

MAELOR SOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 4th November 2025 at 7.00pm
Bettisfield Chapel

Present:

Cllr Alwyn Reay (Chair), Cllr John Griffiths, Cllr Keith Owen, Cllr Jackie Tomlinson, Cllr Jan Thompson, Cllr Michelle Edge, Cllr Ian Burdett, Cllr John Blanchard

Apologies:

Cllr Rebecca Bettis, Cllr Nick Ringrose

Also present:

John Gallanders (Clerk) and County Cllr John McCusker (WCBC)

1.11 Farewell Remarks

Before the formal business commenced, Cllr Michelle Edge wished to make a statement about her future as a Councilor as she announced her resignation due to ongoing health concerns after three years of dedicated service to the Council and the community. The Chair expressed appreciation for her energy, insight and commitment to village issues, noting the many projects progressed during her time in office. Members wished her well and hoped she might return to community work in future. Cllr Michelle Edge thanked Members for their support and friendship, emphasising the importance of following through on agreed actions to maintain momentum on community matters.

Resolved: The Clerk to send a formal letter and card of thanks on behalf of the Council.

2.11 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.15pm. Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Bettis and Cllr Nick Ringrose. The Chair welcomed Cllr Jan Thompson to her first meeting as a Member of the Council.

3.11 Police Report

A short update was received from PCSO Lisa, reporting one incident of student assault at Maelor School on 15th October. No further issues were noted. Members expressed concern at the continuing lack of attendance by Police representatives at evening meetings and agreed the Clerk would escalate this to senior levels to seek a commitment for periodic attendance (at least twice annually).

Action: Clerk to write to North Wales Police requesting regular representation at Council meetings and feedback on local activity.

4.11 GoSafe and Traffic Speed Monitoring

Reports were noted from residents about early-morning speeding through Penley, especially between 6.30am and 7.30am. Cllr Griffiths confirmed GoSafe vans have been active, though not always at peak hours.

It was reported by Cllr JM that Wrexham Council has now reinstated 30mph limits where appropriate, allowing prosecutions to resume- not relevant to Penley as the road remains 20 mph. Members discussed concerns about awareness of new 20mph zones and the difficulty of enforcement.

Cllr JM stated that repeater 20mph signs are not permitted as a means of reminding drivers of the speed limit also referenced that fixed average-speed cameras are being trialled elsewhere in Wales and may be appropriate for Penley in future.

Action: Clerk to contact GoSafe for updated deployment schedules and explore community signage options.

5.11 Highways and Roadworks

Correspondence was read from a resident querying Wrexham Council's authorisation of roadworks on the diversion route at Higher Penley through and past the old Smithy.

Clerk confirmed the A539 resurfacing works, originally scheduled for 6th November, have been postponed to 10th December 2025 due to overlap with existing closures.

Action: Clerk to circulate the updated highways plan received from WCBC officer Leanne Roden to all Members and provide public notice on the website and social media.

6.11 County Councillor Update

Cllr McCusker provided an update covering planning committee workload, phosphates review, and City of Culture 2029 preparations.

He explained that a large backlog of planning applications across Wrexham is linked to environmental restrictions on water quality (phosphates) and anticipated future easing of these rules.

He confirmed Wrexham intends to reapply for UK City of Culture 2029, with preparatory work under way to strengthen the bid and highlight community and tourism links.

Members thanked Cllr McCusker for his ongoing support and updates on local issues including potholes, gully cleaning schedules, and lighting faults.

7.11 Drainage, Street Lighting, and Tree Preservation Orders

Ongoing drainage and flooding issues in Bettisfield were discussed. Members noted that

culvert jetting works remain incomplete, with some ditches still blocked or only partially cleared. The Clerk reported difficulty obtaining updates from WCBC officers and that new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) had hindered access to undertake clearance.

A streetlight unit remains unlit on Ellesmere Lane despite being reported months ago.

Members agreed that safety concerns warrant escalation.

Action: Clerk to write again to WCBC officers requesting:

- Confirmation of current drainage works and TPO boundaries
- Timetable for completion of ditch clearance
- Explanation for ongoing lighting faults and contract delays---

8.11 Bettisfield Works and Power Outage Notices

Members noted the placement of non-WCBC road closure signs around the village, believed to relate to Scottish Power operations. Confusion exists between the mapped location of the work and the area where signage was installed.

