

CYNGOR CYMUNED TAWE UCHAF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 16th October, 2025

Present – Councillors Stephen Davies, Susan Pyart, Sandra Howard, Geoff Woods, Marjorie Joplin, Ann Watkins, County Councillor David Thomas.

Observers - None

In attendance – Jo Lancey Powys County Council

1. **Apologies for absence** were approved from Councillors Alun Thomas, Gareth Hayton and Sandra Clayton.
2. **Declaration of Interest** – No items declared.
3. **Discussion with Jo Lancey PCC** – The Chairman welcomed Jo Lancey to the meeting. The Chairman referred to concerns expressed by the Council over recent fatal road traffic accidents on the A4221 near the junction of the A4221 and Cefnbyrle Road. He continued by outlining the road changes on the A4221 at the Cefnbyrle Junction. Changes to the filter lane were incorporated to accommodate the cycle track crossing the A4221. The length of the filter lane had been reduced. The Council was requesting road safety improvements such as speed reduction, double white lines to prevent overtaking.
Jo Lancey responded to the Council outlining road traffic regulations that had to be observed when considering changes to road layout, speed limits. Extensive checks had been done at the A4221 with Traffic Police. The checks had concluded that engineered changes to the road would not be the answer. The causes of the incidents were totally different. In addition, there was a moratorium on speed changes awaiting further legislation from the WG. The responsibility for changes to the cycle track was a matter for the Active Travel Department. Following an extensive discussion and questions Jo Lancey suggested she would undertake a review of road signage, with technical staff, at the area of the A4221 and Cefnbyrle Road junction and on approaches to the junction. The Council agreed to a signage review. In addition, the Council will request the Police to explore if speed checks may be possible on the A4221. The Council thanked Jo Lancey for attending and providing information to the Council. Jo Lancey left the meeting.
4. **Police Matters** – The Police were unable to attend. They had communicated by e mail to advise speed checks were continuing in the Penrycae/Craig y Nos area on the A4067.
A report was received on the use of motorbikes on the section of cycle track from the A4221 junction to Caehopkin. A white motorbike with a number 5 had been seen. The matter will be referred to the Police.

5. Finance

- a) **Income/Expenditure Report** – The income/expenditure report to the 30th September had been circulated. The Clerk summarised the report. Interest had been received on the Gratuity Fund. The Council approved the report.
- b) **Budget Update Report** – The budget update report had been circulated. The Clerk summarised the report. The Council approved the report.
- c) **October Payment Register** – The October payment register had been circulated. The Clerk reported receipt of an invoice from PCC for RoSPA inspections. The invoice was received following circulation of the register. The Council approved the report and the inclusion of the PCC invoice for payment.
- d) **2026/2027 Budget Discussion** – A draft budget had been circulated for further discussion. The Council discussed the budget and made the following recommendations.

Clerk's Salary - The Clerk's salary was due for review in November 2025, two years following the last review in December 2023. The review will be undertaken by The Chairman and Vice Chairman. A report from the salary review will be submitted to the full Council for approval.

The IT Engineer budget line will be removed.

The Council insurance will be increased to £1500.

Trees at Caehopkin Playground – Costs will need to be established for the removal of several white poplar trees. A separate budget line to be created for the removal of trees.

The Council will obtain cost details for lectern style interpretive panels, bi-lingual artwork preparation, planning costs and installation.

The SID relocation costs will be reduced and a further budget line created for SID Maintenance costs.

The Council will increase the budget for donations using reductions agreed, from other budget lines and budget lines to be removed.

The Coelbren Hall Centenary budget line will also be removed.

The budget discussion will continue at the next meeting.

- 6. **To Receive the 2024/2025 Audit Report** – The Clerk presented the audit report received from Audit Wales. The Council received a qualified audit. The two primary points advised are.

Accounting Statement

The auditor was unable to conclude whether, or not, the accounting statement properly presents the Council's receipts and payments and financial position.

"The Clerk's 1985 contract of employment does not record the Clerk's current salary but states that salary will be reviewed every two years. I have not been able to find references to the Clerk's salary reviews and therefore I am unable to confirm whether, or not, the Clerk has been paid appropriately".

The Council considered the Auditor's comment, noting the Clerk's salary was not due for review until November 2025. The previous salary review was in

November 2023. The Council agreed to advise Wales Audit to respect the Council's process and position on salary reviews.

Arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources

The auditor was unable to conclude whether, or not the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

“The Council did not provide evidence of compliance with its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of procurement contracts.”

The Council considered the comment and agreed to respectfully advise Audit Wales to recognise the limitations on the availability of grounds maintenance contractors in the area. The Council was using the only Contractor available in the area, who is also used by other authorities. The Contractor is also insured to work alongside highways which was a requirement for the Council. Costs had not increased for several years.

Recommendations not affecting the audit opinion.

The Council agreed to note the recommendations as follows;

The Council will review the layout and presentation of its Councillor Training Plan

The Council will review its cashbook to ensure the accounting statement is easily reconcilable.

A copy of the current asset register was provided to the auditor. The Council will also draw the Auditor's attention to this oversight.

The Council will write to Audit Wales to seek clarification on the audit opinion.

7. Planning – No matters presented.

8. Footpaths/Playgrounds

The final round of FP maintenance was scheduled to complete by the end of October, early November. The invoice for work completed will be submitted by the November Meeting.

