
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen (Chair);
Councillor Simon Glyn (Vice-chair).

Councillors: Craig ab Iago, Menna Baines, Dylan Bullard, Stephen Churchman, Steve Collings, Annwen Daniels, R.Glyn Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, Dylan Fernley, Peter Antony Garlick, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Louise Hughes, R.Medwyn Hughes, Judith Humphreys, Nia Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Aeron M.Jones, Aled Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Eric Merfyn Jones, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Keith Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Linda A.W.Jones, Sion Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dilwyn Lloyd, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan, Linda Morgan, Dafydd Owen, W.Roy Owen, Jason Parry, Nigel Pickavance, Rheinallt Puw, Peter Read, Dewi Wyn Roberts, Elfed P.Roberts, Gareth A.Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, W.Gareth Roberts, Mair Rowlands, Paul Rowlinson, Angela Russell, Dyfrig Siencyn, Mike Stevens, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas, Hefin Underwood, Catrin Wager, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams, Gareth Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Also in attendance: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Service / Monitoring Officer), Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department / Head of Democracy Service), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor / Deputy Monitoring Officer), Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Manager), Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department) (for item 16(a)), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head – Planning and Environment) (for item 9(2)), Dewi Jones (Council Business Support Service Manager) (for item 10) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Council was asked to elect a Chair for 2020/21.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020, in response to the crisis, allowed a range of changes in the way the Council's democratic arrangements were administered, which included permission for the Council to extend the term of the current Chair and Vice-chair. Therefore, the need to appoint could be waived and the current Chair and Vice-chair could be allowed to remain in post until the 2021 Annual Meeting at the latest.

It was proposed and seconded not to proceed to appoint a Chair, and to allow the current Chair to remain in post until the 2021 Annual Meeting.

In response to a question, the proposer explained that the logic behind his proposal was that the current Chair had not been in post for a full year as a result of the pandemic, and that appointing a new chair would mean that the person would only have 6 months of chairmanship.

RESOLVED not to proceed to appoint a Chair, and to allow the current Chair to remain in post until the 2021 Annual Meeting.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Council was asked to elect a Vice-chair for 2020/21.

RESOLVED not to proceed to appoint a Vice-chair, and to allow the current Vice-chair to remain in post until the 2021 Annual Meeting.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillors: Freya Bentham, Anwen Davies, Charles W.Jones, Elwyn Jones, Dewi Owen and Cemlyn Williams.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of the Council held on 5 March, 2020 as a true record.

Referring to item 4 of the minutes – The Chairman's Announcements, a member noted that he did not like the use of the word '*Briton*' when referring to Elfyn Evans' success in Rally Sweden, as he was a Welshman from Dinas Mawddwy.

5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

6. THE CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that everyone had experienced a major change in their way of life over the past six months. A high number of Gwynedd families had lost loved ones. Thus far, 83 Gwynedd residents had passed away from this serious disease, a disease that was still amongst us unfortunately.

It was also noted that many members of this Council had lost loved ones since the last Council meeting, and condolences were expressed to everyone who had suffered a bereavement.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect and remembrance.

Best wishes were extended to Councillor Charles Wyn Jones, who was currently in hospital.

The following were congratulated:

- Councillor Craig ab Iago and family on the birth of a daughter;
- Councillor Freya Bentham and family on the birth of a daughter.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATIONS, OR ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to note.

8. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

9. QUESTIONS

(The Cabinet Members' written responses to the questions had been distributed to the members in advance).

(1) Question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

"Is it possible for the Council to persuade One Voice Wales to include, not only the Chair and clerk, but every Member of Town and Community Councils, in the procedure of legal advice? I am asking as the complaint often involves a dispute between the Clerk and/or Chair and Members of Town and Community Councils. Currently, it is not possible for individual Members to obtain advice from One Voice Wales regarding matters involved with Community Councils, such as maladministration on behalf of the Clerk and/or Chair."

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Nia Jeffreys

"Each one of the 64 Town and Community Council in Gwynedd is a corporation that is accountable and responsible for its own procedures. With the exception of the Standards Committee regarding Code of Conduct matters, Gwynedd Council has no formal overview function with regards to the running of these bodies. However, as key partners in several aspects of our work, we are eager for them to have the appropriate governance arrangements.

