

# Penllyn Community Council

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***Clerk to the Council***  
*Mr AD Williams*  
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Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Penllyn Community Council held  
at the Llansannor Community Hall, City

7.00 p.m. on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

Present - Councillors, P. Summers (Chair) (Llansannor), J.N Evans (Ystradowen), D. Fardo (Penllyn), H Harbour (Ystradowen), E. P. Jarvis (Llansannor), S.C. Howells (Ystradowen), A. Jarvis (Penllyn), L. Tiessen (Penllyn).

Also in attendance: Mr A. D Williams Clerk to the Council, Vale of Glamorgan Cllr C.E.A. Champion, Mrs P. Hallett Vale Council Standards Committee Independent Member.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Mrs Hallett, attending in an observer capacity, and introducing her to all those present.

## **396) Apologies for absence**

Cllrs M. Bancroft, Parisa Eslambolchilar, C.Roach; David Hunt, PRoW officer, VoG Council; PC S. Elson, PCSO S.Davies.

## **397) Declarations of interest under the Council's Code of Conduct.**

None.

## **398) To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Resolved:** The draft minutes of the meeting be approved.

## **399) Matters arising from minutes other than appearing below**

None

## **400) Community police matters**

No police attendance, written report received as below:

(Report received too late for reporting to meeting , included here for completeness only)

Incidents / crime March 2023:

Road traffic 2  
Theft 1

#### **401) Vale Council Matters**

(A) Highways matters

(a) Schedule of outstanding and ongoing highways issues.

(i) New issues

None

(ii) Ongoing issues

(a) Winter gritting and flooding (Minute 384 (A) (ii) (a) March 2023 refers) – The Clerk reported that a reply dated 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 had now been received from the Vale's Director,( vis to The Chairman's email / letter of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023) and is reproduced below:

#### **VALE COUNCIL'S REPLY**

"Dear Mr Summers

#### **Re: Long term highways issues**

I refer to your letter of 30th January 2023 concerning the above. I can confirm that my officers have investigated the matters raised and offer the following response.

I would initially advise that it is not unusual for surface water and, in particular, ground water to discharge on to the surface of the highway from adjoining private land. This is particularly the case in rural areas and can be extremely challenging to deal with and, in many cases, impracticable, if not impossible, to prevent in its entirety in a costeffective manner.

It is also the case that positive highway surface water drainage systems can be extremely limited in rural areas due to the nature and character of the area and topography, and where they do exist often discharge to soakaways which can become ineffective when the ground is saturated after heavy or prolonged rainfall. Furthermore, highway drainage systems are designed based on 1 in 5 year storm return periods and greater frequencies or intensities will generally exceed capacity and result in exceedance flows along the road surface which should be considered a normal process.

The Council is constantly monitoring and inspecting its local highway network and where opportunities arise, which are cost effective and practicable, will take necessary steps to divert or manage discharges or surface water on the highway to reduce the risk of incidents. However, as mentioned this action is not always feasible and it is regrettably beyond reasonable expectation to remove all discharges of water from many roads within the Council due to the nature and character of individual areas. Storm intensities are increasing due to global warming and highway flooding is therefore likely to increase in frequency.

**In relation to the specific points raised regarding major long standing flooding issues, I have provided feedback on the actions taken by the Council.**

1. At the location identified north of Ystradowen on the A4222, there are several gullies within close proximity to a wooded area, leaves and twigs from which tend to cover the highway surface water gully gratings during winter months, however, the gullies are fully operational. At the double bend further north, there is one drainage point on the west side of the carriageway, against the stone wall, that we do receive several calls about during the wetter months, again this is due to a build-up of material. Given the Council's limited resources, we generally only react The Vale of Glamorgan Council The Alps, Wenvoe CF5 6AA Cyngor Bro Morgannwg Yr Alpau, Gwenfô CF5 6AA [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) [www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk](http://www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk) to this particular location when it's brought to our attention as a concern. Less than 12 months ago, the highway surface water gullies on A4222 were cleaned and jetted as part of the strategic route gully cleaning program for which stop and go traffic management was utilised.

2. The single gully discharging into a soakaway chamber is the only form of highway surface water drainage in the vicinity of Church Farm given its locality and lack of Council drainage assets in the area. During the wetter months, adjacent land to the soakaway becomes saturated and thus leaving it inoperable with the only option available being to pump the water away, when we are aware of an issue. The Council does not have sufficient funds available to pump this daily, as being suggested, however, we respond to flooding concerns as soon as reasonably practicable given resources available.

