

ESCLUSHAM COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes: Council Meeting Monday 10th March 2025

Present: Cllrs Gemma Richards, Nat Cargius, Jean Kelly, Mark Andrew, Mark Pritchard, John Perkins, Glen Bellamy, Sarah Love, Graham Blackmore, Claire Luckock, Nicci Davies-Williams, Mabyn Pickering & Val Morgan

Apologies: Cllr Darcy Davies-Williams

PRELIMINARIES

1. Daniel Corcoram and Emma Hayter: both Development Project Managers at RWE > re the proposed 'Butterfly Solar Farm' attended to give the Community Council more information on the project. Emma attended as the original attendee, Ghislaine, is indisposed.

Having introduced themselves, Emma, in the first instance gave a brief summary of the proposal, and advised the Council that it was, at present, very early in the process. Councillors had received prior information on the proposal and have been made aware that much of the proposed development is in Marchwiell and Ruabon communities, with a little over 50% of the 'Western Array' within Esclusham community, being located at the very southern tip, alongside the A483. Overall, it is estimated that between 5% and 10% of the overall scheme, such as it currently stands, including the Central and Eastern Arrays, is earmarked for Esclusham community.

Both DPM's shared some extra information on the proposal and invited questions from the Council.

Cllr Mark Pritchard advised that, in addition to being the Local Elected Member for Esclusham, he is also the current Leader of WCBC and has a keen interest in the overall scheme, not just the part earmarked for Esclusham community. This was noted by those present. Cllr Pritchard told Daniel and Emma that he had attended one of the initial consultations recently held at Marchwiell and Ruabon and was not at all impressed with how things had progressed, especially as no consultation had been arranged for the Parish Hall, despite initial enquiries being made.

At this stage, it was confirmed that a Formal Consultation at the Parish Hall, Rhostyllen would be arranged at the same time as at Ruabon and Marchwiell. The Community Council need to ensure that this commitment is adhered to when the time comes.

Cllr Pritchard placed on record his belief that the proposal requires re-thinking and perhaps even starting again > this was noted by both DPMs. "You need to get it right first time".

Questions from other Councillors, some technical, answered, where able, and it was noted by all that further discussion can take place once the feedback from the two consultations at Ruabon and Marchwiell, along with concerns raised at this meeting, have been considered. 2028 was mentioned as a feasible date for the work progressing in one form or another.

Daniel and Emma left the room and were thanked for attending by the Chair.

A brief discussion ensued amongst Councillors and Cllr Pritchard strongly suggested that the Community Council stay close to any developments and, in due course, along with the neighbouring communities, look at the involvement of local politicians should the, possibly to be amended proposals, still be of concern.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair : Cllr Claire Luckock (VC)

Agenda Items

1. Apologies - Cllr Darcy Davies-Williams
2. Chair's announcements - none
3. Declaration of interest - none
4. Ratification of minutes from the meeting of Monday 10th February 2025 - unanimously ratified
5. Members' Items

a) **Budget for 2025/26** - an updated copy of the draft budget, originally presented to the Council in January was handed out by the Clerk. Total the same > three alterations to cost lines, as follows:

- i) 3.2 Streetlight Power - £14,000 (up from £12,500 in the original version)
- ii) 4.1 Streetlights Capital (new) - (£2,000 (down £1,000 from the original version)
- iii) 9.1 Donations - £1,500 (down £500 from the original version)

Final budget formally ratified and a copy is to be attached to the 'master' (signed) copy of these minutes. **Action:** Clerk

6. Bank Transactions

Current Account (05/02/2025 > 05/03/2025)

