

# Whitecastle Community Council

## Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn

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### Minutes of the Council Meeting 10 July 2025 7.30pm

at Rockfield Barns, Pwll Y Cwm, Rockfield

**Present :** Cllr. J. Biggs, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. N. Graham, Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons (Chair)

**In attendance :** L. Taylor (Clerk),

**Members of the public :** R. Metters, C. Duncan (7.40pm)

**1. To accept apologies for absence.**

Cllr. Ian Chandler member for Llantilio Crossenny on Monmouthshire County Council.

**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 receive nominations to co-opt members of the council.**

Members discussed the applications of Rhiannon Metters and Chris Duncan to be co-opted to the council. Copies of their application forms had been circulated to members before the meeting. Rhiannon Metters was asked to leave the meeting during the discussion and Chris Duncan was as yet not present. Members voted unanimously to appoint Cllr. Metters as a member for Whitecastle ward and Cllr. Duncan as member for Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern. The Clerk asked the new members of the council to sign a declaration of acceptance form and a member's allowance form. Cllr. Duncan left the meeting at 7.45pm. Cllr. Astill-Parsons resigned as the member for Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern and was voted unanimously to be the member for Llangattock Vibon Avel.

**4. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meetings held on 8 May and 26 June 2025.**

**Resolution:** to accept the minutes as a true record of proceedings. Proposed by Cllr. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. Graham.

**5. Matters arising from the previous meetings.**

The Clerk asked Cllr. Astill-Parsons to sign a declaration of acceptance of office of Chair of the council.

A thank you letter sent was sent to Abergavenny Boxes to thank the owner for supplying the village gates for Newcastle free of charge.

**6. To consider correspondence.**

The Clerk reminded members of the correspondence circulated prior to the meeting. This included information on Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Reporting, an invitation to an open day at St Cenedlon's Church in Rockfield, upcoming training dates, a survey on active travel in rural Wales, and requests for support from Ty Hafan, Hope Rescue Centre, and the local Quilters Group. Additionally, One Voice Wales shared a range of updates, including advice on its practice development notes, guidance on annual financial procedures, and a document outlining audit standards for Community and Town Councils.

## 7. Councillor reports.

Cllr. Graham provided an update on the installation of village gates in Newcastle. He reported ongoing communication with the County Council's Highways Department but expressed frustration at the lack of support and slow progress. In particular, he highlighted delays in securing a meeting with a highways engineer, which was hindering the project's advancement. The Clerk offered to follow up with the department to help expedite the process.

## 8. County Councillor's report.

Cllr. Chandler was unable to attend the meeting.

## 9. Community Groups

- The Clerk reported on the success of the VE Day celebrations in Llanvapley which were supported by Llantilio Crossenny WI, Selby Sound and the Llanvapley and District Gardening Club.
- Village Life will hold a trustees' meeting on 10 July and are also participating in the Skenfrith Fun Day on 10 August. Cllr. Graham continues to serve as the council's representative at the group's meetings, with Lauren Hughes remaining as the community representative. The group has also reached an agreement with the council on the placement of additional AED signage at four locations throughout the community.
- The Clerk asked members to agree consider approval of payments to community groups at the September meeting. Members were reminded of the budget and that payments would be in line with the previously budget for 25/26. Members supported the proposal to support the Quilters Group in line with other community groups.

**Resolution:** to make payments to community groups at the September meeting inline with the budget for 2025/26. Proposed by Cllr. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. Metters.

## 10. Clerk's report.

- The information requested by Audit Wales was provided on 29 June.
- The Clerk briefed members on the implications of Martyn's Law, formally known as the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act. The legislation is designed to improve protective security and organisational preparedness by placing specific duties on those responsible for certain premises and events. While many of the Act's provisions fall outside the scope of the council's typical activities and most community events, members were advised that any event expected to attract more than 200 attendees would require action from the council or relevant community group to ensure compliance.
- The Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2025 was published in February 2025. Following its release, the Clerk asked members to consider and determine the remuneration provisions for the 2025/26 financial year. The Clerk outlined both the mandatory and optional payments available to members of Community Councils. Mandatory payments include a working-from-home allowance and a reimbursement for the cost of office consumables necessary to fulfil councillor duties. These payments are exempt from income tax unless members are already claiming a working-from-home allowance through HMRC. Members were provided with a form to complete, indicating their preferences regarding the available payments.