3. The roadside ditches/watercourses are maintained by the Council as part of the ditch clearance program. Works were undertaken during January and February 2023 and they are therefore considered to be in reasonable condition and functioning adequately. There is a roadside culvert opposite Newton House and two additional culverts under highway, one across the private road to Newton Farm (15" concrete pipe) and the second across the main road through Newton adjacent to the driveway access to Newton Lodge (masonry arch culvert). The Council undertook repairs to the roadside culvert some years ago and is currently programming works to clear material from the inlets to both the roadside culvert and the culvert across the private access to ensure the free flow of water. The culverts structures were last inspected in 2020 and an informal inspection was undertaken late February with no evidence to suggest that any of the culvert structure is collapsed or otherwise significantly blocked. It is proposed to undertake a survey of the various culverts in this area using funding next financial year which will be used to update our asset management systems and inform any requirement for additional maintenance or other works that may be required at that time. I can confirm that both the 15" concrete pipe and the masonry arched culvert are considered to be on the adopted highway and the responsibility of the Council. The capacity of the culvert adjacent to the driveway access to Newton Lodge has been modelled due to previous investigations / complaints at this location. The results indicate that even at a 100% blockage scenario for a 1 in 100yr return period event, there are no predicted impacts to property, albeit any exceedance flows will inevitably discharge along the highway at this location. Given the presence of the masonry wall north of the highway the actual flooding on the highway could be reduced but it is very difficult to say with any certainty. The masonry arch culvert has an estimated capacity of 0.6 cumecs and the 15" pipe culvert a slightly lower capacity at around 0.25 cumecs which is likely to exceed the predicted peak flow from a 1 in 2 yr return period event, and therefore the

culverts are likely to be overwhelmed every winter resulting in exceedance flows over highway discharging to the main roadside ditch to the west. To improve the surface water discharge /capacity to prevent exceedance flows along the highway would require an upgrade to the existing culverted watercourses, plus any associated open section ditches (this still wouldn't prevent exceedance flows impacting on the private access running north to the Barn and Newton Farm), and regrettably there is no capital funding available to progress such works at this time.

4. The Council was advised by a resident that the open surface water drainage grip adjacent to property named 'Whitehall' appeared to be defective as the outlet point of the grip was blocked, however this particular grip has never had an outlet point connecting to any buried drainage systems and had been installed historically to take surface water off the highway, which would in turn slowly filtrate through the formation layers of the verge. After checking the Council's historic details, it was confirmed that we had no record of an outlet, but investigated the resident's claim and attended site the next day with our workforce and plant. After extensive excavating, it was determined that our records were in fact correct and no outlet was found within the surface water grip and therefore the arisings were reinstated within the verge. Whilst on site, officers also checked our surface water grips near 'Sunny Croft', where it was confirmed that all grips and buried laterals to the nearby river are free flowing and clear of obstructions. Further investigations, both internally and with National Resources Wales (NRW), suggest that there is an illegal foul connection somewhere along Welsh Water (DCWW) system, which could have been a contributing factor to DCWW pumping station exceeding its capacity. NRW has confirmed that now it is comfortable that the surface water is not entering the DCWW foul system it will be pursuing this with DCWW. It is also a key point that all highway surface water systems that discharge through buried lateral systems into the river, can only do so when the river levels are not high and this is no different elsewhere around the Vale of Glamorgan, similarly with many other neighbouring authorities. Under normal rain conditions the rural Vale highway surface water systems can cope, however, this isn't the case in heavy down pours and something the Council cannot address without significant Capital investment.

5. Highway maintenance officers attended site on 25/1/23 and it was discovered that a nearby manhole chamber has been vandalised with the cover and frame stolen and someone has filled the chamber with bales of hay. We have therefore instructed a contractor to remove these items and will programme the ditching works in as soon as resources permit. It must also be noted that following on from the construction of a property "Hillside Farm" that a historic roadside ditch has now be removed to accommodate a vehicle access. Without this ditch to guide the surface water runoff, this location will continue to overtop and flood the highway. Further investigations and consideration are ongoing regarding this area but are likely complex and may take some time to progress or result in any further action if this is at all practicable.

6. The significant amount of surface water flowing down Watery Lane onto the A4222 and Newton/Llanharry road was caused by a blockage of a pipe inlet in a field at Watery Lane that conveys a large amount of spring water, this being brought to the Council's attention by the landowner. I can also confirm that clearance of debris was undertaken by the Council and the problem has not reoccurred since.

7. The roadside ditches exist south of Court Drive and these have recently been cleared as part of the annual program, however, the Council will also now investigate

any pipes that connect these ditches where gateways are present. Ditches on private land into which highway surface water may drain would be the responsibility of the riparian owner to maintain.

8. The flooding on Ffald Lane was cleared by the Council previously and the pipe pressure jetted so that its discharge point in the adjacent field is clear and free flowing. Officers will approach the landowner to gain permission to enter the field to clear this outlet, however, this will be best undertaken in the milder months ahead. With regard to highway surface water drainage near the Jane Hodge home, I can confirm that gullies here discharge into a nearby watercourse and officers will inspect these during the next period of persistent rainfall to determine if any works are required.

With regard to the precautionary treatment of roads during freezing conditions, I am aware that a full and detailed response to such matters has previously been provided to you via e-mail, dated 12th December 2022.

**In relation to the specific points raised regarding the treatment of roads during icy conditions, I have provided a further response below which reiterates the Council's position as previously stated.**

9. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow or ice as far as reasonably practicable. To discharge this duty, the Council operates a 24/7 winter maintenance service between October to April each year when it monitors weather forecasts and road temperatures daily. This is undertaken using eight strategically placed ice stations as well as local weather forecasts to predict weather and road conditions and determine whether preventative road salting is required along predetermined gritting routes. The preventative treatment routes are identified within the Council's Winter Service Protocol and developed over many years and generally include strategic routes and major roads, important industrial commercial routes, roads providing an access in and out of villages and towns and other routes deemed at risk. These preventative treatment routes cover nearly 50 per cent of the Council's total highway network and this activity helps reduce the risk of ice formation on key routes and keep those roads in as safe a condition as far as reasonably practicable – see link below. The Council also maintains numerous salt bins in various areas for residents to use on Council maintained roads and pavements.

