

MAELOR SOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 1st July 2025 at 7.00pm

Bettisfield Chapel

Present:

Cllr Alwyn Reay (Chair), Cllr John Griffiths, Cllr John Blanchard, Cllr Keith Owen, Cllr Michelle Edge, Cllr Nick Ringrose

Apologies:

Cllr J McCusker (holiday), Cllr S Tomkinson, Cllr Ian Burdett, PCSO

Also present:

John Gallanders – Clerk

Phil Jones – local Bettisfield resident

1.07 Chairs announcements

Council was notified that Cllr Simon Huxley has resigned due to work commitment. The Chair acknowledge SH contribution during his time as a Councillor.

2.07 Police Update

A written update was received late but shared with Members prior to the meeting - no notable incidents, except for one involving neighbours arguing. No officer was present for any other updates.

Concern was expressed about the continuing absence of PCSOs from meetings due to shift patterns. Members repeated earlier concerns regarding speeding in Penley, lack of police contact with the Youth Club, and the ineffectiveness of enforcement in 20mph zones. The lack of meaningful response from North Wales Police, particularly from the inspector level and Go Safe programme, was roundly criticised.

Cllrs expressed deep frustration that the PCSO, had not attended for over four meetings due to shift pattern issues. The Chair reported that even targeted queries on speeding and youth engagement had received no substantive details of actions to address the three identified priorities.

3.07 County Councillor / WCBC Update

No update was received from Cllr McCusker.

Cllrs noted continued problems with Go Safe enforcement and shared an article indicating that Go Safe now had only 9 designated sites across North Wales for 20mph enforcement due to legal requirements for traffic orders. This directly contradicts previous claims by WCBC officers that permits were not needed.

The Chair confirmed that previous reports had been contradicted by a new press release from the Police and Crime Commissioner. Members requested that the matter be escalated formally.

Action:

Chair and Clerk to follow up with formal correspondence to WCBC Highways and Go Safe requesting a list of all designated enforcement locations.

4.07 Open Forum: Penley Hospital and BCUHB Consultation

A lengthy discussion was held concerning the ongoing situation with Penley Hospital since it's 'temporary closure' in December 2024.

Key points:

- Misleading information from BCUHB as to the extent of engagement with Hanmer Surgery regarding relocation to Penley Hospital. BCUHB saying no discussion, yet the Hanmer Surgery Patient Group revealed this took place in May 2025.
- Details were shared of a consultation that appeared to have been launched on 1st July – information shared to Council Members from the Patient Group.
- The survey was released with no formal notice and a response deadline within 5 days.
- Cllr JG reported extensive and professional communication with Rob Callow (BCUHB Community Engagement Officer) over the last few weeks. Cllrs were shocked to learn that the survey had been released without prior warning to MSCC as the Council was seen to be a distribution conduit into the community.
- Members agreed this represents a potential breakdown in internal BCUHB communication, and that Rob Callow appears to be acting in good faith but without organisational backing.
- The Council noted the historic role of the Penley Hospital site and the community interest in seeing it retained for community benefit. Concerns raised that BCUHB may be attempting to offload the site without transparency.

Resolutions & Actions:

- Cllr JG to urgently contact Rob Callow to determine the origin and status of the online survey.
 - Clerk to draft a formal letter to BCUHB Chair and Chief Executive expressing serious concern about the flawed consultation process and short notice.
 - Letter to request a full public meeting to be held on-site at Penley Hospital in September, once residents return from summer holidays.
 - MSCC to reach out to neighbouring Community Councils, patient groups, and other stakeholders to form a working group on the future of the site.
 - Press and elected officials to be engaged if consultation continues to be tokenistic or exclusionary.
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5.07. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the correction of "Tollington" to "Tomkinson".

Proposed: Cllr JB Seconded Cllr NR

6.07. Matters Arising

Hedge Cutting – Environmental Dispute: There is not a unanimous agreement in respect to the cutting of the hedge to a lower level between Office Field and Cadney Lane. A concern was raised that the hedge should be laid or cut, expressing concern for wildlife habitat. It was clarified that while hedge maintenance had been discussed following the quotation of £600 (although the work could not be carried out till at least mid-September after the nesting season) to lower the height no actual action has been agreed. At a previous meeting it had been agreed that action was needed. It had been suggested that the hedge could be layered and a member agreed to find more details from the agricultural colleges – this has not resulted in anyone being identified who could advise or carry out work.

Action:

- Bettisfield Members to try and resolve expectations and report to the September meeting.

