

MAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of an **Extraordinary Meeting** of Mawr Community Council held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 12th August 2025 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Chair: Cllr Darren James (DJ)

Councillors: Cllr Angela Williams (AW); Cllr Linda Frame (LF); Cllr Gareth Richards (GR); Cllr Catherine Evans (CE);

Absent: N/A

Apologies: N/A

In Attendance: Mr M Thomas (Clerk & RFO)

Declarations of Interest
None Received.

Questions from the public relating to items on this agenda (limited to 10 minutes)
The Clerk advised that no questions had been received in relation to the agenda.

ADMINISTRATION

62. To discuss funding to update the Council's website

The Clerk provided members with the NALC Website Accessibility Requirements document and noted that the Council's website does not meet the criteria as set out within. This would be classed as a failure on the annual return and result in a qualified (bad) audit. The Clerk advised that he spoke with the Grants Officer who is confident in being able to find funding to update the Council's website.

Members gave permission for the grants officer to locate grant funding to update the Council's website. Members agreed that, if funding was unobtainable through grants, then the website would not be funded from Council funds.

RESOLVED: Proposed AW, seconded CE - Grants officer to locate grant funding to update the Council's website.

63. To review new councillor documents and gift register.

The Clerk advised of a new list of documents that would be provided to all current and new members to help them in their role as Councillors. The list of documents includes:

- The Good Councillor's Guide
- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Acceptance of Office

- Register of Interests Form
- Gifts and Hospitality Register and Policy

The Clerk noted that only one completed acceptance of office form could be located, and no register of interest forms were locatable since his starting. New documents will be sent out to update the Council's records.

FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND POLICY

64. To discuss the Councils change of banking arrangements.

The Clerk advised that the current banking arrangements could be improved to satisfy the Councils financial regulations. He provided the below list of 5 banks for Members consideration:

Bank	Pros	Cons
1. Unity Trust Bank	Specialises in councils, charities & social enterprises. - Ethical & socially responsible banking policy. - Understands dual authorisation needs.	No physical branches (online/phone only). - Monthly account fee.
2. CAF Bank	Designed for charities & non-profits; can work for councils acting as sole trustee. - Good for holding earmarked or reserve funds. - Simple online banking.	Not open to all councils unless tied to charitable activity. - Limited additional services (e.g., no complex lending products).
3. HSBC	Widely available nationwide. - Can handle complex mandates with multiple signatories. - Large branch network.	Mixed feedback on customer service. - Mandate changes can be slow.
4. Lloyds Bank	"Treasurer's Account" designed for community & council use. - Good online banking tools. - Branch presence.	Online dual authorisation setup can be fiddly at first. - Some areas report branch closures.
5. Barclays	Longstanding public sector banking experience. - Can set up dual authorisation for payments. - Wide UK coverage.	Reports of slow admin on account changes. - Some customers find the online system less intuitive.

Members settled on moving the Council's bank account to Unity Trust Bank citing its relevance to the Community Council. CAF was less geared towards the public sector, and the other "high street" banks were dismissed based on members personal experiences and knowledge of their use in other Councils.

Proposed: AW, seconded LF, agreed: all.

65. To discuss a quote for employee payroll.

The Clerk received only one quote for the Council's consideration. He advised that other companies would be worth exploring to ensure the appointed payroll company specialises in the sector and is able to fulfil the needs to Mawr CC.

Resolved: Members agreed to review this item next month when more quotes have been sought.

66. To Approve August payments.

Members were provided with a list of payments for the month of August totalling £10,363.58. The payments relate to:

- Cleaning fees for Felindre, Craig Cefn Parc & Garnswllt Welfare Halls
- General Grounds maintenance across all 3 wards
- Knotweed treatment

- Additional clearance of areas e.g. behind Felindre Welfare Hall and the Dell
- Monthly broadband and telephony costs
- Staff costs including overtime payment for the Clerks additional work in getting the previous two years of accounts to audit (62.5 hours).

The Clerk advised that the accounts for the financial year 2023/24 had been created and are ready for submission to Audit Wales. When the accounts for 2024/25 have been created and submitted to audit, we will be up to date and each monthly meeting will contain the cashbook that displays the financial position of the Council at the previous month's end and will be reconciled against the bank statements. Members agreed to the list of payments.

Proposed: LF, seconded CE, agreed: all.

67. To receive an update on the VAT return.

The Clerk advised that there is a VAT return to be claimed for the financial year 2024/25 and for the current financial year (Apr 25 to August 25). He further advised that, as the previous VAT return was inaccurate, the next VAT reclaim would need to be amended reducing our next VAT return by £1,467.10. The main errors in the already submitted VAT return relate to missing or incomplete expenses forms and insurance premium tax (IPS) being reclaimed as VAT when VAT was listed on the invoice as '£0'.

ESTATES AND HEALTH & SAFETY

68. Update on the licence to occupy agreement for Felindre Welfare Hall.

The Clerk advised that the solicitors managing the licence for Felindre Welfare Hall mentioned the benefits of a lease for the hall committee vs a license. The solicitor had asked if it had been considered. The following list was provided by the solicitor as a comparison list of Lease vs Licence for the hall committee and Council.