[Winter Salting Routes in Green \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/winter-salting-routes-in-green)

The weather conditions experienced across the Vale and South Wales in general during January 2023, represented an extremely challenging situation as there was a significant wet period at the beginning of the month followed by a sharp cold spell and freezing temperatures mid-January. I can confirm that during this most recent severe cold weather gritting operations were carried out in accordance with defined plans, policy and process between 15th to 18th January 2023 as detailed below. Over the period, the winter maintenance team also attended and dealt with numerous sites within the Council's local highway network where icy conditions were reported to spread additional grit / salt to assist in dispersing and reducing the future risk of ice formation as far as reasonably practicable. I consider that the preventative treatment and additional actions taken at the time to deal with the freezing temperatures were

reasonable and sufficient to adequately discharge the Council's statutory duty as described.

Sunday 15th January 2023 out at 18:00 Hrs - 10 Grams all routes

Monday 16th January 2023 out at 18:00 Hrs - 20 Grams all routes

Tuesday 17th January 2023 out at 14:30 Hrs - 20 Grams all routes with a second crew on standby to deploy around pre agreed routes again as required

Wednesday 18th January 2023 out at 15:30Hrs - 20 Grams all routes with a gritter loaded and drivers on standby for any further emergency call outs.

Whilst preventative road salting reduces the risk of ice formation, it does not guarantee roads will be free from ice at all times, and a number of roads within the Vale were regrettably impacted by black ice and the freezing conditions. Where these hazardous conditions were identified, additional salting was organised and the situation was continually monitored to react to changing conditions as quickly as possible until temperatures improved. Special attention was paid, and additional salt deposited to areas where there is known seepage from adjoining land onto the highway which was exacerbated by the very wet conditions before the cold spell. Irrespective of preventative treatments, it is incumbent on motorists and other road users to take additional care when driving, walking or cycling in difficult weather conditions, with advice available on both the AA and Highway Code websites. In particular, the Highway Code Rule 226 to 237 refers to driving in adverse weather conditions and Rule 230 states, drive with care, even if the roads have been treated. The Council would advise the public to regularly check weather reports during cold spells and drive to the conditions of the road.

10. The road from Llanharry via Ton Breigan to the junction with road to City and Craig Penllyn and the road from the fork junction west of Newton through to City is not included on the Council's precautionary gritting routes, albeit the Council will take action to assist with concerns raised along any section of the Vale's local highway network subject to available resource and other winter maintenance priorities at any specific time. I would reiterate that response provided in December 2022, that the Council has no plans to review with the intention of increase its precautionary gritting routes at this time given current budget constraints. The Community Council may wish to consider purchase of grit bins to for roads or locations not included on the Council's precautionary gritting routes schedule where you consider these are high risk or priority for whatever reason. The Council can provide a quotation for additional grit bins if this is required.

11. Please refer to comments already provided above. The Council considers that the actions undertaken in respect of drainage issues and preventative gritting treatment, including additional actions taken at the time to deal with the freezing temperatures are reasonable and sufficient to adequately discharge its statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the adopted highway and ensure that safe passage is not endangered by snow or ice as far as reasonably practicable. This does not guarantee that the highway will be safe, however, the Council will maintain in such a state of repair that it is reasonably passable for the ordinary traffic without danger caused by its physical condition. The duty relating to snow and ice is, again, not an absolute as it is not physically possible and practicable to keep all areas of the highway clear of snow and ice at all times, albeit the Council is required to devise a

plan in accordance with best practice and this is contained in the councils Winter Maintenance Protocol as referred above.

### **Specific points raised regarding communication and actions**

I have reviewed your comments regarding communications with the Highways department and consider as you have alluded there has always been good and effective communications with many Community and Town Councils within the Vale, including Penllyn Community Council. Indeed, I note that you had a prompt response regarding the following matters:-

- E-mail received on 11th December 2022 from Cllr Phil Summer and response sent on 12th December 2022 regarding emergency gritting for essential access to Llansannor school.
- Follow up email received on 12th December 2022 regarding the above matter and whilst no response was issued specifically, action was taken to deal with concerns raised over the road the Penllyn to Llanharry road and, in particular "the Gippy" which was acknowledged by Cllr Summer by email on 13th December 2022. You will appreciate that it is extremely frustrating to provide a detailed response only to have further queries raised in a follow up email with some disregard to the position already stated as well as exacerbating management of what is already an excessive amount of emails that are received into officers with the Highways team.
- E-mail received on 13th January 2023 from the Clerk to the Council regarding highways flooding at Ystradowen and Lansannor to with a holding response sent the same day advising that it is extremely challenging to maintain highways free from flooding during poor weather in many rural areas and that an update would be obtained.
- E-mail received on 17th January 2023 from Cllr Phil Summer regarding public safety issues in Penllyn and Llansannor again raising gritting and flooding issues with follow up emails on 18th January and 20th January 2023. These emails were subsequently superseded by an email from the Clerk to the Council on 29th January 2023 containing a letter from Cllr Phil Summers comprising a comprehensive list of issues contained in the previous emails.

