

PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13th July 2026 at 7.00pm at Ponthir Village Hall

Present: Cllr M Leighton (Chair) Cllr P Buffery, Cllr I Danaher, Cllr L Ryan-Scales, Cllr R Morgan

Officer(s): Clerk: Mrs L McMail

Also present: Dr Simon Read – HDRC, Vicki Ware – Groundworks Wales, Deanne Griffiths – Joint Civil Contingencies Manager, Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen CBC, Cllr George Humphreys – Blaenau Gwent CBC

1. Apologies - Cllrs A Lang and P Matthews.

2. Declarations of Interest - None stated.

3. Matters Raised by Members of the Public - No members of the public attended.

4. Welcome to Guests

(i) Dr Simon Read (HDRC) and Vicki Ware (Groundworks Wales) provided an update on work relating to Flood Preparedness and Community Emergency Planning. The initial Working Group meeting had taken place in June, and the group was now preparing to begin development of a Community Flood Plan, supported through HDRC funding, alongside parallel work with Groundworks Wales on a Community Emergency Plan.

A community meeting was confirmed for 4 September, intended to encourage wider community involvement. Attendees at that session would be invited to join the next Working Group meeting on 14 September to help progress the project. It was noted that the 4 September meeting would be publicised in the August edition of the Community Times.

Vicki shared documentation and details of the associated training programme with those present.

(ii) Deanne Griffiths, Joint Civil Contingencies Manager for Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen CBC, outlined current work on emergency planning and confirmed that a revised Wales Community Flood Plan template would be available for consideration at the September meeting.

Cllr George Humphreys shared his experiences from Cwm, describing how the community had come together during a flood incident and highlighting practical measures that had helped alleviate future flooding and support residents.

The Chair thanked all speakers for their informative presentations.

5. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th June 2026 - Approved. Proposed by Cllr Morgan and seconded by Cllr Ryan-Scales.

6. Chair's Update – Community Flood Plan Working Group - As outlined above. Working Group to reconvene at Ponthir Village Hall at 6:15pm on 14th September 2026.

7. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

(a) Planters/Plants and Benches Planters are being maintained and watered.

ACTIONS: (i) Clerk to thank Chris Mellons for remedial work on planters and benches.
(ii) Future plans for planters and floral displays to be discussed at the September meeting.

(b) Christmas Motif Refurbishment The Clerk updated Council on refurbishment of the motifs. Further discussion on siting of motifs to take place at the September meeting, including any tree-cutting required to accommodate them.

(c) Solar Farm Proposal (Standing Item) Council discussed the Total Energies Transport Plan (*see Appendix 1*). Councillors noted concerns regarding local impact.

Total Energies launched the statutory pre-application consultation for the proposed Candwr Solar Development on 2 July 2026. Following the start of the consultation, the Council began its formal review of the proposal.

Councillors present agreed unanimously that the Council will oppose the development in its consultation response, based on planning concerns relating to:

- transport and access
- loss of countryside
- increased flood risk
- noise and disturbance
- impacts on local roads and communities
- wider economic, social and governance (ESG) considerations

Residents are encouraged to view the consultation materials and submit their own comments directly to the developer as part of the statutory process.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the developer of the Council's observations and comments.

PCC will continue reviewing consultation materials and submit a formal response by email prior to the close of consultation in mid August.

(d) Events 2026 (Standing Item) Chair to provide an update at the September meeting regarding planning for a Christmas Fayre with the Village Hall.

(e) Clerk's Report: Clerk updated members on the following:

Boundary Review: Caroline Genever-Jones (Elections and Business Manager, TCBC) will attend the September meeting to discuss the outcome.

Speakers: A list of planned speakers for the remainder of the year was shared.

Annual Report & AGS 2025/26: Requested information has been submitted to Audit Wales within timescales.

Chair's Chain of Office: Returned to Council, cleaned and polished.

Members' Allowances: To be paid in September. Clerk requested bank details; cheques will be issued if details are not received.

Garage Rental: Annual fee agreed at £833.70.

Defibrillators: Clerk has been unable to identify who maintains the Tram Lane defibrillator. Chair to investigate. PSCC has not responded to the Clerk's request for defib siting information for its premises.

8. Items for Consideration

(a) Grant Applications

1. 1st Ponthir Rainbows – **£200 awarded**
2. 1st Ponthir Guides – **£200 awarded**

(b) Website No update at this time.

9. Finance

(a) Cash Book – May 2026: Balance and transactions noted. Payments previously authorised by the Chair and checked for accuracy by the Clerk. Cllr Ryan-Scales authorised payments made for the quarter to 30/06/2026.

