

4 June, 2025

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 37 – 40

At a Special Meeting of the **RECREATION AND WELFARE COMMITTEE** of the Llanelli Rural Council held at the Council Chamber, Vauxhall Buildings, Vauxhall, Llanelli, and via remote attendance on Wednesday, 4 June, 2025 at 4.45 p.m.

Present: Cllr. D. M. Cundy (Chairman)

Cllrs.

T. M. Donoghue	A. J. Rogers
S. N. Lewis	W. E. Skinner
A. G. Morgan	A. G. Stephens
J. S. Phillips	O. Williams

Absent: J. P. Hart

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. E. M. Evans.

38. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest in the following matters:

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
40	D. M. Cundy	Personal interest – member, Saron Community Hall management committee. Personal interest – member, Trallwm Community Hall management committee.
40	T. M. Donoghue	Personal interest – member, Saron Community Hall management committee. Personal interest – member Trallwm Community Hall management committee.
40	S. N. Lewis	Personal interest – Treasurer, Dafen Welfare Hall management committee.
40	A. G. Morgan	Personal interest – member, Swiss Valley Community Hall management committee.

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<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Interest</i>
40	J. S. Phillips	Personal interest – member, Furnace Community Hall management committee. Personal interest – member, Sandy and Stradey Community Hall management committee. Personal interest – member, Pwll Recreation management committee.
40	A. J. Rogers	Personal interest – Secretary, Dafen Welfare Hall management committee.
40	W. E. Skinner	Personal interest – member, Furnace Community Hall management committee. Personal interest – member, Pwll Recreation management committee. Personal interest - member, Sandy and Stradey Community Hall management committee.
40	O. Williams	Personal interest – member, Five Roads Community Hall management committee. Personal interest - Ponthenri Community Hall management committee.

39. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1960

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the following matter be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.

40. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Further to minute no. 349 (7 February 2024, refers), members considered the Deputy Clerk's comprehensive report on the management of the council's community facilities. The report focussed on:

- A risk assessment examining the volunteer led management model.
- A detailed evaluation of the management model and whether it remained fit for purpose for all council facilities; and
- Whether policy changes could help better manage risk and strengthen financial management and general governance arrangements by introducing alternative management models, especially where hall management committees were experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining a sustainable volunteer base to manage facilities.

Members were informed that when considering alternative management models, if it was felt that the longer-term ambition was to bring halls under direct council control this would require additional staffing resource. In an ideal scenario, the preferred management model was a hybrid approach being applied to day-to-day management of council property and possibly further consolidated under a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Dedicated staff could be allocated responsibility for facility management and administration, thereby

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reducing reliance on volunteers. While this model would increase council expenditure, it would ensure long-term sustainability and regulatory compliance. The larger, busier halls could be professionally managed under the CIO, while the other halls currently operating well could continue to be managed by volunteer-led management committees but with additional council support.

Initially establishing a CIO for hall committees holding charitable status could simplify and improve the management of the halls with them being managed under one umbrella, with the CIO taking over the running of any community hall brought under direct council control. Forming a CIO to manage community facilities would provide the council with opportunities and benefits usually not available to councils namely:

- Mandatory and discretionary relief and reductions for non-domestic rates (NDR) under the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- A wider range of grant funding opportunities would be available.
- If it chose to do so, a CIO could make donations/grants within the community if grants met the charitable objectives.
- Limited Liability for Trustees: In a CIO, trustees were generally not personally liable for the charity's debts or legal obligations. This is a significant advantage, as it protected personal assets in case of financial issues or litigation.

