

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNTY HALL /
ZOOM ON THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2022**

PRESENT

County Councillor G W Ratcliffe (Chair)

County Councillors R G Thomas, B Baynham, D Bebb, S J Beecham, B Breeze, G Breeze, J Berriman, L Brighthouse, A Cartwright, J Charlton, T Colbert, S Cox, A W Davies, A Davies, B Davies, B Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, D Edwards, L George, J Gibson-Watt, I Harrison, H Hulme, P James, A Jenner, A Jones, E A Jones, E Jones, G D Jones, G E Jones, J R Jones, A Kennerley, C Kenyon-Wade, P Lewington, K Lewis, P E Lewis, W Lloyd, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, G Mitchell, G Morgan, WD Powell, G Preston, G Pugh, J Pugh, L Rijnenberg, L Roberts, P Roberts, E Roderick, D Selby, D A Thomas, J Brignell-Thorp, E Vaughan, C Walsh, J Wilkinson, A Williams, D H Williams, J M Williams and S L Williams

1.	APOLOGIES
-----------	------------------

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors M Beecham, R Church, J Ewing, K Healy, C Johnson-Wood, G Morgan and C Robinson.

2.	MINUTES
-----------	----------------

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 July 2022 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
-----------	---------------------------------

There were no declarations of interest reported.

4.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
-----------	------------------------------

The Chair thanked his Vice-Chair and Assistant Vice-Chair for taking part in proclamation ceremonies for His Majesty King Charles III and the officers who had made the arrangements.

He noted the recent deaths of three former members of the Council, Mick Bates, Ann Morgan and Ivy Lewis and expressed his condolences to their families.

5.	LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
-----------	-------------------------------

The Leader noted the unprecedented budget situation facing the Council and he apologised to new Councillors for the heavy responsibility they would face in setting the budget. He warned that there would be difficult decisions to be taken on services. Despite this the Cabinet continued to make investments in services

and had approved proposals earlier in the week for a new all-age school building for Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, Machynlleth.

He advised that the mileage rate for staff would be increased to 50p per mile to reflect increased fuel costs. This would not apply to Councillors.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING

The Chief Executive advised that since September all of the primary schools, three secondary schools, the special schools and all through schools had started rolling out the new curriculum for Wales. They were being supported by officers from the Mid Wales Education Partnership which had been jointly set up with Ceredigion following the end of Erw. Estyn inspections had resumed with four early years settings, two primary schools and one secondary school being inspected.

She advised that the Leader, Deputy Leader and she had met the First Minister on 2nd August. There had been a meeting with Deputy Minister Julie Morgan on Children's Services on 22nd September. She had met the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales with the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

The Chief Executive updated Members on changes at Head of Service level. Sharon Powell was interim Head of Children's Services, Rachel Evans interim Head of Commissioning, Andy Thompson interim Head of Housing, Jenny Ashton interim Head of Community Services and Catherine James interim Head of Transformation and Democratic Services. All of these arrangements would be reviewed in the New Year before permanent arrangements were put in place.

Finally, she congratulated Carrie James, a member of the Wales women's football team and a former pupil of Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

7.1. Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation from Patrick Edwards

Is the council going to refund council tax to council tax payers for the greatly diminished services it provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially as the Government paid 80% of many council workers' wages through the furlough scheme?

Response

The amount of Council Tax charged for a financial year is calculated in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The annual charge is a contribution to the overall running costs of the Council to delivery both its statutory and non-statutory services. The charge is not linked specifically to the services received or used by an individual taxpayer.

The Council faced significant pressure through the covid period and although some services ceased or were limited for a time, most continued to be delivered, many had to adapt to different ways of working in order to keep employees and service users safe. Schools delivered hubs to support the children of key workers, and delivered online teaching for pupils, Care staff continued to deliver care services to residents in need, social workers continued to support older people and children and Waste collection services were maintained.

Where services did stop, staff were redeployed to undertake other duties such things as welfare calls to our vulnerable residents, track and trace support, enforcement work and other areas where pressure on the council's services increased.

