

Cyngor Cymuned Llannon Community Council



Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of Llannon Community Council

on

Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 6.30pm

via Teams

Meeting commenced at 6:30pm

The Vice Chair, Cllr. R. Lloyd Davies presided over the meeting.

Minute No. 144 – Members Present.

Cllr. R. Lloyd Davies (RD)
Cllr. P. Owen (PO)
Cllr. Ll. Davies (LD)
Cllr. J. Anderson (JA)
Cllr. S. Blackmore (SB)
Cllr. G. Jones (GJ)
Cllr. E. G. Evans (EGE)
Cllr. N. Thomas (NT)
Cllr. T. Stillman (TS)
Cllr. R. Jones (RJ)
Cllr. S. Eldridge (SE)
Cllr. S. Stewart (SS)

Also Present:

Mrs. C. Hope – Clerk (CH)
Miss. Ff. Davies – Deputy Chief Officer / RFO (FD)

Minute No. 145 – Apologies and reasons for absence.

Cllr. J. Owen (JO) – Unwell.

Cllr. C. Davies (CD) – Meeting with the Eisteddfod Committee.

Minute No. 146 – Absence without apologies given.

Cllr. A. James (AJ)

Minute No. 147 – Declarations of Interests.

There were no new declarations of interests.

Minute No. 148 – Public participation.

The Vice Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and explained to all members present that the Chief Officer has circulated six documents with information relevant to the meeting along with the agenda for the evening. The six documents were as follows:

- **Prospective Budget Overview** which the Chief Officer will go over in detail.
- **Proposed Staffing Structure** outlining the full staffing structure together with the proposed new roles.
- **Forward Development Plan** which has already been discussed extensively and agreed by full Council regarding the improvements throughout the Ward.
- **Cross Hands Welfare Park Masterplan** a development which has had a very successful start.
- **Recommended Budget 2025-26** which the Chief Officer will go over in detail.
- **Revised Recommended Budget 2025-26** to include the repairs needed to Tumble playground.

The Vice Chair of the Council reminded everyone present of LICC's Standing Orders that relate to the public participation section of the meeting and asked if anyone would like to participate under this section.

No Members of the Public requested to make a representation.

Minute No. 149 – To discuss the recommended budget for the 2025-26 financial year.

The recommended budget for the 2025-26 financial year, along with supporting documents and reports, had previously been circulated to all members of the Council via email by the Chief Officer.

The Vice Chair asked the Chief Officer to explain the recommended budget to all members present.

The Chief Officer gave an overview of the forward plan created after the workshop held in January. These plans were as follows:

- **Parc Y Mynydd Mawr**
 - Project cost estimated at £1.2 million.
 - Planning application is nearly complete, just awaiting a Sustainable Drainage Design for the SAB application.
 - Meeting with Welsh Government and Family Centre on Friday which was also attended by Dame Nia Griffiths, MP for Llanelli Ward regarding the £300,000 application from Communities Fund. Extremely promising and they are recommending to the panel that the funds are awarded. Panel meeting is end of February and LICC will know by the end of March if successful.
 - Tumble Family Centre have been awarded £250,000 from the National Lottery to support their revenue costs over the next three years. Even though this money won't fund the Capital project, it is very positive that they want to support the good work that they do.
 - Cymru Football Foundation Panel meeting is in March and LICC will know by April if they have secured £500,000 for them.
 - Three separate funds are currently available of £100,000 each that the Chief Officer will apply for if successful with the Welsh Government and Cymru Football Foundation.
- **Cross Hands Park Masterplan**
 - This plan has been forwarded to all members of the Council via email from the Chief Officer.
 - Really exciting ideas to include a bike park, pump track and padel court.
 - Re-instating the football and rugby pitches.
 - A building to support refreshments, public toilets and changing facilities.

