

Whitecastle Community Council

Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn

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Unapproved minutes for the Council Meeting 30 January 2025 7.30pm at the Hogs Head, Treadam

Public Speaking

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members of the public to address the council.

Anthony Vines, a member of St Cadocs Community, addressed the council regarding the condition and usage of the council's handbells. He requested that the handbells be entrusted to the community, ensuring their continued use in the church and by the local school. Additionally, Mr. Vines expressed the community group's willingness to assist in selecting a new bench for the churchyard.

Nigel Smith, representing St Michael's Church in Llanvihangel-Ystern-Llewern, urged the council to reconsider its level of support. He highlighted that the church committee provides facilities and refreshments for visitors to the church and churchyard and had formally requested funding of £900.

1. To accept apologies for absence.

The Chair received and approved apologies for absence from Cllr. D. Edwards and Cllr. L. Hughes

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

It was resolved any declarations of interest should be stated during, the course of the meeting.

3. To approve as a correct record the minutes of previous meetings.

Minutes of the meeting on 5 December 2024 had been circulated to members.

Resolution: To approve minutes of the meeting on 5 December 2024.

Proposed by Cllr. Lewis and seconded by Cllr. Biggs.

Minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2025 had been circulated to members.

Resolution: To approve minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2025.

Proposed by Cllr. Lewis and seconded by Cllr. Biggs.

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting.

- The Clerk reported that Cllr. Hughes had been contacted by a resident to thank the council for its help and support following flooding in Llantilio Crossenny in December.
- The planning department / Rights of way department has concluded its assessment of development in Newcastle ward. Residents are encouraged to voice their concerns to

community councillors; however, please note that anonymous complaints cannot be addressed.

- The council has taken part in the consultation on Monmouthshire County Council's Replacement Local Development Plan 2018 – 2033.
- The Clerk reported a concern raised by Cllr. Lewis at the last meeting following an incident on the B4233 close to Llantilio Crossenny. This matter was not recorded in the minutes. The issue has been dealt with by the highways department.

5. To consider the use of the council's website and community council noticeboards.

- A link has been added on the homepage to inform residents of Lets Talk Monmouthshire which is a new initiative from the county council.
- One Voice Wales (OVW) has provided new guidance on community council websites. The guidance has been reviewed by the Clerk and appropriate action taken. The council has been given a Digital Health Check report from OVW to councillors. The report was positive but highlighted a number of issues for the council to consider. These included the option to use a gov.uk domain name and for members to move away from the use of personal email accounts for council business.
- Members discussed the use of existing community council noticeboards. Cllr. Astill-Parsons raised the issue about who was responsible for their upkeep. There is a need for a noticeboard in Penrhos and the churchwarden was mentioned as someone who might provide advice on the siting and use of such a facility. Cllr. Biggs offered to contact the churchwarden to progress the matter and to raise the matter at the next meeting.

6. To consider the schedule and location of council meetings.

Cllr. Astill-Parsons and the Clerk visited Rockfield Barns in Rockfield and St Maughans and confirmed its suitability for council meetings.

The Clerk proposed meeting dates for 2025/26, following the existing pattern of bi-monthly meetings. The Chair reminded members of the current vacancies on the council, emphasising the challenges of increasing councillors' workload. Additional dates for finance and planning meetings were suggested, and it was agreed to hold an extra meeting to set the council's budget request for the following year.

The following dates were confirmed:

8 May AGM (The Hogs Head),
10 July (Rockfield Barns),
11 September (The Hogs Head),
13 November (The Hogs Head),
11 December (Rockfield Barns),
8 January (The Hogs Head),
5 March (The Hogs Head),

7. To consider correspondence.

- A cheque had been received from Skenfrith Community Council for £221.52 as its share of 2019/20 and 2020/21 audit fees for Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council.

One Voice Wales

- One Voice Wales National Awards 2025.
- Digital Guidance Cloud Storage.
- Age Without Limits Day on 11 June.
- One Voice Wales National Awards 30 April 2025
- Area Committee Survey (completed by the Clerk)
- 21 January Glossary of terms.

Monmouthshire County Council

- Holocaust Memorial Day Event - County Hall, Usk, Monday 27 January 2025.
- Dog fouling PSPO signs are due to be distributed.
- The officer in charge of the county council's toilet strategy responded to a request to consider local churches to be part of the strategy.
- MCC Budget Engagement.

8. Chair's report

The Chair expressed disappointment with the quality of services provided to residents by the county council.

Following a January meeting, the Chair presented an appraisal of the Clerk's work over the past year. He thanked Cllr. Hughes for her assistance in completing the appraisal and expressed gratitude to the Clerk for his service to the council. The Chair also requested that the Clerk consider the points raised in the report.

9. Councillor reports

- Cllr. Grahm reported that he had attended two online courses in December – Module 2 The Councillor and Module 9 Code of Conduct.
- Cllr. Astill-Parsons reported that in January, she attended an online course titled "Module 8: Introduction to Community Engagement." She proposed that the council consider producing a quarterly community newsletter for distribution to residents. In her role as the council's biodiversity representative, she participated in various activities, including water quality checks and a bat awareness event. She also suggested adding a section to the council website to keep residents informed about the latest biodiversity news. On 29 January, she attended an event at Rockfield Barns to learn more about the Village Life Community Project, which featured information and training on the role of CPR and defibrillators in saving lives. On 2 February, she will be volunteering at Grange Farm to assist with its rewilding efforts.

10. County Councillor's report

Cllr. Chandler informed members about the ongoing consultation on the county council's budget proposal, highlighting significant increases in the education and social care budgets. He also shared details about the work of Skenfrith Community Council, its activities in the community, and suggested contacting them to learn more about their initiatives.