All Councils in Wales were required to assist Welsh Government taking on additional responsibilities through Covid to support the public and businesses. We distributed £114m of business grants making 17,961 payments and rate relief schemes, 7,952 carers payments were issued, self-isolation and free school meal payments were administered, alongside several other in schemes.

Services like Waste collection, Homelessness and Social Care had to address front line staff absences through Covid as well as respond to significantly increased demands. For many months the council operated at "business critical" level because the demands to support the public and the Welsh Governments response were so great.

The pandemic impacted significantly on the Councils finances, additional costs and loss of income was set to push the council into a significant deficit even after fully utilising the funding we receive annually from Welsh government and collect through Council Tax. We did draw support from the government furlough scheme for the limited number of staff we were unable to redeploy, but we also drew down £29.743 million from the Welsh Government Covid hardship fund which enabled us to balance the budget.

There was no supplementary question.

7.2. Question to the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys from Catherine Evans

Schoolchildren have been disproportionately affected by COVID lockdowns and variable provision by schools. Additional PD days to facilitate planning for the new curriculum have further impacted learners.

Will PCC be offering learners their full entitlement to 190 school days per year from now on?

Response

Schools are required to be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year or 380 sessions by the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

All schools in Wales operate according to the [School Teachers' Pay and Conditions \(Wales\) Document](#) (STPCD(Wales)) which states that a classroom teacher can be directed by the headteacher to work for up to a maximum of 1,265 hours over 195 days of the year.

A maximum of 190 days involve teaching pupils/students, the remainder being non-teaching days to undertake other duties related to the role of a teacher. These are often known as in-service training days (INSET). In compliance with these regulations, the Powys school term dates and planned non-pupil (INSET) are published on the Powys CC website: [School Term Dates - Powys County Council](#)

[Additional national INSET days 2022 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#))

The Welsh Government are currently consulting on:

- whether there should be an additional national professional learning INSET day during the 2022 to 2023, 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 academic years to support the profession with the roll-out of Curriculum for Wales, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform and equity in education
- whether schools should be given flexibility on the timing of the additional INSET day
- whether it should be mandated that any additional INSET day is used wholly or partly to deliver professional learning to support delivery of our priorities for the education system in Wales

[Additional national INSET days 2022 to 2025 \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](#)

There was no supplementary question.

7.3. **Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation from Peter Hindley**

Do Powys CC plan to use its discretionary powers to remove the additional council tax liability, that will apply to many farm holiday cottage properties as a result of recent legislation?

BACKGROUND:

Recent Legislation: Purpose designed Farm Holiday Cottages, typically conversions of redundant farm buildings, have been included under the Welsh Governments recent legislation aimed at combatting second homes.

You may be shocked to learn that Welsh Government has the ability to include businesses that by definition are not second homes and not housing. Nonetheless the legislation has now passed.

Many of these long-standing and successful family businesses will have their livelihoods destroyed and be forced to re-purpose their properties to alternative commercial uses as a result of this legislation.

Impact on Housing: In line with the Local Development Plan these properties are prevented by planning conditions from being used as permanent accommodation. As such, these properties actively protect pressures on local housing by accommodating visitors in non-domestic property.

When these properties are re-deployed away from holiday letting all those visitor nights will be displaced to local housing, placing greater demands on house prices and availability of rented accommodation.

No Choice: To illustrate the impact of the legislation on a typical business with 5 Farm-Cottage Holiday lets: The business will face 5 new Council Tax bills, in addition to the owner's current council tax bill on their domestic-use element of the site.

This not only places an additional operating cost on the business, impacting viability and the ability to compete, it also places blight on the property. Their home would have a total of 6 council tax bills making it unsaleable or significantly devaluing their property. Clearly owners will need to avoid that outcome. Hence many of these 'kind to local housing' holiday lets will be lost. Creating no additional domestic housing and transferring visitor demand to place more pressures on local housing.

Removal of the Council Tax Liability: Over 90% of all self-catering properties on the non-domestic rating list in Wales have benefitted from 100% small business rate relief for many years. Therefore removal of council tax liability on farm holiday cottages is not unreasonable.

If required, this can be achieved in a revenue neutral manner by adjustments to Premium Council Tax policy.

