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COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE GEORGE EDWARDS HALL AND ZOOM AT 10:00AM ON Tuesday 8th of July 2025
Chair: Councillor Mr P Vaughan

Present: Councillors D Wright, Mrs G Wright, Mrs. S Benbow-Jones, Mrs. I Twigg, Mrs. J Jones, Clerk Trina Nicholls-Smith, Community Development Officer Andrew Ruscoe & Project Coordinator Deio Jones via zoom

1. Apologies: N/A

2. To Receive Declaration of Interest from Members
None Received.

3. Update from the Community Development Officer
3.1 – #StayOnSide Primary School Engagement Project
The Community Development Officer reported that the #StayOnSide initiative had reached the presentation stage following the successful delivery of 28 educational sessions across four local primary schools: Ysgol Min-Y-Ddol, Ysgol Acrefair, Ysgol Rhosymedre, and Ysgol Cefn Mawr. A total of 56 hours of engagement had been provided to Year 5 and 6 pupils, focusing on key topics such as anti-social behaviour (ASB), respect, community pride, and sustainability. The sessions were designed to positively influence future behaviour and attitudes within the local communities.

3.2 – Growth of the Cefn Litter Pickers Volunteer Group
The Community Development Officer reported that the #StayOnSide Cefn Litter Pickers group had continued to grow, with increasing public interest and engagement. As a result, additional litter pickers and high-visibility jackets were being sourced to support volunteer activity and ensure safe participation. It was also reported that over 60 bags of litter had been collected in just one week. The group regularly shares its volunteering experiences through a growing WhatsApp group, which has not only strengthened communication and coordination but also helped to build new friendships and address wider issues such as social isolation.

Volunteer Achievement: Jacqueline Palmer
The Community Development Officer reported that local volunteer Jacqueline Palmer had made an exceptional contribution to the Cefn Litter Pickers initiative by collecting 33 bags of litter over a five-day period. Her dedication to the community was greatly appreciated and considered worthy of public recognition. Councillor Sonia Benbow-Jones commented, “She is phenomenal.”

Ysgol Min-Y-Ddol Litter Pick Community Project
The Community Development Officer reported that on 2nd July 2025, pupils from Ysgol Min-Y-Ddol completed their community litter pick project as part of the #StayOnSide programme. The children collected 11 bags of litter from Plas Kynaston MUGA, The Cenotaph, and CRNCA. The event was supported by Cefn Litter Pickers, Keep Wales Tidy, Wrexham Council's Low Carbon Team, and local community members. Zac Jones from Wrexham Council, who was unable to attend the meeting, commented via email, "It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm and pride these young people have for their community."

3.3 – Historic Achievement: Girls Futsal Schools Competition
The Community Development Officer informed the Development Committee that the Girls #StayOnSide Futsal Schools Competition, delivered in partnership with North Wales Police through PACT funding, was a resounding success. Ysgol Acrefair made history by becoming the first school in Wrexham to win a futsal competition and notably, the first all-girls school team in Wales to do so. This landmark achievement reflects the growing strength of inclusive sports programmes within local schools and the wider community.

It was further advised that discussions were currently underway with North Wales Police to bring the competition back in January 2026, with Plas Madoc Leisure Centre identified as the preferred venue. At this point, the Clerk reminded the Committee that the #StayOnSide project is funded from the National Lottery Awards for All scheme, with £18,000 allocated toward the Community Development Officer's salary up to the end of January 2026. An additional £2,000 had been set aside to support project-related costs, including the delivery of events such as tournaments, certificates, and equipment.

Councillor Vice Chairman Derek Wright suggested that, should any projects extend beyond January 2026, the Development Committee should recommend to Council to consider covering any outstanding costs to ensure continuity. In response, the Clerk noted that the existing £2,000 budget for the #StayOnSide project was expected to have a surplus, which should sufficiently cover any remaining expenses. However, Councillor Wright raised a valid concern regarding the sensitivity of the grant timescale and whether the funding would remain usable beyond the stated period.

The Community Development Officer reassured Councillor Wright that, while the suggestion was appreciated, the National Lottery Awards for All grant offered flexibility. The funds could be utilised over a two-year period, thereby providing a safety net and alleviating concerns regarding any time-sensitive spending requirements.

