



Luke O'Connor House Resource Centre
21 Barter Court
Hightown
Wrexham
LL13 8QT

Canolfan Adnoddau Tŷ Luke O'Connor
21 Llys Barter
Hightown
Wrecsam
LL13 8QT

Tel: 01978 291562
email: clerk@offacommunitycouncil.gov.uk

24th January 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Full Council Meeting of Offa Community Council** on **Thursday 1st February 2024 at 7pm**, to be held at Luke O Connor House Resource Centre and remotely on Zoom.

L S Jakeman - Locum Clerk

Distribution:

Councillors: Christine Griffiths, Alun Jenkins, Alex Jones, Angela Jones, David Jones, Barbara Lloyd, Jonh Ramm, Andrew Ranger, Graham Rogers, Sarah Roberts, Jim Steele, Linda Subbacci, Steven Vale, Phillip Wynn, Graham Wynn, John Williams and Keith Williams.

AGENDA

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81941877454?pwd=OWZJQU9jUFpkOEZUN21VWks3cnhhZz09>

Meeting ID: 819 4187 7454 Passcode: 817808

1. To receive any apologies for absence through the Clerk.
2. To receive any Declarations of Interest.
3. **Minutes.**
 - a. To approve the minutes of a meeting (to be) held on 29th January 2024. *(note that the meeting is after the date of issuing this agenda and that they will follow).*
 - b. To note receipt of the minutes of Staffing Committee meeting held on 15th January 2024
4. **Schedule of Payments.** To approve a schedule of payments totalling £36,378.58. **(Appendix 1)**
5. **Bank Reconciliations.** To note that a bank reconciliation has been undertaken as at 31st October 2023, and nominate a councillor to verify the bank reconciliation against the bank statements prior to the next meeting. **(Appendix 2)**

6. **Bank Mandate** -To consider a recommendation:
To add 2 officers of the Council (Lee Jakeman and Helen McCarthy) to the bank mandate(s) for all accounts held by Offa Community Council and for them to be authorised to have access to internet banking for the purposes of making payments authorised by the Council and monitoring account activity.

7. **Little Vawnog.**

To receive a report from the Clerk and progress reports from WoodsWork CIC, and then consider the following recommendations:

- a. That a qualified contractor be appointed urgently to conduct a tree survey (mindful that bird nesting season is approaching) in the are of Little Vawnog owned by Offa Community Council. The tree survey should identify if any trees in close proximity to property/ neighbours require urgent works to be undertaken (because there is risk of damage to people or property).

AND

- b. Delegate authority to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commision a competent contractor.

AND

- c. *(Should urgent works be indentified and bearing mindful that bird nesting season is approaching)* Delegate to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commision any such urgent works identified.

(LJ/03/23-24)

8. **Casual Vacancy.**

- a. To receive any updates following the formal resignation of Cllr Palmer, notified to WCBC elections team on 8th January 2024.
b. To consider a recommendation that a draft co-option policy be approved.

(Appendix 3)

9. **Public Bodies**

It is considered in terms of Schedule 12, A Local Government Act 1972, that the following item(s) will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to the establishment and contractual matters and it is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that: **pursuant to the the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded.**

10. Contracts

11. Staffing



MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2024

Present:

Councillors:

Linda Subacchi,

R Alun Jenkins,

Alex Jones, (Chairman)

Barbara Lloyd,

Sarah Roberts,

Also in attendance:

Lee Jakeman Locum Clerk

Katie Jeffries LGRC Consultant

238 To accept apologies of absence through the Clerk.

Nil

239 To make Declarations of interest.

Nil

240 Previous Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 (and its continuation on 14th November).

241 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that: the pursuant to the the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded.

242 Staffing

Members considered a draft report from the Locum Clerk and;

RESOLVED: to forward a confidential report to the next meeting of the Full Council that provides a summary of the discussions; any delegated decisions made and any recommendations that require approval by the Council.