Whilst the Council and its officers endeavour to respond to emails and other correspondence at the earliest opportunity given current resources, workload pressures and conflicting priorities, the Vale of Glamorgan's published Service Standards currently identify a time period for responses to letters of ten working days and for emails five working days. I therefore do not consider that you have always provided the Council and its Highways team sufficient time to investigate, consider and respond to your various items of correspondence, especially as the enquiries relate to very challenging matters which take time to investigate at a time when resources were fully focussed on delivering the highway and winter maintenance function during exceptional weather conditions.

Therefore, I do not accept that there are any weaknesses in its communications procedures to deal with correspondence in a timely fashion and specifically within the published Service Standards whether this is associated with public requests or those from Community or Town Councils. Should the Council identify an emergency situation due to extreme weather then emergency planning procedures are put into

place in accordance with prepared protocols, however, this was not deemed necessary in respect of the weather experienced in January 2023, albeit all Council resources were focussed on dealing with the ongoing functions of the teams to maintain the highway in a safe condition and ensure safe passage as far as reasonably practicable. You should also be aware that any emergency response to flooding or snow falls primarily to the emergency services working with the local authority – for further information please refer to the webpage link below.

[Flooding \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](http://valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Finally, based on the above information, I do not consider that it is necessary to undertake a review at this time of the Council's operational or communications arrangements.

I hope that the above information provides a full and detailed response to all the matters raised in order to clarify the Council's position as well as clarifying useful information on the processes the Council have in place to discharge its statutory duty and maintain the adopted highway in as safe a condition as far as reasonably practicable.

Yours sincerely Miles Punter Director of Environment and Housing Services"

#### PENLLYN'S RESPONSE

The above having been circulated by the Chairman to all Members 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 for their comments thereon it was agreed that the following response dated 31<sup>st</sup>. March 2023 be sent to Mr Punter and also to Cllr Mark Wilson - Cabinet member for Neighbourhood and Building Services:

"Dear Mr Punter

#### **RE Vale of Glamorgan Council Response to PCC Long Term Highways Issues**

Thank you for your letter dated 10th March 2023 and for the work done by your department since the submission of our report on the 30th January. Despite our ongoing concerns in regard to these issues and your responses, which I will details below, the immediate remedial work done by your team is greatly appreciated by this Council and our residents.

What however was not so appreciated by the Council was the tone adopted in the opening paragraphs of your response and indeed in some of the subsequent detail responses, which was considered to be somewhat patronising and complacent.

The majority of Councillors serving on the Penllyn Community Council have lived in this area for many years if not decades, several were born here. As such we are fully aware of difficulties as well as the benefits of living in a rural Community. We are not "newbies" who complain at the sound of church bells or a bit of farm slurry on the road. We know and understand what we can realistically expect in regard to our roads and other services and also the financial constraints currently placed on local Government. Consequently, we do not need to rehear generic excuses and platitudes in regard to the issues raised.



Specifically we understand what is reasonable and normal on the roads in our area and what is not. And for the avoidance of doubt, the issues set out in our report are not normal and whilst they will obviously fluctuate in intensity with the weather, they have not been present historically in the manner, frequency or duration they are now. These issues have only become significant hazards in recent times and therefore, it is absolutely reasonable to conclude that something has changed, be that due to a failure of the infrastructure or its maintenance. Either way, deficiencies such as these can and must be rectified in away that 'permanently' resolves the issue and we get out of this current cycle of reactive and expensive temporary fixes, which offer only short term containment of the problems in the most costly and inefficient way.

Amongst our members there is considerable knowledge and expertise relating to the local land conditions and some have known and have worked the land in the area for many years. We have offered on many occasions to meet with your engineers so that this local knowledge and experience may be passed on. However, there seems to be a reluctance to avail yourselves of this opportunity. This is regrettable because although I'm sure your team has some very competent engineers, as an engineer myself I learnt a long time ago that theory is of limited value without experience and local knowledge when trying to resolve problems of this nature. Furthermore, there is no doubt that improved liaison between Yourselves, NRW and the local Community Council/knowledgeable local landowners would also encourage better communication and involvement by all parties in the maintaining the wider drainage system and the resolution of these issues on a long-term basis.

**In relation to your responses to the specific issues set out in our original report, the relevant local Councillors have consider those, with local residents where applicable and we would make the following supplementary comments:**

#### **A. MAJOR LONG STANDING FLOODING ISSUES**

1. Regular sustained flooding of A4222 north of Tudor Garage Ystradowen and S bends approaching the county boundary.

The local Councillors and residents were especially disappointed about the response to this serious hazard on this busy and dangerous section of the A4222 north of Tudor Garage and even more so of the way the serious flooding of the S-bend further along was dismissed as no real hazard to be reacted to on an ad-hoc basis!

Users of this road can confirm these areas flood every time we have a modest rainfall let alone a storm and the flood on the S-bend constitutes a particularly serious hazard. It is not just vehicles crossing the dividing line of the highway into the path of oncoming vehicles. Those that don't, mainly delivery vans and heavy goods vehicles, plough right into the water and if you are driving in the direction of Cowbridge your vehicle is deluged causing at least momentary, loss of visibility.

The local Councillor has lived in Ystradowen for more than 6 years and his immediate family live mainly in the Pontyclun/Miskin area, so he has first-hand experience of the frequent near misses on the route. To him and many other residents it is clear this is a serious accident waiting to happen. Therefore if the Highways department genuinely believe this issue is caused by build-up of

material on the gullies and is getting 'several calls during the wetter months', then the response on such a busy road must be an enhanced, planned, frequent and proactive programme of clearance, the current reactive responses simply don't work and are too little too late !