- The Chief Officer has just heard from CCC that they will be installing a digital information board on site.
- Consultations will be starting shortly.
- **Y Graig**
 - LICC have been carrying out improvements to the top, have cut back gorse and fern and the next stage will be to create footpaths.
 - An application is to be submitted in February/March to the Shared Prosperity Funding to install a new playground. Estimated at £110,000.
 - LICC to match fund around £10,000.
- **Tirwaun Park**
 - Grant application to be submitted in February/March 2026 to install a new playground. Estimated at £90,000.
 - LICC to match fund around £10,000.
- **Llannon**
 - s106 of £50,000 is not coming back to LICC as you can not apply for the money retrospectively. When LICC put in the playground, they were led to believe that they could apply for the £50,000 after. LICC need another plan for this s106 money.
 - The residents of Llannon are keen that the money is spent in the village.
 - The residents would like a hub. Consultations will be taking place with the residents.
 - £61,000 that is available could be used for feasibility studies.
 - Consultations need to take place as soon as possible so that LICC have a plan.

The Chief Officer reminded the members present that the Forward Plan for LICC had been agreed in the January's meeting, the Council voted unanimously to accept this plan. The Community Engagement & Well-being Committee, Assets & Personnel Committee have met to discuss the plan further.

The Chief Officer also reminded the members present that one member of the maintenance team retired in October and that there is a possibility of another member of the maintenance team retiring this year that the Council have been looking at the pros and cons of employing more staff against outsourcing larger areas. As a result, the Council voted to accept the Maintenance and Health & Safety requirements and decided on what work should remain in-house and which should be outsourced.

The Chief Officer stated that she has explained to the Council in the workshop and the Committees that she felt there are two areas LICC require staff. The Chief Officer has been volunteering to do the majority of the cooking for Cinio a Chlonc but the success of the project means that the number of attendees are too large for her to continue. The Chief Officer believes that, based on the hours that she has been volunteering, employing a cook for eight hours a week would be sufficient, this person would also be responsible for food ordering and the shopping. With the employment of a cook, this would enable LICC to encourage more people to attend which will generate a higher income, hopefully getting to the point where the income would pay for the staff member's wages. Employing a cook would also mean that additional meals can be made to be distributed through LICC's Community Fridge that is situated in Y Cwtsh.

The Chief Officer emphasised to the Councillor's present that a large number of her working hours is currently being spent working on the large projects spoken about earlier. She explained that LICC would benefit from a Community Engagement Officer, this person would be able to inform residents of what LICC does and would also be able to encourage as many people as possible to engage with the Council. The Chief Officer believes that it is important that the person in this role has a high standard of written and oral Welsh Language skills and is qualified to:

- Develop a marketing strategy for the Council and for Tumble Hall.
- Event planning and execution.
- Arrange summer clubs.
- Organise a Youth Council.
- Build relationships with local businesses, community groups and residents.
- Collaborate with various stakeholders to create partnerships and sponsorship opportunities.
- Increase LICC's social media and online presence for the Council and Tumble Hall.
- Manage the Council website.

The Chief Officer stressed that this role is completely separate to the role of the Well-being Officer who actually oversees the day-to-day management of LICC's Well-being projects and manages the incredible team of volunteers.

The Chief Officer explained that the RFO created a draft budget based on:

- This year's projected year-end figures.

- Staffing structure.
- External Maintenance.
- Internal Maintenance and Health & Safety requirements.
- Biodiversity duties.
- Well-being objectives.
- Training and Development Plan.
- Forward Development Plan.

The budget was discussed and agreed by the Finance Committee meeting held last Monday. Since the Finance Committee meeting, £3800 has had to be added to the budget due to the cost of tree inspections which will be carried out at the end of April. A further £20,000 has been added on for the work needed to restore Tumble Park.

The Chief Officer explained that the recommended budget does not allow for any money to be replenished into the Council's reserves resulting in the General Reserves carried over at £50,000.

The Chief Officer proceeded to explain the recommended budget line by line starting with the expected income. Please see attached Budget report for more details. After explaining this section, the Chief Officer asked the members present if they had any questions.

LD asked if the membership for Cross Hands Tennis Courts will automatically renew. The Chief Officer stated that the members would receive an automated email reminding that their membership will need to be renewed.

