

**MINUTES OF HARLECH COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE OLD LIBRARY, HARLECH AND OVER ZOOM
AT 7.00 P.M. ON 01.12.25**

This was the Council's first meeting with remote access, with Cllr Reg Chapman and as well as some members of the public attending from remote a locations and this was made possible by the purchase of the necessary equipment by the Harlech Old Library and Institute Committee.

APOLOGIES

Cllr. Wendy Williams, Ceri Griffiths.

PRESENT

Cllrs. Christopher Braithwaite (Chairman), James Maxwell (Vice Chairman), Reg Chapman, Edwina Evans, Tegid John, Gordon Howie, Mark Lewis, Simon Turner, Giles Bentham, Martin Hughes, and Cllr. Annwen Hughes and Gwynfor Owen (Gwynedd Council).

There were 2 members of the public present over zoom and 1 in the room at the meeting

Questions by members of the public

No questions were received by members of the public

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that he had received quotes to purchase new play equipment for King George playing field and he thanked Cllrs. Simon Turner a Mark Lewis for all their hard work with all the preparations for the lighting up night.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on November 3rd 2025 were found to be correct.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

No matters were arising from the minutes

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr. Reg Chapman declared an interest in the matter regarding HAL and he was not present when the matter regarding HAL was discussed.

Cllr. Martin Hughes declared an interest in the matter regarding HAL and he was not present when the matter regarding HAL was discussed.

Cllr. Simon Turner declared an interest in the matter regarding HAL and he was not present when the matter regarding HAL was discussed.

No Personal Declaration of Interest Form was signed by them as they had done this already in the last meeting of the Council and the interest in this matter is running continuously.

GWYNEDD COUNCIL MATTERS

The following report was received from Cllr. Annwen Hughes – She reported that the public toilets at Min y Don car park had never reopened following the upgrading work and Cllr Gwynfor Owen stated that this was due to asbestos in the building. She had received a number of phone calls and emails during the day regarding flooding on various roads in the area and had contacted Gwynedd Council about this and was informed that they would be going out to the different locations to assess the situation. She had been informed that a section of the Briwet Bridge road towards Penrhyndeudraeth would be closed on the 18th of this month for 2 days.

Cllr Gwynfor Owen reported that he was apologizing that he was in the meeting over zoom and not there in person and he could see that the system was working well. It was noted that the CPR report had been published and that a number of public bodies were being blamed and that Gwynedd Council was accepting all the recommendations in the report. The financial situation of Gwynedd Council had not yet been agreed, he had complained about the increase in Community Council contributions to keep public toilets open. He extended his congratulations to the

organizers of the lighting up night on Saturday and that the evening had been a great success. He wanted to know if a decision had been made regarding flashing lights and the Chairman declared that the matter was on the agenda later. Cllr Simon Turner thanked him for arranging for large bins to be placed in the castle car park for the Saturday event and that several had asked why some like this were not available during the tourist season. He was going to meet with the people responsible for the mural in Bron y Graig park, he was going to look into why a sign for Harlech had been removed on the A487 in Maentwrog.

MATTERS ARISING

Budget Plan

It was reported that the Council had spent £46,418.36 (which included bank charges) since the start of the new financial year and this was £33,839.64 less expenditure than what was earmarked in the budget for the 2025/26 year.

Christmas 2025

Cllrs. Simon Turner and Mark Lewis gave the following report regarding the christmas festivities – Councillors Mark Lewis and Simon Turner confirmed that £3,800 was raised from donations towards the high street lights. Additionally, notice that a donation of £520 was received on 24th November from the the Nuclear Restoration Services community fund at the Trawsfynydd site.

The 'Light Up Harlech' Lantern Parade and Late Night opening was deemed a huge success with over 500 people judged to have attended. In addition, 135 small children were given presents by Santa. The Council agreed that the left over chocolates (from the 166 ordered) would be given to Tsgol Tanycastell Primary School.

The Council would like to thank the Harlech Tourism Association for paying for the leaflets, posters, and video projectionists. Cadw also were acknowledged for allowing the Castle Car Park to be used and for agreeing that snowflakes could be projected onto the Castle walls.