According to their website:

"One Voice Wales is the principal organisation for community and town councils in Wales, providing a strong voice representing the councils' interests and a range of high quality services to support their work".

There are nearly 740 Town and Community Councils in Wales. However, I understand that One Voice Wales provides a service for those Town and Community Councils that opt to pay membership to them. This is done through the usual point of contact, namely the Clerk or Chair on behalf of the Town or Community Council. Clearly, the range of services provided and what is offered by One Voice Wales is a business matter for them.

I do not have figures for the number of Community Councils that opt to join One Voice Wales. On the other hand, I can presume that providing advice and support services for approximately 8,000 Town and Community councillors in Wales involves quite a lot of resources and capacity.

Given the provisions regarding Eligible Community Councils within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019, it may be timely to hold the discussion regarding the nature of the support required by Town and Community Councils in future. However, in my opinion, the appropriate way of taking this matter forward would be for the Town and Community Councils and their members to make the case directly to One Voice Wales."

Supplementary question from Councillor Gruffydd Williams

"Would it not be more powerful if the question was submitted by Gwynedd Council to the Welsh Local Government Association, on behalf of the community councils?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Nia Jeffreys

"I fully acknowledge the point made by the councillor, and thank you to the town and community councils for the heroic work many of them undertake in their communities. As I say, in my opinion, the appropriate way of taking this matter forward is for the town and community councils and their members to make the case directly to One Voice Wales. However, I am happy to follow this up with Councillor Williams outside the meeting of the full Council to see whether I could do more as Cabinet Member to facilitate, assist or support this."

(2) Question from Councillor Gareth Tudor Jones

"There has recently been a substantial increase in the purchase of second homes in Gwynedd, and particularly in Morfa Nefyn / Edern. It is a 'Crisis' according to local residents, Nefyn Town Council and Councillor Craig ab Iago (on *Pawb a'i Farn*). What steps does the Council intend to take to call on Welsh Government to devolve powers with urgency to the County Council to mitigate the situation and manage second homes?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Gareth Griffith

"This work was commenced last year and we are in the process of gathering evidence. The work will be completed by the end of November and we will move forward with that. The written response deals with what has happened thus far and how we deal with it in the future, but this work was commenced last year."

A supplementary question from Councillor Gareth Tudor Jones

"With it being a second homes crisis, would you not agree that we should not settle on waiting a few months again for the research outcomes and that action is required now, and urgently, and that the Council has a duty to campaign seriously for powers to be devolved from the Government in Cardiff to the County Councils to control land tax rates specifically, in order for Gwynedd Council to be able to introduce emergency measures to monitor and manage the purchase of second homes?"

Response from the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Gareth Griffith

"As the response to the original question notes, we are currently undertaking this work for all communities in Gwynedd, and it deals with house prices and also how this affects our communities in Gwynedd. It is a process that will take time. It is not something that will happen overnight unfortunately. Whatever we do in future, what matters is that we have the evidence to proceed with this. I have spoken to Sian Gwenllian, AM, and she has shared with her peers in Cardiff that this work is ongoing and that support will be required in time to persuade them in Cardiff on the way forward. At the end of the day, it is up to the Welsh Government, but it is up to us to persuade them to provide the evidence at hand."

10. GWYNEDD COUNCIL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20

Submitted – a report by the Leader requesting that the Council approve and adopt Gwynedd Council's Performance Report 2019/20 as a clear, balanced and accurate picture of the Council's performance in 2019/20.

Due to the pandemic, the Leader noted that all efforts of Council departments had been directed towards the response to the crisis from mid-March, and that it was strange to look back at a normal period. He noted that the crisis had highlighted the importance of local government in providing a service for residents, and he thanked the staff of all services for their hard work in supporting the county's communities, and to the councillors for undertaking heroic work on behalf of their electors.

The Leader further noted that members had not been given the usual opportunity to scrutinise in committees this year, and he thanked them for their patience during the period. As he was aware of the gap in the usual dialogue between all members and the Executive, he also explained that he intended to arrange briefing meetings with Cabinet members and heads of department in order to update members regarding the work that had been undertaken in different fields, and to give members an opportunity to discuss and ask questions.

He thanked Bethan Richardson (Business Support Officer) and Dewi Jones (the Council's Business Support Service Manager) for preparing the report in such a coherent manner.

