



**Ordinary Meeting of the Council held at
the Welfare Hall, Cwmtwrch on
Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 6.30 p.m.**

**Present : Chairman M Donnelly, Presided
Councillors M Allen, G Burdett, R Millington, G Roberts,
C Williams, W Thomas, J Horrell, N Craddock, C Nickels,
L Evans, G Davies and A Williams
Via Zoom - M Shrewsbury and J Morgan**

PC Luke Shackley was in attendance as a local police representative as invited by the Town Council.

The Council made enquiries as to the level of local staffing at the Police Station and what resources were available to the Police to address Antisocial Behaviour, patrolling of local Open Spaces and Speeding. PC Shackley advised that 2 members of staff are available from the local station 24 hours a day increasing to 4 members of staff during an overlap on Friday and Saturday evenings. Local monitoring and patrolling was taking place daily as staffing and duties allowed. Speed vans were operating regularly in the local areas and a Rural Crime unit was also an accessible resource. A significant and ongoing issue being dealt with by the local constabulary was of children and youths engaging in a variety of antisocial behaviours and property damage.

The Town Council thanked PC Shackley for attending the meeting and providing the information.

244. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr M Evans.

245. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr M Allen declared a personal interest in a Matters Arising update regarding a boundary wall at The Welfare, Ystradgynlais.

Cllr G Davies declared:

- a prejudicial interest in a Freedom of Information Request from a local resident and
- a prejudicial interest in an item of Correspondence regarding the Town Council Publication Scheme from a local resident.

Cllr N Craddock declared a non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 11 regarding installation of transmitting equipment in Gorof Road.

246. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm the accuracy thereof, and the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the following meetings: -

a) the Extraordinary Meeting on the 24th of January 2023

b) the Ordinary Meeting on the 2nd of February 2023 subject to the following amendment:

that the name of a Welfare Hall in Minute 240 be amended from “Aberdare to “Abercrave”.

MATTERS ARISING

247. INFORMATION GATHERING MEETING WITH CLLR HUW WILLIAMS

Further to Minute 230, it was confirmed that an informal meeting to discuss local infrastructure and flooding matters with County Cllr Huw Williams had been arranged for the 6th of March. Position noted.

248. ST. CYNOG WARM SPACE FUND APPLICATION

Further to Minute 232, the Chairman had advised that he had visited the Warm Space already being provided at St. Cynogs Church Hall and had been very impressed with the provision being made. Under the plenary powers awarded at the Ordinary meeting

in February, the Chairman and Vice Chairman had awarded £600 to support the initiative.

Resolved to confirm the award of £600 to St. Cynogs for the Warm Space.

249. WELFARE HALL – BOUNDARY WALL

Further to Minute 233, the Clerk advised that confirmation from the neighbouring resident had been received that their insurers would not consider a claim against works required on the boundary wall at the Welfare Hall.

Cllr C Nickels advised Cllrs that he had brought to the meeting a copy of a 1918 dated map, which pre- dated the construction of the Welfare Hall. This map showed an existing boundary in the same situation as the current wall.

Resolved to defer the consideration of the map and the item to a later convenient time in the meeting.

250. MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

Further to Minute 234, the Clerk proposed that a Management Sub-Committee meeting be scheduled to establish Terms of Reference for a working group dealing with Climate and Environmental issues, as well as other matters.

Resolved that a meeting of the Management Sub-Committee be scheduled for the 20th of March 2023.

251. TICK TOCK LEASE RENEWAL

Further to Minute 235, the Clerk advised that the new lease for the Tick Tock bowling grounds was now in effect, having been signed by the authorised Councillors and Tick Tock representatives and witnessed by the Council Officers.

Position noted.

252. BRYN Y GROES DEVELOPMENT – WATER MAINS

Further to Minute 236, and a request to install a water main for the Bryn Y Groes development under Town Council land, legal agreement documents had been received the day of the meeting from Morgan construction. The developers were asking for these to be signed and returned promptly to allow works to commence. The Clerk advised that there was no Community Benefit mentioned in the agreement, to offset inconveniences and disruption from the works at a public Open Space.

Resolved to forward the documents to the Town Council solicitor for legal advice and to contact Morgan Construction to discuss an appropriate Community Benefit.

253. BRYN Y GROES DEVELOPMENT – STREET NAMES

Further to Minute 237, in which an invitation had been received from Morgan Construction to propose street names for the Bryn Y Groes Development, the Town Council had consulted with the Heritage Society.

Morgan construction had now confirmed a deadline of mid-March for the return of any proposals. The Heritage Society had advised that it would work to provide some suggestions by the deadline provided.

Resolved that the Chairman collate and circulate the response from the Heritage Society to Council Members for observations, after which the agreed proposals would be forwarded to Morgan Construction.

254. TOWNS INVESTMENT FUND

Further to Minute 240, an email had now been received to confirm that the consultation for the Town Investment Plan was open. A public consultation session had been held at the Ystradgynlais Welfare Hall on the day of this meeting.

Members were querying whether there might be scope for free parking in the public car parks, to encourage visitors into the Town Centre.

Resolved that an item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to consider ways to encourage visitors to the Town.

255. ALLOTMENTS

Further to Minute 243.4b, the Deputy Clerk advised that County Cllrs had been consulted regarding local land suitable for allotments. Responses had identified small areas of land owned by Powys that had the potential for use as allotments.

