

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT COUNTY HALL
AND ON ZOOM ON THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023**

PRESENT

County Councillor J Wilkinson (Chair)

County Councillors G W Ratcliffe, D Bebb, M Beecham, S J Beecham, B Breeze, G Breeze, J Berriman, L Brighthouse, J Charlton, R Church, T Colbert, S Cox, A W Davies, A Davies, B Davies, B Davies, S C Davies, M J Dorrance, D Edwards, J Ewing, I Harrison, K Healy, 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, W Lloyd, I McIntosh, S McNicholas, DW Meredith, C Johnson-Wood, G Morgan, G Morgan, WD Powell, G Preston, G Pugh, J Pugh, L Rijnenberg, L Roberts, P Roberts, C Robinson, D Selby, D A Thomas, R G Thomas, J Brignell-Thorp, E Vaughan, C Walsh, A Williams, D H Williams, J M Williams and S L Williams

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors B Baynham, A Cartwright, L George, J Gibson-Watt, P E Lewis, G Mitchell and E Roderick.

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meetings held on 23rd February, 2nd March and 18th May 2023 as correct records.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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All Members had a personal but non prejudicial interest in item 11, Members Allowances and Expenses.

4.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
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The Vice-Chair advised that he was deputising for the Chair who was attending an event with H.M. The King in Brecon.

On behalf of the Council he expressed condolences to County Councillor Lucy Roberts on the death of her mother.

He also congratulated County Councillor Jackie Charlton on her birthday.

5.	LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
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The Deputy Leader explained that the Leader was also attending the event with The King in Brecon.

He advised that together with the Leader he attended the Urdd Eisteddfod in Llandovery and had launched a leaflet encouraging people moving to the county

from outside of Wales to learn Welsh. They looked forward to welcoming the Eisteddfod to Meifod in 2024.

The Council would be hosting a series of events at the Royal Welsh Show the following week, including an announcement on the Growth Deal and a presentation on becoming a Council of Sanctuary.

He congratulated Mount Street Infants School on becoming the first school in Wales to achieve the Armed Forces Friendly Schools gold award for their welcoming and inclusive environment for the children of service personnel. The Council had been represented in the Pride Cymru parade in Cardiff as part of the Proud Council network. He thanked Councillors Jackie Charlton and Liz Rijnenberg and officers for their work in starting the process of the Council becoming an accredited Council of Sanctuary and he acknowledged the work of the Sanctuary for Refugees group for the support they provided to refugees.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BRIEFING

The Interim Chief Executive referred to the staff awards had been held recognising the good work of staff. He was pleased to note the awards to the Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School building project from Construction Excellence Wales and Education Building Wales. He also noted that Building Control had been re-accredited and he thanked the staff involved in that process.

He advised that the recent Estyn visit would be formally reported back to Cabinet and Scrutiny but that the visit had recognised a lot of good work was going on and other areas where improvements could be made. He also reported that a formal resolution procedure had been agreed with the Health Board.

Finally, he advised that Care Inspectorate Wales had threatened a number of local authorities with criminal investigation over the placement of children with complex needs in unregistered but safe places. Powys County Council was not one of those authorities, but was involved with the WLGA in trying to resolve this in a more appropriate manner. The Interim Chief Executive advised that he and relevant senior officers were involved when decisions to place children in unregistered places had to be taken.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

7.1. Question to the Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys from David Williams

What can residents do to stop P.C.C. giving Planning Permission for new and extensions to Intensive Poultry Units [IPUs], in the light of the damage they cause to watercourses and the potential for the spread of Avian Flu?

Response

The Council is aware of the concerns many residents have, and recognises the environmental impacts associated with Intensive poultry Units (IPU) proposals. These impacts are taken into consideration when determining planning applications when the Council assiduously follows prevailing legislation,

regulations, planning policy and guidance that is in place when a decision is taken. Comments made by statutory consultees, including Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are also considered, given their expertise and legal standing in terms of environmental permitting.

