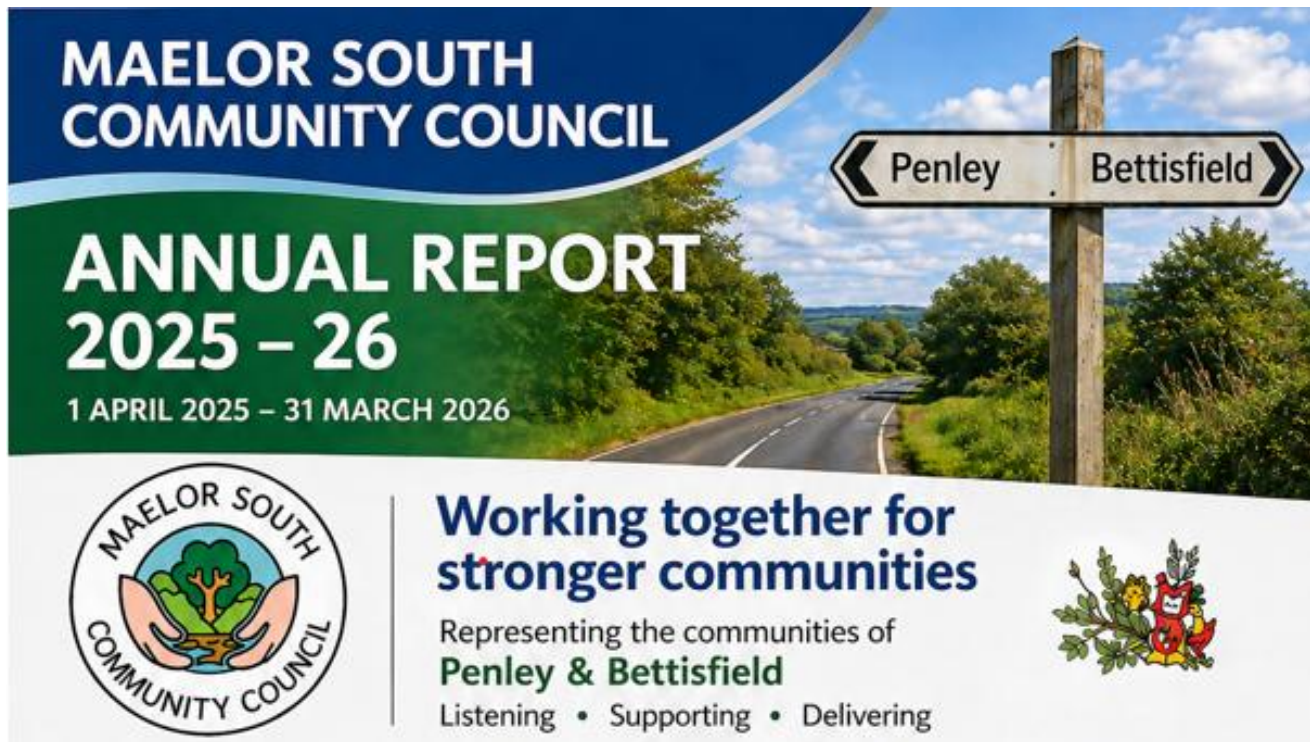




# Annual Report 2025 - 2026

1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

## Council Members

Chair: Cllr Alwyn Reay | Vice Chair: Cllr John Griffiths  
 Cllr Nick Ringrose | Cllr Jackie Tomkinson | Cllr Keith Owen | Cllr John Blanchard | Cllr Jan Thompson | Cllr Rebecca Bettis  
 Served as Councillor during the year: Cllr Simon Huxley; Cllr Michelle Edge; Cllr Ian Burdett  
 Clerk: John Gallanders

## 2025 -26 at a glance

|                                                      |                                                                          |                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>£44,000</b><br>new Pride in Place funding secured | <b>Penley</b><br>Pendas Park Playground upgraded                         | <b>Bettisfield</b><br>Office Field / Donkey Field improved                  |
| <b>3</b><br>defibrillator uses during the year       | <b>School safety</b><br>Mini Police and road safety engagement delivered | <b>Low precept</b><br>Community charge remains at the lowest 25% in Wrexham |
| <b>9</b><br>Planning application responses           | <b>Potholes</b><br>Multiple reports to WCBC                              | <b>Speeding</b><br>Regular engagement with GoSafe and Police                |

# Chair's Introduction



As Chair of Maelor South Community Council, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for 2025-26.