Resolved to clarify the matter further with Cllr Huw Williams at the meeting on the 6th of March.

256. FOOTPATH 110A

Further to Minute 243.7, the Deputy Clerk advised that the Sustainable Drainage Approval body at Powys Council had been contacted regarding water run-off over Footpath 110a from an adjacent industrial site. The County Council were now taking steps to communicate with the site occupant and ascertain an understanding of the issues at the location and further updates would follow from Powys as appropriate.
Position noted.

257. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Queries were raised by members concerning the level of expenditure at Coronation Park over recent years.
There was also concern regarding recent expenditure at Footpath 10 and Coronation Park and that the appropriate Terms of Reference regarding Ward Committees should be reviewed at the Annual meeting of the Council in May.

Resolved that: -

- a) the accounts detailed in Appendix 1 be agreed and paid.
- b) that the Terms of Reference for Ward Committees as confirmed in the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of May 2022 be circulated to all Council Members.

258. COST OF LIVING RELIEF / WARM SPACE FUND

Resolved that this item should be removed from the agenda due to no new applications being received.

259. FOOTPATH 10 DEFINITIVE ROUTE

Further to Minute 243.11b, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk had been in contact with Powys Council representatives regarding the current route of footpath 10. It had been determined that part of the original route had been altered in the 1960's, alongside planning permission to Brecon County Council, it being the principal Council at the time. For undetermined reasons, no legal footpath modification order had been submitted at the time to alter it to the new route, therefore the original footpath was still the legally recognised route.

Powys had forwarded information to the Officers regarding the process to apply for a Definitive Map Modification Order. The Officers were undertaking investigations into relevant landowners and clarification of the process and would update the Town Council as to the best way forward in this matter.
Position noted.

260. MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES AT DIAMOND PARK

Further to Minute 229, regarding a document detailing a proposed maintenance scheme for Diamond Park from The Friends of Diamond Park. The Council were advised that a meeting for Council Members to review the information with the contractor had taken place and the maintenance proposal had been reviewed in detail, a report of the outcome of the meeting attached as Appendix 2.

Resolved that: -

- a) the current maintenance scheme programme continue at Diamond Park.
- b) that Cllr G Roberts pursue enquiries into a possible machine sharing scheme for grass collection and update the Council.

261. HABITAT SURVEY – DIAMOND & CORONATION PARKS

The Welsh Wildlife Trust had contacted the Council to request permission to conduct Habitat Surveys at both Diamond and Coronation Parks. Results would be forwarded to the Council following the surveys.

Resolved to permit the request.

262. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The members discussed appropriate ways to carry out community engagement. It was noted that it would be important to publicise the extent of the Councils powers and responsibilities in any engagement, in order to prevent undue expectations of what the Council could accomplish.

Resolved that Cllrs individually propose five questions suitable for inclusion in the engagement survey and forward to the members of the Management Sub-Committee for further consideration at the meeting on the 20th of March.

263. CORNERSTONE RADIO BASE STATION UPGRADE – GOROF ROAD

The Town Council had been consulted by Cornerstone, an infrastructure service company, to advise that a base station already installed and in use at Gorof Road was in need of an upgrade. No material changes to the parameters of the equipment already installed would occur.

Resolved not oppose the upgrade.

Cllr N Craddock declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item.

264. SKIP PROVISION PROPOSAL

Cllr C Williams had requested that the Town Council consider a scheme of providing skips in the community for household rubbish disposal.

Various aspects of achieving this, as well as the benefits and the risks of such a proposal were discussed.

Resolved that the Ystradgynlais Ward carry out further investigation into potential costs, impacts and best practice and update the Council.

Cllr G Davies left the meeting at this point.

CORRESPONDENCE

265. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

The Council had received correspondence dated the 10th of February 2023, requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act as follows: -

“1) With regards to the "Ystradgynlais Town Council Annual Return 2020-21" link on your website <http://www.ystradgynlaistowncouncil.co.uk/media/26226/ystradgynlais-tc.pdf>. The downloaded pdf from this link is entitled "ystradgynlais-tc". I am specifically referring to the last page of this document, numbered 7, of the “Annual Internal report to” ... "Ystradgynlais Town Council". Please disclose the “detailed report to the Council/Board/Committee dated 20/06/2012” as specified in the last paragraph before “Internal Audit Confirmation”?

2) With regards to Paragraph 39 of the Minutes of the OGM of 16th June 2022 will you please disclose any documentation relevant to that Minute? I wish to read the detailed findings and recommendations of the internal auditor as communicated to the Council for the financial years ended March 2021 and March 2022.”

The Clerk advised that he had collated the information for both requests.

Resolved to forward the relevant information within the time frame allowed under the Act and publish the dataset.

266. PUBLICATION SCHEME

A local resident had sent an email to advise that they believed the current Publication Scheme in use by the Council was based on an outdated model.

The Council were advised that the Deputy Clerk had contacted the Information Commissioners Office to establish the facts and the ICO confirmed that the current scheme was the correct model for current use by the Council.

Resolved that the Chairman respond to the resident to advise them accordingly.

