# MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026 IN THE VILLAGE HALL, FREYSTROP AT 19:00

## 1. Opening Remarks

◦ The Chair welcomed everyone present, introduced Daniel Jones as the new Clerk and confirmed that Russell Lavis would remain involved to support the handover. The meeting commenced at 19:00.

## 2. Attendance & Apologies

◦ Please refer to the attendance register.

◦ No apologies were received.

## 3. FCC Policy on Declarations of Interest

◦ The Chair invited declarations of interest. None were declared and none had been received prior to the meeting.

## 4. Minutes of the 13 July 2026 Monthly Meeting

◦ The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2026 were considered and approved as a true representation of the meeting.

▪ Proposed: J Morris Seconded: E Utting

◦ The Chair signed the printed copy of the approved minutes.

## 5. Matters Arising

◦ The Chair invited any matters arising from the previous minutes. No matters were raised.

## 6. Presentations & Questions from the Public

◦ No questions or requests to present had been received in advance of the meeting.

◦ The Chair invited questions from members of the public attending the meeting; no questions were raised.

## 7. County Councillor's Report

◦ Councillor Michael John provided an update on matters affecting Pembrokeshire.

◦ The Eisteddfod was reported to have attracted approximately 100,000 visitors and was described as a major success for Pembrokeshire.

◦ The Pembrokeshire Eco Park at Puma opened on 18 August. A public open day is planned for 19 September from 11:00 to 16:00, with the new recycling facility highlighted.

◦ Phase 2 of the Pembrokeshire Active Travel Network Mapping is due to go to consultation. Councillor John encouraged the Community Council and residents to respond, particularly where there are gaps in safe transport provision, and to report unsafe areas.

◦ The next round of the Community Warm Spaces Fund is open until 28 September. Examples from other communities were discussed, including hot meals and weekly coffee mornings. Councillor John encouraged communities to consider applying.

◦ The ongoing nitrates issue affecting planning applications was discussed. Councillor John advised that a nitrate mitigation proposal had been announced as an initial step and that applications currently affected were on hold.

◦ The "Let's Talk: Living in Pembrokeshire" survey is open until 1 November. Residents were encouraged to provide feedback on living in Pembrokeshire and their interaction with the County Council.

◦ Transport for Wales is undertaking a survey of bus shelters across Wales and Pembrokeshire to establish ownership.

◦ Sports Pembrokeshire is marking its 20th anniversary. Nominations are open until 11 October, with the event taking place at Folly Farm on 27 November.

◦ Members were reminded that the deadline for secondary school applications is approaching and that late applications may result in an allocation other than the preferred school.

◦ The Council's request for a speed survey at Lower Freystrop was noted.

◦ Hedge maintenance complaints continue to be pursued with PCC. Councillor A M Simpson confirmed that work had commenced on the day of the meeting. The extent of the work and responsibility for hedge maintenance were

discussed. Councillor John advised that he had asked PCC to review the arrangements for next year, as the work had taken place later than expected.

## 8. Community

- **Letter of introduction received from the 3 Plaid Cymru MSs representing Ceredigion Penfro**
- The Council noted that the three Plaid Cymru MSs will provide a monthly newsletter to Community Councils. Members discussed whether newsletters and correspondence should be made public, with Russell Lavis suggesting that anything urgent or particularly relevant could be considered for wider circulation.
- Councillor D Thomas asked who should be contacted where a concern relates specifically to the local area. Councillor Michael John advised that an electoral area review is underway and that boundary changes have been proposed. The boundary consultation is due shortly.
- Members discussed concerns about there being no clear formal process for raising some local issues. Councillor John confirmed that similar concerns had been raised by other Community Councils.
- **National Lottery Community Fund Update**
- An email from One Voice Wales setting out National Lottery Community Fund programmes and their purposes was considered. The Chair asked whether any of the opportunities appeared relevant to the Council's own ten-year plan; Russell Lavis advised that nothing appeared applicable at present.
- It was noted that the Freystrop climbing frame project has been on hold since 17 August in relation to the grant.
- **Community Warm Spaces Fund (SCAF Round 10) Summer 2026**
- The funding opportunity had already been covered during the County Councillor's report. No further comments were raised.
- **National Grid Priority Services Register (PSR)**
- National Grid has contacted the Village Hall about using the hall to promote the Priority Services Register (PSR), which provides additional support to vulnerable residents. National Grid has offered 12 October for a presentation.
- Members discussed how the event could be promoted locally, including the possibility of a Coffee and Chat style event. Councillor Michael John advised that similar work had been carried out in other areas of Pembrokeshire.
- A member of the public raised concerns about power cuts and the planned switch-off of analogue telephone services. It was reported that free BT power banks can be provided on request to give approximately four hours of power during a power cut, and members discussed whether this information could be promoted locally.
- Members discussed the importance of identifying residents who may benefit from the PSR and the data protection implications of the Council collecting information. It was noted that residents would need to provide information voluntarily and for the specific purpose involved.
- Russell Lavis suggested seeking advice from One Voice Wales, as other Community Councils may have dealt with similar arrangements.
  - Chair to speak to OVW regarding the PSR/data protection issue. Clerk to circulate information about the event and PSR as appropriate.
- **PCC Eco Park**
- The educational visit opportunities had already been covered in the County Councillor's report. Councillor A M Simpson added that the Eco Park had been positively received locally.