<u>Current A/C</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Chq</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Monies from Santa Sleigh - towards events 2025	3-Feb-25			106.00	11,310.72
WCBC (commercial refuse)	2-Jan-25	D/D	86.75		11,223.97
Hafren Dyfrdwy - water	6-Jan-25	D/D	174.00		11,049.97
Transfer to Imprest	6-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20		10,695.77
Transfer to Imprest	7-Jan-25	Auto tfr	26.40		10,669.37
Yu Energy - Gas	10-Jan-25	D/D	669.35		10,000.02
Transfer to Imprest	10-Jan-25	Auto tfr	26.40		9,973.62
Transfer to Imprest	13-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20		9,619.42
Transfer to Imprest	14-Jan-25	Auto tfr	72.70		9,546.72
Transfer to Imprest	16-Jan-25	Auto tfr	1,515.19		8,031.53
Transfer to Imprest	20-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20		7,677.33
Transfer to Imprest	21-Jan-25	Auto tfr	150.60		7,526.73
Transfer to Imprest	23-Jan-25	Auto tfr	13.20		7,513.53
BT	24-Jan-25	D/D	95.16		7,418.37
SSE (street lighting Dec)	27-Jan-25	D/D	1,147.69		6,270.68
Transfer to Imprest	27-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20		5,916.48
Transfer to Imprest	28-Jan-25	Auto tfr	830.22		5,086.26
Barbara Jones - contribution VE 80th ann event	12-Feb-25	4980	50.00		5,036.26
Transfer from business savings	18-Feb-25			9,000.00	14,036.26
WCBC (contribution towards Playscheme)	18-Feb-25	4981	5,621.82		8,414.44
Bryn Jones (February salary)	24-Feb-25	4982	2,001.96		6,412.48
JRB Enterprise (8,000 poop scoop bags)	24-Feb-25	4983	149.76		6,262.72

Imprest Account (05/02/2025 > 05/03/2025)

<u>Imprest A/C</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Chq</u>	<u>Exp</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>Balance</u>
	3-Feb-25	2072	158.98		-1,649.41
Transfer from current	6-Jan-25	Auto tfr		354.20	-1,295.21

Transfer from current	7-Jan-25	Auto tfr	26.40	-1,268.81
Transfer from current	10-Jan-25	Auto tfr	26.40	-1,242.41
Transfer from current	13-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20	-888.21
Transfer from current	14-Jan-25	Auto tfr	72.70	-815.51
Transfer from current	16-Jan-25	Auto tfr	1,515.19	699.68
Transfer from current	20-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20	1,053.88
Transfer from current	21-Jan-25	Auto tfr	150.60	1,204.48
Transfer from current	23-Jan-25	Auto tfr	13.20	1,217.68
Transfer from current	27-Jan-25	Auto tfr	354.20	1,571.88
Transfer from current	28-Jan-25	Auto tfr	830.22	2,402.10
HMRC (5 Feb)	10-Feb-25	2073	895.87	1,506.23
	10-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	1,329.13
	10-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	1,152.03
	10-Feb-25	2074	262.20	889.83
	10-Feb-25	2075	90.83	799.00
	13-Feb-25	[2074]	-262.20	1,061.20
	13-Feb-25	2076	262.20	799.00
	17-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	621.90
	17-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	444.80
	17-Feb-25	2078	157.35	287.45
	17-Feb-25	2077	13.20	274.25
	24-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	97.15
	24-Feb-25	S/O	177.10	-79.95
	24-Feb-25	2079	234.36	-314.31
	24-Feb-25	2080	13.20	-327.51
	3-Mar-25	S/O	177.10	-504.61
	3-Mar-25	S/O	177.10	-681.71
	3-Mar-25	2981	69.29	-751.00
	3-Mar-25	2982	13.20	-764.20

7. Cash Transactions

Petty Cash Account (05/02/2025 > 05/03/2025)

Petty Cash A/C	Date	Rec No	Exp	Inc	Balance	Bank
Bookers (supplies Christmas party) > via JK	17-Dec-24		82.37		104.42	
Tea lights - carol singing at Mem Gdns (via CL)	10-Feb-25		20.99		83.43	
Donation in lieu of wreath - Cllr Richard Elias	11-Feb-25		20.00		63.43	
Bouquet of flowers - Mrs Irene Elias (via JK)	14-Feb-25		9.00		54.43	

8. Invoices/Quotations - none

9. Statement of Accounts

The most recent reconciled bank statements are recorded below. However as the cash book is always more up to date than the bank statements the latest position (un-reconciled) is shown in the accounts above with the totals shown at 'Current Balance - Cash Book' below.