GJ asked if the expected income are ambitions to enable the Council to employ two new members of staff? What will happen if this expected income isn't met? Would the new employees lose their positions with LICC? GJ also asked whether the two positions are being measured against income and expenditure?

The Chief Officer informed the members present that there will be other elements within the jobs that can not be measured against income and expenditure. Elements of the two roles will be measured against the tasks that are required of them at the time.

There were no more questions with regards to the income.

The Chief Officer explained every line of the expenditure expected where the details can be found on the Prospective Budget Overview document. After a full explanation, the Chief Officer explained that as of yesterday, the total expected expenditure for 2025-26 was £662,266.78, which is an increase of 65p per week for Band D dwellings.

Unfortunately, late last night the Chief Officer received a quotation for the repairs required to Tumble Playground. LICC have been put in a very difficult situation as the installation of the playground was overseen by the previous administration. The company that originally carried out the work have since gone into liquidation and the standard of their work is poor. The Chief Officer has only been able to find one company willing to help. Some Councillors might also recall that her predecessor was paid an additional £4000 by the Council for managing the project.

The Chief Officer has received a quote from Dragon Play who have been liaising with Kompan who supplied the equipment. They have been unable to source a new trampoline as the current one was not from Kompan. Dragon Play recommends removing the damaged trampoline, leaving the other two in place, and replace it with a rocker.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that an independent inspection has taken place in Tumble Playground, which has revealed that the multi-play unit was originally installed without the correct foot anchors which will explain why there is movement with the unit. The Chief Officer reassured the Council that the unit is currently still safe to use but if the foundations are not re-set and the anchors installed then it is very likely that the whole unit will need to be replaced at a cost of around £50,000.

The Chief Officer also informed the Council that the quote received from Dragon Play also includes replacement of seat caps and flooring to the three seater carousel and replacement of the Cocowave Rope Swing. The total cost of the quote given is £20,250 plus VAT.

The Chief Officer explained to all members present that if they decide to go ahead with the repairs then the expected expenditure would increase to £682,266.78, which is an increase of 84p per week for a Band D dwelling.

The Chief Officer reminded everyone present that within her Prospective Budget Overview it states that 66.5% of dwellings in the Llannon Ward are

Band A-C, these bands will pay less, and 35% of households within the ward also receive a 25% discount.

The Chief Officer stressed that if anyone knows of anyone facing difficulties that they refer them to Y Cwtsh where they can be assisted with:

- Help to ensure they are claiming everything they are entitled to claim.
- They can access the Community Supermarket and the Community Fridge.
- They can use the Warm Hub.
- We can signpost them to any organisation that might be able to assist them further.

The Chief Officer asked the members present if they had any questions with regards to the recommended budget. The Chief Officer also asked if they had any suggestions on possible savings that could be made to reduce the precept request.

LD asked if it was possible to make a claim against the insurance for the repairs needed at Tumble Park.

The Chief Officer explained that the repairs that are needed are not from the storm damage and therefore LICC will not be able to claim through the insurance. The Chief Officer stated that she has looked at the indemnity side of the insurance, but this was not possible either.

GJ asked who paid for the storm damage at Tumble Playground and did LICC claim through the insurance?

The Chief Officer explained that since the flooring hadn't been glued down correctly, then it wasn't possible to go through the insurance.

GJ requested that all Councillors receive a copy of the report.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that there is no written report, and the inspector came to the site. The Chief Officer has spoken to the insurance company with regards to the storm damage and since the excess was £1000 and the cost of the repairs would be £2000, then it would end up more costly for the Council to go down this route as the premium for next year would increase.

GJ requested that all Councillors receive a copy of the playground inspection reports.

The Chief Officer stated that once she has received all of the Annual Playground Inspections, she will pass these on to all members of the Council.

PO asked whether it was possible to remove the damaged trampoline and not replace it with the suggested rocker.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that this option is possible, the rocker costs around £1000, and if the Council wanted to do this then they would have to replace the trampoline with new flooring.

