

# County Council

---

Meeting Venue  
**Hybrid meeting - Zoom - County Hall**

Meeting date  
**Thursday, 7 March 2024**

Meeting time  
**10.30 am**

For further information please contact  
**Stephen Boyd**  
01597 826374  
steve.boyd@powys.gov.uk



County Hall  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 5LG

01/03/2024

---

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod, a bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd ar gael.  
You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting, and a simultaneous translation service will be provided.

---

## AGENDA

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
-----------	------------------

To receive apologies for absence.

<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
-----------	----------------

To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 as correct records.  
(Pages 9 - 40)

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
-----------	---------------------------------

To receive any declarations of interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

<b>4.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
-----------	------------------------------

To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council.

<b>5.</b>	<b>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
-----------	-------------------------------

To receive any announcements from the Leader.

<b>6.</b>	<b>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</b>
-----------	-------------------------

6.1. **Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys from Richard Miles**

Could we have a re-cycling centre for Crickhowell area, it's ridiculous we have to make a 30 mile round trip to get rid of rubbish that can't be taken from weekly roadside collections.

It would cover Crickhowell, Llangattock, Llanbedr, Llangrwny, Llangenny Llangynidr.

(To Follow)

6.2. **Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys from Bob Jones**

Why are we suffering with 3 weeks bin collections, bins are not big enough and when you apply to get a bigger bin you get told NO !!!! But council can waste money on crazy stuff no relevant to the people off Powys in vast amounts !!!!

(To Follow)

6.3. **Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys from Alan Austin**

Approximately 5 years ago Powys County Council drafted a Memorandum of Agreement setting out the basis upon which its responsibility for maintaining and improving rights of way could be shared with Town and Community Councils, who would enlist the help of local volunteers. Is it intended to develop this approach and, if so, what actions are planned?

(To Follow)

6.4. **Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys from James Prothero**

Can the portfolio holder confirm that the bus fare rises of 10% are going ahead?

(Pages 41 - 42)

<b>7.</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION FOR 2024/25</b>
-----------	---

To approve the Council Tax resolution and set the Council Tax for 2024/25.

(Pages 43 - 66)

<b>8.</b>	<b>REVENUE VIREMENTS</b>
-----------	--------------------------

To consider budget virements requiring approval by Council.

(Pages 67 - 68)

<b>9.</b>	<b>NEW WAYS OF WORKING AND COUNCIL MEETINGS – MEMBER SURVEY 2023</b>
-----------	--

To consider the report of the Head of Transformation and Democratic Services.

(Pages 69 - 78)

<b>10.</b>	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR MEMBERS</b>
------------	---------------------------------------

To consider the report of the Head of Transformation and Democratic Services.

(Pages 79 - 98)

<b>11.</b>	<b>PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25</b>
------------	-------------------------------------

To consider the Pay Policy Statement.

(Pages 99 - 124)

<b>12.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES</b>
------------	--

To make appointments to the following outside bodies

1. Newtown Town Partnership – vacancy for a Newtown member
2. Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – vacancy for Brecknockshire member
3. Local Development Plan Working Group – vacancy for a Brecknockshire member.

<b>13.</b>	<b>NOTICE OF MOTION - SEEKING A TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF UNDERGROUNDING POWER CABLES FROM ENERGY PARKS</b>
------------	---

It is widely recognised that the U.K needs more wind and solar farms and nuclear power in the coming years to meet low-carbon energy targets and the demand on the grid will only increase the more transport, industry, and domestic heating are electrified to reduce carbon emissions.

