

Community of Llangattock Vibon Avel


Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council *Cyngor Cymuned Llangatwg Feibion Afel*

Roy G Nicholas

Clerk to the Council
Proper Officer of the Council

16 Rushey Meadow
MONMOUTH NP25 5BT



 (01600) 714181

Clerc y Cyngor
Swyddog Priodol y Cyngor

16 Ddŵl Frwynog
TREFYNWY NP25 5BT

22 January 2013

Mr John Pearson
Local Democracy Manager
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Dear Mr Pearson

Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements for Monmouthshire

Just to recap on a few of the various statements which we have propounded in the past, it is apposite for me to bring them to the fore when the question of "how many community councillors" is under consideration.

A Our community is within the second most geographically deprived area in the whole of Wales for access to facilities and services. We do not have a single shop, garage, doctor's surgery or other facilities. The isolation is such that a person living at Cross Ash has a round trip of 18 miles for a loaf of bread.

B We have fewer than 400 residences. These are scattered within an area of about 14sq kilometres and include Skenfrith, Cross Ash, Rockfield, Llangattock, Newcastle and the Hendre.

The names, contacts including telephone numbers of our members are shown ward by ward on the six village notice-boards which are situated in the open in the most prominent place in the village and are always maintained in an as-new condition. In other words, our community councillors are easy (and happy!) to be contacted.

C Because our *Precept* has to be absorbed by fewer than 400 residences, we have to be exceptionally careful with our funds and have to absorb small jobs as 'in-house' tasks.

D Our really big expense is the care and maintenance of our properties which consist of the War Memorial at Skenfrith and the War Memorial at Llangattock. There is also the Churchyard at Llangattock which produces no income whatsoever. Our obligation at the Churchyard is much compounded by having to care for its stone wall perimeter and the fact so many of the monuments on its steep slope are laid horizontal and require to be exposed lest someone should slip. It is also the burial place of Charles Rolls (of Rolls Royce) which attracts huge numbers of visitors. This places a special H & S responsibility on us to comply with the 2009 regulations. Each time the grass is strimmed costs £150!

So, why do we require 10 Community Councillors?

LT1 = 3. The area stretches from the border with Wanastow as far as Newcastle and includes Llangattock and the Hendre in between. When the weather is reasonable, dealing with visitors (only a few weeks ago we had a coachload of 46 persons) to see the Charles Rolls memorial. Sponsored walks also include this location as a stopping place. These events can well absorb the attention of one Councillor.

With the recent introduction of discharging patients from hospital for care at their own homes, we are obliged to ensure that their carers can actually get to their patient. Only last week when we checked on a route in this ward, it became obvious that salt-bins would be required on the long and steep slope if they were to reach a 95-year old patient, twice daily, discharged from hospital with a broken leg. This was achieved.

LT 2. This covers Cross Ash, Norton, Skenfrith and the area between them and Newcastle. We require one who resides at Cross Ash and who is involved with the Village Hall and the Playing Field. It is only fairly recently that we found how essential it was to have 'Our Man' at Cross Ash when we spent months on fighting our case to retain the playing field from building. It took months of hard work which resulted in the Assembly's Inspector at the Public Hearing finding in our favour.

The next hamlet Norton requires a councillor for that area which includes residences stretching to the Grosmont border.

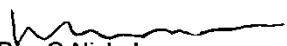
Skenfrith is a very busy place where CADW no longer employs anyone to enlighten visitors about the Castle. The War Memorial attracts attention because, in addition to listing the men who lost their lives, it also lists the men who went to the wars but were fortunate to return home!

Councillor 4 is responsible for the hilly area between Newcastle and the other areas listed above.

LT3 covers St Maughans, the Maypole, Rockfield and the area between Rockfield and the Hendre. Three councillors are kept busy to avoid residents having to contact MCC departments!!

So please, when reviewing or 10 community councillors, allow us to continue providing the service which our electorate has come to expect of us. This will be particularly important as MCC's much publicised **Bringing Health and Social Care Closer Together** gathers momentum. This is happening now and we wish to play our part.

Yours sincerely


Roy G Nicholas
Clerk to the Council
Proper Officer of the Council
Appointed Officer to the Burial Authority
Churchyard Safety Officer