

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANARTHNE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the January 2024 Meeting of Llanarthne Community Council held at Capel Dewi Village Hall on 09/01/2024 at 19.00.

171/2023-2024 Present.

Councillors: G Jones (Chair), County Cllr H Jones, A Isaac, M Jones, R Pole, E Jenkins.

Clerk.

Translator – C Llwyd.

172/2023-2024 To receive apologies.

Councillors: County Cllr A Davies, C Pugh-Jones.

173/2023-2024 To receive declarations of interest.

None.

174/2023-2024 Opportunity for the public to address the Council on agenda items.

None.

175/2023-2024 Presentation by Mr Gwyn Jones on horticultural experiences.

Cllr G Jones welcomed Mr Gwyn Jones, land adjacent to Pistyll Dewi, Llanarthne to the meeting.

Mr Gwyn Jones conveyed the following presentation –

“Dear Council Members.

Thank you for the kind invitation to come and speak to you tonight.

I aim to bring awareness of the importance of sustainability within our local food systems and that it is a subject that we can ill afford to ignore.

In December of 2023 Carmarthenshire was awarded the Prestigious Bronze Sustainable Food Places award in recognition of its commitment to building a thriving, sustainable, inclusive and county wide food system. It has been recognized by the county that it is vitally important to be self-sustainable when it comes to food production, it also recognizes that a network of local food producers are needed within the county, and that the whole process from growing , procurement and delivery to local schools and hospitals is a major re think in the way we wish to deliver food services, providing fresh wholesome nutrient packed food while at the same time keeping costs down with fewer food miles travelled.

Recently a small pilot scheme was started at Bremenda Isaf in Llanarthne led by a steering group with forward thinking ideas on how to achieve this transition from farm to fork and I am fortunate to have been invited along to get involved, as many years of farming and land management have been recognized as being useful to the project. This is only one of many such projects taking place in Wales.

I believe that farmers play a vital part within the community not only from the production of food, beef, pork, lamb and dairy products , but they put most of that back into the local economy, be it through the local shop, the vet, feed merchants or machinery dealers, and as we can surely appreciate in the stunning part of the world that we live in, the landscape is made up of grassland , hedges and trees that farmers have

maintained for centuries, we are fortunate that our valley is such a beautiful place to live, work and bring up our children.

Farmers have always been good at adapting and diversification and in agriculture this is nothing new and now with the curtailing of farm payments farms will have to move on and adapt to change. That change for some means producing another income stream such as tourism or sustainable food production.

Sustainable food production has become a serious challenge since the pandemic where we saw severe shortages in supermarkets and as a result small local producers saw demand rise sharply and the demand for local wholesome food has remained unabated.

I have been involved in the past with outreach projects and co - founded a project that has run for the last seven years feeding people in need, similar to a food bank. I also volunteered in a project called Incredible Edible where small plots and allotments were started in various communities and schools within Carmarthenshire.

I have therefore seen first-hand what food growing can do for the individual and the community, it can provide a place to socialize, a place to exercise and also helps with our mental wellbeing.

My initial vision was to create a horticultural enterprise on a small part of my holding at Llanarthne with a view to welcoming any interested persons to participate and enjoy in a safe and inclusive setting, possibly with a community orchard.

I have been in discussions with Social Farms & Gardens Wales who are advising on any available funding that may be in place for such a project and it looks that it could be achieved. I have also personally planted several thousand native trees to help with biodiversity and intend to plant many more to help with flood plain management. The right tree in the right place.

To conclude, the project at Bremenda Isaf will serve as an example and a training ground for what can be done, I hope it will succeed and become a model that others can follow.

I do hope to put in place a similar project in the future that not only grows food but grows community and to that end welcome you to engage in any conversation regarding the above which may be of benefit the local community.

Thank you”.

Cllr R Pole asked about the location of the land?

Mr Gwyn Jones replied that the land was on the left side of the B4310 just after the Emlyn Arms, Llanarthne. Despite most community members owning land within the village, it would be an opportunity to expand their production and enjoy socializing with friends and neighbors.

Cllr M Jones asked if it was a similar project to Bremenda Isaf?