The Leader expressed his best wishes to Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education) who could not be present at the meeting, as he had recently had surgery at the hospital. He then extended an invitation to all other Cabinet members to say a few words in their turn. During their presentations, Cabinet members highlighted some points from the report that were relevant to their fields of work, elaborating on the priorities of services during the next period and the challenges they faced. They also reported on how departments had made a substantial contribution towards the response to the crisis, and thanked the heads of department and staff for all their hard work.

Members were then given an opportunity to make observations and ask questions. The following matters were raised by individual members:

- All Council staff were thanked for their commendable work during the crisis, and also the councillors, local volunteers, the third sector, Mantell Gwynedd and the county's small businesses.
- Disappointment was expressed regarding the wish of Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board to remove nearly 40 nursing beds from Pen Llŷn, and the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being was asked to raise the matter with the Health Board.
- The Cabinet Member for the Environment was thanked for recently visiting Pen Llŷn, and it was noted that it was good to see how wildlife had thrived and how pollution had reduced during the lockdown period.
- It was noted that there was concern regarding what lay ahead of us in light of the pandemic, and all the jobs that would be lost here in Gwynedd over the winter.
- The report was welcomed and it was noted that the statistics showed that the work being completed by Gwynedd led to good outcomes.
- It was noted that a massive increase had been seen in demand for housing since the start of the year, and it was asked how changes in supply and demand could be monitored, measured and responded to, not only on a county level but also on a more local level. In response, the Cabinet Member for Housing explained that it was intended to build in flexibility into the Housing Action Plan and that it was not intended to be prescriptive. He also explained

that measuring things was an important element of Ffordd Gwynedd and that the member was welcome to contact him if he had any further questions.

- It was asked what the councillors could do to assist staff during this difficult period. In response, the Chief Executive noted that members should be praised for changing their working arrangements to enable staff to undertake their work during the period, and that he did not believe that members could do any more, with the exception of continuing to support the staff. A lot of work in terms of responding to the crisis fell on the crisis system. Members were encouraged to read the report that had been submitted to the Cabinet on 13 October on Council arrangements to prepare for the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic.
- It was noted that the period had been difficult for councillors and that the majority had risen to the challenge.
- A member thanked those staff who had gone the extra mile to help him over the past few months, and especially Steffan Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department), Adrian Williams (Meirionnydd Area Engineer), Sion Wilkes (Highways Inspector) and Tracey Loveday-Fone (Civil Enforcement Officer).
- The local member expressed her dissatisfaction regarding the decision of Gwynedd Consultancy to withdraw from the Fairbourne Project Board and form a group themselves, without consulting with her.
- Reference was made to Gwynedd Consultancy's asset monitoring project using sensors, and it was noted that this exciting development could create the opportunity for staff to work on a cross-departmental basis by connecting the sensors together and using artificial intelligence, and to work in accordance with Ffordd Gwynedd principles. It was asked whether it would be possible for members to receive an output from the sensors as this would enable them to know whether any problems developed in their wards. In receiving this local knowledge, members could assist officers and inform the people who would be affected. In response, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal noted that the provision was not yet available across the county but that it was possible to gain access in some places. He added that he would welcome a further conversation about the potential of the sensors and this could be discussed at the briefing session with members.
- Thanks was expressed for the report and it was noted that it included a lot of what the members had requested. The Leader was thanked for his willingness to always respond to questions from members, and the Chief Executive was also thanked for his willing assistance.

RESOLVED to approve the report as an accurate, balanced and clear reflection of the Council's performance in 2019/20, and to adopt it.

11. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Council was invited to appoint a chair for the Democratic Services Committee for 2020/21.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Chair of the Democratic Services Committee for 2020/21.

12. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Submitted – the scrutiny annual report for 2019/20 by the Chair of the Scrutiny Forum, Councillor Beth Lawton. She thanked all members of the scrutiny committees for their work and all officers for supporting the members and drawing up the report.

