

## Minutes of General Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Present: Cllrs**

Allan Morgans – Chair

Paul Sheldon

Amanda Curtis

Lyn Gibson

Margaret Narburgh – Clerk

**Apologies:**

Jac Armstrong – Vice Chair

**Not Responded**

HO Williams

**Members of the Public:**

4 members of the public were present

**Visitors:**

Caroline Dawson & David Shiel  
Countryside Services

This was a face-to-face meeting with no requests to join by video link.

**864. Apologies**

Cllr Armstrong sent his apologies due to being unwell.

**865. Presentation by AONB – Development work at Moel Famau**

The Chair welcomed Countryside Services and thanked them for providing an update on their plans.

During the presentation it was stated that:

- There has been a 30% increase in visitor numbers from around 200,000 to 300,000 a year post Covid.
- Visitor expectations have changed, especially since Covid and the public now expect basic facilities to be provided at visitor attractions.
- Improvements have been made during the past 5 years with double yellow lines along the road to reduce traffic chaos, the mobile shepherds hut serving drinks and snacks and additional car parking spaces.
- The new building with its 'grab and go' café, toilets, information boards and rangers office is designed to meet basic expectations, improve people's behaviour and better manage traffic rather than attract more visitors.
- The building has a 25m long frontage and has been tucked into the corner of the car park near the start of the path to the top of Moel Famau. This was designed to minimise its impact on the landscape and will include many eco features i.e. solar panels, sedum roof, recycled rainwater etc.
- It will be used as a base for Ranger and Volunteer Rangers working in and round the site.
- Denbighshire CC have had £10.5 million from Welsh Government's levelling up fund and £1.3 million of this has been allocated for improvements at Moel Famau and Loggerheads Country Park.
- One of the conditions is that work must be completed by end of December 2025.

Members of the public asked the following questions:

Q. How have visitor numbers been measured.

A. Through car park ticketing receipts and physical people counts.

Q. How can you justify building more toilets when the ones in the bottom car park are underused.

A. Visitors now expect toilets in the top car park as well and are reluctant to use the bottom car park.

Q. How can you justify a full time café when the shepherds hut is not financially viable with only opening limited hours at weekends.

A. The hut has proved very popular and people are disappointed when it is not there every day. When it is there, it has greatly improved visitors behaviour. Its' presence is limited and costly to run due to it having to be cleaned, re-stocked and transported from Loggerheads every time. A permanent café facilitates longer opening hours because refreshments can be stored on site and will increase revenue to make it more viable.

Q. Why is a rangers office needed.

A. There have been issues with parking, litter, dog fouling, overnight camping and parties. There is a noticeable improvement when rangers are visible because their presence deters inappropriate behaviour. They direct traffic and answer visitor questions. It has been chaotic when there have been medical emergencies so being on hand will help speed up access to treatment by rangers assisting with minor injuries

and clearing the route for emergency vehicles with more serious injuries. They need basic office facilities to do their job and store equipment.

Q. Why are volunteer rangers needed.

A. To provide visibility and interact with the public more effectively.

Q. Why is the levelling up fund being used to site a building in the middle of an historic landscape so close to the hilltop fort. Can the existing infrastructure cope if visitor numbers increase.

A. These matters were considered when preparing the business case before deciding to go ahead.

Q. What is happening at Loggerheads.

A. Work there is to modernise the existing facilities with considerable investment in rebuilding the wall and refurbishing the bridge to reduce flooding.

Q. Many visitors get lost on their way to Moel Famau and stop in Tafarn y Gelyn to ask residents for directions. Can a sign be put up in the village directing the way, and can another sign be put up showing where the toilets are in the bottom car park.

A. This can be considered.

Q. Can the lights be dimmed at the car park pay stations and electric vehicle charging points.

A. This is an issue because bright lights are needed to enable people to read the instructions.

The Chair proposed bringing forward item 11 on the agenda to discuss the planning application for Moel Famau. Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Curtis and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against.

Countryside Services asked if they needed to leave whilst the planning application was discussed and the Chair stated they didn't.

## **866. Planning Application 16/2024/1284/PF – Moel Famau**

Cllr Sheldon felt the building was not too intrusive and would be welcomed by visitors.

Cllr Gibson agreed.

Cllr Curtis felt the building improved inclusivity for disabled people who were not really catered for at present.

Cllr Morgans felt the new building would attract even more visitors and that more car parking spaces should be considered.

