

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BONFIRE SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE BAY OF COLWYN TOWN COUNCIL, HELD REMOTELY (VIA ZOOM) AT 2PM ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Jeff Pearson, Bay of Colwyn Town Council **JP (Chairman)**  
Malcolm Worth, Bay of Colwyn Town Council **MW**  
Lorraine Yorke, CCBC/Eirias **LY**  
Shaun Thompson, CCBC/Leisure, **ST**  
Peter Barton Price, CCBC **PBP**  
Mark Brierley, CCBC **MB**  
Terry Kearney, Get Set Go Events / NW Fire and Rescue Service **TK**  
Laura Mulvaney, NW Police **LM**

**OFFICER:** Tina Earley, Town Clerk **TE**  
Louise Austin, Admin Assistant **LA**

**188/21 Welcome and Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr Jeff Pearson welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr C Hughes, Mike Hughes (CCBC), Richard Orme (CCBC)

**189/21 Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting, held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021, were approved and signed as an accurate record.

**190/21 Matters Arising from the Last Meeting:**

**a) Confirmation of Date:** It was noted that the use of the Barn/Arena/Car Park has been confirmed for Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**b) Fireworks Order:** It was noted that the order has been placed, but can be cancelled up until the date of delivery of the fireworks (approximately 2 weeks prior to the event).

**c) Event Safety Management Plan:**

**(i)** The Clerk submitted the initial feedback from the Conwy Safety Advisory Group (SAG), for information.

**(ii)** It was noted that the Welsh Government had held a press conference on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September and announced that non-seated outdoor events with over 4,000 people in attendance, meeting for a 'prolonged period of time', would require evidence of vaccination (Covid Pass) or of a negative lateral flow test.

MB had been invited to attend the meeting, in his capacity as the officer responsible for compliance with Covid relations on behalf of Conwy CBC. He informed members that there had been no further guidance issued, as yet, though lots of questions are being asked by event organisers etc, seeking further clarification.

LY mentioned that Eirias Park was capable of holding more than 4,000

people and that attendance at the event in recent years had been 7,000+.

A discussion then took place regarding the additional measures that may be necessary for the event to be able to go ahead and comply with the new requirements. These included: the arrival time would need to be longer with gates/lanes set up for attendees; increased resources (staff/stewards/security) would be needed; the need for safety information to be provided in advance and checks on Covid passes etc would necessitate it being a ticketed event; restrictions on numbers may be required; the spectator zone would need to be secured, to prevent unauthorised access - this would require Heras fencing instead of the usual pedestrian fencing, which would result in a significant additional cost; the time it would take to admit everyone safely would need to be clearly communicated; training /support would be needed to deal with turning people away, due to them either not knowing about or having tickets.

MB advised members that, as and when the guidance was issued or changed, any enforcement action will rest with him and his team; they will decide what is appropriate and not appropriate. He advised members that other events have gone through the Conwy Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and that we could use those events as a template for the bonfire event. He would be happy to help and make things easier, dependent on the requirements under the guidance (still to be issued).

Concern was also expressed about the possibility of a Covid 'firebreak' at the end of October/beginning of November, if infection rates continued to rise. MB said that the rumours had been mentioned for a while now and that the Welsh Government always denied them. However, he also mentioned that the infection rate numbers were not good, especially in Conwy where the rates had been steadily increasing for the last 4 weeks. Numbers were higher than in January/February, during the full lockdown. It was noted that those testing positive were experiencing milder symptoms, but that studies showed vaccination cover was starting to drop and hence the booster programme.

In light of the lack of any detailed guidance from the Welsh Government and the reluctance to cancel the event at this stage, it was suggested that the group continue to plan for an event, while waiting for further guidance. Provisional bookings may need to be made, for example for medical cover and event security staff.

It was noted that further guidance would need to be issued by the 11<sup>th</sup> October, at latest, as that is the date that the new regulations come into force, so any decision would need to be made as soon as possible after that in order to ensure staff were aware and have time to prepare.

It was noted that the Welsh Government's FAQ had just been updated and there was a possibility that non-ticketed events, e.g. in public open spaces, may be exempt from the new requirements. This gives events like ours a glimmer of hope.

However, if the event were to go ahead, concern was expressed there is also a possibility of criticism being levied at the organisers, should it be seen as being a centre for infection, as well as putting pressure on the health authority.

MB reassured members that people have been attending events since Level 0 was introduced and that no event had been the subject of public criticism, as yet. Given it is an outdoor event, over a relatively short period of time and with some social distancing possible, the risk is much less than that of indoor events over prolonged periods of time.

It was agreed unanimously that it would be sensible to take a cautious approach and wait for further guidance on/before the 11<sup>th</sup> October. TK confirmed that the fireworks order could still be cancelled within that time period, if necessary.

NW suggested that should the event go ahead, that concessions were not accepted this year, to restrict queuing/congestion, allow for quicker egress of attendees and create more room for viewing.

***Resolved to agree that no concessions be allowed on site this year.***

**191/21 Next Meeting:**

Members agreed to defer the remaining items to the next meeting and the Chair called the meeting to a close.

***Resolved that the Clerk would send out a meeting invite for the next meeting to be held during week commencing the 11<sup>th</sup> October.***

The Meeting closed at 2.40pm.

..... Chairman