MAELOR SOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting – Bettisfield Village Hall

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2026 at 7.15pm

Present: Cllr Alwyn Reay (Chair) Cllr John Griffiths Cllr Keith Owen Cllr Jan Thompson Cllr John Blanchard Cllr Nic Ringrose Cllr Jackie Tomlinson

Also Present: John Gallanders – Clerk

Apologies: Cllr John McCusker PCSO Lisa Rogers

1.5 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies

2.5 Police Update

Members reviewed the written Police report circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that:

- The report contained no significant incidents directly relating to Bettisfield.
- Several incidents related to Penley and surrounding areas.
- A number of entries referenced school-related matters.

Members expressed concern that the reporting structure may give a misleading impression of crime levels within the community.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Whether incidents were being formally recorded due to revised school safeguarding and reporting requirements.
- The impact this may have on public perception.
- Whether parents or schools were initiating reports.

Members commented that recent reports appeared significantly higher pupil assaults than in previous years.

The Clerk advised that his understanding was that updated school reporting procedures had been introduced nationally during the previous year.

Members agreed clarification should be sought from North Wales Police regarding:

- How school incidents are categorised.
- Whether incidents are attributed to Penley itself or wider catchment areas.
- The distinction between school safeguarding referrals and wider criminal activity.

- Whether incidents are being reported by the school or parents.

Members also reiterated ongoing disappointment regarding the lack of police attendance at Community Council meetings.

2.5 County Councillor / Highway Matters

No report-

Members discussed the recently completed resurfacing works on Penley Bank.

The Council welcomed:

- The quality of the resurfacing works.
- Traffic management arrangements during construction.
- Overall communication regarding road closures and diversions.

Members noted that:

- The resurfaced road had significantly improved driving conditions.
- The previous surface condition had been poor for a considerable period.

However, several concerns were also raised.

2.5.1 Road Safety and Signage

Members expressed concern that the improved road surface may increase vehicle speeds.

Specific concerns included:

- Need for additional warning signage.
- Absence of chevron markers near the sharp bends on Penley Bank.
- Limited visibility approaching the bridge area.

Members felt additional traffic calming and warning measures should now be considered.

2.5.2 Drainage Concerns

Members highlighted an ongoing drainage issue near Cheshire Cheese Cottage / Lions Lane where water was continuing to discharge onto the road surface.

Concerns were raised that:

- During colder weather the area may freeze.
- The issue should ideally have been addressed during resurfacing works.

Members requested that the matter be formally raised with Highways.

2.5.3 Canal Bridge Parking Concerns (Bettisfield)

Further concerns were raised regarding parking close to the canal bridge area.

Members discussed:

- Visibility problems.
- Difficulties passing oncoming traffic.
- Vehicles parking near the bridge approaches.
- Potential hazards for pedestrians and mobility scooter users.

Members suggested:

- Review of signage locations.
- Additional warning signage.
- Potential relocation of existing playground signage.
- A future site visit with Highways officers.
- Lack of "SLOW" road markings near the canal bridge.

The Chair also referred to a recent near-miss incident involving excessive vehicle speed near the bridge.

Actions:

- Clerk to contact WCBC Highways regarding reinstatement of "SLOW" markings. (Bettisfield)
- Additional signage and chevrons to be explored. (Penley Bank)
- Drainage concerns near Cheshire Cheese Cottage to be reported. (Penley)
- Future site assessment to be requested.

3.5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2026 were reviewed.

Minor typographical corrections were identified.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2026 be approved subject to minor amendments.

Proposed: Cllr John Griffiths
Seconded: Cllr Keith Owen

4.5 Matters Arising

4.5.1 Penley Road Safety

Members noted that resurfacing works had now concluded, however wider road safety concerns remained outstanding.

4.5.2 Cadney Lane Footpath

Members noted concerns regarding vegetation, leaf fall and visibility of the pavement edge.

It was acknowledged that photographs may be required later in the year once autumn conditions return.

4.5.3 Potholes

Members were encouraged to continue forwarding photographs and locations of potholes to support ongoing reporting.

4.5.4 Defibrillator Relocation

Members discussed the forthcoming relocation of the Bettisfield Chapel defibrillator following the sale of the Chapel building.

The Clerk confirmed:

- A replacement cabinet had already been ordered.
- The intention remained to relocate the defibrillator to the bus shelter location.
- The existing defibrillator unit itself remained operational.

A detailed discussion took place regarding:

- Community awareness of the relocation.
- Appropriate signage.
- Temporary notices.
- Visibility of the new location.
- Importance of ensuring uninterrupted access during transition.

Members agreed that:

- Notices should be displayed at the Chapel once relocation occurs.
- Social media announcements should be repeated regularly.
- Laminated direction notices could be temporarily installed.
- Additional signage identifying the nearest defibrillator locations should be explored.

The Clerk further advised that:

- Bleed kits would now be installed within all Council defibrillator locations.

- Existing cabinet capacity meant additional cabinets would not be required in Penley.
- This would create consistency across all community locations.

Members also discussed the potential value of future community awareness and training sessions covering:

- Defibrillator use.
- Bleed kit awareness.
- Emergency response.

4.5.5 Morris Homes Development

Members received an update regarding continuing concerns around the Morris Homes development.

It was reported that:

- Local residents were continuing to pursue unresolved issues.
- A community action group and social media presence were being developed.
- A Freedom of Information request had been submitted.
- Ongoing infrastructure concerns remained unresolved.