267. WELFARE HALL MAIN ACCESS DOOR

The Clerk advised that an issue with the motor unit for the automatic door at the Welfare Hall had been inspected and the maintenance company had provided an estimate for works totalling nearly £2,500 ex. VAT. This was the latest and most expensive in a few issues that had been occurring with the door over the last two years. Considering that the door had been installed ten years prior, the Clerk advised the Council that an estimate for a replacement door had been sought for value comparison.

Resolved that the quote for the door be received and report back to the Council.

268. ONE VOICE WALES TRAINING SURVEY

The Council had received an invitation to complete a training survey from One Voice Wales.

Resolved that Cllrs inspect the survey questions and forward any observations to the Management Sub Committee members for consideration and completion at the Committee meeting on the 20th of March.

269. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL – ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Council had received the Annual Report 2023 from the IRP included as Appendix 3 to these Minutes. Determination 4 in the report was the relevant direction for the Town Council, which instructed the Town Council to make available to all Cllrs, two separate payments.

- £152 p/year to cover the costs associated with general duties and working from home.
- £56 p/yr to cover the cost of consumables.

The Council resolved that these payments would be provided with the continued ability for individual Councillors to opt out of receiving one or both payments.

270. APRIL ORDINARY MEETING

The Clerk advised that the Deputy Clerk would not be available for the Ordinary meeting scheduled on the 6th of April due to personal commitments and it had been recommended by the Clerk that the meeting be moved to the 13th of April.

Resolved that the next Ordinary meeting be held on the 13th of April 2023.

271. WELFARE HALL BOUNDARY WALL

Further to Minute 249, Cllrs adjourned to inspect the map that Cllr C Nickels had brought to the meeting. The map showed the adjacent properties to the hall with the boundary in place, next to the vacant plot that the Hall would eventually be built upon.

Resolved that the map be shown to the resident for further consideration as to ownership of the boundary wall.

Cllr M Allen declared an interest and left the meeting for this item.

Cllrs C Nickels and M Allen left the meeting at this point in proceedings.

272. PLANNING

Resolved to submit observations as detailed on Appendix 4.

273. MEMBERS REPORTS

273.1 Cllr A Williams: -

- a)** Cllr A Williams expressed concerns that a safety inspection detailing works required had come through following the Wards budget meeting.
- b)** Cllr A Williams requested details for Probation Services.

273.2 Cllr L Evans advised that replacement gates had been acquired for a location at Ffordd Y Glowr and queried whether a Town Council contractor would be carrying out the installation. The Clerk would contact the contractor regarding the matter.

273.3 Cllr N Craddock: -

- a)** Cllr Craddock advised that a council contractor had been asked to quote for works required at Swn Y Nant Playground.
- b)** Cllr Craddock advised that issues had arisen at Gorof Cemetery caused in part by a lack of pedestrian access between the two burial sections. A Council contractor had been asked to quote for works to a wall including the construction of steps.
- c)** Cllr Craddock queried whether the laying flat of damaged and unsafe headstones was proper process in the Gorof cemetery. The Clerk agreed that this was correct and in accord with Health and Safety legislation.
- d)** Cllr Craddock and Cllr L Evans highlighted the service life of the Gorof Cemetery estimated to be in the region of 25years. It was agreed that this matter should be placed on a future meeting agenda.

273.4 Cllr C Williams: -

- a)** Cllr C Williams advised that a meeting with the installers of a 3G pitch at the the Ystradgynlais Community Centre was due to take place.
- b)** Cllr C Williams advised that a local charity called CATCH had partnered with the Ystradgynlais Community Centre to operate a Foodbank in the near future.

273.5 Cllr G Roberts advised that the St Davids' Day Parade in the Town had been very successful and well supported. The Chairman commended Cllr Roberts and all Cllrs as well as local residents who had assisted with arrangements and supported on the day.

273.6 Cllr J Horrell : -

- a)** Cllr Horrell advised that he would be undertaking a further review of the OVW/SLCC Toolkit was to take place with the Clerk
- b)** Cllr Horrell advised that a request for support for a local Pride event had been received via the Facebook page, and that he had requested more details.

Meeting concluded at 22.05 p.m.

Appendix 2

PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**March 2023**

HM Customs and Excise	NI Employers March	457.34
Powys C C/Stand Life	Pension Contributions March	1213.78
Centregreat	Xmas Lighting Ystrad Ward	3390.00
One Voice Wales	Cllr Training Courses	140.00
St Cynogs Church	Grant Warm Spaces	600.00
Viking	Computer Access	221.63
Matthew Thomas	General maintenance/work	15115.00
BT	Telephone Account	193.05
OVW	Member Training	245.00
T Hughes	Electrical work Welrare Hall	404.00
Zoom	Annual Subscription	143.88
Sign Group	Signage Coronation Park	2,480.00

Signed ----- Chairman

----- Vice Chairman

Information gathering meeting regarding a proposed maintenance plan at Diamond Park from the Friends of Diamond Park.

Monday 6th February 10.30am at the Welfare Hall, Ystradgynlais.

Present:

Cllrs M Donnelly, R Millington, L Evans, N Craddock, G Roberts, M Allen, M Evans, J Horrell
Council Contractor

Clerk B Rees and Deputy Clerk J Conroy

Aspects of the maintenance currently employed at the Park were discussed by the members and contractor, after which the Chairman led the discussion by moving through Part 5 of the document provided by the Friends of Diamond Park which listed the areas of the Park with the current and proposed future maintenance.