It was agreed that this inconsistency should be clarified urgently, particularly given overlap with areas affected by drainage and TPO issues.

Action: Clerk to contact WCBC Highways and Scottish Power to confirm the exact location, timing, and nature of the works and report back.

9.11 Planning Matters and Local Development Issues

Cllr JT raised ongoing concerns about a partially built property on Cadney Lane, Bettisfield which has remained unfinished for over seven years and is now overgrown, unsightly, and potentially attracting rodents.

Members discussed options under planning and environmental legislation to address derelict or untidy land, including Section 215 Notices of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Resolved: Clerk to compile a report with photographs and written complaints from nearby residents to present to WCBC Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement, citing health and safety, vermin, and visual amenity concerns.

The Council also noted ongoing communication delays with Tree Officer John Brewin regarding unresolved TPO issues outside Morris Homes in Penley.

Action: Clerk to follow up correspondence and copy County Cllr McCusker for joint representation.

10.11 Defibrillator Relocation

With Bettisfield Chapel scheduled to close on 18th January 2026, Members discussed alternative sites for the village defibrillator. Options considered included installation on a resident's gatepost, mounting at the top Bettisfield bus shelter or the old one on Cadney Lane. Any location is likely to require a solar-powered cabinet.

Action: Cllr JG to liaise with local electrician regarding solar options and costings for new cabinet installation by winter.

11.11 Penley Hospital Redevelopment

Cllr JG reported on the second Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board meeting held in Ruabon on proposals for the future use of Penley Hospital. Two main options are under consideration:

1. Integrated Health and Wellbeing Hub – retaining NHS ownership and providing rotating clinics for physiotherapy, podiatry, hearing, and wellbeing sessions.
2. Partnership Model – joint operation between the Health Board and a third-sector organisation such as the Rainbow Centre.

Members agreed that Penley Hospital should serve the wider rural community.

Actions:

- Clerk to invite BCUHB representatives to attend a future Council meeting.
- Members to consider holding an on-site meeting at Penley Hospital to reinforce community representation.

12.11 Correspondence

A letter was received from Wales Air Ambulance noting that the average cost of an air ambulance response in this area is £5,747 per mission. Members agreed the request for support will be considered during the January grant allocation meeting.

13.11 Finance

The Clerk presented the financial report as at 31st October 2025:

- Payment authorised: £183.53 – insurance adjustment for additional Penley play equipment (pro-rata)
- Current Account: £1139.74
- Deposit Account: £36683.42
- Pending precept transfer: £8,500 (due December 2025)

Members reviewed the ongoing £15,000 WCBC zebra crossing fund, held on the Council's books since the project's incomplete delivery. The money remains ring-fenced pending final confirmation.

Future finance reports need to have redaction of names of individuals.

Resolved: All payments approved. Clerk to present draft 2026–27 budget and precept proposal at the December meeting.

14.11 Governance and Membership

The resignation of Cllr ME creates a vacancy for the Bettisfield Ward.

Action: Clerk to notify WCBC of the vacancy and post formal notice of election, followed by co-option if no nominations are received.

15.11 Planning Enforcement – Classic Cars Site

Concerns from residents were raised regarding ongoing fabrication and construction noise at the Oswestry Classic Cars site, reportedly operating seven days a week in contravention of permitted working hours.

Action: Clerk to refer the issue to WCBC Planning Enforcement for investigation and report findings at the next meeting.

Big Green Court - development of three houses – awaiting response from WCBC – reference from Welsh Water that no developments can occur until 2030 due to the need for upgrade of sewage infrastructure.

16.11 Meetings attended by Members

Cllr JG – Dame Dorothy Jefferys 2 x Madras School Governors

16.11 Potential use of Bettisfield Chapel

The Chair has been approached in regard to the community potentially taking over the chapel when it closes. It has been suggested it could be used for variety of community events etc. The thinking is at a very early stage and Members agreed to receive further details when available.

16.11 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 9th December 2025, 7.00pm online.

Meeting closed at 9.35pm.