

Whitecastle Community Council

Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn

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Minutes of the Council Meeting 8 May 2025 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

1. To accept apologies for absence.

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

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 approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2025.

Resolution : To approve the minutes of the council meeting on 20 March. Proposed by Cllr. J. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. N. Graham. The Chair signed the minutes.

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting.

To be covered in later agenda items.

5. To consider correspondence.

The clerk asked members if they wished to comment on any of the items previously circulated. These included :

- Active Travel Act Guidance
- Enhancing Abergavenny – Time to have your say
- Ystadau Cymru Asbestos Awareness Training
- Gwent Ornithological Society Walks in Monmouthshire
- Llangollen International Eisteddfod appeal
- Llangattock Vibon Avel Churchyard residents concerns
- MCC - Share your views on community safety
- One Voice Wales (OVW) e-bulletin

Other communication noted included :

- Away Film Entertainment LTD Filming in Monmouthshire
- One Voice Wales (OVW) minutes of Monmouthshire & Newport Area meeting
- OVW Training Dates - April - June 2025
- Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Lets Talk Forum
- MCC Biodiversity Pilot Group
- MCC Keep Wales Tidy's Local Places for Nature grants

6. Councillor reports.

Cllr. Graham reported on progress made in installing traffic calming measures in Newcastle. The council would like to thank a local business for its support in making the wooden gates which will be installed at either end of the village and will alert drivers to the need to slow down in a residential area. Cllr. Graham has painted the gates and will submit invoices for material he purchased. Monmouthshire County Council have been asked to replace damaged road signage.

7. County Councillor's report.

The council contacted Cllr. Chandler to express its concerns regarding the county council's "Let's Talk" Forum, which was developed without prior consultation with local communities or town councils. The community council believes the forum undermines the role and efforts of community councils. Furthermore, the forum's registration system fails to acknowledge the existence of community councils, creating barriers for those striving to improve community engagement. Cllr. Chandler raised these issues at County Hall; however, while the county council expressed support for the forum, it has not addressed or amended the registration system.

8. Community Groups

Village Life

Cllr. Hughes, Cllr. Graham, and the Clerk met with Tom Pitts-Tucker and Linda Green from Village Life on 28 March to review the group's recent work. Two new defibrillators at Penrhos Farm and Pwll y Cwm have been added to the group's remit bringing the total to 11. The unit at the Rolls of Monmouth Golf Course is not covered. Insurance arrangements were reviewed, and Village Life will continue with its current insurer.

Linda Green is conducting a survey of defibrillator signage to improve visibility and accessibility. The group spent £2,230 on equipment, including training manikins, replacement pads, and batteries to ensure defibrillators remain fully operational.

A pilot project was proposed to install Community Bleed Kits in Llantilio Crossenny and Pwll y Cwm, with each kit costing approximately £300. Additionally, four defibrillators housed in repurposed post boxes will be repainted, with Cllr. N. Graham offering to assist. Plans to purchase a new defibrillator for £1,000 were also discussed, with Cllr. L. Hughes and Tom Pitts-Tucker working together to select a suitable unit.

Quilting Group

The Quilting Group held a public engagement event in Llanvapley Pavilion on 22 March. The group reported that the meeting was successful in attracting community interest and they were able to highlight its work in creating the Gwent Green Grid Partnership BioTapestry.

Other matters

Churches and Village Alive were informed about the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) Heritage Lottery Fund and its 'Meet the Funder Webinar'.

Village Alive were notified about Benefact grants.

9. Clerk's report.

- Members were asked to support the idea of creating simplified versions of the council minutes which could be used in noticeboard and community magazines.
- Council insurance will be renewed in June and a schedule has been sent to councillors.
- 2024-2025 Statements of Payments of councillor remuneration have been submitted to Welsh Government and added to the council's website.

10. To consider planning matters.

DM/2025/00397 Awen Barns Old Ross Road Llanvetherine To Treadam Llanvetherine. The council noted the measures taken to improve the green infrastructure around the site by encouraging the biodiversity in plant and animal species. The council recommended approval of the application.

