

# ARTHOG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE ARTHOG COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE FAIRBOURNE VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2019

**960: The Chairman Opened the Meeting:** Cllr Roberts, Vice Chairman opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed all. A special welcome was given to Carol Darvill who was co-opted onto the ACC, and to Georgina Salt, resident of Fairbourne who would be making a presentation.

**961: Present:** Cllr Roberts, Cllr Thomas, Cllr Woolley, Cllr (Mrs) J Woolley, Cllr (Mrs) H Neville, Cllr (Mrs) C Darvill and guest Georgina Salt, plus Clerk Angela Thomas

**962: Apologies Received:** Apologies received from Cllr Eves, Cllr Haycock, Cllr (Mrs) Stott and Cllr (Mrs) Louise Hughes

**963: Councillors' Declaration of Interest:** Nil

**964: Guest Speaker:** Guest Georgina Salt made an extensive presentation to all Councillors' present. She had found many references to Fairbourne on the internet, most of which the Arthog Community Council were unaware of. Some pieces of information were inflammatory leaving the ACC with no right of reply. Intriguingly, one piece that Georgina made the Councillors' aware of involved a survey in Fairbourne, conducted by Fairbourne Moving Forward in which they targeted 19 people. It was felt that this was hardly a real or true reflection of what is happening in the Village and at least 100 people should have been involved. Reference was also made to announcements/publications made by Huw Williams YGC, that implied that the ACC had not engaged with the residents of Fairbourne to make them aware of the implications of the SMP2 in 2013, when in fact nobody on the ACC was qualified to make such an announcement, it should have been handled by Huw Williams YGC/Lisa Goodier YGC as they are the experts. When inflammatory or incorrect statements are made, that are widely available for all to read, it is very difficult to get a retraction or correction made, and that fake news/information is on the www. forever. One document that Georgina presented suggested that the quality of the infrastructure would/could possibly decrease as time goes on, despite the confirmation by the utilities that they would stay until the last man standing. The loss of tourism had been flagged up and noted that it would have an adverse effect on the village. In one document decommissioning was mentioned but not decommissioning of the WHOLE village, in fact quite the opposite. One line of discussion that needs to be expanded by the ACC is the exploration of funds that may be available. Discussions lasted approximately 1hour 15 minutes. It was felt to have been a very worthwhile exercise. Georgina Salt was asked if she would consider being co-opted onto the Community Council. Residents like Georgina are badly needed to ensure that the community has a voice where its future is concerned.

**965: To Receive Any Special Announcements:** Cllr Roberts thanked the Clerk on behalf of the ACC for all the hard work carried out on the comments and feedback of the Fairbourne: Framework for the Future. The Clerk thanked Cllr Roberts and the other Councillors for their kind remarks.

**966: To Confirm Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019:** Minutes were proposed as correct by Cllr Woolley and seconded by Cllr (Mrs) Woolley.

**967: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019:** No matter arising.

**968: Clerks Report:** The Clerk reported that she had heard back from the Community Energy campaign, but it was not something that the ACC could become involved in. The Clerk has asked for clarification from the department of transport at Gwynedd Council regarding the proposed change on speed limits through Friog, starting at the toll house right through Arthog. It was explained that the current speed limits were out of the law, they had been changed in 2012 to accommodate road and roadside repairs and had never reverted to the lawful limits. The speed signs would be changed possibly before Christmas and then there would be a period of transition. After a set period the ACC would be able to appeal the speeds and ask for them to be changed again. Currently the traffic department and highways department at GC were trying to decide who should pay for the change in signage. If any person had received a speeding ticket in an area that was unlawfully signed, then they would have the right to appeal. Cllr Roberts said that the change will have to be contested as soon as is possible. A letter had been received from GC asking that the salt bins be inspected to make sure they were full. Correspondence concerning Footpath 13 at Morfa Mawddach had been received from Gemma Evans, but this would be discussed when Cllr Eves is at the next meeting. The Clerk had managed to have a conversation with Steffan Jones GC regarding the idea of a bylaw for Fairbourne, prohibiting overnight camping. Steffan Jones explained that the request was now being handled by the Harbour Master, Barry Davies, hence the delay in hearing anything. She also talked to Steffan Jones regarding the Wesleyan Chapel and the state of repair. He said the properties department at GC would be looking into it. 999 telephones were still being discussed.

