

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Penrice Community Council held on Wednesday 21st October 2015 at Oxwich and Penrice Community Hall at 7.30pm

Members Present:

Councillor M Williams (Chairman)
Councillor G Roberts
Councillor J Ellis
Councillor A Glass
Councillor M Barnett
Councillor R Newman

Approximately eight members of the public along with Nick Edwards (NRW) , Hamish Osborne (NRW), Alexandra Davies-Jones, Greg Mackay and the Project Manager (Dwr Cymru Welsh Water).

65/15 Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs T Methuen-Campbell.

The Chairman proposed that Standing Orders were suspended to alter the order of business and allow the representatives from The NRW and also Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to speak at this part of the meeting.

**66/15 A presentation by the NRW - Nick Edwards and Hamish Osborne
Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – Alexandra Davies-Jones, Greg Mackay and the Project Manager.**

Natural Resources Wales

1. Mr N Edwards gave a brief overview of the difficulties caused by the loss of resources and the change from CCW to NRW. He is the sole full time member of staff remaining and volunteers had been lost due to lack of staff to supervise them, and now there are limited staff available to undertake the work needed, so important areas such as rubbish picking etc cannot be achieved. Daily maintenance has also been affected with the loss of staff. Reactionary work has had to be put out to contractors.
2. Members of the public can assist by monitoring the area for any unauthorized fishing, camping or any anti social behavior etc. If there are any horses that have gone through the fence for example, to report this as soon as possible to Nick Edwards, or an alternative number to call is 0800 807060 as a secondary contact.
3. A member of the public from the floor (Julie Kneath) asked if there could be a speed limit placed on the road.
4. Nick Edwards agreed to look into this with the CCS. Also the Clerk to contact the CCS Highways Dept to request that this is investigated along with the possibility of an animal crossing or nature reserve sign. SC
5. The Nature Reserve is a key site for the study of birds in the UK. The British Trust for Ornithology had been catching a variety of species of birds and placing rings on them in order to study them. The reeds had been cleared and now this site was a great habitat for the bird population and wildlife. Teal had been spotted in the area and some species had been tracked as far as Iceland, Spain and other destinations. Approximately 5000 new birds had been humanely caught and ringed. There is international awareness for this important area. Members of BTO are volunteers who have to buy the seed and rings themselves (with some gifting by NRW and Gower Society). There are approximately 135 ducks on the open lakes.
6. NRW were hoping that a Facebook page would be able to be set up once all the trust issues were resolved.
7. Oxwich Woods had now been bought by Mr Williams of the Oxwich Bay Hotel, but it remains a protected area. Mr Williams is managing the site with outside contractors.. To take over the management, the NRW would have to sign a management agreement similar to a lease that would mean the woods would remain a nature reserve. The NRW are committed to working with Mr Williams to get the best possible result.
8. The Designated Landscape of Wales – The possibility that Gower could lose its AONB status was discussed.

66/15

A presentation by the NRW - Nick Edwards and Hamish Osborne

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – Alexandra Davies-Jones, Greg Mackay and the Project Manager cont...

9. The final gully on the marsh side near the car park gets blocked on occasions; so it has mystified locals and NRW as to why CCS has built a bund to stop excess water flowing straight into the marsh.
10. The sluice was working very well. Nick Edwards explained the details of how this now benefited the lakes and plants. He explained that with the two measures for controlling the water, he was now able to flood the Fen and then drain it so that it could be grazed.
11. Otters have been spotted on the reserve: a male, a female (unfortunately run over) and three juveniles. Mink and polecats have been seen, but the increase in the otter population will see a reduction in the mink population due to the territorial nature of the otters.
12. Traps were installed and caught two mink and these were given to the RSPCA for relocation. It is looking very positive to having breeding otters in the future.
13. The Chair suggested that the seed used for the ringing and tracking of the birds on the reserve is something the PCC could support financially and for the NRW to get in contact in the future with more information.
14. QN : A Member of the public from the floor asked if the NRW had any statutory rights of access to Oxwich Point.
15. ANS: NRW are able to go anywhere if there is a reason to go. Monitoring is currently being undertaken from the air and also extra monitoring is planned for the area.
16. Fly tipping and also tipped garden waste was an ongoing problem.
17. Nick Edwards was thanked for his presentation.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

Alexandra Davies-Jones, Greg Mackay and the Project Manager.

1. Cllr A Glass gave an overview of the problems that had been experienced in Oxwich with many residents having sewage backing up their systems and spilling over into their gardens in a few cases. This was mainly caused by excess surface/ground water entering the sewer and the fact that this system was only designed for foul sewage flow.
2. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have already tried to rectify this problem and some of that work had been successful; however the limitation is in the pumps, so this is still a situation that needs to be rectified.
3. The problem is made worse in the heavy rain as the pumps just cannot cope with the volume of water.
4. The Project Manager advised that at the lower end of the sewer, the pipe will either be replaced or lined, which will address the infiltration. DCWW will be monitoring the flow of water at the area that the sewer is currently taking in excess water. There will be a large cost the DCWW but they are committed to find a solution to this problem.
5. The area where the work is planned is from the crossroads to the pumping-station by the car park, approximately 45 metres. Timescales for the work along with minimizing the impact on customers and the access for traffic were also being given careful consideration. Advice from the PCC and residents was sought.
6. A discussion followed regarding the best time for this necessary work to be carried out, with all parties having input.

66/15 **A presentation by the NRW - Nick Edwards and Hamish Osborne**
Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – Alexandra Davies-Jones, Greg Mackay and the Project
Manager cont...

