

Minutes of Rhossili Community Council

Rhossili Village Hall and via Zoom

7:15pm Tuesday, 10th September 2024

Present:

Chair: Ian Button (IB)

Members: Gill Boulding (GB) – Vice Chair. Councillors: Helen Beynon (HB), Maggie Kirk (MK) (Zoom), Sue Muddeman (SM) and Lesley-Anne Nolan (LAN)

Clerk: Charlotte Nolan (Acting)

RFO: Francis Morgan (FM) (Zoom)

Apologies: Tom Higgs (TH)

Public Attendees: 1 resident in person, 2 over zoom

Opening remarks

The Chair welcomed new Councillor Helen Beynon to the Council.

The Chair acknowledged the death of Reginald Rees from Crofty, whose body was recovered from his car close to the base of the Rhossili cliffs on 18th August 2024. On behalf of the Rhossili Community Council the Chair expressed sympathies for the friends and family of Mr Rees and wished to thank the Rhossili Coastguards for all their efforts in the search and recovery of Mr Rees.

2. Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures were given.

3. Public Questions

One from resident asking for an update on the Rhossili cliffs livestock grazing – to be covered later in the agenda.

4. Minutes

4.1. **Resolved** that the Minutes of the RCC meeting on 24th July 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4.2. Given minutes for meetings would not be approved until the following meeting, the "Minutes in 2 Minutes" videos would be renamed as "Meetings in Minutes" and provide a high-level update of the meeting. It was **resolved** that TH would take the lead for future videos; however, GB would complete the video for September 2024 and liaise with the Clerk to finalise the script.

5. Priorities for 2024/2025

5.1. Renovation of Middleton Bus Shelter – LAN, TH, SM:

- The bus shelter will be thoroughly cleaned on the inside and out. Depending on how the inside of the shelter looks after the cleaning the interior may be painted in limewash or masonry paint, however the outside would be left unpainted.
- After some investigation into cladding the shelter in Welsh stone, this idea has been discarded due to the cost and the suitability of the underlying structure.
- The bench has been cleaned and treated with wood preservative and the plaque has been polished.
- Local artist Helen Sinclair has offered to paint a mural inside the bus shelter, with the subject in keeping with the status of the shelter as a war memorial – she will suggest some ideas. The RCC would help cover the costs of any materials used.
- A plaque will be placed in the shelter with more information about Major Lee, to whom the bench is dedicated to.
- Daffodil bulbs will be planted around the shelter.
- Cllrs Richard Lewis and Francesca O'Brian are arranging for more electrical boxes to be painted throughout Gower. LAN has asked for Middleton to be included in their plan and is expecting to hear back shortly.
- A book swap would be put back into the bus shelter, with a suitable waterproof solution to be investigated.

5.1.1 **Resolved** the mural painting and covering the costs of any materials used.

5.2. Enhancement of Village Signs – IB

- Limiting the scope of the project to updating the signs across the Ward with a classic pressed metal sign for Middleton, Pitton, and Pitton Cross.
- The aim is to achieve consistency across the community as the signs are all different sizes, fonts and some include the Swansea Council sign, and some don't.
- Many of the signs are damaged or have graffiti on them. Many require maintenance as they aren't straight.
- Gower Society have provided feedback to Swansea Council in the past regarding the signs. The Chair has reached out to the Gower Society to ask for their assistance.

There was a wider discussion regarding the proposal and concerns were raised regarding the scope. When the project was originally spoken about the aim was to try to incorporate some planting with the signs to align with the ecodiversity strategy and also to help with speed control within the village.

5.2.1 **Resolved** to form a working group to discuss this topic further.

5.3. Litter Picking Station – LAN

- This is an initiative with Keep Wales Tidy, who have litter picking stations all over Wales. There isn't another litter picking station in Gower so Keep Wales Tidy are very keen to have one in Rhossili.
- This is for groups who want to get together to do a litter pick. They are required to register online and complete the required paperwork with Keep Wales Tidy.
- Keep Wales Tidy are responsible ensuring those loaning the equipment have completed all relevant Health and Safety paperwork and also coordinating the pickup of the collected rubbish with Swansea Council.

