



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON WEDNESDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2004 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

Community Councillor C. Roberts – Vice Chairman (Presiding)

Councillors:

Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, C.P. Duggan, D.J. Potter, Mrs. D. Price, G.R. Price, Mrs. J.A. Pritchard

Councillor H.A. Andrews

Representing Community/Town Councils:

Aber Valley	-
Argoed	- Mr. D.R. Parry (Clerk)
Bargoed	- I. Hughes
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	- Mrs. G. Howell
Blackwood	-
Caerphilly	- Mrs. M.J. Hallam, Mr. M. Evans (Clerk)
Darran Valley	- C.R. Roberts, Mrs. P. Cooper (Clerk)
Gelligaer	- D. Roberts, Mrs. A. Davies (Clerk)
Llanbradach	- G. Brown, Mr. W.M. Thompson (Clerk)
Maesycwmmmer	- Mrs. J.H. Rao
Nelson	- Mr. A. Hoskins (Clerk)
New Tredegar	-
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	- Mrs. A. Nash, Mr. R.B. Williams (Clerk)
Rhymney	-
Rudry	-
Van	- Mrs. E. Macey

Together with:

A. Isaacs (Head of Corporate Finance), M. Rees-Williams (Highways Infrastructure Manager), S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer), H. Morgan (Principal Passenger Transport Officer), Gareth Evans (Community Transport Coordinator), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B.A. Barker, J. Bevan, D. Bolter, Mrs. A. Collins, K.M. Derrick, N.S. Dix, L. Gardiner, M.H. Newman, C.P. Mann and A.S. Williams, Community Councillors J.E. Roberts, Mrs. C. Osborne, M. Maguire, A. Candy and Mrs. P.I.

Francis, Mr. J.S. Humphreys, Mr. J. Dilworth, Mr. D. Allinson, Mr. I. Palmer, Mr. D. Cooper, Mr. J.L. Matthews and Mr. J. O'Brien (Clerks of Aber Valley, Argoed, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen, Blackwood, Maesycwmmwr, Rudry and Van Community/Town Councils respectively).

1. COMMUNITY COUNCILLOR MRS. P. FRANCES

The Chairman referred to the recent death of the husband of Mrs. Frances and it was requested that the sympathies of those present be forwarded to her and her family.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2004 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Anti Social Behaviour (minute no. 5)

Mr. S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer) confirmed that an Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator has now been appointed and that the Community Safety Wardens are currently undertaking training. It was anticipated that in the first instance they would concentrate in those areas identified as 'hot spots' (by the Police and complainants) before moving to other areas. He indicated that there would be a formal launch in order to ensure that the residents of the county borough are aware of the role that they will be performing and the actions they are permitted to take.

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS LIAISON COMMITTEE

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

4. Council Tax Revaluation 2005

Consideration was given to the report which provided information on the revaluation process and detailed the new valuation bands into which properties have been placed. Mr. A. Isaacs (Head of Corporate Finance) pointed out that all properties have been revalued and the changes will determine the level of council tax payable from April 2005 (based upon property values assessed in April 2003). He then indicated that the Council raises significant parts of its budget through collection of council tax and highlighted the financial implications of the proposed changes to both the county borough and community/town councils via their precept.

Members noted the details contained within the booklet produced by the Assembly providing an overview of the revaluation process, a Welsh Local Government Association briefing note and a statistical breakdown of band movements. Mr. A. Isaacs pointed out that the extent of change within Caerphilly is less than the national average (10.8% of houses in Caerphilly have been given a lower band compared to 8% nationally and that 25.6% of houses in Caerphilly have been given a higher band compared to 33% nationally). It was noted that this will significantly alter the tax base and that a higher tax base increases the yield from council tax and properties whose band is unchanged would see a reduction in the charges payable if the same amount of tax is raised. It is of course likely that more council tax will have to be raised to meet increasing costs and possibly lower revenue support grant. A reduction in council tax payable may therefore be limited to those households whose bands have been

reduced.

Mr. Isaac confirmed that the tax base would be set in December and that each community/town council would be advised of the respective tax base for its area.

5. Estimates/Budget Process

A query was raised as to whether, as in previous years, the community/town councils would be invited to put forward ideas for schemes to be included in the budget process. Mr. A. Isaacs reminded the representatives that the Council has faced huge challenges in setting previous years budgets and as the Council may be unable to address all of the essential requirements to maintain its existing service delivery, there would be no guarantee that any of the worthwhile projects submitted will be able to be accommodated with the budget process.

He suggested that rather than submit individual projects the community/town councils should concentrate more on the strategic direction that it would wish the county borough to follow.

6. Unauthorised Stationing/Selling of Cars on the Highway

In accordance with the decision taken at the last meeting, Mr. M. Rees-Williams (Highways Infrastructure Manager) was in attendance to detail actions being taken to prevent the unauthorised stationing/selling of cars on highways.

Reference was made to the report which detailed the actions taken by the county borough to combat the problem of unauthorised stationing/selling of cars on highways and Members noted that Officers are now able to tell the seller that the powers insist that the car is moved immediately and upon a phone call the cars are generally removed by their owners. These new powers supersede the previous policy of attaching a warning sticker and allowing twenty-four hours to move the vehicle.

