

Policy & Finance Committee

Subject to Confirmation by Cwmbran Community Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on Tuesday 18 April 2017

Present Councillor TA Matthews (in the Chair). Councillors: SJ Brooks, M Day, S Evans, M Johnston, R Jones, WJ Walker and TJ Winter

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council)

PF16/099 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillor KK Manneh

PF16/100 Declarations of Interest

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

PF16/101 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments and Bank Reconciliation (February 2017)

Members considered the above information.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Task Force Van (M06) – members acknowledged the advantages of acquiring a single vehicle for year round use.

The Clerk reported that work had commenced on the preparation of the Annual Accounts for 2016/17. He advised that final expenditure for the year had been 64.12% of approved estimates. He drew attention to the need for the Council to review the amount held in General Reserves and advised that he would report on this to Members to risk assess these matters following the forthcoming local election. Members acknowledged the sums within General Reserves but drew attention to the need to be able to meet unforeseen expenses, highlighting a recent notification from the Valuation Office Agency of a review of Business Rates backdated to 2010 as an example. Members also drew attention to sums set aside for specific projects within Earmarked Reserves

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

PF16/102 Expenditure against Budgets

The Clerk reported details of the following additional expenditure approved in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.6

(i)	Code	G11
	Heading	Cleaning/Hygiene Materials 2016/17
	Estimate	£1,500
	Expenditure	£2,638.46
	Reason	The increased expenditure coincides with an improvement in cleanliness & hygiene at the Council's premises.

Policy & Finance Committee

Subject to Confirmation by Cwmbran Community Council

Action taken	Members have increased the 2017/18 budget for this heading.
(ii) Code	H04
Heading	Postage
2016/17 Estimate	£2100
Expenditure	Currently £2,617.63
Reason	Minute PF 16/086 refers – additional postage
Action taken	Members have increased the 2017/18 budget for this heading.

Members discussed options for reducing postage costs, such as circulating the “Members Matters” newsletter by electronic means only and inviting those Members who wished to receive a hard copy to collect by hand.

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

PF16/103 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRP) Annual Report 2017/18

Members considered above report for 2017/18, which took effect for the municipal year 2017/18. In particular, Members considered section 13 of the Report, which related to Community and Town Councils.

Determinations 44 to 51 were permissive powers, each of which required a formal decision by the council. Where the council made such a decision, it must apply to all its members at the levels determined by the Panel. An individual member may make a personal decision to elect to forgo part or all of the entitlement to any of these allowances by giving notice in writing to the proper officer of the council (that is, the Clerk).

It was **recommended** that the Council adopt Determinations 44 to 51 of the above Report.

PF16/104 Torfaen County Borough Council Trade Refuse and Recycling Service – 2017/18 Charges

Members considered a letter from Torfaen County Borough Council which provided details of the above charges.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) the clerk is instructed to submit a detailed report on the Council’s refuse and recycling collection arrangements, including costs and frequency of collection, to a future meeting.

PF16/105 Cwmbran Bowls Club

Members considered a request to take out an advert in the club’s handbook. The Council has taken out a similar advert in previous years. Members noted that, in 2016 this committee agreed to fund an advertisement from the

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Advertising & Publications budget (H06) (£50.00). The Clerk drew attention to the excellent relationship between the club and the Council, as evidenced by a recent donation from the club of a club tie to raffle on behalf of the Chairman's charity at the recent function "Celebration of Cwmbran and its Communities" dinner.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) the funding of an advertisement, as described above, is approved.
- (2) the Clerk is authorised to make enquiries about the potential for Members to visit the club in the near future to enjoy an evening of playing bowls.

PF16/106 Health & Safety Inspection 14 February 2017

Members considered issues arising from the above inspection, which had been undertaken by the Council's Health & Safety consultants, Peninsula. The Clerk drew attention to measures which had been put in place since the inspection. He was examining the options to replace some heavy, petrol driven tools used by the Task Force with lighter, cleaner, battery-powered equipment and also reported the need to review arrangements for undertaking Fire Safety Risk Assessments to ensure that they were undertaken by a Competent Person. Costs for this were being obtained.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) the purchase of battery-powered tools for use by the Task Force is supported.
- (2) the Clerk is instructed to examine the possibility of training the Council's Caretaker/Cleaner to carry out Fire Safety Risk Assessments.
- (3) the Council consider the appointment of an elected member as a Health & Safety Champion to oversee the Council's health & safety arrangements.

PF16/107 Improving the Effectiveness of the Local Councils Partnership Committee (LCP) & Torfaen County Association of Local Councils (TCALC)

Members considered a report which provided details of proposed revisions to the above arrangements. The report outlined a proposed review of the above arrangements and review of the Charter which governed these arrangements. The committee emphasised the need for Members to be closely involved in this work.

Members discussed the disappointing attendance at the above meetings by representatives of other councils. The committee also drew attention to the need for Members to regularly attend meetings of outside bodies or boards to which they had been appointed.

It was **recommended** that no further action is undertaken until Members have had an opportunity to review these matters.

Policy & Finance Committee

Subject to Confirmation by Cwmbran Community Council

PF16/108 Seminars & Outside Bodies

Members considered reports in relation to the following seminars and meetings of outside bodies, attended by representatives of the Council. In response to points raised by Members, the Clerk briefly reported details of attendance at the events by representatives of other councils.

(i)	Torfaen Public Services Board: Executive Board	16 February 2017
	Joint Executive Board & Delivery Group Extraordinary Meeting	23 March 2017
(ii)	SLCC Conference for Wales	15 March 2017
(iii)	Welsh Government Focus Group Town and Community Council Sector	16 March 2017
(iv)	One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee	4 April 2017
(v)	One Voice Wales Larger Councils Committee	5 April 2017

It is **recommended** that

- (1) the reports are noted.
- (2) future reports also include details of attendance by representatives of other councils

Signed.....

(Chair, Cwmbran Community Council.)

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