

Apologies Cllr T Bates WCBC

Present Cllrs F.Evans-Swogger(chair), KL Benning, RW Edwards, J Greatorex, EM Jones, E Owens, JW Thomas

Declaration of Interest

Matters Arising

089 Police Report NWP not present. PCSO Martin Griffiths has submitted a brief update showing 2 concerns for safety. 1 x fraud, 1 x 4 by 4 vehicle seized. On-going off-road operations. The clerk attended a meeting at Wrexham Police HQ organised by Divisional Inspector Wrexham Rural Steven Owens & addressed by Chief Inspector Dave Jolli, with the purpose of improving contact between Wrexham's Rural Community Councils & NWP.

Although the crime figure appears to be rising, this is largely down to the way they are now reported. North Wales is no. 2 out of 43 forces where you are least likely to be the victim of crime. The Police & Crimes Commissioner has targeted 4 objectives 2017-2021 – child sexual abuse & exploitation; human trafficking & modern-day slavery; domestic abuse and organised crime. These will obviously be targeted with more resources as 2011-2017 NWP have suffered 20% budget cut of £30 million & 18% reduction in staff. The average length of service is now 3 ½ years; these inexperienced officers tend to suffer significant trauma which results in them being unavailable for work for some time. Some days it is a struggle to put out 5 officers in Wrexham Rural.

However, the role of PCSO is evolving & NWP are committed to maintaining numbers, even if WCBC stop supporting some officers. NWP are tackling problems that affect rural communities. Operation SCOPO is targeting illegal off-roading activities in the Glyn Valley. There has been an increased presence over the past couple of weekends & this will continue until the message is understood ie NO illegal off-roading tolerated!

It was agreed that these meetings were useful & would continue to be held on a more regular basis. Cllr Greatorex noted that Police had been stopping bikes in the middle of Llanarmon as when they try to stop them in the countryside, they just race off! Also, a 4x4 was apparently booked when they returned from the Wayfarers with Xmas trees on the roof.

090 Finance. Bank – recently received final precept payment for the year= £666.67. Unfortunately, also received a bill for holding uncontested elections of £310.90. The unavoidable costs for the year totalled £2,200 before any donations. Current balance is over £6,000.

091 Consider Precept - the tax base for the Community Council Area for 2018-19 is 164. The precept has been set at £2,000 for some years. Cllr Benning noted that the external audit

had commented on our surplus & thought we should be reducing the level. It was unanimously agreed to leave the precept at £2,000.

092 Register of Interest – Cllr Swogger had not been present at the last meeting to report on the Code of Conduct course she attended. It was clear that a Register of Interests should be kept. It is certainly best practice to register any property owned or occupation conducted within the Community Council Wards. This does not involve commenting on values or revenues. It is sufficient to merely say you own a farm or business or house. It was suggested the clerk design a form which each councillor could complete. He will liaise with other clerks in the valley. Cllr Benning would endeavour to supply a copy of a form he has had to complete as a school governor. Cllr Greatorex noted that he would declare he was on WCBC destination management board.

093 Planning – No applications received, The West Arms amended application refused. Denbighshire CC consultation document re Dee Valley AONB

094 Roads & Lighting – The light on the finger post in Llanarmon has been reported to Paul Rogers. Cllr T Bates WCBC is taking Cllr Mark Prichard on a 'roads tour' with Darren Williams of Highways & Sgt Burns.

095 Reports from Committee Reps. - Clerk attended Police meeting. Chair attended Code of Conduct training.

096 A.O.B –

Dilys Bates would like to discuss the role of Community Agent & will be invited to the next meeting. Cllr Jones requested payment for Jeyes Fluid to de-moss the footpath in the church yard (agreed). Cllr Swogger informed that the signs would be delivered shortly.

Cllr Benning would like to address a question to WCBC & would like an answer. The cottage opposite Pen Rhewl is standing empty. Damp forced out Margaret Roberts the previous tenant. It may be dangerous, it is unsightly & may be devaluing neighbour's properties. There is a national housing shortage & in particular for young people in rural communities. There are 23,000 properties like this in Wales. QUESTION – How many properties in the borough are empty? If they don't know, why not? Since 2006, 'empty dwelling management orders' give powers to seize, renovate & let empty dwellings. This has only happened 3 times in Wales. Has WCBC any plans to utilise these powers? Cllr Greatorex has met Dafyd Ellis-Thomas, Minister for Culture, Tourism & Sport, who suggested there may be an unutilised land tax for situations such as this. Cllrs commented that there are several other properties in the valley in a similar situation, due historic problems with deeds. However, it was doubted that this was really the cause of the problem under today's system of registered land. It is more likely that the owner of these properties is in denial. The council unanimously agreed that the questions should be raised. Clerk to liaise with Cllr T Bates re. to whom these questions should be posed.