Mr Gwyn Jones replied that it was a similar project but on a smaller scale. The project at Bremenda Isaf is a pilot scheme that has funding for 18 months but if successful will hopefully carry on.

Cllr E Jenkins asked if the project was able to compete with large producers of vegetables?

Mr Gwyn Jones replied that only 6% of the vegetables consumed locally were grown within the county of Carmarthenshire. Help is available from Food Sense Wales and has been key in establishing and nurturing food partnerships as part of its work leading on the Sustainable Food Places network in Wales and is now supporting Welsh Government as it rolls out this much-needed funding. Welsh Government has recognised the importance of place-based approaches and the way in which local

cross-sector food partnerships can support communities to respond to the cost-of-living crisis whilst also working to develop more resilient local food economies.

County Cllr H Jones stated that he was very supportive of the scheme but with current funding only available for 18 months, time was not sufficient to allow farmers to come on board with the idea and diversify their business.

Cllr M Jones asked how the pilot scheme would expand after the initial timescale?

Mr Gwyn Jones replied that he had currently advised on machinery and what crops to grow within the area. Hopefully the project will be successful and continue in the future. If community members get involved in the scheme it would be an enjoyable opportunity to socialize, exercise, and enhance their knowledge. Gardening can be relaxing and just looking at a green space can help us de-stress. They can also give us a sense of achievement, boosting confidence and self-esteem.

County Cllr H Jones asked if a charge would be applied for the allotments?

Mr Gwyn Jones replied that he was hoping not to charge for the facility as he wanted to give back to the community, but he would need to research insurance and public liability costs. Mr Jones stated that he was instrumental in the Sospan Soup Kitchen project 7 years ago where hot food and food parcels are provided weekly to the homeless and low-income families. The project is still very successful.

Cllr G Jones suggested that Mr Jones contact both Llanarthne and Capel Dewi Village Halls when the time is right, to convey his idea and invite members of the community to become involved, perhaps in a steering group capacity.

Cllr G Jones and council members thanked Mr Gwyn Jones for his presentation and stated that they would be pleased to discuss further in future together with progress of the pilot scheme at Bremenda Isaf.

Mr Gwyn Jones left the meeting at 19.38, not to return.

176/2023-2024 To consider and note any policing and/or road safety concerns.

Cllr M Jones reported that land opposite Dolgwynnon had slipped from the field above and was blocking the drain. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

Cllr G Jones reported that drains were blocked from the Paxton Tower car park to Heol Fawr crossroads. County Cllr H Jones reported that a community member had commented on the condition of the road at the same location. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

Cllr G Jones reported a pothole near Pantwgan Farm. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

County Cllr H Jones reported a blocked drain near Abbey Farm resulting in a continuous flow of running water creating potentially hazardous conditions with the freezing weather. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

The Clerk reminded council members that reporting safety issues at a council meeting prevented problems being resolved in a timely manner and asked members where necessary to report them on the County Council website ASAP to prevent accidents and further issues.

177/2023-2024 County Council Matters - County Cllr A Davies.

None.

178/2023-2024 To Receive Chairman's Reports.

Cllr G Jones reported that he was unable to attend the Llanarthne Church nine lessons and carols and the carol evening held at Capel Dewi Village Hall on 18/12/2023 at 19.00 due to ill health.

Cllr G Jones reported that he would be attending a meeting of local councilors at The White Hart, Llandeilo on 10/01/2024 after receiving an invitation from the Mayor Christoph Fischer, Mayoress Kate Glanville and deputy Mayor Charlotte Morgan.

179/2023-2024 Confirmation and Signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 12/12/2023.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 12/12/2023. Proposed by Cllr E Jenkins and seconded by County Cllr H Jones.

180/2023-2024 Matters arising from the above minutes.

The Clerk informed Council members that all matters to **resolve** had been actioned and if correspondence had been received, a copy of the Email had been sent to each member for information.

181/2023-2024 To note correspondence or to list for consideration at a forthcoming Council meeting.

(All relevant correspondence is emailed to council members at the time of receipt and only brought before the meeting if necessary or specifically requested by members or the Clerk).

Cllr G Jones reminded council members about a Go Safe session to learn more about Community Speed Watch online via Zoom on 08/02/2024 at 19.00.