Influencing Make-up of Holiday Accommodation in Powys: Please consider Powys CC's ability to influence the future make up of holiday accommodation in the county. After the huge growth in AirBnB style accommodation over recent years the new legislation is likely to cause, perhaps a 30% reduction in self-catering accommodation (that is the aim after all).

Powys CC has the ability to influence whether Farm Holiday Cottage accommodation is part of the 30% reduction or whether it is saved. Common sense would suggest these types of property should be advantaged by legislation, due to their community benefit, rather than impacted. If you would like a better understanding of why many of these businesses will not meet the new criteria, information is available here: <https://www.responsiblecottages.co.uk/protect-welsh-farm-cottages-white-paper>

Note a similar argument also exists for all planning restricted properties and for many annexes.

Fair Play: It is plainly unfair to sweep Farm Holiday Cottage businesses into the same pot as second homes. Welsh Government has placed the responsibility to address this squarely onto Local Authorities through the use of your discretionary powers.

Response

The Council has not yet fully considered its position in this regard. We do not at this time have sufficient information to understand the number of properties that are impacted by the change of legislation which may fall into Council Tax Liability or whether any exemptions already exist that reduces the liability for property owners.

Under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a Local Authority has discretionary powers to reduce the council tax liability by an amount as the Local Authority deems appropriate.

The Councils Section 13a discretionary scheme does not currently include properties where planning conditions limit the use to holiday lets.

The Council must consider the full financial implications in awarding any discounts other than those currently available under the statutory legislation and the financial burden of Section 13a discounts has to be met 100% by the Council so is funded through the Council Tax collected from other taxpayers. The council has to consider all of its Council Tax payers in awarding discretionary discount.

Once we do have sufficient information available we can make an informed decision as to how to proceed.

Mr Hindley's supplementary question was to ask how an informed and timely decision could be made if the council declined to meet businesses.

The Cabinet Member explained that there would be no purpose in meeting until information on the number of properties affected was available as he would not be in a position to make an informed decision. When the information was available a meeting would be arranged.

8. DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

Council received the annual report of the Director of Social Services for 2021/22. The report covered a period when the impact of Covid was being felt and the service was in business-critical mode. There had been a sustained increase in demand for services at a time when there were pressures on staff due to sickness absence and challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. The Chief Executive and Cabinet Members thanked staff and external providers who had delivered the service through this challenging period. Since the report had been drafted Care Inspectorate Wales had carried out a monitoring visit which had further endorsed the work of the service.

It was moved by County Councillor S McNicholas and seconded by County Councillor M Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED to receive the report.

9. CONSTITUTION - SECTION 4 - SPEAKING ON MOTIONS
--

Council considered the recommendations of the Democratic Services Committee on speaking times on motions at Council meetings. For some time the Council had trialled five minutes for proposers and everyone else two minutes and the Democratic Services Committee had recommended that this become a permanent change.

Concern was expressed that two minutes was not long enough to allow for debate and it was proposed that the Democratic Services Committee should look

at this again. The Chair of the Committee accepted the point and said that he would be happy for the Committee to look at this again. It was proposed by County Councillor Aled Davies and seconded by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan and unanimously

RESOLVED to refer this back to the Democratic Services Committee for further consideration.

10. BROADCASTING COUNCIL MEETINGS
--

Council considered the recommendation of the Democratic Services Committee for a return to live broadcasting of all Council meetings within 60 days of the Council meeting on 13th October 2022. Council was advised that there was a mechanism to do this within budget. The Head of Democratic Services and IT staff were thanked for their work in finding a solution. It was moved by County Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson and seconded by County Councillor Pete Roberts and unanimously

RESOLVED that officers continue to test and implement the use of Zoom webinars / events to live broadcast planning, scrutiny, employment, democratic services and all any other meetings which previously were accessible within 60 days of the from the date of this resolution.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION - AIR AMBULANCE

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan and seconded by County Councillor Gary Mitchell

“The air ambulance has provided an essential and valuable service to Mid Wales for a number of years.

The proposed transfer of the base from Welshpool is therefore a retrograde step and one of great concern to our residents.

