

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

Minute of the Annual General Meeting Thursday 8 May 2025 at 7.30pm at The Hogs Head, Treadam

Present : Cllr. J. Biggs, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. N. Graham

In attendance : L. Taylor (Clerk), County Cllr. I. Chandler

Apologies for absence

Cllr. L. Hughes, Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons

To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in items of business listed below.

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

At the start of the meeting the Chair acknowledged the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day and asked all to observe a short silence to remember the contribution of the nation during World War II.

1. To elect a Chair.

Resolution : To ask Cllr. C. Lewis to remain in post temporarily until it is possible to elect a new Chair. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs, seconded by Cllr. N. Graham.

2. To elect a Vice-Chair.

Resolution : To delay the election of a Vice-Chair until a new Chair is elected.

3. To receive the Chair's Report for the year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The Chair reported that Cllr. L. Hughes has submitted a letter announcing her intention to resign as the ward member for Llantilio Crossenny. The Chair expressed gratitude for her many years of dedicated service to the community. In light of the current circumstances, it was considered advisable to contact her and request that she postpone her resignation for a short period. The resignation of Cllr. Hughes would reduce the number of serving councillors to five. The Council intends to advertise the vacancy in order to encourage local residents to come forward and represent their community. It was resolved to proceed with this matter, with the aim of convening an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) in the near future to discuss the next steps. The Clerk showed an example of a poster to advertise vacancies on the council and he offered to submit a updated version.

Chair's Report

"I would like to begin by thanking all council members for their support over the past year, especially Debbie and Nigel, who have become valued and active members of the council. Nigel, in particular, has been instrumental in engaging with residents of Newcastle and has successfully initiated a traffic calming scheme for the village—exactly the kind of proactive work we need more of.

A special thanks goes to our Clerk for his ongoing dedication and hard work. His management of the council website deserves recognition—not only for its clear and useful content, but because it allows residents to stay informed with just a click, without needing to leave the comfort of their homes. It's an important step toward better communication within the Whitecastle community.

In January, we increased our precept following a special meeting. This decision has enabled us to provide financial support to local community groups and churches. It ensures all residents contribute to the sustainability of these important organisations that enrich our local life.

When I accepted the role of Chair, I didn't plan to serve for two years. In the past, it has been an honour to take on this responsibility. However, it has become increasingly frustrating.

Those who undermined our rural communities prior to the last election continue to impose unnecessary rules, excessive regulations, and bureaucratic hurdles—from form-filling to financial red tape—all of which hinder progress and often make no practical sense.

We have been left feeling powerless, consistently ignored by the County Council, especially on planning issues. I have come to believe that potholes will never be fixed, drains will never be cleared, signs won't be replaced, and recently closed footpaths will remain shut. The very fabric of our community is deteriorating.

Recruiting to fill our 11 councillor positions seems increasingly unlikely. Much of the content of our meetings no longer reflects the needs of our community. This must change. We must reclaim control of our community council.

There is a clear loss of community spirit and involvement. Too few are stepping forward to play a role in maintaining and improving the place we call home."

4. To confirm bank signatories.

Resolution : Approval of Cllr. J. Biggs, Cllr. C. Lewis and Cllr L. Hughes as signatories was proposed by Cllr. C. Lewis, seconded by Cllr. N. Graham

5. To approve the accounts for the 2024/25 financial year.

The accounts had been circulated before the meeting

Resolution : To approve the accounts for the 2024/25 financial year. Proposed by Cllr. C. Lewis, seconded by Cllr. N. Graham The Chair signed the documents.

6. To confirm Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other policies.

The Clerk circulated documents before the meeting and asked members to review them. The Financial Regulations have been amended following the publication of new model regulations last year by One Voice Wales.

Resolution : To confirm the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and policies was proposed by Cllr. C. Lewis, seconded by Cllr. J. Biggs.

7. To confirm completion of the annual Risk Assessment.

The Clerk circulated the Risk Register before the meeting. The Clerk asked members to consider moving some of the council's reserves into an instant access savings account. This action would offset the bank charges which had been introduced in January.

Resolution : To setup an instant access savings account. Proposed by Cllr. C. Lewis, seconded by Cllr. J. Biggs.

8. To appoint officers.

The clerk was appointed as the Responsible Financial Officer and the Burial Officer for Llanfihangel-y-stern-llewern churchyard.

Cllr. J. Biggs and Cllr. C. Lewis were appointed as representatives on the Community Green Energy Advisory Group.

Meeting closed 8.10