Cllr G Jones reminded council members about a special meeting of the Community & Town Councils Liaison Forum on 17/01/2024 at 18.00 to discuss the setting of the council's budget.

182/2023-2024 Planning.

There were no objections to the below planning application provided that appropriate planning conditions in these circumstances are imposed. Proposed by County Cllr H Jones and seconded by Cllr M Jones.

PL/06919 - Change of use from agricultural land for the siting of a holiday let - Ffosyffin Fach, Capel Dewi, Carmarthen, SA32 8AG.

183/2023-2024 Payments.

The below payments were certified in the November meeting and **ratified** in the December meeting. Copies of invoices sent to all members electronically prior to payment for authorisation. **Proposed** by Cllr A Isaac and seconded by Cllr R Pole.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	28/12/2023	J G Evans – Oct, Nov, December Payroll	1109.49
Online	28/12/2023	T R Carruthers – Oct, Nov, December Payroll	241.78
Online	28/12/2023	HMRC	412.43
Online	28/12/2023	Dyfed Pension	385.11
Online	28/12/2023	CCW Law Solicitors – P2315	528.00

Online	28/12/2023	Carmarthenshire County Council - 97270815	342.17
Online	28/12/2023	Muscular Dystrophy - Donation	50.00
Online	28/12/2023	Llanarthne Village Hall – Yr Hen a Wyr	132.50

Muscular Dystrophy £50.00 – Chair’s Allowance.

184/2023-2024 To note receipts.

07/12/2023 – HMRC VAT Refund - £1147.31

22/12/2023 – Carmarthenshire County Council Precept 3 - £7885.11.

27/12/2023 – ETA Services Ltd Cycle Insurance Refund - £175.30.

185/2023-2024 To receive the Internal Financial Examiners report 01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023.

Each member had been provided with a written report prior to the meeting. A full verbal report was provided by Cllr A Isaac. The report confirmed the accuracy of the bank reconciliation and statement of accounts provided to the Council. It also confirmed the accuracy of the final budget report provided. It was proposed by Cllr E Jenkins and seconded by Cllr R Pole to accept the report. Councilor G Jones praised the Clerk for his diligence and financial acumen and noted how fortunate the council is to have someone of Councillor Angela Issac’s standing and experience as the Internal Financial examiner. Both were warmly thanked by all members.

186/2022-2023 To develop and finalise the budget and precept for 2024 – 2025.

a) Review of income and expenditure for period 01/04/2023 – 31/12/2023 – All members had received a copy of the report prior to the meeting along with a copy of the bank reconciliation up to 31/12/2023. The statement balance on 31/12/2023 was £32,255.76.

b) Projected balance at 31/03/2024 – Cllr A Isaac and the Clerk discussed and formatted the figures based on current spending trends and expenditure for the same period in 2022 – 2023 (Please see table 1 below).

c) Report and recommendations in relation to 2024 – 2025 budget – A draft expenditure report was sent to all members prior to the meeting totaling £29,706.00. A draft income figure was presented to the members from VAT refund for £1500.00.

d) Confirmation of the 2024 – 2054 budget – The budget is presented in table 2 below.

e) Confirmation of the special project’s programme and the Council’s other reserves. From 2020 the council have been tasked with recuperating their reserves to a minimum of 50% of their revenue. The Clerk announced that reserves are found to be on track albeit with some easily identifiable differences.

f) Report in relation to 2024 – 2025 budget – All members received a copy of the report prior to the meeting. The Band D Council tax figure for 2024 – 2024 is **434.83** and all members were required to evaluate the presented options (Please see table 3 below)

g) 2024 – 2025 Precept Demand - All Council members considered the options provided for the 2024 – 2025 precept. A council needs to hold some reserves to make sure it can pay for unexpected events and to make sure it has enough money to pay bills until it receives income. Unless it has specific plans for future spending, councils should only hold reserves to provide a reasonable balance. The Clerk reported that the reserve percentage was low last year due to unforeseen circumstances

approximately four years ago and he stated that he did not wish the community council to revert to the same situation again considering that a lot of hard work had been undertaken to remain buoyant. The Clerk reported that the reserve percentage was currently on track but with uncertain times ahead regarding inflation and utility charges, it would be advisable to remain cautious. The Clerk suggested increasing the precept demand by 5% due to inflation being high over the past 12 months and in accordance with projected unprecedented times ahead. All council members agreed to the suggested 5% increase and that the precept demand would be £25,863.69 with a Council Tax Band D of **£59.48**.

h) To ratify the annual investment strategy – The strategy was discussed under policies in the Community Council meeting on 14/11/2022 minute **141/2023-2024**.

