

CYNGOR CYMUNED LLANARTHNE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the February 2024 Meeting of Llanarthne Community Council held at Llanarthne Village Hall on 13/02/2024 at 19.00.

194/2023-2024 Present.

Councillors: G Jones (Chair), County Cllr H Jones, M Jones, C Pugh-Jones. E Jenkins.

Clerk.

Translator – C Llwyd.

195/2023-2024 To receive apologies.

Councillors: County Cllr A Davies, R Pole, A Isaac.

196/2023-2024 To receive declarations of interest.

None.

197/2023-2024 Opportunity for the public to address the Council on agenda items.

None.

198/2023-2024 Presentation by Dr Lucy Sutherland NBGW.

Cllr G Jones welcomed Dr Lucy Sutherland, Director of the National Botanic Garden of Wales, to the meeting.

Dr Lucy Sutherland delivered the following presentation –

Dr Lucy Sutherland thanked council members for the opportunity to present to Llanarthne Community Council.

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a botanical garden located in Llanarthne in the Tywi valley and will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2025. The garden is both a visitor attraction and a centre for botanical research and conservation, and features the world's largest single-span glasshouse, measuring 110m long by 60m wide which makes the NBGW a globally unique organization. With over 30 years' experience and having worked in Australia and other countries all over the world, Dr Lucy Sutherland is very excited to plan, develop and instigate the future of the NBGW.

Over the past 12 months the NBGW has been developing a financial model by thinking creatively and collating information on why the public visit the gardens whether it be entertainment, what they see, what they expect, themed days or simply a place to walk. The strategic objective is to be a successful visitor destination of international standing that contributes to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

During 2023, 211,000 people visited the NBGW. In 2022 the number of visitors was higher due to post covid, and the public were allowed to visit attractions again. School and educational groups are now stabilizing and with development and diversification the hope is that visitor numbers will increase to 400,000.

In 2022, Luminare was launched at the NBGW and attracted 31,000 visitors but in 2023 only 25,000 visitors attended. A blockbuster arts and culture event is being planned for October 2024 where international artists will be in attendance to entertain the public and the hope is to attract at least 30,000 visitors from local villages and

towns as well as Cardiff, Bristol, Bath and London. With local community and student interaction it will be a successful event.

The NBGW is currently working with Swansea Bay Health Board and streaming live nature to patients in Cefn Coed Hospital and Ty Olwen Hospice. The same service will be provided to Hywel Dda in the next few months and also nature places will be provided to members of staff and patients with respiratory and heart issues. This will be funded by the Carmarthenshire Prosperity Fund.

The NBGW is currently focusing on science and meadow restoration by saving plants, fungi and pollinators in order to assist biodiversity. The NBGW is working towards an education hub for learning science with assistance from the Centre for Alternative Technology, The National Library, The National Museum and Institute of Biology, Environmental and Rural Sciences. Now they are working towards the reverse decline of Welsh flora due to eradication and Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water are assisting with the recovery of threatened species.

Recruitment is very difficult within the sectors of horticulture and science and employing the correct person is crucial for the future of the gardens.

The regeneration of the reservoir and lakes within the gardens was at a cost of 1 million pounds with safeguards in place to prevent flooding of nearby land. Work is underway at the moment to create a nature play space for the public and a restoration project is also underway to prevent the dilapidation of the walled garden.

Rising utility costs and minimum wage increases in 2023 and 2024 were very difficult for the NBGW and a decision had to be made by the Board of Directors to reduce staff by 22% and ask for voluntary redundancies to help with rising costs as well as eradicating external contracts. The rise in minimum wage over the 2 years was at a cost of £400,000, therefore the focus was to generate income and visitor numbers to avoid a situation similar to 2003 and 2008 where the NBGW had no funds. A shrinking organization to provide a stronger future and take the gardens forward.

Cllr G Jones invited council members to ask questions.

Cllr E Jenkins asked if Llanarthne Community Council could help the NBGW in any way?