3.4 – Community Roadworks and Infrastructure Updates
The Community Development Officer stated that he had been exploring ways to improve the timely and accurate dissemination of information to residents regarding road closures and traffic delays—particularly following recent unannounced disruption on Well Street outside George Edwards Hall. Several councillors had expressed concerns over the lack of formal notification for these works. While Wrexham Council directed the Community Council to their online mapping system, it was noted that this tool, although helpful, is better suited to those who are technologically confident. Furthermore, the system displays planned works, which may not always reflect confirmed or ongoing disruptions—an issue also experienced recently with delays in Acrefair.

In response, the Community Development Officer registered with Wrexham Council's Highways online notification system, which allows users to select specific areas and receive daily email updates. As Wrexham Council confirmed they were unable to provide direct alerts to the Community Council, the Officer took a proactive approach by sharing roadwork updates—such as the Cae Coch Lane closure (8th–10th July)—via the Council's Twitter and Facebook platforms to enhance local awareness and reduce confusion within the community.

Councillor Isabel Twigg expressed her support for continuing these updates, stating that they are both helpful and informative for local residents. Councillor Derek Wright noted that he receives a copy of road closure information every Thursday; however, he highlighted that he has been advised he is not permitted to share this information publicly, which he described as unsual given its public relevance.

3.5 Community pathways Update
The Community Development Officer reported that he had recently developed a deeper understanding of how to operate Wrexham Council's Public Rights of Way definitive map system. During this process, he encountered an unusual issue regarding Pathway 15, located off Crane Street.

According to the definitive map, Pathway 15 is clearly marked as a Wrexham Council-maintained route. However, conflicting information had been received from Council administration, which maintained that it was an unadopted pathway and therefore not their responsibility. This discrepancy came to light following a resident's complaint about overgrown vegetation along the path.

Thanks to the prompt support and intervention of Councillor Stella Matthews, the vegetation was cleared despite the ongoing confusion surrounding official ownership. He also raised concerns about the number of unadopted pathways with overgrown vegetation that have been created within the region, following his exploration of the system.

4. Update on the SPF Fund Application for Toilet Refurbishment
The Clerk informed the Development Committee that the Council's two initial applications to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund—valued at approximately £400,000 and £100,000 respectively—had unfortunately been unsuccessful. However, the most recent bid, submitted for approximately £38,000 to refurbish the public toilet facilities at George Edwards Hall, had been approved subject to completing WCBC diligence checks.

Project Coordinator Deio Jones advised that the project must now progress to a formal procurement stage. This could be conducted via the Sell2Wales platform or by directly inviting contractors to submit tenders via email. Whichever method is chosen, the process must remain fully transparent and openly competitive for a minimum period of two weeks. A one-page brief will be developed to outline the scope of works and essential project requirements.

The Clerk expressed her gratitude to all involved for their contributions to securing this funding and highlighted that the selected contractor will be required to provide clear and detailed specifications as part of their tender submission.

Councillor Derek Wright welcomed the approval and suggested that, in order to minimise disruption and ensure an efficient workflow, any rooms impacted by the refurbishment

should be closed to the public for the duration of one week. He emphasised the importance of providing advanced notice to regular hall users to enable them to make suitable alternative arrangements.

In addition, Councillor Wright proposed that a formal recommendation be made to Full Council to grant the Development Committee delegated authority to manage the refurbishment project. This would include responsibility for overseeing logistics such as temporary closures, scheduling, and liaising with contractors to ensure the project is delivered smoothly and to a high standard. – ***Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025***

5. Update on Low Carbons Project (Rear of George Edwards Hall, Community Garden, Bird boxes, Bug Houses)

The Clerk advised the Development Committee that there is increasing pressure to allocate and utilise the Council's existing environmental funding. As a response, she proposed that a budget of £150 be earmarked for the purchase of handcrafted bird boxes from North and South, a local business recognised for its sustainable product range. A delivery and placement plan would then be developed to determine the most appropriate locations for installation.

Councillors Gaynor Wright and Derek Wright expressed support for the proposal and further recommended that all members of the Council be invited to submit suggested locations within their wards, ensuring broader community benefit and representation.

