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Notes of Public Meeting to discuss the future of Nantmel School Building held on Thursday 17th November 2016 at Nantmel School.

Present: Cllr K Curry, C Lewis, J Price, R Lewis, P Bowen, J Morgan, Cty Cllr D Evans
Gareth Jones - Central Support Services Schools, Powys County Council
Jane Johnston (Clerk, Nantmel Community Council.)

Lilian Evans, Margaret Davies, Mandy Williams, Margaret Thomas,
M Thornett, John Thornett, David Clarke, Roy Gardner, Dossi Davies,
Linda Banks, Vera Smith, Rita Drew, Graham Drew, Francis Pugh, Anne Bates,
John Bates, Gareth Price, Pauline Poore, Miss Banning-Boddy,
Debbie McPhee, Clare Haslam, Philip Clegg, Sarah Davis, Lisa Hardwick,
Vin Hardwick, Eirlys Evans, Bill Evans, Heather Curry, RG Walker, Ian Rees,
Fred Nally, Sue Nally, Stephen Pugh, Lynne Tolhurst, Julia Lewis, Roger Lewis,
Elizabeth Morgan, Alfred Lewis

Apologies: Cllr J Harris

Cllr Kelvyn Curry chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone.

He gave a brief introduction to the meeting and begun laying out the purpose of the meeting which is to look into the possibility of securing the building for community use once the School is closed for perpetuity. He confirmed that this is the sole purpose of the meeting and no discussions will take place on the closure of the school facility.

The building is currently leased to Powys County Council via a full repair and maintenance lease and not rent is paid to the Diocesan.

The Chairman handed over the Gareth Jones, Senior Manager - Central Support Services Schools Service Powys County Council. Gareth confirmed that the building is currently leased by Powys County Council's Education Service and Powys County Council will be closing the school on 31st December 2016. They will then begin the process of handing back the lease to the Church Diocesan. This process could take a while and it is envisaged that PCC will continue to hold the lease until summer 2017. No rent is currently paid for the school as it is being used for education purposes. There is no intention to make any changes to the school provision so that the pupils can enjoy a full education systems until 31st December 2016.

PCC is currently working through the placement of existing pupils in new schools which will be Rhayader and Crossgates. PCC will continue to support Nantmel School staff, the formal process will start in January 2017 and will run until half term.

After the school closes Rhayader and Crossgates Schools will be able to take equipment from the school for use in their schools. Gareth pointed out that any equipment purchased by the PTA or Friends of the School needs to be identified and notification sent to PCC so that this equipment is not removed.

Cllr Curry asked if it is possible for community groups to continue using the school building until the surrendering of the lease is completed. He agreed this would be possible and confirmed that PCC will continue to insure the building until this time.

A resident asked if PCC is obliged to hand the building back and would it be possible for PCC to sublease the building to the community. Gareth confirmed that he felt that PCC would not wish to assign the lease to anyone else and the Education Service has deemed the building surplus to requirements. This will alleviate the financial burden of running costs and the full repair and maintenance costs.

A resident asked for a breakdown of the running costs of the school. Gareth did not have these with him and felt that current running costs would not be appropriate for the community to establish a true cost as these are based on the running of a school service. **Action:** Gareth agreed to establish these costs and pass them to the Clerk for circulation.

A resident asked if it would be possible for the PCC gritter to continue to service the school area. **Action:** Gareth will look into this.

A resident also asked about the culvert. Gareth confirmed that this would remain the responsibility of PCC until the lease is surrendered.

Cllr Curry asked if there had been any financial support to communities which have taken over school buildings. Gareth confirmed that this had happened in Llanfihangel Yn Gwynfa and Llangurig, although he would not divulge the figures. He did confirm that if an application is made for this a robust business case would be required.

Cty Cllr David Evans felt that PCC could assign the lease to the Community which he felt would help PCC. Gareth felt this was unlikely.

A resident mentioned that there is a Public Right of Way through the school and asked whose responsibility it would be to maintain it. Gareth confirmed that this would stay with PCC until the lease is surrendered and the would be responsibility of the new lease holder.

Cllr Phil Bowen had been in discussions with Rev Helen Rees of the Church Diocesan who had been extremely helpful. He had also spoken with Tim Davenport the solicitor acting for the Diocesan who informed him that the surrender of the lease could take a long time. He

believes that the Church is open to the community taking over the school and Cllr Bowen felt that a group of interested parties needs to be formed as soon as possible to explore this. He felt that the question for everyone attending is – are we strong enough to apply to the Church for the tenancy? The community needs to explore all potential uses of the building and to incorporate educational services also. He mentioned offering it to the Police to use, a Library service, Film Club, Exercise Classes, Adult Education and lots of other ideas. He informed those present that £83,000 was left for the education of Nantmel children which earns interest of £2000 per annum, which is a good start towards the cost of operating the building.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bowen for his input and asked the residents present if there was any interest in forming an Action Group to move forward with discussions on this matter and consider entering into negotiations with the Church. The following people volunteered:

Clare Haslam, Julia Lewis, John & Anne Bates. Margaret Davies of WI confirmed she would approach her group for representation. It was also suggested the Mike Hodgson be approached on behalf of the Church. The Golden Hour would also ask their group for a representative. Cty Cllr David Evans, Cllr Kelvyn Curry, Cllr Phil Bowen and Cllr John Price will also represent their Council's respectively. **Action:** Representatives from the groups and Churches to approach the members to ask for a representative to serve on the Action Group.

Cllr Curry asked Julia Lewis if she would act as the community conduit for information. She agreed.

Cllr Bowen will ring Rev Helen Rees to inform her that a group has been formed to move discussions forward.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for making it such a positive meeting. He confirmed that the Community Council will support the group in any way possible and the Clerk will circulate the notes of the meeting to all those present. The Clerk will circulate contact details of all attending to Julia Lewis.