

Cyngor Cymuned Casmael
Punctheston Community Council

Please reply to

Clerc/Clerk

Mr John M Griffiths

Y Garn, Ambleston

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Cadeirydd/Chairman

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31st January 2013

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Legislation Office

National Assembly for Wales

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

Dear Sirs

Consultation on the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Bill

This is the evidence submitted by Punctheston Community Council in response to this consultation, Ann Jones AM's letter dated 29th November 2012 refers. We confine our evidence to Sections 53 – 55 in Part 5 of the Bill, i.e. the Sections requiring community councils to set up websites and to give public notices electronically and to put copies of our minutes on a website.

The Council is totally opposed to these proposals and request that these Sections be removed from the Bill in their entirety.

These proposals are opposed because for small rural community councils such as Punctheston Community Council these requirements are too onerous and are not proportionate to the activities of these councils. This community council meets once a month for ten months of the year. It has one part-time Clerk and a total precept of £2,000.00 per annum and is fairly typical of the small rural community councils within Wales.

Also a website is totally unnecessary. The Pembrokeshire County Council has an excellent website which gives the names of all town and community councils Clerks within the county, and also their addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. Admittedly the names and details of our Councillors are not shown on the County Council website, however if any local resident wishes to have this information, which is known to the majority of our 411 residents on the electoral roll, then all they have to do is to telephone me or to e-mail me. The Pembrokeshire County Council website is updated on a regular basis. I am confident that most of the other twenty-one Unitary Authorities in Wales will have similar excellent websites.

I have been Clerk to the Community Council for six years and in that time I have received only one request to have a copy of the minutes of one of our meetings. This was sent to the resident by means of e-mail within one hour of the request being received. This satisfied the resident involved, and should I receive any similar requests in the future, they could be satisfied in the same manner.

The cost of maintaining an up-to-date website would be totally disproportionate to our Community Council in terms of both time and money and in the end these costs would have to be borne by the Council Tax and Income Tax payers i.e. the members of the public. We were informed yesterday by Mr Frank Cuthbert, Head of Scrutiny, Democracy & Participation Team, Welsh Government, that £1.25 million additional funding had been released by the Minister for Local Government and Communities to support local democracy and public engagement so this gives some indication of the high costs involved. This funding will probably be welcomed by those community councils who perhaps were already contemplating setting up websites of their own. Many of the larger Town and Community Councils already have websites to make it a legal requirement for all community councils to have to set up websites is unnecessary and wrong.

I will make one further more general point and that is a point which we have made to the National Assembly for Wales in the past. And that is it is quite evident that the staff at the National Assembly have very little idea of how the small rural community councils in Wales operate. This has again been demonstrated by the letter from Ann Jones AM. This letter was dated 29th November 2012 and was received by me on 3rd December 2012. Puncteston Community Council meets on the last Wednesday of each month but does not meet in December or August. The letter was received five days after the November meeting and our next meeting, the January meeting took place last night 30th January 2013. The letter states that the provisional consultation deadline is today 31st January 2013. So in effect we have been given one day to consider and reply. The National Assembly has summer and Christmas recesses. Well community councils also have summer and Christmas recesses. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

I attach hereto examples of our minutes, agendas and financial reports which are in word documents and can easily be sent to anyone who wishes to see them at no expense.

John M Griffiths
Clerk

PUNCHESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Notice of Ordinary Meeting to be held at Puncheston School on Wednesday 30th January 2013 at 8.0 p m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Highway Matters
5. Planning
6. Pembs Single Integrated Plan 2013 - 2018
7. Proposed Changes to Pembs CC Electoral Wards
- 8 Correspondence
9. Any other business

PUNCHESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A meeting of Puncteston Community Council was held on Wednesday 28th November 2012 at Puncteston School at 8.00 p m.

Present were:- Mr Wyn Williams (Chairman), Messrs Dewi Lewis, Ian Griffiths, Peter Lilley, Mrs Alison Evans, Mrs Anne Thomas, Councillor Bob Kilmister Pembrokeshire County Council and John Griffiths (Clerk).

1. Apologies

There were no apologies as all members were present.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

Copies of the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 31st October 2012 had been distributed to members. The minutes were agreed as being a true record and were signed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) TELEPHONE KIOSK LITTLE NEWCASTLE. The Clerk reported that on 3rd November he had sent the completed contract together with a cheque for £1.00 and a covering letter to BT Payphones, 4th Floor – Monument Telephone Exchange and he had also sent an e-mail to Linda Kennedy at Payphones Planning Office to keep her in the picture. No further response had been received.

(b) FREQUENT FLOODING OF PUNCHESTON TO MORVIL ROAD. The Clerk reported that Dewi Lewis had phoned him to say that this road was badly flooded on Monday 26th November and was impassable for some cars. The Clerk had sent an e-mail to Cllr Bob Kilmister who in turn had e-mailed Mr Robert Evans, Highways Asset Manager, Pembs County Council. An e-mail reply had been received from Mr Evans stating that the minor works to concrete two channels would be carried out in the next few weeks and that an extension to the drainage system would be carried out sometime in the coming financial year.

(c) ROAD ACCIDENT ON B4329 AT TUFTON. The Clerk confirmed that he had written a letter to Mr John Price, Traffic Manager, Pembs County Council advising him of the accident on 19/10/2012.