The Clerk also presented a wooden stake recently gifted to the Council as part of its community garden initiative and reported that the site currently supports the growth of strawberries, yellow raspberries, and wild garlic. To support further expansion, she proposed the purchase of raised beds for the area behind George Edwards Hall to grow additional produce. It was recommended that the site be maintained by the group led by Community Agent Donna Thornley.

Permission was sought by the Clerk for herself and the Community Development Officer to explore costings and prepare a formal development plan for the garden expansion. This was supported by Councillor Sonia Benbow-Jones, who also suggested that the Council's Wellness Group may be willing to oversee long-term management of the garden space.

The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend these proposals to Full Council for approval. ***Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025***

Additionally, Councillor D Wright proposed that a portion of any remaining environmental funding be considered for the purchase of a storage shed to support the forthcoming Forest School project at the Plaskynaston MUGA. The shed would serve as secure storage for tools and educational resources relating to forest-based outdoor learning.

Councillor Derek Wright provided an update on the Forest School initiative, noting that a pre-application process is required prior to progressing the scheme. Based on current timelines, it is anticipated that the project site would not be operational until September 2026.

The Committee agreed to include all of the above within a single formal recommendation to be submitted to Full Council for consideration and approval. - ***Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025***

6. To discuss Ysgol Acrefair's Dog Fouling Posters
The Clerk invited the Community Development Officer to introduce a new community initiative developed in collaboration with Year 6 pupils from Ysgol Acrefair, as part of the #StayOnSide project. The initiative was inspired by concerns regarding dog fouling in the area, a matter previously raised by Councillor Karen Benfield during a Full Council meeting.

As part of the project, pupils designed a series of creative and impactful posters aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership and reducing dog fouling in public areas. The posters were formally presented to the Development Committee, where members praised the high standard of work. One design was selected as the overall winner.

A proposal was submitted to publish and display the winning poster throughout the community, particularly at key dog fouling locations and dog waste stations, to raise awareness and encourage positive behavioural change.

The Development Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that approval be granted for the associated costs of publication and installation, to support the successful delivery of this youth-led community engagement initiative. ***Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025***

7. To discuss breaches of SLA agreement at the MUGA
Councillor Derek Wright opened the discussion by reporting several breaches of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) relating to the use of the Plaskynaston Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).

Firstly, Councillor Wright explained that during his recent attendance at a football match held at the MUGA, he was asked to pay a £1 admission fee at the gate. This action contravenes the SLA, which explicitly prohibits hirers from charging entry fees due to the historical land covenant. Upon raising the matter with the club chairman, Councillor Wright was provided with a photograph displaying signage indicating a £3 entry fee. No signage was visible on-site to suggest that this was a voluntary donation or discounted rate.

Secondly, it was reported that the changing and referee rooms had been accessed and prepared for an unscheduled fixture outside of the agreed booking times. The SLA stipulates that use of the facilities must be restricted to the designated three-hour match period, and that the rooms remain non-exclusive and accessible for other community uses, including schools.

Thirdly, the unauthorised installation of an electrical appliance in the changing rooms was identified. The item lacked Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) certification and had not been approved by the Council. This was deemed a breach of health and safety standards and another violation of the SLA.

Councillor Sonia Benbow-Jones expressed serious concern, noting that the presence of untested electrical equipment posed a significant fire risk, which could potentially invalidate the Council's insurance cover and compromise the safety of the facility.

The Clerk commended Councillor Wright's persistence in resolving issues and stated that, without his commitment, clubs may not have returned to Plaskynaston MUGA at all. She also noted that despite unprofessional and discourteous communication from the club's chairman, the Council had continued to engage constructively. The chairman's latest correspondence

was described as particularly troubling, referencing a "heavy increase" in MUGA hire fees, despite the fact that the current pricing structure had been introduced following a fair and balanced comparison exercise.

The chairman also stated the Council was "spot checking." Councillor D Wright clarified that this was a mischaracterisation, as he had attended the match solely in the capacity of a spectator and not in any official enforcement role.

Councillor Derek Wright reminded members that the club had previously paid over £100 more per fixture at an alternative venue, and that use of the Plaskynaston site also offered them the opportunity to generate additional income through food sales. He emphasised that the MUGA is a shared community asset, not a private football ground, and that schools must receive equal priority in terms of access and use.