Whilst residents may comment on any planning application, their observations and concerns will be weighed, along with other considerations, for “materiality” against the prevailing legal and policy context.

A number of residents have called for such developments to be stopped and for a legislative moratorium to be put in place. This, however, is a matter for Welsh Government’s consideration and is not something that Powys County Council could do unilaterally. I understand that the Welsh Government is requiring all local planning authorities to include a planning policy on intensive livestock units in their replacement Local Development Plans, and this is something that we will look at in relation to any changes to the legal, regulatory, or national policy frameworks.

In the meantime, we have recently received notification from Welsh Government that we should not approve a number of such applications we are holding, until they have made clear their view whether they wish to call them in to determine them themselves. This amounts to some 13 applications being held in abeyance currently, with no planning approvals having been issued by Powys Council for an IPU for approximately 12 months.

Supplementary Question

Dr Williams asked that if the Welsh Government decided not to call in the 13 applications, would the Council consider cumulative environmental impact or would they deal with each application in isolation with the Planning Committee, which he said was biased towards farming, debating and voting on applications individually and the votes recorded?

In response the Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys explained that a local planning authority could not advise residents about how to engineer an outcome as each application has to be considered on its own merits. Those advising the committee had to be independent and objective.

He explained that the Council was already looking at the cumulative impact on the effects of spreading chicken manure on land in the river catchments. The issue of spreading manure was a matter for Natural Resources Wales who provided advice to the Planning Committee and the Committee would be at risk of legal challenge if it ignored that advice.

The Chair of the Planning Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee explained that the Committee was made up from people from different walks of life. The Committee always considered applications with an open mind and were not biased towards farming.

7.2. Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys from Alison Jones

This has no doubt been raised before. However, it never ceases to amaze me how little Powys do to support our local towns and businesses in the lead up to Christmas.

I regularly read/hear other councils that offer a free parking scheme for example on Saturdays in December. Could Powys not show some good will and do the same this year please?

Response

Thank you, Mrs Jones, for your question which is very timely.

Providing free parking on the run up to Christmas has been beneficial in the past and over the years funding was made available to provide this scheme. It was reduced in the last administration and ultimately ceased.

I am seeking to review the parking service in the autumn and am considering ways of assessing the possibility of funding this initiative again. If there are spare funds available, I will consider reinstating this initiative. It was particularly popular in our Market Towns such as Builth Wells.

Supplementary Question

The supplementary question asked about the lack of short stay parking in Builth Wells which the questioner said was deterring locals and visitors to use local businesses.

The Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys said that the Council would be discussing car parking later in the meeting. She said that there would be a review of car parking, including free parking at Christmas which she would like to see reinstated if finances allowed.

7.3. Question to the Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys from Colin Olivant

Here in Powys we have great Schools that educate children with Special Needs, however, that is as far as it seems to go. Once children leave these schools options are limited in respect of residential colleges, we have to jump through a lot of hoops and complete endless paperwork just to get a suitable place which is out of County. Have Powys thought about having a residential College like Coleg Elidyr in Llandovery based in Powys where children with Special Educational Needs can attend? This would reduce the stress and strains parents have to be put through when applying and being told sorry it's out of County, this in my opinion limits the further education for SEN children. I understand Powys want their money to stay in Powys but NPTC just do not offer what is needed all the time plus as the title says "Neath Port Talbot" the money is still going out of County.

Response

The decision making for granting a placement at a residential special school/college was made by Welsh Government. The statement of special educational need of a young person would have to cease, a Section 1.40 assessment would be carried out and a learning and skills plan would be created by Careers Wales, and this would need to be submitted to Welsh Government for a decision and approval. The funding was held at a Welsh Government level. Welsh Government would expect that all local colleges had been contacted to

enquire about their capacity to meet a young persons need, and additional discussions would be held with a local authorities social care service to deem whether the residential aspect of the provision was necessary. The final decision was not made by the local authority.