Members noted concerns regarding:

- Estate design.
- Road layouts.
- Long-term management arrangements.
- Outstanding adoption and infrastructure matters.
- Funding being retained for amenities

5.5 Village Projects and Community Development

5.5.1 Sports and Leisure

It was reported that two Members had been involved with discussions in respect to the development of sport and leisure facilities for public use in the MSCC area.

It was highlighted that there was a need for additional support, and it was proposed that the Clerk be allocated additional hours to support members and the ongoing discussions.

Action: Clerk to be allocated additional hours to support the ongoing development.

6.5 Penley Hospital Update

Members received an update regarding Penley Hospital consultation activity.

The Clerk advised that:

- The matter was expected to be considered by the Health Board later in the month.
- Current consultation responses would be reviewed.
- A further stage of consultation may follow.

Members reiterated concerns regarding:

- Lack of clarity.
- Slow progress.
- Potential long-term future of the site.

It was agreed the Council would continue monitoring developments closely.

7.5 Audit Wales and Internal Audit

Members formally received and reviewed the Audit Wales documentation.

The Clerk explained that:

- An historic invoice relating to 2021/22 had again been reissued.
- The Council had previously disputed elements of the charges.
- Similar concerns had reportedly been raised by numerous Community Councils.

Members discussed wider concerns regarding:

- Proportionality of audit arrangements.
- Costs applied to smaller Community Councils.
- Differences between large principal authorities and smaller local councils.

The Clerk advised that whilst concerns remained valid, continuing dispute may ultimately prove unproductive.

7.5.1 Annual Financial Summary and Internal Audit Report

The Clerk presented the year-end financial summary for 2025/26.

Members were advised that:

- Opening balances at the start of the financial year were approximately £30,603.
- Closing balances at year-end stood at approximately £38,479.

- Included within reserves were:
    - £15,000 allocated toward the proposed Penley Zebra Crossing scheme.
    - £2,000 previously designated for noticeboard and website improvements.

The Clerk explained that the increase in balances was largely attributable to:

- Community projects not progressing within the anticipated timeframe.
- Slippage within some budget headings.
- Delays linked to wider external projects and consultations.

The Internal Audit report was then reviewed in detail.

The Clerk outlined four observations raised by the Internal Auditor:

5.1 Purchase Approval Process

The Auditor noted that whilst Council Minutes clearly demonstrated approval for the purchase of Council laptops, the exact final negotiated purchase price had not been formally recorded at the point of approval.

The Clerk explained that the issue was procedural rather than financial and related solely to the wording and timing of formal approval.

5.2 Annual Risk Review

Members noted that whilst risk management was regularly considered throughout the year, there had not been a formally scheduled annual review of the Council's overall risk register.

The Clerk advised that future annual risk reviews would now be incorporated into the Council's budget-setting meetings.

5.3 Donation Receipt Confirmation

The Auditor highlighted one charitable donation where formal written acknowledgement had not initially been available.

The Clerk confirmed this had now been resolved.

5.4 Asset Register Valuation Methodology

The Clerk explained that previous practice had involved depreciation of certain Council assets.

However, updated audit guidance suggested depreciation should not routinely be applied in the same way for Community Council asset registers.

Members discussed practical examples including playground equipment and picnic benches, acknowledging that whilst items may reduce in resale value over time, they continue to retain operational and community value.

The Clerk advised he would continue discussions with the Internal Auditor regarding the most appropriate future valuation methodology.

Members noted that:

- The 2026 asset register had now been fully updated.
- New playground equipment and recently installed defibrillators had been included.
- The Council's governance arrangements remained sound.

Members thanked the Clerk for the significant amount of work undertaken in preparing documentation for the audit process.

Resolved:

That the Chair be authorised to sign the Annual Governance documentation.

Proposed: Cllr John Griffiths
Seconded: Cllr Keith Owen

8.5 Financial Update and Payments

Members considered the schedule of payments circulated prior to the meeting.

The Clerk provided a detailed overview of expenditure.

Payments for Approval for May = £5230.00

The Clerk also advised:

- VAT reclaim income of £778.96 had been received.
- The Council's balances remained in good order.
- Designated reserves continued to be retained for major projects.

Members specifically discussed:

- Street lighting repairs in Ellesmere Lane.
- Completion of lighting works behind the garages.
- Ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

Resolved:

That all payments be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Keith Owen
Seconded: Cllr John Griffiths

9.5 Governance and Vacancies

Members noted there remained:

- One vacancy in Bettisfield.
- One vacancy in Penley.

The Chair stressed the importance of encouraging additional community involvement and attracting new Members.

Members agreed that the forthcoming year presented an important opportunity to demonstrate visible community improvements and strengthen local engagement.

Discussion also took place regarding:

- Pride in Place funding.
- Future community infrastructure improvements.
- Potential visible improvements within both villages.

10.5 Planning Matters

Big Green Court

Members noted that the planning application relating to three dwellings at Big Green Court had been refused.

It was understood the refusal related primarily to:

- Infrastructure concerns.
- Drainage capacity.
- Wider service considerations.

Members acknowledged that revised applications may potentially be submitted in future.

11.5 Any Other Business

No further business was raised.

12.5 Action Log

Date of Next Meeting

2nd June 2026 Community Hub, Penley.

Meeting closed at approximately 9.15pm.