Councillor Wright concluded that while it was encouraging to see a large crowd at the event, the following principles must be upheld:

- No admission charges are permitted due to the existing land covenant.
- Continued breaches regarding entry fees could risk triggering a clause allowing Wynnstay Estates to reclaim the land.
- The covenant is permanent and non-negotiable.
- Councillors have a duty as elected representatives to act as custodians of the land
- Councillor Isabel Twigg supported this position and reiterated the importance of the ground remaining inclusive and accessible to all, rather than becoming aligned with any single organisation.

Recommendation:
The Development Committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Full Council approve the issuing of a formal letter of Advisory to the football club's chairman. The letter will:

- Detail the specific breaches of the SLA, including unauthorised admission charges, inappropriate use of the changing rooms, and installation of an untested electrical item.
- Reaffirm the legal and ethical obligations imposed by the permanent covenant on the land.
- Warn that any future breaches may result in a formal review of the club's continued access to the facility.
- Emphasise the Council's commitment to ensuring the ground remains inclusive, accessible to all, and compliant with the terms agreed under the SLA.

Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025

8 Walkabout Inspection and Grounds Observations
Councillor Derek Wright reported to the Committee that a walkabout inspection of various key village locations had recently been undertaken by himself, Chairman Councillor Phil Vaughan, Clerk Trina Nicholls-Smith, and Community Development Officer Andrew Ruscoe. Groundsman Huw Parry later joined the inspection.

A number of grounds maintenance and environmental issues were observed. Councillor Wright reminded members that while it is important to note and respond to such concerns, the

Development Committee must remain mindful of its remit and avoid overstepping into areas reserved for Full Council jurisdiction. It was agreed that only matters clearly within the Committee's remit would be actioned directly, while others would be referred to Full Council for formal decision-making.

8.1 Lane Leading to George Edwards Hall

- Trees on land believed to be owned by Tesco were found to be overgrown, obstructing visibility and access.
- ***Action*****:** Tesco to be informed and requested to carry out pruning work.

8.2 Roundabout Opposite Hall Entrance

- A bollard was identified as missing.
- Overgrown bramble bushes were encroaching onto the roundabout.
- ***Action*****:** Issue to be reported to Wrexham County Borough Council.

8.3 Oxford Street Public Pathways

- Vegetation and bushes were obstructing footpaths, posing accessibility issues.
- ***Action*****:** Tesco and Wrexham County Borough Council to be notified.

8.4 Plaskynaston Bank Pathways

- Pathways were significantly overgrown, hindering pedestrian access.
- ***Action*****:** Tesco to be contacted for urgent maintenance.

8.5 Pathway Adjacent to the MUGA

- Overhanging trees were restricting public use.
- ***Action*****:** Rob the Tree Surgeon to be commissioned for necessary pruning work.

8.6 Park Railings Area

- Metal fencing was observed to be lopsided and unsightly.
- ***Recommendation*****:** Planting of Beech trees along the boundary line was proposed to provide a more natural and aesthetically pleasing barrier.

8.7 Plaskynaston MUGA / Forest School Area

- Old goalposts and scrap materials were identified for removal.
- To enhance Forest School activities, the following items were approved for purchase:
    - A protective canopy.
    - A secure metal storage shed with an internal shadow board for equipment storage.

8.8 Additional Observations

a. Waterloo Place – Road Surface

- The road surface leading to Waterloo Place was in poor condition and believed to be under Tesco's ownership.
- ***Action*:** Tesco to be notified and requested to undertake resurfacing.

b. Clarification of Land Responsibilities

- Councillor Derek Wright requested that written documentation be developed to clearly outline land maintenance responsibilities held by:
    - Tesco
    - Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC)
    - Cefn Community Council (CCC)

This clarification is deemed essential to ensure proper accountability, eliminate confusion, and prevent unnecessary duplication of effort across authorities.