Mr. M. Rees-Williams pointed out that an item appeared on the front page of the October issue of Newline pointing out that the Council is clamping down on persistent offenders who advertise cars for sale at the side of the road or on busy junctions. It points out that the policy now allows the vehicles to be towed away without prior notice if they are causing a hazard to passing motorists. They are then held by the Council until the owner pays all of the costs incurred. He indicated that two of the cars which had been removed in this way have not been recovered by their owners. As such, the vehicles will have to be disposed of by, and at a cost to, the county borough.

Reference was also made to the roadworthiness of the vehicle on display and it was pointed out that it is an offence to sell a vehicle in such a condition. Mr. S. Delahaye indicated that his Officers work in close liaison with those in the Highways Department and pointed out that on occasions patterns are identified which indicates that commercial trading is taking place. It is a criminal offence to advertise in this way unless it has been declared as trading.

Clarification was sought as to the definition of 'obstruction' and 'dangerous' and Mr. M. Rees-Williams indicated that each case would be considered by the Inspector and appropriate action taken (although areas identified as hot spots are being targeted). He reiterated that if a member of the public observes a vehicle that they consider is causing a problem they should contact the Highway Customer Care Line (01495 - 235323) which will require an inspector to carry out an inspection and take the necessary action. In closing, he requested details of the specific locations as reported during the course of the meeting in order that they can be investigated accordingly.

7. Local Bus Services In The County Borough

In accordance with the decision taken at the last meeting, Messrs. H. Morgan (Principal Passenger Transport Officer) and G. Evans (Community Transport Coordinator) attended the meeting to respond to issues which had been raised in relation to local bus services within the county borough.

Members were pleased to note that the service to Graig- y- Rhacca is to be reinstated and that the vehicles would carry CCTV.

General discussions then ensued on the pilot community transport scheme for the Upper Rhymney Valley and Mr. Evans highlighted his role (as recently appointed Community Transport Co-ordinator) to oversee the project and identify opportunities for improved mobility/accessibility for residents. If the pilot is successful, similar projects are envisaged throughout the county borough to compliment public transport services and provide a more comprehensive transport network for residents. He indicated that he would also have the responsibility for co-ordinating between conventional and community based transport schemes to achieve new and innovative solutions. Consultation will begin shortly with community based groups to identify demands and methods of operation. A query was raised as to whether this transport would be provided free of charge. It was pointed out that it would not be free initially but that the Assembly are still deliberating on these schemes and, as such, funding streams are still under discussions.

Reference was made to the feasibility of the introduction of a Sunday morning bus service. Mr. H. Morgan indicated that whilst the Council provides/complements bus services that operators cannot provide commercially this would require a considerable additional revenue resource which, in view of other budgetary commitments, the Council would not be in the position to allocate. He indicated however, that it may be something that the community transport scheme could consider as it progresses.

Members noted and welcomed the proposed establishment of a Community Transport Forum and were advised that it would be launched with links to the local community.

8. Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places

Consideration was given to the report which provided information on existing 'alcohol free zones' within the county borough and outlined new legislation which could extend those areas and provide the police with greater powers.

Mr. S. Delahaye (Chief Trading Standards Officer) highlighted the issues contained within the report and referred to the number of requests received that areas be included within the existing byelaw. It was noted that the mechanism for designating 'alcohol free zones' has been changed by new legislation and greater enforcement powers have been given to the Police. Mr. S. Delahaye then detailed the provisions both of the current byelaw and the adoptive power available under new legislation. He indicated that the Council will be shortly considering whether the current byelaw provisions should be replaced by the provisions of the new legislation and if agreed, consultation will then take place on designating new public areas as 'alcohol free zones'.

Following queries on the implementation of the by law, Mr. Delahaye confirmed that the current byelaw prohibits the consumption of alcoholic liquor by any person in a designated place (which displays signs to that effect). If after being requested to stop by a Police Officer the person complies no action is required. Any person failing to stop drinking after a Police Officer requests that he/she does so commits an offence which is punishable by a fine up to level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500). The byelaw does not give the Police Officer powers of arrest or power to confiscate the alcohol.

Mr. S. Delahaye confirmed that at present there are one hundred fixed cameras in thirteen communities and there are more scheduled to come on line in the near future. He indicated that the two mobile units are used on a daily basis at locations identified by both the Police and the public as problem areas. Operatives record and correlate information and liaise with the Police in the event that anything untoward is seen to be occurring.

Reference was made to the schedule of areas covered by the 1998 byelaw prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in designated places (and the additional areas suggested by the Police for consideration in any new designated public areas) and it was felt that certain areas (i.e. Nelson, Llanbradach, Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen and Penyrheol) had been omitted. Mr. Delahaye indicated that he would clarify the extent of the list approved at that time. He reiterated that should the Council agree that the current byelaw provisions should be replaced by the provisions of the new legislation, extensive consultation would be undertaken and the community/town councils would have the opportunity to offer their suggestions at that time.

9. Christmas Decorative Lighting

It was reported that all applications have now been considered and notification of the award of grant would be sent out over the next few weeks.

10. Licensing Act 2003 - Draft Policy Statement

Members were advised that a seminar to outline the requirements of the Act (such as retail sale of alcohol, supply of alcohol in a club, provision of regulated entertainment and the provision of late night refreshments) and to consult on the draft policy statement had been scheduled to take place at the Council Offices, Tredomen on Wednesday 11th November 2004 at 7pm. A open invitation was extended to all Clerks and Community/Town Councillors.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

CHAIRMAN