CYNGOR CYMUNED TAWE UCHAF COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday 15th October 2026

Present: Councillors Stephen Davies (Chairman), Susan Pyart, Arlene Jones, Sandra Howard, Gareth Hayton, Sandra Clayton, Jaimie Coyne, Ann Watkins, County Councillor David Thomas

In attendance – PCSO Nicole Watkins, Ystradgynlais Police

The Chairman welcomed members to the October meeting of the Council.

1. **To approve apologies for absence –** Apologies for absence were approved from Councillors Geoff Wood, Gail Hopkins-Williams and Alun Thomas.
2. **Declarations of Interest –** None declared.
3. **Police Matters-** PCSO Nicole Watkins updated the Council on speed checks conducted around the Community. Speed checks on the A4221 at the Onllwyn Road crossroads had revealed speed was a problem. Several motorists have received warning letters. Speed checks at Craig y Nos had resulted in motorists being prosecuted. In the wider Ystradgynlais area electric bikes are being stopped and seized under new powers. A quad bike has been stolen from the Ystradfellte area. In conclusion PCSO Nicole reported that thefts of central heating oil have been reported. In response to a question PCSO Nicole reported there was no update on the road traffic accidents at Craig y Nos and the Onllwyn Road junction of the A4221.
4. **Finance**

a) **Income/Expenditure Report –** The report and bank reconciliation to the end of September had been circulated. The Clerk summarised the report. The Council approved the report.

b) **Budget Update –** The budget update at the end of September had been circulated. The Clerk summarised the report. The Council approved the report.

c) **October Payment Register –** The Council approved the October payment register.

d) **2027/2028 Budget Discussion –** The second draft of the budget had been circulated. The second draft included changes suggested at the last meeting namely to Audit Fees, Travel and Subsistence and Defibrillator Consumables. The Clerk advised the cost to replace the entrance gate to the Caehopkin Playground will be £2000.00. The Council agreed to include the figure in the draft budget. The Clerk will continue to review the current year's budget against target and suggest further amendments, to the Council, if required.

5. **Audit Wales Report on Council Audit 2025/2026 –** A copy of the report and completion of audit notice had been circulated to the Council. The documents had also been displayed in Council noticeboards and the Council website. The Chairman advised the audit opinion was unqualified. The Council approved the Audit Wales report.

6. **Standing Orders Updated –** The updated Standing Orders had been circulated. The Chairman advised that governance documents are updated from time to time as required. The Council adopted the updated standing orders. The Chairman signed the updated standing orders document.

a) **Procurement Advice –** The Council adopted the procurement advice.

7. **Planning**

a) **Ref 26/24953/FUL 1 Pantyffynon, Penycae –** The Council considered the planning consultation. The Council noted the planning authority had refused a similar application previously. The Council discussed the matter and agreed the following comments to the planning authority.

1. The access to the site from the A4067 is totally unsuitable. The access is off a long bend on the A4067. The visibility of oncoming traffic in both directions is severely compromised. Approaching from the North requires a left turn at an acute angle off the A4067. The approach from the South on the A4067 is made by crossing approaching traffic from the North on a bend with reduced visibility to oncoming traffic.
2. The access lane to the site is a public right of way. The public right of way must not be prejudiced.
3. The biodiversity of the site must be respected and protected.

b) **Ref P/26/1151/RES New Dwelling Plot adjoining Brynawelon Reserved Matters –** The Council considered the reserved matters consultation. The Council discussed previous concerns raised at the outline stage. Following discussion, the Council agreed to comment as follows.

1.The Council reaffirms previous comments that access to the site via Brynawelon is unsatisfactory. The Council has previously advised a separate access into the site is available from Heol Eglwys just below the former Coelbren CP School. The Council recommends this alternative access is developed to replace the need to access via Brynawelon.

2. The Council has concerns over the scale of the property in relation to its neighbouring properties.

8. **Footpath/Playgrounds Update**

a. **Footpaths –** The third cut of footpath maintenance is in progress.

b. **Playgrounds – Penycae Playground -** RoSPA has advised the Council emergency repairs should be considered for the wooden swing frame at Penycae playground. The playground inspection team has inspected the frame with Stephan Butcher of PCC. The inspection revealed emergency repair was required. The Clerk had spoken with Matthew Thomas, who had quoted the sum of £275.00 plus vat to replace the damaged cross bar. The Council approved the emergency repair.

Cefnbyrle Playground - In response to a question it is hoped the picnic bench at Cefnbyrle playground can be repaired by replacing the damaged panels.