A member of the public continually interrupted whilst Councillors were speaking to ask more questions of Countryside Services regarding archaeological presence, connections with other sites locally, historical conservation, ongoing maintenance costs, vandalism and siting of defibrillators. The Chair asked him to refrain on several occasions stating the time had passed for questions from members of the public and Councillors were now considering whether to support the planning application or not. He was warned that if he continued, he would be asked to leave the meeting. Cllr Sheldon started to speak in support of the application at which point the member of the public spoke again and the Chair asked him to leave. He stormed out declaring he could not believe the Council was supporting this.

The Chair asked Councillors to confirm their views again which they did. Cllr Morgans proposed supporting the application but request that provision for car parking is reviewed. Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllrs Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against. Action: Clerk to notify planning.

## **867. Meeting open to the public**

A member of the public asked if the Council could include provision for painting the edges of the steps from Cae Gwyn to the main road and those from Cae Derwen to the church as a safety measure in the 2025-26 precept. The Clerk confirmed that this was included for consideration later in the meeting.

# CYNGOR CYMUNED – LLANFERRES - COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A member of the public asked if a notice showing the visiting time of the mobile post office van could be put outside the church and on notice boards as there was some confusion over what time it is there. Cllr Curtis check the post office website and confirmed it was between 1.30 and 2 pm on Tuesdays. Action: Clerk to speak to church warden and arrange.

## 868. Declarations of Interest

None declared

## 869. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Cllr Morgans proposed they be accepted subject to the correction of a typo on page 5, minute reference 833 should read 863, as a true record of the meeting, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllrs Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried.

## 870. Matters Arising from Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

827.2 & 854 Still no response from Adam Turner re the buildings in Big Covert. Action: Cllr Morgans to continue chasing.

841 Improvement work for Maes Ysgawen park is ongoing.

853 Completed 13.9.24

855 Completed 13.9.24

878 Completed 13.9.24

880 Completed 13.9.24

881 Completed 13.9.24

882.3 Completed 13.9.24

863 Completed by Cllr Armstrong 20.9.24

## 871. 2nd Quarter Review of Accounts

The Clerk presented the following:

April to end of September 2024				Forecast to end of March			
Income		24052		42118	Includes income & expenses for Maes Ysgawen		
Expenditure		19830		48698			
Under/ <b>Over</b> spend		4222		<b>-6580</b>	Balance after unexpected audit fees, not replacing Tafarn y Gelyn noticeboard and small items costing less than precepted for		
<b>Effect of reserves</b>				<b>Available Reserves better than expected due to savings</b>			
Total funds at end of September		24002		Tafarn y Gelyn noticeboard	1500		
Less overspend by end of March		-6580		Reclaim VAT in this year	1896		
<b>Total reserves</b>		<b>17422</b>		Precept for audit fees	1100		
<b>Ring fenced items</b>				Training	50		
Less election cost		-2500		Chairs allowance	100		
Less Councillors allowance		-2872		Broadband village hall	150		
Less balance from AONB grant		-830		<b>Total</b>	<b>4796</b>		
<b>Available reserves</b>		<b>11220</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>Without savings</b>	<b>6424</b>	<b>34%</b>	
			<b>within target</b>				<b>below 50% target</b>

Cllr Morgans proposed accepting the review of accounts, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllrs Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against.

## 872. 2025-26 Precept

The Clerk had circulated the draft precept prior to the meeting. The Chair went through it line by line stating that the only item that needed thinking about was Maes Ysgawen park. The existing paths are now in

Signed: *Allan Morgans*

Dated: 14/11/2024

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desperate need of repair and the Council should consider precepting for this if the National Lottery grant is not forthcoming. The Clerk stated that this could be left until early January as the Lottery may have responded by then. After due consideration Councillors agreed to include £500 to paint the lines on the steps as requested by a member of the public.

The Chair proposed accepting the precept in principle and finalising it in January. Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Curtis and Gibson voted in favour. Actions: Clerk to include line painting and put on agenda for January meeting. Cllr Morgans to contact Highways dept to see if they will paint the lines and if not, recommend a suitable long lasting paint.

### **873. Role of Town and Community Councils**

The Chair and the Clerk had attended a video conference hosted by One Voice Wales who asked for input into their response to the Local Government and Housing Committee. It has been asked by Welsh Government to consider the role, governance and accountability of Town and Community Councils. Their terms of reference are to examine:

1. The role and value of community and town councils in Wales;
2. Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape;
3. Governance and scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency;
4. Scope of digital and new technology to improve decision-making, service provision and participation in local democratic processes;
5. How new powers and responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities.

Over 60 councils attended from all over Wales and agreed that town and community councils were vital to maintaining local amenities and reporting the needs and views of residents for decision making by higher authorities. They agreed there was a need for change particularly to improve communications with County authorities, update legislation that no longer reflected how society has changed and the use of technology.

