

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 6.00 pm.**

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on a date to be agreed.

**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.**

**Present:** Councillor SJ Brooks (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, AL Bird, RhM Bennett, LJ Chaney, M Day, LG Johnson, KK Manneh, S Morgan, M Villars, WJ Walker, DH Williams and LE Williams.

(Councillors Bennett and Chaney participated in the meeting via remote means.)

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council) and Clare Facey (Interim Clerk)

**Absent:** Councillors JS Davenne, F Jones, J Rees, RD Kemp and LM Ryan

*At the commencement of the meeting, Members in stood in silence in memory of the victims of conflict in Ukraine and other countries.*

(No public participation session was held at this meeting)

**CL21/131 Apologies for Absence**

None

**CL21/132 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.

Councillors AL Bird, RhM Bennett and S Morgan declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute CL21/142 Policy & Finance Committee 28 February 2022 below (Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) for Cwmbran) as an employee of a company who funds the Partnership, professional association with the Partnership and an independent director of Community Alcohol Partnerships respectively. They remained in the meeting.

**CL21/133 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."

**CL21/134 Chairman's Announcements & Vice Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reported that he had visited a number of schools and clubs recently. He had also been present at Blaen Bran Community Woodland on 25 February 2022 to support the Welsh Government's tree planting initiative #MyTreeOurForest and attended Oakfield Flower Gardens on 15 March 2022 to view the refurbishment works with other invited guests.

The Chairman referred to the fact that this would be his last meeting as a member of the Council after a long association with local government in Cwmbran. This was to be the last Council meeting before the forthcoming election though a special meeting could be called if circumstances required.

The Vice Chairman paid tribute to the contribution made by the current Chairman and Members echoed the sentiments. The Chairman suitably responded.

It was **Resolved** that

- (i) the information is noted.
- (ii) the attendance of the Chairman and Vice Chairman at events is approved.

**CL21/135 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.

**CL21/136 Gwent Police Update/ South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update**

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Tinsley-Brustad of Gwent Police, who was attending her first meeting.

Inspector Tinsley-Brustad introduced herself to Members and described her police career. She referred to her commitment to community affairs. The Chairman paid tribute to the hard work and commitment of the local police force.

Inspector Tinsley-Brustad updated Members on issues raised by a Member relating to recent incidents in Northville and Pontnewydd, anti-social behaviour at Cwmbran train station and dispersal orders for the town centre, Northville and Southville. Some of these matters remained the subject of investigation. The Inspector also outlined the role of British Transport Police, who were responsible for the railway station. Members also discussed graffiti locally.

No representative of South Wales Fire & Rescue was able to attend the meeting

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) Inspector Tinsley-Brustad is thanked for her attendance.
- (2) the inspector's contact details are circulated to Members.

**CL21/137 Council Meeting 9 February 2022**

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the above meetings.

In relation to Minute CL21/127 (Estimates 2022/2023), 2017 Members noted that election costs were approximately £17,500. The Council had approved the sum of £10,000 but has also set aside £25,000 in Earmarked Reserves to cover elections. Actual costs would depend on the number of contested seats.

Torfaen County Borough had advised of potential additional costs in relation to the forthcoming election. Postage costs for Poll Cards could be particularly affected.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are confirmed.
- (2) the Council fund any costs for the forthcoming election over and above £10,000 from Earmarked Reserves. (Elections) Should this prove insufficient the Council would draw on General Reserves.

(The Chairman signed the minutes as a correct record)

(Note: the minutes of the Council meeting of 9 February 2022 are subject to confirmation on 16 March 2022 not 16 March 2021.)

#### **CL21/138 Events & Community Projects Committee Meeting 14 February 2022**

Councillor AL Bird introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute ECP21/018 (Provisional Programme of Events), Members welcomed the success of the Primary Schools Choral Festival which had taken place remotely on 9 March 2022. A number of local schools had taken part and would each receive £125 for participation to encourage teaching of arts and music. Each school had shared three songs across social media. Interaction and feedback had been very positive. The Chairman of the Council had also posted a welcome speech. Members considered that the format of the event had been very successful and could provide a model for future events. Members discussed the possibility of using some of the recordings made by schools as part of the Cwmbran Big Event.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are received.
- (2) the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.

#### **CL21/139 Grants to Voluntary Organisations Committee Meeting 14 February 2022**

Councillor WJ Walker introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are received.
- (2) the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.

#### **CL21/140 Grant Application**

Members considered an application from Cwmbran Churches Together.

A vote was taken. 12 Members voted in favour of awarding a grant. One Member abstained.

It was **Resolved** that a grant of £2,000 is awarded to support the fundraising activities of the organisation which are used to support the relief of poverty in the community. (Local Government Act 2000 ss 1-5).