- A member of the community, LAN, would be the Hub Manager, and a small team of volunteers would be needed to ensure someone can meet the visitors as the allocated time and give them the equipment.
- The Rhossili Village Hall have agreed for the lockable container to be placed between the two external struts on the outside of the hall.
- Keep Wales Tidy and the Welsh Government will cover all the costs of the box, there would be no cost to the community. All the equipment is insured, and Rhossili has no liability if equipment is not returned or broken.
- If a group wants to collect litter on National Trust land, then the National Trust will help with disposing of litter so long as they are aware of when this is taking place.

5.3.1 **Action** – LAN to identify volunteers to be part of the team to meet visitors.

5.4. Benches on Rhossili cliffs – GB:

- GB is awaiting a response from the National Trust regarding placing a community funding bench on the Rhossili Cliffs.
- This bench would be to encourage conversation, similar to “friendship benches” and other initiatives to support mental health and suicide prevention.
- We have received a quote for an oak bench with arms, and including installation of approximately £900-1000.
- The National Trust is now reviewing their donor list for benches and the sites of these. If they agree to a bench on the cliffs, we may have to use their suppliers.

5.4.1 **Action** – Clerk to contact Penrice estate about potential alternative placement on the village green.

5.5. Wildlife boxes – MK, SM:

- Host 1 – 3 workshops for the community on the weekend to build their own nature boxes. All sawing would be done off site, but components would be put together during the workshop.
- Attendees would also hear a talk regarding biodiversity in the local area, and more information on where to place their nature boxes and the benefit this has to the local environment.
- This initiative would help bring the community together, educate them in local biodiversity and help achieve our biodiversity targets.
- There would be a small fee for attendance to cover materials.

5.5.1 **Resolved** to hold one community workshop in January 2024.

6. Administration

6.1. Annual Magazine – A discussion took place regarding the approach and content of the Annual Magazine. It was **resolved** to convene a working group to help project manage the magazine and organise content.

6.1.1 **Action** - IB to convene working group to outline approach to Annual magazine to include MK and SM.

6.1.2 **Action** - IB to request three quotes for printing of Annual magazine.

6.1.3 **Resolved** one copy per each residence in the community to be published.

6.1.4 **Resolved** all content would be submitted by 22 November 2024, with publication in the first week of December.

6.1.5 **Action** - Clerk to recirculate community map divided by each councillor for distribution of magazine. IB to move to Pitton Area, HB to look after Rhossili Village. LAN will look after SM's area as SM will be away.

6.2 **Action** - Clerk to circulate OVW training dates for councillors - councillors to confirm which dates they would like to attend.

7 Finance

7.1 Reimbursements and Payments:

7.1.1 **Resolved** the payment of £38.59 To Cllr Maggie Kirk for reimbursement of Facebook plug in via Smash Balloon by approved.

7.1.2 More information is required regarding the video conferencing microphone set up before decision can be made regarding refund.

Action - Clerk to email IB, GB, MK and RFO.

7.2 The finance report for July and August 2024 be **received and noted**. **Action** – the 2024//2025 budget is to be reviewed at the October or November meeting.

7.3 The update on the Audit that there are still outstanding queries on the invoices received from Audit Wales be **received and noted**.

7.4 **Resolved** that the Chairman, Clerk and RFO are approved to act on behalf of the RCC in the following:

7.4.1 Opening a new council bank account with Lloyds Bank,

7.4.2 Transferring any funds from the existing HSBC bank account over to the new account, and

7.4.3 Subsequently closing the HSBC bank account.

8 Environment & Land Management

8.1 The RCC **received and noted** the response from Chris Smith of the National Trust in regards to the removal of the ragwort on the cliffs from Mewslade Valley to Rhossili Bay.

- The National Trust team and their volunteers have put in over 320 hours over the summer removing ragwort from the cliffs surrounding Rhossili.
- Weather conditions plus the decrease of insects to control plant growth have contributed to it being a good year for ragwort growth.
- The plant has now gone to seed and any further removal may inadvertently cause the seed to spread further, therefore no further action will be taken till the new year.
- If any land owners are specifically concerned regarding ragwort seed spreading onto their land, they should contact Chris Smith at the National Trust.

8.1.1 **Action** – Clerk to make a note to contact the National Trust regarding their plan for ragwort control in March 2025.

GB gave an update that the British Horse Society was still looking to meet with the National Trust and the Commoners to discuss their concerns with the horses grazing on the Rhossili Cliffs. GB is waiting to hear from the BHS with next steps and will update the RCC with dates when they are received.

