

Minera Community Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15th April 2020

Commencing at 7.15 pm and conducted by telephone conference

Present: Cllrs: J Edwards (Chair), H Field (Vice-Chair), W Blaze, J Rosier, D Kelly, J Belton, J Marsh

Clerk: Mr D Hinchliffe

Apologies: Cllrs J Barton, D Austin

1/20 Declarations of interest

1.1/20 There were no declarations of interest.

2/20 Ratification of the minutes of the February meeting

2.1/20 Cllr D Kelly raised a point of order to advise that, as legislation had still not been enacted within Wales to allow public bodies to meet remotely, all decisions taken and resolutions made at the previous meeting, and to be made in the current meeting, were and would be technically provisional only. The Clerk confirmed that this matter had been discussed and confirmed with SLCC. Following advice received from this forum, he would prepare a suitable resolution to be moved and agreed at a subsequent Council meeting that all such decisions and resolutions be retrospectively endorsed once legislation was in place to permit this.

2.2/20 Subject to the foregoing minute, the minutes were proposed for adoption by Cllr H Field and seconded by Cllr W Blaze.

3/20 Matters arising

3.1/20 The Clerk confirmed that, on the instruction of WCBC Electoral Services, no co-option notices had been posted since the previous meeting. Minera Community Council would be advised by Electoral Services when this restriction could be lifted, and the process of co-option for the three current Councillor vacancies could re-open.

3.2/20 The Clerk confirmed that the playground safety report had been sent to WCBC and receipt had been acknowledged.

3.3/20 Cllr W Blaze advised the meeting that 19 lighting units were currently non-functional, and that all contractor personnel remained stood down. These units would be prioritised once work could recommence. The Clerk noted that the latest SSE bill reflected a revision to the lighting inventory for new LED units introduced, but expected further reductions in coming months as the bills were lagging the changeover data sent in.

3.4/20 The Clerk confirmed that the instruction not to use the electoral roll as the basis for a residents' mailshot concerning Covid-19 had ultimately been sent by the UK Electoral Commission. Cllr J Rosier expressed the view that this was fundamentally undemocratic as it hindered the Council's ability to address its residents. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should pursue the matter further with One Voice Wales in the first instance, and then if appropriate to approach the Welsh Government. The clerk would also ascertain the protocols and practicalities of using the Royal Mail to provide a postcode-based mailshot.

4/20 Coronavirus

4.1/20 The Clerk summarised the current situation across the local area. Following the initial surge of public enthusiasm and energy the daily flow of information and advice from governmental, local and charitable bodies had settled down, and the community social media pages were focusing on continuing to pass on key messages and encourage community-minded activity, and to signpost individuals to where help could be found and what resources, including grant funding, could be drawn on. The Minera Community Council website was keeping up to date and signposting visitors accordingly, and was running at a 600% increase in individual visitor traffic compared to a year ago. Cllr J Rosier had noted on the website that page updates were being done by one Councillor on behalf of Minera Community Council as a whole.

4.2/20 The Chair added that around 50 volunteers were now registered with the Coedpoeth caretakers, and donations of key supplies were continuing to be made, and being distributed to those who needed them.

4.3/20 Cllr D Kelly noted that WCBC Environmental Services were under significant additional pressure due to the unfeasibility of observing social distancing while carrying out gang-based refuse collection work. The Chair, on behalf of Minera Community Council, expressed his recognition of the great efforts by all members of our communities who were keeping residents supplied with goods and services at the current time. This inevitably meant that some individuals would be putting themselves at greater risk to provide such services, and this was profoundly appreciated.

4.4/20 Following a brief discussion concerning the lack of clarity and speed in response from Welsh Government in identifying the identities and entitlements of those residents considered 'vulnerable' at the present time, Cllr J Rosier proposed and Cllr J Marsh seconded a resolution that the Clerk write to Welsh Government requesting urgent effort be applied to resolving these issues.

5/20 Review of Standing Orders and Policies

5.1/20 Cllr H Field advised the meeting that all policy and procedural documents having been reviewed and circulated for scrutiny and feedback, Councillors should study them and advise the Clerk of any suggested amendments prior to the next Council meeting

scheduled for 20 May. Cllr D Kelly added that the important issue would be that the policies should be adhered to once adopted, and so should be read from the standpoint of practicality.

5.2/20 The Clerk added that 20 May was the provisional date for the Annual General Meeting at which it would be customary to ratify amendments to policies and procedures. It was still uncertain whether pending legislation would defer the 2020 AGM for anything up to 12 months, but there was no practical impediment to adopting the revised documents at an ordinary meeting of the Council in lieu of an AGM.

6/20 Police report

6.1/20 The Clerk advised the meeting that the Police.co.uk facility for reviewing local crime data had been temporarily suspended to put resources to alternative use in the current national emergency. Raw data could be downloaded, but was hard to use without some guide as to the localities to which Police location identifiers applied. North Wales Police had been asked for details of the Minera codings, and once received the Clerk would sort the data and advise all Councillors accordingly.

6.2/20 Cllr D Kelly added that during the period of national lockdown, North Wales Police had witnessed a significant increase in the seizure of uninsured vehicles and vehicles being used in the furtherance of crime, notably drug offences.

7/20 Minera Community Council Chair's report

Then Chair gave a brief recital of matters which he had attended to:

7.1/20 The problem with sheep straying on to the Old Road had continued and had been reported to the authorities as appropriate. The danger posed by this problem persists.

7.2/20 One particular isolated elderly resident had been directly contacted to ensure she was aware of available community networks. She had confirmed that she was well and had support.