9. **Interpretive Panel Update –** The Chairman and Arlene Jones updated the Council on progress. A further draft of the panel had been received. The latest draft will require some minor amendments before the text is approved and translation work can begin. Copies of the latest draft was circulated at the meeting, for the Council to view the content. The project was expected to meet timescales agreed with Anglezarke Dixon. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.
   In response to a question the Clerk confirmed a draft of the proposed panel for Penycae had been provided to PAT.
10. **Correspondence**

a. **Draft Annual Remuneration Report 2027/2028 –** A copy of the draft report had been circulated to the Council. The section on Community Councils had been highlighted. The Council had no comments and approved the draft report.

b. **Cost of Living Crises –** OVW advised a grant of £500.00 was available to smaller Community Councils to use to start a community project. The Council agreed to ask OVW if the grant could be used to support local food banks.

11. **County Council Update –** County Councillor David Thomas provided the following update. PCC has reviewed its policy on long term empty residential property premiums. The purpose of the review was to bring empty residential properties in the County back into use for occupation. The Council has proposed the premiums should increase in line with allowed parameters. The Council tax on empty properties will therefore increase as follows. A premium of 100% after 12 months. To increase to 200% after 5 years. To increase to 300% after 10 years.
    Councillor Thomas then updated the Council on the work of the Transformation Board. The purpose of the transformation board was to identify possible savings against the Council's current budget. In addition to identify savings and cost avoidance proposals for both the short and medium term including the PCC draft budget for 2027/2028 and subsequent years. The immediate concern would be the expected announcement from the WG on local government funding, due in November. A reasonable settlement from the WG would be helpful, however, a below inflation settlement would not be helpful.
    The Chairman thanked Councillor Thomas for the update.
12. **Updated Councillor Training Register –** The updated Councillor training register had been circulated to members. No amendments were proposed. The Council adopted the Training register.
13. **Councillor Vacancies –** No expressions of interest have been received for the vacancies at Caehopkin or Ynyswen/Penycae Ward.
14. **Minutes –** The minutes of the previous meeting on 10th September, were signed as a true record.
15. **Matters Arising**

a. **SID Locking Key –** The Chairman confirmed a locking key had been located by the Abercrave Highway Depot. Matthew Thomas will relocate the SID to Craig y Nos in due course.
b. **Tynycoed Deacons Meeting –** The meeting had been deferred. The Clerk will make contact and re-arrange.
c. **Bench at Coelbren –** The Chairman advised two possible sites had been identified, to locate a new bench at Coelbren. Both sites will require approval from Powys Highways in terms of suitability and highway safety. The Chairman and members from Coelbren will consult the Abercrave highway depot and highway inspector to assess the suitability of the sites to locate the new bench. The preferred site will be reported at the next meeting of the Council.
d. **Litter Henrhyd –** Arlene Jones updated the Council on her discussions with the National Trust on the problem of litter at Henrhyd waterfall car park. In addition, she had facilitated direct communication between the National Trust and the resident at Coelbren who undertook litter picking. The National Trust was aware of local litter picking efforts around Coelbren and Henrhyd Waterfall. The National Trust also undertake a weekly litter pick and additional litter picking following bank holidays. The NT have expressed their frustration over continuing littering problems at Henrhyd waterfall. The NT policy is not to have litter bins, and their experience has confirmed that signage is not sufficient to prevent littering.
   Part of the discussion explored how visitors often got lost on routes approaching the Falls. The NT had undertaken a review of map descriptions including the in-car navigation aids used by motorists. The review had not found any obvious routing errors to the .

16. **Bannau Brycheiniog National Park –** The Chairman advised that following the decision of the Council at the previous meeting the Clerk had written to the BBNP to request a meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to set up a closer working relationship with BBNP as part of the Community lies within the BBNP boundary. The letter had highlighted specific topics namely, the land owned by the Council at Craig y Nos, the major tourist attractions in the Community, Road Safety on the A4067, the Council's fund raising to provide a defibrillator at the park and local planning issues. The park has responded positively that Gareth Jones the Head of Planning and Place will meet the Council for initial discussions. The Council will offer a selection of dates to BBNP to hold the meeting.

c. **National Trust Field Coelbren –** Arlene Jones advised the Council the NT have undertaken improvement work on its property at Coelbren. Specifically, improvement to a field. Specifically, the clearing of overgrown vegetation to provide a suitable home to accommodate welsh mountain ponies, a native breed in Wales. New fences and gates had been erected. The work also

involved the clearing of areas of vegetation adjacent to Station Road, that will reduce the risk of grass fires spreading and subsequent risk to property.

17. **Date of Next Meeting 19th November 2026**