

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

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

The recommendations below will be submitted to the Council Meeting to be held on 15 December 2021.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the meeting of the committee to be held on 12 January 2022.

Present: Councillor AL Bird (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, SJ Brooks, M Day, , F Jones, LM Ryan, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams,

(Councillors M Day, F Jones, M Villars and DH Williams participated in the meeting via remote means)

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council)

Absent: Councillors RhM Bennett, LG Johnston, M Johnston, KK Manneh and J Rees

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

ESP21/001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors RhM Bennett (civic duties), KK Manneh (personal) J Rees (work commitments) Apologies for absence were also accepted from Clare Facey (Administration Officer.) (personal).

ESP21/002 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.

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute ESP21/004 below (Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters), ESP21/005 (Neighbourhood Services) and ESP21/006 (Torfaen Active Travel) 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.

ESP21/003 Membership

Members noted the membership and terms of reference of the committee which had been approved at Annual Council on 19 May 2021. Terms of Reference were also agreed at the meeting.

Members discussed the terms of reference of the committee. Members considered that they may be scope to examine the workload of all committees.

It was **recommended** that:

(1) the information is noted.

- (2) the terms of reference of the committee are amended to include responsibility for all matters relating to sustainability, Well-being of Future Generations (including climate change.).

ESP21/004 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in this matter 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.

(a) Planning Lists

Members considered outstanding Planning Lists 1389 and 1390. Schedules of Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Decisions had been provided to Members separately.

Members also considered details of a proposed Base Station Upgrade at Melbourne Court, off Greenmeadow Way. (Pre-Application Consultation.).

It was **recommended** that

- (1) no objection is offered to Planning Lists 1389 and 1390.
- (2) the need to retain the scope of the base station upgrade within the existing site and ensure protection in relation to any emissions and noise is emphasised to the developer.

(b) Mynydd Maen Wind Farm Proposal.

Members considered details of the above. Members noted advice contained in the Scoping Report about the impact on flora and fauna. Members also discussed the visual impact of the development. Members suggested that the Council could host any exhibition about the proposals.

It was **recommended** that, in principle, the proposal is welcomed as a contribution to renewable energy sources and the above observations are forwarded to the developer.

(c) Footpath Matters

Members welcomed the actions of ward members in helping to re-open a footpath in Llantarnam.

ESP21/005 Neighbourhood Services

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in this matter 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 had been asked to provide advance notice of any matters they wished to raise with the Executive Member for Environment (Torfaen County Borough Council). Issues suggested by Members for discussion with the Executive Member included local nature partnerships, the role of the new Canal Coordinator at Torfaen County Borough Council. Torfaen County Borough Council's draft climate emergency action plan, which sets out the

council's approach to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and the allocation of Covid relief funding across Torfaen.

The Clerk confirmed that the Executive Member had indicated a willingness to attend future meetings of the committee.

It was **recommended** that the proposals are noted.

ESP21/006 Torfaen Active Travel

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in this matter 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.

Earlier in 2021 Torfaen County Borough Council had sought views on how cycling and walking provision in Torfaen could be improved and considered all comments to produce a draft Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) . As a result there were an additional 111 Km of routes on the draft Active Travel Network Map recently consulted on, compared to the map that was approved by Welsh Ministers in 2017.

This consultation exercise ended on 9 November 2021. Torfaen County Borough Council would look at the comments for consideration and analyse them for any suggestions received to check that all routes had been identified. Any additional routes would be added and a report written and submitted to Welsh Government before the 24 December deadline for approval.

Members discussed local projects and potential Active Travel routes. Members highlighted the difficulty of access along certain footpaths, the importance of crossing gates, disabled access and the limited pedestrian access to the Grange University Hospital. Members drew attention to concerns arising from the use of footpaths by mopeds, scooters and 4x4 vehicles and encouraged sensible and responsible use of footpaths.

It was **recommended** that:

- (1) the position is noted.
- (2) the observations of Members are forwarded to Torfaen County Borough Council.

ESP21/007 Local Places for Nature

Members welcomed the introduction of a planting area and "Bug Box" at the Council House. The package had been awarded to the Council from Keep Wales Tidy, made possible by Welsh Government funding.

The Council had taken significant steps to raise awareness of the project.

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

ESP21/008 Primary Schools Eco Quiz. 3 February 2022

The Clerk reported that the Council had contacted the Congress Theatre to review arrangements for the above. It was anticipated that Knauf Insulation would once again support the event via a donation. Local schools would be contacted to assess their availability.

The Chairman of the Council expressed his concern that local schools had not already been approached. He stated that he had previously called for this.

Members discussed the implications of Covid-19 on the Council's ability to stage the event in the traditional way. Members discussed potential arrangements at the Congress Theatre, which was the traditional venue for the quiz. Members considered that it would be preferable to hold the event via remote, digital means in view of current restrictions. Members also discussed the potential to align the quiz to matters associated with the curriculum.

The event would be delivered under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016: using approved budgets of £800 (N09) with an anticipated donation from Knauf Insulation.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the 2022 Primary Schools Eco Quiz is held remotely.,
- (2) local schools are contacted as a matter of urgency to ascertain their interest in the proposal and their availability.

ESP21/009 Future Projects

Members discussed potential future environmental projects for taking forward by the Council.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Interaction with the "Bridge 46 to Five Locks" Group, whose purpose was to raise awareness of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal in Torfaen.
- partnership working with the Canal Coordinator at Torfaen County Borough Council.
- progress of restoration of the canal.
- dredging works at the canal.
- local nature partnerships
- management of parks.
- Prioritisation of improvement works in parks
- tree planting

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the above proposals are taken forward by the Council as part of overall future priorities.
- (2) the public, including local schools, are invited to submit suggestions for future environmental projects which the committee could consider

ESP21/010 Exclusion of the Press & Public

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was agreed that the following matter 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.

ESP21/011 Task Force

Members considered performance information about the work of the Task Force. The Clerk confirmed that he would continue to examine ways in which the presentation of the information to Members could be improved, such as the inclusion of invoice details to provide an improved audit trail and ward-based information. The Clerk advised that the Council's Administration Officer would be attending a Carer's Rights Day event on 25 November 2021 at which she would be able to promote the Task Force service.

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

Signed
(Chairman, Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee