

Llantrisant Fawr Community Council

Incorporating the wards of Llantrisant, Llanllowell, Gwernesney, Llangwm and Llansoy

Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held at Llangwm Parish Hall, on Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllr. David Williams (Chairman), Cllr. Gwynfor Gardiner (Vice Chairman), Cllr. John Watkins, Cllr. James Hawkins, Cllr. Bob Trigg, Cllr. Steve Jolliffe, County Cllr. Rachel Buckler, (online) County Cllr Fay Bromfield, Mrs Jayne Stoodley (Clerk).

1. Apologies for Absence:

Cllr. Glyn Williams – Prior commitment.

Cllr. Malcolm Hatfield – Illness.

2. Visit by Laura Jones – Member of the Senedd (MS)

Laura introduced herself and thanked Council members for the opportunity to attend the meeting. She began by saying she would be pleased to listen and discuss the issues that were important to everyone and hoped she would be able to provide support and help where needed.

Cllr Hawkins began by explaining that Community Council residents suffered badly with Mobile and Internet connectivity and said in reality it was more a case of there being no signal rather than poor signal.

Cllr Watkins agreed, saying the most important thing for Llangwm was to have a Mobile Mast sited in the village which everyone could use and he thought the Telephone Companies should be able to install this without too much expense.

He stressed the current situation was a dangerous one, with repercussions for the whole community. There was no mobile connectivity or Internet connection at times and recently during storms, land lines were unavailable without the use of an old plug-in-style handset and there had been loss of electricity.

He pointed out that the demographic of the village meant the likelihood of a resident's collapse potentially meant real danger.

This lack of Connectivity also has a damaging effect for the local Holiday rental businesses in the area. Llangwm is a thriving tourist Community and visitors expect to be able to use their Mobile Phones or at least connect to the internet.

Cllr Trigg confirmed there had at one time been a Mobile Mast in Llandenny, but this had been terminated due to O2 requiring 4000 users for it to remain viable, which had been unachievable.

The issue of Smart Meters was also raised as without a mobile signal they are deemed inoperative. Solar panels also come up against problems which the Electricity supplier is unable to establish how much electricity is being fed back into the Grid.

Signed_____

Date_____

County Cllr Buckler advised the Welsh Government were currently in talks with Starling and said there must be a way of putting pressure on the Government to take this forward. Laura confirmed she would raise the question in the Senedd and push them on funding. She promised to keep the council informed of her progress.

Cllr Trigg raised the issue of the Culvert problems causing flooding on the main road through Llangwm and was advised there was soon to be a Site Visit by the Flood team to investigate this further.

Many other issues were raised by Councillors including:

- The perverse nature of speed limits in the area.
- Hospitals locally - confusion in the mind of the public over which hospital should be used - A Public Awareness Campaign is needed by Aneurin Bevan Health board.
- The inadequate size of the front entrance at the Grange to serve the volume of A & E arriving there.
- The condition of road surfaces, more patches than road and repairs being carried out at the wrong time of year wasting money. Current pothole repairs in the area are poor and just temporary fixes.

Laura ended her visit by confirming she would take all these concerns back to the Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council. She suggested the Council write a letter to Catrin Maby and copy her in so that she can fight these issues on the Council's behalf.

Cllr David Williams thanked Laura for her visit and listening to the concerns of Councillors.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 21st January 2025:

Agreed as a correct record by all present and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising from the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 21st January 2025

Gwernesney defibrillator

Funds have now been received from Zurich Insurance in relation to the claim made for the Gwernesney Telephone Kiosk which housed the Village defibrillator and was destroyed following a crash in the village. A suitable replacement Cabinet will now be purchased and installed alongside the Village Bus Shelter. Agreed and Approved.

Voneus Broadband

The company is working hard to rectify problems and upgrade the network to improve connectivity and speed issues in the village. However, many people continue to suffer Streaming issues and Cllr Watkins said that ultimately the quality of service received appears to also be dependent on location, the property itself and the quality of the Tech installed.

Mobile Connectivity Service

Since the recent feedback from Monmouthshire CC confirmed there was poor / non existent mobile signal locally. Cath Fallon of Monmouthshire CC has been investigating other opportunities and ways of getting connected and suggested the trialing of a Mobile Booster Box. This would be shared between a couple of properties or placed in a central location.

Signed_____

Date_____

Councillors were happy to trial this initiative but felt it was a sticking plaster and not the right solution for the village. Cllr Watkins said a Mast was needed to service everyone in the village adding Mobile Service providers needed to act to ensure their customers could be kept connected.

5.Highways issues:

Update on Matters reported:

Gwernesney Speed limit changes

The proposed lowering of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on the main road through Gwernesney and the old Raglan Road is to be implemented in the new financial year.

Llangwm traffic speed measures

A flashing speed sign was recently installed at the site of the Village car park. This was a welcome addition in the fight to lower traffic speed through the village. However, the sign had not been installed in the best location and should have been placed at the Village Hall, facing oncoming traffic going towards Usk. A second sign was offered initially by Monmouthshire CC, but this has since been used at an alternative location.

Gareth Freeman from the Highways dept has agreed to meet with Councillors and residents to discuss the possibility of further speed measures in the village. The meeting is arranged for Wednesday 19th March at 10.30am in the Llangwm Village car park. The clerk will advertise this to residents via the Llangwm Facebook page and the village noticeboard.

The cost of purchasing a further Flashing Speed sign for the village is being investigated with the manufacturer and once a cost has been established, Councillors will consider whether this might be an affordable option.

Poor road conditions Trevella, Llangwm

No response has yet been received from Highways, but County Cllr Buckler continues to chase for updates.

Llan Y Nant Road Llangwm

County Cllr Buckler has requested a site visit in relation to the bridges and the concerns raised over heavy traffic causing damage to the road surface and destroying verges. There are additional concerns over the amount of flood water eroding the natural banks in the area.

Footpath resurfacing, Llangwm

Cty Cllr Buckler said she continues to chase the outstanding work which is required on the footpath between Yew Cottage and the Mill House. However, response is slow and the department is likely awaiting funding in the new financial year.

Collapsed ditch on the R113

Cllr Glyn Williams spoke to the clerk prior to the meeting to advise the collapsed Ditch on the R113 between Arch Farm and Tump Farm, Llantrisant was still in need of urgent repair work. The Clerk wrote again as a matter of urgency to Highways to highlight the dangerous nature of the problem. A response was received confirming the issue had been passed to the Area Engineer. County Cllr Bromfield was also advised and is monitoring the issue.

Signed_____

Date_____

Chevron Signs between Llanllowell and Usk

Last month the warning signs were reported as being down on the very sharp bend between Llanllowell and Usk. The problem was reported and is now under review.

Route 60.2 Llansoy

The road from Llansoy to Nant Y Gethi was again reported by Cllr David Williams as being in extremely poor repair. The whole length of the road is made up of deep and extensive Potholes, causing ongoing problems to road users. Cllr Williams added that a recent visitor to the area experienced a tyre blow out on her vehicle which had cost her £95. The clerk will write to Highways to request the road be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Llansoy Road markings

County Cllr Buckler subsequently raised the outstanding roadwork in Llansoy. The middle lines in the road are awaiting removal and White lines are still to be added to the verge lines. She confirmed this had been flagged by Gareth Freeman and would be completed when the weather improves.

New Highways issues raised by Councillors:

Cllr Hawkins reported that at the bottom of the junction of Llanllowell Lane in Llanllowell, the Give Way Sign had now been knocked down completely and needed urgent attention. The clerk will report the issue.

Cllr Gardiner last month highlighted the problem with the 'Give Way' sign which had become hidden in the hedge of the garden of the property at the Junction with Chepstow Road, Gwernesney. Following work carried out by the owner it became apparent the Give Way sign had disintegrated and required replacing. The clerk will request a replacement sign be installed.

County Cllr Bromfield raised the issue of the extensive flooding in Llangview. She had reported the issue to Monmouthshire CC and the Land drainage team will be visiting the site to investigate in more detail.

New issues raised by others:

None

6. Crime Prevention and Neighbourhood Police updates:

Reports were received and forwarded to Councillors.

A recent invitation to the Rural Crime team has been accepted and PC Dan

Counsell and a colleague will be joining Councillors at the March meeting in Llangwm.

7. Review of Website Compliance

Councillors reviewed the current requirements and agreed to regularly monitor the website content to maintain compliance and ensure it remained accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. Cllr Watkins requested Councillors current roles be updated on the website. The clerk will action.

Signed _____

Date _____

8. Review of Biodiversity Policy

The Community council has a statutory duty under Section 6 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016 to seek, maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of eco systems.

The Council is a small authority with no land holdings or responsibility for land. The majority of local government services impacting biodiversity are provided by Monmouthshire County Council rather than at Community Council level.

In line with the requirements of the Environment Act 2016 the Community Council endeavors to include the consideration of biodiversity and eco systems in the setting of its' policies, plans and projects.

The Community Council has agreed to the following plan to support and enhance Biodiversity:

- A) To take biodiversity into account when considering planning applications.
- B) To support hedge/tree planting by replacing felled trees in appropriate areas.
- C) To further support the Llangwm Village Scheme by providing plants to encourage much-needed sources of food for pollinators.
- D) To encourage and provide possible funding for community groups to become involved with local projects by identifying pockets of land which might be enhanced.
- E) To encourage Community members to litter pick their hedgerows.
- F) Leaving standing and fallen dead wood where safe to do so, as habitat for invertebrates.
- G) The Community Council will consider reducing the number of grass cuts throughout the year if felt appropriate, and request that the contractor leave uncut any areas of natural wildflowers.