Dr Lucy Sutherland stated that informing the council and having them as advocates for the gardens would be very helpful and having the opportunity to work together will help to further sustain relationships within the community.

Cllr M Jones asked with regards to recruitment if the NBGW is working with schools, colleges, universities and Carmarthenshire County Council to provide skilled members of staff?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that they were working with Lantra which is the leader in land-based training and qualifications and the Tywi Centre provides trades people with regards to the care and repair of heritage buildings.

Cllr M Jones asked if education in the UK provided the correct skills to students?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that Trinity St David's, Aberystwyth University and Swansea Bay University provided courses on food security, biotechnology and innovation.

Cllr M Jones stated that she was impressed with bilingual usage of language within the NBGW.

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that they encourage Welsh being used within the business and that the NBGW support and fund staff members to study Welsh. The NBGW

employ two full time translators to assist with daily demands and that during the 2023 Eisteddfod a garden installation was provided.

Cllr G Jones asked with regards to arts and culture if the NBGW would also engage with schools, colleges, the YFC movement as well as universities?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied positively that all parties would be contacted.

Cllr G Jones asked if the number of volunteers would increase with financial constraints continuously affecting the business?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that there were a large number of volunteers within the business providing help various tasks and that members of MENCAP and their carers also assist.

County Cllr H Jones asked if the NBGW was still involved in breeding livestock?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that they currently breed Welsh Black cattle and lambs and that they sell most of the animals to generate income. The woodland within the property is currently being used to create bio charcoal.

County Cllr H Jones asked if any of the land was being rented to local farmers?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that one of the farms had been recently sold and that plans were being developed to rent a portion of the land and self-manage the rest.

Cllr M Jones asked what was happening with Pantwgan Farm?

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that it was currently utilized to house students and staff members.

Cllr G Jones asked if the NBGW and Llanarthne Village Show could possibly collaborate in 2025 as both parties were celebrating their 25th anniversary.

Dr Lucy Sutherland replied that they would be happy to collaborate.

Cllr G Jones and council members thanked Dr Lucy Sutherland for her presentation and wished her all the best with the future developments at the NBGW.

Dr Lucy Sutherland left the meeting at 20.00, not to return.

199/2023-2024 To consider and note any policing and/or road safety concerns.

Cllr M Jones reported that land opposite Dolgwynnon had slipped from the field above at more than one location and required attention. **Resolved** for the Clerk to report to the relevant department.

The Clerk reminded council members that reporting safety issues at a council meeting prevented problems being resolved in a timely manner and asked members where necessary to report them on the County Council website ASAP to prevent accidents and further issues.

200/2023-2024 County Council Matters - County Cllr A Davies.

None.

201/2023-2024 To Receive Chairman's Reports.

Cllr G Jones reported that he attended a meeting of local councilors hosted by the Mayor of Llandeilo at The White Hart, Llandeilo on 10/01/2024. A total of six councilors were in attendance and numerous discussions were deliberated including councillor recruitment, dog fouling, finances and the Tywi Valley cycle path. Cllr G Jones asked County Cllr H Jones if there was an update on the cycle path?

County Cllr H Jones reported that some changes had been made to the design of the path but that they were approaching the final stages of the project.

County Cllr H Jones asked if meetings of this nature would continue after the introduction of the new mayor.

Cllr G Jones to enquire.

Cllr G Jones reported that the next informal gathering would be held at Gwili Cafe, Rhosmaen Street, Llandeilo on 14/03/2024 at 19.00 with the invitation extended to current and future community council chairs.

Cllr G Jones reported that the Capel-Arthne YFC Annual Dinner would be held at the White Hart, Llandeilo on 23/02/2024 at 19.30.

202/2023-2024 Confirmation and Signing of the Minutes of the Council Meeting 09/01/2024.

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes for 09/01/2024. Proposed by Cllr M Jones and seconded by Cllr C Pugh-Jones.

