

Quarterly Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Thursday 15th October, 2026, 7.30pm. Abermule Community Centre

Clerk: Sarah Reast, Ysgubor Crugnant, Pennant, Llanbrynmair SY19 7BN.
Tel: 07743 689912 Email: clerk@kerrycommunitycouncil.gov.uk

PRESENT
Members: Cllr. Carmen Seal - Chair (Kerry), Cllr. Susan Robertson (Kerry), Cllr. Phil Bettley (Berriew), Cllr. Debbie Kent (Berriew), Cllr. Peter Williams (Montgomery), Cllr, Mike Whittal (Churchstoke)
Guests: Cllr. Veronica Wildish (Kerry)

1) WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

2) APOLOGIES: Cllr. Eddie Evans (Churchstoke), Cllr. Jane Rees (Abermule and Llandyssil)

3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.

4) APPROVAL OF QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES from 30th June 2026 - Approved by all

5) MATTERS ARISING - None

6) ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR – It was agreed by all that Cllr. Mike Whittall is to be Chair and Cllr. Peter Williams is to be Vice Chair for the next two years. Cllr. Carmen Seal continued in the Chair for the duration of the meeting and she was thanked by all for her commitment and steadfastness in the role over the preceding 3 years.

7) PRESENTATION FROM ELWYN VAUGHAN (MS) WITH A FOCUS ON CURRENT ISSUES AROUND HEALTH SERVICES – Update from email correspondence 16/10/26 - Elwyn Vaughan was unable to attend due to the over-running of a previous meeting in Newtown and sent his sincere apologies and has offered to attend the next meeting.

8) FOOTPATH UPDATES – Although Brett Kibble was unable to attend, Cllr. Carmen Seal updated the members that no work had been done on the list included in the minutes of the meeting on 30th June 2026 (Appendix 1, VMRC Workplan) much to the frustration of everyone. It is unclear exactly what the impediment to progress is. Clerk to write to Head of Countryside Services.
Clerk to send copy of Memorandum of Agreement to Cllr. Peter Williams

9) PLANNING SERVICES INCLUDING PROBLEM WITH NEW PORTAL – Members of Kerry Council expressed frustrations about the inadequacy and technical glitches in the new planning portal on PCC web-site especially regarding historical applications which members from other Councils concurred with. Cllr. Veronica Wildish presented detailed notes on her experience and observations – see Appendix1, Clerk to write to planning department to enquire about future functionality of the portal including:

a. What was the rationale for change?
b. When will it be complete and fully functioning including migration of historical data?
c. When will routine updating of delegated decisions be available?
d. What are the pathways for different sorts of searches?

10) UPDATE TO MODEL CONTRACT FROM OVW – It had come to the attention of Kerry CC that the OVW new Model Contract for Council Employees had an anomaly in the section regarding incremental pay awards/salary rises when compared with previous versions. It implies that pay rises happen automatically through the pay scale of the adopted range which would cause inequities when other staff may be on an old contract and not subject to the same increments. Cllr. Phil Bettley reported that Berriew CC have written and adopted their own contract template and suggested that no Council is obligated to use the OVW version. It was also noted that the mileage allowance table in the OVW contract was out of date – Clerk to make enquiries.

11) FINANCES

a. Accounts up to 30/09/26 (all documents circulated to Members 08/10/26) – Approved
b. Bank recs, payments and receipts approved and to be collated by RFO for e-signing
c. Clerk's salary and expenses – Approved
d. RFO's salary and expenses - Approved

12) REPORTS FROM EACH COUNCIL

BERRIEW

a. Golden Age Celebration (with support from OVW Cost of Living Crisis funding) including flood lighting the Church with switch on 6th of December and accompanying music and collection of local artisan craft stalls 4 - 8.00pm.
b. Soon to launch new WIX web-site
c. Heritage Walk continues around the village taking in points of interest

d. New Audio-Visual equipment installed in the Community Centre including large screen and conference facilities but not funded by the Council
e. Refurbishment of Woodland Walk underway with Cllr. Debbie Kent co-ordinating. Lots of activities happening around the children's book, 'The Dragon Who Lost Her Egg' including school projects. A chainsaw art Owl has been completed and installed
f. Grievances heard about no.76 bus through to Shrewsbury
g. There is a wish to do more updated walk leaflets but problems arise with expensive print runs when landowners alter key features. It was proposed that a co-ordinated project could be undertaken with other cluster members emulating the styling of the Montgomery walk leaflets if funding could be raised

CHURCHSTOKE

a. Pavement has been installed from centre of the village to the Co-op making it very restrictive for passing vehicles
b. Co-op is due to close with several jobs lost
c. Consultation with PCC regarding the change of 20mph zones was disregarded and changes are being implemented not in accordance with local wishes
d. The Bishop's Castle Sports School is using Churchstoke football pitch for practices