As we transition to the new ALN Act* and Code**, the decision making process and funding allocation has been given to the local authority. The funding is distributed on a formula devised by Welsh Government.

Further Education colleges are independently owned, and not part of the Education portfolio in local authorities across Wales, nor in Powys. At this time there are no plans to develop a specialist residential college in Powys. The number of young people that meet the criteria and threshold for a place at a residential specialist college is very small; therefore at this time it would not be cost effective to provide this service internally.

Learners within Powys that have a statement of special educational need or an Individual Development Plan within the new Act and meet the threshold for attending one of our special schools can attend post-16 education in these schools until they are 19 years of age. The Inclusion and Youth Services Team are working with schools to improve the offer at Post-16 for learners with ALN, and this forms a major workstream on the service plan.

Our ALN team are available to give further help and assistance should it be needed.

*Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

**Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2021)

Supplementary Question

The supplementary question asked about the numbers who had applied for places and whether it would not be more informative to find out the number of young persons who would want to attend a Powys setting.

The Cabinet Member for a More Prosperous Powys explained that admissions to residential special schools and colleges was not based on the same process as admissions to schools but on the complexity of need. Until recently these decisions had been made by Welsh Government, but from September 2023 decisions would be made by the local authority. The numbers applying in recent years had ranged from 14 – 22. He said that the Schools Teams would be happy to discuss any issues with the questioner to try and find a resolution.

7.4. Question to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys from Phoebe Jenkins

Local residents are being priced out of the housing market, whether that's first time buyers or families who need to expand. There are no new affordable home developments, nor any existing properties available.

Properties that are on the market exceed the financial capabilities of those working in the area. 3 bedroom properties in the town of Hay-On-Wye start at £300k, with most being nearer or over £400k. If you take the average

salary of a two adult family, and a large deposit, it is still impossible to reach.

Properties that are within budget, typically ex council homes, are also incredibly difficult to mortgage, with most lenders rejecting applications. Reasons cited include infrastructure, location and proximity to industrial units. If the only houses that are affordable are unmortgagable, they aren't accessible!

On top of this, as most of these families have financial savings, they are unable to receive social housing (for many reasons). Also, private rental for larger family homes is way above affordability. Therefore, they are often left with little or no choice but to move out of the area, which will have huge social and economic effects on communities.

How will Powys County Council help local families stay in their home towns?

Response:

Powys County Council is committed building a stronger, fairer, greener future for our communities.

The Council is working to address the challenges of affordability of housing in Powys. The cost of housing has risen in part because of a long-term disparity between the need for homes, both to rent with secure tenancies at affordable rents and to buy, and the number of additional and new homes being built. The growth of buy-to-let has further exacerbated the problem people face, by driving up the price of homes that are often those most suited to first time buyers and home buyers with low and middle incomes.

In 1992, the UK government imposed a moratorium on the ability of local councils to build new homes. This came to an end in 2012-2013 and since then Powys County Council has once again started to build new homes for local people to rent at genuinely affordable rents and all let on secure contracts. Since the Council started building homes again after that thirty-year hiatus of not being allowed to build homes, 129 Council homes have been completed in Powys.

The target in 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' is to have by 2031 added another 350 new homes to the Council's total stock. Between 2026 and 2031, the Council's development programme – taking into account secured and unsecured land – already stands at 217 new homes. This includes secured land banks able to support the building of 112 homes once the management of phosphates in affected communities is resolved. Additional sites and opportunities are expected to become available between now and 2031.

Progressing all new developments is dependent upon events often outside the control of the Housing Service. These include securing viable development sites, gathering all necessary planning and other regulatory consents, having a range of competent and stable construction contractors able and willing to build new homes, supply chains being able to provide cost effective and timely supplies of materials and components, and managing increases in construction cost inflation. Of critical importance will be addressing the challenges to new

development posed by the need to improve phosphate management in the River Wye and River Usk catchment areas in the south of Powys. Under current proposals for improving the capability and capacity of water treatment works, this should be resolved by 2025-2026 for the River Wye and 2027-2028 for the River Usk.

