



MINUTES OF MEETING

BEDLINOG & TRELEWIS **COMMUNITY COUNCIL** **MEETING**

MONDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Searl (In the Chair)

Councillors Matthews, Frayne, Jago, Preston and Thomas

Officers: Ryan James

Outside Bodies:
(none)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
1	Welcome and Apologies	The Chair, Cllr Richard Searl, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Searl welcomed Cllr Chris Frayne to his first Community Council meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Helen Thomas, Cllr Ian Thomas, Cllr Jeff Beard and Cllr Elizabeth Evans.
2	Declarations of Interest	Cllr Richard Searl, declared an interest in Planning Application P/20/0010, the applicant is his Accountant.
3	Police Report	The Police Report was discussed. The majority of Anti-Social behaviour in the Community was in relation to

		breaches of lockdown. Cllr Sherelle Jago also advised that Inspector Ben Rowe had been replaced with a new Inspector for the area. The Community Council will look to invite the new Inspector to future meetings when we are able to meet in person again. ACTION: RJ to upload Police Report to Community Council website and social media channel.
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	Council resolved that the minutes were a true reflection of the previous meeting.
5	Matters Arising	A quote from a company based in Swansea has been provided for a durable bench to replace the one stolen from the road to the Cemetery. All the suppliers that RJ has been in contact with do not fit benches, they only supply. Cllr Sherelle Jago, suggested speaking to Robert Barnett at MTCBC to enquire if his department could fit the bench. Cllr Searl proposed the purchase of the bench this was seconded by Cllr Preston and Council resolved to go ahead with the purchase of the bench. RJ has been in contact with Waste Services at MTCBC, and refuse collections from the Community Centre commenced Monday 1st June 2020. Posters in relation to the Hardship Fund were produced. Cllr Richard Searl has put the posters up in shops in Bedlinog and Trelewis. Work has commenced on the wall and gate at the entrance to Bedlinog Community Centre. It was noted that if we put a lock on the gate, then the garages in use beyond the gate will require a key. Cllr Sherelle Jago advised that the number of reports that she has received of youths gathering in the Community Centre car park since the gate was installed has reduced. Council resolved that a lock should be purchased, and 6 sets of keys would be required. A sign is also required to be put on the wall to advise of the location of the public footpath. Cllr Vanessa Matthews received feedback on Planning Application P/20/0091. Residents' concerns were in relation to potential parking issues – this feedback was communicated to the Planning Department at MTCBC. A report of fly-tipping on Bedlinog Mountain (at the 'Fox') has been made to MTCBC – RJ has requested feedback and the Environmental Health Officer has responded to say that MTCBC are trying to determine who owns the land. The Community Council will be updated as the case progresses. ACTION: RJ to enquire with MTCBC if they will install the bench on behalf of the Community Council. ACTION: RJ to purchase lock for the community centre

		gate.
6	Councillors Report	Cllr Sherelle Jago advised Council that since the Education Minister's announcement about pupils returning to school, MTCBC has been working hard with Head Teachers to consider a coordinated approach to managing the process. There is apprehension amongst teachers and there is Union involvement as to how the return to school is going to be managed going forward. Welsh Government will be issuing guidance w/c 15th June, and then MTCBC will provide a full briefing paper on how the return will work in schools across Merthyr. The priority will be the safety of all in managing the spread of COVID-19. It will not be a typical school day; this is an opportunity for pupils to check-in and catch-up with their teachers to prepare for September. There will be small cohorts of children in one classroom with one teacher during their time in the school building. No parent will be reprimanded for not sending their child into school. Cllr Jago advised that the Early Year Settings in Bedlinog and Trelewis are currently struggling financially, and that she is working with them to identify any grants that are available to support them. The Cabinet at MTCBC held a test 'Microsoft Teams' meeting last week to identify any issues with running Council meetings virtually going forward. A meeting of the Police and Crime Commission was used as a test for the local authority to learn from running virtual, public meetings. Most Council meetings will be held virtually for some time to come. The LA is managing high call volumes at the moment via their Call Centre and Lifeline services – the calls are mostly requirements from residents within the County Borough that are currently shielding. 1140 food parcels are being delivered to those on the shielding list. Cllr Jago is arranging food parcels for any resident in Bedlinog and Trelewis who has not received a shielding letter but is shielding because they believe they need to. There has been a change to the guidance in respect of care homes from Public Health Wales – care homes will no longer take any residents unless they have been free from COVID for 28 days. From 15th June, there will be weekly testing of staff who work in care homes to help monitor the spread of the disease. The approach of MTCBC is to work towards the 'new normal' – we are not in the recovery stage yet and medical advice is that we are in this position for the long haul. Social Services will look to start re-opening some of the day services in consultation with the families that use them. Ty Cwm has opened on a trial basis – numbers of service users will be limited, and staff will clean the unit before and