In addition to what we trust will be the application of an improved clearance strategy by the Highways department, our local Councillors will monitor and log the instances of flooding on the S-bend during the next nine months, so we have a record, which apparently you do not, to assist you in justify further structural improvements to the drainage in this area. For your information in the last 14 days the S bends have been significantly flooded on 5 days and on 2 of these the flood water has come beyond the centre line of the road. Despite this it would appear Highways department have chosen to remove the temporary flood signs. This seems to be a somewhat illogical decision.

2. Regular sustained flooding of bend/junction between Court Farm and Church Farm Llansannor

We believe your response in regard to this issue rather misses the point. We are not asking for the soakaway to be pumped daily, even in wet periods, that is not a practical, viable or costeffective solution. Nor does it address the real issue.

The soakaway has historically provided adequate drainage for 30 years or so and it is only in the last 4 or 5 years that there has been any substantive flooding issues. It is therefore self-evident that IF the pipe from the gully to that soakaway has been checked and is not blocked or collapsed, something has specifically failed in regard to the soakaway system itself. It's quite probably it has simply reached the end of its useful life and if it was re dug and repaired with fresh drainage material there is no reason to expect it would not once again provide adequate drainage for the gully and resolve the issue for many years to come. Without the need or cost for repeated regular pumping.

We would also bring to your attention the associated issue on the road entering this junction from Llansannor Hill and the 'Green road'. The stretch between the junction and the sharp bend at the bottom of Llansannor hill is also frequently flooded to a significant depth and not only has this water badly damaged the road surface but it then drains down the road to the junction where it further contributes to the load on the previously referenced gully and soakaway. Although there is a very wide verge on RHS as you approach Llansannor Hill, any ditch which may have existed has long since disappeared. We would suggest that if a wide ditch /holding pond was recut in this verge with suitable run offs from the road, the dug material could be used to reinforce the true edge of the verge and the water which now collects on the road could run off, collect in the ditch and drain naturally. Thereby helping to ease the primary issue and the hazard on this road.

3. Newton road from Newton House Farm to junction bottom Pen y Lan hill and side road to the Barn and Newton farm

We are pleased to observe that limited ditch clearance work has been undertaken at the culvert entrance opposite the 'Milk Churn' and either-end of the short road crossing culverts. We are also pleased to learn that a full survey

of all the culverts in this area will be undertaken in FY 23/24 FY as local evidence clearly indicates these are, for whatever reason, currently not fit for purpose.

We would however highlight, since it does not appear to have been adequately considered to date, that the volume of water exiting the field ditches opposite the Milk Churn at peak times will always significantly overwhelm the culvert entrance even if it is in perfect condition but especially as the existing ditch flows directly onto the protective grating, which is therefore quickly blocked. Since enlarging that length of culvert may not be cost effective, even if possible, the alternative of re-digging of the incoming ditch to create a suitable size Attenuation Pond in the field at the head of the culvert should be considered by the Council in cooperation with the local landowner, who would also benefit.

At the other the end of culverts, to the west beyond the properties, effective drainage is dependent on the condition of both the roadside ditches and those across farmland to the River Thaw. All these form part of the River Thaw drainage system for which Vale of Glamorgan Council and NRW have joint responsibility, to monitor, maintain and enforce where necessary. However, the deterioration in this network due to the current lack of liaison and joint working between Vale Council, NRW and where appropriate local landowners, to ensure it is adequately maintained across Newton Moor and where necessary attenuated before entering the populated area, appears to be a significant contributory factor, alongside the condition of the culverts, to the flooding in this area. We would suggest that any survey work done on the culverts must be extended to address this element of the problem with NRW.

4. Sustained flooding and sewage contamination road Graig Penllyn to Pont y Rhyd junction

We note that some significant clearance and recutting of the ditches has been carried out in this area since submitting our report, for which we and the residents are very grateful. We also note your concerns and intent to investigate with DCWW a possible illegal connection to the fowl drain. We look forward to receiving further feedback on this issue in the near future.

With regard to the missing outlet pipe from the 'grip'. Although initial excavation to find this were carried out in the wrong location, we understand further excavations have since been undertaken. At this time, it is unclear if these have been successful or not. However, if further works are required to locate this pipe please do not hesitate to contact this Council and we will ensure an informed local Point of Contact is provided who can provide relevant information to the site supervisor.

5. Penllyn to Llanharry Road adjacent to Hillside Farm and Degar Hill

We were unable to locate the manhole referred to, however we are pleased to note it is being replaced and it has also been noted that some clearance and recutting of roadside ditches is now being undertaken in this area, for which again we are grateful.

With regard to the drain/ditch across the access road to Hillside Farm, we understand a pipe was installed under this track when it was built, which extends up towards the agricultural buildings at Hillside and drains into the pond.

It has also been noted that there is a pipe into this from the road some 100m up from the Hillside access road towards the farm, at a point where localised ponding regularly occurs. Your engineers may quite possibly have dug it out when in the area a few days ago. However, the pipe is open ended and unprotected so will block again in a very short time. May we suggest a gully or similar is installed at this point, feeding into and protecting this pipe so as to minimise maintenance and provide ongoing reliable drainage this point on the road.

