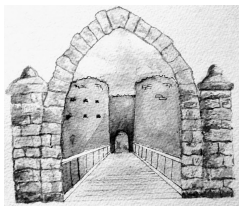
# Whitecastle Community Council
## Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn

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## Minutes of the Council Meeting 15 October 2026 at the Hogs Head

Present: Cllr. Astill-Parsons (Chair), Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. N. Graham
In attendance: L. Taylor (Clerk)

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

- Cllr. C. Duncan gave his apologies as he was unable to attend.
- The Clerk reported that County Councillor, Ian Chandler is unable to attend the meeting as he is away and sent his apologies.

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 meetings held on 17 September 2026.**

**Resolution:** to accept the minutes as a true record of proceedings. Proposed by Cllr. Lewis and seconded by Cllr. Graham. The minutes were signed by the Chair of the Council.

4. **Matters arising from the previous meeting.**

The Clerk confirmed that the majority of actions arising from the previous meeting had been completed. One cheque was not signed at the last meeting and the churchyard maintenance contracts for 2027 have yet to be confirmed.

5. **To consider correspondence.**

Members of the Council have been updated on correspondence since the last meeting by email updates. Many of these items are to be covered by later agenda items.

6. **Chair's report**

No report was presented for consideration.

7. **County Councillor's report.**

No report was presented for consideration.

8. **Councillor ward reports**

- Cllr. Graham reported that he had been assisting the Village Life Community Project with fundraising. He has approached Waitrose and has asked for the group to be considered as part of the Waitrose Community Matters (Green Token Scheme).
- Signs have been made to assist the local litter-picking group in Newcastle.
- Damage to a roadside wall was reported at Crossways and the County Council are providing signage to alert motorists of the need to slow down.

9. **Clerk's report**

- As the Community Council's representative on Monmouthshire County Council's Culture Forum, the Clerk informed Members that Let's Talk Culture has been added to the Let's Talk consultation page on the MCC website. The next meeting of the forum in on 13 January. The Clerk meet with Rachael

Rodgers from MCC's Culture, Community Learning and Events department on 12 October at Llanvapley Pavilion to discuss how the Council supports community groups and cultural activities in the community.

- The Welsh Government is consulting on its vision for the future of culture and sport in Wales, seeking views from organisations and communities. One Voice Wales (OVW) is asking town and community councils to provide brief evidence of their support for local events, sports facilities, heritage projects or youth activities. Members asked the Clerk to provide evidence of the support given to the Crucorney Young Farmers Club and the work it does.
- OVW has reminded Council's of the Code of conduct for Clerks. The Clerk reported that he has read the document and will retain a copy in the folder of work for the current year.
- OVW as published its latest practice development notes on the use of non-members on sub-committees and well-being.
- OVW has notified the Council of a £500 grant which can be used to help a community project get started.
- The Clerk will be attending the Joint OVW / SLCC Event on Wednesday 18 November as part of his ongoing professional development.
- The Welsh Government has published its Draft annual remuneration report 2027 – 2028. Members were informed that members allowances were proposed to stay the same in the coming year.
- Members have been informed of two recent MCC reports on the flooding in 2025. These included a section 19 report and an updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

**10. Community Groups and Village Greens**

- Members had been notified of letters which accompanied donations to community groups and any responses.
- Members discussed the Council's support for the Christmas event in Llantilio and agreed to proceed with the decision made at the September meeting.
- The Footpath Maintenance Group met on 7 October. Since then, it has been confirmed that the right of way along the north side of the river, from the Trothy Bridge in Llantilio to Tal-y-coed, is now accessible following the installation of three new metal gates. The Community Council and the group have expressed their thanks to MonLife for its assistance in completing this project, which was identified by the local community as an important route.
- Members discussed the next steps in registering the village greens at Llanfaenor and Newcastle with the Land Registry. It was decided to consult a land agent to ascertain costs and how to proceed.
- A meeting was held with the approved contractor at Llanfaenor Village Green to discuss details of the mowing schedule for 2027. Following the meeting the Council was provided with updated costs for the work. Members discussed how to proceed and agreed to assess the work to determine the next step.
- The Village Life Community Project held its Annual General Meeting on 7 October. The group is working with Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern Church Committee to ensure the defibrillator in the church porch is regularly checked. A new defibrillator cabinet is now in place at Penrhos Farm.

**11. Community Open Evening**

The meeting at 7pm on 12 November will be held at Llanvapley Pavilion. The Clerk will send out email invitations to each community group and ask for a representative to prepare a short presentation highlighting the group's achievements over the past year and outlining its plans for 2027/28. It will also be an opportunity for the Council to update community groups on the work of the Council and the Community Council elections in May 2027.

**12. Planning matters**

- **DM/2025/01590** Penrhos Equestrian Barn update. Additional information has been submitted by the applicant regarding drainage. A detailed response to this was submitted by a resident. The Community Council listened to residents' concerns at the meeting on 15 September and responded again on 21 September.
- **DM/2026/01196** October 2026 Mod or Removal of Condition Variation of condition 1 relating to planning DM/2021/01436. (Renew permission for a further 5 years). 2 Oak Grove Rockfield NP25 5PY.

  Members discussed the application and raised no concerns and recommended approval.

- The Clerk informed Members that the planning application at Rowancroft, The Hendre has been withdrawn.
- **DM/2026/01041** Construction of two on farm water storage reservoirs for winter fill from surface water run-off. Penrhos Farmhouse.

