

CYMDEITHASFA CHWARAEON LLANGENNECH & BRYN SPORTS ASSOCIATION

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Dear Councillors,

As the current acting chairman of the established Llangennech and Bryn Sports Association I feel the need to address you in my absence for the July meeting in order to represent the reaction to the reports of the Clerk and Surveyor, which I received on Friday.

Firstly I assume that you as Councillors have all received every correspondence submitted by the LBSA with a chance to digest it with enough time prior to our recent meetings? (That'd be the Constitution, lease areas proposal, business plan and all corresponding letters including a list of members and which clubs and organisations they represent).

We have made every effort to submit such work to the clerk by at least 9 days prior to the next meeting. (You will recall that the wrong contact email addresses on your website was brought up by myself in a meeting in April. May I point out that this has not been addressed. Therefore you will understand the irony when the Surveyor continually questions the competency of our organisation in his report.)

Therefore could I please point out how unprincipled I find the fact that the reports of the Clerk and Surveyor were conveniently delivered to us on Friday 6/7/18. (72 hours/3 days prior to the July meeting) whereby they are addressing issues from a full 2 months prior. I assume they are either expecting us to reply to the "shortfalls" in our documentation within the weekend timeframe, or otherwise put off hearing them until September. The contents of the reports, which I assume you will have also been distributed and digested prior to tonight's meeting, is both elitist and has been deemed borderline offensive to many of the members of the LBSA.

I implore the Councillors to consider the advice of the Surveyor and Clerk with some reservations with regard to the shortfalls they refer to. This has been clarified in the attached document where answers to their points have been addressed, or counter-queries raised.

The Surveyors report appears to be pushing for a more professional body to take on the lease, as opposed to a Community Interest Group; I can only assume this is in order to take liability away from the Council themselves. I would be interested if the other organisations granted leases could stand up to the same level of scrutiny and have had to demonstrate long term sustainability. We therefore would like to make a request to see the scrutiny of the existing lease agreements applied to the Cricket and Bowls clubs at the park; if that could please be provided to the LBSA in order to compare and address our apparent shortfalls as raised by the administrative branch of your council.

Just as a side note, the LBSA will not be regulated by the Community Council administrative branch. In fact, we have already perused projects outside of the remit of any Council agreement with great development. Should the Councillors agree that there are shortfalls in our constitution then we will gladly hear and consider amendments as necessary, however statements from the Surveyor relating to representing the ideals of funding organisations should be given short shrift since our understanding is that he is unqualified in this field, thus cannot speak with authority on behalf of such funding organisations.

The suggestion of employing a "project officer" is also not in keeping with a community group; this again supports the notion that the Surveyor is keen to introduce facets of bureaucracy to put the brakes on an already slow process. I would suggest that this is possibly in part due to some form of reluctance to cease control or perhaps even resentment that a group outside of his control might attain some power to change and develop things for the good of the community. For the record, unlike previous efforts to implement similar changes drowning under the tidal wave of council red tape, our organisation are keen to drive this project to its natural end. We are fully prepared to do the paper work required, therefore we'd like to request that any further requirement from the Surveyor in order for the LBSA to arrive at the point where the council are satisfied to move forward would be greatly appreciated today. The drip feed process adopted over the past 3 meetings clearly do not suit either party.

We would also like to impress on the Councillors that the section of the Surveyor's report conveying an unwillingness to consider anything other than the development of the tennis court and surrounding area may well be perceived by the people of the community as the council taking advantage of the opportunity to correct a derelict and dangerous part of the recreation ground without incurring any costs to themselves, therefore, would prefer this to be accomplished rather than additional potential development of the larger and more useful space at the dog park (or "the area behind the hedge" - "the dog park" is becoming an increasingly used term to recognise the area).