1. Long lowland grassed area with memorial to mining community by River Tawe

Current maintenance: In the summer over the last 2 years annual Himalayan Balsam pulling has been carried out before it seeds by volunteers for Friends of Diamond Park. The area of Japanese Knotweed has not yet been treated

Proposed Maintenance: Cut grass regularly but join up the individual trees in the grassland with an area of long grass and just cut once in the autumn

Discussion Points: Members had concerns about leaving grass long in this area as it was felt this area dedicated to the historical aspects of the park with the information boards should be kept tidy cosmetically for the benefit of all. Long grass could trap rubbish as well as hide dog waste from sight increasing the risk of it being trodden in by park users. The contractor would be monitoring knotweed throughout the park.

2. Two areas of woodland along either side of the Nant Gyrlais

Current Maintenance It is currently cut regularly round the edge of the field leaving a path about 3m wide. This grassed area is full of saplings. The field is finally cut in October. Invasive cotoneaster is in several places, plus other invasives: Ladies Mantle, Blue Eye Grass

Proposed maintenance: Keep pulling the Himalayan Balsam to eventually erase it. Treat the Japanese Knotweed professionally by injecting it with glyphosate next autumn. NRW to be informed. Keep an eye on the river for dams that might cause flooding. Tag and record position of any significant trees.

Discussion Points: The contractor and members agreed that the Himalayan Balsam should be monitored and addressed as far as practicality and expenditure would allow. Knotweed should continue to be monitored and treated by the Town Council contractor.

Costly works to install paths into the dense areas at Nant Gyrlais were not considered a priority at present but risks associated with the area were being monitored and safety assessments for the Park continue on a regular basis. The contractor confirmed that no significant trees have been noted in existence in the area.

3. The wildflower meadow

Current Maintenance: It is currently cut regularly round the edge of the field leaving a path about 3m wide. This grassed area is full of saplings. The field is finally cut in October. Invasive cotoneaster is in several places, plus other invasives: Ladies Mantle, Blue Eye Grass.

Proposed Maintenance: That the width of the mown path around the edge of the field is reduced to 2m wide leaving a 2m transition zone from the woodland to grass. Tree saplings are removed to stop encroachment. These should be removed by volunteers using tree poppers. Other Invasive species could also be removed. *Possibility of harvesting wildflower seeds to be investigated. After mowing in October, grass should be removed to maintain the low fertility of the area (to encourage wildflowers). The contractor does not currently have the equipment to do this and maybe YTC could fund the purchase/hire of this.*

Discussion Points: The contractor advised that the transition zone for mowing remain as it currently is due to risks associated with wildfires and the adjacent residences backing on to the area.

The contractor agreed that ideally the grass should be collected following mowing. However, the cost of purchasing a grass collection box for their equipment had been investigated at approx. £12,000. This coupled with the extra work of numerous emptying's during a mow and final disposal would mean the initial outlay and extra ongoing costs would be significant.

It was suggested in regard to the invasive species and saplings, that volunteer efforts would be required.

4. The grass meadow

Current Maintenance: This field is regularly mown all summer. The mown grass is not removed.

Proposed Maintenance: Largely this field should be left unmown, but it is recognised that dog walkers will want paths through the long grass and an area should be left mown for picnickers with an unmown 2m buffer transition zone of long grass between the woodland and the grassland. Mow whole area in October with the rest of the unmown areas to stop encroachment. Remove the cut grass. An on-site meeting in January 2023 with the contractor Matthew and YTC representative Geraint Roberts is requested to discuss exact areas/ path routes to be cut. Could he suggest possible dates.

Discussion Points: The usage of the area was discussed, and members were concerned that the proposal would impact on that for many, including children playing football and the ability to run and walk freely including Dog Walking in the Park which was extremely important.

5. Surfaced and unsurfaced Footpaths

Current maintenance: Glyphosate is used along the edges of the paths and around some trees.

Proposed maintenance: Minimal use of glyphosate should be used at the edge of the tarmacked paths and glyphosate should be used to kill the weeds growing in the tarmac. Glyphosate should only be used around trees during their first 2 years after planting to enable establishment

Discussion Points: The contractor confirmed that Glyphosate at recommended concentrations is used as a weedkiller once annually and that they have never used it to treat the base of any trees.



Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

February 2023

Annual Report 2023 to 2024

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Section 1: Introduction

This is the Final Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting the Decisions and Determinations on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of principal councils, community and town councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2023.

This is my first Report as Chair of the Panel, having been appointed in June 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Bader, the outgoing Chair, for his service over many years and who led the Panel through two significant pieces of work last year – the [Independent 10 Year Review of the Panel](#) and restoring the link between elected members salaries and average earnings in Wales. I also thank Joe Stockley for his service and I am pleased to announce the appointment of Bev Smith in June this year. Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Ruth Glazzard continued to lead the work of the Panel during this period of change and I thank them for the support they have given both Bev and I, as new members. Ruth Glazzard stood down from the Panel at the end of 2022, when she took up a new Public Appointment. The Public Bodies Unit is currently recruiting for a new Panel member.

This year the Panel has continued to focus on and take forward the recommendations from the [Ten-Year Review](#). There are four key strands to this work – review the way we work, set out a three year strategy for the Panel, improve how we communicate and engage with stakeholders and build a robust evidence base to inform decisions.

