

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JUNE 2002 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Community Councillor C.R. Roberts - Chairman
Councillor C.P. Mann - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, H.A. Andrews, P.J. Bevan, M.H. Newman, N.E. Newnham, D.J. Potter,
H. Price, Mrs. J.A. Pritchard

Representing Community/Town Councils:

Aber Valley	-	J.E. Roberts, Mr J.S. Humphreys (Clerk)
Argoed	-	A.S. Williams, Mr D.R. Parry (Clerk)
Bargoed	-	
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	-	
Blackwood	-	J.B. Criddle
Caerphilly	-	Mrs M.J. Hallam, Mr M. Evans (Clerk)
Darran Valley	-	C.R. Roberts, Mrs P. Cooper (Clerk)
Gelligaer	-	Mrs A. Davies (Clerk)
Llanbradach	-	
Maesycwmmmer	-	Mrs J.H. Rao,
Nelson	-	Mrs B. Miles, Mr A. Hoskins (Clerk)
New Tredegar	-	E. White
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	-	Mrs A. Nash, Mr R.B. Williams (Clerk)
Rhymney	-	
Rudry	-	Mr J.L. Matthews (Clerk)

Together with:

A. Brown (Environmental Health Manager), N. Liversuch (Principal Planning Officer - Countryside Services), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, D. Bolter, Mrs A. Collins, Ms E.E. Forehead, I.G. Franklin, Mrs. M.E. Hughes and K.R. Snell, Community Councillors H.M. Farrant, Mrs M.R. Richards, Mrs J.R. Hanson, B. Miles, Mrs M. Betts, H. Williams and D.G. Hill and Mrs H. Harris, Mr W.G. Woodroffe, Mr I. Palmer Mr W.M. Thompson, Mr D. Cooper and Mr. W.T. Powell (Clerks of Bargoed, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen, Blackwood, Llanbradach, Maesycwmmmer and New Tredegar Community/Town Councils respectively).

1. **MR W. WOODROFFE - CLERK - BEDWAS TRETHOMAS AND MACHEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The Chairman referred to the impending retirement of Mr Woodroffe and Members made reference to his career with Mid Glamorgan County Council and paid tribute to the role that he has carried out on behalf of the community council and to his valuable contributions at the Liaison Sub-Committee. It was agreed to write to Mr Woodroffe accordingly.

2. **CHAIRMAN**

It was agreed that Councillor C.P. Mann be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

3. **VICE - CHAIRMAN**

It was agreed that Community Councillor C.R. Roberts be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

4. **GWENT POLICE - CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT I. JOHNSTON AND SERGEANT R. DAVIES**

The Members welcomed both Chief Superintendent Ian Johnston and Sergeant Robert Davies to the meeting.

The Chief Superintendent made a brief reference to the merger of C and E Divisions and indicated that Blackwood would become the new divisional headquarters. He indicated that links with groups such as community/town councils are integral to the way in which policing is carried out and that he was prepared to listen and respond to any suggestions.

He made reference to the recent law and order offensive which is centred on a team of specialist officers whose aim will be to tackle the growing problem of anti social behaviour. These Crime and Disorder Reduction Officers will work within each section of the police division. He stressed the importance of the community/partnership approach to this form of policing.

Discussion then ensued on the problems of off-road motorcycling and Mr N. Liversuch (Principal Planning Officer - Countryside Services) detailed the initiatives being progressed with Gwent Police, Forest Enterprise and local landowners to try to resolve this problem.

Members were please to note that the council is seeking to identify sites, which could be used legitimately by motorcycle clubs, and aims to publicise the fact that it is illegal to ride or drive off road without having the permission of the landowner. The locations of clubs that are able provide sites where motorcyclists can ride legitimately will also be publicised. Mr Liversuch confirmed that a meeting is to be held with local motorcycle clubs in the near future to enlist their cooperation in these initiatives.

The Chief Superintendent supported the initiatives and confirmed that the police are undertaking overt and covert operations at known trouble spots to enforce the law. He indicated that details will be provided for circulation.

It was suggested that an item be included in Newsline to highlight the problems being experienced and the initiatives being examined and giving details of contact numbers where members of the public can report offenders to enable the police to take appropriate action.

Specific reference was made to the indiscriminate parking of cars on the highway and the resultant traffic hazards being caused. One such area raised was in the vicinity of the new roundabout at Argoed. Sgt Davies indicated that there is a difference between abandoned vehicles and those parked indiscriminately. If the cars are abandoned it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure the vehicles are removed. However, if they are not classed as abandoned and are parking to create a traffic nuisance it becomes the responsibility of the Police. He reported that Officers of both bodies liaise and work together in such circumstances. Mr Brown requested specific details in order that the necessary action can be taken.

