**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th FEBRUARY 2021 on GOOGLE MEET.**

**These notes do not form part of the meeting but may be acted upon by the Members**.

No members of the public.

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**Present:** Cllr G Evans (Chair), Cllr E Harris, Cllr P Barrett, Cllr M Collins, Cllr B Thomas, Cllr C Thomas, and Cllr M Morgan. County Councillor Rachel Powell,

**APOLOGIES**

Cllr A Jones

**Declarations of Interest.** Members were requested to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests they may have in matters to be considered at the meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct Order) (Wales) Order 2008.

*None*

**5999.   APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings on 12th January were approved.

**6000** **MATTERS ARISING**

From the meeting of 12th January 2021 only matters which do not appear on the Agenda should be raised.

**Roads update**

**Update in relation to closure after storm damage to B4355.**

Vedw Lwyd – Road fully open. Negotiations ongoing with landowner over final clear up.

**Knucklas Playground Report**

Ann Jones to continue with monthly report. No identified problems at the present time.

**Knucklas Bridge overhanging branches**

An emergency traffic order was agreed by Powys CC to allow Network Rail team to clear the dead and damaged trees in order to ensure the safety of road users next to Knucklas bridge. The road was closed from 8am to 4pm from Monday 1st February to Friday 5th February. The removal of the trees was vital and long overdue and had been the subject of continual lobbying by Beguildy Community Council, our County Councillor and Powys Highways. The completed work is quite comprehensive.

The road closure was recognised to be essential but strong feelings were expressed about the lack of communication relating to it, which had increased the disruption and inconvenience. Our County Councillor was only made aware of the closure on the Monday afternoon with no opportunity to forward this information to the community.

County Councillor Powell agreed to raise the issue of the communication breakdown with Powys C.C. Highways Department.

**Blocked Drains on Knucklas Bypass**

Clerk to chase up Powys CC again

**Clerk to report large Pothole on Beguildy side of Lloyney on B4355**

**Clerk to report collapsed BT manhole near Halfway House on B4355.**

**Rural Broadband**

Cllr B Thomas reported that Openreach engineers had been installing fibre Optic broadband cable from the Beguildy Exchange towards Felindre and that they had suggested informally that those on the route would be eligible for no cost installation. This also tied in with communication which he and other householders had already received but no firm date was given for the installation.

It was reported that other householders served by the Beguildy Exchange were being quoted charges of £100k for installation of fibre broadband cable under BT’s Universal Service Obligation.

It was suggested that the issue of this apparent two-tier service be raised with our local MP and the Chair agreed to contact her.

**6001. COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

Cllr A Jones has sent a query regarding a resident in Knucklas. I will await feedback and liaise with her in view to what happens next which will depend on the information sourced).

Budget setting has been confirmed and will go to full council with the proposals. Clearly, this has been an extraordinary year and particularly difficult for services, especially social care (Children’s and Adults). The proposal is for a 3.9% Council Tax rise (we are at the lower side in comparison to other LA’s). There has been a great deal of effort to protect some of the vital services such as highways, appreciating that this is what the public see and raise but, clearly our statutory services will take priority (for example Education 40% Adult Social Care 35%). The pandemic has created additional pressures and services are reacting to these. For instance, we have had additional children brought into care due to the pandemic (additional pressures in being at home and being unable to access additional safety support systems, for example health support/ education/wider family members etc etc).

As I know you will appreciate, the budget proposals are never an easy time for politics and also, services but, as a cabinet we have tried our best to set a budget that is realistic but also considers service provision as well as the tax payer (we had planned for 5% initially but, worked with officers to bring that down further – being mindful of the implications for all in view to the current pandemic).

I have nothing more to add other than in view to Cllr Chris’s question.

Virtual working will continue, and this has been encouraged and, to a degree, expected by WG. It has provided savings for the council for example with members travelling expenses and has had many benefits. Clearly, this type of working does not suit everyone or for some services, such as social care. As cabinet member, it has meant I can attend WG meetings with Ministers and briefings, saving time and cost of travel. We have not met face-to-face as a cabinet or as a council since the announcements last March and there is no intention to meet until it is safe to do so. I am of the opinion that this will only be for full Council days in the future.

Teams media base is mainly used which can hold up to 120 people and more, Zoom has a better offer in view to translation and the Welsh language but, there have been some difficulties, which I know the department is trying to overcome. Both of these works well.

**6002. FINANCE**

1. Payments –

N King (February2021 Salary)               £319.32

HM Inspector of Taxes (£63.86)

(Income Tax deducted from Clerks Salary)

Net Pay £255.46

Felindre Village Hall £25.00

High ground Maintenance £131.88

**Payments agreed by members.**

**6003. PLANNING**

**No planning applications.**

**6004. HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT**

None

**6005. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE / ISSUES**

. None

**6006. HEYOPE RECREATION GROUND**

None

**6007 FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

The Chair confirmed that at a recent windfarm Panel, all Teme Valley applications for funds were agreed in principle.

**6008. ANY URGENT BUSINESS/INFORMATION (at discretion of Chair)**

None.

**Meeting closed at 8:30 pm**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Next meeting to be Tuesday 9th March 7:30 pm on Google Meet.**