It is imperative that an equally efficient service that takes into consideration the rurality of the area, the difficulty of getting an ordinary ambulance and fewer health options is kept

We therefore call on the air ambulance base to be kept at Welshpool and to look into the option of extending the hours of service.”

Members expressed their concern at the potential loss of this important service from Welshpool leading to delays in response times. Members were also concerned that the data used had not been made publicly available. By 41 votes to 0 with 17 abstentions it was

RESOLVED to call on the air ambulance base to be kept at Welshpool and to look into the option of extending the hours of service.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION - SCHOOL TRANSPORT
--

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Lucy Roberts and seconded by County Councillor Adrian Jones

“In recent months there have been a number of appeals made to the School Transport Team with regard to access to free home to school transport. Residents have been in touch with their County Councillors and Senedd representatives asking for support. The appeals have most frequently arisen from changes to catchment allocations, historical precedents and reduced flexibility but include:

- Younger siblings only provided free transport to a school which is different to the one their older sibling attends because the catchments have been changed.
- Problems with the way GIS is used to identify the closest school with some school buses travelling through another catchment on route to school.
- The system used to calculate the shortest route from home to school does not consider the route that the school bus travels, or even the most practical, driveable route by car.
- Pupils who are neighbours and/or close friends being forced to attend different schools because the boundary between catchments is being very strictly enforced with no room for overlap.

The effect of this has been to create unnecessary stress for pupils and their parents and will in some cases, where parents have the time and financial resource, result in parents following the bus into school, unnecessarily increasing carbon footprints.

The Council calls on the School Transport and Education Services to ensure that the current review of the Home to School Transport Policy not only delivers greater clarity for pupils/student’s entitlement to free transport but also supports greater parental choice of school, where this can be done without increasing the total school transport budget.”

In moving the motion Councillor Roberts called for the review of the Home to School Transport Policy to provide greater fairness and consistency. She noted that the current online survey only applied to those eligible for transport. There was a call to look at education transport rather than school transport so that apprentices could also benefit. It was also suggested that service buses should be utilised. The Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys advised that a working group would be looking at school catchments, transport and any anomalies.

By 59 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED to call on the School Transport and Education Services to ensure that the current review of the Home to School Transport Policy not only delivers greater clarity for pupils/student’s entitlement to free transport but also

supports greater parental choice of school, where this can be done without increasing the total school transport budget.

13. NOTICE OF MOTION - DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Amanda Jenner and seconded by County Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson:

Having seen increased adverse weather and flooding in recent years, it is apparent that the current conditions of our drains and gullies are not able to cope when we have increased and or severe rainfall. This is exacerbated by the lack of routine drain clearance due to the limited resources in Powys. Feedback from our residents, other councillors and community councils indicates that people feel that our other road maintenance problems are made worse by the increased amount of water running down the roads which should be going into the drains and gullies.

Earlier this year we saw severe flooding across Powys. Whilst flood risk cannot be eliminated when such extreme rainfall occurs, and flooding was also caused by rivers overflowing, in some areas properties were flooded potentially due to the lack of regular drain clearance. These are homes which are not adjacent to rivers or streams but flooded from road surface water which had no where else to go.

The Powys Conservative Group believe that there needs to be an annual routine drains maintenance schedule for county roads. However, we appreciate that this needs to be supported with sufficient resources. That is why we have already urged Powys Council to make use of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Levelling up Funds to bid for funding for at least two more drain jettors in Powys. Whilst that SPF process is still underway, there needs to be urgent action put in place, before the Winter sets in, in order to identify and clear those drains and gullies which are in the most high risk places that are likely to cause localised flooding of properties.

This Council calls on the Powys Council administration to:

1. Direct managers of the highways teams, at the earliest opportunity before Winter months, to work with Local Members to identify drains and gullies which need to be cleared in order to help prevent localised flooding.
2. Direct resources accordingly to ensure that those drains identified are cleared and unblocked urgently before the Winter months.

Councillor Jenner explained that she was not looking for additional money for new machines, but for officers to take account of members concerns and local knowledge. She asked for future depot meetings to take place well before the late autumn. The Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys indicated that she was fully supportive of the motion and that the service would look to work with members.

