

Minutes of General Meeting held on 14th November 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:

2 members of the public were present

Visitors:

None

This was a face-to-face meeting with Cllr Curtis joining by video link.

881. Apologies

Cllr Armstrong sent his apologies.

882. Meeting open to the public

A member of the public asked if Denbighshire CC had any plans to resurface the road around the S bend along the Maeshafn Road. Cllr Morgans replied that some of the pot holes had been filled and edges repaired recently and that the contractor had confirmed resurfacing was on the schedule of work to be done but no date was given.

883. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Morgans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Part II due to his relationship with the Clerk.

884. Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on 10th October 2024

Cllr Sheldon proposed they be accepted, Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Morgans and Curtis voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried.

885. Matters Arising from Meeting on 10th October 2024

- 773 Actions from Maeshafn playing field inspection still ongoing.
- 854 Still no response from Adam Turner re the buildings in Big Covert.
- 866 Completed 11/10/24
- 867 Completed 11/10/24
- 872 Precept on agenda for completion at December meeting.
- 878 Completed 11/10/24
- 879 Completed 11/10/24
- 880.3 Completed 12/10/24

886. IRPW – 2025/26 Councillor Payments

The Clerk stated that as far as she could see payments for small councils remained the same at £156 for Councillors allowances and £52 for consumables.

887. Correspondence List

1. DCC have confirmed they will be sending out consultation documents to residents in Maeshafn re the road name reverting back to Village Road. If more than 50% support the change it will be referred to the next stage.
2. A resident has confirmed that DCC have surveyed Rectory Lane in preparation for the road to be resurfaced but no date has been given for when the work will start.
3. One Voice Wales has offered to undertake a 'digital health check' on the Councils IT systems. Councillors agreed to go ahead. Action: Clerk to complete the necessary forms.
4. Audit Wales had responded to the complaint submitted regarding the fees charged.

5. One Voice Wales have submitted their response to Welsh Government stating that Town and Community Councils in Wales are at the front line of democracy and their roles should be protected.
6. One Voice Wales have updated the Financial Regulations and these have been circulated to Councillors for consideration.
7. Aubergine have completed the quarterly website accessibility check. There were two alerts both of which have been corrected by the Clerk.
8. Keep Wales Tidy have circulated the 2025 application forms for Maes Ysgawen and Maeshafn playing field to apply for Green Flag Awards. Action: Clerk to complete and submit.
9. One Voice Wales have circulated the consultation document for the Legislation (Wales) Bill. The Chair felt that the Council was not qualified to respond and Councillors agreed.
10. Welsh Government have notified Councils that the Section 137 allowance for 2025-26 is £11.10 per elector.

The Clerk reported that on 29th October there was £300.16 in the current account and £22,845.68 in the savings account. This did not include the 4th National Lottery grant payment of £2,715 which had arrived in the bank earlier today.

888. Big Covert

Cllr Morgans reported that he had watched DCC's council meeting last week. At present there are 360 enforcement issues outstanding that are not being addressed. One enforcement officer has left and the other promoted so there is no one 'in post' at present. When asked when a replacement would be appointed the Chair was non-committal citing the budget review. Action: Cllr Morgans to write to the Chief Executive and Darren Millar asking for action to be taken on the unauthorised building in Big Covert.

889. Planning Applications

- i. 21/2024/1361/PF – Maes Ysgawen Park
The Clerk reported that consultation period has ended with no objections to the application being raised. AONB have supported the improvements on condition that the trees are protected and Denbighshire have issued a SAB requirement notice which needs addressing by Councillors.
- ii. 21/2024/1235/PF – Loggerheads Country Park
After due discussion, Councillors agreed to support this application. Action: Clerk to notify planning.
- iii. 21/2024/1434/HH – Tyn y Coed Maeshafn
Cllrs Sheldon and Gibson reported that the planned extension was over 50% bigger than the existing building and therefore not 'subservient' as required. After due discussion Councillors agreed to object on this basis Action: Clerk to notify planning.

890. Maes Ysgawen Park Update

The Chair thanked the Clerk on behalf of the Council and sub-committee for all the time and effort she had put into submitting the National Lottery grant application for the capital works. The Clerk reported that the application had been accepted and Eirian Jones has been appointed Funding Officer for the project. She is required to consider and submit her recommendation to the funding committee before 12th December. It is unlikely the Council will be notified of the outcome until January 2025.

The Clerk has received 3 quotes for preparing and submitting the SAB application to comply with the notice issued by Denbighshire Highways and Environmental department during the planning process at £950, £2,620 and £4,195, respectively. The lowest quote is from a small local company and is based on an hourly rate. The other two are from larger companies who appear to have 'set' rates for this type of work. The application fee itself is based on the size of the project and estimated to be £500. The Council is eligible for a 50% discount bringing it down to £250. Cllr Sheldon proposed accepting the lowest quote and instructing the company to

submit the application. Cllr Gibson seconded and Cllrs Morgans and Curtis voted in favour. Action: Clerk to notify those concerned.