Caehopkin Playground Trees – A site meeting was held on 15th October, to inspect white poplar trees within the playground boundary. The Council was advised by Mr Hywel Joplin a qualified tree surgeon who attended the site meeting. Mr Joplin advised the Council while the trees did not appear diseased, he recommended the Council consider removing the trees due to their close proximity to a neighbouring property and the children's playground due to a risk from falling branches, into the playground and on to the adjoining property.

The Council reviewed the report of the site meeting and agreed the following action.

The Council agreed with the advice and will proceed to arrange for the removal of the white poplar trees.

The Council will formally thank Mr Hywel Joplin for his help and advice at the site meeting.

A list of possible contractors, to undertake the work, to be collated and presented at the next meeting. The agreed list of contractors will be invited to

tender for the work and provide the methodology they would use and equipment they will use, to try and protect the integrity of the football field. The information will be used to include in the Council budget for 2026/27. The Council will approach Mr Hywel Joplin to request if he could act as a project Manager.

9. Interpretive Panels – The Clerk reported information received from Shelley Signs detailing costs for a typical lectern style panel. The cost of artwork preparation and delivery. The information provided is for example.

A panel A1 size approximately £890

Artwork preparation using information provided £490 if the artwork has to be created an additional cost of approximately £350 could be applied.

A delivery cost of £120 is applied.

The Council has established the likely cost of planning from BBNP. Costs for a Lawful Development Certificate was expected from PCC.

An additional cost will be installation.

The Council asked the Clerk to collate information from other suppliers to present to the Council for comparison. Examples of their work to be requested also.

The Council considered the e mail from PAT. The Council will build up further cost comparisons for panels, to be reported at the next meeting. When further detailed information is available the Council will arrange a meeting with PAT to discuss their request.

10. Correspondence

- a) Governance and Accountability of the C&T Sector** – The WG has published a statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government. The LG and Housing Committee has concluded its inquiry the governance and accountability of the sector. During the autumn a further engagement process will commence into the standards of behaviour to enable good governance stewardship. A second theme is expected to explore a new bespoke audit for the sector.
- b) Grant Application** – PCC has advised the Council was unsuccessful in its bid for grant aid from the All Wales play opportunity grant.
- c) Section 6 Duty** – OVW has published dates for forthcoming webinars on Section 6 duty. Councillors were invited to register.
- d) Urdd Gobaith Cymru** – The Council has received a request for financial assistance for the organisation's work in Breconshire & Radnorshire. The Council deferred to the January meeting.
- e) Sustainable Powys** – Sustainable Powys has published dates for further local meetings. The meeting at Ystradgynlais will be on 20th November. The date clashes with the Council's November meeting. The Council agreed to postpone the November meeting to the 13th or 27th November depending on the availability of the Hall. Sandra Howard will liaise with the hall committee to agree an alternative date. The revised date will be advised to the Council.

- f) PAVO Community Conversations** – PAVO has announced dates for Community Fairs throughout Powys which will be followed by a Community Conversations focus group. The event at Ystradgynlais will be on 26th November between 10am – 12pm. A conversation focus group will be held between 12 to 1pm.
- g) Welshpool Town Council** – A letter has been circulated to all T&CC in Powys. The letter deals with a Public Spaces Order on Control of Dogs on Sports Grounds and seeks the support of local Councils. The letter advises that former Dog Control Orders restricting dogs from sports grounds had now expired as they were not renewed as PSPO's within the required statutory period, resulting in limited enforcement powers available to address dog fouling on sports grounds. The Council agreed to support the initiative to lobby Powys County Council to introduce a County wide PSPO covering all designated sports grounds in Powys, prohibiting dogs (except assistance dogs) from entering such areas. The Council also agreed to suggest the inclusion of children's playgrounds.
- h) Norton Subscription** – The annual subscription to Norton will automatically review in November at a cost of £64.99. The Clerk will reclaim the cost in the Q3 office costs claim.
- 11. County Council update** – David Thomas provided the following update. The County Council had commenced work on the Council's budget for 2026/27. The WG settlement will be critical to the reduction of funding gaps and further service reductions.
The Chief Executive will visit the Community on the 23rd November. The itinerary will include a visit to Ysgol y Cribarth, a meeting with the Chairman of the Community Council and Coelbren Welfare Hall.
- 12. Councillor Training update** – The Council considered comments included in the audit report, on the Council training plan. The Council will be required to present the training plan in much greater detail. The Council will also review training plans for this financial year and the following financial year.
- 13. Councillor Remuneration** – All information has now been received.
- 14. Councillor Vacancy** – The Council agreed to republish a notice of co-option from the 1st November.
- 15. Minutes** – The minutes of the previous meeting on the 18th September were approved and signed as a true record.
- 16. Matters Arising – Bus Services** – The Chairman advised he had made contact with the officer responsible for Bus Services at Powys. He had explained in detail, to the officer, the issues concerning changes to a local service leaving Cefnbyrle without a complete service of an outward and return journey. The absence of the service was creating difficulty for residents at Cefnbyrle. A reinstatement of the original service had been requested. He will update the Council when further information is available.

17. Member Issues – Items submitted in writing by Gareth Hayton had been discussed during the meeting..

18. Date of Next Meeting – Due to the date clashing with a Sustainable Powys Meeting, the date of the November meeting may need to be rearranged. Sandra Howard will find out if the hall is available on the 13th or 27th November. The Clerk will issue a diary marker of the new date.