EGE stated that the playground is an asset for the children within the community and that it needs to be up to the correct standard.

The Vice Chair addressed the Council and stated that she would like to start by saying that when she was elected onto the Community Council she was quite ignorant of the responsibilities and statutory demands on the Council, during the last two years a huge volume of work has gone on to fix the Health & Safety issues that should have been addressed prior to the employment of the Chief Officer. There has been a vast amount of work carried out at Tumble Hall, the Cemetery and Y Cwtsh to ensure that all legal documents are correct and up to the correct standard. She stated that the Assets Register and the Schedule of In-House Maintenance and Health & Safety Requirements documents astounded her and brought to light the extent of the Council's responsibilities. The Vice Chair commended the staff for their level of dedication towards completing these documents.

The Vice Chair expressed that she felt that finally, in this financial year, LICC has started to reach out and grasp the well-being initiatives and make a real difference in people's lives. The Vice Chair informed the Council that she volunteers with Cinio a Chlonc which has given her great joy and the people who attend. In the same way the opportunities that LICC offered the children within the ward during the summer holidays. The value of these Community Engagement activities outweighs the cost.

The Vice Chair also expressed how frustrating it is as a member that LICC are constantly having to deal with the problems inherited from the previous administration such as the solicitor fees that LICC are now paying to sort out

the asset transfers. The yearly costs to maintain the inherited asset transfers are a constant drain on resources which means that the reserves are not being replenished. The additional cost for the repairs at Tumble Playground due to the poor workmanship is also worrying as the playground is such a vital asset for the families that visit the park and would be disastrous if it had to close.

The Vice Chair stated that setting the budget and the precept is never an easy task, the Chief Officer and the Deputy Chief Officer have worked diligently to bring this very thorough budget to us.

The Vice Chair asked the Councillors present to share their thoughts and opinions in turn.

SB expressed his concerns with regards to the repairs needed to Tumble Playground. SB was concerned whether there's going to be further repairs needed and how much will this playground cost LICC. SB also asked if there will be a guarantee supplied from the company after the work has been carried out.

The Chief Officer reassured the Council that the work needed can be carried out and that Dragon Play are the company used to install Cross Hands Park which was to a very high standard. The Chief Officer stated that she would contact Dragon Play and ask whether or not the improvements will be covered with a guarantee.

SB also expressed his concerns with regards to the matting that has been fixed since the storm and asked what was the likelihood of this happening again?

The Chief Officer informed the Council that the only way to prevent other parts of the matting from lifting is to resecure it all the way around the perimeter which could be done at a different time as this would be too costly at the moment.

SB suggested that LICC look to see if there is a better solution to the problem as he wouldn't want LICC to be in a situation where they are constantly paying for repairs at Tumble Park.

LD stated that Tumble Park has always been a very busy park and is an asset for the local community and beyond. LD stated that it's important that LICC keep the park open. LD asked how much the rope swing would cost to replace

and does LICC need to replace this as she wouldn't want it damaged again, like it had done previously.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that if they choose not to replace the rope swing then they would need to replace the current flooring to account for this, which would be more expensive.

SE stated that he felt the same with regards to Tumble Park. SE also stated that it goes against the grain to raise the precept but if LICC want to carry out their initiatives then, regrettably, he can't see any other option.

EGE agreed with SE and iterated that he didn't want to raise the precept but couldn't see any other option.

RJ agreed with the previous comments. RJ stated that he doesn't agree with raising the precept as so many households are finding it difficult under the current climate.

PO stated that he's not comfortable with raising the precept and that it's important to keep all of the residents informed with the work that LICC do.

SS stated that she doesn't know how to resolve this situation and shares everyone's reservations with regards to raising the precept. SS informed the Council that the Finance Committee had quite a fiery debate with regards to the recommended budget and is disappointed to hear about the news with regards to Tumble Park.

NT stated that he felt like that LICC is between a rock and a hard stone. NT also stated that he doesn't want to raise the precept, he also doesn't want Tumble Park to close. NT felt like that the only options available was to either close Tumble Park or to raise the precept which goes against the grain.