DM/2025/00268 1 May 2025 Planning Permission The installation of ground mounted photovoltaic panels in agricultural field. Park Cottage Llantilio Crossenny NP7 8TF

Members discussed the proposed development and noted that it would be situated behind existing non-residential buildings. The planning officer will assess its potential visual and amenity impact on the surrounding area. The Clerk was asked to contact the Llantilio Crossenny Church Committee to determine whether they have any concerns about the development, as it is likely to be visible from the churchyard.

Clerk training at county hall

The clerk attended a Planning System and Enforcement meeting at county hall on 29 April. Information from the meeting is available to members. Clarification on a number of matters was provided by planning officers. These included - agricultural development permitted development rights - permitted development rights for householders in respect of domestic heat pumps and biodiversity net benefit guidance for householders. Biodiversity Net Benefit guidance was passed on to members of the Llanvapley and District Gardening Club.

11. To consider highways matters.

- Service requests to the county council are generally acknowledged and given a service request number but the system is not updated in line with the work done, Cllr. Chandler expressed his concern that the highways department was not able to cope with the reporting of its work.
- Service request 22553420 made on 31 January has been actioned. The request concerned a section of road in the Penrhos ward. The carriageway on the edge of the road has collapsed and is unsafe. The report from the county council said “due to the depth of the drop to the watercourse and its adjacency to the existing structure, this matter has been passed to our structures team. Whilst they work on designing the repair, we will keep the area safe.”
- The Clerk contacted the county council to remind it of the proposed reduction from a 40 mph limit to 30 mph limit at The Hendre and the proposed 40 mph speed limit on B4233 from Monmouth to Rockfield village. This formal legal consultation was scheduled to commence in March 2025.
- Cllr. Lewis reported the poor condition of the lanes in the south eastern part of Penrhos ward.

12. To discuss churchyard matters.

Llangattock Vibon Avel

- The grass cutting program has started.
- The new churchyard bench arrived on 9 April.
- Dog fouling signs have been posted at entrance points to the churchyard. The council was contacted by a resident to enquire about the signs. The signs have to be removed as they were mistakenly not included in the Public Spaces Protection Order. The order will be reviewed in 2027 and in the meantime general PSPO signs will be put in place advising people to pick up after their dogs.

Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern

- The program of grass cutting and churchyard maintenance has started.
- The work to repair the walls has been delayed as the work requires the removal of hedgerows which would disturb nesting birds.

13. To consider policing matters.

March and April reports had been circulated to members and added to the website.

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

The Clerk contacted local joinery firms to ask for a quotation for a noticeboard for Penrhos. The council has not received a reply.

15. To consider a Welsh Language Scheme.

This matter was deferred to the July meeting.

16. Engagement plan for co-opting community councillors

This matter was deferred to the July meeting; however, action will be taken in the meantime to advertise existing vacancies. This will allow the council to gauge the level of community interest. The Clerk was asked to prepare suitable notices for the website, noticeboards, social media, and flyers. Residents are invited to respond by 19 June, with a potential meeting scheduled for 26 June to review the responses.

17. To consider financial matters.

End-of-year financial reports were presented in the Annual General Meeting.
The following payments were presented and approved.

Invoices

Nettles2Petals	Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern churchyard March 2025	£234.00
Nettles2Petals	Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern churchyard April 2025	£108.00
Monmouthshire CC	PSPO signs: 4 x dogs on leads signs	£56.40
Matt Baker	Llangattock Vibon Avel grass cutting	£140.00
Audit Wales	Llantilio Llantilio Crossenny Community Council 2021/22 Audit Fees	£280.00
Cath Williams	Internal Audit 2024/25	£330.00
L Taylor	Secretarial duties March / April 2025 plus expenses	£838.00

Direct Debits

HMRC	Payment of income tax	£280.40
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18. 2024/25 audit

Copies of the internal audit report were circulated before the meeting. The report was completed and signed by Catherine A. Williams Ltd of Crickhowell. The annual return and audit report was presented to the council for approval. The Annual Return was signed and dated by the Chair. 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. N, Graham.

19. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting.

The next scheduled meeting will be a full council meeting on 10 July at Rockfield Barns, Pwll Y Cwm, Rockfield, NP25 5SZ

Meeting closed at 9.15