MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2026 IN THE VILLAGE HALL, FREYSTROP AT 19:00

1. Opening Remarks

◦ The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting commenced at 19:00.

2. Attendance & Apologies

◦ Please refer to the attendance register. The Chair reported that Cllr Anna Simpson had resigned from the Council.

3. FCC Policy on Declarations of Interest

◦ The Chair invited declarations of interest. None were declared.

Northmoor Common – Discussion Brought Forward

◦ The Chair welcomed Mr Jim Dunkerley, Common Land Officer at Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC), to the meeting and proposed bringing the Northmoor Common discussion forward. No objections were raised.

◦ Mr Dunkerley thanked the Council for inviting him to attend and said that he considered it important for PCC and FCC to work together regarding Northmoor Common.

◦ Mr Dunkerley explained that he had worked for PCC for approximately ten years. His role included maintaining the register of common land across Pembrokeshire, updating records and dealing with applications relating to village greens. He described the role as largely administrative, alongside project work, and said he was keen to work with community councils on projects where possible.

◦ Mr Dunkerley also explained that Northmoor Common was a medium-sized common for Pembrokeshire and had good conservation interest. It had been registered in the early 1970s but had no known owner. As a result, it did not appear on the Land Registry. Mr Dunkerley explained that this situation was not unusual across the county. At the time of the original registration, where no individual came forward to claim ownership, the land could be placed within the care of the local authority and community council. This was the position with Northmoor Common, meaning PCC and FCC had powers to look after and protect the land as though they were the landowner, although neither was the registered legal owner.

◦ The Chair asked Mr Dunkerley to clarify what was meant by the term custodianship. Mr Dunkerley explained that neither PCC nor FCC owned the land and that, legally, there was no known owner. Their role as custodians was therefore a protective one, effectively looking after the land. He confirmed that this was not the same as having full ownership rights and that their powers were primarily concerned with protecting the Common. PCC had previously taken action in specific cases involving encroachment, although there were no current concerns of this nature at Northmoor Common.

◦ The Chair asked about the day-to-day responsibilities of the custodians. Mr Dunkerley referred to the Commons Registration Act 1969 and explained that PCC and FCC had a power, rather than a duty, to act. He clarified that a duty meant something the authorities were required to do, whereas a power meant they were able to take action if considered appropriate. This distinction also applied to matters of encroachment.

◦ The Chair raised concerns about public access through the kissing gate and asked Mr Dunkerley to clarify the permitted access. Mr Dunkerley confirmed that the Common was designated as open-access land, allowing access on foot, including on horseback. However, vehicles were not permitted, and horses were not permitted to enter the Common itself. He explained that there was a bridleway along the edge of the Common which could be used for horse riding. PCC had historically taken a pragmatic approach to access, although Mr Dunkerley was not aware of any specific incidents involving access at this location.

◦ The Chair explained that there had been ongoing problems with gates and locks being stolen and gates subsequently being left open. He asked who was responsible for securing the gates. Mr Dunkerley confirmed that this fell within the custodians' responsibilities. He advised that PCC had placed a sign on the gate explaining the terms of access and had also installed a padlock and pin.

◦ The Chair asked about the rights of access and the ability to carry out maintenance or other works on the Common, noting that prior consent should be obtained before works were undertaken. Jim explained that registration of the land with the Land Registry could be explored. Similar applications had been made successfully elsewhere and could provide greater clarity and an improved ability to manage the land. He explained that the law was clearer in relation to grazing rights, whereas ownership could be more complicated. The Land Registry had been sympathetic to applications of this nature in other areas.

◦ The Chair asked whether Mr Dunkerley would support FCC pursuing registration. Mr Dunkerley advised that he did not believe PCC would object to an application being made.