This has been a year defined by determination, persistence, and visible delivery for our communities. The Council has continued to operate at the frontline of local issues - raising concerns, pressing for action, and ensuring that the voices of residents in Bettisfield and Penley are heard clearly and consistently.

Many of the issues we have faced this year have not been quick to resolve. Drainage, road safety, and the future of Penley Hospital are complex matters involving multiple organisations. Progress has often required sustained pressure, repeated engagement, and a willingness to challenge where necessary. While outcomes have not always come as quickly as we would wish, the Council has remained focused and consistent in its approach.

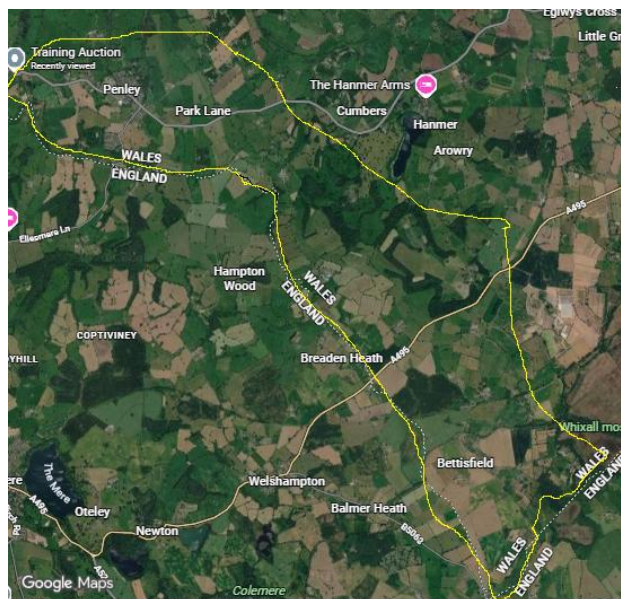
Alongside this, we have continued to deliver visible improvements. From the upgrade of Pendas Park Playground to the ongoing development of Office Field, from supporting the Youth Club to maintaining vital community infrastructure such as defibrillators, the Council has worked to ensure that practical benefits are delivered where possible.

Looking forward, MSCC has been allocated £44,000 by Wrexham County Borough Council as part of the Government's Pride in Place funding. Thank you to those community members who have already put forward ideas. Whilst we will not be able to deliver every suggestion immediately, all ideas will be retained for future funding opportunities.

This report reflects not only what has been achieved, but also the strength of community involvement and the importance of local representation.

**Cllr Alwyn Reay**

**Chair**



Maelor South Community Council covers a rural area in the south-east of Wrexham County Borough, positioned along the England-Wales border. Our principal communities are the villages of Penley and Bettisfield, along with surrounding hamlets, farms, and dispersed dwellings that form part of the wider Maelor countryside.

Geographically, the area lies within the historic Maelor region, characterised by flat agricultural land, a network of rural lanes, and strong cross-border links. It sits close to the market towns of Ellesmere and Whitchurch, which provide access to wider services, employment, and retail. The area is also connected to nearby settlements such as Overton-on-Dee and Hanmer.

The council's coverage includes key local infrastructure such as village halls, primary and secondary school provision, recreational spaces, and community facilities that act as focal points for local activity. Despite its rural nature, the area maintains strong community cohesion, with residents often relying on shared spaces and local initiatives.

Overall, Maelor South Community Council represents a geographically dispersed but socially connected area, balancing rural character with cross-border accessibility and a strong emphasis on sustaining local services and community wellbeing.

# Community Safety and Policing

## The Challenge

Safety within our communities - particularly around our schools - has remained a central concern throughout the year.

In Penley, the areas surrounding Madras School and Maelor School continue to experience significant challenges, particularly during drop-off and pick-up times. Issues such as speeding, unsafe parking, and general driver behaviour have created risks for children and families navigating these busy areas.