Meeting closed: 12.30pm

BANK RECONCILIATIONS AS AT 31 OCT 23

24 January 2024 (2023 - 2024)

Offa Community Council
RECONCILIATION - Lloyds Treasurers Account - Savings 31-10-2023

<hr/>	
From Accounts	£13,933.20
Payments not cashed Add	
Receipts not entered Subtract	
<hr/>	
Statement should be	£13,933.20

Offa Community Council
RECONCILIATION - Lloyds Treasurers Account - Savings 31-10-2023

From Accounts	£13,933.20
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Payments not cashed Add	
Receipts not entered Subtract	

Statement should be	£13,933.20
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Offa Community Council
RECONCILIATION - Lloyds Business Bank Instant 31-10-2023

From Accounts	£149,268.08
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Payments not cashed	Add
Receipts not entered	Subtract

Statement should be	£149,268.08
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**OFFA COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MEETING**

1st February 2024

LJ/2024/Fin

25th January 2024

**REPORT TO OFFA COMMUNITY COUNCIL: AGENDA ITEM 7 – LITTLE VAWNOG TREE
MAINTENANCE.**

AIM(s)

1. To receive the Little Vawnog Woodland Management Report dated November 2023.
2. To receive the Little Vawnog Woodland Management Report dated December 2023.
3. To consider undertaking priority tree works at Little Vawnog.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. It is recommended that the Council RESOLVES:
 - a. That a qualified contractor be appointed urgently to conduct a tree survey (mindful that bird nesting season is approaching) in the area of Little Vawnog owned by Offa Community Council. The tree survey should identify if any trees in close proximity to property/ neighbours require urgent works to be undertaken (because there is risk of damage to people or property).

AND

- b. Delegate authority to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commission a competent contractor.

AND

- c. *(Should urgent works be identified and bearing mindful that bird nesting season is approaching)* Delegate to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commission any such urgent works identified.

BACKGROUND

5. Offa Community Council owns and is responsible for Little Vawnog and should ensure that the site is managed in a responsible and safe manner.
6. The Council has received 2 reports (Dec and Jan) from WoodsWork CIC (**Enclosure 1 and Enclosure 2**) for information.
7. The site is bordered in places by housing and concern has been raised about the potential damage to those properties and in turn the residents from tree damage (large branches or whole trees coming down).

INTRODUCTION

8. I am not aware that any management plan for the site exists or that any overall risk analysis has been undertaken. In the near future this should be addressed through the engagement of an appropriate contractor. Notwithstanding that, the trees are an obvious area of risk to the Council.
9. There is likely to be the need for some tree works and this is best carried out before (or after) bird nesting season which begins early March. Trees within the main wooded area are likely to be of less risk than those that directly border neighbouring properties.
10. It is considered that; an urgent assessment is needed of those trees close to neighbours. This should be undertaken by a competent contractor with appropriate insurances and should identify priority works (a more detailed inspection of the wider area can be undertaken during the summer months to produce a plan of works for after the bird nesting season).

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

11. Financial regulations require 3 quotes to be obtained. However in light of the urgency and risk to the Council, it is recommended that financial regulations be waived to find an available contractor at short notice (but being mindful of the need to achieve best value). A contract can be entered into more quickly if the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair or another appropriate councillor) is given delegated authority to enter into contract on behalf of the Council, without having to come back to Council for approval.
12. The anticipated cost might be between £500 and £2,000 subject to the number of trees assessed. There is no funding available within the 'Environmental' budget and costs would therefore need to be funded through the use of the general reserve. It should be noted that the draft budget for FY 24/25 does include £5,000 for tree works.
13. Once a survey has been completed an assessment of priority works needs to be identified and undertaken. This will require the engagement of another contractor (tree surgeon). The cost of this is wholly dependent on the outcomes of the survey. Again, to undertake this work quickly (with the desire to have it completed ahead of bird nesting season) it would be prudent to delegate the awarding of a contract to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair or another appropriate councillor). A spend of a further £5,000 should be budgeted from the general reserve.
14. Once the urgent remedial works have been identified and completed it is recommended that the Council begins work to produce a comprehensive management plan for Little Vawnog along with a wider tree survey. In the meantime, the Clerk should make contact with appropriate agencies like North Wales Wildlife Trust who have the appropriate expertise to understand what support / services are available. The creation of a small working group of councillors should be considered to help create the vision and investigate options that can be brought to Council for approval. The Clerk will look to draw up some terms of reference for such a working group for formal adoption by the Council, once the priority tree works (if any) have been remedied (some engagement with the WoodsWork CIC would be beneficial).
15. Whilst tree works should be conducted out of bird nesting season, where there is real and serious risk to people or property this would override that convention. Any tree works that need to be undertaken should be carried out in line with appropriate guidance (e.g. inspect trees for nests before undertaking works).