◦ The Chair asked whether registration would create a duty for FCC to maintain the land. Mr Dunkerley explained that the main consideration would instead be potential liability. For example, if FCC became the registered owner, it could potentially become liable for incidents such as trips or falls on the land. He advised that this was an important consideration for FCC to weigh up before deciding whether to pursue registration, although he noted that other areas had not experienced problems.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown asked whether a person walking away from the designated footpath and onto the Common would be trespassing. Mr Dunkerley confirmed that access on foot was permitted and would not constitute trespass. He further explained that registering the land with the Land Registry would not change its status as common land. The common land register contained an ownership section, but this was based on information provided by those who had come forward and was not necessarily a definitive record of ownership. The Land Registry would ultimately determine registered ownership. Mr Dunkerley confirmed that Northmoor Common was not currently registered with the Land Registry, as nobody had claimed ownership.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown asked whether all common land was registered. Mr Dunkerley explained that Pembrokeshire had approximately 350 registered commons. The register included maps, although many were historic and had been hand-drawn or manually annotated. He also explained that changes in ownership of common land needed to be registered.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown asked whether he could potentially use the Common for grazing if he purchased sheep, and who would decide whether someone could become a grazier. Mr Dunkerley explained that

this would ideally be a joint decision between PCC and FCC and would need to take account of any existing grazing arrangements. Cllr Andrew Brown asked whether grazing was restricted to one grazier. Mr Dunkerley explained that, where a common was not fully grazed and there was considered to be surplus grazing capacity, it might be possible to agree additional grazing. He added that, although FCC had rights in its capacity as custodian, any arrangements would remain subject to the rights and restrictions of existing graziers.

◦ The Chair asked whether the clearance works previously undertaken on the Common had now been completed. Mr Dunkerley confirmed that the works had been carried out by the National Park with PCC's consent and had ceased following agreement with him. He clarified that this did not necessarily mean the National Park would not return at a later date to undertake further maintenance. The Chair confirmed that improving Northmoor Common was one of the projects FCC hoped to progress. Mr Dunkerley said FCC was welcome to contact him for advice and that he could also provide information about potential funding sources.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown asked whether part of the Common could be used to establish additional woodland, should suitable surplus land be available. Mr Dunkerley explained that part of the Common was already wooded. He said he would have some legal concerns about creating further woodland because the land was designated as open-access land, although a carefully considered proposal might be possible. He also highlighted the need to consider any specific habitats and protected species present on the Common.

◦ A member of the public raised a further concern about the gate, explaining that another incident had occurred since the previous meeting, with the gate being left open and livestock potentially put at risk. They advised that the situation had improved since Mr Dunkerley had arranged for the padlock to be installed. The member of the public also asked for it to be recorded in the minutes that they had no intention of claiming any land on the Common. Mr Dunkerley added that he had never had any concerns in his dealings with the current graziers. The member of the public confirmed that the police had been informed of the gate related incidents and that a crime reference number was available.

◦ There being no further questions, Mr Dunkerley left the meeting at 19:34.

4. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19 October 2026

◦ The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2026 were reviewed by the Council. A minor amendment was identified, relating to a missing word in the minutes.

◦ It was agreed that the amendment would be handwritten onto the existing copy of the minutes. Subject to this correction, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and would be scanned and uploaded to the Council’s website.

▪ Proposed: Cllr Esmee Utting. Seconded: Cllr Chris White

5. Matters Arising

◦ The Council reviewed matters arising from the previous meeting. It was noted that the outstanding matters were either covered under other items on the current agenda or would be addressed during the relevant discussions.

◦ No additional matters were raised under this item.

6. Presentations & Questions from the Public

◦ The Chair invited members of the public present to raise questions or make comments. No questions or requests to speak were raised.

7. County Councillor's Report

◦ The Council received the County Councillor's report from Cllr Michael John, covering the following matters:

• Choice Homes – Allocations Policy: PCC Cabinet approved the revised policy on 2 November 2026. The changes provide additional priority for applicants with an established residential connection to Pembrokeshire.

• Council Tax: Updates were provided on the proposed Council Tax premiums for second homes and long-term empty properties. The recommendation was to retain the second homes premium at 125% and the long-term empty properties premium at 300%.