7.3/20 A fire on the Old Road had required eight fire tenders to bring it under control. The apparent cause was a garden rubbish fire which had got out of control.

7.4/20 Contact details for a volunteer from New Brighton had been passed to the Coedpoeth caretakers, and a Gwynfryn resident had been put in touch with the excellent service they were co-ordinating as the resident had not been aware of the facility.

7.5/20 A message of support to all the members of the community and beyond who were standing up to be counted in the current climate had been put on the Minera Community Council website, noting that a donation to the AVOPW 3D printer appeal had been made by the Council on behalf of all residents of the Minera ward.

7.6/20 The Chair had emptied the Gwynfryn play area bin and in response to a query from Cllr H Field would check whether the Minera play area bin emptying was included in the Service Level Agreement with WCBC, or if it had been excluded on grounds of cost.

7.7/20 Scheduled broadband upgrade work by Openreach had begun in the play area.

8/20 County Borough Councillor's report

Cllr D Kelly briefly commented:

8.1/20 Having read that Minera Community Council had pledged £200 to the AVOW 3D printer appeal, Cllr D Kelly proposed that this be raised to £1,000, to be taken from reserves, the additional £800 to be applied to AVOW's overall community response to the Covid-19 emergency. This was seconded by Cllr J Marsh, and it was noted that the Clerk should verify that the PPE specification being produced under this campaign was appropriate for NHS use.

8.2/20 Welsh Government legislation to enable remote meetings, and other points of variation to established practice by public bodies, was expected to be in law by 17 April.

8.3/20 Incidents of fly tipping had been recorded on Minera Mountain. The closure of municipal waste facilities will inevitably tempt some people to resort to this, and resources to remedy incidents were reduced at present.

8.4/20 Rate relief grants were now available to eligible businesses. Bank finance was proving less easy to release, however, with banks being slow to advance the loans backed by government guarantees.

9/20 School Governor's report

9.1/20 There was nothing to report under this agenda item.

10/20 Correspondence

10.1/20 The Clerk had furnished all Councillors with the most pertinent items of correspondence received since the last meeting, and now that correspondence volumes were returning to normal the correspondence log would be resumed.

10.2/20 Notification had been received of a grant to build a butterfly garden within the Local Places for Nature initiative sponsored by Keep Wales Tidy. Minera Quarry was discussed as a potential location for the garden if it could not be developed within the School's grounds. There was no rush to finalise arrangements as the grant offer was open for completion until 31 March 2021.

11/20 Grants and donations

11.1/20 Cllr H Field proposed and Cllr J Marsh seconded that a donation of £200 be made to Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. The Clerk was asked to include in the covering letter that the donation recognised the exceptional costs faced by LIME following the cancellation of the 2020 event.

12/20 Financial matters

12.1/20 The financial report was proposed for approval by Cllr J Belton and seconded by Cllr W Blaze. The schedule of payments, listed below, was proposed for approval by Cllr H Field and seconded by Cllr W Blaze.

Pre-approved	Chq no	
WCBC School Crossing Patrol Q3	101873	1,141.50
Cllr D Austin - Councillor Allowance	101874	120.00
Cllr J Barton - Councillor Allowance	101875	120.00
Chair's purse (Civic Budget) - balance of 2019/20 allowance	101876	320.00

For approval to pay

Clerk salary, April	STO	314.98
Clerk Home Working Allowance/phone	STO	28.50
SSE March account	DDR	197.43
HMRC - tax on 2 Councillor allowances		60.00
Clerk overtime, March		253.24
Clerk expenses, March		77.42
Donation to AVOW	101877/8	1,000.00

12.2/20 Cllr J Belton proposed and Cllr J Marsh seconded that the Clerk should contact WCBC concerning the continued payment of the School Crossing Patrol cost in full in the light of the closure of Minera School, and whether or not the affected employee was to be furloughed.

12.3/20 The Clerk advised that the insurance policy renewal quotation had been received in the sum of £1,972.70, an increase of 1.3% and well inside the precepted allowance. Cllr H Field proposed and Cllr J Marsh that, subject to a scrutiny of the renewal papers for gaps and anomalies, the quotation be accepted and the insurance placed.

12.4/20 Cllr J Rosier had received a renewal quotation from Wix for hosting the Minera Community Council website. In view of the great value the website was currently providing to the community it was agreed that this should be renewed to avoid any service interruption, and the cost recovered through an expense claim.

13/20 Planning matters – to consider items received from Chief Planning Officer

13.1/20 Planning application number P/2020/0087, *Erection of dwelling, Bryn Y Ffynnon, Old Road, Bwlchwyn, Wrexham* had been received during the month and circulated to all Councillors. Cllr J Belton asked that WCBC take due note of any potential increase in traffic volume as a result of the development. Other than this no objections or observations were recorded, so that the Chair asked the Clerk to advise WCBC accordingly

of Cllr Belton's comment, and that Minera Community Council was content to allow the proposal to proceed.

14/20 Community Agent

14.1/20 The Clerk advised the meeting that, following an initial agreement to share a Community Agent with two neighbouring wards, Minera Community Council was now in a position to advertise for and recruit an Agent purely to serve its own needs. In the current climate the services of an Agent would be a great asset to the Council, and while adding administration to the Clerk's workload, the position was fully funded from WCBC for at least the first 12 months, including a grant for setup costs relating to computer and telephone. The Clerk also confirmed that the proposed rate of pay of £9 per hour was above the current level of the living wage, and that any subsequent interest in sharing the agent's services would be addressed by extending the hours rather than reducing the service to Minera. The proposal was endorsed for immediate advertisement with a closing date for applications of 7 May 2020.

Meeting adjourned 2050 hrs.