## 9. Highways & Rights of Way

- **Enquiry re provision of speed signs from M Tamilia, Will Meadows**
- The Acting Clerk had responded to the enquiry and also spoken in person. Russell Lavis confirmed that speeding concerns in the area had previously been raised and had been acknowledged in the response. No further action was required at this stage.

## 10. Planning Matters

- **CAS-04719-P6H0W2, Upper Sandy Wells, Appeal Decision**
- The appeal was dismissed. The decision identified harm to the character and appearance of the area and concluded that the personal circumstances put forward did not outweigh those harms. The Chair noted that the building remains standing.
- **25/0464/PA, Bower House, Decision**
- The application was conditionally approved. No further action was required.
- **26/0256/PA, Blossom Hill, Replacement Porch**
- The application remains live and under consultation. Russell Lavis confirmed its current status.
- **25/0181/PA, Clayston Garage, Decision**

◦ The application was conditionally approved. No further action was required.

◦ **26/0297/PA, Shire Hill, Feed Machinery Store (revised 8/9/26)**

◦ The application remains live. It was resubmitted in August and the documents were updated on 8 September.

◦ **26/0263/PA, Middle Hill Farm, Demolition and sensitive re-build of adjoining stone storage shed to provide additional amenity space (games room) to an existing dwelling**

◦ The application remains live and requires a response from FCC. Members noted that this was the first formal application submitted and agreed that the documents should be reviewed in more detail before a response is made.

▪ Members to review the documents and provide feedback so that an FCC response can be prepared and submitted.

◦ **Examination into the Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan 2**

◦ The examination is due to commence on 10 November. Councillor D Thomas declared an interest and advised that he is acting personally for clients in the community, advising them and speaking at the November hearings. He confirmed that he is not representing FCC in relation to the parcel of land of interest to the Council.

◦ Members discussed whether FCC should make a representation. The Chair noted that FCC had not previously made a representation and therefore its ability to speak at the upcoming hearings may be limited. Councillor Thomas also raised concerns about the length of time taken to progress the LDP and the implications for the plan timetable.

◦ Councillor Michael John confirmed that PCC continues to take part in the LDP process and must follow the relevant process.

◦ **Update from the Joint Working Party on the White House Solar & Storage Facility**

◦ No further Joint Working Party meeting had taken place since the representative submitted the previous update. Andrew had circulated a further update, expressing disappointment about the reclassification of land shortly before the consultation closed and raising concerns about the amount of information available.

◦ Members discussed the status of information expected to appear on the planning portal and what, if anything, FCC would need to submit. It was noted that responses already submitted through the consultation would not need to be resubmitted.

◦ Members of the public raised further concerns regarding the planning portal and the outcome of FOI requests. It was agreed that the Working Party would consider meeting again once the relevant information had been published.

◦ Further discussion took place regarding the land classification, its implications for the local area and concerns that the classification may not reflect local circumstances. These views were raised during the discussion and remain matters for the relevant planning and consultation processes.

## 11. Assets

◦ **Defibrillator management**

◦ D Thomas confirmed that the area by the defibrillator had been marked and could be remarked if required. Members discussed the need for a backup/deputy arrangement so that access to the defibrillator is covered when required.

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▪ David Thomas to add T Holder as the backup administrator for the defibrillator.

◦ **Village Hall inspection**

◦ D Thomas reported receiving a call from Sharon Knowles regarding an inspection of the Village Hall. The inspection is connected with the use of the hall for events.

▪ A M Simpson to look into the inspection requirements.

◦ **Freystrop Village & Playing Field Management Committee Report**

◦ J Morris presented a report from the Management Committee. The Committee is considering an application for funding, including equipment and fencing, and will return to FCC with a proposal setting out what the funding would be used for.

◦ The possibility of FCC making the application on behalf of the Village Hall was discussed. The available PCC funding and closing date were also discussed; the closing date was not confirmed.

◦ Russell Lavis has contact details for a supplier of equipment.

▪ FCC to enquire about the funding closing date. The Management Committee to provide a plan so that an application can be prepared and submitted.

◦ **Northmoor Common**

◦ The custodians are meeting with graziers and members of the community to discuss management of Northmoor Common. An update was also given following discussion with PCC regarding possible funding.

◦ A Wild Watch event is planned for 11 October. West Wales Biodiversity will attend to look at the area and encourage local recording of wildlife and species.

◦ **Other assets**

◦ D Thomas asked whether a formal thank you had been sent to T Holder for repairing the bench.

▪ Council to send a formal thank you note/email to T Holder.

## 12. Training/Seminars, Consultations & Presentations

◦ **Reports on past training, upcoming events**

◦ There were no further updates since July. Members commented positively on the quality of OVW courses.

