

Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 6.00 pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on
27 October 2021

Venue: The meeting was held remotely and at the Council House (Annex), Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Present: Councillor SJ Brooks (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, AL Bird, RhM Bennett, M Day, LG Johnson, M Johnson, RD Kemp, KK Manneh, S Morgan, J Rees, LM Ryan, M Villars, WJ Walker, DH Williams, LE Williams.

(Councillors Bennett, Rees, Morgan and M Johnson participated in the meeting via remote means.)

Absent: Councillors, LJ Chaney, JS Davenne and F Jones.

(No public participation session was held at this meeting)

CL21/054 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillor F Jones (personal) and Councillor LJ Chaney (Community Hall meeting).

Apologies for absence were also accepted during the meeting from Councillor JS Davenne.

CL21/055 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor SJ Brooks declared a personal interest in Minute CL21/064 (Room Hire 23 August 2021, Invoice 1173) below. He declared the nature of his interest and remained in the meeting.

Councillors SWJ Ashley and RD Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute CL21/066 (Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan) and CL21/074 Installation of Traffic Speed Signs below as members of Torfaen County Borough Council. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matters at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

CL21/056 Voting

It was **Resolved** that the manner of any voting at this meeting would be by calling each name alphabetically with a response of "for" or "against" or "abstain".

CL21/057 Chairman's Announcements & Vice Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman of the Council attended that he had attended the following:

Visits to Summer Playschemes sites	18 August 2021
Pride Cymru Flag Raising	24 August 2021
Merchant Navy Day Flag Raising	3 September 2021

(The Chairman agreed to the raising of the flag to commemorate Dydd Glyndŵr on 15 September 2021.)

Congress Theatre to record speech for Big Event	13 September 2021
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The Chairman also reported that he had recently visited CCYP and Our Lady of the Angels RC Primary School. He also paid tribute to the work of Canon John Griffiths who had now left the parish.

There were no announcements from the Vice Chairman of the Council.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) the Chairman and Vice Chairman's attendance at events is approved.

CL21/058 Public Question Time

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders the opportunity for public questions was included as an item on the agenda for the meeting.

No questions had been submitted.

CL21/059 Gwent Police Update/ South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update

The Chairman welcomed Inspector George of Gwent Police. Inspector George presented an overview of recent police activity, describing partnership working with a local public house, Trading Standards and British Transport Police. He explained that crime and disorder was returning to "pre covid" levels. He referred to measures to control speeding in the town and measures being put in place in preparation for Halloween, Guy Fawkes' Night and Christmas.

Issues raised by Members included:

- An update on recent initiatives in Northville and St Woolos Green
- Firearm applications
- Community Alcohol Partnership
- Speeding in Thornhill Road
- Incidents in Pontnewydd
- Speed awareness in Llantarnam
- Litter picking in St Dials
- Potential to involve local children in litter picking activities.

Inspector George also clarified the position of the police in relation to supporting road closures for Remembrance Sunday Parades (Minute CL21/69 below refers).

Members noted that Station Commander Simmons was unable to attend the meeting and that he would soon be retiring. Members paid tribute to his contribution to Cwmbran and the wider contribution made by local firefighters to recent events.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the above information is noted.
- (2) Inspector George is thanked for his willingness to attend and answer Members' questions.
- (3) the Clerk is instructed to convey the Council's best wishes to Station Commander Simmons and thank him for his contribution to the work of the Council.

CL21/060 Council Meeting 21 July 2021

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute CL21/048 (Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Clerk took the opportunity to report that he would be taking part in an online consultation event on 16 September 2021 in relation to the Draft Local Elections (Communities) (Wales) Rules 2021.

In relation to Minute CL21/050 (Consultation on Qualifications of Clerks in Wales), the Clerk confirmed that was the only member of the Council's staff to hold the Certificate in Local Council in Administration in Wales. The Administrative Officer held an accounting technician's qualification. (AAT)

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are confirmed.
- (2) the clerk is instructed to report back to Members with details of any key issues arising from the Draft Local Elections (Communities) (Wales) Rules 2021.
- (3) staff are encouraged to undertake appropriate training with the support of the Council.

CL21/061 Delegated Powers

It was **resolved** that delegated powers granted to the Clerk remain in place until the next Council meeting. (Note: under this delegation any reference to a specific statute includes any statutory extension or modification or re-enactment of such statute and any regulations, orders or bylaws made thereunder.)

CL21/062 Receipts & Payments June & July 2021

Financial Regulations required details of receipts & payments and comparisons of expenditure against budget to be reported to the Council's Policy & Finance Committee. The regulations also required that bank reconciliations are verified by a member (Councillor M Villars) and that details are reported to the Council's Policy & Finance Committee. (Financial Regulations 4 and 2 refer.) Councillor Villars had verified and signed the information.

