

Special Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday, 21 February 2018 with Ms. Kathryn Silk, Panel Member on the Independent Review of Community/Town Council Sector in Wales in the Council Chamber, Orchard Street at 5.30pm.

Present:- Councillors ***B.M. Sutton*** ***(Presiding).***
Mrs. D. Brown
Mrs. O.M. Swales
H.J. Swales
W.K. Hodgins
D.P. Foote
J. M. Sutton
G.D. Jones
M.I Morgan

In Attendance:- ***Mrs. A.C. Davies*** ***(Town Clerk).***
Miss. N.J. Williams ***(Asst. Town Clerk).***

Apologies were given on behalf of Councillors, R.J. Hill, D. Lyn Elias, Miss. S.A. Morgan, J.M. Gardner, T.S. Hughes, N. Boyd, Mrs. J. Boyd.

The Chair welcomed Ms. Kathryn Silk to the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves to the guest.

Ms. Kathryn Silk started by informing members that the Independent Review Panel was first set up by Mr. Mark Drakeford, Welsh Government. The Panel was set up to look broadly at what Town Council's do at present and what they would like to be able to do in the future.

A member informed Ms. Silk that due to Council's small precept Brynmawr Town Council is very limited to what activities it can deliver. Brynmawr Town Council supports organisations such as Sports Groups, Scouts, Schools, Christmas Lights, Events, Charities and clubs within the town. A member suggested engaging with the general public to gather their views on the future role of Community and Town Council's.

Ms. Silk informed the member that the Welsh Government has already set up five road shows throughout Wales which is advertised on the Welsh Government Website. The panel are relying on Community and Town Council members to represent their area.

Ms. Silk asked members would the Town Council like to be able to manage Community Facilities. A member said to run community assets you need certain expertise and Brynmawr Town Council would not want to promise services that they would not be able to deliver.

Ms. Silk asked members how they felt about amalgamation.

Members all agreed that they would not want to amalgamate with other Councils and feel that if this did happen they would lose their identity.

A member informed Ms. Silk that local Town/Community Councils meet with their County Borough Council every 2 months (Consultation Meetings) to forward views and concerns within their towns.

Ms. Silk asked members if more funding became available would the Council take on more responsibility in the future.

A member said Brynmawr Town Council have many ideas but the finances are not available.

A member said that if the Welsh Government would like Town Councils to deliver more services to their communities it would help if they would top up Town Councils precepts without raising the Council Tax.

In members opinion, Town Councils should be able to apply directly to the Welsh Government for funding.

Members expressed if there were more money and powers available to Town Council's it would persuade people to put their name forward to sit on the Town Council.

Members informed Ms. Silk that the Town Council holds presentation evenings to recognise local sports people, retired Doctors etc. and meets outside bodies such as ABUHB, Police, Community Health Council and other Government representatives to highlight general public concerns.

It was unanimously agreed that if more money became available, Brynmawr Town Council have many ideas to improve facilities in their community.

Ms. Silk thanked members for a very productive meeting and would forward Council's issues.

Further information would be forwarded to the Clerks regarding the review and Ms. Silk would be happy to meet members again when the review has been completed.

Meeting closed at 18.05 hours.