In regard to the works undertaken last year, there is considerable concern particularly from the surrounding landowner that the gully/soakway was installed without making appropriate provision for this to properly drain across the adjacent land into the established field drainage system and ultimately into the River Thaw. As a result of this omission the new soakway overflows directly onto the adjoining field which is now regularly flooded and unusable. We would highlight that in these circumstances where you are deliberately diverting water onto private land it is the Council's responsibility in conjunction with NRW to ensure suitable pipe or field drainage is provided to effectively take the new excess water onward into the existing ordinary watercourse and river drainage system without creating new flooding of the adjacent land.

It has also been highlighted by the local Council member with historic knowledge of the immediate area that a piped drain exists to carry excess water from the roadside pond at Hillside under the road and on into the River Thaw drainage system. It is believed that the recent repeated overtopping of this pond across the road is in part the result of the failure/blockage of this pipe. Consequently, we would suggest that if this drain was investigated and repaired as necessary by the Highways authority it would also significantly contribute to the mitigation of flooding on this section of road.

Once again if the relevant highways supervisor /engineer contacts this Council we will be pleased to provide contact details for a knowledgeable person who can assist further with detail information on this matter.

6. Maendy Road (A4222) to Newton West of disused rail bridge & Newton fork junction Water run off from Watery lane / A4222

Thank you for the information relating to this area. Apart from what appears to be a specific issue as you describe, there is a long-standing issue with water running off the A4222 onto the Aberthin /Newton/Llanharry road and flooding that road to the east of the disused rail bridge, where the drainage, despite work by Highways and the landowner, is limited.

More regular clearance of the gullies on the A4222 is essential to minimise this run off and this Council will continue to monitor the situation and report to Highways as necessary.

#### 7. Llansannor to Trebettyn road south of Court Drive

Again, we note and appreciate the recent work to clear these ditches and run offs. We consider it critical that work continues in regard to the referenced pipes and these are also now properly cleared /repaired as indicated.

However, we must highlight these ditches and runoffs will serve little purpose if the field drainage to the River Thaw, into which they drain, is not adequately maintained. We consider it to be the Councils responsibility to liaise with NRW and the riparian land-owners to ensure that adequate maintenance of such drainage ditches is regularly undertaken. If only to ensure your work on the roadside ditches is as productive as possible

#### 8. Trerhyngyll - Ffalds lane, Jane Hodge and Culvert from Wellgreen to Jane Hodge

We note your comments and will monitor this situation.

Throughout many of the specific comments made by our local Councillors and residents in regard to flood prevention there appears to be a common theme regarding the lack of communication and coordination between Vale Council (Highways department) and NRW in respect of work necessary to maintain the overall drainage system which carries excess water from many of the highway drains back into the wider River Thaw drainage system. Without such coordination any work undertaken by highways is likely to be of limited benefit. It would therefore seem clear that to get best value from the work of the Highways department, Vale Council and Highways department in particular, must significantly improve its working relationship with NRW and where appropriate riparian landowners.

### **B. TREATMENT OF ROADS DURING ICY CONDITIONS**

I have again revisited the email response received on the 12th Dec 2022 and fail to see how that can be described as anything remotely close to a “full and detailed response” I regret to say it more accurately falls into the ‘patronising and complacent’ description referenced in my opening paragraphs.

At no point have we suggested that we would expect every road to be treated and this Council fully appreciates drivers own responsibilities in such adverse conditions. Nor would we expect the council to immediately clear rural roads in the event of sudden and extreme snow fall. However, what we would expect is that:

- a) the Council did actually meet its section 41 obligations to maintain the adopted highway and ensure that safe passage is not endangered by snow or ice as far as is reasonably practical - especially in the vicinity of Schools and Community access routes
- b) the Council follows its own published Policy when determining the regularly treated ‘Green Routes’ and
- c) that it does actually then reliably treat those routes.

Despite the generic protestation that the Authorities is meeting its statutory duty under Section 41, the extent of routes treated and the information quoted in regard to rates applied in the period Jan 15th to 18th across supposedly all routes. This council has clear evidence from numerous sources, that even some ‘green routes’ in Penllyn

and Llansannor including regular school access routes were not treated during this period or in fact earlier in mid December, until repeated complaints were lodged with the Council/Highways. Whilst we appreciate mistakes and equipment failures can occasionally create issues, some of these roads appear to have been deliberately omitted on several occasions, even though they are the only 'planned treated route' from that direction to the local school.

And for your information, the emergency situation at Dehgar Hill was eventually addressed not by any emergency intervention by the VOG highways, despite repeated reports and requests for them to attend, but by the attending police officers persuading the RCT gritter driver to come an additional few hundred yards over the border and treat the affected section of the hill ....

This Council considers your refusal to review the 'green routes' to include the sections of road in Llansannor, previously advised, to be arbitrary, contrary to published Vale of Glamorgan Council policy on this issue and unsupported by any meaningful rational argument.

Not only is the omission of these sections of road contrary to the published Vale Council Policy on gritting, as previously stated, but there are specific reasons for their inclusion, set out again below.