Referral to Full Council:
It was agreed that the following matters should be formally referred to Full Council for further discussion and resolution:

1. Development of written guidelines clarifying land ownership and maintenance responsibilities between Tesco, WCBC, and CCC.
2. Legal or administrative advice regarding whether Tesco can be invoiced or billed for grounds maintenance work carried out by the Council's Groundsman on land believed to fall under Tesco's responsibility (e.g., grass cutting and vegetation management). - ***Recommendation to be approved by Full Council on Tuesday 22nd July 2025***

9. General Discussion / Action Plan

9.1 Sell2Wales Procurement Support
Project Coordinator Deio Jones offered support with the Sell2Wales platform. The Clerk recommended the Community Development Officer liaise with Deio to ensure smooth procurement progress for the George Edwards Hall toilet refurbishment.
No Council action required at this stage.

9.2 Appreciation from Ysgol Min-Y-Ddol
The Clerk reported positive feedback from Ysgol Min-Y-Ddol regarding their use of the Plaskynaston MUGA facility, which was welcomed by the Committee.
No Council action required.

9.3 Delegated Authority – George Edwards Hall Toilet Refurbishment
Recommendation: That **Full Council delegate authority** to the Development Committee to oversee the George Edwards Hall public toilet refurbishment, including:

- Scheduling of works
- Temporary closure arrangements
- Liaison with contractors

9.4 Community Garden Development
Recommendation: That **Full Council approve a £150 budget** to purchase handcrafted bird boxes and support expansion of the community garden behind George Edwards Hall,

including raised beds and related resources (to be quoted).
Further Recommendation: That **maintenance responsibility be assigned** to the Community Agent-led group and the Wellness Group.

9.5 Storage Shed for Forest School Project
Recommendation: That **Full Council approve the use of the Low Carbon budget** to fund a secure metal storage shed in support of the Forest School project at Plaskynaston MUGA.

9.6 Ysgol Acrefair – Dog Fouling Poster Campaign
Recommendation: That **Full Council approve funding** for printing and installation of awareness posters designed by Ysgol Acrefair Year 6 pupils. Posters are to be displayed at key locations across the community.

9.7 Service Level Agreement (SLA) Compliance – Plaskynaston MUGA
Recommendation: That **Full Council endorse** the following actions to ensure compliance with SLA and land covenant:

- All signage to state "Donations" only (no admissions or charges).
- Signage must be accurate, visible, and SLA-compliant.
- Club to strictly adhere to allocated facility times and allow shared access.
- No electrical equipment on-site without prior Council permission and PAT certification.
- A **formal advisory letter of disapproval** to be issued to the club chairman outlining breaches and reaffirming usage terms.

9.8 Follow-Up Grounds Maintenance Actions

- Request confirmation from Paul Moss (Derwen College) on snowdrop planting locations.
- Follow up with Tommy Evans for delivery of promised turf to cover exposed rock.
- Groundsman Huw Parry to maintain the warm-up area near the stand on match days.
  No Council decision required – actions assigned to officers.

9.12 Community Pathways (Unadopted)
Recommendation: That **Full Council engage with Wrexham County Borough Council** regarding ownership and maintenance responsibilities for unadopted pathways.
Further, consider:

- A comprehensive audit of all community pathways.
- A long-term adoption or maintenance strategy.
- The feasibility of involving community volunteers in upkeep.

9.13 Toilet Refurbishment Project (UK Shared Prosperity Fund)
Recommendation: That **Full Council delegate project oversight** to the Development Committee.
Further Recommendation: That procurement proceed via Sell2Wales or selected contractor invitations, with:

- Temporary closures scheduled with advanced public notice.

- Procurement monitored to ensure delivery within budget and to required quality standards.

9.14 Low Carbon and Community Garden Initiatives
Recommendation: That Full Council approve a £150 allocation to purchase sustainable bird boxes from local suppliers.
Further Recommendations:

- Invite councillors to suggest appropriate locations for installation.
- Approve the full development plan for the garden (raised beds, storage, ongoing maintenance).
- Support continued progress on the Forest School initiative with a target launch of September 2026**.**

9.15

Walkabout Inspection – Grounds Maintenance
Recommendation: That **Full Council receive the walkabout inspection report** and:

- Prioritise identified maintenance tasks.
- Assign responsibility for resolution.
- Consider funding or external support if required.
- Schedule regular follow-up inspections for ongoing monitoring.

The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.