### **874. Correspondence List**

1. One Voice Wales has invited Councils to participate in the consultation to examine the role of town and community councils in the future.
2. Audit Wales have acknowledged the Councils complaint about the high level of audit fees and following Darren Millars intervention agreed to respond by the end of October.
3. NRW held a video conference on 31<sup>st</sup> September to provide an update on the consultation for the proposed National Park. Cllr Morgans had been unable to join the meeting due to technical issues.

The Clerk reported that on 29<sup>th</sup> September there was £292.77 in the current account and £23,709.64 in the savings account which included the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Lottery grant of £5,455 and VAT refund of £1,896.06.

### **875. Maes Ysgawen Park Update**

The Clerk reported that the planning application was submitted on 19<sup>th</sup> September but that during a meeting with Harrisons to finalise costings on 8<sup>th</sup> October, it came to light that a 'Green Infrastructure Statement' should have been included and they were having difficulty working out how to do this with DCC's new IT system or who to contact for help. The Clerk obtained the information they needed from her contact in planning and forwarded it to Harrisons with a request for immediate attention. The planning officer has also agreed to prioritise the application due to the time pressure with the grant.

The grant application form and accompanying documents are finished and the committee is just waiting for the revised Cost Estimate from Harrisons to complete the Budget form. This is needed before the application can be submitted. The costs were discussed at length during the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October and need to be finished before the end of October.

The Clerk had asked for an extension to the 18<sup>th</sup> October deadline for submitting the grant application and the funding officer has agreed to no later than 11<sup>th</sup> November. She has notified Harrisons of the urgent need to complete the actions on them. Action: Committee to continue working to meet the deadline.

**876. Armistice Day**

Cllr Morgans confirmed the service would start in St Berres church at 10.15 am and would continue at the war memorial at 11 am on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November. He offered to do the reading and lay the wreath.

**877. Internet Banking Check**

Cllr Sheldon stated that he had checked the bank statements against the internet banking and accounts for September 2024 and the transactions were all correct.

**878. Audit Wales Invoices**

The invoices for 2020-21 and 2021-22 are still outstanding waiting for a response to reduce them from Audit Wales. 2022-23 invoice has still not arrived but 2023-24 came on 9<sup>th</sup> October and was for £200. Cllr Curtis proposed leaving the 2 invoices unpaid until Audit Wales respond and paying the 2023-24 invoice. Cllr Sheldon seconded and Cllrs Morgans and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against. Action: Clerk to arrange payment.

**879. Payment of Bills and Invoices**

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay.

Date	From	For	Amount
6.10.24	AVOW - Wrexham	Payroll for October 2024	£542.30
19.9.24	HSBC	Bank charges September 2024	£5.00
28.6.24	Audit Wales	2020/21 Audit fees	£5,431.00
28.6.24	Audit Wales	2021/22 Audit fees	£2,037.00
13.9.24	SLCC	One Voice Wales annual conference	£78.00
16.9.24	SLCC	Training - quotes, tenders and contract management	£36.00
18.9.24	Denbighshire CC	** Planning application fee	£575.00
<b>Total Bills to Pay</b>			<b>£8,704.30</b>

\*\* Expenditure to be reclaimed from National Lottery grant for Maes Ysgawen park improvements

Cllr Morgans proposed paying all bills with the exception of the two from Audit Wales, Cllr Sheldon seconded, and Cllrs Gibson and Curtis voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to pay those bills authorised for payment.

**880. Other Matters brought to the Council’s Attention**

## CYNGOR CYMUNED – LLANFERRES - COMMUNITY COUNCIL

1. The Clerk asked if the meeting in January could be brought forward from 9<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> as she was going on holiday on the 10<sup>th</sup> and would like to clear the paperwork before she goes. Also, if Councillors wanted to hold the Dec, Jan and Feb meetings by video conference. Councillors agreed to both.
2. The Chair reported that he had heard people shooting in Aberduna nature reserve and that another resident had confirmed they too had heard it. He had reported it to North Wales Wildlife Trust.
3. Kate Thew, Denbighshire's street naming and numbering officer has asked if the Council still wants to go ahead with the consultation to change the Maeshafn road name back from Pont Y Mwynwr to Village Road. Cllr Morgans proposed going ahead, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllrs Sheldon and Gibson voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against. Action: Clerk to notify DCC.

Cllr Morgans proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Curtis and Sheldon voted in favour. The meeting was closed at 9.15 pm.

**The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30 pm in Llanferres Village Hall and by TEAMS video conferencing**