



## **Cyngor Cymuned Argoed**

**Markham, Argoed,  
Man-moel and Hollybush**

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Minutes of Argoed Community Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at Argoed Village Hall.

1660 To sign the register and receive apologies

1660.1 Community Councillors present: Chairman M. Williams, S. Blakeman, Ann Jones, D. King, G. Lewis, Hilary Rowlands, John Watkins and W. Williams

1660.2 Apologies were received from L. Gardiner

1661 To welcome the guest speaker Mr Jeff Cuthbert, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent. He was accompanied by Mr Neil Taylor, Head of Performance, Planning and Partnership.

Mr Cuthbert started by explaining the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). He said that he sets the "direction of travel" for the Police force in Gwent. A document (the Plan) would be published in March which would set out his priorities. The Police and Crime panel would initially have sight of the document prior to it being issued to the public. He holds the Chief Constable to account for carrying out the Plan.

As PCC his priorities are-

Priority 1 Police Visibility – what many people would think of as "bobbies on the beat" would either be Police officers or PCSOs. He needed to balance this with the volume and seriousness of crime. Cyber-crime accounts for more than 50% of all crime in Britain. This has implications for recruitment. He was looking for a net increase in overall staffing levels. He mentioned high profile cases such as domestic abuse and child abuse and also trafficking and slavery.

The Police resources were stretched – there has been a reduction of 40% in funding from central government. A 3.99% increase in the Police precept for 2017/18 had been agreed with a total budget of £131M. By 2020/21 the balance of funding between Central Government and precept will be 50/50.

A report had to be published every year which shows the PCC progress against the Plan. He met with the Chief Constable on a regular basis. 300 police officers and 200 support staff have been lost since 2010. He would like to provide well located and functioning police stations but this was subject to finance being available. He spoke of the big drug bust in Newport recently.

The PSCO level is being maintained due to funding from Welsh Government.

Priority 2 – provide support for the victims of crime. A police hub in Blackwood provided support for people subjected to abuse, hate crime, theft, etc.

Anti-social behaviour – The Police never has enough officers to cope with the demand from the public.

#### Priority 3 – Effective Service Delivery

The Chairman asked about recruitment of new officers. He added that Police officers used to regularly attend Community Council meetings. The Commissioner confirmed that the new recruits were Police officers and not PCSOs. He added that he would investigate why officers were not attending Community Council meetings on a regular basis. The Commissioner confirmed that he would e-mail the Clerk with the contact details of the local officers.

Cllr Stephen Blakeman asked about the devolution of Policing to the Welsh Government.

The Commissioner said that like Scotland and Northern Ireland, he felt that the Assembly should have responsibility for Policing.

A councillor asked about the Police efforts to stop illegal off-road activities. He added that the Community had suffered from this problem for over 15 years. The Commissioner said that northern Gwent had a bigger problem than other areas. He was working with the MP for Blaenau Gwent. He added that there were legal tracks and he wanted to encourage off-road bikers to use them. Natural Resources Wales and the Common Land owners (mainly farmers) were working together to strengthen boundary fences to prevent access to open land. The Police were using drones to monitor activity and were liaising with Local Authorities. The Commissioner said that all activity must be reported and a log kept.

Concerns were expressed that the OWL information system could tip-off off-roaders about forthcoming Police activity.

The Commissioner said that he had been in contact with Caerphilly County Borough Council about the off-road bikers on the Markham Colliery Site. The Borough Council had told him that they cannot do much about the problem. A Councillor said that threats had been made against people who had tried to stop the off-road activity.

Councillors mentioned the problem of fly tipping. The Commissioner said that initially this was a problem for the Borough Council to sort out. The Police would get involved if a criminal prosecution was sought.

Cllr Walter Williams said that he had tried to use the Police 101 service and had failed to get an answer.

The Commissioner said that if a crime was being committed then 999 should be used to report it. He added that new software and staff training was being introduced for the 101 service.

Cllr David King asked about the Neighbourhood Watch scheme which seemed to have “died a death”. The Commissioner said that this was a voluntary organisation which liaises with the Police. Some areas have a Crime Prevention Panel which liaises with the Neighbourhood Watch organisation. There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked the Commissioner for attending the meeting and answering all the questions posed to him.

- 1662 To receive a report from Cllr Leon Gardiner. Councillor Gardiner had previously apologised for not being able to attend the meeting.

1663 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were agreed.

1664 Matters arising: -

1664.1 Minute 1654.3 – The Clerk confirmed that he had sent reminders about these items.

1664.2 Minute 1655 – The Clerk confirmed that he had written to the Borough Council and was waiting for a reply.

1664.3 Minute 1658.4 – Cllr Walter Williams informed the meeting that the petition had been handed to Rhiannon Passmore, the AM for Islwyn.

1665 The schedule of correspondence provided by the Clerk was received and the required actions **agreed**.

Item 1655.11 – Elsbury Plant – it was agreed that the Clerk enquire whether there were any Christmas Decorations available at the special prices quoted.

Item 1665.16 – Freaks Fitness – it was agreed that an application for financial assistance should be completed by the organisation before the Council could consider the request for financial assistance.

1666 To receive the financial report from the Clerk.

1666.1 The financial position of the Community Council as at 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017, showing a total balance of £12,631.08

Treasurer's Account	6,366.68	
Unpresented income/cheques	<u>-677.03</u>	5,689.65
Business Money Manager A/C		6,941.43
Bank Balances		<u>12,631.08</u>

1666.2 The Clerk reported increases in projected spend on the following items:-

- Stationery – revised budget of £741.39 – this is due to the purchase of paper and lever arch files. This is off-set by a 50% contribution from Risca East Community Council.
- Other Income – revised projection of £517.80. See above item

1666.3 The financial report, revised projected spends and schedule of payments produced by the Clerk was **agreed**.

1667 Delegates Reports

1667.1 Markham Primary School – Cllr Garry Lewis said that the existing Deputy Head had been appointed acting head for 4 terms. The Governors had to recruit a deputy head.

- 1667.2 Argoed Village Hall – no report
- 1667.3 Hollybush Community Centre – Cllr Stephen Blakeman reported that he had met with the Cabinet member to discuss external lighting at the Centre because the Centre is used as a polling station at election time.
- 1667.4 Joint Liaison Committee Meeting – no meeting
- 1667.5 Markham House and Leisure Centre – Cllr Hilary Rowlands informed the meeting that a person had been found to take on the role of Treasurer.
- 1667.6 Access Forum – no meeting

#### 1668 Local Reports

- 1668.1 Argoed – ARTA meeting to be held on Thursday night (23<sup>rd</sup> February)
- 1668.2 Hollybush – no report
- 1668.3 Manmoel – Cllrs Blakeman and Walter Williams reported on the removal of trees on land to the north of Penylan Pond. The Borough Council was investigating the matter.  
Cllr Blakeman reminded the meeting that he had raised some months ago the possibility of arranging a joint meeting between the Community Council and representatives of Caerphilly County Borough Council to be held at Manmoel Village Hall. It was agreed that the Community Council would wait until after the May elections before deciding who to invite.
- 1668.4 Markham – Cllr Hilary Rowlands said that dog fouling was becoming a real problem in the village. Cllr Walter Williams said that he would raise this with the dog warden employed by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

#### 1669 Planning Applications – none

Signed.....Chairman of Argoed Community Council 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017