Mark and Simon also wished to thank Jim and Sheila Lees from Rock Ardudwy for their generous donation towards the high street lights, erecting the marquee, providing the sound system, and funding the Tom Jones tribute act.

The Council agreed that further Christmas Lighting options should be explored for the A496 Road in Lower Harlech. Simon will contact Gwynedd County Council highways department to establish the cost of fitting AC Power Outlets on more of the street light poles for the 2026 Christmas festivities. It was agreed that the LED Light Braids installed this year were nice and, subject to budget funds and/or donations, should be installed in greater numbers.

Daryl Edwards proved a great success as Santa and it was agreed that the Council would use him again in 2026. He is now booked for Saturday 28th November 2026. The Council would like to thank Daryl for personally giving each child that visited his grotto a Christmas Wish Coin. Daryl did not charge the Council for this year. He insisted on offering the first year at no cost.

Prizes for the most creative homemade lantern designs were awarded on the night. Simon is now ensuring that the generous gifts from local businesses are now finding their way to the winners.

It was acknowledged that leaflets and posters promoting the event ideally should have been printed in both Welsh and English languages. This will be done in 2026.

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from the Chair of the Governing Body of Tan y Castell School expressing disappointment on behalf of the members of the Body and the School staff that the poster that had been printed promoting the event was in english only, even though the school was very proud to have the opportunity to create the poster, there was great disappointment to see afterwards that the welsh had been removed from the poster that was used. The school works hard to promote their welsh culture, and what happened to the successful poster shows a lack of respect for that and for the hard work of the child. Additionally, it was reported that the Community Councillor later came forward to ask the school to distribute leaflets promoting the event and, because all the leaflets were in english only and the school has a bilingual policy, it was necessary to refuse the Councillor's request to distribute the leaflets. Again, it was disappointing, and the Councillor's reaction to his request being refused was shocking. She had also received an e-mail from Sian Roberts firstly congratulating the Community Council for a superb Christmas event but at the same time voicing disappointment that the pamphlets were english only and hoping that this won't be happening again. Received an email from the organizers of the town's craft fair congratulating the Community Council on the success of the event and also stating that all the craftsmen have now agreed to open the fair next year until 5:00 pm, but they express disappointment that the leaflets promoting the

event were all in English and that the craft fair leaflets are all bilingual. Also a Councillor stated that 4 complaints had been received with regards to the event poster being in English only.

It was agreed to check if the Community Council can take donations and the Clerk stated she would contact the Internal Auditor to ask this question.

Bron y Graig Nature Trail

Cllr James Maxwell informed the Members that he had received a report on the above site inspection from the Woodland Trust and that the Clerk had already forwarded this report to all Members. Everyone agreed to accept this report. It was also agreed that Cllrs Reg Chapman and James Maxwell would draw up a specification of the work needed to be done on the site so that the Clerk could send it to various contractors in the area asking for quotes to carry out the work.

Flashing Signs

It was made known that the Council would have to spend £3,500 to purchase one of the above and then £1,500 to install it. After a discussion it was agreed that it would be better to have a crossing in this location and it was agreed that the Members send a letter of support regarding this to Cllr. Annwen Hughes.

Ardal Ni – Stragedy Plan

Cllr. Martin Hughes reported that there was a need to send an e-mail to Councillors asking what they wanted to see happening with the above and take the answers to the next meeting of the Ardudwy Councillors Forum.

Y Las Ynys Fawr

The Chairman that he would be speaking with the Solicitor this week and there was nothing else to report at the moment.

Council's Website

Cllr James Maxwell reported that he had met with Mr. Owen Brown regarding the above and that the new website is live. It was agreed to invite Mr. Brown to the February meeting of the Council.