9. Monmouthshire County Council Report:

County Councillors informed and updated Councillors throughout the month on issues relevant to their local Communities.

County Cllr Bromfield confirmed that the MCC budget consultation for 2025-26 was ongoing at this time.

10. Finance:

- a) The Bank Statement: For the period 28th December 2024 – 29th January 2025 was received and signed by the Chairman.
- b) Financial Accounts: A Statement of Income and Expenditure for the period ending the 29th of January 2025 was received, AGREED and signed by the Chairman.
- c) The Bank Reconciliation: For the period 28th December 2024- 29th January 2025 was received and signed by the Chairman.
- d) Expenditure: The following expenses were APPROVED

Clerk's Net Salary for February (including an additional 9.5 hours worked in January)
Total £636.02

Clerks Expenses February – Allowance and Sundries
Total £36.80

Signed_____

Date_____

Mrs Joan Bennett – Donation for Llangwm Best Kept Village Planter project
Total £87.78

Total Expenditure to pay: £760.60

- e) The clerk advised an urgent online remote visit had been needed by the IT Medic following issues that had arisen with the laptop and software. Troubleshooting was required to recover data that had not been saved correctly following a Microsoft update.

This also highlighted that from October no further updates/support would be offered by Microsoft for the current version of Windows 10 installed on the laptop. To upgrade to Windows 11 the laptop would require checks to ensure it could run this new version. In view of the laptop now being 5 years old and experiencing some issues, the IT Medic suggested that Councillors might consider replacing the current laptop with a newer model with Windows 11 already installed.

Councillors agreed this would be the best option and requested the clerk approach the IT Medic to source a comparable replacement model.

11. Correspondence

A list of MCC Agenda and Meeting notices was received throughout the month and advised to Councillors. NOTED

Correspondence was received from Sara Jones of Llantrisant requesting consideration of a grant to support her daughter Lottie, aged 13 who is a local aspiring winter sports athlete. She has recently been selected to the GB's Children's team – as the team's youngest member, which follows on her success in being selected to the Welsh Snowsports team last summer. The family are struggling to meet the extra financial requirements to support their daughter in this venture and were hoping the Community Council might consider her for a grant / sponsorship.

Councillors requested a Grant/ Donation application form be sent to Sara and to advise her the request would be considered at the April Council meeting.

12. Planning:

No new applications have been received since the last meeting.

Updates and Enforcement Issues:

Application:DM/2022/00235

Stables with day room/accommodation and barn – revised plans

Contact was received from David Wong at MCC Planning to enquire whether Councillors had previously raised any objections over the application as Planning officers were now getting ready to visit the site. The clerk confirmed Councillors had no comments to add on these proposals and had agreed there was no reason to object.

County Cllr Bromfield reported that this application had now been approved.

Wern Panna Llangwm

Cty Cllr Buckler advised the situation remained unsatisfactory. Planning permission stated the gates should be inset and this remained particularly important when considering road safety. The head of Enforcement at Monmouthshire CC is taking legal advice currently and a response is awaited.

Signed_____

Date_____

Mill Meadow Cottage and Stables Llangwm

Original permissions granted in 2015 stated the holiday accommodation should only be used from March through to October and not as now quoted 28 days in a calendar year.

County Cllr Buckler reported that Monmouthshire CC had now closed the case as it was deemed not to be breaking the terms of the planning permissions. Cllr Buckler requested the case be opened again, but to date this has not happened.

13. Ward Reports: None received

14. HMPS: No updates

15. Any Other Business:

Cllr Trigg raised the issue of the appalling road surface in the area of the The Olway Pub, Usk. He highlighted that the square in Usk had been resurfaced recently but this road had been left without attention and in an extremely poor state.

Cllr Jolliffe highlighted an issue that had arisen in Llantrisant village where a Footpath and Bridge had been closed without notice. The area location was provided by Cllr Hawkins and then passed to County Cllr Bromfield who had agreed to investigate the issue further.

16. Date of next Meeting:

Tuesday 18th March at 7.00 pm to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

Date of future Meetings for 2025:

Tuesday 15th April at 7.30 pm to be held at the Greyhound Inn Llantrisant

Tuesday 13th May at 7.30 pm to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

Tuesday 17th June at 7.30pm to be held at to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

Tuesday 15th July at 7.30pm to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

Tuesday 16th September at 7.30pm to be held at the Greyhound Inn Llantrisant

Tuesday 21st October at 7.30pm to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

Tuesday 18th November at 7.30pm to be held at Llangwm Parish Hall

No meetings will be held in August or December 2025 unless deemed necessary.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9 pm.

Signed_____

Date_____

Signed_____

Date_____