KERRY

a. PCC are proposing to erect a fence around what has always been a village recreation ground to comply with safeguarding policies so that the school may use it for outdoor activities. The development threatens the safety and accessibility of the community playground managed by the Council. There is a residents' petition underway.
b. The local Defib and Events Group held an outdoor cinema event in Dolforgan Park which was a big success
c. The same group organise the Christmas lights switch on in front of the Church with other kids activities
d. There will be a craft fair in the Church on 7th November 10.00am – 3.00pm Two Councillors will be running a stall to gather biodiversity engagement to develop little pockets of Council land around the village

MONTGOMERY

a. Forden Road planning application is problematic and being disputed
b. A very good Walking Weekend was held
c. The water works in town centre have all been completed and cleared up. There was lots of disruption and local businesses were adversely affected but should be eligible for some compensation
d. Broad Street will be re-surfaced including either side of the Town Hall
e. There is a plan to re-format the parking layout to make more spaces including disabled parking bay – supported by a grant which includes improvements to the toilets and street lighting
f. There is a consultation underway about traffic movement with a view to easing congestion but as breaches of any arrangement are not enforced it may be for nought
g. The 2nd playpark in Old Gaol Rd has been re-furbished and is much appreciated
h. New no.81 bus has been added (Newtown-Montgomery-Churchstoke-Craven Arms). There is very good bus coverage and networking generally

i. Speeding controversies abound but responsive flashing signs are to be installed – Cllr. Peter Williams to share details of that project with other cluster members

13. **BRAINSTORMING SESSION** – led by Phil Bettley – notes in Appendix 2

14. **FUTURE SPEAKERS** – It was proposed that Elwyn Vaughan AS could be invited again

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING, VENUE AND AGENDA** - Thursday, 21st January 2027, 7.30pm Abermule Village Hall.

Meeting ended 9.45pm

Signed by the Chair: Date:

Appendix 1

PCC Planning Portal

PCC implemented a new planning portal in May 2026 – Arcus Built Environment Public Register Powys.
All applications validated from 20th April onwards were prefixed P/26/ and these could be viewed in the new public register.
Initially, older applications could be accessed on the older IDOX system by clicking on the word 'Links' however, late in July the 'Links' app became inaccessible and a message appeared on the portal a few days later stating they (PCC) were working to fix it but in the meantime we could still access the files prefixed P/26/... on the new portal.
Decisions were being made by the delegated planning officers during this time but those decisions and the officer's reports were not being uploaded although following contact with planning department staff it was evident that it was still possible for them to do so.
(It was reported in the County Times on the 11th September that A Guide to help people use the new portal would soon be uploaded to the authority's website).
Councillors were given an update on work being done to try and make the new planning portal more user friendly at a planning committee meeting held on 3rd September. The update came during discussions about the Council's delegated decision list. (These lists contain decisions made by planning officers between meetings.)
Cllr. Jonathan Wilkinson said "once again, the delegated list is confused, it is difficult to interpret and in no sort of order

Powys planning portal user guide to be uploaded soon | County Times

The situation regarding lack of access to the old portal remained unchanged until some time on the 7th October. It also became possible to see some but not all of the file details of pre P/26/.... applications on the new portal but not all of the documents relating to the older applications have been moved across – namely the comments/responses from statutory bodies.
Last night – the 14th October 2026 – a new message appeared on the portal which reads:-
'THE PLANNING REGISTER WILL BE UNAVAILBLE DUE TO MAINTENANCE FROM THE 15TH OCTOBER TO 16TH OCTOBER 2026. DURING THIS PERIOD USERS WILL

NOT BE ABLE TO VIEW OR SEARCH PLANNING APPLICATIONS ONLINE. WE APOLOGISE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE THIS MAY CAUSE'.
If you wish to comment on a planning application view our guidance whch explains how to submit comments and what to include:
How to Comment on a Planning Application

Appendix 2

Successes

- Memorandum of Agreement (As a model)
- Footpath and Rights of Way maintenance
- Footpath leaflets
- Sharing best practice.
- Biodiversity – Nature Day
- Pooling Knowledge
- Speakers giving info on specialist subjects.

Opportunities

- Fundraising as a group.
- Speed awareness project.
- Harmonise Walking leaflets.
- Create a Biodiversity Corridor.
- Create a Heritage Trail across the cluster.
- Use our collective weight to open conversations with other organisations i.e. bus routes, devolution of services, stand together!
- Identify and share specific expertise across member councils
- Group purchasing.

How to work differently

- Set specific goals (annually) and make plans to achieve them.
- Create a directory of subject matters experts
- Target specific speakers to help us achieve our goals
- Identify speakers to inform and educate
- County Councillors to attend meetings
- Make the cluster seen to be useful - more input from the public.
- Town and Community Councils to use/leverage the cluster (by saying what they want from it