HAL

The following report was presented by Cllr. Reg Chapman with regards to the latest situation regarding HAL - Further to my report to the November 2025 Harlech Community Council Meeting, I have had further dialogue with Ian Williams of the Welsh Government. Council will remember that the Welsh Government has offered to fund the legal cost to our Community Council to enable us obtain Clear title to all aspects of the Site and pay the legal costs for the setting up of a Community Interest Company, wholly owned by this Council. In addition the costs involved with negotiating with any developer would also be met. He has asked me to provide a record of this Council's support for the Hotel project {formal vote}. The strength of our support is an important part of giving confidence to the various levels of Government who seek assurance that this project is fully supported by our community. If this development is successful the economic and social benefit to the whole community will provide Harlech with the economic driver that is desperately needed to give employment and career opportunity for local people. I consider this is a fantastic opportunity and I would ask you to give it your full support. I detail below the legal aspects the funding offer will cover;

Scope of Work Required

The primary objective is to facilitate the development of a new hotel, which is integral to the strategic tourism goals for the Harlech area. The legal services required will focus on three main pillars:

1. Title Clean-Up and Land Assembly: Resolving current ownership complexities and providing a clean, marketable title for the future hotel developer.
2. Community Interest Company (CIC) Compliance and Formation: Ensuring the successful and legally compliant establishment of a new CIC by the Community Council.
3. Developer Negotiation: Drafting and negotiating the legal agreements between the newly formed CIC and the eventual developer.

Site and Ownership Complexities

The proposed development footprint, which includes the potential use of a part of the land for the 'Harlech Link' project, involves four distinct parcels currently under varying ownership structures:

- **Tennis Court Site:** Currently in the ownership of Harlech Community Council (HCC).
- **Band Hut:** The structure is owned by the Band, but the underlying land is owned by HCC.
- **Swimming Pool Site and Access Road:** Owned by the Swimming Pool Board (HAL), a closed not-for-profit company.
- **Playing Field:** A designated King George V site, in the ownership of HCC.

Specific Legal Constraints and Resolutions

1. **Swimming Pool Site Covenant:** The site is subject to a restrictive covenant placed by Gwynedd Council (GC) when they gifted the land to HAL. This covenant stipulates an overage on the sale price if the site is used for any purpose other than a pool.
2. **Covenant Removal:** In a recent meeting with GC (represented by their Leader and relevant Chief Officer), it was indicated that this covenant could potentially be removed, **subject to the hotel development proposals including accessible leisure provision for local people.** We require assistance in formalising this agreement.
3. **King George V Playing Field:** This land may require some remodelling as plans evolve. While HCC is independently looking at securing funding to improve the grounds for sport and recreation, any changes must comply with the requirements relating to its King George V site status.

The Community Interest Company (CIC) Model

The core strategy being pursued by the Community Council is to use a **Community Interest Company (CIC)** as the legal entity to manage the land transfer and ensure long-term community benefit.

- The CIC's function will be to provide the hotel developer with a clean title.
- Crucially, the CIC **will not seek a capital receipt** for the site transfer.
- Instead, the CIC is seeking a **reasonable, ongoing revenue stream** tied to the hotel's operation, which will be used to benefit the local community.
- The CIC's role is defined as providing **oversight of the development and its community benefit mandate**, rather than prioritising a direct financial return on the land sale itself.

The three below motions were presented to the Members:-

To support in principle the development of a hotel – Cllrs Christopher Braithwaite, James Maxwell, Edwina Evans, Mark Lewis, Gordon Howie voted in favour and Cllr. Giles Bentham abstained from voting.

To support in principle of a new CIC - Cllrs Christopher Braithwaite, James Maxwell, Edwina Evans, Mark Lewis, Gordon Howie voted in favour and Cllr. Giles Bentham voted against

To support in principle the Welsh Government report - Cllrs Christopher Braithwaite, James Maxwell, Edwina Evans, Mark Lewis, Gordon Howie voted in favour and Cllr. Giles Bentham abstained from voting.

Penygraig Land

The Clerk reported that she had received the report regarding the survey that was carried out of the above land by Groundsolve Ltd and that they stated that no major issues were found and that the land is safe. This report was forwarded to all Members. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward this to the Solicitor. Also Cllr. James Maxwell stated that he would be meeting Mr. Rowland Jones with representatives of Adult Learning Wales on the site next week.

Gwynedd Council grant

Cllr. Reg Chapman reported that a grant of £7,500 had been received from Gwynedd Council to carry out work in different locations in the town and that this work will have to be completed by the end of January 2026.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None come to hand since the last meeting

RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Responsible Financial Officer reported that there was £30,579.14 in the current account and £115,248.36 in the reserve account.

