

BURTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the monthly meeting held in the Jubilee Hall, Houghton, and also online via the Zoom videoconferencing platform, on Wednesday 7th December 2022, 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Robin Howells (Chairman), John Evans, Fiona Hart, Nia Phillips, Scott Sinclair, Vicky White, Derek Jones, Peter Griffiths, John Mathias; Peter Horton (Clerk).
Apologies: C'llrs Paddy McNamara, Laurence Price; Danny Young (County Councillor)

Declarations of known interests

None.

Opportunity for public representation on tabled agenda items

No members of the public were present.

Approval of minutes of the November 2022 monthly meeting

The minutes were approved as written (proposer C'llr Robin Howells, seconder C'llr Peter Griffiths), and held by the Clerk for subsequent signature by the Chairman.

Address by / Q&A session with representatives of Hywel Dda Health Board

Members welcomed to the meeting officers from the Hywel Dda Health Board, including the Chief Executive, Vice Chairman, Pembrokeshire County Director, Associate Medical Director (Transformation and Digital Lead) for Hywel Dda, and Communications Director.

The Vice Chairman of Hywel Dda initiated proceedings by means of an introductory address. This reflected on the impact of Covid on health services, and stressed the value and importance of engagement with local communities in assessing how to move forward with changes in the delivery of services. Following this, the Chief Executive presented the first part of a slide presentation entitled 'A healthier Mid and West Wales'. This described the challenges facing local health services, which centred around unfilled vacancies and available numbers of staff for fulfilling rotas, etc.; the poor state of repair of estate; problems with the ways in which historical strategies better suited to a different era had been developed; and the perceived need to move away from 'fixing' people, and more focus on preventative medicine.

The Pembrokeshire County Director then took over the presentation at this point. She focussed attention on the desire for more community-based care and preventative policies. She mentioned that a future model would need to involve as much interconnectivity with communities as possible. She mentioned the multi-agency placed-based networks currently being designed. This was in part aimed at working towards minimising time spent by patients in hospital, which had been proved to be 'de-conditioning' for inpatients.

Following the presentation, C'llr Derek Jones presented a number of questions to the Health Board Members and officers on behalf of the Community Council, as follows :

Q1) Where and when is the new hospital coming to fruition ?

Answer given - The process involves going through numerous iterations in relation to making a business case. Next summer should see work begin on sourcing funding streams. Work on a final business case should be commenced about 2 years after that, and take 1-2 years to complete. That should take us up to

around 2026, to be followed by about 2 years of building to completion.

Obviously the entire process could be subject to slippage in timescales.

- Q2) **If the business plan is not accepted for the new hospital will services such as maternity and paediatric be restored to Withybush?**

Answer given – This concerns multiple factors such as staffing issues, birth rates, training arrangements, and no straightforward answer can be given. In Glangwili now it is much better in these aspects. This is uncomfortably far away for Pembrokeshire residents at present, of course, but that is the compelling case for the new hospital currently planned between St. Clears and Narberth. The temporary change made during the pandemic to the Puffin Ward is under review, and consideration is being given to returning this ward to its previous use.

- Q3) **When will the proposed new Community hubs come into operation?**

Answer given - There are already two in operation, and a visit to these can be arranged for Members if desired. Hopefully these hubs as they come on stream will stabilise services, and attract needed staff.

The Pembrokeshire Community Director added that this would involve an assessment of existing buildings and services, many of which could be utilised or repurposed.

- Q4) **With the population of Pembrokeshire increasing, why over the last few years have services been moved away from Withybush and how safe is the Accident and Emergency Department for the future?**

Answer given – Obviously people want guarantees. We can't do that, but don't see any situation where full A&E service will not be retained in Withybush Hospital until new hospital is built, as there is no realistic alternative. However, every day is a struggle for staff, so services are very fragile. To maintain them for 7-10 years is going to be difficult due to these external factors.