	Date of Statement	Current Balance Cash Book £
Business Instant Access Account	31/12/2024	4,816.25
Current Account	31/01/2025	6,262.72
Imprest Account	31/01/2025	-764.20
Petty Cash Account	05/03/2025	54.43
		£10,369.20

As previously advised, the Imprest account is not actually overdrawn - book entry only

The situation regarding the **Trust fund** is recorded below for information.

RPHT Current A/C	Date	Chq	Exp	Inc	Balance
Transfer from Petty Cash	27-Jan-25			800.00	11,385.22
Playgroup	27-Jan-25			55.00	11,440.22
Aikido Class (January)	31-Jan-25			72.00	11,512.22
Transfer from Petty Cash	17-Feb-25			410.00	11,922.22
J Williams - cq lost in the post > stop thereon	18-Feb-25	[0220]	-375.00		12,297.22
Jonathan Williams (replacement cq - 23/1)	18-Feb-25	0221	375.00		11,922.22

RPHT Petty Cash A/C	Date	Rec No	Exp	Inc	Balance	Bank
Beth Tudor (kids party)	2-Feb-25	3697		80.00	285.73	
Tuesday Club	4-Feb-25	3698		18.00	303.73	
Snooker Group	4-Feb-25	3699		10.00	313.73	
Refund - Church bingo 4/4 (not proceeding)	4-Feb-25	[3651]		-10.00	303.73	
D Sides Dance Class	4-Feb-25	3700		12.00	315.73	
Refund - event 31/5 (cannot accomodate)	5-Feb-25	[3686]		-40.00	275.73	
Indoor Bowls	5-Jan-25	3701		18.00	293.73	
Lily York (deposit kids party 22/2)	6-Feb-25	3702		20.00	313.73	
John Lord Tai Chi class (Wed & Fri)	7-Feb-25	3703		24.00	337.73	
Emily Cook (kids party)	8-Feb-25	3704		55.00	392.73	
Sophie Gregson (kids party)	9-Feb-25	3705		80.00	472.73	
Tuesday Club	11-Feb-25	3706		18.00	490.73	
Indoor Bowls	12-Feb-25	3707		18.00	508.73	
John Lord Tai Chi class (Wed & Fri)	14-Feb-25	3708		24.00	532.73	
Transfer to current	17-Feb-25				122.73	410.00
Biscuits > Parish Hall 'drop-in cafe' (via DJ)	18-Feb-25		28.99		93.74	
Tuesday Club	18-Feb-25	3709		18.00	111.74	
Snooker Group	18-Feb-25	3710		10.00	121.74	
Indoor Bowls	19-Feb-25	3711		18.00	139.74	
John Lord Tai Chi class (Wed & Fri)	19-Feb-25	3712		30.00	169.74	
Esclusham Community Gp (bingo)	21-Feb-25	3713		30.00	199.74	
Lily York (kids party)	22-Feb-25	3714		55.00	254.74	
Chloe Blackwell (deposit kids party 23/3)	24-Feb-25	3715		20.00	274.74	
Tuesday Club	25-Feb-25	3716		18.00	292.74	
Indoor Bowls	26-Feb-25	3717		18.00	310.74	
Income > 'Tea Room' at the Parish Hall	27-Feb-25			107.00	417.74	
John Lord Tai Chi class (Wed & Fri)	28-Feb-25	3718		30.00	447.74	

RPHT	Date of Statement	Current Balance Cash Book
Current Account	31/01/2025	£ 11,922.22
Petty Cash Account	05/03/2025	447.74
		£12,369.96