JA shared the same concerns as the previous members and expressed her disappointment to hear about the work that is needed at Tumble Park. JA stated that nobody wants to raise the precept but also the ward benefits from the park. JA was concerned that the older children in the area have been climbing over the fence whilst the park was closed. JA also stated that the shoddy workmanship is out of LICC's control as this happened during the previous administration. JA said that the only way she could see to bring the precept down was to not include the money needed to fix Tumble Park but she

also doesn't want to see the park close. She felt that LICC are in a difficult situation.

GJ asked the Chief Officer whether the park would be insurable?

The Chief Officer informed the Council that once the work has been completed and an independent inspection has been carried out then there will be no problem with insuring the park.

GJ stated that he doesn't want to see an increase in the precept but was unsure of where to make deductions. GJ asked if the salary section of the recommended budget included the increase with the NI and does it include all employment costs.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that the salary section includes the increased NI costs, Pensions, increases inline with the NALC pay awards and the rise with the living wage.

GJ stated that as he wasn't voted on to any of the Committees and neither were SB, AJ and RJ, he hasn't been allowed to be part of these committees and therefore was unable to have an input with the decision made. Which he was very disappointed about.

The Chief Officer stated that SB attended the Finance Committee meeting last week and was provided with an opportunity to make comments on the budget and reminded everyone of how the committees work and that every member of the Council was able to attend if they so wish. The Chief Officer also noted that all Councillors were asked to attend the Forward Development Plan Workshop in January and GJ, SB, RJ and AJ failed to attend or provide apologies.

TS stated that he too is uncomfortable with raising the precept and that the repairs needed to Tumble Park has come as a shock.

LD informed the Council that during the Finance Committee held last week to discuss the recommended budget, the committee went through everything to try and make cuts and the unfortunate news with regards to Tumble Park has come as a shock.

SS stated that having gone through the budget during the Finance meeting it's a really difficult decision on what to do with the unexpected extra £20,000 added to it. SS also stated that she isn't happy raising the precept.

The Vice Chair asked the members present if anyone had any ideas on how to reduce the precept and if they had any other questions that they would like to ask.

PO proposed that the Council accept the recommended budget for the 2025-26 financial year (that includes the £20000 for the repair of Tumble Playground) that has previously been circulated to all members of the Council via email by the Chief Officer.

No alternative proposal was suggested.

GJ requested that a recorded vote is made.

NT seconded the proposal. LD, TS, JA, PO, EGE, NT, SE and SS in favour. GJ, RJ and SB against the proposal.

Resolved that the Council accept the recommended budget for the 2025-26 financial year (that includes the £20000 for the repair of Tumble Playground) that has previously been circulated to all members of the Council via email by the Chief Officer.

Minute No. 150 - To discuss the recommended precept required for the 2025-26 financial year.

The Council were reminded by the Vice Chair that the precept required for the 2025-26 financial year followed on logically from the decision to accept the recommended budget.

PO proposed that the Council request a precept amount of £561,515.08 from Carmarthenshire County Council. SE seconded the proposal. GJ, RJ and SB were against the proposal. All other members present in favour.

Resolved that the Council request a precept amount of £561,515.08 from Carmarthenshire County Council for the 2025-26 Financial Year.

Minute No. 151 - To discuss the recommended reserves required for the 2025-26 financial year.

The Chief Officer informed the Council that following the discussion of the recommended budget that the recommended reserves are to be £50,000. The Chief Officer reiterated that the reserves were extremely low and this has to be addressed going forward.

PO proposed that the Council accept the recommended reserves of £50,000 required for the 2025-26 financial year as presented by the Chief Officer. seconded the proposal. All members present in favour.

Resolved that the Council accept the recommended reserves required for the 2025-26 financial year as presented by the Chief Officer.

GJ proposed that any additional underspend is put back into the reserves. The Chief Officer explained that any underspend would have to be dealt with as a virement throughout the year.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm

Signed

Date

(Chair)