

## CYNGOR CYMUNED TAWE UCHAF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

**Present:** Councillors Stephen Davies (Chairman), Arlene Jones, Geoff Woods, Sandra Howard, Gareth Hayton, Sandra Clayton (on ZOOM), Ann Watkins (on ZOOM), Gail Hopkins-Williams (on ZOOM)

**Observers – None**

The Chairman welcomed members to the March meeting of the Council, pointing out this is the final meeting of 2025/2026 financial year.

1. **To approve apologies for absence –** Apologies were approved from Councillors Susan Pyart, Alun Thomas, County Councillor David Thomas
2. **Declarations of interest –** None declared.
3. **Police Matters –** Police not in attendance. Speeding on the A4067 and A4221 and surrounding roads to be communicated and speed checks maintained.
4. **Finance**
  - a) **Income/Expenditure Report –** The income/expenditure report to the end of February had been circulated. The Clerk summarised the report. A VAT reclaim will be submitted to HMRC at the end of March. The Council approved the report.
  - b) **Budget Update Report-** The budget update had been circulated. The Council approved the report.
  - c) **March Payment Register –** The Council approved the March Payment Register.
  - d) **Council Audit 2024/2025 –** Audit Wales have responded to the Council's appeal on the audit opinion for 2024/2025. Wales Audit accepted some issues had been overlooked and removed the qualification on items related to the Clerk's salary. In addition, the reference to missing documents was also corrected. However, the qualification on arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in use of resources remained. The Council had demonstrated these arrangements during this financial year on the sourcing of interpretive panels and felling of trees.
5. **Planning Ref 26/24437/FUL St David's Church Abercrave –** Change of Church Building (class D1) into a single-family dwelling (class C3) and associated works.

The Council considered the application and agreed to make the following comments.

1. The Council agrees in principle with the proposal
2. The Council notes that the proposed access into and out of the site will be by the East gateway. The Council remains concerned at road safety issues in this location. If permission is granted could the means of access, only via the East gate, be a condition of planning.

3. The Council makes the observation that approximately 50% of the overall footprint of the building appears to be unused.

## **6. Footpath/Playgrounds Update**

**Footpaths** – Footpaths maintenance work for 2026 will commence in May or June.

The Council had received a report from a local walker of a FP obstruction in the Glyn Llech. The Council has now been informed the BBNP Wardens have undertaken necessary works to clear the obstruction.

**Nantfedwen Bridge Deck** – The Chairman reported part of the bridge deck had collapsed presenting a risk of injury to walkers. The Council asked the Clerk to contact PCC to request a repair.

**Playgrounds** – Following the decision taken at the last meeting, the playground team have met Stephan Butcher of PCC. Gareth Hayton updated the Council on discussions with Stephan Butcher and the inspections. The inspection team recommended the Council consider renewing the U bolts and fixings on the swing frames at each playground. In addition, some of the swing seats and see saw seats will need replacing due to wear. The Council agreed with the recommendations and requested the playground inspection to provide a list of items required with costings for the components required. Stephan Butcher has offered to assist the inspection team to change the worn components.

**Caehopkin Entrance Gate** – The inspection team recommended the Council needs to consider replacing the public entrance gate to Caehopkin Playground. The Council agreed and requested that options of replacement gates and prices be provided to the Council at a future meeting. It was agreed the cost of the replacement gate could be included in the Council budget in the 2027/2028 financial year.

**Water Leak Penycae** – A water leak is causing problems at the entrance into the playground at Penycae. The entrance into the park has holding water. The leak had been reported by the owners of Penycae Inn and by the Clerk. Investigation work will be undertaken shortly, to identify and determine the cause of the water leak. A further update will be provided.

**7. Interpretive Panel Update** – Following the decision taken at the previous meeting, Councillors of the Coelbren Ward had met with Anglezarke Dixon to prepare a working plan. The meeting considered options and material topics for inclusion on the panel to be displayed in Coelbren. A plan of content was agreed. The content will include local geology, railways, industrial past, Capel Coelbren and natural beauty. Stephen Davies, Arlene Jones and Sandra Howard will develop the content, which will be provided to Anglezarke Dixon. Anglezarke Dixon will use the content to design a mock-up of the panel for the

Council to approve before manufacturing the finished item. The preferred site in Coelbren will be alongside the Council notice board. A planning application for consent to advertise will be made in the new financial year.