Due to the current Covid-19 outbreak, Council was recommended to confirm the suspension of these regulations to allow these matters to be reported direct to Council for the foreseeable future. This avoids the risk of the activity not being reported to Members in a timely manner. The risk of not doing so would cause a delay and a risk accountability, sound financial management and effective scrutiny.

In response to a question from a Member, the Clerk confirmed that details of jobs undertaken by the Task Force would be provided to Members.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the suspension of Financial Regulations to allow these matters to be reported to Council for the foreseeable future is approved
- (2) the information is approved.

CL21/063 Internal Audit

Members noted that, on 1 September 2021, the Council's internal auditor, Mr Lyn Llewellyn, announced his retirement from undertaking the audit of larger councils. Arrangements were being introduced to identify a successor. Details will be reported to a future meeting.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the position is noted.
- (2) the Council's thanks are conveyed to Mr. Llewellyn for the services provided to the Council.

CL21/064 Room Hire 23 August 2021, Invoice 1173

Councillor SJ Brooks Villars declared a personal interest in this item. He declared the nature of his interest and remained in the meeting.

On 23 August 2021, the meeting room of the annex at the Council House was used by Torfaen Community Transport for an interview. This assisted Torfaen Community Transport but also allowed the Council to test procedures in terms of Covid measures in preparation for a return to hiring of the Council's premises by outside bodies. The interview went ahead safely and successfully.

An invoice was raised to cover the cost of the booking (£30.00 Invoice 1173).

Members considered that, in view of the community benefits arising from the work of Torfaen Community Transport however (and the co-operation received in “piloting” the Council’s safety measures) the invoice could be cancelled.

It was **Resolved** that:-

- (1) invoice 1173, as described above, is cancelled.:
- (2) no charge is made for use of the Council’s facilities by organisations on which the Council is represented, subject to no additional costs being incurred by the Council.

CL21/065 Standing Orders

Members considered draft Standing Orders.

It was **Resolved** that the Standing Orders are approved.

CL21/066 Torfaen Replacement Local Development Plan

Councillors SWJ Ashley and RD Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as members of Torfaen County Borough Council. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matters at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Members noted that, following the closure of the Preferred Strategy consultation, Torfaen County Borough Council was taking time to reflect on the responses received and conduct further work based on the issues raised.

This would assist in preparing the Initial Consultation Report and next stage of the plan, which was the preparation of the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan.

Due to the delays associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the further work required there was a need to develop a new timetable for the plan preparation. This timetable would be part of a revised delivery agreement to be presented to Torfaen County Borough Council for agreement this November.

Members emphasised the importance of maintaining a close interest in the progress of the Plan. The Clerk confirmed that any information received would be submitted to Members, referring to information provided to Members on 3 September 2021 by way of example.

Members referred to a forthcoming meeting of the Local Council’s in Partnership Committee (21 September 2021), which could provide an opportunity for further dialogue. The Council would be represented by Councillor SWJ Ashley and the Clerk.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the information is noted.

- (2) the Clerk is instructed to request that Councillor AL Bird also attends the meeting of the Local Councils in Partnership Committee.

CL21/067 Planning Consultations

Members considered details of recent planning applications from Torfaen County Borough Council, which had been circulated separately.

It was **Resolved** that Members forward any observations on outstanding applications and other consultations to the Clerk (via cwmbrancc@cwmbrian.gov.uk) so that any response can be submitted.

CL21/068 Play Provision 2021

Members considered a detailed report on various activities which had taken place this summer to deliver play provision locally. The provision had included Play Camps, National Play Day and “Gnomes Around Torfaen.”

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the success of the above initiatives is noted.
- (2) the allocation of £66,000 to support play provision in the current financial year, as per the Council’s approved estimates, is confirmed. (Code L07)

CL21/069 Cwmbran “Virtual” Big Event 18 September 2021

Members considered final arrangements to support the Cwmbran “Virtual” Big Event on 18 September 2021. The programme included arts & crafts activities and a virtual dog show. Members were grateful for the support of “Classy Muts” for donating a prize for the winning entry in the dog show. Details would be posted on the Council’s website and sent to Members.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the format described above is supported in principle.
- (2) a report is submitted to a future meeting to review the success of the event.

CL21/070 Remembrance Sunday 14 November 2021

On 1 September 2021, the Council received confirmation that Remembrance event organisers would be required to factor into their plans their own traffic management/staffing of road closures this year and that it was the responsibility of the event organiser to undertake the actions required to plan and hold the event safely and with minimum disruption to other highway users. Gwent Police would be unable to put traffic arrangements This was the position across Gwent and was as a result of ongoing demands on policing.

