

Whitecastle Community Council

Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn

Les Taylor
Clerk to the council
2 Firs Road
Llanvapley
Abergavenny
NP7 8SL



Les Taylor
Clerc y cyngor
2 Heol y Pinwydd
Llanfable
Y Fenni
NP7 8SL

whitecastlecommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Council Meeting 27 June 2024 Unapproved Minutes

Present : Cllr. J. Biggs, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. L. Hughes (from 8.05), Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons

In attendance : L. Taylor (Clerk)

Members of the public : N. Graham

1. To accept apologies for absence.

None

2. To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in items listed below.

It was agreed to allow members to disclose interests as they arise.

3. To consider an application to be co-opted as member for the Newcastle Ward.

Members discussed the application of Nigel Graham to be co-opted to the council. Copies of his application form had been circulated to members before the May meeting. A notice had been placed on the council website on 10 May which invited residents to send any comments on his suitability. Members were asked to vote by a show of hands. Members voted unanimously to approve the application. The Clerk asked Mr Graham to sign a declaration of acceptance form.

4. To consider a contract of employment for the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer

The Chair asked members to review a contract of employment for the Clerk. The document was based on a template contract of employment for local councils provided by One One Wales in April 2024.

Resolved : To approve the contract of employment. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. C. Lewis. The Chair was satisfied with the conditions in the contract and the Chair and Clerk signed and dated the document.

5. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 May 2024.

Resolved : To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting and full council meeting on 9 May. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. D Astrill-Parsons. The Chair signed the documents.

6. Matters arising.

- The Clerk asked members to consider the use of the framed photograph of King Charles provided by the UK Government. It was agreed to ask the church committee of St Teilo's Church in Llantilio Crossenny to display the photograph in a public location in the church. The Clerk offered to approach a member of the church committee.
- A meeting has been arranged with members of the Village Life Community Project on 16 July to discuss defibrillator plans in the Whitecastle community.
- The Clerk reminded members of mandatory payments to members of community councils and asked members who hadn't signed the acceptance form to do so. The form had been

modified since the last meeting to clarify income tax liability for members who already claim a working from home allowance.

- Planning DM/2024/00485 2 May 2024 Householder Two storey side extension and associated external works. Yewtree Cottage The Hendre NP25 5HL has been approved.
- Gobion Fawr Community Council was contacted and agreed to discuss the closure of footpaths 91 and 55 which are on the boundary of the community council areas.
- Cllr. Biggs informed members of a quotation for a notice board in Penrhos. The Clerk was asked to follow up this matter and asked Cllr. Biggs to send him contact details.

7. To consider the use of the council's website

The clerk reminded members of recent changes to the website and asked for comments. The following items were added to the News and Notices page.

- Local Council Clerk Week
- Foster Wales Monmouthshire celebrates Foster Care Fortnight
- A Conversation for a Healthy Future
- Emergency Road Closure
- Community Green Energy Advisory Group Community Benefit Grant 2024. Community groups were informed directly of this matter to encourage them to make an application should they wish.
- Community Assistance Project - New Volunteer Opportunity
- Road closure - Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice
- Monmouthshire County Council News
- Neighbourhood Policing Team report
- Following a request from Citizens Advice Monmouthshire, a link to its website had been added to the home page of the council's website.
- Public Spaces Protection Order 2024 (Dog Controls) Monmouthshire came into force on 1 June.
- Recorders' Field Day at the Grange Project
- Eagle Re-introduction Wales
- Road closure in Whitecastle ward
- Assistive Technology Hub in Chepstow officially opens 13 Jun 24
- Temporary Traffic Order in Maypole

8. To consider correspondence.

One Voice Wales

- Joint Youth Engagement Summit with NALC and OVW
- Thanks for 20
- Recruitment And Retention Of Clerks/Responsible Financial Officers (Resources)
- New Climate Toolkit
- Guidance on Working Digitally. The Clerk advised the council to budget to update the council's laptop in 2025 to ensure it running a version of Windows which is still supported.
- Advice on how to run multi location and hybrid meetings
- Launch of New Biodiversity Resources
- Environmental principles governance and biodiversity targets consultation response.
- Wales Nature Week
- Agenda for Thursday 25 July 2024 Monmouthshire and Newport Annual Area Committee Meeting
- Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership meeting 2 July
- Consultation on draft priorities for Culture 2024-2030

Residents / community groups

- Llanvapley and District Gardening Club provided a report on its activities in 2023/24 highlighting ways in which the group is serving the community.
- Cross Ash School enquired about financial support from the community council. Advice was given.
- A resident of Penrhos Farm sent a letter of complaint about the activities of Heineken UK as it removes the orchards from around the farm. The Clerk contacted Heineken UK and the Environmental Health Officer in Monmouthshire County Council. Action has been taken by Heineken UK and the concerns of residents have been addressed to some extent.
- Age Cymru has introduced a new Telephone Listening Service for Lonely and Isolated Older People called Listen and Connect.
- The Village Alive Trust is holding an open day at Llanarth church.

MCC

- Consultation on Statement of Licensing Policy - Gambling Act
- Invitation to Fly a Flag for our Armed Forces Event Monday 24 June.
- MCC Environmental Health is holding a 'Give Dog Fouling The Red Card' awareness day on 25 July.

Welsh Government / Westminster

- Consultation Document on the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill Requirements for pre-application consultation and methods of engaging stakeholders and local communities
- Safety of Lithium ion Batteries and e-bikes and scooters. Members agreed to support raising awareness of this matter.