## Council Action

The Council has taken a proactive and persistent approach. Despite the installation of the Zebra Crossing a couple of years ago, instigated by MSCC, there are still ongoing safety issues for those crossing. Site meetings were arranged and evidence has been gathered and shared, engagement with GoSafe has been maintained, and concerns have been escalated to North Wales Police at multiple levels. These efforts have not always resulted in immediate change, but they have ensured that the issues remain firmly on the agenda.

## Current Position

This work has also led to positive engagement with young people. The introduction of the Mini Police initiative at Madras School has provided a valuable opportunity for children to understand road safety, develop awareness, and play an active role in promoting safer behaviour.

This combination of challenge and collaboration reflects the Council's approach - holding organisations to account while working constructively to improve outcomes.



*School safety engagement and visible community policing.*



*Penley village setting - local routes and community safety remain connected.*



# Infrastructure and Environment

## Flooding and Drainage

### The Challenge

Few issues have required as much sustained attention this year as drainage and flooding, particularly in Bettisfield.

Residents have experienced ongoing problems caused by blocked culverts, poorly maintained ditches, and conflicting responsibilities between landowners and authorities. These issues are not only inconvenient but, in some cases, present real risks to property and wellbeing.

### Council Action

The Council has collaborated closely with residents to gather evidence, document conditions, and ensure that concerns are clearly communicated to WCBC. This has included highlighting the complexities created by Tree Preservation Orders, which at times have delayed or restricted necessary work.

### Current Position

While some progress has been made, long-term solutions are still required, and this will remain a priority for the coming year. MSCC have been seeking detailed plans from WCBC on their plans for the area, but these have not been forthcoming.



*Blocked culverts and drainage have required sustained Council attention.*



*Drainage infrastructure remains a practical and environmental priority.*

## Highways

Road conditions continue to be a major concern across both communities.

In Bettisfield, the reliance on B roads means that deterioration has a disproportionate impact. These routes are essential for residents yet often fall outside priority repair schedules. The condition of side lanes has also been raised repeatedly, with many now in a state that residents feel is unacceptable. Heavy-weight vehicles and the lack of passing places have meant that edges of the road have crumbled and, in many cases, fallen into the drainage channels.

In Penley, concerns have focused on key routes such as Penley Bank, where delays to planned works have caused frustration for residents. The Council has made clear representations to WCBC and continues to press for timely delivery. Delays have been caused due to weather in the winter and suitable times to allow for school buses. The latest information is that the repairs will be conducted over a two-week period in May with daytime closure up to 3.00pm

This is an area where the Council's role is clear - to ensure that rural communities are not overlooked and that standards are maintained consistently. Residents are encouraged to take photos and report potholes to WCBC and ideally copy in the MSCC Clerk so there is a local record of reports and repairs can be chased.



**If you see one of these,  
report it – it could save a life.**

**Link to WCBC**

**<http://bit.ly/4uqkaoo>**

*Road condition remains one of the most visible day-to-day concerns raised with the Council.*

## **Residents action.**

To ensure there is constant pressure on WCBC, MSCC would like residents to report potholes on a regular basis using the WCBC Portal - <http://bit.ly/4uqkaoo>

## **Village Projects**

### **Penley - Pendas Park Playground**

One of the most visible achievements this year has been the upgrade of Pendas Park Playground.

This project, funded through a Section 106 contribution linked to local housing development, demonstrates how planning obligations can be used effectively to deliver tangible benefits for the community. The improvements have created a safer, more attractive, and more usable space for children and families.

The playground is now a focal point for activity within the village, reinforcing the importance of investing in facilities that support everyday life.





Pendas Park Playground - upgraded through Section 106 funding in line with developer obligations.

**MAELOR SOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**NO DOGS IN THE CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA**

- This is a **dog-free zone**
- Designed for children's **safety** and **hygiene**
- Dog fouling poses serious **health risks**

**PICK UP YOUR DOG POO — EVERY TIME —**

- It's the law
- Fines apply for non-compliance
- Keep our community clean and safe

**RESPECT YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Use designated dog walking areas
- Always carry poo bags
- Dispose of waste in bins provided

**LET'S KEEP THIS A SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN**

**NO EXCUSES. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

*Be responsible. Be respectful. Be part of the solution.*

### Keep your village clean and safe:

For the safety of children using the play area and everyone else around all areas in our communities clear up any dog poo.