We would therefore repeat our request for a formal review of the green routes to include:

a) The road from Penllyn to Llanharry, via Dehgar Hill, which provides routine access for school transport and wider vehicles in general to a significant number of properties and farms and from Penllyn to Llanharry and Llansannor School. [To avoid the steep gradient and severe width limitation in City.] This road also forms the natural route for traffic between Llanharry and Penllyn and onto Bridgend and is regularly used by significant numbers of commercial and private vehicles. However it does include a number of bends and steep hill sections which are potentially dangerous/impassable if not treated.

b) The road from the fork junction west of Newton, (with road from A4222 to Llanharry) through to City, including Pen y Lan Hill. Which provides the only access for residents of Newton, Pen y Lan, Trebettyn and Llansannor to safely treated roads.

And as has previously been highlighted, since the gritting vehicles regularly travel along these routes anyway for access, the additional cost in time and fuel is zero. The only addition being the small amount of extra salt used.

For the record, suggestions regarding the use of additional grit bins on these routes are impractical and show a lack of appreciation of the roads concerned, distances and issues applicable to these sites.

## **C. COMMUNICATION**

We note your response and reference to specific emails, some of which have, we accept been responded to in reasonable or even prompt manner, but equally many have not been responded to at all. And those are emails from the Clerk and or Chair

of a Community Council..... which one might expect to be addressed with some reasonable diligence.

We are not unreasonable and we do not expect instant answers, what we should however reasonable expect is that all emails are at least promptly acknowledged and then if necessary followed up with an informed and informative response in a reasonable time frame. What will inevitably cause confusion and frustration is if an email is not at least acknowledged and the writer is left in limbo with no alternative but to enquire again. Obviously, we do not wish to distract officers from urgent duties but failure to acknowledge emails and reports leaves Councillors, in particular, in a position where they cannot keep residents advised in regard to ongoing situations and the civic response and must therefore repeat the communication, to the obvious frustration of all parties.

Response to emails is however only part of the issue, during emergencies or even simply during adverse events, weather, etc. All residents need to have access to basic information: Can they get their Children to school and how; Will be able to get to the doctors, shops etc. They also need to know promptly if they report a highways issue, be it snow and ice or flooding, fallen tree, etc. that their report has been registered and then what action is being taken and in what time scale. And when they can't get that information themselves, they not unreasonably expect their Councillors to be able to access it for them.

Those are basic requirements for society to operate in abnormal circumstances (emergency or otherwise) and we would consider it to be incumbent on the Vale Council to ensure that its Communications Systems are designed and its staff briefed, to provide those simple clear responses, either to individual reports wherever possible and /or if appropriate, by way of well publicised, easily accessible, meaningful and informative generic responses. If the Utility providers such as National Grid and Dwr Cymru can do it then so can The Vale Council.

Failure to provide a reliable method, with the resilience to ensure sufficient information to keep residents fully advised of the actions being taken and any issues or delays which might occur, in a timely manner during adverse conditions and emergencies, will only cause frustration amongst those residents, Community councillors and Council staff alike and can lead to much worse.

## **D. ACTIONS**

Penllyn Community Council and our residents thank you for the time taken in providing your initial response and very much appreciate more practically the work already done since our initial report in regard to clearing ditches etc.

In this follow up report we have sort in particular to highlight a number of the underlying issues and root causes associated with these problems. We do not wish to unreasonable add to your administrative load considering these points however we do believe these root causes must also be addressed if a permanent and cost-effective resolution is to be achieved.

We would therefore request the Vale of Glamorgan Council Neighbourhood Services and Transport Department revisit the supplementary information highlighted in this report for each issue and advise this Council what can practically be achieved and

when to provide permanent solutions. Which we can then pass on to our Constituents.

We would specifically ask that particular attention is paid to achieving or improving on, a coordinated approach with NRW so that work done locally by the Highways Department is not constrained or even nullified by issues with the wider drainage system within the River Thaw drainage area for which both the Vale Council and NRW have responsibility.

We would again ask that the Department gives meaningful consideration to the modification of the gritting “green routes” where we consider the significant highlighted shortcomings can be simply overcome, with negligible change or cost.

And despite your previous answers we would suggest that the Department does need to reconsider its position in regard to urgently reviewing and update your communications systems and policies to ensure residents are kept fully informed in a timely manner, particularly during abnormal and adverse conditions. Thereby ensuring good communication and minimising frustration for both the electorate, local Councillors and Council officials dealing with those situations.

As indicated throughout this report should the Department require any additional information in regard any of the matters raised, this Community Council will be pleased to provide local points of contact for detail information/site meetings etc. and or answer any questions raised.

Based on your review of these supplementary comments, the Community Council would thank you for your attention and request an urgent updated report from the Vale of Glamorgan Council in regard to each of the issues raised and your proposals for their permanent resolution, with time scales.

Phil Summers CHAIR PENLLYN COMMUNITY COUNCIL “

(b) Road signage – (Minute 384 (A) (a) (ii) (b) March 2023 refers) – Nothing further.

(B) Other matters

(a) Public Rights of Way, Newton / Pen-Y-Lan (Cllr Eslambolchilar) (Minute 384 (B) (a) March 2023 refers) – Mr David Hunt , Vale Council Countryside Access Manager, had again unfortunately to cancel at the last moment, due to the Easter school holidays, but agreed to attend May’s meeting of Council.

(b) Green waste collection, Vale Council’s intentions regarding charging (Minute 384 (B) (b) March 2023 refers) – VoG Cllr Champion advised that whilst it is intended charges wef July 2023 detailed arrangements are being developed.