◦ **OVW Innovative Practice Conference 2026**

◦ The annual conference at the Welsh Showground was noted. FCC does not normally attend.

◦ **OVW Area Committee Meeting Representatives**

◦ No decision was made regarding representatives.

◦ **OVW nominations and training**

◦ OVW has requested nominations from each Community Council. Chris and David were identified for nomination, subject to completion of the relevant form.

◦ All training bookings are to be made through the Clerk. Russell Lavis advised that General Councillor training is mandatory for the Chair.

◦ Councillor Michael John highlighted the PCC “Working Better Together” Teams session taking place the following evening.

▪ Clerk to complete and submit the OVW nomination form and circulate the relevant training information, including the Chair’s training and the “Working Better Together” session.

## 13. FCC Administration

◦ **Community Councillor vacancy**

◦ One Community Councillor vacancy remains. The vacancy has been advertised on Facebook and on the Village Hall noticeboard. Members also discussed approaching people in the village.

◦ **Local Places for Nature (LPfN) capital funding 2026-2027**

◦ The funding opportunity was discussed. The available funding was noted as similar in scale to the play area funding. FCC had not submitted an Expression of Interest and the deadline may have passed. The Council had previously applied unsuccessfully.

◦ **OVW: New model contract of employment based on green book conditions**

◦ The updated OVW model contract was noted. Members discussed reviewing it against the Council’s current arrangements, with the Chair normally involved in this review.

◦ **ICO payment and clerk change**

◦ The ICO registration currently has the previous clerk arrangements recorded and needs to be updated to the new Clerk. The next payment is due in October.

▪ Clerk to contact the ICO and arrange the change.

◦ **Standing Order review**

◦ The Chair advised that a draft of revised Standing Orders is in circulation alongside the updated OVW template. Members agreed that the current, proposed and new model Standing Orders should be compared before adoption.

▪ Members to review the latest Standing Orders. Adoption to be considered at the next meeting.

## 14. FCC Financial Matters

◦ **Audit matters**

◦ The full audit was submitted on time. No queries had been received from Audit Wales at the time of the meeting and the final results are awaited.

◦ The possibility of a qualified result was discussed in relation to concerns about signatures on invoices. This remains subject to the outcome of the audit.

▪ Clerk to inform the Council when the audit results are received.

◦ **Annual Pay Settlement 2026/27**

◦ The latest annual pay settlement from OVW was received, with the increased rate backdated to 1 April 2026. Russell Lavis confirmed that the current budget makes provision for the increase.

◦ **Budget 2027/28**

◦ The main budget decisions are expected to be made in November. The Council will discuss the budget in October and aim to approve it in November, as FCC does not meet in December and January may be too late for the PCC submission deadline.

◦ Russell Lavis has prepared and circulated a draft budget for the Clerk to review. Items to be considered include website costs, Village Hall Wi-Fi/internet, possible online meeting costs and the training budget.

◦ Members discussed the possibility of four new Councillors in 2027/28 and whether the existing training budget would be sufficient. Bursaries have been used and courses are now at full price. The possibility of using reserved funds pending elections was also discussed.

▪ Clerk to review, prepare and circulate the draft 2027/28 budget.

◦ **Banking**

◦ **HSBC signatures**

◦ The HSBC signatories need to be updated following the change of Clerk. Current signatories are Russell Lavis, A M Simpson, D Thomas and E Utting. Members discussed adding the Chair as a signatory alongside the Clerk.

▪ Russell Lavis to visit HSBC to establish the process and timescales and report back.

◦ **Procedure until HSBC changes have been made**

◦ Interim arrangements for approving payments were discussed. Russell Lavis and A M Simpson are currently dealing with day-to-day payment approvals. The intended arrangement is for the Clerk to raise payments on behalf of FCC for authorisation by the appropriate signatories.

▪ Russell Lavis to update the Clerk on the interim payment procedure.

◦ **Payments made**

◦ Payments made were noted as detailed in the accounts.

◦ **Payments upcoming**

◦ Upcoming payments include grass cutting as required, the inspection report and data protection registration.

▪ Clerk to discuss the upcoming payments with Russell Lavis and A M Simpson and confirm the position.

◦ **Bank balances**

◦ The quarterly accounts had been circulated. Russell Lavis confirmed the balances shown, and the latest precept payment had been received into the current account.

## 15. Other Matters

◦ Condolences are to be sent on behalf of Freystrop Community Council to the family in relation to the upcoming funeral.

◦ Councillor D Thomas thanked Russell Lavis for his time as Clerk and asked that the Council's thanks be formally recorded. Councillors E Utting and A M Simpson also thanked Russell for his work and support.

## 16. Councillors' Requests

◦ No requests were raised.

## 17. Date of Next Meeting

◦ The next monthly meeting will be held on Monday 19 October 2026 at 19:00.

▪ A M Simpson to update the Council calendar.

◦ Items for inclusion on the agenda should be received by the Clerk by 12 October 2026.

◦ There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:03.

**Signed:_____**

**Chair**

D Jones
Clerk to Freystrop Community Council
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