(d) FLOODING OF B4329 SOUTH OF TUFTON. The Clerk reported that he had written a letter to Mr Darren Thomas, Head of Highways & Construction, Pembs County Council. A letter of reply had been received from Mr Thomas which stated that the specific matter of flooding has been passed direct to the Area Maintenance Manager to review and address. As to the Community Council's disquiet over maintenance works, Mr Thomas has raised the matter with Mr Richard Brown, Head of Service overseeing the maintenance teams.

4. Highway Matters.

(a) The Clerk reported that on 1st November he had been contacted by Mr Ernest Harries who requested that the unclassified road past Poll Tax be swept prior to the funeral of Mrs Brenda Harries, Poll Tax. The Clerk had contacted the Feidr Castell Highways Depot who had arranged for the road to be swept.

(b) STREET LAMPS. On 6th November Alison Evans had reported that street lamp 803/394, Llygad-yr-Haul – Evergreen, Little Newcastle was faulty. The Clerk had reported this lamp to the Service Line. On 16th November the Clerk had observed that lamps 804/3651 and 803/394 at Little Newcastle were working satisfactorily. On 26th November Dewi Lewis reported that lamp 803/418 at Nantylfynnon, Puncteston, was faulty once more. The Clerk had reported this lamp to the Service Line.

(c) WORKS TO UNCLASSIFIED ROAD U3334 BY DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER.

On 27th November Ian Griffiths had contacted the Clerk to say that Mr Paul Vaughan, Pantycabal had reported to him that road U3334 had now reopened but that there was a great mess left on the road and on

the grassy road island triangle at the junction with the U3370. The Clerk had reported the matter to Mr Ben Blake, Road Traffic, Pembrokeshire County Council, who had promised to have the area inspected.

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(d) Dewi Lewis reported that it had been brought to his attention that there was flood debris on the Puncteston to Llanychaer road near Fagwrfran. Cllr Bob Kilmister stated that he would inspect this area on his way home from the meeting and that he would take any necessary follow-up action.

5. Planning

There was no item of planning.

6. Financial Report.

The Clerk presented a financial report as at 28th November 2012 with projected figures to the end of the financial year. A copy of the report is attached as an annexe to these minutes.

7. Clerk's Salary and Expenses.

Ian Griffiths declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. It was proposed by Dewi Lewis, seconded by Alison Evans and agreed to pay the Clerk a salary of £592.50 for the period 1st July to 31st December 2012. It was proposed by Dewi Lewis, seconded by Alison Evans and agreed to pay the Clerk's expenses of £11.13 for the period 28th June to 30th November 2012.

8. Precept 2013/14.

It was proposed by Ian Griffiths, seconded by Dewi Lewis and agreed that a precept of £2,000.00 should be requested for 2013/14 in the light of the facts that the balance in hand on 1st April 2012 had been £2,092.33, the projected balance in hand on 31st March 2013 would be £1,720.69 and the projected expenditure for 2012/13 would be £2,560.50.

9. Correspondence.

(a) PEMBS COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF GAMBLING POLICY. The Clerk reported that he had studied the proposed policy and there was very little difference to the existing policy. He saw no need for any changes to the policy as far as Puncteston Community Council was concerned because there were no casinos or betting shops and only one gaming machine within the Community.

(b) COMMON LAND CL/85 MYNYDD CASTLEBYTHE. Copy letter received from Mrs Lynne Curcio, Common Land Officer, Pembrokeshire County Council confirming that hand gliding and para-gliding cannot take place on Mynydd Castlebythe.

(c) PALC. Notification of free training for Councillors at Yr Hen Ysgol, Dinas on 22nd November 2012. The Clerk had notified all Councillors by e-mail and telephone prior to the training

(d) The following items of correspondence were received for information:-

- (i) Barclays Bank Plc offer of Barclaycard Business credit card.
- (ii) BDO LLP notification of changes to their extranet.
- (iii) Clerks and Councils Direct November 2012.
- (iv) Play for Wales magazine.
- (v) Pembrokeshire Housing Annual Report 2011/2012.
- (vi) North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum News Briefing October 2012.

10. Any Other Business.

There was no item of any other business.

There being no further business the Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and declared the meeting closed at 8.40 p m.

Date of next meeting agreed as Wednesday 30th January 2013.

Puncheston Community Council

Financial Report 28th November 2012

	£
Balance in hand 1 st April 2012	2,092.33
Receipts to date	
Precept	1,333.50
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Total receipts to date	3,425.83
Expenditure to date	
Insurance	555.81
Charitable donations	485.00
Playing Field rent	30.00
Clerk's salary	622.50
Clerk's expenses	18.90
Audit fee	60.00
PALC Membership	27.00
Adoption of Kiosk	1.00
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Expenditure total to date	1,800.21
Balance in hand 28 th November 2012	1,625.62
Receipts still to come	
Precept	666.50
Way-leave payment	178.86
VAT repayment	10.00
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Projected receipts to end of year	2,480.98
Payments due to be made	
Clerk's salary	592.50
Clerk's expenses	11.13
Christmas Lights	6.66
Caretaker	50.00
Hire of room for meetings	100.00
	<u> </u>
Projected payments to end of year	760.29
Projected Balance in hand at end of year	1,720.69

Notes
Projected expenditure 2012/13 = £2,560.50