By 58 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED to call on the Powys Council administration to:

- 1. Direct managers of the highways teams, at the earliest opportunity before Winter months, to work with Local Members to identify drains and gullies which need to be cleared in order to help prevent localised flooding.**
- 2. Direct resources accordingly to ensure that those drains identified are cleared and unblocked urgently before the Winter months.**

14. NOTICE OF MOTION - NATURE EMERGENCY
--

Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Adam Kennerley and seconded by County Councillor Angela Davies:

Preamble

For the purposes of this motion 'nature' shall mean all living organisms and the ecological complexes (including non-living elements (such as air, water, soil) and processes) of which they are part. It includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems; the resilience of ecosystems; the services they provide to society and the way in which humans interact with nature.

Professor [Sir Partha Dasgupta's review into The Economics of Biodiversity](#), commissioned by Her Majesty's Treasury in 2019 and updated just last year, highlighted that humanity does not exist in isolation from nature but sits within it. Nature is an asset on which all aspects of our society depend and with biodiversity declining faster than at any time in human history, we are undermining the productivity, resilience and adaptability that nature lends our society. In a county like Powys our nature loss is undermining the productivity, resilience and adaptability of our agricultural and forestry sectors alongside the inter-dependent tourism industry. Put simply, Powys depends on nature.

We are in the middle of a nature crisis. Almost half of all UK wildlife is in long term decline and 15% of species are at risk of extinction. The climate emergency is only hastening this destruction of the natural environment, damaging habitats and disrupting ecosystems. Yet it is these very habitats that have the potential to lock up carbon and fight back against rising global temperatures. It is essential that we not only protect these spaces but let them thrive – for the benefit of people, planet and nature. As we recover from the COVID-19 crisis, the need for nature-rich green spaces where we live and work is clearer than ever and will help health, education and the economy build back stronger.

We recognise that action must be taken now to remedy this and to put nature into recovery at a local level, in support of regional, national and international work to do the same.

Section 6 under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act introduced an enhanced duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities. The S6 duty requires that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.

Powys County Council has already done much including appointing a Biodiversity Officer under the Local Places for Nature funding from Welsh Government and whose principal duty is to distribute grants in support of nature to groups in Powys. Within its own services the Council is undertaking projects such as managing roadside verges for nature by changing their management regimes to cut and collect.

The Biodiversity Officer post – externally funded – lends some support to the current Local Nature Partnership in Powys, a forum that brings together a number of organisations interested in nature recovery and has recently published a Nature Recovery Action Plan for Powys.

The Council has already submitted a proposal to the Shared Prosperity Fund to seek external funding for an additional post for the period from 2022 – March 2025. This would effectively be a Nature Recovery Officer, to carry out wider biodiversity work, particularly oversight and reporting for Section 6 duties, engagement with Council services and communities and identifying projects for funding applications that sit outside Local Places for Nature.

Many people respect Sir David Attenborough who has said:

“Our planet may be home to 30 million different kinds of animals and plants. Each individual locked in its own life-long fight for survival. Everywhere you look, on land or in the ocean, there are extraordinary examples of the lengths living things go to to stay alive.

Ever since we [humans] arrived on this planet as a species, we’ve cut them down, dug them up, burnt them, and poisoned them. Today we’re doing so on a greater scale than ever.”

Or if you prefer Jeremy Clarkson:

“Forget climate change, if insects disappear so does all life on this Planet”.

The Council notes that:

- 1) Nature provides the life support systems enabling all organisms, including humans, to survive and to thrive.
- 2) Nature is essential to our economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being. Nature provides us with a range of ecosystem services such as insects pollinating our food crops, wetlands purifying water and preventing flooding, peatlands storing carbon and woodlands purifying the air we breathe. Nature provides us with products that support our economies, for example, the means for food production, wood for building and fuel and providing the backdrop to our tourism industry.
- 3) Nature loss is well documents and reported:
 - a) Nature is declining at an unprecedented rate. The **IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) [Global Assessment of Biodiversity](#)**, the **UN [Global Biodiversity Outlook](#)** and the **WWF’s [Living Planet Report](#)** show that levels of biodiversity across continents are plummeting with no

sign of stopping, around one million animal and plant species across the globe are threatened with extinction.

