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GOETRE FAWR

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING HELD AT LLANOVER VILLAGE HALL AND BY TELECONFERENCE ON MONDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Present**: Community Councillors Nigel Morrey, Lewis Carter, Andy Barnes, Peter Daniel, Janet Robins, Martin Stevens, Owen Dodd and Community / County Councillor Jan Butler.

**In Attendance**: Jonathan Lazenby (Clerk).

**Apologies**: None.

**Absent without Apology:** None.

**Guests:** Nicola Awni - Project Lead for the Gwent Federation of WIs.

**Members of the Public:** Maureen Wilcox.

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | **Apologies for Absence.**  As above. | Clerk |
| 2 | **Chairman’s Remarks.**  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting after the summer recess, in particular our new Councillor Martin Stevens, who was elected to office on 7th August. In addition, a welcome was extended to Nicola Awni, Project Lead for the Gwent Federation of WIs, and member of the public, Maureen Wilcox. The Chair also read to the meeting an email which he had received from a local resident thanking the Clerk for the support he had offered, in trying to resolve an issue with a blue badge application. The Chair also noted that we had a number of mentions in the latest edition of ‘The Diary’, with a dedicated article on the Biodiversity planting, undertaken in and around Goytre and Llanover. |  |
| 3 | **Welcome of New Councillor.**  All the members warmly welcomed Councillor Stevens to the meeting. The Clerk advised that the declaration of Acceptance of Office had already been signed in his presence, and therefore, all of the relevant formalities had been completed. |  |
| 4 | **Declarations of Interest.**  The Chair, Councillor Morrey, commenced the meeting by asking the members present whether they had any declarations of ‘interest’ to make, which includes previous declarations already made. No declarations were forthcoming. |  |
| 5 | **Minutes.** Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14th July 2025. The minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried by all those present at the July meeting (Councillors Stevens and Butler who were not present, did not vote). | Clerk |
| 6 | **Matters Arising.**   1. Item 7 (ii) (i) – Ton Land Health & Safety Assessment. The report on the four oak trees on Ton Land has now been received from Dan Sainsbury at MCC and previously distributed to Councillors by the Clerk. It confirmed that all the trees display good vitality and no further action is required. Clerk has diarised for another inspection in summer 2028. 2. Item 6 (2) – Councillor Dodd advised that the management committee of the Community Centre met on 29th July and had concluded that they could not take on the new lease on the terms being offered, in particular with regard to the cost, (even with a discretionary 95% rebate), and on the full repairing basis being demanded (especially as MCC have declined to undertake a survey). As a result, the issue was now being passed back to GFCC ‘to sort’. The Clerk queried what this would look like, but none of the representatives present were able to articulate what new terms might be considered acceptable. He explained the legal advice he had received today, was that he should not try to ‘negotiate’ without explicit ‘acceptable’ terms being provided by the charity. He also felt such new terms would also have to be acceptable to GFCC, but the likelihood was that they would be less ‘generous’ than the current lease. Some elements of the Clerk’s arguments were disputed, and therefore it was agreed that he should seek legal (paid opinion) on the following:  * The exact obligations of a Custodian Trustee. * The legal status of a charity and its trustees. * The permissions / instructions required for GFCC to attempt to re-negotiate the lease which formed part of the trust deed. * The legal situation, if terms were subsequently offered, which were acceptable to the charity, but not to GFCC.   This was proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. | Clerk  Clerk |
