

MERLINS BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 6-30pm, online via the Zoom platform, and in person at the Welfare Hall, Merlin's Bridge.

Present: Cllrs. John Cole, Chris Lawler, Rita Lawler, Mike Dare, Veronica James, Alison Palmer, Michelle Lewis; Peter Horton (Clerk).

Apologies: C'Ilr Ian Lewis

Declaration of known interests

None

Approval of minutes of minutes of November 2025 monthly meeting

These were approved by Members, and retained by the Clerk for signature following the meeting (proposer C'Ilr Rita Lawler, seconder C'Ilr Chris Lawler).

Matters arising

Postal deliveries. No response had been received to the message sent to Royal Mail. However, C'Ilr Michelle Lewis had asked her local postman about the matter, and they had said there was no manipulation of delivery days that they were aware of. They had mentioned staffing issues as an occasional factor. Matter left in abeyance.

Pembroke Road narrowing. Nothing had been heard back from P.C.C. Clerk to write in again, citing concerns over failure to respond in a timely manner, and seeking clarification of service level failures in respect of response times.

Plans

There were no plans for discussion this month.

Correspondence

01) P.C.C. – Response to query about any potential legal liability on dog walkers to carry poop bags – noted.

02) Audit Wales – Notification of completion of audit of 2024/25 accounts – dealt with in 'Accounts' below.

03) P.C.C. – Reminder to request re-filling of grit bins as necessary – noted, and Members had confirmed that all the grit bins were full.

Accounts (to include quarterly budget review)

Payments

Easy Websites (website direct debit)	:	£36-96
Lloyds Bank (monthly bank charges)	:	£ 4-25
Clerk (salary, October – December)	:	As per contract
HMRC (PAYE tax / N.I. contributions)	:	As per contract
John Cole (Invoice for Christmas trees provision, etc.)	:	£786-00
Sycamore Stores (Selection boxes)	:	£253-75
I.C.O. (Data registration fee)	:	£ 52-00

The above payments were approved by Members (proposer C'Ilr Veronica James, seconder C'Ilr Alison Palmer).

External audit of 2024/25 accounts

Members noted that the audit had been completed, with unqualified approval. The Clerk had arranged for publication of the requisite completion notices in the community noticeboard and online.

County Councillor's report

Boot Valley. A complaint from a local resident about surface water in Boot Valley had been posted on the Facebook page. It was noted that this was the responsibility of P.C.C. Members noted a wider problem with blocked drains in the community, especially along the Pembroke Road.

P.C.C. budget. C'llr John Cole mentioned that the P.C.C. Envirocrime external tender had not been renewed, and the Authority was considering other options, including possibly bringing the service in-house, and possibly amalgamating it with parking enforcement. He also mentioned that P.C.C. was hoping to keep its budget increase below 7.5%.

Discussion of any applications received for co-option of new councillors

There had been no applications since the October meeting.

Discussion of arrangements for siting of public bench to mark VE-80 commemorations

P.C.C. had not commented on the possibility of siting a bench on the P.C.C.-owned land near the cenotaph. C'llr John Cole to chase this up. Members noted that if a response was not received soon, it might be better to proceed with siting the bench on land in the Welfare Field, as previously discussed.

Any necessary discussion of environmental / dog-fouling issues in community

Fly-tipping. Members felt that the overall situation seemed somewhat improved, though acknowledged that this may be temporary, and it could well be worse on black-bag collection weeks.

Dog-fouling. No change noted.

Any necessary discussion of future community events

Christmas bingo. It was reported that the bingo event held on 6th December had been a success, with around 45 in attendance.

Christmas cards. C'llr Alison Palmer apologized, but had not achieved any progress on the matter. It was noted that Cleddau Press would need around a week to turn around any order, and there would be limited time to arrange delivery in the remaining time available. C'llr John Cole undertook to arrange something if possible, with Members circulating photographs for possible use on the cards.

Tree decorations. C'llr John Cole offered to mention to the school that they would be free to put decorations on the tree if they wished to do so, as for the previous year.

Discussion of difficulty finding free parking for carers accompanying adults in their care

C'llr Chris Lawler had raised this issue, whereby carers transporting adults in their care could not reclaim parking costs, but were having difficulty finding non-charging spaces. This was impacting the time those in their charge had for recreational activities, due to the time being taken to locate suitable parking. C'llr Rita Lawler suggested that dedicated bays should be provided. C'llr John Cole noted that the situation would improve when the new multi-storey car park was opened, providing around 250 extra spaces. Beyond noting the situation and sympathizing, Members felt that there was nothing the community council could do about this situation.

Any other business

Litter. C’lir John Cole mentioned that the problem of litter in the community was worsening, partly due to the current temporary absence of the regular P.C.C.-litter picker. JC – messy with litter in village. C’lir Mike Dare commented that volunteers from the Emmanuel Mission Church may be willing to assist with volunteer litter-picking, as they had done previously. Agenda item to be tabled for January to discuss possible options to address the problem.

Street lights. C’lir Michelle Lewis mentioned that some non-functioning street lights in the vicinity of St Catherine’s Gate had still not been replaced, despite having been reported some time previously. C’lir John Cole assured Members that these lights were on the list for action in due course.

The meeting was closed at 7-10pm. Next meeting - Wednesday 14th January 2026.