• Council Tax Scams: Residents were being warned about fraudulent messages claiming that Council Tax refunds were due and requesting personal or financial information.

• Pembroke Dock Central By-Election: A by-election had been announced following the resignation of Cllr Josh Beynon. If contested, the election was scheduled for 8 December 2026.

• Pembrokeshire College Energy Transition Skills Centre: Cllr Michael John reported on proposals for a training centre to prepare local people for employment opportunities arising from future energy projects.

• Pembrokeshire Spotlight Awards 2026: Nominations were open to recognise young people who had achieved exceptional things or made a positive contribution to their communities.

• Scrutiny and Strategic Partnerships: Cllr Michael John provided an update on the work of PCC's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its strategic partnerships.

Local Matters

Cllr Michael John also provided updates on the following local matters:

• Freystrop Cross – School Bus Stop Safety: Ongoing safety concerns and correspondence with Highways were discussed. The Council had previously received a copy of the relevant correspondence.

• Speed Surveys – Lower Freystrop and Little Milford Road: The survey results showed relatively low average speeds. Further discussion would be required to consider the findings and whether any action was necessary.

• Hedge Removal – Opposite Furniture Directory: Cllr Michael John advised that PCC's Planning team was investigating the removal of the hedge.

◦ Cllr Esmee Utting advised that she had received direct contact from a resident querying whether FCC had reported the hedge removal. It was clarified that FCC had not made a report in this instance. Cllr Esmee Utting explained that the resident had intended to attend the meeting.

◦ It was agreed that any concerns of this nature should be raised through the Chair so that the Council could consider whether further action was appropriate. Cllr Esmee Utting confirmed that she did not feel any further action was required at this time.

8. Community

◦ The Council received an update on the Winter Wellbeing and Preparedness event held on 6 November 2026. The event was reported to have been well attended and well received. The Chair thanked the Clerk for organising the event.

◦ The possibility of Freystrop Village Hall being used as a warm space during power cuts was discussed. National Grid was considering the provision of a generator to support the facility. It was suggested that National Grid also be asked to provide wind-up torches for use during power outages.

◦ Cllr Esmee Utting offered to explore the possibility of an additional generator being made available through Paul.

▪ Action: Clerk to follow up with National Grid regarding the proposed generator and wind-up torches, and whether a further visit to the Village Hall could be arranged.

▪ Action: Clerk to contact Cllr Andrew Brown regarding his proposal.

9. Highways

Overhanging Trees – Targate Road

◦ The Council discussed the overhanging trees along Targate Road. Cllr Esmee Utting suggested an alternative contractor who may be able to undertake the work. The Chair requested that three quotations be obtained before a decision is made.

▪ Action: Clerk to contact John Colnet (07882 139853) and obtain three quotations, including from the alternative contractor suggested by Cllr Esmee Utting.

Winter Salt Bins

◦ The Council discussed the outstanding request for the winter salt bins to be replenished. Cllr Michael John located previous correspondence confirming that a request must be submitted to PCC for the bins to be filled. The Clerk confirmed that a request had already been made.

▪ Action: Cllr Michael John to forward the relevant correspondence to the Clerk, who will resubmit the request to PCC via an alternative email address.

Will Meadows – Stream and Public Right of Way

◦ The Council discussed the concerns regarding the stream and public right of way at Will Meadows. Cllr Esmee Utting advised that Rachel had previously spoken to David about the matter, but no action had followed. As David was not present, Cllr Esmee Utting agreed to follow this up with him.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown reported that he had visited the location but had been unable to identify the specific concern. The location of the path and the original arrangements for access were discussed. Cllr Michael John advised that the original consent had required a public path to be provided and suggested that David would be best placed to clarify the position.

▪ Action: Cllr Esmee Utting to follow up with David and clarify the position regarding the stream and public right of way.