She emphasised that it was important for everyone to get the opportunity to see that scrutiny was taken seriously in Gwynedd and she noted that 40 matters had been submitted to scrutinisers during the year. She added that a meeting of the Scrutiny Forum had recently been held, along with a series of meetings between Chairs and Vice-chairs of the scrutiny committees, the Cabinet members and heads of departments to identify matters to be scrutinised. She noted that there was no wish to place additional pressures on the departments in the current climate, but dates had been set to resume the scrutiny process, limiting the number of matters under consideration until everyone had adjusted to the procedure. Should any member be of the opinion that a matter needed to be addressed, she noted that they would be welcome to contact her or one of her scrutiny co-chairs.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Forum was thanked for presenting the report on behalf of the scrutiny chairs.

13. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2019/20

Submitted – the Statutory Director of Social Services submitted her annual report offering an overview of 2019/20 performance and outlining the journey in Gwynedd in providing services for individuals who needed advice, support or care from the Council.

The Director noted that she was happy with the performance of the Social Services for 2019/20 although there were some challenges to overcome. The year in question, which referred to the period pre-Covid, now felt like ages ago, and the crisis had emerged as that year ended. She sympathised with the many people who had been affected by the virus. She thanked all staff of the sector in Gwynedd for their heroic work during the last few months, and for their work over the coming months. She also thanked others who had supported this heroic effort, the volunteers, carers, members from the third sector and Council partners, and also the Council's other departments for their willingness to release staff to assist in many ways, so that departments in the care field could focus on responding to the crisis. She noted that it had been challenging for her to find the time to put the annual report together, and she thanked Sophie, Nia and Bethan for volunteering to help her with the work.

The Director took advantage of the opportunity to also thank Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Families Department) and Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department) for their valiant work during the year, and she thanked Cabinet Members in the care field, Councillors Dilwyn Morgan and Dafydd Meurig for their continued support and assistance. She noted that members were welcome to contact both heads of departments after the meeting with any detailed questions.

To conclude, the Director noted that this period had enabled both departments to push forward a number of their projects and vision, and that they were eager to continue with the good work that had been undertaken in light of such a sad situation.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations. During the discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was noted that Welsh Government's desire to set a target as a way of ensuring that they saw a reduction in the number of looked after children conveyed the wrong message; and the fact that Gwynedd had not set a target for reducing the numbers was welcomed, as this would lead to the risk of declining standards in terms of safeguarding the most vulnerable, and run the risk of us not implementing what mattered in terms of the children.
- The fact that the dementia units were going ahead as a result of years of battling for them, was welcomed.
- It was noted that the report was commendable, which reiterated the excellent work that had been undertaken in both departments.
- The language guidance in eight languages at the beginning of the report was welcomed, and the Social Services were congratulated for being imaginative in displaying that more than one language existed in this area.
- It was noted that both departments had gone through a very difficult period and that staff had had to adjust rapidly to a different situation. However, the work had been extremely good and the doors of the Director and both heads of departments were always open to members.
- In response to a question regarding how the numbers of looked after children could be reduced safely, it was noted that what mattered was that the service did the right thing for those children, protected them and ensured that the family thrived. The aim was to keep families together, but that it was done in a safe manner. A number of looked after children now still lived at home with their parents or close family and, therefore, those children did not always realise that their situation was different to any other child.
- It was asked how a sufficient number of foster parents could be ensured. In response, it was noted that there was a number of fantastic foster parents in Gwynedd, and that a campaign held at the beginning of the pandemic in order to recruit more of them had been very successful. Such campaigns would have to continue but it was also important to have foster parents who specialised in specialist aspects of fostering.
- It was asked how dependency on specialised placements could be reduced. In response, it was noted that this was a substantial challenge as the needs of some children could be so complex, and it was important to respond to the individual and find the most suitable placement for them.

The Director was thanked for her presentation.

14. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE

Submitted – a report by the Head of Democratic Services on the Council's political balance and relevant matters.

During the discussion the following matters were raised by individual members:

- It was noted that an Individual Member would lose his/her seat on the Care Scrutiny Committee although there had been no reduction in the number of individual members. Similarly, it was noted that the Llais Gwynedd Group would lose one seat on the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, although no members had been lost from the Group, and that the decision of the Business Group on the balance had not been unanimous. In response, members were reminded of the main rules regarding the allocation of seats, as noted in the report.
- It was asked whether any consideration was given to allocating vacant seats on committees to other political groups. In response, it was explained that political

groups were responsible for filling the seats on a committee, but the full Council set the framework. If a group had not been appointed to a seat on a committee, it would be possible to ask the full Council to allocate that seat, and that appointment would not have to be in accordance with the political balance.