Renewable energy trade body RenewableUK Cymru said Wales needed to quadruple its wind power in just over a decade in order to stay on track to meet the Welsh Government's target for electricity to be 100% renewable by 2035. (<https://www.renewableuk-cymru.com/wp-content/uploads/Future-Energy-Wales-The-Critical-Role-of-Welsh-Wind-Power.pdf>)

In recent months Green GEN Cymru have announced plans for two sets of pylons to link proposed energy Parks in Powys to the national grid further afield. Such plans are potentially controversial locally and will be decided as Developments of National Significance (DNS) by a Government appointed body PEDW (Planning and Environment Decisions Wales)

The Welsh Government are on record as saying “Updating Wales' grid is essential if we are to have an energy system fit for purpose in the long term. Our planning policy states that wherever possible lines should be laid underground” to reduce visual impact.

This is a reasonable proposition caveated by it being the best and most appropriate, cost-effective solution available. There will be, most people recognise, circumstances where new overhead cables will be the right solution. The sector highlight that the “technical specification for underground cables is likely to be more substantial, costly and environmentally disruptive to maintain and repair”, but are committed to work with the government to find an acceptable way forward.

In November, climate change Minister Julie James MS, said that establishing whether cable-ploughing was technically possible for the largest power lines would be important in understanding whether 'undergrounding' could be more extensively adopted. This is a sensible approach ahead of such proposals being tabled for determination. As Such:

**This Council resolves to:**

1. Call on the Welsh Government to commission an independent study, with comparative trials as appropriate, into the technical viability of cable ploughing being deployed extensively for the largest power lines to serve the energy parks arising from the Government’s renewable energy plans for the county, to minimise ongoing visual impacts.

Proposed: Cllr Jake Berriman

Seconded: Cllr Glyn Preston

**Financial Assessment**

The motion proposed requests that Welsh Government commission independent study/trials. There does not seem to be anything further required from this motion, therefore there is minimal financial impact, although there may need to be officer time to help prepare the correspondence to Welsh Government, these costs can be covered from existing service budgets.

**14. NOTICE OF MOTION - SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**

We call on the Council to lobby Welsh Government and oppose the proposed shorter School summer holidays.

We are calling on this for several reasons including:

The detrimental effect this will have on the Powys rural economy and the huge impact it will have on the Royal Welsh Show

The lack of evidence that the proposal will have a positive outcome for our learners.

Proposed: Cllr Gareth D Jones

Seconded: Cllr Gwynfor Thomas

### **Financial assessment**

This motion proposes lobbying Welsh Government and can be managed within existing resources. Officers will be able to accommodate supporting this activity as part of their role.

## **15. NOTICE OF MOTION - IMPACTS OF THE WAR IN GAZA**

### Council notes

The unresolved and ongoing violence of over 76 years and its context in the tragic event that took place on Oct 7th. Leading to the unacceptable loss of life and the crime of taking of hostages which took place on Oct 7th.

The unparalleled and disproportionate killing and maiming of civilians within the Occupied Palestinian Territories - Include the lives of journalists, health professionals, civic and rescue workers.

The unprecedented and reckless destruction of civilian infrastructure across the Gaza Strip - Including that of refugee camps, monuments, heritage sites, places of worships, graveyards, hospitals, universities and schools.

Following South Africa's submission of a case against Israel to the International Court of Justice regarding alleged actions and statements made by Israeli government and military officials, provisional measures have been implemented against Israel. Additionally, an investigation into plausible claims of genocide has also been initiated by the ICJ.

The "Return to Gaza Conference" took place on January 28th. It featured prominent members of the Israeli Government sharing a platform with individuals advocating for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza and promoting the construction of Israeli settlements on land previously occupied by destroyed Gazan communities.

The Israeli government's perceived failure to address the radical proclamations made during this occasion is contrary to the Provisional Measure imposed on Israel by the ICJ.

The continued and explicit declarations of intent to conduct comparable military action in Rafah, as that of areas further north.

That Rafah, previously declared a 'Safe Area' for the civilian population, currently hosts over 1.7 million internally displaced civilians (85% of total population). Also noting that 47% of the population are children.

That the UN office in Geneva states 70% of civilian infrastructure has been destroyed or severely damaged in Gaza and disease is spreading as the health system "collapses" with only 13 of 36 hospitals partially functional. And 25% of the population are grappling with catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

The enormous costs of supporting refugees in camps or third countries impose a burden on the global community, and directly on Powys when the UK are part of a hosting scheme.