MSCC are currently looking at purchasing more bins for the villages

## Bettisfield - Office Field / Donkey Field

In Bettisfield, the continued development of Office Field - known locally also as Donkey Field - has provided a different but equally important form of community investment. Can any residents of Bettisfield remember when the donkeys came for their holidays from the seaside or have any other history, please let one of your local Councilors know.

Through tree planting, seating installation, and environmental improvements, space has gradually evolved into a valued local asset. While progress has sometimes been slowed by external factors, MSCC has remained committed to maintaining and improving the area.

The field now serves not only as a green space but also as a place for reflection, community gathering, and informal recreation - demonstrating how smaller-scale projects can have a lasting impact.

With the picnic benches it is ideal for eating fish and chips when the van is in the village – just please help keep the area clean and tidy.



*Office Field / Donkey Field - a developing green space for Bettisfield residents.*

## Penley Hospital

The future of Penley Hospital remains one of the most significant issues affecting the community.

Following its sudden closure in December 2024, the MSCC has worked to ensure that the interests of local residents are accurately represented. Concerns have been raised about the quality and timing of consultation, and the Council has made clear to BCUHB its expectation that any decisions regarding the site must involve meaningful engagement with the community.

The current position is that proposals are expected to be presented to the Health Board in May 2026, with a further stage of consultation anticipated in September 2026.



The Council will continue to advocate strongly for a future that retains the site for community or health-related use, recognising both its practical importance and its place within the local community.



*Penley Hospital - the Council continues to advocate for community and health-related use.*

## Financial Position and New Funding

The Council has maintained a strong and stable financial position throughout the year, ensuring that resources are managed responsibly while still delivering meaningful outcomes.

The Council has ensured that the precept - the amount charged per household through the community charge - is sufficient for ongoing requirements whilst staying in the lowest 25% of communities in Wrexham for charge levels.

MSCC have continued to support both local organisations and those that support local residents –

### External / Community Grants:

- Wales Air Ambulance – £125 (approved).
- Macmillan Cancer Support – £125 (approved).
- Hope House Children's Hospices – £125 (approved).
- Wales Blood Bikes – £125 (approved).
- Nightingale House Hospice – £125 (approved).
- Friends of Madras (Summer Fête / bouncy castle and activities) – £200 (approved).

### Local / Village Grants and Annual Contributions:

- Penley Churchyard (maintenance) – £550 (approved).
- Penley Village Hall (annual contribution) – £550 (approved).
- Bettisfield Churchyard (maintenance) – £550 (approved).
- Bettisfield Village Hall (annual contribution towards running costs) – £550 (approved).
- Youth Club – £1,100 (approved, reflecting inflationary uplift included in budget).
- Battlefield Village Hall – additional £100 contribution towards grounds / playground



## **£44,000 FOR YOUR COMMUNITY**

A significant Pride in Place funding allocation has been secured for Maelor South Community Council. The funding must be spent by March 2027 and is intended for community initiatives and capital projects. This is a rare opportunity to move from discussion into visible, community-led delivery across both Penley and Bettisfield.

The Council is keen to ensure that this funding reflects local priorities, and residents are actively encouraged to put forward ideas. This could include improvements to community facilities, environmental projects, or initiatives that support wellbeing and local engagement.

Whilst the amount is substantial, it will not cover all ideas being put forward. All ideas will be retained in the event of additional funding becoming available, or where partnership working with existing organisations may make delivery possible in future.

## **Governance**

Governance remains a central priority for Maelor South Community Council, ensuring that all activities are conducted transparently, responsibly, and in full compliance with statutory requirements.

The Council is subject to both an annual Internal Audit and an External Audit undertaken by Audit Wales, providing independent assurance that financial management, decision-making, and reporting processes meet the required standards. The Council complies fully with all necessary legislation and continues to operate in line with recognised best practice for local government.

During the year, no Council Member has claimed any allowance, reflecting the continued commitment of Members to maximise the resources available for the direct benefit of the community.