We have embarked on the recommended Effectiveness Review of the way we work and have started developing our longer-term strategy with Panel Development Days in August and February. We have agreed that our mission is to deliver a fair and accountable reward framework for Wales, to support communities to have their voices heard within our local democratic bodies. We will use our expertise and professionalism to build trusting, sustainable partnerships to inform our work and deliver the changes Wales needs.

We aim to improve the way we communicate and engage both with our immediate stakeholders and the general public. As a first step we now publish a summary of our monthly meetings on our [website](#), but recognise there is much more to do. We aim to improve the accessibility and ease of use of our website and develop it into a more useful resource tool for people. We intend it to be an easy-to-use store of information on our Determinations, and, building on our current [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page, develop our Guidance on how all decisions should be applied.

Whilst we are an independent body, we will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders engaged in promoting participation in local democracy. The Welsh Government published research exploring the barriers to standing for elected office and the changing role of the councillor and held a series of events across Wales to highlight and discuss the findings.

We took an active part in these events, hosting seminars on remuneration and the changing role of local councillors. We welcomed the opportunity to share knowledge, experience, and best practice across a range of subjects and particularly the focus

on developing a shared understanding of how we can take collective action to increase diversity in local democracy.

The Panel has decided that this year will be a year of consolidation. Major changes were put in place last year, and a significant uplift in salary levels was agreed. We wish to allow time for last year's Determinations to bed in and to allow the Panel to continue its development of a research and evidence base to inform future decisions and move to a longer term planning cycle. This report reflects that decision.

During the past few years, we have been considering the structure of our reports and how we can make them more accessible to all. We have concluded that much of the information published replicates previous years, often without significant change. For this report we decided to focus on the changes made as a result of the proposals. We have therefore decided that the majority of the content set out in previous reports will be removed from the report and placed on the Panel's website. We will make arrangements for those who are unable to access the website.

This change has significantly reduced the size of the report and made it more manageable to navigate. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

We included an online survey in this year's Draft Annual Report for the first time and would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete this, or send in written responses to our consultation questions and comments on the Draft report.

Panel Membership

Frances Duffy, Chair
Saz Willey, Vice Chair
Bev Smith

Detailed information about the members can be found on the website: [Panel website](#)

Section 2: Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Role of the Panel

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of members of the following organisations.

- Principal councils – county and county borough councils
- Community and town councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent body and is able to make decisions about:

- The salary structure within which members are remunerated
- The type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- Whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- Arrangements in respect of family absence
- Arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes. There is no requirement set by the Panel for principal councils to vote on the Determinations. The Panel also sets out Guidance on how its Determinations should be applied, and all councils must have due regard to this Guidance. The current guidance is set out in the [2022 to 2023 Annual Report, Annex 2 “The Regulations”](#). This guidance is still applicable.

The Panel is also consultee for proposed changes to the pay of principal council Chief Executives.

Principles

The work of the Panel is underpinned by a set of principles which guides its approach, methodology and decision making. They are:

- **Upholding trust and confidence** – Citizens rightly expect that all those who choose to serve in local authorities uphold the public trust by embracing the values and ethics implicit in such public service.
- **Simplicity** – The Framework is clear and understandable.
- **Remuneration** – The Framework provides for payment to members of authorities who carry a responsibility for serving their communities. The level of payment should not act as a barrier to taking up or continuing in the post.
- **Diversity** – Democracy is strengthened when the membership of authorities adequately reflects the demographic and cultural make-up of the communities such authorities serve.

- **Accountability** - Taxpayers and citizens have the right to receive value for money from public funds committed to the remuneration of those who are elected, appointed or co-opted to serve in the public interest.
- **Fairness** - The Framework will be capable of being applied consistently to members of all authorities within the Panel's remit as a means of ensuring that levels of remuneration are fair, affordable and generally acceptable.
- **Quality** - The Panel recognises that the complex mix of governance, scrutiny and regulatory duties incumbent upon members requires them to engage with a process of continuous quality improvement.
- **Transparency** - Transparency of members' remuneration is in the public interest.

Section 3: Summary of Deliberations and Determinations

Methodology

Each year the Panel engages with members of the bodies for which it sets remuneration levels, officers within those organisations and clerks. The Panel also engages with relevant membership bodies including Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Society for Local Council Clerks. It does this through a range of meetings which, at the moment, remain mostly online. The Panel has continued with these discussions. They provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. They have also provided an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel has considered in its decision making.

The draft report was published widely and members of the public encouraged to and have provided valuable feedback and we welcome this. This year, the Panel had the opportunity to engage with a wider group of stakeholders at the three Welsh Government “Diversity in Democracy” events and workshops.

The Panel also considers feedback from the publishing of the Annual Report in the previous year. The changes made in last year’s Report, in particular the uplift in the basic salary, seem to have been well received by stakeholders. The issues raised with the Panel have all been centred around the detail of the Determinations, asking for guidance on how they should be applied or asking for points of clarification where the text of the Report was unclear.

The Panel has therefore agreed to review the format and structure of the main Report and make better use of the Panel website to provide information and guidance.

The Panel has a duty to set payments that are fair and that encourage and enable democratic participation. It must also take account of affordability and acceptability.