Powys' pension fund's investments in pooled arrangements that support the armaments industry.

The number of peace vigils is on the rise in towns throughout Powys, and the ongoing mass protests taking place internationally, urging a cessation of hostilities in order to prevent famine and disease from precipitating a notable upsurge in mortality rates.

Council believes

That there should be an immediate and enduring ceasefire to enable the safe return of remaining hostages, the release of Palestinians held under administrative detention, and the expansion of access to humanitarian aid from within the Gaza Strip.

That Israel should honour its commitment to allow Gazans to return to their properties and to prevent famine and disease by facilitating the rebuilding of residences, civilian infrastructure and health care systems across Gaza, which it has comprehensively destroyed.

That following the ICJ's ruling issued on January 25th, all signatory parties of the Geneva Conventions have an explicit and undeniable obligation to prevent a "plausible genocide" from taking place in Gaza. By way of applying pressure through revoking any (directly or indirectly) sustained material and financial backing provided toward Israel's military conduct.

The increased instability in the Middle East is detrimental to stable global governance. It damages global trade through the Red Sea and increases shipping costs, which are likely to fuel inflation. This, in turn, will prolong the cost-of-living crisis facing Powys residents and increase borrowing costs for council expenditure.

That it is contrary to Powys' 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy and 'Sustainable Development Goals, for the council investments and pension funds to provide support for the armaments industry and is therefore an unsustainable investment decision.

As an occupying force, Israel has a clear humanitarian duty and legal responsibility to all the residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They must be held liable for fulfilling this obligation under international law.

It is not in the best interest of both Gazan citizens and the United Kingdom to establish a resettlement scheme for Gaza refugees within UK territories. The International Court of Justice's interpretation suggests that such an act might be regarded as facilitating ethnic cleansing, which has unfavourable implications on either side.

Council calls for the Pensions and Investment Committee to withdraw any direct investments in the armaments industry and to work to minimise level of investment in the industry within pooled investments.

Proposed by Cllr Pete Roberts  
Seconded by Cllr Richard Church

### **Financial Assessment**

The Council does not hold direct investments in the armaments industry.

The Pension Fund invests using pooled funds (such as via the Wales Pension Partnership (WPP)) and perhaps indirectly, through pooled investments, "may" have exposure to such companies. The WPP does not currently exercise any exclusionary policies in respect of any stocks it can potentially invest in.

The cost of such a change by the Pension Fund would not be borne by the Council.

## **16. NOTICE OF MOTION - SUSTAINABLE FARMING SCHEME**

Powys County Council calls on the Labour Welsh Government to pause and reconsider the 'Sustainable Farming Scheme: keeping farmers farming' consultation, given the current strength of feeling in the industry. It is clear that the farmers across Wales who have attended the Welsh Government hosted 'roadshow' events, and those hosted by the farming unions, reject the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Given the importance of the farming sector to Powys' economy it is important of get the future support scheme right, continuing with the current consultation of a flawed scheme is a mistake and will lead to serious frustration and resentment from farmers across Wales.

The cumulative effect of changes to agricultural policy in Wales, from The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations (NVZs) to the ending of Glastir contracts, coupled with the errors in the Habitat Wales Scheme and persistence of Bovine TB means that the Welsh sector is under increasing pressure.

This Council resolves as follows:

Powys County Council believe it to be prudent to pause the consultation, renew engagement with the farming unions before approaching the agricultural sector once serious amendments are made to the Sustainable Farming Scheme proposal. The current situation is unsustainable.

Proposed by County Councillor Lucy Roberts  
Seconded by County Councillor. Geoff Morgan

### **Financial assessment**

This motion proposes lobbying Welsh Government and can be managed within existing resources. Officers will be able to accommodate supporting this activity as part of their role.