Support from the Welsh Government is also an essential part of our growing programme to increase the number of homes affordable for people in Powys, through the Social Housing Grant programme.

Powys regularly secures the full support of the Welsh Government to help make sure that new homes, developed by the Council and housing associations, can be let at rents that are affordable to local people.

Powys County Council has in place a Package Deal policy to encourage developers to bring to the Council completed and ready-to-move-into developments of social housing. The developer designs and builds the homes, to a standard acceptable to the Council, with the Council having the option to buy upon completion at a mutually agreed price. This approach frees up our own capacity to focus on those schemes where we buy the land and directly develop ourselves. In 2022-2023, we have added seven social rented homes using our Package Deal model.

Further additions to the social housing available to people living in Powys will be secured through continuing the programme of property acquisitions. The numbers to be bought will depend upon the opportunities presented by the housing market and how the properties match local housing needs and represent long-term value for money. In 2018-2019, 21 homes were bought, followed by four in 2019-2020, three in 2020-2021 and six between April 2021 and December 2022.

Housing associations working in Powys develop a range of home ownership schemes to help support people into home ownership, alongside their developments of homes for rent at affordable prices. The Council will explore how to offer more options for increasing the range of low-cost home ownership options that can be offered to the people of Powys.

In 2023-2024, we will be ramping up our work to bring empty properties back into use as homes. This includes making available to people in Powys the Welsh Government's Empty Homes Grant which provides financial help for people to buy and bring into use a long-term empty property as a home for themselves and their family.

We are creating our new Local Development Plan, which will support the aims of this Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan to make Powys stronger, fairer and greener. The plan will shape the future of Powys as it will outline opportunities for future development and land use in the county. It considers a variety of topics, including making sure that decisions consider the impact to the planet, that housing is built in the areas where people need or want to live, and that services are provided in the places where they are needed.

Supplementary Question

Phoebe Jenkins asked how the council would address the issue of affordability of homes in Powys and whether this could include extending the purchase of properties beyond social rent to create shared home ownership opportunities or if Powys could implement a scheme to advertise available properties suitable for the empty homes grant to prospective buyers. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys explained that the Council's acquisition programme was aimed at increasing the supply of homes and reducing inflationary pressures. The Council was also looking at what it could do for those who wished to buy their own home including shared ownership and shared equity options. The Council had just launched an empty property grant scheme which offered help to those wishing to buy an empty property which required work.

8. REVENUE VIREMENTS

Cabinet considered two requests for virements:

- a) Transport fund - The Fleet Management Services had asked to utilise an underspend against depreciation charges of £685,455 with an additional contribution to the vehicle replacement reserve to assist in managing the increasing pressure on the transport fund arising from significant inflation on purchase costs.
- b) The Insurance budget outturn had unspent funds of £906,707, which was requested to be transferred into the specific insurance reserve. The reserve had reduced as claim excesses had been met in recent years and this transfer would replenish the reserve to meet future liabilities.

The recommendations were moved by County Councillor David Thomas and duly seconded and it was

RESOLVED to approve the virements as set out above.

Further information was circulated by the Executive Director Economy and Environment following the meeting as requested.

9. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Stephan Hayes, the Chair of the Standards Committee, presented the Committee's report for 2022/23. He said that the Committee's goal was to maintain high standards of conduct by members and so improve their standing and trust amongst the public. He welcomed the opportunity to meet with Group Leaders and had been encouraged by their positive attitude to working collaboratively.

10. DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT
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The Director of Social Services presented her annual report which set out the challenges and achievements in Adult Services and Children's Services in 2022/23. The Director, the Cabinet Member for Future Generations and the Cabinet Member for a Caring Powys expressed their thanks to the staff for all their work throughout the year.

