

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PORTSKEWETT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD AT PORTSKEWETT & SUDBROOK RECREATION HALL
WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2026

Councillors Present:

Cllr T Fawcitt, Cllr Nurcombe, Cllr G Parker (Chair) and Cllr M Patterson. Cllr Dymock attended remotely.

Members of the Public present:

No members of the public were present.

1. **PUBLIC MEETING**

No issues had been raised.

2. **SIGN THE ATTENDANCE BOOK**

The Attendance Book was duly signed.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- a. Apologies were received from Cllr Carne who was on holiday and Cllr Lillie due to work commitments.
- b. No requests had been made for apologies to be approved.

4. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

5. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

- a. Cllr Parker proposed that the minutes of the December meeting be accepted as a true record, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to publish on website.**
- b. Cllr Fawcitt proposed that the minutes of the January Extraordinary meeting be accepted as a true record, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to publish on website.**

6. **CLERK'S REPORT**

- a. Enquiries had been made with a Bristol company regarding a laser display for 2026, but they do not provide laser displays. No alternative companies had been found. Horizon Fireworks had availability for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th November 2026. Confirmation of the cost had been requested. It was agreed, subject to cost, the 4th or 3rd should be booked.

Unity Trust Bank had confirmed the new bank charges from 1st February 2026.

The clerk advised members the life expectancy of a defibrillator is between 8 to 10 years.

Cllr Parker confirmed the defibrillator cabinet had been installed on the Middle Leechpool Road.

7. **ITEMS OF LOCAL CONCERN (FOR INFORMATION ONLY NO ACTION CAN BE AGREED)**

Cllr Dymock had received numerous complaints about potholes in the villages, she will take this up with Monmouthshire County Council (MCC).

The Leechpool traffic assessment has been completed, Cllr Dymock will forward the report to members.

There have been reports of rubbish being dumped in the layby behind the Parkwall estate.

Residents of Mill Meadows raised complaints about sewage water backing up into their bathrooms. Cllr Dymock contacted Redrow who have cleared the blockage, found to be caused by residents putting inappropriate waste into the sewerage system

8. **REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVE ON ARW SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY AND OTHER BODIES**

- a. **ARW School Governing Body**
Cllr Carne was not present.
- b.i **Give Dog Fouling the Red Card Working Group**
Cllr Carne was not present.

b.ii One Voice Wales (OVW) – Monmouthshire/Newport Area Committee

The clerk attended the meeting held on 22nd January 2026 and gave the following update:

- An officer from Newport County Council democratic services shared how they work and communicate with their Town and Community Councils.
- Other Community Councils shared how they engage with their Communities.
- Councillors were reminded that the OVW E-bulletin contains all the latest information they need to be aware of.
- Model Standing Orders are being updated for the changes in Welsh Government Guidance on Procurement as they are currently out of line with the Model Financial Regulations.

Cllr Nurcombe attended the OVW AGM on 21st January 2026. He informed members that devolution is on the agenda, so Town and Community Councils will be expected to take on extra responsibilities.

Councils in North Wales are keen for responsibility for Crown Estates in Wales to be transferred to Wales.

The motion was carried for free school meals for secondary school pupils in Wales.

The next meeting will be held on 16th April 2026 at 7pm at Usk Town Council Offices.

b.iii Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall & Playing Fields (P&SRH)

Cllr Dymock had met with the architect and will meet with a builder next week to obtain a costing for the proposed work on the cloakrooms.

b.iv Portskewett and Sudbrook Church Hall Committee

Cllr Lillie was not present.

b.v The Cornfield Project Committee

Cllr Lillie was not present.

b.vi Severnside Area Committee

Cllr Carne was not present.

9. **DISCUSSION WITH COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

- a. Cllr Dymock informed members that MCC are currently consulting on their budget for 2026/27.

10. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2026/27

The section 137 limit for 2026/27 is £11.60 per elector, this was duly noted.

- b. Joint OVW/Planning Aid Wales(PAW) Webinar “Improving our Local Places – Welsh Case Studies and Planning Updates

This item was noted.

- c. Request to Adjust the Fencing Layout at Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall

The Junior Football Club sought permission to adjust the layout of fencing adjacent to the Recreation Hall at the rear. Cllr Parker proposed the adjusted layout be approved, seconded by Cllr Fawcitt, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to notify the junior football club.**

11. **PLANNING**

- a. Planning Applications Approved/Refused by Monmouthshire County Council

A schedule had been circulated to members; this was duly noted.