In making its determinations the Panel considered a range of benchmarks, including past, current and projected indices and actual figures and the known and forecast extent and impact of multiple economic and social factors. These included post Brexit and COVID work environments and the cost of living, energy and climate crises.

Consultation on the draft Annual Report

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions using an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 44 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox. The

Panel would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. A summary of the responses is included in section 4.

Overall, the responses supported the Panel's determinations and so no changes have been made in the final Determinations. In some areas the wording of the Determinations has been strengthened to clarify areas of uncertainty raised through the consultation, primarily a restatement of the ability for members, on an individual basis, to opt out of part or all of their remuneration.

In addition, the consultation responses, highlighted a few areas that the Panel will consider in their forward work programme for this year. The forward work programme will be published on the Panel's website at the end of March.

Following consideration of the views received in response to its consultation the Panel now makes its final determinations.

Panel's Determinations for 2023 to 2024

Basic salary for elected members of principal councils: Determination 1

The basic salary, paid to all elected members, is remuneration for the responsibility of community representation and participation in the scrutiny, regulatory and related functions of local governance. It is based on a full time equivalent of three days a week. The Panel regularly reviews this time commitment and no changes are proposed for 2023 to 2024.

Last year the Panel reset the basic salary to align with the [2020 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#) published by the Office of National Statistics. This reduced the imbalance that had arisen between the basic salary of members of principal councils and the average salaries of their constituents. The change took effect from the May 2022 local elections. The rationale for this significant step can be found in last year's Annual Report and a detailed explanatory paper setting out the historical context and analysis is available on the Panel's website.

Building on this decision the Panel has determined that for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 it is right to retain a link between the basic salary of councillors and the average salaries of their constituents. **The basic salary will be aligned with three fifths of the all Wales [2021 ASHE](#), the latest figure available at drafting. This will be £17,600. This will represent a 4.76% increase in the basic salary.**

Salaries paid to Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils: Determination 2

The limit on the number of senior salaries payable ("the cap") will remain in place. At the 2022 local elections boundary reviews changed the number of members for some councils. The Panel adjusted the senior salary cap for these councils in its 2022 to 2023 Annual Report. As there are no further changes for 2023 to 2024, the

maximum number of senior salaries payable within each council remains as set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Report](#).

All senior salaries include the basic salary payment. The different levels of additional responsibility of and between each role is recognised in a banded framework. The framework was revised last year after a review of differentials and market comparators. No changes to banding are proposed this year. Early next year the Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed.

The [ASHE 2021](#) increase applies to the role element of Band 1 and Band 2 salaries – leader, deputy leader and executive members.

To complete the last year's realignment of the framework, Band 3 and Band 4 salary holders will receive a small increase to the role element of their pay and the role element of Band 5 pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply.

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will therefore be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Salaries payable to Basic, Senior, Civic and Presiding members of principal councils

Description	Remuneration		
Elected members of principal councils			
Basic salary (payable to all elected members)	£17,600		
Senior salaries (inclusive of basic salary)	Group A	Group B	Group C
Band 1:			
Leader	£66,000	£59,400	£56,100
Deputy Leader	£46,200	£41,580	£39,270
Band 2:			
Executive members	£39,600	£35,640	£33,660
Band 3:			
Committee Chairs (if remunerated): Civic Head Presiding Officer	£26,400		
Band 4:			
Leader of largest Opposition Group	£26,400		
Band 5:			
Leader of Other Political Groups Deputy Civic Head	£21,340		
Deputy Presiding Member – no role payment	£17,600		

Group A: Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea

Group B: Bridgend, Caerphilly, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham

Group C: Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Isle of Anglesey

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Care and personal assistance;
- Sickness absence;
- Corporate Joint Committees,
- Assistants to the Executive,
- Additional salaries and Job sharing arrangements and
- Co-opted members

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

There are no other changes.

Contribution to costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils: Determination 4

Last year the Panel carried out a major review of the remuneration framework for community and town councils and undertook a comprehensive consultation exercise with the sector. The Framework was updated then and this year the Panel has decided to make limited but important changes.

The Panel recognise that all members of community and town councils necessarily spend time working from home on council business. This was the case before and during COVID and is continuing. As a result, members have extra domestic costs and also need office consumables.

The Panel considers members should not be out of pocket for carrying out their duties. However, an individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so. Each community and town council must ensure that it does not create a climate which prevents persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled that may support them to participate in local democracy. Payments should be made efficiently and promptly.

Reimbursement for extra costs of working from home

All councils must pay their members £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Reimbursement for consumables

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

It is a matter for each council to make and record a policy decision in respect of when and how the payments are made and whether they are paid monthly, yearly or otherwise. The policy should also state whether and how to recover any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year.

Guidance on taxation

It is not within the remit or authority of the Panel to provide specific advice on matters of taxation. Advice can be provided by One Voice Wales and guidance is available on the HMRC website.

The £156 should fall under the statutory provisions of section 316A ITEPA: [Income Tax \(Earnings and Pensions\) Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/18/section/316A) and the current amount that can be paid without attracting a tax liability is £6 per week: [Expenses and benefits: homeworking: Homeworking expenses and benefits that are exempt from tax - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking).