10. **Budget Position - ECC situation noted.**

CHAIR

DATED

FULL COUNCIL

CHAIR : Cllr Gemma Richards

Agenda Items

1. **Apologies** - Cllr Darcy Davies-Williams

2. **Chair's announcements** - none

3.. **County Councillors' Reports** - Cllr Mark Pritchard

i) Cllr Pritchard commented further on the proposed 'Butterfly Solar Farm', which is only one of a number of possible developments in and around Esclusham. He re-iterated his opinion that Esclusham CC needs to consider working closely with neighbouring communities, and local politicians, as matters progress on the various proposals.

ii) Cllr Pritchard commented briefly on a matter raised by NWP, but Cllrs Graham Blackmore and John Perkins confirmed that it had been discussed at the NWP/ECC Police Liaison meeting - see below.

4. **Declaration of interest** - Cllr Mark Andrew - item 9(d) > left the meeting at the appropriate time

5. **Ratification of minutes from the meeting of Monday 10th February 2025** - unanimously ratified

6. **Members' Items/Action List**

a) Police Liaison Meeting NWP/ECC held on the 5th March 2025 > Cllr Graham Blackmore

Present:- PCSO Sara Willimas, PCSO Gethin Thomas, Cllr John Perkins, Cllr Graham Blackmore and the Clerk, Bryn Jones.

Speeding - Bersham Road: as the 'speed information bands' are still not located on the Bersham Road, the Clerk had, pre-meeting, asked PCSO Sara Williams to enquire of Sgt Sarah Hughes-Jones why there is such a delay. We are advised that the Sgt had spoken with the relevant officer at WCBC who, so we are told, was, at the time, under the impression that the bands are in place. Apparently the Sgt has been unable to speak further with WCBC. All parties agree to stay close until the promised 'bands' are in place. Linked:

Local College: the officers will make further enquiries of the college to ensure that they are happy to allow further NWP visits. **Monday**: Sara confirms that she has spoken with one of the college tutors and they have held two sessions of video (crash) and will be putting-up signage stating that any student from site reported for dangerous driving, may be automatically excluded.

Speed gun (local officers): will look to continue to visit Bersham Road. **Monday**: Sara confirms that officers will be visiting on an ad-hoc basis. Cllr Pritchard has also exchanged e-mails with NWP to enquire about timescales.

Speed indication cameras (as on the 'upper' B5098): the Clerk advised that he had been instructed by the Community Council to obtain some costing figures for locating on the Bersham Road - similar to the ones purchased some 4 years ago (smiley/sad face). The Clerk did mention that, as the Bersham Road was partly in Esclusham community and partly in Offa community, (i.e. part WCBC Cllr Mark Pritchard ward and part WCBC Cllr Phil Wynn ward) that it would be unfair for ECC to bear the full cost of any such camera. Certainly Cllr Phil Wynn has, in the past, been agreeable to sharing the cost between the two councils, but Offa CC will not consider a contribution without seeing the figures > 'speed bands' essential for information.

Speed Gun (dedicated for Offa): further to NWP writing to three local councils, including Esclusham, asking if they would consider purchasing a speed gun for use by the NWP Offa team, the Clerk advised the officers that ECC are not prepared to contribute due, in part, to previous misuse of items/kit purchased for use, but subsequently lost or misplaced. See minutes ECC meeting 10th February.

Number Plate Recognition Camera - Esclusham: The Clerk advised that he had been asked to resurrect this matter, once again > a very laudable course of action but, as ever, subject to availability of funds. Some Councillors are of the opinion that NWP should finance when locations are mooted. However, as a starting point the Clerk advised that he would look at writing to the PCC's office to see if there is any funding available. With, perhaps, a small contribution from ECC.