10. Planning Matters

Local Development Plan (LDP2)

◦ No further update was available from David regarding LDP2. Cllr Andrew Brown expressed concern that there appeared to be no clear timetable for progress, particularly given David's absence. It was noted that the relevant hearings were being livestreamed but were not available to watch afterwards.

Planning Application 26/0457/PA – Blossom Hill, Lower Freystrop, SA62 4ET

◦ The Council considered the application for a single-storey therapy suite to meet the applicant's needs. No objections or formal comments were raised by the Council.

Planning Application 26/0408/AG – Little Nash Farm, Freystrop, SA62 4HE

◦ The Council noted that the application for an agricultural storage shed had been approved unconditionally on 20 October 2026.

11. Assets

Village Hall and Playing Field – Management and Responsibilities

◦ The Council was unable to receive an update from the Village Hall Management Committee, as Cllr Jen Morris was absent and the Committee had not met since the previous update.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown raised questions regarding the financial arrangements between the Community Council and the Village Hall, particularly the Council's contribution towards playing field expenses while the Village Hall held approximately £12,000 in funds. He also queried the availability of the Village Hall's audited accounts and the arrangements for the transition to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

◦ Concerns were raised regarding the number of trustees currently in place, with it understood that only two trustees remained. The Chair acknowledged that further clarification was needed regarding the responsibilities of the Community Council and the Village Hall, including which organisation was responsible for meeting the costs associated with the playing field.

◦ It was noted that the Community Council currently paid most of the playing field expenses, despite not receiving income from the facility. The previous Clerk had advised that income from Village Hall bookings belonged to the Village Hall rather than the Community Council. The Council discussed whether income generated through community events could be used to support wider community projects.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown queried whether a formal agreement existed between the Village Hall and the Community Council and whether the relevant governing documents clearly set out their respective responsibilities. It was suggested that, if no suitable agreement existed, this should be reviewed and potentially redrafted.

◦ Cllr Michael John provided information on arrangements involving Llangwm playing field, Pill Park, the Village Hall lease, the rugby club and play area. The Chair suggested that the historical paperwork should be reviewed to establish how the current arrangements had developed. It was noted that the Village Hall had previously formed part of the Community Council arrangements but had become separate approximately 12–18 months ago.

◦ The Chair expressed concern about the future management of the Village Hall, including the possibility of trustees leaving and limited public attendance at Village Hall meetings. The Council agreed that it needed a clearer understanding of its relationship with the Village Hall and should take a more active interest in the arrangements.

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown also referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on trustee numbers and the possibility of establishing a CIO. The existence of Freystrop Land Trust Ltd was discussed, although it

was understood that the company had not been used. The Chair wished to establish the purpose and status of this organisation and whether it could have a role in future arrangements.

◦ The possibility of a £2,500 PAVS grant was also raised, with clarification needed on any repayment obligations should the funding remain unused. The Chair confirmed that copies of the relevant will were available, although no Land Registry entry had been located.

▪ Actions:

- • Clerk to review the historical paperwork and establish the relationship, responsibilities and financial arrangements between the Community Council and Village Hall.
- • Clerk to investigate the purpose and current status of Freystrop Land Trust Ltd.
- • Clerk to review the relevant will and any associated documentation.
- • Clerk to clarify the conditions and any repayment obligations attached to the PAVS grant.

Village Hall Broadband and Wi-Fi

◦ The Clerk read an update from Crundale Hall regarding its arrangements. The Council discussed exploring suitable IT equipment and options for improving broadband and Wi-Fi provision at the Village Hall.

Community Orchard

◦ The Clerk advised that searches of the available paper records were ongoing, but the relevant documentation had not yet been located. It was agreed that electronic records should also be checked.

◦ Cllr Esmee Utting understood that any proceeds arising from the housing development were intended to go towards the playpark. The Chair wished to confirm this against the wording of the will.

▪ Action: Clerk to continue searching the paper and electronic records for information relating to the community orchard and its intended proceeds.