**Resolution** The council will not be introducing a scheme for additional payments .  
Proposed by Cllr. D. Astill-Parsons and seconded by Cllr. N. Graham.

- The council's insurance policy has been renewed.
- The Social Media campaign run by Social Buzz Media Management was successful and supported the recruitment campaign and gaining residents' views on bridge closures.
- It was agreed to allocate a budget of £40 for the purchase of flowers and a card as a gesture of thanks to a former councillor, in recognition of her service and contributions to the community.

#### **11. To consider planning matters.**

DM/2025/00564 Householder Removal of existing single storey extension and porch and erection of an extension to incorporate a staircase. Pen Y Cae Pant Lane Llanvihangel Ystern Llewern NP25 5HN

No comments received from members by the consultation deadline of 30 May

An holding objection was made by MCC Biodiversity And Ecology and further information was requested from the applicant. The application has not been decided.

#### **12. To consider highways matters.**

##### **Rights of Way**

- The council has budgeted to support the work of the Countryside Access in maintaining the rights of way network in the community. Members asked for clarification on the department's plans before making a payment of £1000.
- The council discussed its response on the consultation regarding 'Footpath Bridge Closures Extension 3' Members noted the number of responses from residents and were informed of the council's response made on 1 July which agreed to the extension while emphasizing the importance of reinstating the bridges over the Trothy at Tal-y-Coed and New House Farm. The council understands that early geomorphological assessments of both sites are planned with the aim of deciding the location of replacement bridges.

##### **Highways**

- The council discussed its response to a consultation on speed limit changes at three locations in the community. There has been no public response to the two proposed changes in Rockfield and members were in agreement with the proposals. Two residents from The Hendre contacted the council commented on the proposed 30mph scheme suggesting the introduction a 20mph limit providing evidence to back up their comments. Members were broadly in favour of the residents' proposals but suggested an onsite meeting with the county council to determine the details of a new proposal.

#### **13. To discuss churchyard matters.**

The Clerk visited both churchyards on 21 June to inspect their condition.

##### **Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern**

- The second cut of the year was completed on 30 May and the next one will be on 1 August.
- The Clerk and Cllr. Astill-Parsons met with a member of the church committee to assess the condition of the grass, walls, trees, and bushes. Cllr. Astill-Parsons reported back on the discussion. Following the report, members agreed to request an additional grass cut in August and to obtain a quotation for remedial work on the eastern wall and the wall adjacent to the Offa's Dyke footpath on the western side. The planned work along the southern boundary will proceed outside of the nesting season, in collaboration with the landowner. Cllr. Lewis is currently liaising with the landowner regarding this.

##### **Llangattock Vibon Avel**

- The next cut is scheduled for September and the churchyard was in satisfactory condition when it was inspected. The gardener reported that the weather this year has been very sympathetic to growth and the church yard has a lot of obstacles.

#### **14. To consider policing matters.**

Members had received the reports for May and June which were also published on the council website. No comments were made.

#### **15. To consider the use of the council's website and community council noticeboards.**

It was agreed to proceed with the installation of a noticeboard in Penrhos Ward. The Clerk will provide a quotation and work with residents and the local member to decide details of its location and use.

## **16. Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Reporting**

Cllr. Astill-Parson is starting to pull together the WCC Biodiversity Action Plan which would include the churchyards. The council is responsible for a very small amount of land and any plan would depend on the co-operation of other landowners and community groups. The Chair emphasised that this is an opportunity to improve and enhance the environment of the area, ensuring we make a positive impact for future generations.

## **17. To consider a Welsh Language Scheme.**

Due to lack of time this item was postponed until the meeting in September.

## **18. To consider financial matters.**

Prior to the meeting financial reports had been circulated. These included statements of payments and receipts, a bank reconciliation, budget report and a bank balance. The statements were inspected and signed by the Chair.

The Clerk presented a statement of payments for approval.

L Taylor	Secretarial duties May / June 2025 plus expenses	£873.66
Clear Councils	Insurance 25 26	£961.05
Nettles to Petals	Churchyard maintenance Llanvihangel YL May	£126.00
One Voice Wales	Councillor training	£84.00
Matt Baker	Llangattock churchyard May and June	£290.00

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

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

The next meeting is on 11 September 2025 at 7.30pm at The Hogs Head, Treadam.