

Dear Council members

I would kindly ask that I convey my observations in English for the purpose of this presentation.

I was unaware until a couple of months ago that these council meetings were being held. Being an onlooker only at the last meeting I was overwhelmed at the discovery that a community could hold such meetings to convey any concerns present in the community and have a voice, all be it a small one, that could be heard by other authorities. I was however bewildered as to how such meetings could have taken place for so long without my awareness, as I have been a member of this community for over 20 years. Having discussed the matter with other members of the community I now realise that there is a large proportion of the community that are also unaware of such meetings. Having found this quite alarming we decided to look further into the possible reasons for the lack of public awareness and would like to make some recommendations to the council.

As I understand the public have a right to attend meetings. S232 of The Local Government Act 1972 and The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 places a requirement on community councils to give notice of forthcoming council meetings 3 clear days before the meeting is to be held. This is to be done by displaying a notice in 1 or more conspicuous areas within the community and also electronically. At my last checking which was Saturday 23/9 and my checking on the night of 24/7 after the last meeting I have failed to find such notice. Might I suggest to the council that the conspicuous area used at present be re-evaluated and a more conspicuous area be used instead so as to better inform the public of these meetings. There is also a requirement to publish electronically so far as is reasonably practicable any documents relating to the business to be transacted at the meeting. Again at my last checking which was the evening of 23/9 these documents were not published. I can only assume this is an oversight on the council's behalf.

Having viewed the council's website to try and locate the required electronic publications we have also discovered further issues which I would like to bring to the council's attention.

S55 to 58 of The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 requires community councils to publish a contact telephone number for the council, information about how each member may be contacted, party

affiliation (if any), the minutes of its meetings and their annual audited accounts. All of this information is either incomplete or non-existent. May I remind the council that all minutes and records should be available from 1st May 2015 onwards. Older records can be archived but must be accessible from the website. I would like to suggest to the council that these points be rectified as soon as possible so as not to breach The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and The Code of Conduct. Yet again I believe this to be an oversight on the council's behalf.

It is deemed good practice for the council to have a business plan showing clearly what the council wants to achieve during its 4 year term and how it will accomplish this. I wonder whether a business plan has indeed been constructed and if so could request that this also be made available to the public in the spirit of open government.

It is my understanding that 11 seats exist on this council yet only 9 seats have been filled. I also understand that the council has experienced difficulty in filling its vacant seats for sometime. This I feel reinforces the point I have made concerning the conspicuous area currently used for displaying public notices. I feel that utilising a more conspicuous area for public notices could better inform the community of the council's existence and aims. This in turn would consequently result in a broader interest from the community and provide awareness of any vacancies which could then be filled. I would suggest to the council that the 2 vacant seats be advertised as soon as possible so as to provide an opportunity for these seats to be filled. I feel this would better enable the council in achieving its goals.

I understand that the community council elections were unopposed but feel that this was the only possible outcome when allowing for the lack of public awareness and procedure within the community. 2 of the council members have been co-opted having failed to express their interest before the deadline. Where a community council intends to fill a vacancy by co-option they must give public notice of the co-option opportunity as required under S116 of The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. This should be done by displaying a notice yet I cannot find any evidence of a notice or reference to the provision of a notice in the minutes. Consideration should also be given to advertising the vacancy in the local press. Again by reviewing the very few minutes available on the website it appears, that on more than 1 occasion, only 4 members in total have attended

certain meetings. I understand that this is still sufficient for the quorum set but fear that the communities needs are not being given the attention and consideration it requires on these occasions. I do not doubt that each council member gives of their time freely and selflessly and understand the reality of each council member not being able to attend each and every meeting. But with a view to filling the 2 vacant seats I believe this will alleviate any concerns regarding attendees as it should provide the council with a more balanced attendance at meetings.

According to One Voice Wales community councils are deemed "the part of the local government closest to the people and are responsible for the most local of matters". These fall into 3 main categories (i) representing the whole electorate within the community (ii) delivering services to meet the local needs (iii) striving to improve quality of life in the community. In the meeting of July the public members present at the meeting were informed of the councils lack of knowledge and involvement concerning the eisteddfod proceedings. Yet of the very few minutes available on the councils website I notice that February's minutes contain reference to the presentation made by Huw Aled of the eisteddfod to the council regarding the proposed measures to be taken and the councils reference to the valuable information received ("gwybodaeth werthfawr"). I believe that the eisteddfod utilised the meeting with the council as a way of relaying information to the community. The council failed in it's duties to relay this information to the community and also failed in it's duties of putting the views of the community across. I fail to understand how the council can possibly fulfill any of these categories whilst there remains an overwhelming lack of awareness with regards to the councils existence. I can only hope that the council has now realised the importance of it's duties to the community should any further events arise in the future.

I do not take any pleasure in standing before the council today but feel that I, as a member of this community have a duty to raise the councils awareness of the seemingly lack of existence of internal controls shown by the council. It is my hope that by expressing my views and the views of the community that we can move forward positively and create a stronger awareness within the community of the councils existence and commitment. This, in turn, I hope will provide a strong foundation in which both the council and the community can build upon to create a better

community and aid the council in achieving economy,efficiency and effectiveness.

May I thank the council for hearing the views