County Cllr H Jones reported that there was a possibility that Carmarthenshire County Council may reduce the number of public bins within the county and that community councils may be required to adopt the current facilities and pay the county council to empty the units on a regular basis. **Resolved** for the Clerk to source the location and number of public bins within the community.

i) Insurance Policy – This matter was discussed in the May meeting on 10/05/2022 minute **39/2023-2024**. It was proposed by County Cllr H Jones and seconded by Cllr G Jones to renew the policy.

The budget and precept report were proposed by County Cllr H Jones and seconded by Cllr R Pole with no objections from any Community Council members.

187/2023-2024 To discuss Community Awards.

Defer to February.

188/2023-2024 To discuss “Yr Hen a Wyr” project.

The following notes were sent to the Clerk on 05/01/2024 and forwarded to all council members after a meeting of the sub-committee on 04/01/2024.

“Present: Myfanwy Jones (Chair), Eirian Jenkins, Anna Jones, Betsan Quick, Gwenllian Jones, Gethin James, Eirwyn Bennet, Glenn Jones

Myfanwy identified the elements of the Heritage Lottery Project

Replacing the current information panel, £3,500 allocated

The production of Digital Materials for the website, and creating and uploading web content for CC website £2,500

Marketing materials, leaflets, and project promotion at an event within the community £800

Proposed Plan

Information Board

Preference to date to liaise with Phil Wait Design to reproduce the current information panel with minor amendments including QR code.

Gary Evans, CC Clerk to be asked to source e mail copies of the current information board for Community Council members, Subgroup members and YFC members to consider and suggest any minor amendments. GE to source GJ to circulate to subgroup members and YFC

Possible location --- There was agreement that the Information Panel should not be south facing. Three possible locations – Opposite Wrights by the CC Bench, Llanarthne Hall grounds, opposite the Emlyn Arms near Hafan Deg. The latter is preferred at present pending further consideration.

Digital Developments

Planning meeting required with Capel Arthne YFC to consider Digital Schedule to :

Design a new, digital village map based on the old drawn board, and the new information collated at the village event (11.11.2023)

Work with Moilin and Optimum incorporating film, interviews and possible podcasts
Research then produce and locate QR codes around Llanarthne and Capel Dewi
Digitize photos and upload on the CC Website, together with a time line. Work with Moilin on this but also possible liaison with Rhian Pole regarding web site developments. MJ

Eirwyn Bennet and Gethin James agreed to locate the Llanarthne Information DVD produced by local children in approximately 2005. EB/GJ

Eirwyn Bennet to label photos for use on timeline (website)

Next Meetings:

11/01/2024 Information Panel Meeting – Troed y Bryn at 17.00”.

The Clerk distributed a copy of the current interpretation board to all council members present. Cllr M Jones was not familiar with the copy provided but as the current board is illegible. Cllr M Jones suggested removing snippets of the wording as more pictures was required. Change the photograph of Dryslwyn Castle to Paxton’s Tower and include a picture of Llanarthne Church. If Paxton Tower is to be added, the topic of slavery must be included.

Cllr G Jones asked council members to consider the current format and forward any comments by 12/01/2024.

The QR code includes a digital format of the interpretation board videos of past and current community members and interviews. Pictures, photographs and sketches to be added to the website at a later date.

The Clerk asked what evidence of spent funding was required by the National Lottery. Cllr M Jones replied, “A copy of all invoices and bank statements relating to Yr Hen a Wyr project”. **Resolved** to note.

189/2023-2024 To discuss the co-option of new council members.

No Update.

190/2023-2024 To hold a forum in order for members to raise reports/questions through the Chair.

None.

191/2023-2024 In Camera 20.57.

Those who were not Community Council members, or the Clerk departed the meeting – not to return. The exclusion is due to personnel / staffing matters being discussed.

192/2023-2024 Next Meeting.