Much of the advice presented to the Council appears to be poorly researched and their statements reflect a clear failure to listen to or read what the proposals of the LBSA are. I.e. The surveyors notes repeatedly refer to "Llangennech football club" as the source of threat to development on the cricket field. This is neither a football process nor do we intend on encroaching on the cricket field. The LBSA are working to better opportunities for all; I must insist that this be recognised at this juncture. With regard to the building of an "arena behind the hedge"; this was an initial provisional idea which was dealt with earlier in the year. Why would the Surveyor pursue the matter when everyone else has moved on? The WRU/FAW/Sport Wales grants officers meeting (held on 4/6/18), which has been reported to the council, makes no mention of any "arena" in the dog park.

I would like to speak directly to the Councillors on this matter. We are a group of people within our community who have got together to do good and with a common goal of improving the underused areas of the park for community use when the demand is so great.

The queries - with regard to the competency or ability of our committee members - border on personal criticism and are inappropriate and unfounded. Neither the Clerk nor the Surveyor have to date displayed any interest in understanding what skills we hold. Naming officers in a constitution will not tick this box, so it would be an empty gesture. All works undertaken under the guise of this association would be subject to professional consultancy as we would never agree something without technical support - never have we heard that done by formal appointment in these circumstances.

For the record, the majority of our volunteer members are professionals who have agreed to put aside past "perceived" differences between our sports clubs to form an organisation, at the advised request of the Surveyor. We feel we have adequately fulfilled all of the requirements of the admin branch of your council in order to get a start point on creating our vision. Attached with this letter is a PDF document that has notes in answer to all of the Clerk and Surveyors points. Should the Councillors actually feedback with a statement of any shortfalls following a full and comprehensive review of what we have submitted so far, then we would be happy to discuss with the Council members.

As a number of the Councillors will know, I am born and bred within this community. I have a far reaching understanding of how people think across many of the "classes" (to put it in a way that the administration might recognise) and I know for a fact that the community council is ridiculed in most part due to a perceived absolute fear of change. It is to the extent that people will argue "what is the point of trying to say anything?" As I brought up in your meeting in April, this fact will be backed by the failure of the people to actually email issues to the council because there is still today a failure to recognise the errors in the email addresses on the website. It is now 2018 - people of the village will expect to be able to email the council to air their views. If I could borrow phrase from the surveyor's report, "Simple questions requiring not so difficult answers."

We would implore the council members not to hide behind the mass of red tape on this occasion; preventing the members of this community to make positive changes. Creating a minefield of bureaucracy to prevent change simply feeds the belief within the community that the Council's support for initiative, development and change is non-existent. We understand that the Council does not have the funding or prerogative to pursue this type of improvement; all we ask is that we are given the opportunity to do so ourselves.

The LBSA will hold its inaugural AGM at 7pm on Thursday July 26th at Llangennech Rugby Club - you are all very much welcome to attend that meeting.




Best regards to you all and thank you for your time. I look forward to your feedback.

Emyr Williams (B.A., MInstBINDT)

Acting chairman
LBSA






Initial Comments on Papers from The Llangennech and Bryn Sporting Association

Public Meeting

- a) Where was the public meeting held and the date 
- b) Was it advertised. 
- c) What sporting organisations were in attendance. 






Constitution

It is a very general document with no specifics regarding the Sporting Association.

-  a) It has no specific detail on the specific purpose of the organisation.
-  b) How is finance to be raised and controlled.
-  c) Who are the officers.
-  d) Who are the members and details of meetings and how the organisation is to be run.
- e) Has legal advice been sought. 

Business Plan

A detailed business plan had been requested by Council but what has been received is a very general document with no specifics. The following would be expected.

- a) Detailed description of the project. 
- b) Detailed analysis of the capital expenditure 
- c) Detailed analysis of the financing of the project with specific details of grants to be received and source of contributions expected. 
- d) Details of running expenditure and income and source of this. 
- e) Details regarding the control of the project during construction and the running of thereafter. 

ENC
1/7/18


DEVELOPMENT AT THE RECREATION GROUND


Report to Council at the Meeting to be held on Monday 9th July, 2018

Wyn


I am writing early to you regarding this matter in view of holidays, as I will be away when the Agenda of the next Council Meeting is prepared.




