

MINUTES OF TREWERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT MIDDLETOWN VILLAGE HALL AND VIA MS TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2025

Present: Councillors Gill Corfield (Chair), Judy Evans, David Corfield, Peter Davies, Colin Jenkins, Nicola Dyson, Phil Hughes and Amanda Jenner.

2105 Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Rex Turner, Fiona Warburton and Rob Breakwell.

Two members of the public attended for the discussion of planning application 24/1839/FUL, while another member remained for the entire meeting until the play area lease was addressed, as the Council had agreed to discuss the lease confidentially due to its ongoing legal nature. All Councillors in agreement.

2106 Minutes of the Meeting from 26th November for approval

Minutes from the meeting held on 26th November to now be approved and signed by GC.

Proposed by PD and seconded by CJ

Private minutes from the meeting held on 26th November to now be approved and signed by GC.

Proposed by PD and seconded by CJ.

2107 Declarations of Interest – Blanket dispensations have been received for matters relating to wind farms, renewable energy, membership of voluntary organisations, school governors, school modernisation and school transport.

DC and GC declared an interest in Play area Lease, Middletown.

2108 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on agenda

None.

2109 Playgrounds

Play area lease, Middletown

The lease between TCC and The New Saints Football Club for the land on which the play area in Middletown is situated ended on 31st March 2024. Following extensive discussions with The New Saints Football Club, it was agreed that they would purchase the play area equipment from TCC for £5,300. This payment was received on 21st August 2024. Therefore, TCC is no longer responsible for any liabilities or maintenance regarding the play area.

RoSPA report for Trewern

The RoSPA report identified a few minor issues that require attention in the play area in Trewern. PD and DC will arrange to visit the play area to address these matters.

ACTION: DC/PD

An invoice from RW Jones & Sons for work completed two years ago has just been received.

2110 Highways

Residents are reminded to continue requesting salt and grit if needed. If it doesn't arrive, please let CCJ know, and she will follow up.

Work has been completed on a drain outside Sandiacre, Middletown.

It was noted that there have been two accidents on Cefn Bridge recently.

GC has suggested we continue pushing for improvements on the A458, outside Bank Caravans. The request is for the relevant department to conduct an inspection during the summer months, when traffic is busier, as illegal overtaking and poor driving standards remain ongoing issues.

The condition of the road near Nelly Andrews' green, is deteriorating, with water running down it. There is a rut about 4 inches deep, particularly where wheels pass.

The potholes by Llwynmelyn have reappeared. The previous patching work has failed, and the issues are again ongoing.

Litter along the Leighton Road (from Buttington Church towards Leighton), especially from McDonald's has accumulated. PD will visit McDonald's to request that they send teams to clean it up, as they act upon direct reports.

ACTION: PD

The latest update from Jake Evans regarding road U2253, by the Dingle, indicates no immediate danger. Bins were collected last week, and recycling is scheduled for tomorrow. However, a member of the public was present to discuss the ongoing deterioration and concerns about the road. The bridge has eroded on both sides, and while the resident has reinstated a fence on one side, the other side (which is the responsibility of PCC) has been in disrepair for over a year.

Despite a meeting between residents and PCC in the summer, no progress has been made since, and the landslide over New Year has further worsened the situation. CCJ raised this as a major health and safety issue approximately 12 months ago, but action has yet to be taken. We need to continue pushing for progress. CCJ suggests sending numerous photos and letters to the portfolio holder to emphasize the urgency of the situation. GC recommended demanding a meeting with the portfolio holder. If the issue remains unaddressed, it could prevent residents from being able to travel to work.

Cllr. Jackie Charlton (email: jackie.charlton@powys.gov.uk) has been contacted previously. AE will draft another email to Cllr. Charlton, attaching Jake Evans' response and requesting an urgent meeting to address the ongoing concerns.

ACTION: AE

2111 County Councillors' Report

See 'Highways'

2112 Planning

24/1571/REM | Removal of conditions 6 and 7 of planning permission 22/0070/FUL in relation to landscaping and occupancy | Barn At Fronhaul Buttington Welshpool Powys SY21 8DU

It was agreed that the condition should not be lifted, as there is no new access proposed; the access is shared with the farm. This condition was likely a key factor in the original planning permission being granted, and its removal would undermine the reasoning behind its inclusion.

24/1839/FUL Erection of 40 dwellings (terraced and semi-detached), formation of access road and all associated works, Land At Gate Farm Trewern Powys SY21 8EE

Members of the public were in attendance, and all present agreed to discuss the planning application openly.

