



VALE OF MONTGOMERY RURAL CLUSTER

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 9TH JULY 2025

MONTGOMERY INSTITUTE

Present: Cllr. C. Seal (CS) (Chair – Kerry) : Cllr. S. Robertson (SR) (Kerry) : Cllr. J. Rees (JR) (Abermule with Llandyssil) : Cllr. G. Jones (GJ) (Abermule with Llandyssil) : Cllr. D. Kent (DK) (Berriew) : Cllr. P. Bettley (PB) (Vice Chair – Berriew) : Cllr. J. Lock (JL) (Montgomery) : Cllr. V Wildish (VW) (Minute Taker - Kerry) :

Members of the Public/Visitors: Diane Reynolds (DR) (Director of Economic Development and Growth – PCC) : Brett Kibble (BK) (Leader of Montgomery Footpath Volunteer Group) :

1. Welcome: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Thanks to JR for attempting to create a Zoom link to this meeting, unfortunately due to inadequate broadband connection we were unable to keep the link open and this meant Churchstoke member MW was unable to join.

2. Apologies: E. Meredith-Jones (Clerk-VMRC) :

3. Invited Speaker: Diane Reynolds (PCC – Sustainable Powys) addressed the meeting. DR explained at length the aims of Sustainable Powys and why it is necessary – namely lack of WG funding to enable PCC to meet its statutory obligations going forward. Sustainable Powys is tasked with ‘how can we do things differently?’ This entails looking at ways that Town & Community Councils and residents can help deliver non-statutory services. Were PCC unable to meet its Financial commitments in any given year it could be declared bankrupt and a Section 114 notice would be issued. This could mean that a team from central government would come in and take over PCC; this could involve selling off all of PCC’s assets, farms, buildings, libraries etc.

DR said we need to work with our communities to help them help themselves more. This idea is based on the ‘Wigan Deal’ which is a community focused initiative centred around a social contract between the council and its residents. It aims to foster collaboration and shared responsibility to address budget cuts and promote a stronger more resilient community.

4. Declarations of Interest: None.

5. Minutes of AGM 8th July 2024: Approved.

6. Election of Officers: Cllr. CS agreed to remain as Chair and Cllr. PB as Vice-Chair. Both stated they would hold these posts for 2025/2026 only.

7. Update of Standing Orders and Terms of Reference: It was noted that the Standing Orders had previously been agreed.

The Standing Orders to be amended as follows: 'Meetings of the Council' to read 'Meetings of the Cluster'. **Action: CS**

The proposed amendments circulated prior to the meeting and noted in 'blue' were agreed.

PB proposed that the following be amended on the TOR – 'The Cluster partnership has been created as a sub-committee etc.' 'Sub-Committee' to read – 'Working Group' of Community Councils – Unanimously agreed. **Action: CS**

There were no amendments to the MOA.

8. Finances and Annual Subscription: the finances were approved and it was agreed to keep subscriptions at £250.00.

QUARTERLY MEETING

9. Approval of Minutes from 23rd April 2025: The amended Minutes were approved.

10. Footpath Update: Brett Kibble, Leader of Montgomery Volunteer Footpath Group, reported that work had been carried out to replace the Burnt House boardwalk in Lymore Park together with the replacement of stiles and gates. All the leafleted walks from Montgomery have had the first vegetation clearance of the year.

It is hoped to carry out work on stiles in Sarn and on the canal footpath. The volunteers have now cleared the overgrown stretches on the Sarn Circular Walk. BK also reported that there is a problem with maize fields. A meter wide strip should be kept clear where there are public footpaths on the land. PCC's Rights of Way Officer, Calum Carr, will be sending letters to landowners advising them of this and if not observed then enforcement notices will be issued.

BK requested that we provide him with details of any work that is required in each of our Council areas.

JG reported the 'old road' in Llandysill had been looked at by Highways – BK said he had logged this with Calum Carr.

Landowners claim replacement of stiles is not their decision but ROW Officer and Montgomery Volunteers dispute this.

There is an issue regarding PCC's new Volunteer Programme. (BK said it will be negative to our group re localities.) CS to write to Sian Barnes and Calum Carr. **ACTION: CS**

11. BEE Event: A discussion took place and it was agreed to keep the events in each Council's locality and to make lists of what worked well and what didn't work so well at 2024's event. It was noted that Wales Nature Week takes place the second week in July in 2026. Ideas to be discussed at next VMRC meeting.

GJ reported that taking part in the BEE event in 2024 had contributed to St. Tyssil's Church winning an ECO Award.

12. Finances, Banking Update and Website: Unanimously agreed.

13. Reports from each Council: Montgomery - JL reported that the BBQ venue had to be changed three days before the event due to sheep being left on the field for too long. The Lit Fest had been a great success and especially the Mini-Fest for children in memory of Jill Kibble.

Abermule – JR reported on the on-going issue regarding black bag waste at the recycling centre. A planning application is awaited. The Busy Bees pre-school and After School Club is unable to continue due to funding issues. However, there are ongoing discussions with Abermule School about taking-on the After School Club from September.

Berriew – PB reported School role is full with a large in-take due in September. The Head is temporarily away. Berriew CC has a new Clerk, Lucy Mason, who also Clerks for Llanfair Caereinion. Both CC's have the same County Councillor. The CC has saved money on insurance. DK is leading the work required to upgrade the Woodland Walk. She is hoping to do a trail for the children written by the local children themselves. Berriew CC has been awarded a grant of £17,000 for the project from the National Lottery Awards for All Programme.

Kerry – CS reported on the public meeting held in Sarn regarding the sale of PCC owned farms. The meeting was attended by more than 150 people and was supported by The Farmers' Unions. A moratorium was presented to PCC and this is to be discussed at the Cabinet Meeting due to take place tomorrow (10th July). It is proposed to hold an on-line vote/petition on the matter to be launched at this year's Royal Welsh Show.

SR attended a 'Keep Wales Tidy' meeting and explained about the various levels of FOC help on offer for those councils with suitable space. Further information available from: keepwalestidy.com/packages.

14. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 8th October 2025 at 7pm – Sarn Village Hall (Main Hall)