The Clerk reported that she had used the sell2wales service and contacted numerous landscape architects to obtain quotes for the professional fees to manage the works if the grant is approved. Two quotes have been received, two companies responded that they did not have a Chartered Landscape Architect (National Lottery requirement) so were unable to quote, three companies asked for further information but did not respond after receiving it. The Clerk suspects there is a reluctance to quote to effectively take over work started by someone else and Councillors agreed. The fees will fall between £1,500 and £25,000 and therefore within the values stated in the Financial Regulations requiring 3 quotes to be obtained. After due discussion Councillors agreed to base the decision on who to appoint on the two quotes received due to the difficulty in getting three. Action: Clerk to prepare comparison of quotes and circulate to Councillors for consideration if the grant is approved.

The Clerk reported that five companies have quoted for the tree works following the advert circulated on social media. Action: Clerk to prepare comparison of quotes and circulate to Councillors for consideration if the grant is approved.

Cllr Morgans reported that he had obtained a number of quotes for the entrance and nature trail lecterns and associated graphic design. All were within the £1,500 budget and would be considered when the time comes. Cllr Gibson asked about the information on the nature trail lecterns and Cllr Morgans stated the content would be agreed at a later date and that David Shiel from AONB had offered to help with this.

891. Updated Financial Regulations

The Clerk went through the sections that she considered needed adapting to reflect the Council's activities stating that the main updates were to the management of contracts and banking arrangements. After due discussion Councillors agreed financial limits for the various activities listed, to delete sections that did not apply and asked the Clerk to draft wording for sections 6 (Banking and payments) and 7 (Electronic payments) to reflect what was possible within the HSBC banking system. Action: Clerk to adapt and circulate to Councillors for further consideration at the December meeting.

892. Review of Standing Orders

The Clerk stated that the Standing Orders will need reviewing after the Financial Regulations have been updated for consistency. Action: Clerk to include on Agenda as appropriate.

893. 2025/26 Dates of Council Meetings

Councillors agreed to continue holding meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month except January 2025 when it would be on Tuesday, and to hold December, January and February meetings by video conference. Action: Clerk to circulate and publish dates and book Llanferres village hall.

894. Internet Banking Check

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

895. Audit Wales Invoices

Councillors expressed their frustration and disappointment that the complaint to Audit Wales about the high fees for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 audits had not been upheld. They considered referring the matter to the Ombudsman but concluded that the wording of the response from the Auditor indicated they were fully compliant with legislation and it was highly unlikely the outcome would be any different. Cllr Morgans

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proposed the 2 invoices be paid, Cllr Gibson reluctantly seconded and Cllrs Curtis and Sheldon voted in favour.
Action: Clerk to arrange payment.

896. Payment of Bills and Invoices

The following bills were presented for authorisation to pay.

From	For	Amount
AVOW - Wrexham	Payroll for November 2024	£542.30
HSBC	Bank charges October 2024	£5.00
Audit Wales	2020/21 Audit fees	£5,431.00
Audit Wales	2021/22 Audit fees	£2,037.00
WH Smith	Stationary	£9.98
Lawn Order	Autumn treatment Maeshafn village green	£40.00
SLCC	Annual membership fee	£110.00
***Harrisons	Technical design Maes Ysgawen	£1,800.00
***Cavendish Bloor	Quantity surveyor cost estimate	£768.00
Total Bills to Pay		£10,743.28

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

Cllr Sheldon proposed paying all bills, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllrs Gibson and Morgans voted in favour. There were no abstentions or votes against and the motion was carried. Action: Clerk to pay all bills.

897. Other Matters brought to the Council's Attention

1. Cllr Sheldon had been asked via Facebook if the Council was demonstrating political bias by inviting Darren Millar MS to attend Council meetings. The Chair stated that Mr Millar was the area representative for Clwyd West and 'offered' to attend meetings rather than being 'invited' to do so. He provided useful insight into Welsh Government activity and had been instrumental in helping progress issues affecting the community. There was no political bias and other Members of the Senedd would also be welcome to attend if they so wished.
2. Cllr Morgans reported that a resident had asked if the works being undertaken to install solar panels, external wall insulation and an air source heat pump at one of the Rock View cottages in Maeshafn needed planning permission. He had established that the works were within 'permitted developments' and notified them accordingly. The only possible issue was the location of the heat pump as it should be at least 3m away from the fence.
3. Cllr Morgans reported that the owners of 1 Rock View cottage have asked for the noticeboard in Maeshafn adjoining their property to be relocated onto the village green to enable them to renovate the old bake house and install a window in the side wall. Councillors considered this at length and concluded that although there is no obligation on the Council to agree to this because the noticeboard is not sited on said residents land, they had no objection in principle providing an alternative location could be agreed with other villagers likely to be affected, the resident obtained the necessary permissions and funded the associated costs. Action: Clerk to draft response and circulate to Councillors for agreement.

Cllr Morgans thanked members of the public for their attendance and asked them to leave before moving onto Part II. Cllr Gibson proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Sheldon seconded and the meeting was closed at 21.15.

Cllr Morgans handed over the Chair to Cllr Sheldon and he and the Clerk left the meeting whilst Councillors considered an item under Part II.

898. Part II

Councillors considered the 2024-25 salary scales for Clerks agreed by NALAC and approved the increase in accordance with the Clerks contract of employment.

Cllr Sheldon proposed closing the meeting, Cllr Curtis seconded and Cllr Gibson voted in favour. The meeting was closed at 21.25 pm.

The next General Meeting of the Council will be held on Thursday 12th December 2024 at 7.30 pm by TEAMS video conferencing