| 7 | **Waterloo Project – Nicola Awni – Gwent Federation of WIs.** Nicola is the Project Lead for the Gwent Federation of WIs (37+ branches), which has around 1300 members. This year, they are campaigning on behalf of, and being supported by, the Waterloo Foundation, to launch the Waterloo Project across all WI's in Wales. As part of the project, they are looking for organisations and men's groups in particular, to sign up as Ambassadors, and to wear the White Ribbon to demonstrate they support stopping violence against women and girls.  The campaign originally started back in 2005 linked to the ‘Not In My Name’ campaign, and each year, for a period of two weeks (this year 25th Nov to 10th Dec) the ribbon is worn to remember people who have been subject to violence. We are asked to sign up, and if possible for some Council members to attend the ‘Light a Candle’ service. Nicola advised that the Womens’ Aid Group hold a surgery in Usk every week, which has highlighted the problem in the area.  Both Councillors Daniel and Stevens said that they would be willing to take part, drawing upon their previous career skills. It was also agreed that Councillor Carter would post the handout on to the village FB pages. The campaign was supported by all those present, and it was agreed that GFCC should sign up as Ambassadors with the members and the Clerk wearing the white ribbon during the 16 days of ‘activism’. This was formally proposed by Councillor Daniel, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. | Clerk All Cllrs. |
| 8 | **Maintenance.** (including items previously reported, but not yet addressed).   1. Purchase of sandbags in case of winter flooding (suggested 100 @£2.94 a bag).   Councillors felt it would be prudent to have a local supply of sandbags which could be distributed to residents at short notice, in the event of flooding this winter. They could be delivered by MCC and stored at the back of the Community Centre. However, rather than offer to buy them, it was requested that the Clerk ask MCC if they would simply store them at the Community Centre for use locally as required. If this was not acceptable to MCC, then it was agreed that the purchase as outlined above should proceed. This was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Morrey and carried unanimously.   1. Maintenance of Local Bridleways and Long House Barn to Newtown Road footpath. Councillor Stevens, is trying to resolve the poor state of maintenance of many bridleways, which are overgrown with brambles etc. In addition, he is looking to arrange a ‘DMMO’ - an application for a Definitive Map Modification Order, which is the legal process to amend a Definitive Map of public rights of way, so that the above footpath could be formally adopted by MCC. However, the ownership is unclear, as it is believed that one of the neighbouring houses may own part of the land on which the footpath sits. Councillor Butler is to investigate to try and support moving this forward. 2. The Clerk noted that the LED light above the public conveniences (and which shines on to the car park) is continually on. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Gwent Electrical to repair or replace, subject to a maximum spend of £100 plus VAT. This action was proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously. 3. In light of recent requests for CCTV footage of ‘minor car crash incidents’ in the car park, it was agreed that the Clerk should request a quote from Tod Security to replace the existing car park camera, which is of much lower quality than the door camera, and produces particularly poor images at night time. | Clerk  Cllrs. Stevens / Butler  Clerk  Clerk |
| 9 | **Finance.**   1. Payments made since the July meeting.  **£**   Most are regular monthly payments, with the exception of the Q1 payroll bill and the additional graveyard maintenance. There were no comments or observations.   1. Review of Cashflow as at 31st August 2025 including allocation of election costs. The Clerk presented the meeting with a copy of the August 2025 cashflow.   He confirmed the cost of the recent election has not been advised to him by MCC (circa £3500?) and therefore cannot yet be included in the budget calculations for the remainder of the financial year. As a result, its potential impact, and whether we need to recoup the costs for next year or 2027 (when full local elections will take place) cannot be calculated. Councillor Morrey felt that this should be accrued, and the Clerk said he would look at how best this can be accommodated in our accounts. He will continue to monitor the situation so that a final calculation can be taken prior to next year’s precept request. There was no further comment or observation.   1. 2026/27 budget – initial thoughts. The Clerk will begin his budget projections over the course of the next few weeks, and therefore, asked the members whether they had any specific items or projects which they wished to budget in the financial plans for 2026/27. Councillor Butler asked that £3000 be included for a donation(s) in favour of the Community Centre. Clerk will propose this to the Finance Committee when they meet to consider the first draft of the 2026/27 budget. 