		after use. Temperatures of service users will be monitored, and families are providing their own transport. Neighbourhood Services are continuing to experience high volumes of recycling – the current levels are more than what they experience at Christmas periods. Car parking of vehicles is an issue and residents are being asked to park sensibly to allow the recycling lorries to access streets. Cllr Jago attended the meeting for the Crime and Commissioners Panel – in terms of figures in relation to South Wales Police staff, 16 officers are currently shielding and between 23rd March – 18th May, SWP issued 229 sanctions for breaches of COVID restrictions. Fines totalled 179 and there were 50 arrests for breaches. There have been 245 members of staff within the Police force tested for COVID and 37 were positive. One area of concern raised was that in April 2020, there were 54% fewer crimes against children reported compared with April 2019 because children are being unseen by teachers and other practitioners during the pandemic. SWP want the message out there that any safeguarding concerns must be reported. Cllr Jago referred to two areas of concern – the first being transport. There have been lots of complaints from residents in Bedlinog regarding the bus service – in April the service was reduced to a two-hourly bus as a result of the pandemic, and from 1st June, only a maximum of 11 people can be on a bus in order to maintain social distancing. This is a problem for Bedlinog residents as the bus is often ‘full’ and is driving past them as they wait at bus stops. As a rural area, residents are not in walking distance of work and supermarkets and they have no access to train links. Cllr Jago has written to Stagecoach and Dawn Bowden MS. Cllr Searl proposed that the Community Council should also write to our MS, Stagecoach and Gerald Jones MP to express concern. This was seconded by Cllr Jago and Council resolve to proceed with the letters of concern/complaint. The second area of concern that Cllr Jago raised was in relation to rats – many residents of Bedlinog and Trelewis are complaining about rats in their gardens, and some even in their properties. MTCBC are not currently providing a pest control service. Cllr Jago proposed that the Community Council could engage with a private pest control company and cover the cost of the first visit to residents (up to a maximum of £50) to carry out the investigatory work and advise residents what treatment may be required and how to reduce the risk of a re-occurrence. Cllr Searl seconded the proposal and Council resolved to proceed. County Cllr Malcolm Colbran was contacted prior to the meeting and asked to provide a Councillors Report but no response has been received. ACTION: RJ to draft letters to Stagecoach, Dawn Bowden MS and Gerald Jones MP. ACTION: RJ to engage with Pest Control company to offer
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		service to residents. ACTION: RJ to send date of next meeting to Cllr Malcolm Colran and request Councillors Report.
7	Planning Applications	Council considered the following Planning Applications: P/20/0108 and P/20/0110 Council resolved that they had no objections to both applications. ACTION: RJ to inform MTCBC Planning Department of Council's decision on both planning applications.
8	Correspondence	The Independent Renumeration Panel for Wales Report in relation to the reimbursement of cost of care has been shared with Cllrs. Information about a Welsh Government Grant in relation to creating places for nature in communities has been shared with Cllrs. RJ has a Microsoft Teams meeting 12-06-2020 about the grant application process and will update Cllrs following the meeting.
9	Cases	Cllr Jago stated that she had received complaints of dog fouling near Trelewis Community Centre, also there were 17 dog-mess bags found thrown in the grass in Garth Terrace. Cllr Jago proposed that the Community Council purchase two dog waste bins for these areas, this was seconded by Cllr Searl and Council resolved to go ahead with the purchase. RJ advised that the cost is approx. £120 per bin. Cllr Jago stated that elderly residents receiving the food packages had requested more fresh fruit and vegetables. Cllr Jago asked if the Community Council would fund a small amount of produce to add to the food share scheme at a cost of £50 per week. Cllr Frayne proposed that we proceed and review it on a monthly basis, Cllr Searl seconded this, and Council resolved to proceed. Cllr Jago stated that there was a lot of pasta and rice left over from donations from Morrisons in Ebbw Vale. Bedlinog RFC have agreed to allow volunteers to use their kitchen to prepare meals for residents that are shielding. Six volunteers will need to complete Food Hygiene training at a cost of £50 per person – Cllr Jago proposed that the Community Council cover the cost of the training and this was seconded by Cllr Preston. Council resolved to proceed with funding the cost of training. Cllr Preston raised an issue in regard to Ty'r ywen Farm, Bedlinog – there has been an ongoing dispute regarding a right of way and there are currently electric gates in place that are preventing the right of way. Cllr Preston asked if enquiries could be made to MTCBC about this and for RJ to update at the next Council meeting.

		ACTION: RJ to arrange purchase of dog waste bins and arrange installation and collections with MTCBC. ACTION: RJ to contact Rights of Way at MTCBC re query about Ty 'ywen Farm.
10	Internal Audit Report	The Internal Audit Report has been received and several recommendations made. RJ has drafted an Action Plan and presented this to Council. There was a query around a recommendation in respect of payroll controls – Cllr Searl suggested that RJ respond to the Internal Auditor and request further guidance on how this recommendation can be implemented ref. 7.6.1. Council accepted all other recommendations. ACTION: RJ to query recommendation ref. 7.6.1 with the Internal Auditor.
11	External Audit - Annual Governance Statement	RJ presented the Annual Return to Council and asked Cllrs if they had any questions. No questions were proposed, and Council resolved to approve the annual return. RJ advised Council that the NOTICE of Appointment of Electors' Rights has been published on our website and social media channels. Annual accounts will be available for viewing from 1st-28th July. ACTION: RJ to submit Annual Return to External Auditor.
12	COVID-19 Response	RJ updated Council that Western Power have awarded the Community Council with a 5k grant and Community Foundation Wales have also awarded a 5k grant – this means that the Community Council will be able to continue supporting the residents of Bedlinog and Trelewis with the Hardship Fund on an on-going basis. The Community Council has made 29 Hardship Fund payments to date. The Community Council continues to fund the food share scheme for food packages to be made available to residents within our community. Cllr Jago advised that to date, 226 food parcels had been delivered to residents. Cllr Jago wanted it put on record that she is grateful to the volunteers that have given their time and put themselves at risk to help others.
13	Date of Next Meeting	The next Council meeting will be held virtually, Monday 13th July 2020, 6.15pm.