The parking of vehicles near road junctions was also raised and it was confirmed that if it is illegally parked it is a Police matter and the vehicle should be removed and the offenders prosecuted. During discussion on this item the question of parking on pavements was also raised. It was confirmed that if the vehicle is causing an unnecessary obstruction of the pavement that a fixed penalty ticket could be issued. Reference was made to an article that had appeared in the Western Mail indicating that if the vehicle is stationary no action could be taken and the Chief Superintendent requested a copy so that he could examine its content. He also asked for details of specific locations of such instances in order that they can be investigated.

The Chief Superintendent referred to criticisms levied in the past that telephones remain unanswered and that limited action is taken on non-urgent issues. He reported that the Crime and Disorder Officers have also been tasked to examine these sorts of issues to ensure that they do not occur in the future. He requested that when members report an incident they request that it is logged for future records.

Discussion ensued on byelaws in relation to the consumption of alcohol in public places and their subsequent enforcement. The Chief Superintendent indicated that a dedicated Licensing Officer, Mr. Norman Gifford, has been appointed who will concentrate on crime and disorder linked to alcohol. That Officer will work in close liaison with the local authority with a focus on prosecuting licensed premises caught selling alcohol to anyone underage and with community/town councils and other groups to seek ways of resolving the problem. It was noted that a licence to allow the sale of alcohol is granted by the Magistrates Court and it will be the role of the Licensing Officer to co-ordinate police evidence to present to the Court if necessary.

The use of CCTV in assisting in the detection crimes was discussed and it was requested that an article be placed in Newslines to advise the public of its uses in an attempt to deter would be offenders. Details were requested on the number of cameras, operatives and screens and details of any subsequent prosecutions from CCTV footage.

In his closing remarks the Chief Superintendent indicated that he would like to attend future meetings of the sub-committee to discuss policing issues and receive feedback generally and requested any further views and concerns on the merger of C and E Divisions.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Superintendent Johnston and Sargeant Davies for their attendance and for their responses to the variety of issues raised.

5. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2002 (minute nos. 1-8) (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

6. Abandoned Supermarket Trolleys (minute no 4)

Mr Brown reported that Tesco have now installed a fee reclaim system for their trolleys and Safeway has given verbal assurances of their intention to do likewise. The company is currently determining which system it will introduce.

With regards to the views of the Environment Agency, it was reported that it has no specific policy relating to abandoned supermarket trolleys but has indicated a willingness to assist in individual cases if necessary.

7. Progress on Schools Anti-Litter Campaign (minute no. 7)

Mr Brown made reference to the successful campaign carried out at a school in Bargoed and indicated that several fixed penalty notices (£25) had been issued. He reported that other schools would be targeted from September onwards.

It was requested that an article be placed in Newline to that effect.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the following items raised by the community/town councils .

8. Community Centre Funding

It was noted that due to other commitments, Mr P. Gomer was not able to be present to respond in person to a request for information in relation to the funding of community centres. It was reported verbally that all budgets are set on an annual basis and unfortunately budget savings have to be made. The community centres budget is not isolated from this process. At the Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee there were no decisions taken other than to request a more detailed report to the next meeting scheduled for 25th June 2002. There will be no recommendations within that report to reduce the community centres budget but members will be invited to make recommendations/comments on where they feel budget savings could be made.

Specific reference was made to the constitution which certain centres are finding difficult to operate. It was agreed to invite Mr Gomer to the next meeting to discuss the issue.

9. New Audit Arrangements

Following a request for assistance with new audit arrangements, it was noted that the Chief Auditor has indicated that in view of the new initiative and the difficulties in assessing the work for each of the sixteen community/town council he is unable to offer the services of his staff to undertake this function.

10. Measures To Prevent Animal Trespass

Members received an up to date report on the additional measures proposed to prevent the problems of straying animals in the county borough including a review of the charging arrangements which are to be presented to Cabinet for approval.

Mr Brown indicated that the council are already progressing some initiatives to attempt to bring the straying problem under control and although straying animals are a problem in various parts of the County Borough, the greatest concern is the Upper Rhymney Valley. The main problem in the communities is that the areas are surrounded by common land and grazing fields.

Certain measures have been taken to replace and improve fencing but vandalism (with breaches in fences and gates by owners, local people taking short cuts, motorcyclists and joy riders) has undermined the effectiveness of any repairs carried out. That along with farmers and owners who either deliberately allow animals to stray or not taking proper care of their stock are causing problems in the areas. It was noted that the council's Mobile CCTV Unit is being used in the area to attempt to gather evidence on vandalism

Concerns were expressed at the damage to properties and allotment gardens, highway safety and potential public health concerns from droppings, particularly in parks and on playing fields.

Mr Brown indicated that a publicity campaign is proposed to bring the problem to people's attention and a request will be made for information on culprits. Officers will continue to raise the issue at local community fora to determine the measures the local community wish to employ and how the Council can assist. Continued pressure will also be put on the National Assembly for Wales to improve the legal powers available to the local authority.

The sub-committee supported the recommendations in the report which will be presented to Cabinet on 25th June 2002.

11. **Funding Of Christmas Lighting**

The Chairman indicated that £30,000 has been made available for Christmas decorative lighting and requested that application forms be submitted by the end of September.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.