- b) The [2019 State of Nature Report from the UK JNCC \(Joint Nature Conservancy Council\)](#) report estimated that 1 in 6 of Wales' species are at risk of extinction and that over the past 50 years 73 species have already become extinct with a further 666 under threat of extinction.
 - c) The [2020 State of our Natural Resources Report from Natural Resources Wales](#) also shows that Wales' species and habitats are in serious decline and the resilience of our ecosystems is in decline too.
- 4) There is no single cause of nature loss. Contributory factors are many, individually complex and often interacting with each other, but they include:
- a) Climate change.
 - b) Intensification of land management - driven by wider economics - on both our farmed and forested land.
 - c) Development pressures.
 - d) Pollution.
 - e) Hydrological change.
- 5) In [2021 the Senedd declared a nature emergency](#), one of the first parliaments in the world to declare such an emergency. This requires Welsh Government to introduce a legally binding requirement to reverse biodiversity loss through statutory targets.

The Council believes that:

- 1) That nature is fundamentally important to the people and prosperity of Powys. One small but high profile 'marker' of this is our very own use of the red kite in the Council's logo. The red kite is also an example of a recovery success now urgently needed by so many species and habitats in Powys.
- 2) The ongoing decline in nature will impact directly on the residents, communities and businesses of Powys across many areas including the viability of our rural economies and the livelihoods they support, the provision of affordable food to our residents, the ability to manage flooding and the well-being of our communities to name just a few.
- 3) Despite the threats to nature there are many reasons to be hopeful:
 - a) The Welsh legislative and policy structure and action planning directly considers the natural environment, including the way we manage it, and its links to our health and well-being. Specifically:
 - i) The **Environment (Wales) Act (2016)** places an enhanced duty on all public bodies to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity (THE section 6 duty).
 - ii) The **Wellbeing of Future generations (Wales) Act (2015)** states that all public bodies must maximise their contribution to all the wellbeing goals.

- iii) Wales being the first country to introduce the UN sustainable development goals into national policy and, as all sustainability goals are intertwined, this helps to put us in a position to create an environment for nature to thrive.
 - b) A **Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales** now with a Powys focussed and recently published equivalent in the form of the **Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan**, the aim of which is to halt and reverse the declines in biodiversity across Powys.
 - c) The public – in no small part thanks to the work of David Attenborough – has a growing awareness and understanding both of the importance of nature and of the threats it is under. With this comes an increasing appetite to act directly and to support the action of others.
- 4) Here within Powys, we have substantial resources that can help us stem and reverse the loss of nature. It begins with talented and experienced land managers in our farming and forestry industries, an environmental NGO sector (specifically our Wildlife Trusts which the Welsh Government have recognised as playing a pivotal role in delivering a nature recovery), a higher education system with the infrastructure to support skills development, a local nature partnership and plan for action in the newly published Powys Nature Recovery Action Plan and a public that is increasingly supporting action to preserve nature.

The Council resolves to:

- 1) **Declare a Nature Emergency** as demonstration of the Council's commitment to protecting and rejuvenating Powys' natural environment for its inherent value, for the role nature plays in achieving a vibrant and viable economy and for the benefits nature provides to the wellbeing of our county's residents.
- 2) **Establish meaningful supportive structures** that embed nature in decision making including:
 - a) **Establish a cross-party Nature Emergency Working Group** within the Council to help embed biodiversity in Council decision making, its engagement in partnerships and its ambitions for county-wide nature recovery.
 - b) **Appointment of a Council Member as a champion for nature** as allowed for by this Council's constitution.
 - c) **Actively seek to secure the funding from external new resources for a dedicated and permanent Nature Recovery Officer**, between them to help drive nature recovery within the Council and to animate action amongst stakeholders, seeking new external funds to help enable the delivery of nature recovery.
 - d) **Reaffirm the Council's support for the Local Nature Partnership** and to actively encourage and enable its development as an independent stakeholder group to represent those who manage nature alongside those who use and / or benefit from nature.