My previous Report in April referred to the major difficulties in developing the south western corner of the site due to ground conditions, difficulty of access and the unlikelihood of obtaining planning permission for development on the flood plain.

In the last Meeting of the Council the football representative again referred to the provision of some form of arena in this area. 

Whilst the enthusiasm of any Member of the Public or Club is to be welcomed with regard to improving facilities in the village there is a need for certain parameters to be recognised. These need to be firmly established by the Council, not to discourage development, but to face up to realities regarding what may be possible to achieve and maintain in the future. 

The Council could consider the following parameters:

1. A leasehold interest can only be considered in respect of the Tennis Court and adjoining area. A lease is unavailable for any other location in the park. 

The only other development acceptable is the improvement of playing  surfaces, through the provision of additional top soil etc. This work does not require a lease. No other physical development in the Park is acceptable and should not be further considered by the Football Club  The tennis court area is the main project that can be pursued with funding organisations, rather than create an impression that there is going to be a major restructuring of the whole of the Recreation Ground 

2 The hedgerow between the south-western corner of the Park and the Cricket Pitch to be retained in accordance with previous Council Policy. In addition, the cricket outfield shall not be disturbed by any future plans without the agreement of the Council, in consultation with the Cricket Club. Removal of this hedge will inevitably lead to encroachment on to the Cricket outfield.

The scheme to be promoted by the Sports Association (a major project in its own right) should be confined to the area of the Tennis Court and adjoining land.


The concept for providing an "all weather multi sports area" at this location is worthy of complete support and this is enough to be getting on with.

3 The Council will need to be sufficiently confident that the "applicant body" is competent as an organisation and able to promote and manage the facility for the period of any lease granted. There must be sincere support from all interested sporting interests, which should endure for the long term. The Council will need to be ensured that the Officers of the "applicant body" are competent to deal with this major proposal. This will also be a likely requirement of "Funding Organisations".

The Association (when properly constituted) will be responsible for Project Management and handling large sums of money which will have to be properly accounted for in Audited Accounts. The Council needs to be fully satisfied that the Capital costs of construction and the ongoing costs of managing the facility can be provided by the Association. Otherwise liabilities resulting from the demise of the Association, whether early or later would have to be met from Council Budgets.

The Council has to be sure that any Association set up has credibility for the long term, a point not lost on any funding organisation.






The Clerk to the Council will respond to the shortfalls in the the Constitution presented to the Council. At an earlier presentation of this project advice was given to seek legal advice on the procedures for setting up a Constitution.

This advice has not been acted upon. Unless the Association is properly constituted its unreasonable to expect a lease to be granted. The lease, if granted, would lay down terms for the appointment of a suitably qualified Project Officer to oversee the whole scheme. In particular, this involves advising on design, tendering, dealing with the Contractor, and settling accounts. 

The lease would also include a clause requiring the surrender of the lease in the event of the Association ceasing to exist. In such circumstances any assets on site, as a result of partial or full completion of the project would revert to the Council, and no other Organisation.

I have to say that I am nervous about the current approach. Someone who is reasonably familiar with Project Management, and the complexities involved, needs to be co-opted onto the Association at a very early stage.

These are all issues for consideration by the Association, and to be helpful a start could be made as follows:

- a. Identify and sketch out what is to be included in the proposal - suggest that Hendy Park be visited and that enquiries are made as to how their project was achieved. 
- b. What use is going to be made of the facility and who will use it and what is the likely demand? 
- c. What is the estimated cost of the scheme, and how will this be funded? 
- d. Establish the potential funding organisations and make early contact with an outline of the scheme. What happens if the funding level is less than 100%? 
- e. What are the proposals for managing the project after completion and will the income be adequate to fund future maintenance? Alternatively, is it expected that the Council will make a financial contribution? 

These are simple questions (and there will be more) requiring difficult answers.

All of these matters will need to be quantified in the Business Plan.

Finally it is important for the Association too fully realise the complexities of what is being proposed and to make sure it has the necessary skills on board.



A J Williams, MRICS, MRTPI

Council Surveyor.

15/06/2018