2. Adoption of General Power of Competence. The Clerk was pleased to advise that, following the election of Councillor Stevens, the Community Council again meets the eligibility criteria to re-adopt the General Power of Competence (GPoC), namely:  Two thirds of Councillors (rounded up) have been elected / elected unopposed.The Council has a suitably (e.g. CiLCA) qualified Clerk.The Community Council’s two most recent auditor’s opinions are ‘unqualified’. The Clerk advised the meeting that a resolution must be passed each year, both confirming the Council’s continued eligibility and their wish to re-adopt GPoC. Adoption would negate the need to rely on individual ‘Powers to Act’ created by Parliament under various acts of legislation over the past 100+ years, as well as the need to use s137 where no specific power existed. Instead GPoC would become the Power of first resort, enabling Council expenditure on anything that an ordinary resident could spend money on. Only where expenditure was specifically prohibited (for example, on Churches and ecclesiastic charities under section.6(1) (a) the Local Govt act 1894), would we be unable to apply GPoC. The system of accounting and recording expenditure would also be simplified. It was agreed that the Council should re-adopt the power, and a resolution to this effect was proposed by Councillor Morrey and seconded by Councillor Dodd, with the vote carried unanimously.  1. Councillor Allowance 2025/2026. The Clerk advised that he will be looking to pay the mandatory Councillor Allowance (£156 a year), plus the Chair & Vice Chair Honoraria (should the Chair & Vice Chair wish to claim). He then distributed the relevant forms for Councillors to either claim payment (confirming their eligibility to receive tax free – subject to availability of working from home allowance), or to decline payment. 2. Review of account Signatories. The Clerk has noted several recent delays of late to the signing-off of payments on the bank account. This necessitated him having to send text reminders to two of the authorised signatories. He therefore wondered whether there should be a change of signatories to Councillors who are more likely to be available during the day. Councillor Butler advised that quite often she has a problem with a obtaining a signal (rather than being unavailable). Councillor Carter offered to become a signatory, although this would mean that he would be unable to sign-off any future bank Cashflow reconciliations. Eventually it was agreed that the Clerk would continue to monitor the situation. | All  Clerk  Clerk  All /Clerk  Clerk |
| 10 | **Planning.**   1. Acceptance of the Planning Meeting minutes of 3rd September.   It was noted that the meeting scheduled for 5th August to consider application number [DM/2025/00596](https://planningonline.monmouthshire.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage) (New drive entrance access to improve visibility & highway safety at [The Old Vicarage](https://www.google.com/maps/place/51%C2%B046'59.4%22N+2%C2%B059'39.4%22W/@51.7832602,-2.9930278,704m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m4!3m3!8m2!3d51.783174!4d-2.9942711?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDUwNy4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D), Llanover Road, Llanover), had to be abandoned as it was inquorate.  The meeting on 3rd September was convened to consider the following:  DM/2025/01013 - Fast Track Full Planning Permission and DM/2025/01014 – ‘Listed Building Consent Heritage’, for a proposed conversion of barn to dwelling, utilising existing entrance, planting of wildflower meadow, native hedgerow &  associated works, at Abergwenllan Farm, Llanvair Grange, Llanover, NP7 9DG.  The planning meeting concluded that “without the expert response from the National Amenity Society consultee, regarding Listed Building Consent Heritage status, and from other consultees as relevant, it was not reasonable for the layman to comment on the viability of the proposed conversion. The Goetre Fawr Community Council planning application review committee would prefer to return to this proposal once the heritage status of the subject building has been determined.”    Acceptance of the minutes was then proposed by Councillor Butler seconded by Councillor Robins, and carried unanimously.   1. Any other updates. The application for the erection of a war memorial in the village has now been received. A meeting of the Planning Committee was scheduled for Tuesday 23rd September at 6.30 pm, with confirmed attendees of Councillors Morrey, Butler, Robins and Daniel, with the meeting likely to take place in person at the Community Centre. Councillor Barnes will organise the meeting, but will not attend due to his close association with one of the applicants. | Cllr. Barnes |