RESOLVED

- (a) To adopt the list of committees and sub-committees to be established for the municipal year, as noted in the appendix to these minutes, and to adopt the allocation of seats in accordance with what is noted in the appendix.**
- (b) To delegate the power to the Head of Democracy Services to make appointments to the committees based on political balance and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.**
- (c) To adopt the chairmanships of scrutiny committees on the basis of political balance, as follows:**

**Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Communities Scrutiny Committee
Care Scrutiny Committee**

**Plaid Cymru Group
Independent Group
Independent Group**

15. NON-ATTENDANCE OF A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

Submitted – a report by the Head of Democratic Services requesting that the Council approve the absence of Councillor Charles W. Jones from meetings of the Council because of personal circumstances, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, enabling him to continue to be a member of Gwynedd Council.

It was noted that the Council was sending its best wishes to the member.

RESOLVED to approve the absence of Councillor Charles W. Jones from meetings of the Council for six months from this date because of personal circumstances, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, enabling him to continue to be a member of Gwynedd Council.

16. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (A) Submitted – the following notice of motion by Councillor Glyn Daniels, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution and it was seconded:**

That Gwynedd Council, in collaboration with Snowdonia National Park, urgently investigates the possibility of charging tourists who visit parts of the Park, particularly on and around Snowdon itself.

I believe this would be advantageous in more than one way:

a) Charging a considerable fee for visiting the summit of Snowdon could boost the coffers of Gwynedd Council and the Park at a time when we are facing financial uncertainty owing to the side-effects of Covid-19.

b) Consequently, there is room to believe that such steps could contribute to reducing the serious problems of excess cars causing traffic jams and hazards on the region's roads.

During the discussion on the motion, it was noted:

- It was agreed that a discussion was required with the National Park, but there was a need to be clearer in terms of what was meant by a 'considerable fee'.
- The tourism industry was important to Gwynedd, but there was a desire to see the county benefiting from sustainable tourism, with those people visiting the area showing respect to the local environment and community.
- The motion was very timely and it was important to address this urgently, by holding a joint meeting with the National Park as soon as possible with the aim of having a fee charging system in operation by the 2021 season.
- Gwynedd had wonderful natural assets but communities were not benefiting fully from them at present.
- It was important to ensure sufficient parking provision, while giving consideration to creating a network of car parks in our communities. It was suggested that consideration could be given to the creation of a park and ride facility in Glyn Rhonwy, offering a free pass to Llanberis residents.
- Technology such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and the Council's new sensor system could be used to monitor and manage parking in the area. Technology such as an advance registration system could also be used to visit the Snowdon area, with local people paying a smaller fee or being granted access for free.
- This was a problem that had become apparent across Gwynedd and Snowdon was a classic example of over-tourism.
- The Council had received many calls to respond to the situation, e.g. Llanllyfni Community Council and others had called on Gwynedd Council to arrange a conference to discuss this. Although it was difficult in light of the pandemic, it was intended to arrange a virtual event in due course.
- It was not legal to charge a fee to use public footpaths but the call to examine this further was welcomed.
- A report commissioned by the National Park on transport around Snowdon mentioned some great ideas, but there was a need to widen the discussion to include the whole of Gwynedd.
- A piece of work had been completed to examine examples of how other areas across this country, and in Europe, dealt with over-tourism, and to consider how to re-set tourism after the pandemic crisis in a way that supported the county's communities.
- It was important for any fee charging system to be enforced correctly. Should a fee be charged for walking up Snowdon, a number of questions arose such as where exactly the money would be collected? In terms of the main routes, turnstiles could be installed and young people employed to collect the money; however, not everyone followed the main routes, with some ramblers going cross-country. Another option would be to collect the money on the summit of Snowdon.
- The money collected could be used to create jobs locally.
- A cost was associated with tourism, such as the cost of clearing up litter after the visitors. The Council was required to provide these services but, ultimately, Gwynedd residents paid for them. Also, as the Sherpa service was subsidised, Gwynedd taxpayers were currently paying for visitors to go up Snowdon.
- The research was welcomed and it was greatly hoped that benefit could be brought to our residents and local environment from this.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:

That Gwynedd Council, in collaboration with Snowdonia National Park, urgently investigates the possibility of charging tourists who visit parts of the Park, particularly on and around Snowdon itself.