- Q5) **What is planned to address the current issues with ambulance waiting times due to bed-blocking.**

Answer given – The situation is the most serious we have seen in the last 30 yrs. Discharge of patients is logjammed. Today, in the Health Board area, there are 330 medically fit people in the hospitals. Ambulance delays are the tip of the iceberg. We are working hard with Local Authorities, community organisations, charities, etc., to find a way forward. We are also recruiting into the care sector, and facilitating 'micro-enterprises' to address the problem.

- Q6) **There are vacant care home spaces – could not these patients be sent there?**

Answer given – Pembrokeshire alone has lost 60 care home beds in recent times, and seen the closure of one care home. There are serious staffing issues in the whole care sector. Such provisions are used as interim measures, but a difficult balance to draw, as many people want these spaces for ongoing use as their long-term future residences.

- Q7) **What will the effect be of the impending industrial action by nursing staff?**

Answer given – This will slow our ability to recover after the pandemic. The nursing staff are taking this action with a heavy heart. Management is collaborating with them as much as possible to minimise negative effects. However, it is a fluid situation, and informing patients is key to getting through it.

- Q8) **Regarding G.P. surgeries, people cannot get through to make appointments, end up getting frustrated and going to A&E. What can be done to address this?**

Answer given - There is pressure everywhere in the system. G.P. access is a recurrent complaint. All GP surgeries are different, as they are mostly managed privately. The current contract has very little about access, and is not well-

equipped to deal with the access standard changes that have occurred. The Health Board is trying to use other health professionals besides G.P.s, and to increase diversification of the process of gaining access to healthcare. Hybrid models, including an App for making appointments, is currently being prepared for launch.

Q9) What can be done to address numbers of vacancies within the system?

Answer given – Nurse apprenticeship schemes; prioritising investing the local population into the process via well-paying jobs locally.

Following the Q&A session, Members thanked the Health Board representatives for attending, after which they left the meeting. C’lIr Scott felt that a discussion of these matters should be held. Members agreed to table an agenda item for discussion in January, to give Members time to consider the points made.

Matters Arising

Trinity House. No further progress, with matter due to be reviewed in February 2023.

Planning enforcement Sardis – No progress to date.

Burton Ferry – Nothing further to report.

Planning

Application consultations received

22/0644/PA - Proposed new dwelling, double garage, workshop/store on vacant plot incl. vehicular access / parking & turning area plus new garden / hobby room / store to rear garden of Burngate Cottage; Site Address: Vacant plot adjacent to Burngate Cottage & rear garden of Burngate Cottage, Kiln Park, Burton Ferry, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, SA73 1NY – Members noted the proposal to include a driveway directly onto the main road from Burton Ferry to Burton, as well as onto Kiln Park. Consultation response to raise concerns over this proposed access, due to visibility, interference with traffic flow, danger to traffic, etc.

Planning decisions notified.

21/0504/PA – Proposed dwelling at Plot 1, Kiln Park. – Members were informed that this application had been passed unanimously by the P.C.C. Planning and Rights of Way Committee.

Correspondence

- 1) P.C.C. – Request for consent to use car park at Houghton Playing Field during scheduled highway improvement works – noted, as this matter had been dealt with. Work yet to commence.
- 2) Local resident – Message notifying the community council of apparent problems with discharges from the Burton Ferry S.T.W. – noted.
- 3) National Lottery – Notification of payment of funds into community council account – noted.
- 4) P.C.C. – Notification of consideration of closure of toilet block at Burton Ferry on budget grounds - Clerk to respond to remind P.C.C. of the legal obligation to keep the toilet block open.

Accounts

Payments

Clerk (salary October – December 2022) : As per contract

H.M.R.C. (P.A.Y.E. tax on Clerk’s salary) : As per contract

Clerk (incidental expenses for June – November 2022) : £144-53

The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C’lIr Robin Howells, seconder C’lIr Fiona Hart).

