

CAERWENT COMMUNITY COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Caerwent Community Council have resumed face to face meetings. We meet every second Thursday of the month at the Caerwent Community Centre at 7pm.

Headlines For Year Ending March 31st 2024

***Community Council Members**

The community council continues to consist of seven members from a variety of occupational backgrounds and interests.

Our chairperson this year has been Councillor Phil Murphy who is also the County Councillor for our area and is Chair of the Planning Committee of Monmouthshire County Council.

We also welcomed Edwina Sherwood OBE as a new councillor. Edwina is retired and previously worked in the civil service and particularly The Crown Prosecution Service. She is now the local councillor for Dinham Ward

***Police Reports**

These have been successfully resumed and the detail is now much better compared to recent years.

The council welcomed the Deputy Police Commissioner and local Police Inspector in the Community to one of our meetings. There was a lot of information sharing as to our roles in the community and an agreement that there would be a consistency in the template used for reporting and more information that we could share with the community.

We also had a visit from a member of Safer Neighbourhoods “We Don’t Buy Crime” who gave an informative talk in how communities can safeguard their property and belongings in particular with the use of “Smart Water” marking. This information was shared with the community on our Face Book page although there was no uptake by the public.

***Traffic**

Traffic through Caerwent continues to be a concern to residents regarding volume and speed. There have been a lot of concerns regarding the safety of the bus stop at Eastgate in terms of capacity for school pupils. The Community Council held site meetings with members of MCC and as a result the size of the bus stop has been significantly enlarged and visibility of the bus stop has improved as a result.

Speed warning lights are due to be installed at two sites near the bus stop as this is a particular “hot spot” for speeding despite the introduction of the 20mph limit.

The community council have sought information about the “Community Speed Watch” initiative and whilst there was some interest from the public, the minimum number of volunteers could not be secured.

***Defibrillators**

One of our defibrillators at the Woodlands Tavern has been temporarily out of use due to faulty casing. We have purchased a new cabinet from the Aneurin Bevan Jack’s Appeal and it is due to be installed in the very near future.

The remaining three defibrillators have been checked on a regular basis as determined by The Circuit and where necessary batteries and pads have been replaced.

***Playing Fields**

The council have decided to minimise council playground inspections to six a year as opposed to twelve. The handyman continues to perform weekly inspections at our three sites and following guidance from our Insurance Policy we will have a yearly full inspection by ROSPA of all equipment in the Summer. One of our councillors has agreed to accompany our handyman on visual inspections which will assist in providing information about the state of play equipment at our monthly meetings. The council tree officer has visited Caerwent Playing Fields as there have been a few concerns by residents as trees overhang some of the surrounding gardens. He has suggested that small branches can be trimmed by volunteers working on the trail and that we have another tree survey in the summer months.

We expect to have new signage on the fields when the final PSPO comes into being.

***General Repairs**

A survey of our assets has been conducted by our handyman and members of the council. A programme of maintenance has been drawn up and approved by the council. This is encouraging a proactive rather than reactive approach to the maintenance of our many assets.

***Donations**

The council continue to make annual contributions to local groups and societies and for the next financial year, we have revised some of the amounts that have been donated over the years to ensure a higher degree of equality and fairness. From time to time we receive requests from local groups and charities to which we respond if we feel that we can support them.

***Remembrance Service**

Another successful and well attended Remembrance Service was held again in the village. Despite the poor weather there was a good turnout and was supported by community members of all ages. The usual laying of wreaths took place and we were ably supported by the local church, chapel and local bugler Alex.

Attendees were invited back for refreshments at the church and this was an opportunity for individuals and groups to meet thereby strengthening community links.

***Christmas**

The Christmas Tree was much more successful this year with an improvement in the lighting which was commented on by the community. There was a suggestion that the council consider the establishment of a "living tree" but it was agreed that this would prove difficult as the site of the Christmas Tree belongs to CADW.

***Dog Fouling**

Dog Fouling continues to be an issue periodically.

The council seek advice from the County Council Officer responsible and the clerk regularly attends an awareness meeting to learn how other communities deal with the issue. This year we have asked if we can be involved in the “Summer Action Day” when officers visit communities to distribute literature and discuss issues that individuals may be having in disposing of dog waste.

The dog bin emptying contract has been renewed with a small increase in costs and there have been no reported issues with the company we currently use.

***Training**

There have been a number of training opportunities that have been taken up by members of the council. These include the Code of Conduct, Planning, Website and use of IT and also attendance at the One Voice Wales Conference.

***Highways**

The council report on any issues with the highways in our area. A number of reports have been sent to the County Council in regard to potholes, damaged road signs and fly tipping with positive results. We are hoping that the parking and traffic control will be improved at Dinham ward in the new financial year.

***Section 6 Reporting**

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”) requires all community councils to prepare and publish a plan every three years setting out what they propose to do to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilience. Under section 6(7) of the 2016 Act.

We have a working group which have met to determine as to how best to fulfil this requirement and we have adopted the template suggested and this is an ongoing activity. This continues to be of great value when considering planning applications and will be underpinned in any project undertaken by the council.

We continue to support a Wildlife Area in Crick which has received several awards and the Caerwent Meadows is a recent project for which we secure an annual grant of £2500 from Welsh Government.

***Planning**

The council regularly comment on Planning Applications with reference given to all planning considerations. One of our members has attended Planning Committee Meetings in order to support members of the community who are concerned about issues in our rural environments.

***Community Halls**

We remain very proud of our two large Community Halls which are still very well used.

We have very close links to both committees and make useful financial contributions on an annual basis.

Caerwent Community Centre is hoping to avail themselves of a small community grant which will help to improve the kitchen and thereby further attract groups to enjoy the facilities on offer at the Centre.

Caerwent Village Hall continues to be leased by the Caerwent Playing Fields Association who meet regularly to plan community events including The Annual Village Show and Summer Car Boots. The Hall is used by local groups which serve members of the community well and provide recreational activities and those that help foster wellbeing.

***Finance**

Caerwent Community Council has been supported by a precept of £51,417.00 this year and hold regular finance meetings to discuss how the money is to be spent. We have finished the financial year with balances of

Charitable Bank Account **£16,19.48**

Business Bank Account **£7,611.31**

Here is a list of organisations we supported with financial contributions this year

Maintenance of the Church yard £780

Church Lighting £150

Village Hall £1500

Community Newsletter £500

Community Centre £2,000

Christmas Parties £400

Crick Wildlife Reserve £200

Caerwent Meadows £200

Citizens Advice Bureau £2,500

Football Club £500

Embrace Nature £200

Caerwent Baptist Chapel £240.

Llanvair Discoed Church £240

Llanvaches Tabernacle Church £80

Caerwent Historic Trust £400

AM Spooner

Clerk To The Caerwent Community Council

April 2024