Feature	Lease	Licence
Legal nature	Creates a legal interest in land. Tenant has exclusive possession for 25 years.	Simple permission to occupy – no property interest created.
Control	Harder to regain possession before term ends unless tenant breaches terms or there's a break clause.	Much easier to terminate (subject to agreed notice period). Retain greater control.
Security of tenure	Unless excluded from 1954 Act, tenant may have right to renew at end of term.	No renewal rights under 1954 Act – easier to end.
Flexibility	Tied to long-term arrangement, can restrict landlord's ability to deal with property for 25 years.	Can adapt or terminate more easily if future redevelopment or different tenant is desired.
Marketability	Lease may be harder to vary or adjust if market conditions change.	Licence terms can be adjusted more readily to respond to market or operational needs.
Rent and income	Rent reviews every few years (usually upwards only) protect against long-term rent stagnation.	Can build in regular fee adjustments but often harder to secure long-term rent increases.

Repair obligations	Can pass full repairing obligations to tenant, reducing landlord's maintenance costs.	Landlord usually retains most repair responsibility, increasing ongoing costs.
Alienation (assignment/subletting)	Tenant may assign or sublet (if permitted), introducing new occupiers you may not have chosen.	Generally personal to the licensee – no right to assign or sublet, keeping control over occupier.
Enforceability	Breach enforcement is formal and sometimes slow (forfeiture proceedings).	Easier to remove licensee for breach (no court order usually required).
Lender perception	Lenders prefer leases for security; long licences may be seen as disguised leases and could cause legal risk.	Less attractive to lenders – may affect finance if property is charged.

- A 25-year licence risks being reclassified by the courts as a lease, especially if there is exclusive possession and fixed rent – meaning you could accidentally give the tenant long-term rights without the protections you intended.
- A lease gives certainty of income and ability to transfer repair liability but greatly reduces flexibility.
- For 25 years, most landlords prefer a lease for rent security.

Members advised that a lease had been considered previously but they settled on the licence agreement. The Clerk advised that everything was now ready to go for the licence to be signed off, we are just waiting on the solicitors. Members agreed to continue to pursue the licence agreement.

RESOLVED: Proposed LF, seconded AW – Clerk to continue with the finalising of the license.

69. To note the surveyors report for the new bridge on Sally's Way.

Members were provided with a structural engineers report from Barratt Associates Ltd following the completion of the bridge to Sally's Way, courtesy of Cllr Mark Tribe's members fund. The following recommendations were provided within:

Discussion and Recommendations

It is clear from the previous inspection carried out in 2023 that the timbers have been replaced. The recommendation provided in the previous report have not been carried out. See below the extract.

'Remove the timber decking and replace, possibly with plastic non-slip composite decking. It is also highly recommended when the decking has been removed that the following is carried out:

- *The concrete bases are cleared of any debris and vegetation under the walkway at the end bearing of the PFCs.*
- *The PFCs have any surface rust removed with a wire brush/wheel and are treated with rust preventing paint.*

- *The timbers are also cleaned/pressure washed, left to dry and the treated with good quality external wood preserver. If any rotten timbers are found after the decking has been removed, then they are to be replaced as necessary.'*

The bridge remains, as mentioned on the previous report, structurally adequate. However, the longevity of the foot bridge is questionable if the recommendations are not carried out.

- *The decking will remain a slip hazard if no non-slip design is implemented.*
- *Composite decking supported at 400mm centres will prolong the life of the footbridge surface.*
- *Removing the debris from the end bearings, together with removing and treating the rust on the PFCs will again prolong the life of the footbridge.*

It is recommended at this stage, or the next maintenance interval, to carry out preventative maintenance to prolong the life of the bridge and provide anti-slip.

1. *Removal the decking and removal the rust and treat the affected areas with rust preventing paint. Paying special attention to the inside of the PFCs where water and debris will collect.*
2. *Either replace the decking with non-slip decking or provide a non-slip solution.*

These are recommendations and not structurally required at this stage, however from experience, when rust has set in, as it is indicated in this report (and the previous report), it will accelerate until the bridge in its entirety will require replacing. In conclusion the bridge is structurally safe for public use, however it is advised that people do not congregate on the bridge due to the supports being at 500mm centres and a risk assessment is carried out for slipping.

Members noted that Cllr Tribe had received the report. The Chairman advised that chicken wire is industry standard to remediate the slip hazard and could be a quick fix and ensure the bridge can be opened and safe for public use, following a risk assessment.

70. To discuss Solar Panels for Felindre Welfare Hall.

Members were provided with a report from Barratt Associates Ltd who inspected the roof of Felindre Welfare Hall to ensure its suitability for the installation of additional solar panels. The report confirms that the roof is suitable and will be able to facilitate the installation of the new solar panels.

Members were then directed to the original quotes previously received for solar panels. They were advised that the grant funding only covers 1 quote when factoring in the reclaiming of VAT. The winning quote was selected based on this information.

RESOLVED: Proposed DJ, seconded LF - The accepted quote was submitted by Solar Installations Wales for **£15,347 +VAT (£3,069.30)**. It was agreed to submit a planning application to begin this project.

71. To receive an update in relation to Craig Cefn Parc Charity arrangements.

The Clerk advised that he had attended a meeting with SCVS to produce a plan so that the Council can begin to fully realise its role as the Trust of the CCP Charity. The future management of the charity will come down to the original terms set out in the 'scheme' and the Councils vision for the future of the charity. Training will be provided to the Council should it wish to remain involved with the managing of the charity. More information will follow as this

item progresses and the Clerk attends more meetings.

72. To note the date of the next Ordinary Meeting as 15/09/2025 (subject to change should there be any unforeseen circumstances).

CLOSE: The meeting ended at 9:20pm.

Signed:

Cllr Darren James

Chairman

Date:

DRAFT