9. Councillor reports

- Cllr. Hughes confirmed that contact had been made with Cross Ash PTFA.
- Cllr. Graham and the Clerk agreed to discuss having a meeting to provide advice and support to enable him to understand his new role.

10. County Councillor's report

- Cllr. Lewis expressed his concern regarding the absence of the county councillor. It was agreed to write to express this concern.

11. Clerk's report

- On 12 June the Clerk attended a meeting of Llantilio Crossenny Womens' Institute at Llanvapley Sports Pavilion as part of Local Council Clerk Week. This was an opportunity for the Clerk to explain his role and the role of the community council.
- The Clerk asked permission from the council to attend a training course organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks on 31 July 2024 / 1 August. The course is entitled 'Councillor Induction, From A Clerk's Perspective (Wales)'.

12. To consider planning matters.

DM/2024/00688 Planning Permission The change of use of an agricultural building for light industrial (B1) storage and distribution (B8) use. Cwm Newydd B4347 Porthygaelod Farm To Post Office Row Rockfield NP25 5QE

The application appears to have been withdrawn since the council was notified on 8 June.

13. To consider highways matters

- Cllr. Biggs expressed his concerns about the roads in Penrhos ward. Potholes are being filled but the quality of repairs means the repair does not last. The Clerk was asked to contact the Highways department to express its concern.
- Cllr. Lewis and Cllr. Biggs discussed the county council's highway hedge trimming programme. Concerns were expressed about the timing of the work and the contracts for

this work. The Clerk was asked to contact the Highways department to ask for information about this matter.

- The Clerk contacted the Rights of Way Enforcement Officer to inform the county council of its concern with footpath closures and asked for a meeting to be arranged to discuss this matter. The Principle Countryside Access Officer acknowledged the council's comments about the closure of footpath 91 and the obvious link that footpath 55 forms to the Halfway House public house and the council's request for better signage.
- The council has been asked to comment on the extension of the footpath bridge closures order which came into force on 8 January. The Rights of Way Enforcement Officer explained that there are 1359 bridges on the public rights of way network. 257 require repairs or replacement, 69 of which are very high risk. 42 bridges are closed and a further 95 bridges are on a watch list. The Countryside Access Team has recently received confirmation that it will receive additional capital funds to be used for bridges. Currently all bridge work is prioritised according to the prioritisation used for all maintenance and enforcement issues and includes risk, usage, promotion and inconvenience. Some community councils have elected to contribute towards the costs of bridges and the council was asked if it would consider whether this is possible. The Clerk was asked to contact the Principle Countryside Access Officer to confirm a meeting to discuss how the community council can support the county council on this matter. Members agreed to accept the extension of the footpath bridge closures order.
- The council has been informed that the protracted closure of the bridge on Offa's Dyke National Trail near White Castle is close to being resolved.

14. To discuss churchyard matters.

- The draft churchyard management plan has not been reviewed. The Clerk and Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons have agreed to meet to take this matter forward.
- The Clerk held a meeting on 23 May at Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern Church with a member of the church committee and Mr. Simon Evans of GCC And Plant Hire Limited. Mr. Evans' quotation had been accepted and details of the maintenance work on the footpaths in the churchyard was discussed. The Clerk asked Mr. Evans to provide his certificate of insurance to ensure cover for public liability is in place. The council also asked to see a risk assessment which covers the work in the churchyard. The work will affect part of Offa's Dyke National Trail and will require a temporary diversion of the footpath. The Clerk has arranged for this diversion and has consulted local residents on the matter. Work is due to start on Tuesday 27 August and is expected to be completed within two weeks.

15. To consider policing matters.

The May policing report had been circulated to members and posted on the website.

16. To consider the internal audit and complete the Annual Return.

Copies of the internal audit report were circulated before the meeting. The report was completed by Catherine A. Williams Ltd of Crickhowell. The internal auditor was able to sign off the Annual Return following minor amendments. The annual return and audit report was presented to the council for approval. The Clerk confirmed June 30 as the date for the announcement of exercise of electors' rights. The council will now comply with the requirements of Audit Wales to enable an external audit of the council's financial and governance arrangements.

Resolved : To approve the annual return and audit report. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. D Astrill-Parsons.

17. To consider financial matters.

- The Clerk informed members that the council's insurance was renewed on 10 June. The insurance is with Clear Councils which was formally BHIB Councils.
- Anti Virus software has been purchased to protect the council's laptop.

- The clerk presented financial reports up to 31 May 2024. The statements consisted of a balance sheet, a list of payments, a bank reconciliation and a budget analysis. The financial statements were accepted by members and signed by the Chair in accordance with the adopted financial regulations.
Resolved To approve the reports. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons and agreed unanimously.
- The clerk asked for approval of the following payments. The Chair examined invoices and documentation to confirm accuracy of the payments.

L Taylor	Secretarial duties May 24 + expenses	£419.65
Greenbarnes	Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern noticeboard	£1,358.31
Clear Councils	Insurance 24 25	£786.01
Monmouthshire CC	Removal of bus shelter / installation of noticeboard	£900.00
Cath Williams	Internal Audit 23 24	£300.00

18. Any other business.

- Date of the next meeting is Thursday 26 September at 7.30pm at The Hogs Head, Treadam. Members agreed to change the original date of 12 September to ensure all members would be available.
- Meeting closed at 21.08