11. Community Groups

- The Quilting group contacted the council and explained its part in the Bio Tapestry Initiative and the Quilts for Care Leavers project.
- The Village Life Community Group: A meeting has been scheduled for Friday, 7 February, to discuss the group's defibrillator survey and its report on the group's activities. Cllr. Hughes, Cllr. Graham, and the Clerk have been invited to attend. Additionally, on 29 January, Village Life hosted a public training course at Rockfield Barns.
- Cross Ash PTFA have been notified about support from the council and updated about requests made to Skenfrith and Grosmont Community Councils.
- Members have been provided with feedback from community groups following approval of the budget for 2025/26.

12. Clerk's report.

The Clerk explained the importance of developing a Training Plan for members. New members have attended mandatory training sessions and the uptake needs to be increased and recorded. A draft of a Training Plan is to be circulated to enable this matter to be fully discussed at the next meeting.

13. To consider planning matters.

DM/2024/01467 11 December 2024 Alterations & Extension to rear of existing dwelling. Forge Cottage B4233 The Hendre NP25 5HG 1 January – no objections and approval recommended.

DM/2024/01468 Alterations & Extension to rear of existing dwelling. Forge Cottage B4233 The Hendre The Hendre Monmouthshire NP25 5HG 3 January – no objections and approval recommended.

DM/2025/00039 23 January 2025 Listed Building Consent Heritage Roof repairs including the removal of existing slate finish from the main dwelling roof, timber repairs (as required), and re-slate. Hendre Gardens, The Rolls Of Monmouth Golf Club The Hendre NP25 5HG – no objections and approval recommended.

Members were reminded that planning application **DM/2024/00890** for the change of use from a steel framed agricultural barn, into a micro distillery and shop at Grange Farm, Upper House Lane, Llantilio Crossenny was approved on 18 December.

14. To consider highways matters.

- The report of overgrown hedges in the Hendre is being reviewed by the council and action is expected soon.
- Speed limit changes (a reduction from 40 mph to 30 mph) in the Hendre have been delayed. A consultation is now scheduled for March 2025 and includes: a 20 mph extension in Rockfield village and a 40 mph limit on the B4233 from Monmouth to Rockfield.
- The report of churchyard flooding in Llanvihangel-ystrern-llewern is under review.
- The report of the condition of road signs in Llantilio Crossenny is under review.
- The report of the condition of a green lane near White Castle is under review.
- The report of the deterioration to the carriageway in Llantilio Crossenny has been actioned and verge markers have been placed along the damaged area until permanent repairs are carried out.
- Cllr. Biggs reported damage to the edge of the carriageway near to Penrhos Farm.
- There was a discussion regarding the response time of the highways department. The Clerk enters all reports into the county council's system as service requests, which can be monitored online. Cllr. Astill-Parsons requested access to the system to enhance the council's oversight of how service requests are processed.

15. To discuss churchyard matters.

St Cadoc's, Llangattock Vibon Avel

- The Clerk informed members of arrangements for churchyard maintenance (closed part) in 2025. A recommendation to employ Matthew Baker Gardening Services was made and approved by members. A quotation is to be requested to find out the costs for the season.
- St Maughans Church Committee thanked the council for its support in managing the maintenance of the open part of the churchyard.
- Members discussed the use of council's handbells. It was proposed to formally hand over the bells in trust to the St Cadoc's Community and to provide financial support to enable them to be used.

Resolution : To handover the council's set of hand bells in trust to the St Cadoc's Community and to support their repair and maintenance. Proposed by Cllr. N. Graham and seconded by Cllr. C. Lewis.

- Members also agreed to ask the group to provide advice on the selection of wooden bench for the churchyard.
- An appeal has been made for the funds for the repair to the pipe organ in St Cadoc's by the Friends of Friendless Churches, The Clerk was asked to provide more details about the matter.

St Michael's, Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern

- The Clerk informed members of the arrangements for churchyard maintenance in 2025. Members approved a recommendation to employ Nettles to Petals, and a quotation will be requested to determine the costs for the season. Given the churchyard's poor condition, essential work must be carried out before the growing season begins. Approval was granted for this work to proceed, provided that costs are carefully monitored and controlled.
- A local resident contacted the council about the condition of around 10 to 12 feet of the wall on the southern side of the churchyard. The Chair asked the Clerk to ascertain the ownership of the wall to enable responsibility to be determined.
- Members took the opportunity to discuss the proposed level of support for the church committee. The agreed budget of £250 was considered insufficient, given the committee's request for a significantly higher amount.

Resolution: To allocate £500 to assist the church committee in providing services for residents and visitors. Proposed by Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons and seconded by Cllr. C. Lewis.

16. To consider policing matters.

Monthly police reports had been circulated to members. No comments were made.

17. To consider financial matters.

- Financial statements had been circulated to members and the Clerk asked the Chair to inspect and sign the statements.

Resolution : to approve the balance sheet, bank reconciliation, budget report and receipts and payments records. Proposed by Cllr. N. Graham and seconded by Cllr. C. Lewis.

- The clerk presented a list of payments for approval.

L Taylor	Secretarial duties December 2024 plus expenses	£525.28
L Hughes	Child care costs to attend meeting on 9 January	£45.25
One Voice Wales	Cllr. Graham training course 9 December	£40.00
Vision ICT	Website hosting and support 2025	£240.00
SLCC	Membership for the clerk 2025	£110.00
Llanvapley Sports and Social Association	Use of the hall 6/16 January 2025	£37.50
The Hogs Head	Use of the Skirrid room since April 2023	£360.00

18. Any other business.

Cllr. Astill-Parsons noted that the fields formerly owned by Heineken in the Penrhos ward had been ploughed. Members acknowledged the regulations governing ploughing near hedgerows.

Date of the next meeting is 20 March

Meeting closed 21.39