

Minutes of the Grovesend & Waungron Community Council Meeting held on

Tuesday, 5th March, 2013

Present:

Mr. J.H. John, Chairman

Mr. M. Jones

Mr. W.B. Davies

Mr. B. Williams

Mrs. S. Morgan

Mr. W.D. Merriman

Mrs. C. Knox

Mr. H. Bates

Mr. L. Jones

Mrs. T. Rees

Councillor Mrs. J. Curtice

Councillor D. Cole

Mr. J.I. Burge (Secretary)

2 members of the public present

1699. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. A. Hamilton.

1700. Disclosures of personal interest.

None.

1701. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February, 2013.

Approved.

1702. Matters arising from the minutes.

None.

1703. Local Members Report.

Councillor D. Cole and Councillor Mrs. J. Curtice update Members on the following items:

i) The PCSO from Gorseinon is looking into the parking difficulties on High Street.

Swansea Council are considering a new policy that will allow motorists to park on pavements in certain circumstances, subject to an assessment for safety. An offence of parking on a pavement is only committed if the vehicle obstructs;

ii) The budget at Swansea had now been finalised with council tax being capped at 3.7%. Individual Members have had their environmental monies increased to £3000 per Councillor per year;

iii) A restructure was being undertaken of senior management with several Directors and Heads of Service leaving and some services merging with one another to reduce costs.

1704. Ten-minute Public Questions.

None.

1705. Gypsy/Travellers Consultation.

The Chairman informed Members that there was a tremendous attendance at the recent public meeting in Gorseinon with an estimated 500 people present. Demand to attend was so high that the venue had to be changed at the last minute to the Brighton Road Club. A second meeting is required as not everyone could get into the room to hear what was being said.

Members were informed that a residence committee had been formed and that a demonstration/march was being planned through Gorseinon for Sunday, 17th March from 3.00pm at Somerfield car park.

The Secretary circulated to Members the grounds and reasons for objection that Gorseinon Town Council were due to consider at their meeting the following evening.

Resolved: That following a discussion in regards to both sites at Gorseinon, Members unanimously agreed to object to both sites as part of the consultation exercise for the following reasons:

Site 6 (A9 S1) Rear of Parc Melyn Mynach (Gorseinon)

1. The site is currently defined as residential allocation (HC1-102) and greenbelt (EV24) in the authority's own Unitary Development Plan and is proposed for that use in the emerging Local Development Plan. The development of the site would result in the loss of part of the housing land bank for the authority;

2. The allocation of part of the LDP housing site would mean the loss of a significant capital receipt for the authority as it could not be allocated and then sold as future housing site;

3. Members of this Community Council understand that Gorseinon Town Council has submitted a candidate site proposal as part of the proposed LDP that, if agreed, would recognise the area as a designated woodland and public amenity site. Members also understand that village green status is currently being pursued in order to afford the site further protection. This Community Council fully supports both those proposals;

4. The identified short-listed site is significantly larger than what is needed for a traveller site;

5. Part of the allocated site lies within an area that has historically viewed as open space and is extensively used by the local community for recreation. The site has been used for activities such as an eisteddfod, parkland, fair and national cycling competition events,

and is seen by local people as an important open amenity space within the centre of the community;

6. Already in the area there are two allocated sites for showmen in Railway Terrace and Brighton Road. These sites have an extensive history of showmen families extending back four generations. It is fact that relationships between showmen families and gypsy/travellers families can be strained. Speaking at one of the public meetings recently, a member of the showmen's family publicly explained that it is not wise that the two groups be mixed in the same area;

7. The site has important historical links and the Parc Melyn Mynach has been protected for its historical, archaeological and community open space importance;

8. Parts of the site have been the subject of detailed botanical surveys which have shown the sitting of twenty three indicator botanical species present within the boundaries of the Melyn Mynach site. It is considered the site is eligible to be classed as a wildlife site of interest. The Community Council is led to understand that species present include cuckoo flower, glaucous sedge, spiked sedge, common knapweed, common centaury, southern marsh-orchid, carrot, common whitlowgrass, eyesbright, sheep's fescue, meadow cranes bill, yellow feather moss, perforate St. Johns wort, cats ear, meadow vetchling, oxeye daisy, fairy flax, common birds foot trefoil, black medick, bee orchid, parsnip, yellow rattle;

9. Parts of the site have been the subject of detailed biodiversity surveys by the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre. This organisation has shown the sighting of twenty-three priority and protected species with four of specific local concern species. It is considered that substantive nature conservation value can be demonstrated, and thus the site should be protected and not developed;

10. The now defunct Welsh Development Agency reclamation scheme claw-back provisions remains in force until disposal and capital receipts have been received. The development of the site for gypsy/travellers would require the refunding of the original grant to external bodies that supported the original mountain colliery site reclamation and redevelopment;

11. Given that the site is within the Gowerton waste water treatment works catchment; it would be a requirement to investigate whether the proposal would adversely affect the special area of conservation. It is envisaged that the Environment Agency and Countryside Council Wales would object to the development on the grounds of additional yield at the Gowerton treatment works;

12. The site boundary is within just 10 metres of existing established housing off Pontarddulais Road at the western end, and 100 metres from existing housing within the new Melyn Mynach site at the south-east end. The site would also adjoin the new housing allocation at Melyn Mynach in the UDP;

13. The site adjoins an existing international business Toyoda Gosei, which is the largest employer in the Gorseinon area. The allocation of the site for travellers is likely to prejudice future expansion and employment at the site. A recent meeting with the manager has confirmed the firm's opposition to the proposed gypsy site allocation;

14. The site and immediate surroundings are subject to adverse physical ground conditions that would deem it unsuitable as a housing site. It was on the advice of consultants for the removal of the mountain colliery burning tip that the western part of the site was allocated as open space and deemed not suitable for development for residential uses;

15. Development of the site would require significant investment in boundary and

landscaping works, all of which comes at public expense.