The level of payments is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Payments to Community and Town Councils

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all Members
Senior Role	Mandatory £500 for 1 member; optional for up to 7
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Costs of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 2	Electorate 10,000 to 13,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Mandatory for 1 member; optional up to 5
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 3	Electorate 5,000 to 9,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory
Group 4	Electorate 1,000 to 4,999
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Type of payment	Requirement
Group 5	Electorate less than 1,000
Extra Costs Payment	Mandatory for all members
Senior Role	Optional up to 3 members
Mayor or Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £1,500
Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair	Optional - Up to a maximum of £500
Attendance Allowance	Optional
Financial Loss	Optional
Travel and Subsistence	Optional
Cost of Care or Personal Assistance	Mandatory

Group number	Size of Electorate
Group 1	Electorate over 14,000
Group 2	10,000 to 13,999
Group 3	5,000 to 9,999
Group 4	1,000 to 4,999
Group 5	Under 1,000

There are no further changes to the payments and benefits paid to elected members and therefore all other Determinations from 2022 to 2023 still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering:

- Payments for undertaking senior roles;
- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;
- Compensation for financial loss:
- Attendance allowance and
- Co-opted members

Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The three national parks in Wales - Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. The Environment Act 1995 led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park.

National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The three fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

Payments will increase as a result of the uplift proposed for elected members of principal councils. Therefore, there will also be an uplift of 4.76% in the basic salary element.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a Band 3 senior salary of principal councils. Therefore there will be a small increase to the role element of their pay. Deputy Chairs, Committee Chairs and other senior roles will remain linked to Band 5. Therefore their role element of pay will remain frozen. The increase in basic salary will apply. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities, is set out in Table 3.

Table 3 – Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

National Parks Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£4,964
Chair	£13,764
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£8,704
Committee Chair or other senior post	£8,704
Fire and Rescue Authorities	
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,482
Chair	£11,282
Deputy Chair (where appointed)	£6,222
Committee Chair or other senior post	£6,222

All other Determinations for 2022 to 2023 will still stand and should be applied in 2023 to 2024, including those covering;

- Contributions towards costs of care and personal assistance;
- Reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs;

- Compensation for financial loss;
- Co-opted members and
- Restrictions on receiving double remuneration where a member holds more than one post.

Section 4: Consultation: Summary of Responses

The Panel produced and issued a draft report on 6 October 2022 for an eight-week consultation, which closed on 1 December 2022.

The website link and pdf version of the draft report was sent to:

- One Voice Wales
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Society for Local Council Clerks
- Principal councils
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- National Park Authorities and
- Community and Town Councils.

Determination 1: Basic Salary increase

Not all councils commented. Three highlighted whether it was correct that members be given an increase during the current cost of living crisis. However, these accepted that personal circumstances of members need to be considered and therefore it should be a personal matter for members to determine themselves whether or not they accept the pay rise or make the choice to opt-out. The Panel considered this feedback, and, whilst mindful of the overall impact on council budgets, agreed that the increase in basic salary was an important factor in encouraging and supporting a diverse group of people to stand for election.

Determination 2: Senior Salaries

There were two key issues raised by stakeholders; firstly whether the level of remuneration adequately recognises the increasing responsibilities of principal council members and secondly whether the current maximum number of senior salaries ought to be reviewed. The Panel noted these points and will consider whether this area should be a focus of the future workplan.

Determination 3: Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees

No representations were received in relation to the salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Determination 4: Payments towards costs and expenses of members of Community and Town Councils

Over half of the responses highlighted a concern that the payments were mandatory and that their council did not wish to increase their precept to meet these costs. The fact that the Report did not restate that members can choose to decline their entitlement to payments was not helpful. However, other responses supported the payments.

Ten per cent of the responses received raised concerns about the costs of administration and fifteen responses raised questions about the correct treatment for tax purposes. One clerk also asked if the payments that members receive could be

published globally, similar to how the contribution to costs of care and personal assistance is publicised.

Other comments mentioned the need to encourage “green” travel and one queried the need for payments to be made for senior positions.

The Panel considered these responses and agreed to reiterate the policy on individual opt outs in the Final Report and to provide a link to helpful HMRC websites.

The Panel will continue to work with stakeholders to improve support and advice to Community and Town Councils.

Determination 5: Payments to National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

No representations were made in relation to payments to members of National Parks Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

In addition, as part of the consultation process, stakeholders were invited to answer five questions via an online survey or by return email. A total of 89 responses were received online, whilst 48 were submitted by email to the IRP Mailbox.

Question 1

The Panel has continued to use the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) published by the Office for National Statistics as the benchmark for setting the basic salary of elected members of principal councils. There is a corresponding proportionate increase proposed for the members of National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Panel has continued to refer to the last published ASHE which was 2021. Do you agree that the basic salary element should be referenced to the [ASHE 2021](#) data.

Responses

90% of those who answered this question agreed that the Panel should reference the basic salary element to the ASHE 2021 data. 3% did not agree whilst 7% had no opinion on this question

Question 2

The Panel has made changes to the payment of costs and expenses of members of community and town councils. Do you agree with the addition of the “consumables” element?

Responses

72% agreed to the addition of the ‘consumables’ element, whilst 25% did not agree to this additional payment.

The most common theme in the answers given to question two was whether this payment was now mandatory or if the payment was optional and that Councillors had the choice to forgo. The same question was asked of the £156 payment.