County Councillor Amanda Jenner, the Chair of the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had considered and welcomed the

report. The Committee would be looking at direct payments and wanted to have an update on WCCIS. The Director advised that WCCIS was a priority for the service which was waiting for an update from Welsh Government. She thanked Scrutiny for their constructive challenge.

The Director was asked about day care opportunities and she advised that this would be one of the services priorities this year.

11. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES 2022 - 23
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The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that they had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in this item.

Council received for information details of the amounts paid to Members and Co-opted Members in 2022/23, in salaries and expenses.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM - A SENSE OF PLACE
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Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Elwyn Vaughan and seconded by County Councillor Bryn Davies:

“The Council has on a number of occasions, declared the importance of sustainability, and therefore notes and congratulates Bannau Brycheiniog National Park on adopting Bannau Brycheiniog as its official name, reflecting the importance of the Welsh language and the fragility of the language’s sustainability as a community language and through that, emulate this Council’s policy, one that was proposed and passed following a proposal from the Conservative group.

We also welcome the fact that so many enterprises in the tourism sector in South Powys have recently said that they would like to see bilingual operations in the Bannau Brycheiniog area. However, we note that **not one of them** has a Welsh section to their websites neither do they have plans to develop bilingual services. The Council already believes that the Welsh language belongs to everyone in our communities, and that our local Welsh names reflect the historical wealth, our heritage, our habitat and that it reflects our current sustainability priorities and lends a Sense of Place to the locality in question.

This Council declares:-

1. In view of this new enthusiasm in favour of bilingualism, we encourage the tourism sector to use native Welsh names for new commercial enterprises in order to maximise the principle of a Sense of Place, and thereby make the most of what makes the area in question so unique and special. Also that they make use of the free Welsh translation service, ‘Helo Blod’ available through the Welsh Government, in order to provide a bilingual service and image, and that they use Welsh food and drink produce.
2. We ask the Powys council tourism department and the partners in that sector, such as the Wales Tourism Alliance, Mid Wales Tourism and others to draw the attention of all tourism sector providers to the existence of the Helo Blod service and that they practise this as a matter of good practice.

3. We ask the planning department to adopt this principle when dealing with planning applications in this service area and to draw the attention of agents and applicants to the Helo Blod service.
4. We remind all tourism enterprises which receive public grants or a contract from Powys or the public sector, of the expectation that they acknowledge the Welsh language, and that they act in accordance with the Council's Language standards.
5. We encourage citizens to use historical, current and new Welsh names on houses and buildings and stop the practice of getting rid of Welsh house names."

By 56 votes to 1 it was

RESOLVED that this Council declares

- 1. In view of this new enthusiasm in favour of bilingualism, we encourage the tourism sector to use native Welsh names for new commercial enterprises in order to maximise the principle of a Sense of Place, and thereby make the most of what makes the area in question so unique and special. Also that they make use of the free Welsh translation service, 'Helo Blod' available through the Welsh Government, in order to provide a bilingual service and image, and that they use Welsh food and drink produce.**
- 2. We ask the Powys council tourism department and the partners in that sector, such as the Wales Tourism Alliance, Mid Wales Tourism and others to draw the attention of all tourism sector providers to the existence of the Helo Blod service and that they practise this as a matter of good practice.**
- 3. We ask the planning department to adopt this principle when dealing with planning applications in this service area and to draw the attention of agents and applicants to the Helo Blod service.**
- 4. We remind all tourism enterprises which receive public grants or a contract from Powys or the public sector, of the expectation that they acknowledge the Welsh language, and that they act in accordance with the Council's Language standards.**
- 5. We encourage citizens to use historical, current and new Welsh names on houses and buildings and stop the practice of getting rid of Welsh house names.**