12. **FINANCE**

- a. January Pink Paper

The pink paper for January had been circulated for councillors’ consideration. Cllr Patterson proposed the following payments be approved, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all:

	£'s
Salaries	1,621.68
Torfaen CBC – Pension contributions	302.37
HMRC – NIC and PAYE	310.98
Merlin Environmental Services (Waste collection January Inv. 2241)	388.08
Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall (Hire of Hall December and Carols Inv. 716)	39.00
Unity Trust Bank (Bank Charges 1.12.25 to 31.12.25 Statement 104)	6.00

Balances held: Current Account £16,099.56, Deposit Account £16,947.88.

Action: clerk to set up payments, Cllr Fawcitt and Cllr Parker to approve online.

b. Quarterly Report on Bank Reconciliations

Cllr Fawcitt had carried out the quarterly bank reconciliation check and confirmed everything was correct.

c. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report for the 9 months ending 31st December 2025

The report had been circulated for consideration. Councillors raised no questions. Cllr Patterson proposed the report be approved, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to publish on website.**

d. External Audit Report for the Year Ending 31st March 2025

The council received an unqualified report from the external auditor. The recommendation to review the annual audit notice for completeness of information was duly noted.

e. Internal Audit Contract 2026/27

Mr Murphy had indicated he would be willing to continue as Internal Auditor for the Council for the 2026/27 financial year; his fee would increase to £310. Cllr Fawcitt proposed the contract be approved, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to forward contract to Mr Murphy.**

f. Trophies for Special Achievement Award

Costs had been obtained from three suppliers. Cllr Fawcitt proposed two trophies be purchased from Trophies Medals Plus at a cost of £43.95, to be funded from the underspend on the Community Fun Day budget, seconded by Cllr Parker, agreed by all. It was agreed that the trophies would be presented at the Community Fun Day. **Action: clerk to place order.**

The Chair proposed that Standing Order 9.b be suspended to facilitate approval of two additional invoices for payment as they were above the delegated powers limit:

- Black Mountains Tree Consultancy for the Tree Survey and reports £650
- Morris's Grounds Maintenance for the vegetation clearance at Sudbrook Trinity Church £890

Cllr Patterson proposed the payments be approved, seconded by Cllr Nurcombe, agreed by all. **Action: clerk to set up payments, Cllr Fawcitt and Cllr Parker to approve online.**

13. **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

a. Dates for 2026/27 Events

The following dates were agreed:

Community Fun Day - 11th July
Best Kept Garden – Judging in July
Bonfire Night Event – 3rd or 4th November
Remembrance Service – 8th November
Carols on the Green – 13th December
Community Awards – 13th December

14. **PLACE PLAN**

a. Update on Meeting with Planning Aid Wales (PAW)

PAW review of the place plan had been circulated to members. The working group will now meet to review the feedback and determine amendments required to the Place Plan. **Action: clerk to arrange a working group meeting.**

15. **SUDBROOK CAMP AND CHAPEL**

a. Update on Progress

The chapel had been cleared of vegetation to allow the surveyors access. The survey work is planned for the 12th February 2026. The grant offer had been increased to include the cost of clearing the vegetation, and the deadlines had been revised to 1st March for the end of the funding period and grant claim to be made by 25th March 2026.

16. **COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL EVENTS**

a. Attendance at Council Events in Respect of the 6 Month Rule

Cllr Parker proposed that if a member is unable to attend the monthly council meeting but attends either

another meeting as a representative of the council or a council event, in that month, it will be counted as attendance for the purpose of the 6 month rule, seconded by Cllr Fawcitt, agreed by all.

17. **STAFF APPRAISAL**

- a. The Chair had carried out the clerk's appraisal. It was agreed to review the clerk's hours worked at the next meeting.

18. **COUNCILLOR VACANCY IN THE SUDBROOK WARD**

- a. There had been no new applications for the vacancy and the original applicant felt unable to commit to the position.
- b. It was agreed to readvertise the vacancy in due course.

19. **SECTION 6 BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2026-28**

- a. Deferred to next meeting. **Action: Cllr Fawcitt to review the current plan.**

20. **RENEWAL OF RECREATION HALL LEASE**

- a. Cllr Dymock is awaiting a response from the MCC officer. If a response is not forthcoming the Recreation Hall Committee would look for the lease to be renewed in their name to allow funding opportunities to be progressed, which are not open to the Council.

21. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

- a. 2026-2028 Section 6 Biodiversity Plan.

22. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- a. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and gave the date and time of the next meeting as **Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 7pm** at Portskewett and Sudbrook Recreation Hall. The meeting was declared closed at 8.50pm.

Mrs B Young - Clerk