Question 3

The Panel will gather evidence from principal councils to explore whether and how the workload of elected members has changed to inform future Determinations. Are you content that the Panel should build this review into its future work plan and build the evidence base to support decisions?

Responses

97% of those who responded to this question agreed.

The majority of the answers highlighted the additional work that elected members now undertook in their role.

Community and town councils welcomed this as it would recognise the amount of work that the sector does.

Question 4

We have significantly reduced the size of the report this year to concentrate on key decisions made and intend to make more use of the website to provide easy to use guidance to users. This approach is also in line with our efforts to respect the challenges facing us in protecting our planet.

How would you like to access information and guidance from the Panel? (choose all that apply)

Responses

Summary report with links to detailed guidance	84
Easy to use guidance notes	71
Frequently asked questions	49
Website	54
Social media	16
Information events	25
Other	14

If other, please specify:

The proposed summary report, detailed guidance notes and frequently asked questions were welcomed. Other answers included seminars, online meetings and an information event.

Have you experienced any challenges accessing or understanding our guidance and information through our website? Please let us know how we can make it easier for you?

A simplified report and separate guidance document will help stakeholders find the information they require.

No stakeholders experienced any challenges accessing or understanding the guidance and information through the website

Question 5

The Panel intend to undertake a series of engagements with all relevant stakeholders over the next year as part of the development of its forward planning and building of its evidence and research strategy.

Have you any comments that would help the Panel shape this engagement?

For example, a preference for online polls, the holding of engagement events, virtual or face to face, which groups should be involved, how do we engage with prospective candidates etc.

Responses

The most popular answers given to this question were:

- online polls
- Virtual meetings
- Face to face meetings

There was a mixture of support for both online and in-person events. Some responses proposed that the Panel held regional engagement events so that several Councils could attend at the same time. Other comments received suggested these events would help to discuss any issues with the Panel in depth and for the Panel to receive a broader viewpoint and more comprehensive feedback on any proposals.

One Voice Wales offered support to the Panel in arranging any events in the Community and Town Council sector.

Summary of Determinations:

Determination 1:

The basic level of salary for elected members of principal councils will set at £17,600.

Determination 2:

The salary of a leader of the largest (Group A) council will be £66,000. All other payments have been decided in reference to this and are set out in Table1.

Determination 3:

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be £8,800.

The salary of vice-chair will be £4,400.

Determination 4:

Members of Community and Town Councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home. And councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables.

Determination 5:

The basic pay of members of National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities has been increased by 4.76%. All payments are set out in Table 3.

Determination 6:

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 to 2023 [Annual Report](#) of the Panel remain valid and should be applied.

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The Report and other information about the Panel and its work are available on our website at:

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#)

**YSTRADGYNLAIS TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF YSTRADGYNLAIS**

**Planning matters to be considered by the Town Council for the month
of March 2023**

1.0 Applications granted consent

From information available on the Powys County Council website, the following applications the Town Council has been consulted upon have been granted approval.

22/2076/HH	Mr & Mrs Smith 113 Heol Twrch Lower Cwmtwrch Swansea SA9 2TE	Proposed two storey rear extension
22/2115/HH	Mr S Haggard 313 Brecon Road Ystradgynlais SA9 1QX	Erection of an extension and demolition of a garage.

2.0 Applications refused consent

From information available on the Powys County Council website, no applications the Town Council has been consulted upon have been refused approval.

**YSTRADGYNLAIS TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF YSTRADGYNLAIS**

3.0 Applications for consideration

From information forwarded by Powys County Council the Town Council has been consulted upon and are requested to give consideration to the following applications:-

23/0019/FUL	Mr L Grattarola Persimmon Homes Land West of the Former Penrhos School Brecon Road Ystradgynlais SA9 1QT	Development of 134 no. dwellings and associated landscaping and infrastructure works (Phase 2)
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Resolved ***That the following observation be submitted:
Although the Town Council has no objection to the proposed
development, it would request that the following be taken into
consideration:***

1) There should be an allocation for affordable housing
***2) There should be a review of local resources and infrastructure
e.g. health/education provision, etc and contribution/provision
where appropriate.***
***3) Tandem driveways could lead to on-road parking for
convenience, and contribute to congestion and obstruction of
paths and roads.***

23/0158/HH	Mr & Mrs Price 5 Richmond Park Ystradgynlais SA9 1SG	Erection of an extension to add an upper storey to bungalow
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Resolved ***No Observation***

23/0153/HH	Mr & Mrs D Davies The Larches 165 Brecon Road Ystradgynlais SA9 1QL	Erection of an attached garage
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Resolved ***No Observation***

**YSTRADGYNLAIS TOWN COUNCIL
CYNGOR TREF YSTRADGYNLAIS**

22/2160/OUT	Mr K Lock Land adj. to Talycoed Station Road Ystradgynlais SA9 1PW	Outline – Erection of a dwelling with all matters reserved
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Resolved ***No Observation***

4.0 Miscellaneous

- 4.1.** Further to Appendix 2, item 4.2 of Minute 242 at the meeting on the 2nd February 2023, the Ystradgynlais Ward had been awarded plenary powers to clarify matters and submit an observation for pre-planning consultation for a proposed development at Pen Y Bryn and Ael Y Bryn.

The Council was advised that the Ward had **Resolved** to submit **No Observation** regarding the consultation.