13.	NOTICE OF MOTION - ARMED FORCES AND THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS
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Council considered the following motion proposed by County Councillor David Meredith and seconded by County Councillor Sarah Williams:

“Our armed forces have a long and proud history of service and dedication to this nation. From deployments to NATO’s eastern flank to keeping essential services running at home, service personnel continue to serve our country with courage and distinction. They are being let down by the UK Government. After a decade of real terms pay cuts, the cost of living crisis, and the delay to this year’s Armed Forces pay award we now see Service Personnel forced to use food banks, while forces charities and regimental associations continue to provide cost of living grants and food vouchers to veterans and their families.

Service personnel are routinely called upon to cover for a lack of resilience across the public sector and to provide cover for some essential services during industrial action. They do this in the dedicated and professional way we would expect from our forces. Without a right to strike it is the moral duty of their leaders to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant, and the responsibility of elected bodies to uphold their part of this obligation and insist that our service personnel and their families receive the support they need and deserve.

Therefore this council notes that:

- It is deeply concerning that service personnel are forced to turn to food banks.
- It is deeply concerning that forces charities and regimental associations continue to have to provide cost-of-living grants and food vouchers to veterans and their families.

This council believes that:

- We should condemn in the strongest terms the UK Government’s neglect of our service personnel.

This council calls on the UK Government to:

- Provide additional basic financial support to service personnel by capping food and accommodation charges for the next 12 months.”

By 43 votes to 8 with 3 abstentions it was

RESOLVED

1. This council notes that:

- **It is deeply concerning that service personnel are forced to turn to food banks.**
- **It is deeply concerning that forces charities and regimental associations continue to have to provide cost-of-living grants and food vouchers to veterans and their families.**

2. This council believes that:

- **We should condemn in the strongest terms the UK Government’s neglect of our service personnel.**

3. This council calls on the UK Government to:

- **Provide additional basic financial support to service personnel by capping food and accommodation charges for the next 12 months.**

14. NOTICE OF MOTION - CAR PARK REVIEW

The proposer advised that if the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys confirmed she would have a cross party review, he would be prepared to withdraw his motion. The Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys gave that commitment and therefore the motion was withdrawn.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION - SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEALS
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Council debated the following motion proposed by County Councillor Lucy Roberts and seconded by County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas:

“In October 2022 the Council unanimously supported my motion to allow for greater flexibility around free school transport where it could be provided at no additional cost to the council. Since then I have been fighting a number of individual cases for residents who already have siblings at the school of their choice and where, for geographical reasons, there are buses running in two directions. Officers have argued that if they are flexible in one place, they will have to be flexible elsewhere too (surely that is the point if the criteria of no additional cost can be met) and have turned down appeals. The splitting of families is causing huge anxiety for parents and children and will severely limit the pupils’ opportunities to take part in after school activities. If members can’t have some sort of influence on the council’s decision-making process what is the point of being here.

I therefore call on members to support a motion to recommend to cabinet that school transport appeals are dealt with by a small cross-party group of councillors, supported by an officer who can guide members around any potential additional costs or issues that might arise from their decision, and that this should apply to any outstanding appeals for 2023 admissions and allow for a re-hearing of any stage 2 appeals for this year which have already been turned down.”

The Monitoring Officer advised that the motion was not asking for the policy to be changed, which would require a period of consultation, but to ask the Cabinet to consider that school transport appeals are dealt with by a small cross-party group of councillors.

By 28 votes to 21 with 5 abstentions it was

RESOLVED to recommend to cabinet that school transport appeals are dealt with by a small cross-party group of councillors, supported by an officer who can guide members around any potential additional costs or issues that might arise from their decision, and that this should apply to any outstanding appeals for 2023 admissions and allow for a re-

hearing of any stage 2 appeals for this year which have already been turned down.