**CL21/141 (a) Environmental, Sustainability & Planning Committee 23 February 2022**

Councillor AL Bird introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute ESP21/029 (Seminars & Outside Bodies: Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canal Trust: 31 January 2022), Councillor SWJ Ashley indicated his written report would follow. He confirmed that he had met the new Canal Coordinator (Alice Rees.)

It was **Resolved** that

(1) the minutes of the above meeting are received.

(2) the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.

**(b) Planning Consultations**

Details of recent applications had been circulated, together with pre application consultation in relation to the development of 84 new homes, landscaping, open space and associated infrastructure at the Former Police Training College, St Dials.

It was **Resolved** that Members forward any observations in relation to the above proposals to [cwmbrancc@cwmbran.gov.uk](mailto:cwmbrancc@cwmbran.gov.uk) so that they could be forwarded on.

**CL21/142 Policy & Finance Committee 28 February 2022**

Councillor SWJ Ashley introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute PF21/048 (Community Alcohol Partnership), Members noted an oral report on progress from Councillor S Morgan. Councillors AL Bird, RhM Bennett and S Morgan declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as an employee of a company who funds the Partnership, professional association with the Partnership and an independent director of Community Alcohol Partnerships respectively. They remained in the meeting.

In relation to Minute PF21/046 (Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report), Members considered a report on allowances and payments for the forthcoming year.

In relation to Minute PF21/049 (One Voice Wales Membership 2022/23), Members noted receipt of a letter from One Voice Wales describing the services provided.

In relation to Minute PF21/053 (Staffing Matters), Members noted updated details of the carry over of leave by staff. Members also considered additional responsibilities on staff as a result of staff changes.

Members considered changes to banking arrangements in the light of forthcoming staffing changes.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are received.
- (2) the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.
- (3) in relation to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report 2022:
  - (i) members adopt the Determinations set out in the report.
  - (ii) the specific responsibilities payment of £500 is paid to the four committee Chairs and Leader of the Council.
  - (iii) each payment is made as soon as possible following the Annual Council Meeting by way of single payment of each appropriate allowance.
  - (iv) all payments are applied proportionally, as described above.
  - (v) the Council recovers any payments made to a member who leaves or changes their role during the financial year on a pro rata basis to reflect the time in the role.
  - (vi) a time limit of one month is set from the date on which an entitlement to travelling or subsistence allowance arises during which a claim for those allowances must be made by the person to whom they are payable. However, this does not prevent an authority from making a payment where the allowance is not claimed within the period specified.
- (4) the information provided by One Voice Wales is noted.
- (5) the payment of honoraria to staff required to undertake additional responsibilities as a result of staff changes is approved, should this prove necessary.
- (6) Blair Mwendo is added as a signatory to each of the Council's bank and building society accounts (Co-operative Bank, Unity Trust Bank and Monmouthshire Building Society) and permitted to access internet banking. (David Collins to be removed from these accounts on leaving the Council).

#### **CL21/143 Ukrainian Crisis**

Members considered a report about ways in which local councils could support local agencies providing aid and support to refugees displaced by the

crisis in Ukraine who were arriving in Cwmbran. Local councils were well placed to offer support, either through direct action or signposting to other registered charities.

It was **Resolved** that, using the power of well-being (Local Government Act 2000) :

- (1) the Council provides support to local charities who are providing sponsorship and support to those displaced by the crisis in Ukraine and other areas of conflict and were arriving in Cwmbran in the form of signposting to relevant agencies.
- (2) the Council allocates up to £10,000 from within its Anti-Poverty budget to provide direct financial support to local charities who are providing sponsorship and support to those displaced by the crisis in Ukraine and other areas of conflict and were arriving in Cwmbran.

**CL21/144 Annual Council**

It was **Resolved** that the Annual Council meeting would take place on 18 May 2022 at 6.00 pm. The meeting to be held in person and remotely using a video conferencing facility in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

**CL21/145 Exclusion of the Press & Public**

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was **Resolved** 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.

**CL21/146 Staffing Matters**

Members considered a detailed report on various staffing matters, including annual leave and NJC Pay Award from April 2021.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) annual leave arrangements relating to two members of staff are confirmed and staff are allowed to carry over any additional leave arising.
- (2) the NJC pay award is implemented across all Council staff.
- (3) if requested by an ex-employee to do so, the Council pays any backpay to that employee from 1 April 2021 to their last day of employment.
- (4) the Council notes that the NJC will review term-time only working, homeworking, mental health support and maternity etc leave.
- (5) For the time being the Council permits a manageable amount of home working to combat the spread of coronavirus and achieve work-life balance.

(6) the Council's grading structure continues to mirror that of Torfaen County Borough Council, in view of the benefits arising for payroll administration and comparison purposes.

(7) contract documentation continues to be updated to reflect legislation.

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