As the Council did not have the capacity to support these arrangements it had been anticipated that no arrangements would be made by the Council in relation to a parade this year.

However, other potential solutions had recently arisen which would see organisations such CADESA and 100 Field Squadron, Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers – Militia making the appropriate arrangements, with support from the Council, who would help facilitate the Parade etc. Gwent Police were satisfied with the arrangements being put in place. An Act of Remembrance would take place at Cwmbran Park,

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the Council notes the arrangements in relation to a Remembrance Parade this year.
- (2) the Council would lay wreaths at Cwmbran Park on Remembrance Sunday and lay a wreath at 11.00 am on 11 November 2021.
- (3) flags are flown at the Council House on each occasion.
- (4) in pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, expenditure up to £2,250 is approved in relation of the above events (Code L10 Remembrance), to include the costs of hiring a PA system (if required), wreaths, Event Poppies and any other associated expenditure.

CL21/071 Forthcoming Events

Members considered the arrangements in relation to forthcoming Council events.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) no arrangements are made to stage the Senior Schools Festival in October but that the potential to combine this with the Primary Schools Festival are examined.
- (2) Tree Lighting events take place on at 6.00 pm on Wednesday 1 December at Pontnewydd and Friday 3 December at The Council House.
- (3) a report is submitted to a future meeting on the detailed arrangements for each event, which would reflect any restrictions in place in relation to Coronavirus.

CL21/072 Care of Former Police Dogs

At a meeting held on 23 June 2021, Members were disappointed to learn that there was no financial support provided for retired police dogs and that no forces in the UK had retirement funds for dogs. It was understood that a similar position existed in relation to police horses. (Minute CL21/028 refers.)

The Clerk had been instructed to write to the local MP to express concern about the arrangements to support retired police dogs and police horses. (Minute CL21/028 refers.)

The MP had advised that there are benevolent funds which existed for police forces to look after retired animals and some national charities had been established. He had confirmed however that there is no systematic Government funding for the specific purpose of caring for retired animals across all police forces.

The MP had thanked the Council for emphasising the concerns that existed around this and reassured members that he would bear this in mind when holding the Government to account in the House of Commons.

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

CL21/073 Governing Body Vacancy

Members noted that a Minor Authority Governor vacancy for the Federation of Blenheim Road and Coed Eva Governing Body following the resignation of Councillor Davenne. The Council had been invited to select another representative and inform the school, Chair of governors and Southeast Wales Education Achievement Service of the new appointment.

It was **Resolved** that Councillor RhM Bennett is appointed to fill the above vacancy.

CL21/074 Installation of Traffic Speed Signs

Councillors SWJ Ashley and RD Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as members of Torfaen County Borough Council. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matters at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Members considered a report about the potential introduction of Speed Indicator Devices at Llantarnam Road and Station Road. Details of costs and statutory authority were reported. Several Members supported the proposals.

In considering the proposals, Members also drew attention to the need to take a view of speeding issues across Cwmbran as a whole, rather than just at two specific locations. Several Members referred to conditions in their wards. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Torfaen County Borough Council is asked to provide an assessment of areas of most concern so that a way forward is agreed. Councillor Manneh to lead on these arrangements in consultation with Councillors Bird, Villars, Ryan and Ashley and report back. The Chairman suggested that this work is undertaken within the next three weeks.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) Torfaen County Borough Council is requested to provide an assessment of the areas of most concern in relation to speeding, in order that a way forward could be considered which would prove most beneficial to Cwmbran as a whole.
- (2) Councillor Manneh to lead on these arrangements in consultation with Councillors Bird, Villars, Ryan and Ashley.

(3) A report is submitted to a future meeting.

CL21/075 Date of Next Meeting

It was **Resolved** that that the next Council meeting is held on 27 October 2021 at 6.00 p.m. The meeting to take on a hybrid basis, remotely via Zoom and in person.

CL21/076 Exclusion of the Press & Public

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is **recommended** that the following matters be considered in private and that the power of exclusion of the public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960 be exercised.

CL21/077 Staffing

Members considered a report which advised that the Council's Caretaker/Cleaner would be leaving his post on 30 September 2021. Members approved a revised Job Description.

Members also approved the continuation of additional hours in respect of two members of staff, to be further reviewed with effect 30 December 2021.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the revised job description and hours of work in relation to the Caretaker/Cleaner post is approved.
- (2) the arrangement for two members of staff to continue to work an additional four hours a week is approved, until 31 December 2021 to be reviewed at that point.

Signed..... (*Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council*)