16.	NOTICE OF MOTION - PROPOSED WELSH GOVERNMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES WALES BAN ON THE RELEASE OF GAME BIRDS IN WALES
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Council considered the following motion proposed by County Councillor Aled Davies and seconded by County Councillor Iain McIntosh:

“Powys County Council calls on Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales to withdraw their proposal to ban the release of gamebirds in Wales thus only allowing release by licence, which will hugely impact the people of Wales. There has not been sufficient evidence brought forward to warrant this proposal by NRW. We call on the Welsh Government to acknowledge the economic, conservation and well-being benefits game shooting brings to Wales, it’s value to rural communities, our heritage, culture and the Welsh language.”

The motion was lost by 16 votes to 29 with 7 abstentions.

17.	NOTICE OF MOTION - PHOSPHATES
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Council considered a motion proposed by County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe and seconded by County Councillor Corrina Kenyon-Wade.

“This council and neighbouring authorities in Wales and England have faced severe planning restrictions due to the phosphate levels within our rivers. This is a national issue that is being passed around, and communities are being divided on who is responsible and how to deal with the issue.

We have heard numerous times that high concentrations of phosphorus in our rivers are due to agricultural practices, runoff from urban areas, leaking septic systems or discharges from sewage treatment plants, to name just a few that the public is citing as the cause. All of these systems are mainly operating within the laws that were granted to them, and that allows them to discharge into our rivers. We need to acknowledge they are operating within the rules set by the national government.

Whilst individually such developments are of minimal impact, collectively they cause massive damage to our environment, and impact the housing shortage issue facing our county as well as other developments.

We look at Natural Resources Wales, which, as the manager of our natural Welsh resources, should monitor our rivers. Its purpose is to "pursue sustainable management of natural resources" and "apply the principles of sustainable management of natural resources" as stated in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The proper monitoring of water quality, and the enforcement of new environmental policy is going to be key in reducing the impact of phosphates on our rivers. NRW is said to need to employ an extra 85 staff to achieve the necessary robust monitoring service, but they need the funding from Welsh

Government to be able to do this. Powys County Council itself does not have the power or capacity to effect change. Homes are not being built, communities in Powys are at a standstill, and something needs to be done to support them.

The motion

1. We call on the Welsh Government to set a clear monitoring framework for river pollution.
2. We call on National Governments to accelerate funding for our monitoring bodies like NRW to allow them to monitor and enforce safe levels within our rivers.
3. Call on Welsh Water to accelerate its investment in the sewage system and their upgrade programme.”

Councillor Ratcliffe explained that he was happy to accept the following amendment proposed by County Councillor Gareth D Jones and seconded by County Councillor Gwynfor Thomas:

Add to point 3 the text in bold 3. “Call on Welsh Water and **Hafren Dyfrdwy** to accelerate its investment in the sewage system and their upgrade programme.”

Add a point 4: “Call on Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy to accelerate its investment in replacing the current supply pipe network to eliminate the use of orthophosphate.”

A further amendment to point 1 was proposed and seconded
“We call on the Welsh Government to set a clear monitoring framework for river pollution and carry out a meaningful assessment of phosphate contributions from natural and artificial sources.”

By 51 votes to 0 it was

RESOLVED that we call on the Welsh Government to set a clear monitoring framework for river pollution and carry out a meaningful assessment of phosphate contributions from natural and artificial sources.

This became the substantive motion and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- 1. We call on the Welsh Government to set a clear monitoring framework for river pollution and carry out a meaningful assessment of phosphate contributions from natural and artificial sources.**
- 2. We call on National Governments to accelerate funding for our monitoring bodies like NRW to allow them to monitor and enforce safe levels within our rivers.**
- 3. Call on Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy to accelerate investment in the sewage system and their upgrade programme.**

- 4. Call on Welsh Water and Hafren Dyfrdwy to accelerate investment in replacing the current supply pipe network to eliminate the use of orthophosphate.**

**County Councillor J Wilkinson
Chair**