

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 15 September 2014

Present Councillors WM Howell (Chair), Councillors SWJ Ashley, S Brooks, LJ Chaney, S Evans, R Jones, M Johnston, R Kemp, TA Matthews, J Rees and WJ Walker

Also Councillor TJ Winter

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council) and Clare Rowles (Administrative Officer)

PF14/023 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillor Day (personal)
(An apology was also subsequently submitted by Councillor DJ Williams)

PF14/024 Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have and sign the Interests Sheet to give details of the nature of the interest.

PF14/025 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (June and July 2014) Bank Reconciliation and Quarterly Financial Monitoring (Quarter 1)

Members considered the above information. Background papers relating to the schedule of receipts and payments were available to allow members to interrogate any transactions in more detail.

Issues raised by members included:

Remuneration Payments to Members (B02)

Task Force vehicle (Tipper Repair) (M06)

Task Force Fuel (M07)

Playscheme Income (L07)

Playschemes DBS Checks (L07)

It was **recommended** that the schedule of receipts and payments, bank reconciliation details and quarterly monitoring information is noted.

Subject to confirmation by Cwmbran Community Council

PF14/026 Investment Opportunities

The Clerk to the Council drew attention to a long-standing commitment to review the arrangements for holding money in Reserves. In particular, he reminded members of a suggestion from the Council's former auditor, that the Council should consider investing reserves in more than one bank or building society.

The Clerk explained how difficult it had been to identify financial institutions who could offer an appropriate arrangement but, with the help of the Council's new internal auditor, he had identified an option to invest with HSBC Bank. Members considered details of this option, which had been circulated with the agenda.

Members noted the arrangements proposed by HSBC. Members also identified other potential investment opportunities, such as Torfaen Credit Union, the Greater Gwent Pension Scheme and Unity Bank. Members were interested to examine "ethical" investment opportunities. Members also referred to a Bond scheme which had been in place at Henllys Community Council.

In considering the possibility of obtaining external advice, Members were disappointed to note that One Voice Wales was not registered to provide financial advice on investments.

It was **recommended** that consideration is deferred to allow the Clerk to obtain further information in relation to the suggestions from Members, as described above.

PF14/027 Health & Safety Action Plan

Members noted that the Council's Annual Health & Safety Evaluation had recently been undertaken by the Council's consultants, Peninsula.

Members were pleased to note that most specific areas, working practices and safety arrangements examined were considered to be satisfactory. Further action was required only in relation to recording the servicing of emergency lighting (which had since been carried out) and Risk Assessments of Display Screen Equipment.

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The Evaluation confirmed the Council's commitment to Health & Safety standards and showed considerable progress since the 2013 visit.

It was **recommended** that the position is noted.

PF14/028 Remembrance Update

Councillor Matthews and the Clerk to the Council updated Members on the arrangements to commemorate Remembrance Day in Cwmbran on 9 November 2014. They described key issues discussed at a Planning Meeting held on 20 August 2014 and reported on progress. A site meeting would take place on 25 September 2014 and a further Planning Meeting had been arranged for 6 October 2014.

It was **recommended** that the position is noted.

PF14/029 Support to Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon Community Council

The Clerk to the Council updated Members on the progress of the arrangement whereby the Council's Administrative Officer had been undertaking the temporary role of Acting Clerk at Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon Community Council (Minute CL14/018 refers). The arrangement had been an excellent example of collaboration between the two Councils and a valuable development opportunity for the Administrative Officer. An advert had now been published to appoint a new Clerk at Croesyceiliog & Llanyrafon Community Council (closing date 24 September 2014) and it was therefore likely that the arrangement would come to an end shortly. It was not anticipated that the arrangement would continue beyond 29 October 2014, when the Administrative would begin her holiday.

It was **recommended** that the position is noted.

PF14/030 "An Evening to Celebrate Cwmbran and Its Communities"

This event had been due to take place at Irie Shack Caribbean Restaurant in Cwmbran on Sunday 1 March 2015, but Members noted that the venue had recently ceased trading.

It was **recommended** that the Clerk to the Council, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, identify a suitable alternative venue and report back.

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PF14/031 Regeneration Sub Committee

The Council's approved estimates for 2014/15 included a sum of £35,200 allocated to the Cwmbran Regeneration Partnership. (Code I13) This allocation fell within the remit of this committee.