Having considered the general risk of hall management committees failing in their managerial responsibilities and recognising the issues associated with each and every council owned community facility, it was

RESOLVED that to address the current challenges associated with community facility management, the following measures be enacted:

1. The Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee, supported by the ward councillors appointed to represent the council on the respective local hall management committees be charged with making recommendations and where appropriate for overseeing any changes to the council's current community facilities management model. The sub-committee's terms of reference shall be guided by:
 - (1) **Oversight and Consultation** - engage with the existing volunteer groups and hall committees to understand current challenges, assess sustainability, capacity and skills and gauge willingness to continue in management roles.
 - (2) **Support and Capacity Building** - provide the resources to develop and implement a centralised support structure for volunteer committees, to provide administrative assistance, training in governance, health and safety, safeguarding and data protection. A regular audit process should also be formulated to maintain compliance.
 - (3) **Policy and Governance Frameworks** - review and consider revising the Heads of Terms and other common policies relating to hall management. This should include consideration of formulating:
 - A standardised financial reporting format with mandatory annual reporting.
 - Standardised hiring terms and fees (as far as possible).
 - Developing a policy framework for third-party licences across all facilities to ensure consistency, transparency and legal compliance.

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- A policy regarding the distribution of financial support to external groups and alignment with the intended use of community assets.
 - A revised budget policy for community facilities to alleviate pressure on council budgets derived from precept.
- (4) **Interim and Alternative Management Models** - identify struggling or failing committees and assess the need for direct council intervention. Where necessary, transition facility management to a hybrid management model (as described above) that provides council oversight. Explore, and where appropriate, implement alternative management models such as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to provide structured and legally distinct governance.
 - (5) **Community Engagement and Promotion** - develop and implement targeted outreach programmes to raise awareness of hall availability, increase community involvement and enhance the relevance and use of these spaces.
 - (6) **Implementation Plan and Resourcing** - recommend appropriate resource allocation for delivering the above objectives and oversee the development of a detailed implementation plan, including staffing, legal advice, volunteer engagement and financial implications.
2. At the earliest opportunity, to mitigate risk because of the lack of volunteer-led committee presence, that the council assumes responsibility for the full operational management on an interim basis of both Furnace Hall and Ponthenri Community Hall in accordance with the guidance and determinations of the Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee. This shall include oversight of all administration, bookings, maintenance and financial management. At the same time, further legal advice shall be sought regarding the charitable status of each facility and any associated obligations.
 3. That in principle, failing community facilities shall transition to a hybrid management model with council governance oversight, should the Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee so determine.
 4. The formation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) as a long-term governance model be supported in principle. A CIO would allow the council to access grant funding, mitigate financial risks and provide structural clarity. Further specialist legal advice shall be sought to help establish the CIO with priority focus being given to Furnace and Ponthenri Halls because of the halls' charitable status and their respective high-risk ratings. Thereafter, consideration to incorporating the Phil Bennett OBE Community Resource Centre under the same CIO management model, shall be assessed by the Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee following further discussion with the Felinfoel Executive Committee because it currently managed the premises under charitable trust arrangements.
 5. That a grant of £2,000 be awarded to the newly established Swiss Valley Community Centre Events and Activities Committee from existing hall earmarked funds held by the council to support the committee in its initial development and planning activities.
 6. That the existing Swiss Valley Community Centre earmarked funds shall be also used to respond to the hall users' and committee feedback suggestions for enhancing the facility, to include namely: improving heating and insulation; providing accessible Wi-Fi; upgrading overall decoration and aesthetics; add bay markings in the car park; repurpose underused rooms for hiring, and install an outward-facing digital information screen.

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FURTHER RESOLVED that as far as possible, and to help further guide the Recreation and Welfare Sub-Committee's work programme, a phased transition framework for the gradual assimilation of facility management responsibilities should prioritise sites presenting the most immediate or heightened risk, especially paying regard to the facilities referred to in resolutions 2. and 4. above. This approach should be aligned with current staffing capacity and incorporate contingency planning. However, as staffing resources were currently limited, further consideration shall be given to supporting permanent roles dedicated to governance, finance, community engagement and operational oversight as the sub-committee's work programme evolved.

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The Meeting concluded at 5.45 p.m.

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The afore-mentioned Minutes were declared to be a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman presiding thereat and were, on 11 June, 2025 adopted by the Council.