**Penycae Action Team Meeting** – The delayed site meeting with PAT was held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March. The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Susan Pyart and Ann Watkins and members of PAT. PAT had requested a discussion on the Council's roll out of interpretive panels and if the Council could consider Penycae as a location for a panel. The Chairman provided an update and advised the initial panel will be located at Coelbren. Following a discussion, it was agreed the Council will discuss a recommendation to provide the second Interpretive panel at Penycae in the 2027/2028 financial year.

The Council gave approval to locate an Interpretive Panel at Penycae in the 2027/2028 financial year. The Council budget for 2027/2028 will include a budget line for the expenditure. PAT will prepare the material content for the panel and share with the Council. The Council will contact Anglezarke Dixon to inform them of the Council's future intentions.

## **8. Correspondence**

- a) **Resignation** – Councillor Huw Williams has advised the Council of his resignation as a Councillor for the Caehopkin Ward. The Council reluctantly accepted the resignation and thanked Councillor Williams for his service. The Clerk will contact Electoral Services to begin the process to elect a replacement Councillor.
- b) **One Voice Wales Membership** – OVW has advised the membership renewal will be £321.00. The Council agreed to renew membership of OVW. The fee will be paid in April from the 2026/2027 budget.
- c) **Bus Shelter Coelbren** – PCC has confirmed it has placed an order to replace the bus shelter near the former Coelbren School at Heol Eglwys Coelbren. PCC has also advised their intention to replace the other bus shelter at Heol Eglwys later in the year.
- d) **Recycled Plastic Benches** – Second Life Products had circulated customers to advise a reduced price for benches in stock. The Council considered the offer but could not immediately identify a location. As the Council does not have storage facilities it will not progress the offer.
- e) **Craig y Nos Farmers Market** – The organiser of the event has requested whether the Council will consider funding some grass matting to ensure access for mobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs during wet weather. The Council considered the request and the Council budget for 2026/2027 and unanimously agreed it could not support the request on this occasion.
- f) **Campaign for Local Energy** – The Council agreed to write to David Chadwick MP in support of the campaign.
- g) **Penycae Action Team Key Dates** – PAT has advised the dates of village events in 2026 where use of the playground at Penycae is required. The

annual village carnival is scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> June and the Christmas switch on will be the 29<sup>th</sup> November. PAT has provided assurances they will arrange the public liability insurance cover for both events. The Council agreed to the request.

- 9. County Council Update** – County Councillor David Thomas had provided a brief written update. The PCC budget was approved by the full Council on 26/2/26. The Council Tax increase was adopted on the 5/3/26. The Council Tax increase will be 4.9%. £12m of efficiencies had been found and are unlikely to impact service delivery.

A report on the 6<sup>th</sup> form reform will be going to Cabinet in the next few weeks.

- 10. Annual Report 2025/2026** – The second draft of the annual report had been circulated. Minor amendments suggested by Arlene Jones had been included since the circulation. A further comment was raised if the word fly-tipping had been duplicated on pages 3 to 4. The Clerk will review. The report will have final approval at the April meeting and will be published by the end of April.

- 11. Councillor Vacancy Ynyswen/Penycae Ward** – No expressions of interest received.

- 12. Minutes** – The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council on 19/2/26 were signed as a true record.

**13. Matters Arising**

- a) **Bus Services Cefnbyrle** – The Chairman advised he was progressing a change in the timetable of the 62 service to include return journeys from Coelbren to call at Cefnbyrle. He has been advised that his contact at Powys County Council has left the authority. The Clerk was asked to raise the matter with John Forsey to allow the issue to be progressed.

- 14. Member Issues –Open Gardens** – Sandra Howard advised a local garden at Heol y Maes, Cefnbyrle is included in the Glamorgan and Gwent open gardens publication.

- 15. Date of Next Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2026**