(b) Current Account and Deposit Account balances noted.

(c) Quarterly budget figures reviewed. It was noted that use-of-reserves figures should be offset against Election Costs to provide a more accurate forecast. **ACTION:** Clerk to revise budget.

10. Governance

(i) Standing Orders – confirmed and adopted. (ii) Code of Conduct – readopted. (iii) Civility & Respect Pledge (OVW) – adopted.

11. Planning

None received at the time of agenda preparation. It was noted that the statutory consultation for the Candwr Solar Development commenced on 2nd July 2026.

12. Correspondence

Discussed and noted.

13. Committee Reports

- **Ponthir Church in Wales Primary School:** Cllr Ryan-Scales advised that the School has received a good Estyn Report, which will be published soon.
- **Torfaen Community Transport:** No meeting held.

- **Gwent Valleys Partnership:** OVW advised rotation of attendance will be permitted. Cllr Danaher was unable to access the July meeting.
- **Ponthir Village Hall:** No update.
- **Local Council Partnership Committee:** No meeting.
- **Chair's Report:** No update.

Date of Next Meeting: 14th September 2026 at 7.00pm Meeting closed at 20:45

This document is available on the Council's website. A copy of this document can be made available in Welsh. Please contact the Clerk on 07454 988250 or email clerk@ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Key Actions from Meeting with Total Energies (TE) 13/7/2026 at Ponthir Village Hall

Attendees :

Mary Neale, Ian Danaher, Roger Morgan, Louise Ryan Scales, Paul Buffery, Lisa McMail

Total Energies (TE) representatives:

Trevor Howe - Senior Project Development Manager - Solar, TotalEnergies

Kath Thomas - Account Director, Grasshopper Communications

Purpose: TE offered a meeting with representatives of Ponthir Community Council to discuss the transport plan and associated proposed solar development.

Key Outputs of Meeting

Number of Panels

Requested that the number of panels be provided as this information was missing from consultation documentation. TE stated site was designed with 650W panels , approx. size 1.9M by 1.2M. This will produce max output of 46 MW and they use a factor of 1032 per MW to estimate total “sellable power” so site will produce around 47 Giga Watt hours of electricity per year.

Stated if more efficient panels become available then number of panels will be reduced rather than increase the size of site. **TE agreed to provide written calculation.**

Transport

TE advised that on average there will be 2 HGV movements per day. PCC requested that the detail calculation be provided as there was concern that this was a significant underestimation. **TE agreed to provided calculation.** The only route HGV vehicles would access the site would be via the route from the A4042 , past the Grange Hospital and turn left via a new access road which will be created around the area opposite Brechfa Farm.

All HGVs would decant all materials in the main construction compound. All other movements would then be via Tractor Trailers

TE confirmed that there would be no HGV or Tractor Trailer movements through Ponthir, Caerleon, Usk or Treherbert Road.

PCC requested details of size of Tractor Trailer units to be used.

TE stated all internal movements would be on new roads within the site layout and on a number of local public roads. PCC stated the specific routes were not clear and obvious on the website and asked for a simplified map to be provided. **TE did not commit to providing such a map stating the information was available in description in the consultation pack.**

Major concern over proposed use of local public roads around the site for Tractor Trailer movements. As one example the proposal for Tractor Trailers to drive down Candwr Road from/near Pembridge House and perform a turn at an acute angle to drive up the road to the water works was seen to be unrealistic.

Impact of tractor trailers on these local roads would have major impact on the hundreds of people who use these roads every day as pedestrians, cyclists and by car. , It will not be possible to walk safely on these roads with large Tractor Trailers driving past.

TE confirmed then intend to use the bridge on Cadwr Lane to access site area 5 . A planning application has been made for a new bridge by the owner in late 2025. PCC believe that there may have been misrepresentation in this application 25/P/0704/FUL and will raise a query with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Other Items

The consultation documents include a new Substation, and the consultation documents have an error and state that this will be included in the existing perimeter of the water works. The substation will be a large new site 100M by 60M and up to 6M high on a field visible from Ponthir and less than 800m from the village. **This was accepted as being incorrect by TE who committed to correct the information and publicise this in their consultation sessions on the 15th and 16th.**

PCC expressed disappointment that statutory consultation has been started in the summer when previously requested to avoid this period to maximise public engagement.

Concern was raised by PCC over recent media reports relating to Total Energies conviction over greenwashing by a French Court.

Next Steps

TE will provide written calculations for panel numbers and transport movements. PCC will seek clarification from TCBC regarding the Candwr Lane bridge planning application (Nov 25).