SUMMARY

16. Reports have been received from WoodsWork CIC and the Council should note the activity being undertaken by them.
17. A strategic approach to the management and maintenance of the site should be considered in the medium term.
18. The commissioning of a tree survey is required urgently to identify trees posing risk.
19. Once a trees survey has been completed, it is likely that urgent remedial works will need to be undertaken.
20. The Council should anticipate some significant spend out of the general reserve to undertake the survey and works (£2k to £10K).
21. The Council should consider delegating authority to the Clerk to undertake immediate actions.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

22. It is recommended that the Council RESOLVES:

- a. That a qualified contractor be appointed urgently to conduct a tree survey (mindful that bird nesting season is approaching) in the area of Little Vawnog owned by Offa Community Council. The tree survey should identify if any trees in close proximity to property/ neighbours require urgent works to be undertaken (because there is risk of damage to people or property).

AND

- b. Delegate authority to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commission a competent contractor.

AND

- c. *(Should urgent works be identified and bearing mindful that bird nesting season is approaching)* Delegate to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair of the Council) to commission any such urgent works identified.

Furthermore,

- d. The Clerk should write to the Woodwork CIC and thank them for their ongoing efforts and inform them that the Council would look to engage them more formally on wider matters relating to Little Vawnog once the urgent tree works issue is remedied.

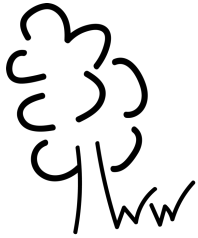
Lee Jakeman
Locum Clerk



WoodsWork CIC

Client	Offa Community Council
Project	Little Vawnog Woodland Management
Date	November 2023
<p>This month, in addition to meeting to discuss our plans and ideas for community projects, we have also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held two volunteer events, where we were joined by new volunteers to cut back growth adjacent to paths and grass on the meadow. We have also carried out more work to improve the dead hedges, including those created along the river bank to prevent falls into the river. • Developed a priced proposal for the spending of the new funding to submit to Transport for Wales and liaised with contractors to obtain quotations for the works to paths. We are waiting for some of these so that we can determine the extent of path improvements that can be carried out. • Liaised with Transport for Wales about the new funding package. • Liaised with Llais y Goedwig as they have offered to help with volunteers from a local company to install the new signs. • Liaised with Andy Hughes from Dynamic regarding the event in December • Liaised with the playscheme regarding their sign at Little Vawnog • Emailed the Clerk and Councillors regarding fallen branches from an Ash tree. • Liaised with a local resident and the council, regarding works to reduce the height of trees • Attended an Ancient Tree Inventory training session organized by Llais y Goedwig and the Woodland Trust so that we can record features of some of the more mature trees on site. <p>Plans for the coming months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the Council to discuss future works to the area, including hedge laying and works which may be required to trees later in the year. Plans for other events are mainly on hold until the meeting has taken place • Hold a pre-Christmas event with Dynamic, for a small group of young people with autism to be introduced to the area and the benefits it can bring. This is planned for Saturday 9th December • Complete the installation of the new signs. • Continue to develop and plan for spending the additional Transport for Wales funds. The work must be completed before the end of March 2024. • Continue work to the meadow, in addition to cutting grass when required, we will carry out work to improve the surface levels before the Play Scheme re commences. • Continue to remove areas of bramble to improve the area for visitors and help with the control of Himalayan Balsam 	

- Continue to investigate other opportunities for the site and sources of grant funding,
- Contact Nick Brown at Ysgol Clywedog, to make arrangements for pupils working with us in the New Year
- Contact more schools and other groups to plan and hold events
- Monitor tree planting to check for damage and manage growth
- Following discussions with the council, plant new trees / shrubs to hedgerows away from properties and to replace removed trees
- Continue to photograph progress and make records of species on site throughout the seasons