- 3) **Take meaningful action** to help achieve a net increase in nature county-wide including:
- a) **To draw up a response – outlining the Council’s role – to the recently published Powys Nature Recovery Plan** produced by Powys Local Nature Partnership and which sets out actions needed to protect and conserve existing systems and to restore nature at a scale and pace commensurate with the threats it faces.
 - b) **To show meaningful leadership** by reviewing how the Council’s assets and services can be more fully harnessed for reversing our county’s loss of nature. **An immediate priority to be the County Farm Estates.** To then extend this as resources allow to review all services the Council provides such as Planning (exploring opportunities afforded by the review of the LDP to implement the motion for example), Procurement (a lot of nature’s recovery can be aided by what and how we consume for example), Highways (further adoption of roadside verges as nature reserves), Education Services (skills development, school grounds), Countryside (parks management for example) etc.

Councillor Kennerley explained that the Council could demonstrate its commitment to protecting the environment and show leadership by reviewing how its assets could be used to reverse the loss of nature. A number of members expressed concern that there would be financial costs, but Councillor Kennerley argued that there would be no need for any additional funding and that there was an opportunity to attract funds to support farm diversification.

By 36 votes to 16 with 5 abstentions it was

RESOLVED to

1. **Declare a Nature Emergency as demonstration of the Council’s commitment to protecting and rejuvenating Powys’ natural environment for its inherent value, for the role nature plays in achieving a vibrant and viable economy and for the benefits nature provides to the wellbeing of our county’s residents.**
2. **Establish meaningful supportive structures that embed nature in decision making including:**
 - a) **Establish a cross-party Nature Emergency Working Group within the Council to help embed biodiversity in Council decision making, it’s engagement in partnerships and its ambitions for county-wide nature recovery.**
 - b) **Appointment of a Council Member as a champion for nature as allowed for by this Council’s constitution.**
 - c) **Actively seek to secure the funding from external new resources for a dedicated and permanent Nature Recovery**

Officer, between them to help drive nature recovery within the Council and to animate action amongst stakeholders, seeking new external funds to help enable the delivery of nature recovery.

- d) Reaffirm the Council's support for the Local Nature Partnership and to actively encourage and enable its development as an independent stakeholder group to represent those who manage nature alongside those who use and / or benefit from nature.**
- 3. Take meaningful action to help achieve a net increase in nature county-wide including:**
- a) To draw up a response – outlining the Council's role – to the recently published Powys Nature Recovery Plan produced by Powys Local Nature Partnership and which sets out actions needed to protect and conserve existing systems and to restore nature at a scale and pace commensurate with the threats it faces.**
 - b) To show meaningful leadership by reviewing how the Council's assets and services can be more fully harnessed for reversing our county's loss of nature. An immediate priority to be the County Farm Estates. To then extend this as resources allow to review all services the Council provides such as Planning (exploring opportunities afforded by the review of the LDP to implement the motion for example), Procurement (a lot of nature's recovery can be aided by what and how we consume for example), Highways (further adoption of roadside verges as nature reserves), Education Services (skills development, school grounds), Countryside (parks management for example) etc.**

15. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION
--

15.1. Question to the Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys from County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan

How many Powys pupils from outside the Swansea valley area, travel to Ysgol Ystalyfera for their education?

Response

We transport 44 learners from outside the Swansea valley area who travel to Ysgol Ystalyfera.

There was no supplementary question.

15.2. Question to the Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys from County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan

In view of the impending energy crisis and the increased costs for all, can I draw your attention to the German proposals –

- **Public buildings heated to max. 19° C**
- **No heating in communal spaces of public buildings (e.g. corridors)**
- **Monuments and public buildings won't be illuminated.**
- **Shop doors can't be kept permanently open**
- **No lighting in shop windows or on billboards from 10 pm**
- **Private pools can't be heated with energy from the grid.**

Can we as an authority implement the relevant elements of these proposals thus not only cutting down on energy waste but also making a positive environmental contribution?

Response

The Corporate Property team are currently reviewing how it can seek to reduce its energy usage across all of our estate. It is aiming to reduce the heating schedules for buildings and reducing the temperature set points. Additionally, the team is reviewing reducing the operational use of office accommodation in order to minimise energy usage.

There was no supplementary question.

County Councillor G W Ratcliffe (Chair)