



Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council, Wednesday 19th November 2025

PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

Mayor Cllr Geraint Baty (chair), Cllr Gwen Baty, Cllr Sami, Cllr Thomas, Chief Officer Natasha Alexander (minutes).

PRESENT VIA TEAMS

Cllr Bond, Cllr Williams, Cllr Board.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies received from Cllr Harbour, Cllr Ellis, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Champion, Cllr Hannigan-Davies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

4. REVIEW OF THE LICENCE REGARDING INSTALLATION OF CATENARY WIRES

A summary of why an Extraordinary Meeting is being held is given and an update on progress of the Christmas lights installation is given by the Chief Officer: In March 2025, the Vale of Glamorgan Council took the catenary wires down due to a large load passing through High Street. They subsequently lost our wires. A quote for replacing the wires was obtained from our contractors - who tested the wires and installed the lights in 2024 – and sent to the Vale of Glamorgan to confirm that they would pay for this. The Vale of Glamorgan Council confirmed that they would pay to replace the lost wires, however they would use their own contractor who are lighting specialists. Their contractors subsequently informed the Vale of Glamorgan that due to safety concerns with the existing fixings in the ten buildings,

these fixings would need to be replaced. It was confirmed that their contractors would put in new fixings when installing the catenary wires. The Vale of Glamorgan Council requested the Town Council obtain written consent from each property for the new fixings to be installed, which has been obtained from nine out of ten properties to date, with information awaited from the Vale of Glamorgan Council before the tenth property will give their consent. We have sought permission from the Vale of Glamorgan Council in respect of the listed buildings, as six of the ten buildings are listed. The new fixings have been agreed from the Senior Planner on the basis that the Town Council remove the old fixings and make good the installation site to match the material and finish within 12 months, which is a clause within the Licence received from the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The Licence has a number of issues and questions have been raised with the Vale of Glamorgan Council. A response had been requested in advance of this meeting to enable us to fully discuss and approve, where possible, however a response has not yet been received.

A question is raised that the lights were safe last year, why do we have to replace the fixings, as stated by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Cllr Thomas provides historical context from her role with the Chamber of Trade, which were initially responsible for the catenary wires and Christmas lights installation before gifting the lights to the Town Council in 2023. Since 2023 the Town Council have hired alternative lights. It is raised that the locations for the wires, the fixing and wires were selected specifically for the original lights, which are smaller and lighter than the hired lights. The first year used in 2023 the lights fell down, the second year used in 2024 there were issues with the lights bunching inwards on the wires in strong winds. It is Cllr Thomas' understanding that the new lights require a second catenary wire at the bottom to secure them and reduce blowing in the wind. On this point, it is also noted that we do not have a copy of the pull tests from 2024; this has been requested from the contractor but not yet provided. It is discussed that Health and Safety is the most important issue here. It is better to have no lights installed this year than to have unsafe ones. The Chief Officer confirms that we are seeking and awaiting confirmation from the Vale of Glamorgan Council as to whether their contractors will be carrying out the safety testing on the wires including the pull tests for our Christmas lights to be installed. We are also seeking and awaiting confirmation as to whether our contractor will need to carry out further safety tests following installation of the lights. It is preferable for the Vale of Glamorgan's contractors to carry out the safety testing as the lighting specialists.

On consideration of the safety of the fixings, it is possible that the hired lights have put additional strain on the fixings now causing them to be unsafe. In any event, it is considered that there will be general wear-and-tear on the fixings over the years and that it is the Town Council's responsibility to deal with this. It is discussed that clause 2(m) of the Licence puts a requirement onto the Town Council to remove the existing fixings and make good the installation sites to match the material and finish within 12 months, to be approved by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. It is confirmed by the Chief Officer that we are seeking and are awaiting confirmation from the Vale of Glamorgan Council that this term relates solely to the 6 listed buildings. A quote for the works has been requested, but not yet received. However, on discussion with Cllr Champion yesterday, it is his view as an Architect that the cost to satisfy clause 2(m) will not be excessive as the fixings will leave a relatively small hole to be made good. He has given his apologies for this meeting, but has given permission for the Chief Officer to raise this comment. Photographs of the fixings requiring replacement are sent by the Vale of Glamorgan Council are shown to all Councillors.

Cllr Thomas states that historically the Chamber of Trade used one contractor to install the wires and the lights and it would be preferable if the Vale of Glamorgan Council's contractors would also install the lights on behalf of the Town Council. This would ensure consistency and prevent issues of blame should there be further issues with the lights as the same company have installed the wires and the lights. They can also assess the hired lights for suitability. It is confirmed that this option will be explored urgently.

A question is raised about if further heavy goods loads pass through Cowbridge High Street in relation to the new wires. It is considered by the Chief Officer that lessons have been learnt with the Vale of Glamorgan Council as discussed in a meeting following the incident in March 2025 where the lights were uninstalled and lost by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and they have agreed to liaise with the Town Council in future. It is also considered that the catenary wires are usually taken down after Christmas, however were left up in error on year then subsequently used for bunting. This is a point that has not yet been discussed with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Licence, but is a point that will be raised.

A motion is passed and seconded for a vote on whether to explore the option of the Vale of Glamorgan's contractor installing the lights, which is APPROVED.

A motion is passed and seconded for a vote on whether to agree to pay for the removal of the existing fixings and make good the installation sites, which is APPROVED.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No further meeting is required at this time.