Criminal Damage: the officers advised that an attempt to break into a garage behind Amanda Grove had been made > although little information shared. It is not believed that anything was stolen. Monday: Cllr Pritchard mentioned that WCBC officers are aware and options are being looked at - such as the possibility of installing a 'drop-bollard'.

Possible abandoned vehicles: both Cllr Graham Blackmore and Cllr John Perkins advised of possible abandoned/unsecure vehicles > one a van on Church St and one a car on the Wrexham Road towards Johnstown.

Police and Crime Commissioner - 3 Year Plan for North Wales: those present at the meeting briefly discussed the content of the report, especially the key priority of 'a local neighbourhood policing presence'. The Clerk confirmed that a copy is being sent out to all members of the Council as requested in the covering letter.

b) Bersham Colliery 'miners banner' > Cllr John Perkins was asked to continue with enquiries with regard to the possibility of the Community council having a copy of the Bersham Colliery miners banner. Cllr Perkins will report back to the Council should there be developments.

7. Planning Items & Reports

Applications

P/2025/0131 - application for: "Advertisement consent for free standing sign" on land east of Felin Puleston Industrial Estate, Felin Puleston, Wrexham LL13 7RF. *Already circulated > the Clerk advised that the location of the proposed sign is not actually in Esclusham community. WCBC advised via e-mail on the 25/2 > app was sent to the wrong Community Council. Noted*

P/2025/0147 - application for the: "Formation of vehicular access" at 60 Henblas Road, Rhostyllen, Wrexham LL14 4AB. *Already circulated.* Following discussion, the Clerk instructed to advise WCBC that ECC have no objections to the application. **Action:** Clerk.

Withdrawals

None

Reports/Appeals/Other

None

Determinations

None

8. **Correspondence - for the attention of the Council**

a) **Ron Bailey - Lithium-ion batteries campaign.** February update. *Copy to Councillors. Noted*

b) **Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru** - E-mail received advising that the Commission has published its Policy and Practice document in preparation for the 2025 Electoral Review Programme and is seeking views on the content. *E-mail with link to the DBCC website, where the said document can be viewed, forwarded to Councillors on the 11/2. Consultation ends on the 24/3. Noted* and all encouraged to partake/respond.

c) **Power for People** - update re 'community energy'. *Copy e-mail shared with Councillors. Noted*

d) **SG Estates Ltd** - 'Pre-application Consultation for proposed planning application for bridge and footpath/cycleway works on land at National Trust and south of Wrexham Road, Rhostyllen, Wrexham LL14 4DH'. *Copy of email from SG Estates, together with attachments, forwarded to Councillors on the 19/2 > copies of the said attachments in the 'March agenda pack'. The aforementioned e-mail contains a link from which the application plans and supporting documents can be viewed.* End date for comments: 21st March 2025. Following discussion, and some clarification from Cllr Mark Pritchard regarding the precise location, the Clerk was instructed to advise S G Estates that ECC fully support the application for a bridge. **Action:** Clerk

e) **WCBC** - 'Community Review'. WCBC has a duty under s22 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 to report every 10 years on a community review having regard to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales timetable for conducting reviews of principal areas' electoral arrangements required by section 29 (1) of the Act > the last Community Review was carried out in 2013. *E-mail containing full details of the proposed review, along with a copy of an attached questionnaire, shared with Councillors.* The completed questionnaire is required back by WCBC, via e-mail, by the 27th of March. Following discussion, the Clerk was instructed to complete the said questionnaire and copy Councillors onto the completed document, once done. **Action:** Clerk.

f) **SSAFA (Wales region)** - request for a financial grant/donation. *Copy e-mail shared with Councillors.* Clerk instructed to place the request in the S137 file, for consideration at the bespoke meeting in late March. **Action:** Clerk

g) **'Ambition North Wales' Team** - Consultation on the draft North Wales Regional Transport Plan > end date 14th April. *E-mail containing the information and link forwarded on the 4th of March.* All encouraged to view and make comment.

