**Grwp Cymunedol Rowen Community Group AGM 2020**

The COVID19 pandemic has meant we have had to conduct this year’s AGM in a novel manner. We are required to make an official record of procedural changes related to this meeting and how any such decisions were made. This document lays these out.

At the time plans were being drawn up for the AGM in mid-September, it was very uncertain what rules would be in place come mid-November. Anything from a full lockdown, which Wales did in fact get between 23rd October and 9th November, through to a full relaxation of Social Distancing might have been possible.

The Secretary looked into what the requirements were and what guidance was available. Information was obtained from Community & Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC), the Charity Commission, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and various law firms supporting the voluntary sector.

This research guided our early deliberations and was further reinforced by on-line training from the WCVA. This webinar also covered how to run a virtual AGM, which the Chair and Secretary both attended. It was hosted by Sarah Jones-Howell, a solicitor with Hugh James & Co.

The key points are:

1. The Corporate Insolvency & Governance Act 2020 provides specific laws for the benefit of Charities and Companies on how to run their AGM this year. Only if the Governing Document permits a deferral, would this then be allowed up to 30 September 2020. There has been no extension on this date.
2. If the organisation is not a Company or Charity (ie a non-incorporated body) then it is the Governing Document that must drive the decision-making. There are no exceptions to this. GCRCG is a non-incorporated body and as such the holding of the AGM must be directed by our Governing Document, the 2017 Constitution.

The 2017 Constitution states that “an Annual General Meeting shall be held annually in October or November”. There is no provision made for deferral, postponement or cancellation.

There are also good reasons for wanting to hold the AGM, but it must be emphasized that these are not the main drivers for doing so, namely:

* The need to elect a Management Group and invite new members – again a Constitutional requirement
* To seek input on whether to make charitable donations
* The desire to get wide input on holding the Winter Festival again

The Honorary Officers had to decide how to run the meeting itself. At the time of planning, it was highly unlikely we were going to be able to meet in person. Accordingly, it was decided to hold the meeting virtually. However, not everyone in the community, including those who regularly attend Community Group Meetings, have internet access. Therefore, it was felt it would be more equitable to have a closed meeting.

The Constitution makes no provision for a quorum, though regular meetings require 6 committee members to be present. We took our lead from this clause. In order to meet these requirements in a COVID-friendly way, it was decided that the 4 Honorary Officers and spouses (on committee) would hold a closed meeting by Zoom.

In the light of this, it was further decided that proxy voting was the best way forwards to offer maximum participation within the village and was the most inclusive and democratic way of proceeding. Hard copies of all paperwork were made available within the village along with a postal ballot point. People could also access these papers on-line and submit their responses by email. The votes were counted by the Secretary and verified by The Chair of the Memorial Hall.

Whilst the Memorial Hall has recently opened for meetings of up to 15 people, a number of the Committee are needing to self-isolate, others may well have been apprehensive of gathering physically and Mark Drakeford is actively exhorting us not to gather together at all. With so many variables in play, it was felt that the plans for the virtual meeting remain the safest and most appropriate way for us to proceed.

The AGM will be held simply to conduct the formal business and implementing the matters voted on.