Date of the next meeting to be held at Llanarthne Village Hall – 13/02/2024 at 19.00.

193/2023-2024 The Meeting Finished at 21.00.

Chairman

Date

LLANARTHNE BUDGET & PRECEPT 2024-2025

Please find below a report on the 2023-2024 budget, the actual expenditure to 31/12/2023 and the estimated expenditure to 31/03/2024. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 09/01/2024.

HEADING	PREVIOUS BUDGET	ACTUAL SPEND TO 31/12/2023	ESTIMATED SPEND ON 31/03/2024	DIFF	REASON
Ground Maintenance	900.00	810.00	810.00	- 90.00	-
Staff Salary & PAYE	8500.00	6446.43	10,200.00	1700.00	Inf + NALC inc
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2300.00	1639.29	2300.00	0.00	-
Insurance	630.00	602.54	602.54	- 27.46	-
Financial Assistance Including Standing Revenue Grants	2100.00	2100.00	2100.00	0.00	-
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1500.00	684.34	1368.68	- 131.32	-
Street Lighting Estimate	8850.00	0.00	8850.00	0.00	-
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	320.00	0.00	250.00	- 70.00	-
Members Allowance + PAYE	156.00	0.00	0.00	-156.00	-
Election Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-
Section 137	800.00	450.00	800.00	0.00	-
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve from Precept	1000.00	768.00	768.00	- 232.00	Requires increasing as planned in the 2023 – 2024 precept.
TOTAL	27,056.00	13,500.60	28,049.22	993.22	

There was a projected VAT refund in the 2023-2024 precept of £1050.00. This reduced the precept demand from £27,056.00 to £26,006.00. It was resolved to demand a precept income of £23,655.34 in 2023-2024 and for general funds to accept the £2350.66 deficit to replenish funds.

Please find below a proposed budget for 2024-2025 in comparison to 2023-2024. Reasons are given on sum difference and will be discussed in the January meeting on 09/01/2024.

HEADING	PREVIOUS BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET	REASON
Ground Maintenance	900.00	900.00	-
Staff Salary & PAYE	8500.00	10,200.00	Inflation and salary increase in line with NALC
Admin, Inc Audit Fees	2300.00	2300.00	-
Insurance	630.00	680.00	Inflation
Financial Assistance – Inc Standing Revenue Grants	2100.00	2100.00	-
Seating & Asset Maintenance	1500.00	1500.00	-
Street Lighting Estimate	8850.00	9750.00	Inflation
Misc – Inc Subscriptions	320.00	320.00	-
Members Allowance	156.00	156.00	-
Election Cost	0.00	0.00	-
Section 137	800.00	800.00	-
Allocation to Special Projects & Reserve From Precept	1000.00	1000.00	Reserves require increasing as stated in 2023 – 2024 budget.
TOTAL	27,056.00	29,706.00	

There is a projected VAT refund in the 2024-2025 precept of £1500.00. This will reduce the precept demand from £29,706.00 to £28,206.00.

Bank balance as at 31/12/2023 (See Statement Copy)	£32,255.76
Less projected expenditure 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	£14,548.62
Projected bank balance as at 31/03/2024	£17,707.14
Expenditure proposal for 2024-2025	£29,706.00
Less Estimated income for 2023-2024 (VAT Refund)	£1500.00
Less projected bank balance as at 31/3/24 (based on projected expenditure)	£17,707.14
Amount required to make up the difference	£10,498.86
Add 50% of projected expenditure to create a reserve of 50% of revenue	£14,853.00
Amount required as total precept for 2024-2025	£25,351.86
By using tax base 434.83	
Amount raised by keeping the Band D rate the same as last year @ £56.65	£24,633.12
Amount raised by increasing the Band D rate to £59.48 (+5.0%)	£25,863.69

N.B. If we keep the Band D rate the same as 2023-2024, we will end up with a budget deficit of £718.74 which will be deducted from the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 48% of annual expenditure (5.25 months). This is below the required reserve amount recommended.

If we raise the Band D rate to £59.48, we will end up with a budget surplus of £511.83 which will be added to the reserve. The reserve will then be equal to 52% of annual expenditure (6 months). This is acceptable as the required reserve amount recommended.