Noticeboards and Community Newsletter

◦ The Council discussed the provision of additional noticeboards and the possibility of producing a community newsletter. It was noted that the available grant funding would cover approximately one noticeboard.

◦ Cllr Esmee Utting suggested that a noticeboard could be installed in Lower Freystrop, potentially mounted on the inside wall of the bus shelter.

12. Training/Seminars, Consultations & Presentations

◦ The Council noted that no training had been undertaken since the previous meeting.

◦ The Chair highlighted that Cllr Andrew Brown should complete training relating to conflicts of interest. Cllr Andrew Brown requested further information on how to access the training.

◦ It was suggested that One Voice Wales should be contacted for details of the available course.

▪ Action: Clerk to contact One Voice Wales regarding suitable conflicts of interest training and provide the information to Cllr Andrew Brown.

13. FCC Administration

One Voice Wales – Model Standing Orders

◦ The Council discussed the 2026 Model Standing Orders issued by One Voice Wales. The Chair queried the proposed £25,000 procurement threshold, indicating that he understood the threshold to be lower and suggesting that an amount of approximately £3,000 may be more appropriate.

◦ It was agreed that the Council should review its Financial Regulations alongside the Model Standing Orders before approving any changes.

▪ Action: Clerk to obtain and circulate the Financial Regulations for consideration at the next meeting.

Unreasonable, Persistent and Abusive Behaviour Policy

◦ The Council discussed the need for a policy covering unreasonable, persistent and abusive behaviour towards councillors and officers.

▪ Action: Clerk to obtain a suitable model policy from One Voice Wales and circulate it to councillors for consideration.

14. FCC Financial Matters

Audit Wales

◦ The Council noted that no response had yet been received from Audit Wales.

Budget 2027/28

◦ The draft budget for 2027/28 was discussed. The Chair proposed holding a separate meeting in December to consider the budget in detail and suggested that the meeting should be open to members of the public.

◦ It was agreed that the draft budget and Standing Orders would be reviewed further at the next meeting. The Clerk was also asked to compare the Council's precept per head with that of other local community councils.

▪ Action: Clerk to compare the precept per head with other local community councils and report back.

Bank Balances – 8 November 2026

◦ The Chair read out the Council's bank balances as at 8 November 2026, as confirmed by the Clerk:

Account	**Balance**
Deposit Account	£12,996.72
Current Account	£6,580.45
Total funds	**£19,577.17**

◦ The following transactions during the month were noted:

- • Deposit Account: £14.11 interest received on 3 November 2026.
- • Current Account: £44.00 payment to One Voice Wales on 29 October 2026.

◦ The Council discussed the division of funds between the accounts.

▪ Action: Clerk to check the current allocation of funds between the bank accounts and clarify the reason for the split.

15. Other Matters

Christmas Quiz

◦ The Chair suggested holding a Christmas quiz with mulled wine and prizes, potentially following the EGM. This was raised as an initial idea for consideration.

Christmas Lights

◦ Cllr Andrew Brown asked about the possibility of Christmas lights and how to encourage members of the public to attend the budget meeting. Cllr Esmee Utting explained that previous attempts to organise similar activities had attracted limited interest and could be costly.

▪ Action: The Clerk was asked to investigate the costs of providing Christmas lights for the Village Hall. Solar-powered lights or window lights were suggested as possible options.

Solar Farm

◦ The Council discussed the proposed solar farm. It was noted that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had submitted a detailed response to the planning portal the previous day, raising concerns including the proposed replacement of Pembrokeshire hedgerows and the need for further bat surveys.

◦ A member of the public commented that these concerns had already been raised. The Chair recommended that councillors read the NRW response in full.

16. Councillors' Requests

◦ No further requests were raised by councillors.

17. Date of Next Meeting

◦ The next meeting will be the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), scheduled for Monday 14 December 2026 at 19:00 at Freystrop Village Hall.

◦ There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 21:11.

Signed: _____
(Chair)

D Jones
Clerk to Freystrop Community Council
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