Since the preparation of the estimates, the Council had been advised that, from 31 March 2014, the Regeneration Partnership would cease to exist. The finance, however, remained allocated for "regeneration" in the Council's estimates.

At a meeting of this committee held on 7 July 2014, it was recommended that an item is included on the agenda for the September committee to consider the establishment of a sub committee to manage the regeneration budget, with responsibility for agreeing criteria for schemes to support (Minute PF14/022 refers). It was also recommended that Torfaen County Borough Council is invited to send officers along to meetings of this sub committee to advise on potential schemes. Any sub committee established would report to the Policy & Finance Committee.

It was **recommended** that the establishment of a sub committee is supported in principle and that the membership be determined at Full Council.

PF14/032 Governor Vacancies

The Council had been notified that Councillor Matthews' Term of Office as a Community Council representative on the Governing Body of Woodlands Community Primary School had come to an end. The Council had also been made aware of other vacancies which existed in the Council's representation on various Governing Bodies.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) Councillor Matthews is nominated to continue to represent the Council on the Governing Body of Woodlands Community Primary School.
- (2) any Members interested in representing the Council on the Governing Bodies at Greenmeadow Primary School, Henllys Church in Wales School, Llantarnam Community Primary School

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and Maendy Primary School, should contact the Clerk to the Council as soon as possible, to allow appointments to be made at the next Full Council meeting.

PF14/033 Publication of Agendas

The Clerk referred to the Council's practice of serving agendas and accompanying documents electronically. He advised that the Council should regularise the position by formally authorising the practice of serving summonses etc. electronically.

It was **recommended** that the Council continue to serve the Council summons and agendas by electronic means. Hard copies would continue to be provided to members who request them.

PF14/034 Code of Conduct Complaints: Adoption of a Protocol

In conducting a recent review of the Council's Standing Orders, members asked that consideration was given to the development of a local protocol to encourage dialogue and early resolution of complaints. Members noted that a similar protocol was already in place at Torfaen County Borough Council.

On 7 July 2014 (Minute PF 14/018 refers) the Clerk to the Council reported on the outcome of discussions with the Monitoring Officer about the potential for adopting such a Protocol at Cwmbran Community Council. However the procedure was particular to Torfaen County Borough Council and so closely linked to the various processes and individuals of that Council that it would not easily "translate." Further, the Monitoring Officer had advised that she did not have the resources to deal with community council complaints through this process. However, the Monitoring Officer had provided advice about encouraging good relationships between Members & Officers and Members & Other Members, which was capable of being adapted by the Community Council. Members considered a draft Protocol, which would help to reinforce good relationships and avoid some complaints escalating to a more formal level.

It was **recommended** that Protocol is adopted.

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PF14/035 Society of Local Council Clerks: Annual Subscription Renewal

Members noted that the Clerk's subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks was due for renewal in the sum of £279. The Council had previously paid for the Clerk's subscription and benefited from the Clerk's membership.

In answer to members' questions, the Clerk explained that membership of the Society was held by the clerk as an individual rather than the Council as a whole. As such it was geared towards practitioners rather than the Council as a corporate body. The Society was a reliable source of advice & support to its membership and the clerk described some of the advantages of membership, with particular reference to development opportunities.

It was **recommended** that the Council pays the subscription for the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

PF14/036 Seminars & Meetings of Outside Bodies

Members considered attached reports in relation to the following seminars and meetings of outside bodies, attended by representatives of the Council.

(a) One Voice Wales Larger Councils Conference 8 July 2014

The Chairman reminded Members of the seminar taking place on 22 September in relation to the Future Management of Community Halls. She suggested that Members would find it useful to study a copy of the presentation included within the above report prior to attending the seminar, and bring a copy along.

(b) One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Partnership Meeting (AGM and Ordinary Meeting) 8 July 2014

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Matthews on being appointed chairman of this committee.

(c) CCYP (AGM and Management Committee) 10 July 2014

(d) Torfaen Community Transport AGM 11 July 2014

(e) Torfaen Armed Forces Community Covenant 24 July 2014

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Councillor Matthews updated members on discussions he had held with Cwmbran Shopping. Members considered that it would be useful to invite representatives of Cwmbran Shopping to attend a seminar with Members to discuss opportunities for the Council to work together with Cwmbran Shopping. Councillor Matthews also expressed his concern at the proliferation of meetings which seemed to cover similar ground.

It was **recommended** that the above reports are noted.

Signed (Chair, Cwmbran Community Council)