**969: Special Items Brought to Attention:** The Clerk reported that the Comments and Feedback for the Fairbourne: Framework for the Future had been sent by email to Huw Williams and Catrin Wager. Huw Williams had acknowledged receipt, Catrin Wager had not. A paper copy had also been posted in the box in the Village Shop. The closure date was the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The Post Box was still in the corner shop on the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup>, so not a great deal of importance seemed to be attached to it by GC. Coincidentally, Lisa Goodier had extended the date to Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December as it appeared that some residents had had a problem sending their comments by email. Lisa Goodier was holding an extra drop in in the small village hall room, 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm on that Thursday.

**970: To deal with Any Correspondence:** The Clerk had received a request for a donation from the Arthog Village Hall. A donation had been made on March 2019 for £500.00. It was decided that Cllr Roberts would speak to Sue Ellis the secretary of Arthog Village Hall to explain, and that the Clerk would follow up with a letter explaining that any donation would now have to wait until 2020 once the new Precept had been received. The Clerk had received an email from a lady named Linda Hughes. Linda wanted to know if it was possible to place a memorial bench for her mother on the hill leading up to Brackenhurst. Linda Hughes said she would be responsible for all costs incurred. Cllr Roberts explained that Brackenhurst Hill is in fact a private road. The Clerk said she would contact Roger Duke who owns a property up there and ask him to investigate the possibility of the request being fulfilled.

**971: To Deal with Planning Matters:** Nil

**972: Financial Statement and Report:** A report had been circulated to all Councillors. All cheques had been cashed from the previous month. The cheque book was circulated for signatures. Cheques to be signed were as follows:

Wales Audit Office £272.70, Cambrian News (Advert) £196.20, L C Jones £100.00 (9<sup>th</sup> cut), stamps 3 books £25.20, Goal Posts and Nets £379.94 (the same figure will be transferred from the Youth account back to the current account), Ink Cartridges x 2 £48.00, Plastic Ties for the Play Park £21.76.

All accounts balanced.

The bill for the external Audit had been received, a much more reasonable bill than last year. L C Jones had done his last cut on the cemetery. The bill for the Goal posts and nets was submitted. A letter of authorization to transfer funds will need to be signed by three signatories. A bill for plastic ties for the playpark was submitted by Cllr Neville.

Discussions took place regarding the Precept. It was pointed out that translation from English to Welsh costs £80.00 per thousand words, and payment for Advertisements had been unexpected and therefore it was felt that an extra £500.00 should be added to the Precept for next year. Proposed by Cllr Woolley seconded by Cllr (Mrs) Neville. The ACC approved the sum of £12500.00 for the Precept for 2020/2021. The Clerk was asked to investigate how much money needed to be held in the account for the possibility of having to hold an election.

**973: To Receive Councillors' Questions:** Cllr (Mrs) C Darvill raised a question about Council Tax, i.e. what criteria was needed to be exempted. Cllr Thomas gave an explanation. The Clerk explained to Cllr (Mrs) Darvill that the subject of council Tax had been raised with GC with a view to getting a reduction because of the loss of value caused by GC's announcement that Fairbourne would be decommissioned, and that this was on going. Cllr Woolley stated that in the "master plan" it clearly stated that properties had lost 40% value. This statement was made by GC. Alan Pugh, Walter Lloyd Jones also had made a statement that properties were worthless. Cllr Thomas raised the subject of Arthog Church and the proposal that had been made to put it up for sale. Friends of Arthog Church are very much aware of this. It was proposed that ACC write a letter to the Church of Wales and suggest that it should be run by the Community of Arthog. Cllr Roberts said that he would speak with Gareth first. Arthog Community residents each donate to the diocese and the existing funds of the Church pays for the cutting of the Churchyard. Cllr Roberts said that if the church was decommissioned the Church of Wales would still be responsible for the Cemetery. This subject will be discussed again at the next meeting. Many local Churches are being closed which is a big worry.

