



CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD 24th NOVEMBER 2021 held virtually on-line over video /telephone conferencing

Present

Cllrs. Mr Frank Hemmings (FH) - Chairman, Mrs Jackie Allen (JA), Mr Gareth Baines (GB),
Mrs Barbara Humphreys (BH), Mr Newman James (NJ), Mrs Sarah Williams (SW),
Mrs Deborah Cooke (DC), Mrs Dot Griffiths (DG), Mr Brian Colley (BC),
Miss Lynne Painter (LP), Mr Terry Evans (TE) Mr Mark Holmes (MH)
Mr Mark Roberts (MR).

Mrs Karen Brown (KB) - Clerk to the Council.
Mrs Rebecca Ap Gwyn (RAG) – Administration Officer

Mrs Jo Goodchild (JG) – Regional Officer at UNITE
Tony Clarke (TC) – Kronospan Employee and Unite Member
Deryn Poppit (DP) – Kronospan Employee and Unite Member

78. To Accept Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr Chris Burgoyne.

79. Declarations of interest

None.

80. Discussion and finding of common ground between community and Kronospan through Unite.

BC introduced the members of the meeting and briefly explained the reason for it. JG thanked the Council for the invite.

Four questions were sent out prior to the meeting and are addressed below:

1. Of the total work force represented by the union, how many live in Chirk.

JG responded by informing the Council that nearly 60% of Kronospan's workforce (661 direct employees) live within six miles of Chirk. 158 employees live directly in Chirk. It is a local employer, JG fears this is getting lost in interpretation.

2. How does the Union monitor the health of its members in relation to work place risk at Kronospan and are there any concerns?

JG reported that health surveillance is a statutory obligation on Kronospan. Hearing, vision, lung function, urine, drug and alcohol tests are completed once a year together with spot checks. There is a full trade union health and safety committee who look for patterns in absence. Patterns would be noted and investigated. JG has no concerns.

3. What level of reported work place accidents are there and how do these compare to industry averages?

JG reported six accidents per 100,000 hours in last 12 months at Kronospan. Accidents have reduced by 35% over the past five years. In 2021 there have been more near misses reported,

which is encouraged by all staff to ensure things are reported and fixed before an accident happens.

Industry standards – difficult to get information as wood panel industries do not make it available. Kronospan is no worse than any other company. In the last 10 years ASC Plastics and Airbus have reported fatalities, whereas Kronospan has not. Accidents that are reported can be anything from a paper cut to a broken leg. As always in any industry there is the possibility of accidents happening, but Kronospan are taking all the correct measures to reduce that risk.

4. Are the union and its members aware of Chirk resident complaints regarding emissions and noise and are these discussed with management?

DP and TC responded. Management meetings discuss complaints daily, also discussed in health and safety/trade union meetings.

DP and TC live in Chirk with 70 years of service between them, they are first to knock on directors doors if issues arise that affect the community. Staff do care, more than people think.

JG raised the appropriateness of the question? BC advised that question four was to find common ground.

TE stated he is not anti Kronospan, he wants them to be successful etc, but also wants them to be good neighbours. Dust has been awful over the school playgrounds and out towards Rhos y Waun. TE wrote to the company and public protection and had not received a response. JG wished to know who TE had written to, TE responded. LP supported TE with regards to the dust situation.

BC asked how many people are sub-contractors? JG said she didn't have the information as they only have information for core employees.

TE highlighted the gas station explosion – at 7.30am reported to WCBC and Kronospan, 8am had to chase up. WCBC came back in the afternoon and said there was no issue, report again if needed. Another resident complained the next day. TE reported no answer. Next day there was a gas explosion.

Also, in October 2019 there was a smell of formaldehyde and gas along Lodgevale - reported it, again no response. Eight weeks later largest fire in history.

DP wants Council to know that they are constantly reporting local issues to management and that is then escalated to JG and even further if needed.

NJ asked how Chirk Town Council can help in order to get more action. The Council wants to offer support.

TE thanked JG, DP and TC for attending the meeting but, in future, would like better dialogue in future.

BC thanked the Unite members and said that it had been a useful meeting and requested a further meeting take place in the future. JG said she wanted to work in partnership with the Council and the community.

Meeting closed at 19:00

Signed

Chairman

Date