Councillor CCAJ called in the application due to various concerns raised by the public. CCAJ is currently seeking advice from the council on whether she needs to declare an interest, as her neighbours oppose the development. It remains unclear if there is a conflict due to perceived interests. If CCAJ is required to declare an interest and is unable to represent the community, she will arrange for another local councillor to do so.

The proposed development is a substantial one on a hillside location, raising concerns about road and sewerage capacity. It was noted that the application could not be objected to on the grounds of it being in the countryside but could be challenged based on access issues, visibility at junctions, and local amenities being at full capacity. There is uncertainty about whether neighbouring properties would be overlooked, particularly those in Pentre Gwyn.

Ongoing concerns about sewerage capacity were discussed, with no concrete evidence to confirm its adequacy. It was agreed that we would seek support from Russell George MS to request that Severn Trent send an operational team to review the infrastructure and provide an informed assessment. It is critical that this response is not generic and involves effective communication between Severn Trent departments.

A resident raised flooding concerns, noting that since the farmland was sold, the waterway is no longer dredged. This has led to flooding in properties, including water entering kitchens. Blocked drains due to leaves and debris exacerbate the issue. An elevation assessment was suggested to mitigate these risks. The planning statement encourages cycling to local amenities, but residents pointed out that there are no such amenities in Middletown or Trewern, making the suggestion impractical. Criggion Lane lacks safe footpaths and lighting, posing significant safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists.

Concerns were raised about noise from quarry lorries operating outside permitted hours (starting at 6 am). A resident raised concerns about the development blocking natural light to her property, which she believes infringes on her "right to light" after more than 20 years of occupancy.

Criggion Lane is narrow and unsuitable for the increase in traffic from 116 additional car parking spaces. Blind junctions, the busy A458 and the need for children to cross the road to access the play area raise significant safety concerns.

It was agreed that we could make some recommendations to replace proposed houses along the hedgerow with bungalows to maintain light and privacy, avoid creating footpaths through the estate near existing cul-de-sacs and review access points, as the plans currently show three new points leading onto Criggion Lane.

The suggestion that residents could walk or cycle to the train station was deemed unrealistic and unsafe.

Councillors agreed to object to the application, incorporating public concerns into the response. AE to draft a response to the planning application highlighting the Council's objections, including concerns about traffic, flooding, sewerage, and site layout. AE to seek support from Russell George MS regarding sewerage issues and to ensure Severn Trent provides a thorough review.

2113 Finance

Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation shows that there is £43,878.82 in the accounts at the end of December 2024. Bank reconciliation and bank statements checked to confirm that it is all in order.

GC to now sign bank statements.
Proposed by PH and seconded by PD

GC and PH have had difficulty logging onto HSBC Online Bank Account, whilst AE was on holiday. AE checked the log in details for GC and it seems to be working. GC to double check.

ACTION: GC

Payments

Clerk Salary - £537.70 (November and December payment) under L.G.A 1972 s112.

Middletown Village Hall - £273.18 (Broadband)

Middletown Village Hall - £25 (Hall hire for December) under L.G (M.P) Act 1976 s19 (3).

RW Jones and Son - £345.60

Audit Wales - £200

Proposed by CJ and seconded by PD

Budget/Precept

AE has sent the updated budget to all Councillors. The precept for 2025/26 will be £23,352, which is £34.28 per Band D household. Everyone happy with budget/precept for 2025/26

Proposed by PH, seconded by ND

2114 Correspondence

None.

2115 Any Other Business

It has come to our attention that inappropriate symbols have been scratched into the paintwork of the Middletown bus shelter. JE will take photos of the damage so we can determine whether the entire shelter needs repainting or if only the affected areas require attention. AE will then contact Scott Jones or Selwyn Jones for a quote to sand down and repaint the necessary areas.

ACTION: JE/AE

Reviewing TCC's Policies and Procedures

Deferred until next meeting.

Cllr Rex Turner has requested to stand down from the Council. As a result, it was agreed that an advert will need to be issued before the next meeting. Councillors are encouraged to share the opportunity and suggest potential candidates who might be interested in joining the Council. AE to draft a notice for publication on Facebook, the TCC website, and local noticeboards. AE will also check with One Voice Wales to confirm if the vacancy needs to be advertised in the County Times.

ACTION: AE

2116 Date of Next Meetings

18 February 2024 at Trewern Community Centre and via MS Teams.