**974: Representatives Report:** Cllr (Mrs) Neville said that she now had the plastic ties to complete the job in the Play Park. This will commence in the Spring. Cllr Thomas said that during the IDD meeting the NRW expressed a wish to be able to clear the ditches through the middle of the Village. Unfortunately, boats were having to be deployed which was not either cost effective or work effective. The problem arises because so many residents have "cabbaged" land at the bottom or side of their gardens that does not belong to them, thus making it impossible for heavy machinery to get access to the ditches. The NRW do have the right to access this land. There is a booklet available from the NRW detailing riparian rights. This should be sent to the offending properties. It is going to be a delicate matter but needs to be addressed. This needs to be discussed again at the next meeting and a decision made on how to proceed. Cllr (Mrs) Woolley said that she felt no one would object to the work being done if it added to the protection of Fairbourne. Cllr Woolley raised a point that it now appears that more Communities are now becoming aware of the consequences of sea level rise. He suggested that these Community Council should perhaps begin to work together. Cllr Thomas wondered if this is something that One Voice Wales should become involved. This subject to be revisited. Cllr (Mrs) Woolley reminded that a show is being held in the Village Hall over the Christmas period. Golf Club: Cllr Roberts explained that the FAT had held a meeting and talked about the Golf Club. There is a conflict of thought regarding FAT becoming involved in the future of the Golf Club. It was decided that perhaps a further Limited company be set up. Cllr Roberts read aloud a letter received from OVW answering a specific question asked of them. It was a complicated legal reply. Cllr Thomas said that a new limited company would cause severe problems and that a better course of action was to appoint a new set of Directors under the existing Limited Company, and then sub-let it to any interested party. In 2023 the current lease runs out

with GC. It was not anticipated that there would be a problem. Cllr Roberts said that it is vitally important that this amenity remains within Fairbourne. The Clerk said that she had only received one email of interest from the advertisement. The FAT met on the previous Monday and it was confirmed that just over £3000 was held in their account. However, a cheque to the value of £8000.00 plus, was due to be received from the now defunct FFC which would now enable the building of a disabled toilet. A very positive note. Cllr Roberts read a letter out from Mike Scott reference Penrhyn Drive South toilets regarding costs for electricity and sewage. Costs were well under the anticipated cost. The toilets located at the shop have been receiving free electricity for approximately 40 years. The meters have never been read. Nothing has been paid. There is no NPAN. GC are looking for any aged documents applicable. FAT have instructed Scottish Power that they have been willing to pay the electricity, therefore have done the right thing. The launching fees raised a measly £200.00 for the whole season. It was proposed to put the launching fees up to £15.00. It is now felt that raising the fee will cause aggravation and that FAT will no longer be involved in the collecting of fees. Further up the Coast there have been incidents that now mean that anybody collecting fees must wear a body cam. The Clerk asked if anybody had any news regarding the person of interest to the Police who it appeared had spent the summer in Fairbourne. He was awol from Prison. The Police had been to the Village, but it was felt that the residents of Fairbourne should have been more fully informed. The Police had been made aware in the Summer that this person was in Fairbourne, but the Police had taken no action. Cllr Roberts asked Cllr (Mrs) Darvill if she was happy to join the Council and she confirmed that she would be happy to join.

The Vice Chairman wished everybody a Happy Christmas, and the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

**975: Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 in Arthog (now changed to Fairbourne) Village Hall, commencing 7.00 pm. Councillor Roberts wished everybody present a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.