| 11 | **Community Youth representatives.** Following the May meeting, the Clerk circulated a proposed advert, updated from the initial suggestion following some very useful comments from Councillor Carter, for the two potential Youth Councillor vacancies on the Council. At the time, Councillors confirmed the wording on the advert, but felt that with the school summer-break then fast-approaching, we should wait until the new term before proceeding.  Councillors agreed that we should now proceed, with Councillor Lewis confirming that he would post the advert on to the Facebook page to enable interested parties to apply. This was then proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Daniel, and carried unanimously. | Cllr Carter / Clerk |
| 12 | **Outstanding appointments to outside bodies.** Due to her absence at the May statutory meeting and subsequent monthly meetings, Councillors did not feel it appropriate to nominate Councillor Butler to the Community Council Management Committee, without her ‘agreement’. However, at this evening’s meeting, Councillor Butler confirmed that she would wish to ‘stand’; and her appointment was therefore proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Dodd, and carried unanimously. | Clerk |
| 13 | **Adoption of new email system.** At the moment our existing email system doesn’t provide push notifications of messages received. Therefore, for Councillors to take part in real time email conversations, they need to set up alternative forwarding Council email addresses. However, this isn’t compliant with how ‘gov.uk’ email addresses are meant to be used. In addition, when members respond to messages, the email address which is shown, will be that of their own personal CC email, not their gov.uk address.  However, the company that operates our mapping system (Parish on-line), have just set up a system that would allow us to resolve this problem. They have produced platforms for PCs and Macs, as well as mobile applications, all with the availability of push notifications, and utilising our ‘gov uk’ addresses for both messages received and sent. This would become our standard Community Council email platform, ensuring we are compliant with the requirements of our gov.uk addresses.  The annual cost would be £260 a year, plus £24 for a 10GB limit (which we are already near with our existing supplier).  Price wise, it is difficult to compare, as our existing supplier charges for individual items (domain name / mail box limits etc).  However, overall, the Clerk believes that the outlay will be broadly cost neutral. The Clerk has spoken to colleagues, but as yet has been unable to identify any other suppliers which provide such a bespoke solution.  However, before proceeding, Councillors felt that they would like to see an outline plan of what the migration to the new platform would look like and in the interim they asked if the Clerk would seek out how other Councils operate. He is attending the One Voice Wales Conference on 1st October, and will take the opportunity to speak to other Clerks to identify what systems they operate. | Clerk |
| 14 | **Staff vacancy & Clerk’s salary (closed session).**   1. Staff Vacancy. A vacancy will shortly arise to support the main cleaner of the public conveniences by providing holiday cover. In the short-term, the position will be covered on a voluntary basis by her daughter. However, the role now needs to be formally advertised at the agreed wage rate. The Clerk had previously provided a specimen job advert for consideration and it was agreed that this should be published on the noticeboard etc to allow local candidates to apply. This was then proposed by Councillor Morrey, seconded by Councillor Carter and carried unanimously. The Clerk to post the advert and provide an application form for anyone who expresses an interest in applying. 2. Clerk’s salary. At this point the Clerk left the room while his pay was discussed.  TheLocal Government pay agreement for 2025/2026 has now been accepted by the relevant unions, with a 3.2% pay increase for all staff. It was agreed to implement the pay increase in full and this was formally proposed by Councillor Dodd, seconded by Councillor Daniel and carried unanimously. | Clerk  Clerk |