7.07 Flooding and Drainage – Cadney Lane, Bettisfield

Clerk updated the Council on the enforcement notice served to the landowner on Cadney Lane, who has since expressed willingness to clear the ditches. It was reported that WCBC withdrew the enforcement notice, and the work has now been stopped due to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Key concerns:

- The landowner only received the 21-day notice 14 days into the period.
- The TPO has never previously been mentioned.
- WCBC have not confirmed the date, scope, or extent of the TPO.
- The ditch is vital to the Bettisfield water management system, and residents face continued flood risk if the issue is not resolved urgently.

Actions:

- Clerk to send formal letter to WCBC requesting:
 - Date and legal reference of the TPO.
 - Identification of trees covered and ownership of the land.
 - A clear plan of action to clear blocked drainage.
- Letter to include reference to the growing legal risk posed to WCBC from residents due to inaction and potential property damage.

8.07 Madras School Engagement – Speed Awareness

The Council had previously received a letter from a Year 6 pupil at Madras School expressing concern about speeding near the school. Efforts to secure a police visit had failed repeatedly.

Following an escalation email to the Police Inspector, the PCSO has now confirmed a visit to the school council will be arranged before the end of term. Cllrs expressed relief but noted the poor response was unacceptable.

Action:

- Cllr JG and PCSO to visit the school and meet with the School Council

9.07 Village Projects:

Joint: Dates to be arranged for walkabout with Highways Officer from WCBC

Penley:

Playground – the contractor has commenced the installation of the new equipment- once a completion date is arranged children from Madras will be invited to a ‘re-opening’ before the end of term. Two Members have been on a site visit.

Penley Play/Youth Project – deferred to September

Bettisfield:

Memorial event for the late Cllr Alison Jones will take place on 20th July at the Village Hall and on Office Field.

Action: It was agreed that MSCC would contribute up to £200 for the event

10.07 Financial Update

The Clerk provided an update on the Council’s current financial position covered within the meeting papers.

Members agreed that all payments listed be authorised for settlement except for one for CRT- this to be held over until such time as all necessary works to Office Field have been completed. An additional payment not listed as agreed - £65 reimbursement of an IT expense.

- It was noted that the combined balance of Current and Deposit accounts after all authorised payments are made will result in a balance of £33,299.49 (noting that £15k is still held re the Zebra Crossing)
- The necessary split between net salary and HMRC will be made once information is available from AVOW.

Financial report accepted: Proposed Cllr JB Seconded Cllr KO

11.07 Governance:

Vacancy – it was noted that there is now a vacancy for Bettisfield and one in Penley following the resignation of Cllr Simon Huxley

Action: Clerk to report to WCBC the resignation for the due recruitment process to commence

IT- Three Members have confirmed they require an MSCC provided laptop. These will be ordered and provided with Basic Business 365 accounts for the exclusive use for Maelor South Business. The laptop will remain the property of MSCC and will be returned when the councillor leaves their post.

Annual Play Inspection- Members noted receipt of the report from WCBC. There are some minor repairs to be undertaken to existing equipment which the contractor on site has agreed to undertake. Cllr NR will review in detail

12.07 Correspondence Received

Rainbow Foundation: A letter was received from the Foundation seeking financial assistance to support services that due to funding they are no longer able to sustain.

Unfortunately, the grant funding allocation for the year has been allocated.

Action: Provide the Rainbow Foundation with details of the next grant round.

Maelor School – change of hours of the school day: Representatives from MSCC recently met with the Headteacher of the Maelor school to discuss the current consultation on the hours the school will operate.

The proposal is to shorten the day by 15 minutes – this will however mean both the Maelor and Madras School pupils leaving at the same time. Whilst recognising the school have budgetary pressures Members highlighted the increased safety risks for pupils from both schools with the increased level of traffic and limited parking.

Action: Clerk to send a letter to all the stakeholders informing them of the high risk and the need for a full risk assessment to be made within and outside of the school grounds. Any recommendations made would need immediate action. MSCC will arrange a site visit for early September.

13.07 Meetings attended:

It was noted that Cllr JG and Cllr KO have met with the Headteacher of Maelor School and Youth Event at Maelor School.

Cllr JG attended Dame Dorothy Jeffres Trust meeting and Madras School Governors

Cllr JG attended the Madras School Governors meeting

Cllr JG attended the Heartlands Farm planning appeal meeting held at the Shrewsbury Guildhall

14.07 Any Other Business

No AOB

Date of Next Meeting:

Tuesday 2nd September 2025, 7.00 pm at Madras School Community Room

Meeting closed at 9.45pm.