Site 9 (A9 S20) Cemetery (Gorseinon)

1. The site is currently defined as a cemetery allocation in the Council's own UDP. During the lifetime of the UDP/LDP it is likely that the capacity of the existing Kingsbridge cemetery is likely to be reached and the Penyrheol cemetery site would be required;

2. The identified short-listed site is significantly larger than what is needed for a traveller site;

3. The residents of Gorseinon/Penyrheol/Grovesend have been under the impression for many years that the site would one day be used as a cemetery. Residents living within such close proximity are content with such a use. To have to find an alternative site for the community after such a long period of understanding would be wholly unacceptable;

4. The site is the subject of a restrictive covenant between former Lliw Valley Council and British Coal stating that no building shall be erected on the site unless the building is suitably designed to minimize damage caused by subsidence. (Minute 1343b Housing Environment Committee 4th March, 1993);

5. The site is not flat, but is tiered with a gradual gradient and therefore unsuitable;

6. Given that the site is within the Gowerton waste water treatment works catchment; it would be a requirement to investigate whether the proposal would adversely affect the special area of conservation. It is envisaged that the Environment Agency and Countryside Council Wales would object to the development on the grounds of additional yield at the Gowerton treatment works;

7. The site boundary is within just 30 metres of existing established housing off Pontarddulais Road at the western end, and directly opposite the new housing allocation at Melyn Mynach in the UDP;

8. The site adjoins an existing international business Toyoda Gosei, which is the largest employer in the Gorseinon area. The allocation of the site for travellers is likely to prejudice future expansion and employment at the site. A recent meeting with the manager has confirmed the firm's opposition to the proposed gypsy site allocation;

9. Already in the area there are two allocated sites for showmen in Railway Terrace and Brighton Road. These sites have an extensive history of showmen families extending back four generations. It is fact that relationships between showmen families and gypsy/travellers can be strained. Speaking at one of the public meetings recently, a member of the showmen's family publicly explained that it is not wise that the two groups be mixed in the same area;

10. The now defunct Welsh Development Agency reclamation scheme claw-back provisions remains in force until disposal and capital receipts have been received. The development of the site for gypsy/travellers would require the refunding of the original grant to external bodies that supported the original mountain colliery site reclamation and redevelopment;

11. If the traveller/gypsy site is deemed as "housing" in land use terms, the site lies outside of the settlement boundary, in an area not allocated or being considered for future housing use;

12. The site and immediate surroundings are subject to adverse physical ground

conditions that deem it unsuitable as a housing site.

1706. Planning Applications – Mrs. S. Morgan.

None.

1707. Application for financial assistance from Cardiff Institute for the Blind/Swansea Branch.

Members discussed a letter requesting financial assistance from the Cardiff Institute for the Blind/Swansea Branch.

Resolved: To note the letter.

1708. Secretary's Report.

The Secretary reported on the following items:

i) He circulated a thank you card received from the children of Mount Pleasant for funding their recent trip to the pantomime;

ii) He had received notice from Swansea Council Planning Section that the application for solar panels at Dolgoed Farm and the application for houses at 118 Coalbrook Road had both been approved;

iii) A planning application had been submitted to Gorseinon Town Council for an unmanned petrol station at ASDA;

iv) A copy of the revised City & County of Swansea/Community Council's Charter was circulated to all Members for discussion. The Secretary informed Members that a task group made up of Swansea and Community Council representatives had met several times over the past few months to amend and update the Charter following its introduction a year ago. Members were reminded that the Community Council has not signed up to the Charter to date.

Resolved: To sign up to the Charter in the knowledge that it had no legal status and that the Community Council could always withdraw from it at any time.

v) Mrs. S. Morgan had requested that the Secretary enquired with Swansea Council regarding the costs involved in purchasing hanging baskets/lamppost baskets. Swansea Council Parks Department had advised that hanging baskets cost £62.85 each and lamppost baskets cost £78.22 each. This cost included delivery and watering throughout the summer period.

Resolved: That following a discussion it was agreed to purchase two lamppost baskets to be displayed around the leg posts of the Grovesend sign entering from the Gorseinon direction.

1709. Election of Chairperson for 2013/14.

One nomination for the position of Chairperson was received from Mrs. C. Knox.

Resolved: That Mrs. C. Knox be elected as Chair for 2013/14.

1710. Election of Vice-Chairperson for 2013/14.

One nomination for the position of Vice-Chairperson was received from

Mr. B. Williams.

Resolved: That Mr. B. Williams be elected as Vice-Chair for 2013/14.

1711. Any Other Urgent Business at the discretion of the Chair.

i) Mr. B. Williams informed Members that the pavement entering Waungron on the right-hand side had narrowed to a point that it had now become extremely dangerous for pedestrians to walk along. It was mentioned that workmen had started to clear the length of pavement last summer, however, left without finishing the whole area. Councillor Mrs. J. Curtice responded by saying that she would take the issue up with Swansea Council.

ii) Mrs. C. Knox informed Members that a substantial amount of hardcore had been laid in the field at the junction of Allt-Y-Graban Road. It appears that a road is being laid into the field.

Resolved: That the Secretary will report this to the Planning Enforcement Section at Swansea Council and to the Environment Agency.