Invoices needing payment since last meeting

- Mr. G. J. Williams - £68.00 - cut grass on King George football pitch
- One Voice Wales - £84.00 - Cllrs. James Maxwell and Martin Hughes training courses

Groundsolve Ltd - £2,700.00 - survey of Penygraig land
Mrs Annwen Hughes - £155.88 – zoom licence
Simon Turner - £163.45 – Christmas lights

The above payments were processed by Cllr. Reg Chapman and Cllr James Maxwell approved the payments and permission was granted to the Clerk/Treasurer to make payment on line or by cheque at the end of the meeting.

Financial contribution application

Junior Badminton Club - £1,560.00 (out of community engagement fund)

It was agreed that invoices must be sent direct to the Council for payment, as this was not a grant to an organisation

Monies received since last meeting

Customs & Excise - £250.27 – VAT reimbursement

Invoices paid since the last meeting

Blachere Illuminations - £354.24 - christmas lights

Simon Turner - £499.00 – items for Christmas parade

Simon Turner - £487.93 – Christmas lights

Catrin Soraya Williams – £165.00 - translation services

Management Accounts and Budget

The accounts up to the end of October 2025 were shared and everybody accepted them. The finance sub committee would welcome any comments regarding the figures for next year.

CORRESPONDENCE

Gwynedd Council – Environment Department

A letter along with attachments has been received from the above Department regarding the Consultation as the Council considers introducing a new comprehensive parking order and making changes to the fee structure for pay and display long-stay car parks (band 2 only), implementing £1.55 for 2 hours of parking, with a minimum payment of 4 hours, amounting to £3.85. The Members had no objections with regards to this Consultation.

Gwynedd Council – Environment Department

Received a letter from the above Department informing the Council that the road known as Pentre'r Efail will be closed from a point by the property known as Gerlan as far as the property known as Bennar on the 12th of January 2026. This is necessary on health and safety grounds to the public during works on behalf of Welsh Water.

Snowdonia National Park

Received an email from the above regarding an update on the review process of the Snowdonia Local Development Plan and asking whether it would be possible for an informal survey to be completed by residents of the Park in order for them to hear the views of local people on key planning policy issues in the area. The deadline for completing the survey is December 12th. The Clerk had already forwarded this to all Members.

One Voice Wales

Received an email from the above notifying the Council that the annual general meeting of One Voice Wales will be held virtually on 21st January 2026 and that there is an invitation for only one Councillor to attend the meeting. They also requested the name of the attendee along with a substitute by 18th December. The Clerk had already forwarded this to all Members. Cllr. Martin Hughes agreed to represent the Council at this meeting and put Cllr. Christopher Braithwaite's name as reserve

Mr. Joe Patton

Received an e-mail from the above thanking the Council for opening a bank account for King George playing field and stating that this has enabled him to try for a grant of £1,500 from the National Gardening Scheme and also stating that he has had confirmation that his application has been passed onto the panel and he will know in April if he has been successful in getting the grant. Mr. Patton also stated that In spring 2026, Keep Wales Tidy will conduct a follow-up assessment as part of their ongoing monitoring of gardens awarded the Green Flag designation and asking the Community Council to kindly confirm the following that are matters arising from their 2025 assessment visit:

Has the awaited third quote been received for the Community Council to consider funding the provision of play equipment for disabled users? The answer to this was “yes”

Will funding for a gate and wheelchair-accessible pathway to the seating area near the storyteller’s chair be included in the Community Council’s 2026/27 budget? The answer to this was “yes”

The Chairman agreed to contact Mr. Patton with regards to the above.

Ms Emma Howie

Received an e-mail from the above asking for a financial donation from the Council towards running a new badminton club in the town. It was agreed to give £1,560 out of the community engagement fund. Also wanted to stated that she is welcome to send in an application next year and this would be discussed under donations.

Remote Access

It was noted that at the end of this first meeting with remote access, both Councillors and members of the public considered it had worked well.

SIGNED.....Chairman

DATE..... 870