h) **North Wales Police & Crime Commissioner** - 'North Wales Police and Crime Plan' (next 3 years). *E-mail containing a link to the Plan sent to all Members on the 6/3. Noted* - and, linked to the 'Police section', above, the Clerk asked to enquire if any grants are available for speed-related deterrents.

i) **Marie Curie Great Daffodil Appeal 2025** - request for a financial grant/donation. *Copy e-mail shared with Councillors.* Clerk instructed to place the request in the S137 file, for consideration at the bespoke meeting in late March. **Action:** Clerk

9. **Items for the Clerk**

a) **RPHT Trustee** - Cllr Mark Andrew accepted the invitation to become a trustee of RPHT.

b) **AUDIT ITEMS > 2022/23 and 2023/24 (as listed)**

i) **2022/23 Wales Audit** - minutes 10th June 2024:

Audit Wales: completed Annual Return for 2022/23. *Copy shared with Councillors. Page 4 contains the 'Auditor General's report and audit opinion. Esclusham Community Council has*

been issued with a qualified audit report > "Except for the matters reported below in my Basis for Qualification, on the basis of my audit, in my opinion no matters have come to my attention to give cause for concern that, in any material respect, the information reported in this Annual Return:

- i) has not been prepared in accordance with proper practices;
- ii) that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met;
- iii) is not consistent with the Council's governance arrangements; and
- iv) that the council does not have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Basis of Qualification: "Assertion 3: the Council did not obtain written notification that members did not wish to claim allowances for 2022/23."

Action required henceforth: Annually, upon receipt of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report > the content and recommendations therein **must** be placed on an agenda, discussed by Councillors and any decision formally recorded in the minutes - which was not done in the above instance. The IRPW report for 2025/26 will be placed on an agenda for Q22025. **Action:** Clerk

ii) 2023/24 Internal Audit - minutes 10th June 2024

The Clerk advised that the completed 'Action Plan' sheets are to be shared with the Council before the end of the Financial Year. Sheets are headed: Issue, Recommendation and Follow-up. **Action required:** Clerk to distribute accordingly by the 31st March 2025 - consider adding onto the S137 meeting agenda as 'other Council items', Councillors have previously received copies detailing the 'Issues'. **Action:** Clerk to be on diary to complete.

iii) 2023/24 Wales Audit - minutes 9th December 2024

a) Audit Wales: completed Annual Return for 2023/24. Copy shared with Councillors. Page 4 contains the 'Auditor General's report and audit opinion. Esclusham Community Council has been issued with an UNQUALIFIED audit opinion. Please see the following comment: On the basis of my audit, in my opinion no matters have come to my attention to give cause for concern that, in any material respect, the information reported in this Annual Return:

- i) has not been prepared in accordance with proper practices;
- ii) that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements have not been met;
- iii) is not consistent with the Council's governance arrangements; and
- iv) that the council does not have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

'Other matters and recommendations', "I draw the Council's attention to the following matters and recommendations which do not affect my audit opinion but should be addressed by the Council >

"Analytical Review: an explanation for total other receipts was provided, however, the explanation was not sufficiently detailed. We recommend that the Council provide a more detailed explanation for significant variances in future audits - there are no other matters I wish to draw to the Council's attention".

No further action required as the above recommendation is already on diary for April when work will commence on the 2024/25 Audit. Noted and Cllr Mark Pritchard complemented the Clerk, and the late Chair of Finance, Cllr Richard Elias, on the unqualified audit opinion received for 2023/24.

c) Section 137 meeting for 2025/26 - arranged for 7:00pm on the 31st March. Action: Clerk to be on diary to send out the summons/agenda on the 26/3.

d) Esclusham CC - Clerk & RFO vacancy: Closing date was the 5th of March and details of all applicants shared with the Council. The Chair moved the meeting to PART 2 to discuss the process. All non-Councillors left the room. **ALSO:** see declaration of interest, above.

CHAIR

DATED