- (B) Submitted – the following notice of motion by Councillor Gruffydd Williams, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

That Gwynedd Council calls on the Welsh Government to change the Planning Act in order that it is compulsory to have planning permission to convert a dwelling-house into a holiday home / holiday unit, and adapts the policy framework to allow thresholds to be set regarding the maximum numbers of holiday homes in any area to a figure that should not exceed approximately 5% of the housing stock.

At the beginning of the discussion, a member noted that a second home owner in her ward had contacted her asking what support would be available if no more than 5% of housing would be permitted to be second homes, and that she would pass the letter on to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

During the discussion on the motion, it was noted:

- The high number of second homes in Gwynedd made it impossible for young local people to buy houses.
- This was not the first time for the Council to draw this to the attention of Welsh Government.
- The problem had increased over the years and there was an opportunity to do something about the situation through the planning system. The Government had already granted the right for councils to make it compulsory to have planning permission to convert a dwelling-house into a multi-occupancy house, therefore, it should be relatively simple to introduce the same regulation in relation to holiday homes and second homes. There was also a need to differentiate between second homes and holiday homes, as holiday accommodation brought economic benefit.

If there were people failing to buy a house at all, it was further noted that no holiday home should be permitted at all, and an amendment was proposed and seconded to erase the last clause of the motion, namely '*to a figure that should not exceed approximately 5% of the housing stock*', so that the cap on allocated numbers was set at the discretion of planners and communities on a scale that would be suitable for the area in question.

The proposer of the original motion agreed to amend the motion on these lines with the Council's consent.

During the discussion on the amendment, it was noted:

- The problem was not unique to Gwynedd or this period.
- Enough was enough, and that young people were being priced out of the housing market.
- More than 5% of housing were holiday homes in some villages and the figure was up to 30% in some parts of Gwynedd.
- The suggestion that local communities should be given a voice in the decision was welcomed.
- One of the main principles of the planning system at the time of its conception was to create a fair system for all, but the current system was controlled by well-off people. The holiday homes situation was one element of what was

wrong with the planning system, namely a system that was operating under an act that had been passed in 1990, and in a different country.

- People should be warned that an application to convert a property registered as a business, such as a bed and breakfast business, back into a dwelling-house or flats on the open market could mean that the said property would revert to an affordable home.
- This was not only a linguistic matter, it was also a matter for the community.
- The villages were full of AirBnBs, with people coming there on holidays often taking up more than one parking space on the street. In addition, local people were unhappy that owners of the AirBnBs could claim a £10,000 grant for businesses that were eligible for small businesses rates relief.
- It was earlier reported at this meeting that research into second homes would take time, but it was already the eleventh hour and evidence of the harmful impact of second homes was already available.
- Welsh Government statistics regarding land tax per constituency showed that Meirion / Dwyfor was the second highest throughout Wales, with £3-£4 million coming to the Government's coffers from second homes.
- A 70% increase had been seen in the sale of houses in Gwynedd over the last few months, compared to the same period last year, and the majority were second homes.
- Llŷn villages were besieged by external developers, and tourism had reached its peak with an excess amount of caravan sites and holiday homes.
- Members of Nefyn Town Council, including Councillor Gruffydd Williams, should be thanked for proposing clear actions to improve the opportunities for young people to buy houses locally.
- We would not have "*prosperous and vibrant communities where the Welsh language thrives*" very soon, and there was a need to remind the Government of the objectives of the Well-Being Act.
- The themes of the three motions submitted to this meeting of the Council were associated with problems that had arisen as a result of all the visitors coming to the area, and that Brexit could exacerbate the problem as fewer people go on holidays abroad.
- People had now been drawing attention to the holiday home problem for half a century, and 20 years ago, a private measure submitted by Elfyn Llwyd on this exact matter had been thrown out by Tony Blair's Cabinet.
- It was hoped that we had the will to protect our communities by means of this call on the Government, and any other possible way. This was not the only answer, but it would be easy to implement if only we secured the support of Welsh Government. However, positive responses had not been received from the Government recently.
- Local people in Gwynedd failed to obtain planning permission and, therefore, there was also a need to examine our planning policies here in Gwynedd.
- It was hoped that recent research from Gwynedd would encompass every aspect of this problem so that we could say that we had done our best for our communities.
- Second home owners were converting the properties into businesses and were therefore granted Council Tax relief.
- People were migrating to the countryside as they did not feel safe in the large towns and cities.
- There were 2000 people on the waiting list for social housing in Gwynedd and there was a need to act fast on this matter.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it carried.