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| 15 | **County Council update - County Councillor Jan Butler.**  Councillor Butler commenced by thanking all those present for their kind words following her recent bereavement.   1. Mon and Brec Canal. The Deputy First Minister has now found £5m which has been given to Welsh Water to help them with the pumping of water to the canal. A Task & Finish Group has also been set up and will be meeting tomorrow (9th) for the first time. The Petitions Committee is meeting again on the 22nd September, and Councillor Butler has been asked to comment. She advised that the Canal & River Trust is still saying that they cannot sustain the £11k a day it is costing them. 2. Goytre A4042 Pedestrian Crossing Status. The ‘disputed’ land has now been purchased and any delays are now as a result of the scheduling of the work by the contractors. In the meantime, Councillor Butler and Peter Fox, MS, are chasing Welsh Govt every 4 to 6 weeks for a progress update. 3. Goytre Hall Wood. This is managed by MCC, who are seeking funding from the Woodlands Investment fund to improve the management of what is a bluebell wood. There are some 20 Sequoia trees, although it is mainly beech. They are looking to establish a friends group and undertake further tree planting.   At this point (9.45pm) it was proposed by Councillor Morrey, and seconded by Councillor Carter that we **suspend standing orders** (meetings are limited to two hours), and this was carried unanimously.   At this point **Councillor Dodd** lost his internet connection and left the meeting.   1. Revised Local Development Plan.  This is going to Full (County) Council meeting on October 23rd. The further development of The Acres will be dependent on the plan being passed. The public can attend, but it is probably easier to watch it on line. In addition, there is a separate meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee on September 24th. 2. Llanover Pedestrian Crossing. Councillor Carter updated the meeting on the latest position. He is still waiting for the results of the feasibility study. However, Welsh Government have now committed to undertake a speed limit review through the village, which will likely take between 6 to 8 weeks. |  |
| 16 | **Village Committee Reports – questions based on previously distributed updates.**   * Goytre Village Hall.   + Looking for grants to upgrade the hall’s curtains.   + Good level of bookings still.   + Excellent community event which was well received. * Llanover Village Hall.   + AGM held - well attended and a new committee was appointed. New officers were elected. Previous chair, vice chair and treasurer were returned to positions.   + Damp issues repaired and redecorating is ongoing.   + Bookings and financial health of hall remains strong.   + Flower & Veg Show 6th September, Village Breakfast 7th September. * Goytre School Governors.   + School Recommenced Wednesday 3rd September.   + New headmaster and receptionist.   + Wish to apply for some extra disabled parking spaces outside the school. It was confirmed that they should approach MCC Highways. * Goytre Community Centre.   + At the last meeting of the Community Centre Committee, it was the majority view that they should not take on the lease on the terms offered by MCC for a number of reasons including:   a) They could not afford the substantial increase in annual rent (even with a 95% discretionary grant).  b) The uncertainty of having a "discretionary" grant that might or might not continue in future years.  c) The commitment to a "full repairing" lease when MCC wouldn't do a survey (even though this is the basis of the original lease with the Community Council).   * + The Community Centre Committee view was that they needed to hand the issue back to the Community Council, in its capacity as custodian trustees, and allow them to resolve the situation.   + A Film Group has been established with a view to the first film night taking place towards the end of October/early November on a Friday evening. More details to follow.   + Next Repair Cafe Saturday 13th September 10:30 - 12:30.   + Volunteers are being sought to set up a Monday morning coffee group for the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month. A core group of volunteers of 6 or more is needed to get this off the ground.   + Keep Wales Tidy visited last week and are happy with our progress. We have been able to pick another £2K of stuff to improve the garden. This includes a bench with planters. A table/seat and another raised bed.   + Tom will be in the garden working with us from 9am Thursday morning. All welcome.   + Events coming up:     - Family Bingo Friday 12th September 7pm.     - Fish and Chips Quiz Wednesday 22nd October 7:30 pm.     - All Welcome. * Other Reports. * There were no other reports. |  |
| 17 | **Communications.**   1. GFCC Facebook page – latest posts / responses. There have been no communications. 2. Aderyn Temporary accommodation. Following an email approach via the Clerk from Aderyn, it was agreed that the respective committees (GVH and the Community Centre) would consider whether they can provide temporary (very short term accommodation – max 24 hrs) whilst alternative accommodation was sought in an emergency situation (major fire at Aderyn etc). | GVH & CC Com’ttees |
| 18 | **Advertising – Usk and Raglan Diary Contributions Nov/Dec 2025.** The closing date for articles to be submitted for the Nov/Dec issue will be towards the end of this month. | Cllr. Carter  Clerk |
| 19 | **Date of next meeting and close.**  The next meeting is to be held on **Monday 13th October at 19.45.**  The venue to beLlanover Village Hall, and by teleconference using: <https://meet.jit.si/GoetreFawrCommunityCouncil> | All/  Clerk |

Chairman: **………………………………** Date:**…………………**