7. A Member of the public from the floor queried that further up in the village a large part of her sewer ran over her land and questioned if the problems were caused by the infiltration of surface water. Were the land drains working properly? Would this be a CCS issue as the Highways Department look after this?
8. DCWW would be looking at this and reiterated that the sewer was being overloaded by excess clean water. If the surface water drains were working properly, this would alleviate the problem, but there is still too much water and nowhere it can go.
9. Hamish Osborne from the NRW explained that the volume of ground water was due to the types of rocks in the area and the marsh ground and therefore the sewer was acting as a land drain which it was never designed for.
10. DCWW had previously tried to resolve the problem. However this had not worked and the excess water is still getting into the sewer via the manhole covers and pipe joints and these need to be sealed.
11. It was resolved that the best way forward is to include the community by setting up a Community Liaison Committee which would include three Oxwich Councillors, Mr D Workman and Mr I Williams of the Oxwich Bay Hotel.
12. It was agreed to meet to discuss each stage and to arrange a public meeting so that as many of the residents who would be affected by the inevitable road closures could be informed of the details of the work and also have any concerns or questions answered. It was suggested that for the first meeting, a possible location would be the Oxwich Bay Hotel. DCWW/AG
13. DCWW were thanked for their input to the meeting, and given an assurance that there would be local support to assist them in carrying out the proposed major repairs to the sewer, with minimum disturbance and inconvenience to locals, and minimum cost to DCWW.

67/15 **Declarations of Interest.**

Cllr G Roberts declared an interest in an Item regarding the sale of land to the RNLI due to being a member of the Lifeboat crew.

Cllr M Williams and Cllr R Newman declared an interest in an Item under Planning application no 2015/1257.

68/15 **To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 16th September 2015.**

Item no 60/15

Amendment: Add... even though the PCC did not have an objection to the porta cabins in the Horton car park they had not seen the application until after they were in place.

Cllr G Roberts proposed that with the above amendment, the minutes were a true and accurate record of events, seconded Cllr A Glass, carried unanimously.

69/15 **Matters arising from the minutes.**

Item 55/15 sub item 35/15 B

The Penrice Sign is still missing, The Clerk advised that this had been chased on a few occasions twice by email and once by phone. Due to this still not being dealt with Clerk to chase again. SC

Item 49/15 no 2

The Chair to contact Chris Williams to ensure that the problem with the unit had been resolved. MW

74/15 RNLI - Sale of Land adjoining the Horton Lifeboat House.

Cllr G Roberts declared a personal interest in this item and did not speak or vote.

- ***To discuss the email received from RNLI advising that the foul sewer and water drains from the new extension of the Boat House have to be sited on PCC land which currently has common status.***

Points raised;

1. The new location of the flagpole was unknown at this stage.
 2. At the corner of the extension, there was 5/6 ft of sand: is there going to be a retaining wall placed there or were the dunes going to be graded?
 3. The proposed emergency door would be opening directly onto a footpath that was the Gower Coastal Path and if anyone was walking past then they could be knocked by it. Also this is shown on the diagrams on the Transfer Document. There is no permission to do this and it is a legal point that would need to be checked.
 4. The drain details were not advised to the PCC until the very last minute. The main sewer ran under the RNLI building.
 5. The drains were for grey water and not "gross" sewage.
 6. Advice would be needed from the solicitor regarding the easement, indemnity and common land permission needed for the land that was still in the PCC ownership, where the drains were planned. Also an easement had been requested to work on PCC land in order to carry out this work.
 7. This could all take weeks to get done.
 8. Instead of an external drain, a Flygt system (Saniflo principle) could be installed internally which would allow this water to be pumped into the existing sewer.
 9. Inspection covers and manholes on Horton Green: many people do not like these, as it is common land in an AONB. Also, as the land around them erodes over time, they are then more visible, and potential slip and trip hazards, and likely to damage mowing machinery.
 10. A trapped gulley was also suggested.
 11. A sump and Flygt pump would route water into the existing drain system.
 12. Was permission needed from Dwr Cymru Welsh Water? Not if all the work is done internally into existing foul drains.
 13. To the South of the building is an area that is not in PCC Ownership; does the CCS own this?
 14. Who would be responsible for the manhole cover, DCWW, RNLI or PCC?
- ***To consider and sign the transfer documents for the sale of land to the RNLI for the extension of the Boat house subject to satisfactory outcome of the discussion regarding the drains.***

Due to all the queries that were still unclear at the moment, it was not possible to sign the Transfer Document at this stage due because some of it may need to be altered.

75/15 The Oxwich Marsh Road

There was concern over why the surface water being routed into the marsh has had a bund placed across the overflow natural channel by CCS.

Resolved: The Clerk to contact the CCS Highways Department.

SC

76/15 Litter Bins.

Dealt with earlier this week.

77/15 Councillors Reports.

More signs were now missing : the "Oxwich" sign at the top of the hill and also reported that the hedge cutter does not cut around one of the remaining signs and so it cannot be seen properly.

MW/SC

The Designated Landscapes – The possibility of Gower being changed from an AONB status to a Designated Landscape seemed to have been passed the PCC. The Clerk and Cllr J Ellis via OVW to investigate this.

SC

78/15 Public Questions relating to the agenda. (limited to 10 minutes)

None.

79/15 Date and venue of next meeting.

18th November 2015 at Horton Village Hall.

Date _____ Chairman _____