As the amendment was accepted, the Monitoring Officer explained that the original motion had been amended and that a further vote was needed on the wording of the amendment, rather than the wording of the original. The majority voted in favour of the motion.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:

That Gwynedd Council calls on the Welsh Government to change the Planning Act in order that it is compulsory to have planning permission to convert a dwelling-house into a holiday home / holiday unit, and adapts the policy framework to allow thresholds to be set regarding the maximum numbers of holiday homes in any area.

- (c) Submitted – the following notice of motion by Councillor Gareth Thomas, in accordance with Section 4.20 of the Constitution, and it was seconded:

That the Council calls on the UK Government to create legislation to control personal watercrafts and powerboats on the sea in the same manner as motorcycles on land. That is, that every personal watercraft and power boat has to have a licence and insurance prior to use on the sea and that every driver is given a test on his/her ability to manage the vehicle and on his/her knowledge of navigation.

During the discussion on the motion, it was noted:

- That Britain was the only country, with the exception of Egypt, that did not have control over personal watercrafts.
- That they could compare driving a personal watercraft to an inexperienced person driving a powerful motor cycle among people.
- The sale of watercrafts had increased this year as a result of Covid and, therefore, the problem was likely to be even worse next year.
- It appeared that the police could not prosecute in cases of irresponsible or aggressive driving of personal watercrafts.
- This was a problem along the Gwynedd coast and there was a real need for legislation to ensure that our beaches were safe.

It was further noted that individuals were not required to register or obtain a licence to drive powerboats either, and an amendment to include powerboats was proposed and seconded.

The proposer of the original motion agreed to amend the motion on these lines with the Council's consent.

During the discussion on the amendment, it was noted:

- There was no method to monitor whether or not the driver of a personal watercraft or powerboat had been drinking alcohol.
- Lack of control was a common theme for the three motions that had been submitted to this meeting of the Council, and the importance of devolving powers for such matters was emphasised.
- An app was available to manage the movements of boats.
- Everyone should receive training prior to driving such vehicles.

In response to a member's question regarding the situation on Council beaches, the Monitoring Officer explained that there were limited rights in terms of, for example, controlling speed in specific sections of a beach etc. which had been indicated in by-laws. However, it was not required to have insurance or to register in order to use these vehicles and this was the loophole in the law that was referred to by the motion.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it carried.

As the amendment was accepted, the Monitoring Officer explained that the original motion had been amended and that a further vote was needed on the wording of the amendment, rather than the wording of the original. The majority voted in favour of the motion.

RESOLVED to adopt the motion, namely:

That the Council calls on the UK Government to create legislation to control personal watercrafts and powerboats on the sea in the same manner as motorcycles on land. That is, that every personal watercraft and power boat has to have a licence and insurance prior to use on the sea and that every driver is given a test on his/her ability to manage the vehicle and on his/her knowledge of navigation.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 4.45pm.

CHAIR

APPENDIX – ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

A	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1 (down from 2)	1
Communities Scrutiny Committee	10	5	2	
Care Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1	1
Audit and Governance	10	5	1	

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party
Democratic Services	8	4 (down from 5)	1	1
Planning	8	4	1	
Central Licensing	8	4	1	
Language	8	5	1	
Chief Officers Appointment	8	4 (down from 5)	2	1
Employment Appeals	4	2	1	
Number of seats	84	43	12	4

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party
Pensions	4	2	0	
Local Joint Consultative Committee	6	3	1	
SACRE	4	2 (down from 3)	0	1
Joint Planning Policy Committee	5	2	1	
Total seats	103	52	14	5

In accordance with the previous decision of the Council, the higher salaries are paid as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- 8 other Cabinet members
- The Leader of the largest Opposition
- Committee Chairs
 - Scrutiny Committee (x3)
 - Audit and Governance Committee
 - Planning Committee
 - Licensing Committee (Central and General count as one Committee)
 - Pensions Committee