8.1.2 **Action** – A representative of the RCC will attend the BHS meeting as an observer to report back to residents.

8.2 Payment Terms have been received from the supplier with regards to grass cutting throughout the village. **Resolved** to accept the quote and payment terms (one invoice at the end of the calendar year) for grass cutting for 2024.

Action – a formal tender is required for the grass cutting for 2025.

8.3 An **update was received** from the National Trust

- National Trust are resetting for the end of the summer – taking down the temporary notices which were in place for the summer regarding the horses.
- This is because the wind has become more of an issue and is damaging the signs, and also, they become less effective if they are in place for too long.
- The additional car park is going to be closed off for the year, including taking down the bunting and ropes from the temporary fences and it will go back to being a field.
- The NT will be focusing on the benches along the cliffs as their next project.
- The NT have sent notices out to anyone with access to the cliff gate reminding them to lock that gate behind them given the recent incident of the car going over the cliff.

8.4 An **update was received** regarding footpaths and rights of way that all issues raised with the Clerk have been forwarded to the Footpaths Officer at Swansea Council.

Action – contact the footpaths officer with regard to the pathway down to Rhossili Bay where the footpath has eroded away.

9 Roads

9.1 A proposal was raised to petition the Highways Agency and Swansea Council to reduce the speed limit in certain parts of the village to 20mph, in particular:

- Upper and Lower Pitton Lane and Bunkers Hill
- School Lane
- The main road through the village prior to the bend before the village green.

A discussion took place amongst the council that potentially the speed limit should be reduced throughout the entire village.

9.1.1 **Resolved** to wait for the speed survey to be completed before revisiting the proposal.

9.2 An **update was received** that the Clerk had been in contact with Cllr Andrew Stevens regarding the speeding concerns in the village.

- Swansea Council's survey team would be visiting Rhossili in the next couple of weeks to carry out a risk assessment before placing monitoring tubes on site.
- If the site location is deemed unsuitable for the Council's in house survey team, then the surveys will have to be carried out by an external provider.
- If this is the case the RCC would have to pay for this provider. Swansea Council have asked if this is something the RCC are prepared to do.

9.2.1 **Action** - Clerk to clarify with Swansea Council the circumstances why their in-house team will not be able to complete the speed survey.

10 Planning

10.1 **Resolved** to defer "To review and approve the terms of reference for the Rhossili Community Council Planning Committee" to the October 2024 RCC meeting.

11 Communications

11.1 The RCC discussed the proposed contract for technical support of the RCC and Rhossili Hwb websites. The RFO advised that as the cost of the contract was significantly above the amount for competitive tender the council needed to be satisfied that due to the specialist services and knowledge provided by the current supplier it was inappropriate in this case to seek competitive tender.

It was noted, by the RCC, that the contractor had been providing support services ex gratia for a significant period, but that this could not continue and had led to delays in the support provided, that the cost was considered to be reasonable, and that, as the contractor hosted and had developed some of the software for the sites to be supported, it was not possible for other parties to provide the support services provided under the contract.

Resolved to approve the quote for technical support of Rhossili Hwb.

11.2 The proposed Communications Strategy was reviewed and discussed. It was emphasised that it was the responsibility of all Councillors to understand the points of the strategy and to assist in embedding it going forward.

Resolved to approve the proposed communications strategy and for it to be published on the RCC website.

12 Correspondence

12.1 Feedback from resident on emergency response times to be **received and noted**.

12.2 Email to Cllr Richard Lewis and Highways department asking for the Council to undertake the clearance of the kerbside and cut back protruding vegetation alongside the main road through Pitton and Rhossili **was noted**.

12.3 **Resolved** to decline the invitation to the One Voice Wales Conference for 2024.

12.4 **Action** – The Clerk will forward The Village Hall Community leaflet to members of the RCC for comment and returned to the Village Hall Trustees.

12.5 The minutes from the June meeting of the Swansea Local Nature Partnership was **received and noted**.

12.6 **Action** - Clerk to email the Boundary Commission to request updated timeline of response to consultation.

13 Public Comments

None made

The meeting ended at 9:30pm.

These minutes were approved at the RCC meeting on Tuesday, 8 October 2024