(c) Black bag collection, Vale Council’s intentions - VoG Cllr Champion advised, similar to the above, a change to three weekly collection is being considered wef July 2023.

(d) A48 litter/ litter picking (Minute 384 (B) (c) March 2023 refers) - VoG Cllr



Champion agreed to look into possible alternatives.

(e) Ystradowen land plot (Minute 319 (B) (b) November 2022 refers) (Cllr Evans) – Council had been waiting circa five months for any response from the Vale regarding a licence for this site.

The Clerk reported that in view of the above he had sought the involvement of VoG Cllr Champion following which it is hoped that it might be possible to report some progress to the next meeting of Council.

**Resolved:** Cllr champion be thanked for his ongoing assistance in taking this project forward.

#### **402) Chairman and members reports and communications**

None

#### **403) Delegates reports**

Vale Community Liaison Committee meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 – Apart from the regular reports of the police and the fire service, other reports were received in respect of the modernisation of the Llandow skip site, and the Vale Council's initial response to the Boundary Commission which comments do not implicate this Council.

#### **404) Matters relating to land holding**

(a) Allotments from Labouring Poor (Minute 387 (a) April 2023 refers) – The Clerk advised on latest received from the Charity Commission, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, advising that “After considering the information you have provided I am happy the trustees are meeting the charity’s objectives”, and also requesting us to update our Charity Commission entry. This closes the matter.

**Resolved:** Clerk to update Charity Commission web site as requested.

(b) Grounds maintenance Winchfield – The Clerk advised that following further correspondence from the Chairman to Countrywide, the contractor had reduced 2022/23 charges to reflect the exceptionally dry conditions and reduced grass cutting during the year. 2023/24 contractual arrangements had now also been agreed but the revised contract had not yet been received.

#### **405) Planning applications**

(a) New applications:

Application No.	Location & proposal	Community Council's Recommendation
<b>2023/00299/FUL</b>	<b>Highfields, Ystradowen</b> Ground floor extension, convert double dormers to single larger dormers, changes drive to improve parking /	No objection

	manoeuvrability, internal remodelling througho...	
<b>2023/00298/FUL</b>	<b>Fern Cottage, Llwyn Nwyddog Farm, Cowbridge Road, Ystradowen</b> Proposed ground floor extension to form WC and utility room	No objection
<b>2023/00126/LAW</b>	<b>2, Carne Close, Cowbridge</b> Removal of the existing rear window and double doors, widening existing openings. Construction of rear single storey extension, containing new utility room and kitchen	No objection
<b>2023/00108/FUL</b>	<b>1, Radcliffe Walk, Ystradowen</b> Proposed alterations to existing external openings and ground floor infill extension. Part conversion of garage to study and utility room	No objection

**Resolved:** The recommendations as set out above be forwarded to the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

(b) Replacement LDP, Candidate Site Register publication – The Register can be viewed at:

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/planning\\_and\\_building\\_control/Planning/planning\\_policy/Candidate-Sites.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/planning_and_building_control/Planning/planning_policy/Candidate-Sites.aspx)

This document highlighting sites within the Council wards was discussed in some detail. However there is no provision for formal consultation at this stage in the process, further consultation will take place following the publication of the 1st draft RLDP in due course.

#### 406) Finance

(a) Payment of accounts:

<b>Chq No.</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount £.p</b>
726	Mr AD Williams	April 2023 Salary	301.00
727	Wales Audit office	Audit 2022/23 (Estimated)	200.00
728	One Voice Wales	Member training	35.00
729	Wales Audit office	Audit 2020/21 (Replacement for Cheque No.672 £300.00 cancelled), Audit 2021/22	400.00
730	Graig & Penllyn Residents Assoc.	Duplicate receipt	375.00
731	Askfrank Ltd.	Playground sign , Trerhyngyll	156.00
732	Mr AD Williams	Disbursements – Cllr Bancroft re: Trerhyngyll playground, mole control, gate lock.	80.00

**Resolved:** Schedule of payments as above be approved.

(b) Council's Annual Accounts 2021/22, Report of the External Auditor, "Unqualified report" - Council considered the report.

**Resolved:** That the "Unqualified" report be noted

(c) Vale Council Strong Community Grant funding 2023/24 - The Clerk reported on the availability of funding as above, applications to be submitted by 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

#### **407) Clerks Correspondence**

Nothing further

#### **408) Member's training programme 2022/23**

Nothing further. OVW bursary and free course information for 2023/24 is awaited.

#### **409) Council's Annual Dinner**

Members expressed their appreciation of the work done by the Chairman in organising the above which proved to be a very enjoyable evening.

#### **410) Any other business**

Evan Jenkin's Charity – Request from the Charity, asking whether Council would like to nominate additional persons to serve as trustees.

Discussion ensued regarding the obligations on the Council. to try and obtain a copy of the Charity's Trust Deed and Chair to write Chair of Evans Jenkins Trust to obtain further clarification

**Resolved:** That Cllr Howells / Cllr Evans try and obtain a copy of the Charity's Trust Deed and Chairman to write Chair of the charity to obtain further clarification for consideration at the next meeting of Council.

#### **411) Date time next meeting**

Next meeting, Council's Annual Meeting Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023, 7pm, to be followed by May's Ordinary Meeting at 7.30pm.

**Signed:**

**Chair**

**Date:**