At present, there are two vacancies for Councillors, one representing Penley and one representing Bettisfield. The Council actively encourages residents to consider becoming involved in local decision-making, helping to shape the future of their community.

## **BECOME A COUNCILLOR - YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU**

Current vacancies: Penley and Bettisfield.

Becoming a Councillor is an opportunity to represent your local community, influence decisions, and support practical improvements locally.

Interested? Speak to any current Councillor, contact the Clerk, or attend a meeting to see how it works.

Meetings are normally held on the first Tuesday of each month, alternating between Penley Community Hub and Bettisfield Village Hall.

## **Case Studies**

### **School Safety - Listening to Young Voices**

The concerns raised by pupils at Madras School about road safety provided a powerful reminder of the importance of listening to young people. The Council's response - collaborating with Police and supporting engagement through the Mini Police initiative - has helped ensure that those voices were not only heard but acted upon.

## Donkey / Office Field - Building Community Space

Donkey Field continues to evolve as a community space shaped by local input and care. It represents the value of incremental improvement - where small, consistent actions create a space that is genuinely used and appreciated.

Many thanks to Keep Wales Tidy for support in providing trees, benches, water butt, and tools.

## Defibrillators - Quiet but Critical

The Council's work in maintaining defibrillators and planning for bleed kits is not always visible, but it is essential. These are the types of investments that communities rely on in moments that truly matter.

Current locations maintained by MSCC: Rainbow Foundation; Phone Box on the main road; Tudor Drive; and Bettisfield old bus stop at Cadney Lane. Other defibrillators not maintained by MSCC are outside Madras School and Bettisfield Village Hall.

During the past year, defibrillators have been used on three separate occasions.

### IMPORTANT - USING A DEFIBRILLATOR

To access a defibrillator, always call 999 first. This provides the access code and ensures that a paramedic is dispatched.

Time is critical. Defibrillators are safe to use and provide clear voice instructions.



*Public access defibrillators provide vital emergency support in rural communities.*

## Bleed Kits.

Look out for information about which defibrillator sites will have bleed kits. These have become quite common now as an added support that could make such a difference for an injured person.

## Ongoing Priorities

The Council continues to press for progress on issues that affect daily life across Penley and Bettisfield. These will remain priorities into 2026-27:

- Drainage solutions and flood-risk reduction
- Road repairs and pothole reporting
- Responding to Planning Applications
- Consistent Police engagement and visibility
- The future of Penley Hospital
- Delivery of Pride in Place community funding
- Recruitment of new Councillors for Penley and Bettisfield
- Support for Penley Youth Club

## Conclusion

Maelor South Community Council continues to deliver strong outcomes for residents while operating with limited resources.

This year has demonstrated persistence in addressing complex issues, delivery of real community improvements, and strong governance and financial management.

The Council remains committed to turning community voice into action and ensuring that both Penley and Bettisfield continue to benefit from strong, visible, and effective local leadership.

### Contact

Clerk: [clerk@maelorsouth-cc.gov.wales](mailto:clerk@maelorsouth-cc.gov.wales)

Tel: 07562 244328

Meetings are open to the public and are normally held on the first Tuesday of each month, alternating between Penley Community Hub and Bettisfield Village Hall.





# YOUR COUNCIL NEEDS YOU!



## WE HAVE VACANCIES!

- ✓ 1 VACANCY IN PENLEY
- ✓ 1 VACANCY IN BETTISFIELD

Help shape the future of Penley and Bettisfield.

## WHY GET INVOLVED?

-  Make decisions that shape your local area
-  Improve community facilities and services
-  Represent the views of residents
-  Support local projects and funding decisions

## WHO CAN APPLY?

You can become a councillor if you:

- ✓ Are 18 or over
- ✓ Live or work in the area
- ✓ Care about your community

No previous experience needed – just commitment and common sense.

## WHAT'S INVOLVED?

-  Meetings once a month
-  Working with other councillors and the Clerk
-  Helping drive local improvements

## INTERESTED?

Contact the Clerk or speak to any Councillor or come along to a meeting:

-  **FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH**
- Alternating between:
  -  **PENLEY COMMUNITY HUB**
  -  **BETTISFIELD VILLAGE HALL**



⇒ **MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHERE YOU LIVE!** ⇐