

MINUTES, 12th October, 2021

RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Council: **Chair** - Steve Campbell-Kelly (SCK), **Vice-Chair** - Ian Button (IB), Tom Higgs (TH), Jeff Higgins (JH), Nicola Rees (NR), Sally Thomas (ST) and Steve Walmsley (SW).

Remote Council Meeting, carried out by video conferencing on the internet due to restrictions on meetings caused by Coronavirus Regulations.

1. **Attendance:** SC-K, JH, TH, NR and SW

Residents: 1

Meeting commenced at 7.08pm.

2. **Apologies:** IB and ST

3. **Declaration of Interest:** None.

4. **Previous Minutes:** accepted as a true record. Proposed SW, seconded SC-K. **Approved unanimously**

5. **Matters arising:** Item 6(v) NT Response to Ragwort and Thistles. Clerk reported verbal reply from NT Ranger, Mark Hipkin. He is not prepared to eradicate Ragwort as it provides habitat for Cinnabar moth and other pollinators. Clerk had asked if community could organise activity, similar to beach cleans, to help clear it. NT have cleared it from meadows where hay is being produced, but not responsible for Common Land on cliffs. This would include the area of Mewslade Valley where there had been a huge increase in plants. TH said that he spot sprays with broad-leaved weed killer if it appears on his land. No resolution was proposed.

Item 6(vi) Newsletter 2021. Clerk reported positive conversation with a Rhossili resident who had volunteered to work alongside Clerk to produce this year's version.

6. **Chairman's Items:**

(i) Support for Pilgrimage Way in Gower Churches. Clerk gave a summary of proposals by Anglican community about setting up a Pilgrimage Way, connecting all the Churches and Chapels. They are making an application for funding assistance from the RDP, and requested a letter of support from RCC. SC-K proposed positive response, seconded by JH. **Approved unanimously.**

(ii) Surface Drainage Issues in the Village: SC-K and Clerk reported several instances of excess water damage caused to homes and structures, following recent heavy rain. It appeared that the drainage system had failed in various places across the villages. On the corner of The Green, the short-cut trackway, already made hazardous to a vehicle from previous rainfall, was more deeply incised and eroded. The neighbouring retaining wall on the adjacent property had also been undermined to a depth of two to three inches, possibly making it unstable. SC-K to approach Penrice Estate to see if permission would be forthcoming to place a drain and pipe down the length of the track with soil and gravel over, with turf on the top. The surface water needs to be channelled away. Clerk reported other residents who had dealt with water ingress through doors into their house or garage. SW proposed a letter be sent to Highways, asking that all the drains, gullies and grilles be flushed and cleared of debris and silt. SC-K asked resident about any problems that had been in Pitton valley. He reported that work done in nearby farm by TH had helped to mitigate effects of torrential rain, but there had still been a bit of ingress of floodwater into a building. He said he was grateful to TH for carrying out the work. The resident said that there was an old soak-away at the top of Pitton Hill, which his family had kept clear when they owned the nearby field. He had contacted Highways three or four times in the past to have this cleared out as there was a danger in winter that the excess water can freeze in a thick layer across the road. TH proposed that Penrice Estate be approached in the first instance to see the position regarding filling in the trackway beside The Green and get agreement before proceeding to any restorative works. SC-K agreed. Clerk to write to Highways about the rest.

(iii) CC Self-evaluation Toolkit: Clerk gave a brief summary of the Toolkit and how it will enable each Town or Community Council to carry out an evaluation of how they are performing. This is a new project and the Welsh Government is looking for volunteer councils to join the project to evaluate its effectiveness. Clerk recommended it to RCC, as it may help any new Community Council to set up in the right direction after the elections in May 2022. SW proposed putting RCC forward. SC-K seconded. **Approved unanimously.** Clerk to sign up.

(iv) Minutes of AGM 2021: SC-K asked if all Councillors present at the meeting had read the Minutes. SC-K proposed acceptance, SW seconded. **Approved unanimously**

7. **Highways:**

- a. **Re-surfacing of road** - Why the re-surfacing work of the road stopped half-way through the village was questioned. Clerk reported that there was still no response to the question, to date. Clerk to write again.

8. **Footpaths and Rights of Way:**

- a. Bridge across Paviland footpath almost totally defunct. Report to Steve Parry that it is in a dangerous state. TH reported that the stile on a much-used footpath from Pitton Cross through into his fields is broken and visitors are climbing over the fence. Clerk to write to Steve Parry.

9. **Planning:**

- a. **2021/2535/FUL – Field in Pitton:** Retrospective application to widen gateways. Applicant present during discussion. Planning Statement in application written by applicant, not by CCS Planning Officers. After study of available details (they were not all accessible on website) and some discussion SC-K asked for a proposal. TH proposed “No comment”. SC-K said he felt it would be better, if retrospective permission was granted, to have the gates set back off the road, allowing for machinery to leave the highway before stopping to open the gates. SW commented that it was always better to apply for permission before the work was carried out, and all Councillors agreed. Seconded by JH. **Approved unanimously.** Clerk instructed to so comment.

10. **Finance:**

- (i) RFO gave a report of financial position [Balance stands at £3510.28] He gave details of each entry – all Councillors had copies of the financial position.
- (ii) Because there had been no meeting in August, RFO had paid invoice for £36.00, the cost of hosting the Support Group web-site. SC-K proposed accepting retrospective permission, seconded by JH. **Approved unanimously.**
- (iii) RFO also reported that the Clerk’s wages and Tax had been paid for the period July to September 2021. Proposed permission by SW, seconded by SC-K. **Approved unanimously.**
- (iv) SW reported that request for financial assistance had been received from St. Mary’s Church and he proposed payment. **Approved unanimously**
- (v) RFO went through budget allocations and progress in expenditure. Question was raised concerning the noticeboard to be placed in the bus shelter in Middleton as many people use the shelter for distribution of other things. After discussion about possibly moving the board from outside the Village Hall and re-siting it in the bus shelter an alternative was suggested, to place a white sheet of metal instead, like a magnetic whiteboard, so notices could be fixed using magnets, without the need for a door. SW to make enquiries and report back to next meeting.

11. **Clerk’s Item:**

Clerk reported a conversation with a new resident to the area, who revealed that she was a fully qualified paramedic and had volunteered her services to the Welsh Ambulance Service. The reply from the WAS said that they weren’t recruiting in this area and turned down her offer to carry out duties for free. Other Councillors were aware of her qualifications and the discussion then moved to the existence of the “new” First Responder Vehicle that local communities had purchased and equipped, but was not used. It is understood that this vehicle is still at Reynoldston Fire Station but unable to be used, but no-one on RCC is sure what the reason for this is. JH proposed that Clerk write to WAS to request reasons why the vehicle is not allowed to be used and why WAS no longer call out the Community First Responders in our area.

12. **AOB: HM The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Beacon**

Very many residents have said they want to join the celebrations across the country by lighting a beacon in Rhossili. In view of previous years, when the request to the National Trust for permission to erect and light a beacon on The Beacon on Rhossili Down has been denied, it was felt that there is no point in asking again. TH offered a facility to erect and light a beacon in one of the fields close to Thurba Head. This offer was received with gratitude. Clerk to send more details to TH.

The Virtual Meeting closed at 20.16pm

Date of next Meeting: 9th November 2021

Residents who wish to “attend” the virtual meeting via Zoom should contact the Clerk by phone or email and you will be given the password.