  The Council raised its concerns with the Planning Department following the previous meeting. However, it recognises that, in this instance, it has no influence over decisions made by planning officers.
- **DM/2026/01214** Broadlands Llantilio Crossenny Village Thoroughfare NP7 8SU Householder New porch, external render, cladding, garage doors and entrance gate / boundary treatment.

  Members discussed the application and raised no concerns and recommended approval.
- The following application was received shortly before the meeting and Members asked for more time to consider their responses.

  **DM/2026/01207** 13 October 2026 Householder Proposed modest link extension to connect annex to main dwelling and associated works. Lower Grove Grove Road Newcastle NP25 5NT

**13. To consider highways matters.**

- The Clerk reported that the Highways Department has been working to improve the road from The Onen to the Grange Farm / Grange Project. Work started 30 September and residents and visitors are already benefitting from the improved road surface.
- The County Council is working to improve its response to pothole reports. Residents are encouraged to report any potholes directly to the County Council wherever possible.

**Footpaths**

- Partnership working has enabled MonLife to support the Whitecastle Volunteer Footpath Maintenance Group, and efforts are underway to secure an extension to the officer's funding and role beyond March. The group and the Council have provided feedback highlighting the benefits of recent improvements, helping to demonstrate the value of this work to Welsh Government and strengthen the case for continued funding.
- The Clerk reported that a new footbridge has been installed on a right of way in The Hendre.

**14. To discuss churchyard matters.**

**Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern**

- The proposed safety notice was distributed to the church committee for comment.
- The contractor reported good progress following a recent visit but advised that, due to the thickness of the grass, some areas remain unfinished. Approval to return on Friday 30 October to complete the strimming and clear brambles around the gravestones opposite the church entrance was requested. The additional work has been approved.
- The Clerk reminded member of the projects taking place in the churchyard which are being run by the charity "Looking After God's Acre', Members endorsed the work.

**Llangattock Vibon Avel**

- Access to the churchyard had been restricted in anticipation of major works to the church by the Friends of Friendless Churches, causing difficulties for both contractors and visitors. The charity has agreed to remove the fencing until a confirmed start date for the works is known.
- The Council has been notified of a burial in the churchyard on 23 October.

**15. To consider policing matters**

- The Council has not received a police report for September.
- The new Police Community Support Officer will be invited to a future meeting of the Council.
- Cllr Lewis reported the theft of livestock and animal feed in the Whitecastle ward. He expressed concern about the length of time taken by the police to respond to the incident and the lack of engagement and support provided to the victim.

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

- Extra keys for the Penrhos noticeboard are to be distributed to a resident who wants to use the noticeboard to notify residents of community events
- The Clerk asked members to review changes made to the planning page of the Council website. The Council has been given access by Plota to a system which provides details of all planning applications in the Whitecastle Community. Plota is an independent UK planning application search platform that allows users to find local planning applications, monitor proposed developments and receive alerts about new applications in their area. It can be a useful tool for local councillors and residents, although official council planning records should be checked to confirm details and decisions. There is no cost to this service.
- The Clerk reminded members that news items are regularly added to the Council's website. The Chair acknowledged the value of these updates but suggested that the news page should focus on recent items to keep the information current and relevant.
- The minutes of the September meeting recorded that Members supported the publication of a Community Council newsletter. The Clerk asked Members to consider the proposed publication date and frequency. The arrangements for its production and distribution, together with the associated budget implications, would also need to be considered. Members suggested that Cllr Duncan and the Clerk discuss these matters and prepare a proposal for consideration by the Council.

**17. To consider financial matters .**

- The cheque to Llantilio Crossenny WI, which was approved at the last meeting, was signed by Cllr. Lewis
- The Clerk outlined the arrangements for Members to consider and approve the Council's budget for 2027/28. Members will be invited to identify any projects requiring budget provision in October. The Community Open Evening in November will help inform decisions on the donations budget. The Clerk will present a draft budget at the December meeting for consideration, with the final budget to be approved at the January meeting. The precept requirement will then be notified to the County Council by the end of January 2027.
- The Clerk presented financial reports for consideration and approval. A balance sheet, list of payments, receipts, budget report and a bank reconciliation were circulated to Members

  **Resolution**: to accept the reports as a true record of the Council's financial affairs. Proposed by Cllr. Biggs and seconded by Cllr. Duncan. The reports were signed by the Chair of the Council.
- The Clerk presented a list of payments for approval.

**Invoices**

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|---|---|---|
| L Taylor | Clerk services and expenses September 2026 | £517.61 |
| Greenbarnes | Spare Keys for Penrhos Noticeboard | £17.87 |
| SLCC | Conference Fee for the Clerk (18th November 2026) | £90.00 |
| Llanvapley Sports and Social Association | Hire of hall for Culture Forum meeting | £15.00 |
| NettlestoPetals | Llanvihangel Churchyard 9 October | £140.00 |
| Llantilio Church Committee | Holding account to support Christmas community event. | £100.00 |

**Resolution**: to approve the payments. Proposed by Cllr. Lewis and seconded by Cllr. Graham. The list of payments was signed by the Chair of the Council.

**18. Dates of Upcoming Meetings**

12 November 7pm Community Open Evening at Llanvapley Sports Pavilion.

10 December 7pm Pwll-y-Cwm Rockfield Barns

Meeting closed at 8.37