Discussion of progress on proposed project at Houghton Play area, including playpark project and adjacent wooded area

New play equipment. C’lir Nia Phillips had received three quotations for the proposed new playpark installations. One was preferred to the others, and was lower. C’lir Nia Phillips to email the quotations to the Clerk for filing against the eventual expenditure. The quotations were from Easifall, Action Play, and Adventure Playgrounds Wales. Final formal decision on awarding the contract deferred until January, when it was hoped that more information on proposed funding streams would be available, and this could be considered in the context of a full budget discussion for 2023/24. C’lir Derek Jones informed Members that he had sent a written proposal to Valero for consideration for a grant. He was awaiting a reply and undertook to keep Members informed of progress of the application. Matter to be placed on January agenda for discussion.

Tree felling. This was currently in hand with C’lir Paddy McNamara, who was currently obtaining the necessary quotations for the needed tree felling at the playpark and playing field. C’lir Fiona Hart mentioned that the remaining felling and undergrowth clearance in the wooded area adjacent to the playpark were currently in hand with volunteers.

Fencing. C’lir Paddy McNamara was currently in the process of obtaining the necessary quotations for the perimeter fencing around the playpark.

National Lottery grant. Members were delighted that a £9500 grant towards the cost of the project had been awarded by the National Lottery. C’lir Peter Griffiths mentioned that they were looking for some promotion of the grant, possibly in the local press / social media accounts. Clerk to arrange for a press release to be prepared and placed on the community webpage and noticeboards once a suitable photograph had been received from C’lir Peter Griffiths. C’lir Peter Griffiths to supply National Lottery with copies of the notices posted. It was also mentioned that the grant could also be posted on the community Facebook page, but there was some confusion over who was the administrator for this page, and no clear decision was reached on how to arrange that.

Discussion of potential lease of land at Hill Crescent from PCC

C’lir Paddy McNamara had informed the Clerk that he had been in informal discussion with P.C.C. over the matter while attending an unrelated meeting, and had been assured that the matter was moving forward.

Discussion of arrangements for planting of commemorative tree for Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, and associated plaque

The Clerk informed Members that the two trees on order had arrived at Grandiflora. The promised license for the one to be planted at Sardis was currently awaited before planting could proceed.

C’lir Peter Griffiths had received an offer of a stone for mounting a commemorative plaque from A.C. Aggregates. Members appreciated this generous gesture. C’lir Peter Griffiths to continue with arrangements for this, as well as enquiring with A.C. Aggregates to see whether a second stone could be made available for the second tree proposed.

Discussion of problems with seasonal closure of toilet block at Burton Ferry

C’lir Scott Sinclair had received reports from concerned residents about incidents of defecation and urinating taking place behind the toilet block, which was currently closed for the winter period. Members thought it unlikely that P.C.C. would agree to fund the opening of the toilet block year-round, but were unsure of the legal reason for the closure. Clerk to make enquiries with P.C.C. about the reason for the winter closures, draw attention to the reported problems occurring, and seek their input / suggestions as to a way forward to address the matter.

Any other business

Dog barking. C’lrr Nia Phillips had been contacted by a local residents with concerns about dog barking from a neighbouring property, and seeking advice on how to deal with it. The Clerk advised that the matter should be reported directly to the P.C.C. Domestic Pollution team, which had responsibility for domestic noise nuisance complaints.

New sub-station, Houghton. C’lrr Nia Phillips had received comments from residents complaining about the perceived unattractiveness of the sub-station. Matter to be tabled for discussion as an agenda item in January.

For sale signage on playpark fence. C’lrr Nia Phillips had been in receipt of comments about the signage attached to the playpark fence. The Clerk advised that the signage was illegal, and as B.C.C. owned the fence in question, it could remove it if it wished to do so.

Projecting telegraph stay. Members reported a projecting stay over the footpath opposite 19, Sardis. Clerk to report this to P.C.C.

Potholes. C’lrr John Mathias reported that the potholes around the Old Stable Bar area were still unaddressed. C’lrr Derek Jones mentioned that the potholes outside the bus shelter between Hill Mountain and Sardis had once again opened up. Clerk to report these.

Burton Ferry garden area by pontoon. C’lrr Scott Sinclair suggested that it might be a good idea to arrange for someone to carry out regular maintenance of this area. It was left with Members to think of possible ideas regarding this.

The meeting ended at 9-10pm. Next meeting to be held at 7pm on Wednesday 4th January 2023.