

15 September, 2026

LLANELLI RURAL COUNCIL

Minute Nos: 161 – 168

At a 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 Tuesday, 15 September, 2026 at 4.45 p.m.

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

Cllrs.

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

Absent: J. P. Hart, O. Williams.

161. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. E. M. Evans (Cllr. N. Evans deputising).

162. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. A. J. Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute No. 164 as he was a member of the St Michael and All Saints Church Committee.

163. COMMUNITY FACILITIES – MAINTENANCE WORKS

RESOLVED that the Facilities Manager's report on work undertaken be noted.

Cllr. T. M. Donoghue left the meeting.

164. DAFEN PARK – TREES

Correspondence was received from the Chairman of the Congregational Committee at St. Michael and All Angels Church, together with local residents, expressing concerns regarding the trees situated along the boundary between residents' properties and the church hall at Dafen Park.

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The Facilities Manager provided members with a tree survey, which identified that the overhanging branches required lopping and that additional cutting back was necessary.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that an Officer and Ward Members visit residents to obtain further information, with the aim of identifying a suitable solution that would benefit all parties.

Cllrs. A. G. Stephens and W. E. Skinner left the meeting during the above discussion.

165. GWILI FIELDS PLAY AREA

Members received email correspondence from a local resident concerning the playground at Gwili Fields, Llwynhendy. The local resident was seeking the installation of additional fencing around the play area at Gwili Fields.

The complainant felt that there should be a perimeter fence around the new play area which would mitigate the following:

- Uncontrolled dog access.
- Dog fouling.
- Pedestrian movements through the site.
- Children leaving the play area.
- Access by vehicles, e-scooters and e-bikes.
- Litter entering the play space.

The Governance and Projects Officer informed members that the national play safety guidance and advice from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recognise that not all play areas require fencing and the decision should be based on site-specific factors. The council's primary duty was to ensure that facilities were reasonably safe through appropriate design, inspection, maintenance and management.

The junior play area facility at Gwili Fields formed part of a wider open recreation space and was primarily intended for older children. Open access play facilities of this nature were common across Wales and the UK. Whilst fencing could provide certain management and amenity benefits, its absence did not in itself indicate a safety deficiency.

A site specific risk assessment was undertaken to determine whether additional fencing was necessary on safety grounds which identified low to medium risk profile so no immediate safety concerns requiring intervention.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that due to the site specific risk assessment did not identify a safety concern justification for the installation of a full perimeter fence. However, officers would continue to inspect, maintain and monitor the site.

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**166. PENYGRAIG PLAY AREA BALL COURT
PROTECTIVE NETTING**

Members considered the report of the Governance and Projects Manager informing of concerns raised by neighbouring residents regarding footballs leaving the Penygraig Play Area ball court.

The concerns raised were:

- Footballs entering neighbouring gardens.
- Potential injury to residents and young children.
- Potential damage to property, vehicles, fencing and garden structures.
- Children entering private property to retrieve footballs.
- Ongoing nuisance and disruption to neighbouring residents.

The existing fencing surrounding the facility had generally proved effective in containing day-to-day recreational activity. However, recent reports received indicate that footballs occasionally leave the facility, particularly from the South Eastern goal end area where balls were struck at greater height and velocity, escape over the rebound fence line and reach neighbouring properties.

Whilst the number of recorded incidents remains limited, members considered whether proportionate mitigation measures should now be implemented to minimise future occurrences.

Members received a detailed risk assessment which demonstrated that the installation of ball-catch netting behind the goal areas would significantly reduce the likelihood of footballs leaving the confines of the ball court and entering neighbouring residential properties.

The Governance and Projects Manager informed members that no allocation had been made with the council's approved 2026/27 budget for the installation of netting. However, Section 106 monies of £2,000 had been secured from Carmarthenshire County Council to fund the installation of mitigating measures at the facility.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the installation of netting be installed using the Section 106 monies, secured from Carmarthenshire County Council to fund the installation of mitigating measures at the facility.

167. SWISS VALLEY RESERVOIR

Members received the report of the Community Development Officer, which informed members of the recent efforts undertaken to control Himalayan balsam at Swiss Valley Lower Lliedi Reservoir. The report summarised the work carried out, the contribution of volunteers, key findings, what had worked well, what had been less effective, the proposed future approach, and recommendations for the next steps.

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Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was a fast-growing, tall and upright annual plant. Its seeds germinated in early spring, producing broad, almost square seed leaves, followed by lance-shaped true leaves with finely serrated edges. It was considered a highly invasive and problematic plant because it spread rapidly, forming dense monocultures that outcompeted native plants for light, nutrients and pollinators. Its exploding seed pods were capable of dispersing seeds up to 7 metres, while watercourses carried them even further downstream. Its shallow roots also contributed to riverbank erosion and increased flood risk, making it a significant threat to biodiversity.

The most effective control measure was to prevent the plant from setting seed. This was usually achieved by hand-pulling, cutting or strimming plants between May and July, before seed pods develop. Infested sites should be monitored and treated annually for at least two to three years, as seeds can remain viable in the soil and new plants may germinate after the initial clearance.

Over the previous two years, volunteers from the Friends of Swiss Valley Reservoir had assisted the Council by pulling up the plants by the roots and leaving them in piles on site at the reservoir. This had been necessary because removal required a special licence, which the Council did not currently hold.

If Himalayan balsam at the reservoir was left unchecked, the long-term consequences were usually:

- Reduced biodiversity – it could outcompete native plants and leave the banks less ecologically diverse.
- Weaker bank stability – because it was shallow-rooted, the plant died back in winter and could leave bare, unstable ground, increasing the risk of erosion.
- Higher siltation and poorer water quality – erosion could wash more soil into the reservoir, affecting water clarity and increasing maintenance requirements.
- Spread downstream and to neighbouring land – once established, it could seed widely and spread along waterways, making later control more costly and less effective.
- Loss of amenity and access – dense stands could dominate bankside areas, making paths, verges and work areas more difficult to manage.
- Rising future costs – early control was usually much cheaper than repeated clearance after the plant had become established.
- Longer-term habitat degradation – over time, invasive dominance could reduce the reservoir's value for wildlife and make restoration slower and more expensive.

Opportunities had been offered to Perthyn and Carmarthenshire County Council's Coleshill Ground Maintenance Team; however, no involvement had materialised to date. Members were advised that approaches could be made to large local employers, including Tata Steel, Marelli and Gestamp, as part of their corporate social responsibility and team-building initiatives. Opportunities to work with Live Free Adventures to incorporate paddleboarding or rowing activities following balsam-bashing sessions were also identified. In addition, there was scope to engage with local volunteer-led groups, attend meetings and recruit further volunteers to the Friends of Swiss Valley Reservoir. Members were further informed that collaboration with the Probation Service could be explored, as it had previously assisted the Council with hedgerow planting at Ponthenri Recreation Ground and had expressed an interest in supporting future projects.

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RESOLVED that Members noted the work carried out to date by volunteers and the challenges identified in managing the invasive species in areas that had not yet been reached. Members approved approaching the suggested organisations to achieve a greater impact in the following year, considered engaging with probation services to explore potential assistance, and considered permitting administration staff to support the Community Development Officer and Charge Hand at volunteer sessions.

168. REMEMBRANCE BENCH – BYNEA SQUARE

Correspondence was received from the Chairperson, Bynea District Forum requesting permission to purchase and install a memorial bench at Bynea Square.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that permission be granted to Bynea District Forum to purchase of a memorial bench for Bynea Square and subsequently be installed by the Council's DLO at Bynea Square, Bynea, Llanelli.

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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 13 October, 2026 adopted by the Council.