WoodsWork CIC

Client	Offa Community Council
Project	Little Vawnog Woodland Management
Date	December 2023

This month, in addition to meeting to discuss our plans and ideas for community projects, we have also:

- Visited the area during the holiday period to inspect for damage following bad weather; we have not held any volunteer events due to the inclement weather and the holidays
- Continue to liaise with contractors regarding prices for the footpath works. Although the quotations exceeded the funding available, Transport for Wales are willing to assist with this, but we hope to discuss in more detail when we meet with the Council.
- Continued to liaise with Transport for Wales about the new funding package.
- Continued to liaise with Llais y Goedwig about the installation of the new signs with volunteers from a local company.
- Unfortunately, Dynamic had to cancel their event in the woods due to a problem with their transport. It is the intention for this to be re-arranged.
- Met on site and liaised with a number of contractors to obtain quotations for work to the hedges and to the trees
- Emailed the Clerk and Councillors regarding the quotations received and we hope to meet to discuss these soon
- Contacted Nick Brown from Ysgol Clywedog

Plans for the coming months

- Meet with the Council to discuss future works to the area, including hedge laying and trees. Plans for other events are mainly on hold until the meeting has taken place but we will continue to investigate other opportunities for the site and sources of grant funding,
- Re-schedule the event with Dynamic, for a small group of young people with autism to be introduced to the area and the benefits it can bring.
- Complete the installation of the new signs.
- Liaise with the Clerk and Council regarding the additional work to the footpaths to spend the additional Transport for Wales funds. The work must be completed before the end of March 2024.
- Continue cutting the meadow and improve the surface levels
- Continue to remove areas of bramble to improve the area for visitors and help with the control of Himalayan Balsam
- Liaise with Nick Brown at Ysgol Clywedog, to discuss possible works for pupils studying horticulture. With the agreement of the Council these may include planting new trees / shrubs to hedgerows away from properties and to replace removed trees
- Monitor tree planting to check for damage and manage growth
- Continue to photograph progress and make records of species on site throughout the seasons

OFFA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

POLICY

Policy for Conducting Co-options

Adopted [date] (Council minute xxxx refers)

Review Date: [date]

Procedure for Conducting Co-options

a) Casual Vacancies

On confirmation from Electoral Services that a casual vacancy must be filled by co-option, the Clerk will advertise the opportunity (notifying that there is a vacancy with the reason for it and confirming there is to be a co-option) on the Council's website and by any other reasonable means (e.g. placing on notice boards, issuing a press release and the use of social media). The advertisement must also state the rules for eligibility and direct interested parties to write to the Clerk confirming their eligibility to sit on the Parish Council, including a short statement explaining the reasons s/he wants to become a Parish Councillor. The candidates statements will be shared with all councillors (councillors should treat these confidentially and not disclose any personal data provided to anyone else). There will be a deadline for responses of not less than 6 weeks from the date of the advertisement. The date of the meeting when the co-option is to be made will be stated in the advertisement.

Nominees must also be made aware that canvassing of Council members will disqualify them from standing for the vacancy.

At the Meeting

At the Council meeting when the co-option takes place (which shall be in public session), each nominee will be invited to speak for up to 3 minutes. When all the nominees have spoken the Chairman shall seek proposers and seconders for each nomination (whether or not they have spoken) and the vote will follow. The voting process will follow standing order 8a below. In order to be co-opted onto the Council, the candidate must receive an absolute majority of the vote of those present and voting.

b) After the full Parish Council Elections

In the event of vacancies following the close of nominations for the full Parish Council elections, the Clerk shall follow the above procedure to fill the vacancies and the co-option(s) will take place at the first possible Parish Council meeting.

Standing Order 8: Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

(Note: for clarity the matter of co-option voting shall be in public and by a show of hands)

Canvassing of and Recommendations by Councillors Canvassing councillors or the members of a committee or sub-committee, directly or indirectly, for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this to every candidate.