Cllr G Jones requested an addition to minute **175/2023-2024** – Add “land adjacent to” prior to Pistyll Dewi. **Resolved** to note.

203/2023-2024 Matters arising from the above minutes.

The Clerk informed Council members that all matters to **resolve** had been actioned and if correspondence had been received, a copy of the Email had been sent to each member for information.

204/2023-2024 To note correspondence or to list for consideration at a forthcoming Council meeting.

(All relevant correspondence is emailed to council members at the time of receipt and only brought before the meeting if necessary or specifically requested by members or the Clerk).

205/2023-2024 Planning.

None.

206/2023-2024 Payments.

The below payments were certified in the December meeting and **ratified** in the January meeting. Copies of invoices sent to all members electronically prior to payment for authorisation. **Proposed** by Cllr G Jones and seconded by Cllr C Pugh-Jones.

Method of Payment	Date	Suppliers & Details	Sum £ inc VAT
Online	22/01/2024	Just Print - 64671	25.00
Online	22/01/2024	Llanarthne Village Hall – December Meeting	30.00
Online	22/01/2024	Catrin Llwyd – CCLARTH 20	70.00
Online	22/01/2024	Catrin Llwyd – CCLARTH 21	236.00
Online	25/01/2024	Carmarthenshire County Council - 97325584	854.86

207/2023-2024 To note receipts.

None.

208/2023-2024 To discuss Community Awards.

Defer to March.

209/2023-2024 To discuss “Yr Hen a Wyr” project.

Cllr M Jones reported that five members of the youth group (Becca, Mabli, Freya, Anna, Awen) had collaborated recently to transfer a pencil sketch of historical buildings within the community for Moilin Cyf to locate on a map of the community, where members of the public are able to click on the picture and discover the history of the building as well as photographs and sketches. The QR code will also present a video of community children from 2007 and 2024 visiting various locations within the area and showing the changes over 17 years. There is also a plan to chronicle the activities and discussions relating to “The Hen a Wyr” project. Not all digital content will be completed before 31/03/2024 but the majority will be active.

Cllr M Jones asked the Clerk to contact Moilin Cyf for a copy of the QR code. **Resolved** to note.

Cllr G Jones reported that an interpretation panel sub-committee meeting was held together with consultation meetings with the Llanarthne Hall warm hub members, Capel-Arthne YFC and the NBGW to gather information and photographs.

A meeting was held on 28/01/2024 with County Cllr A Davies, Cllr G Jones, Cllr A Isaac, Mr Eirwyn Bennet and the Clerk in attendance to discuss the new location of the interpretation panel. Following a village walk it was decided that the best location would be on the right side of the church entrance as this area is a regular passing point for both members of the community and visitors to the village. Seating benches are available as well as parking for 2 vehicles.

It was agreed to launch the interpretation panel at the Discover Llanarthne event on 20/04/2024.

Cllr M Jones asked that if funding was available, it would be nice to install the QR code on all community benches so that access is available to all members of the public. All council members agreed. **Resolved** for the Clerk to get a quotation.

The Clerk stated that due to County Council funding it was not possible to replace the seating benches in Ger-Y-Llan. He asked council members if the bench at Cefn Bryn could be relocated. Council members were not in favour of relocating the bench but were willing to fund 1 x new seating bench if funds were available. **Resolved** for the Clerk to investigate available funds for the project.

210/2023-2024 To discuss the co-option of new council members.

No Update.

211/2023-2024 To hold a forum in order for members to raise reports/questions through the Chair.

None.

212/2023-2024 In Camera 20.43.

Those who were not Community Council members, or the Clerk departed the meeting – not to return. The exclusion is due to personnel / staffing matters being discussed.

213/2023-2024 Next Meeting.

Date of the next meeting to be held at Capel Dewi Village Hall – 12/03/2024 at 19.00.

214/2023-2024 The Meeting Finished at 20.45.

Chairman

Date
