

**Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 11 July 2022 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 27 July 2022.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the meeting to be held on 12 September 2022

**Present:** Councillor R Bennett (Chair), Councillors SWJ Ashley, A Bird, L Chaney, M Day, F Jones (Vice-Chair), P Jones, P Seabourne, M Villars

*(Councillors SWJ Ashley & L Chaney participated in the meeting via remote means)*

**.Also:** Clare Facey (Interim Clerk) & David Leech, Officer at Torfaen County Borough Council

**Absent:** Councillors L Johnston, L Lloyd-Tolman, K Manneh, C Morgan & S Morgan

*(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)*

**PF22/016 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were accepted from L Lloyd-Tolman (personal), K Manneh (work commitments), C Morgan (holidays) & S Morgan (holidays).

**PF22/017 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.

Councillor M Villars declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute PF22/021a Council House Matters, quotes for external works.

He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

**PF22/018 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

The Chair signed the minutes.

**PF22/019 Community Engagement**

The Committee welcomed Dave Leech (Chief Officer Communities, Customer Care & Digital at Torfaen County Borough Council) to the meeting.

The Officer gave a full and informative presentation to members, relating to Communities at the Heart of Public Service and how do we work together to develop a Communities Approach. Key points raised were:-

- Recognising that communities are an integral part of public service
- and re-igniting our communities' collective passion to act in their community
- so that, together, we can focus on the issues that make the biggest difference to our residents' quality of life and wellbeing
- Enabling our communities to be resilient to future challenges whilst maintaining great public services in an uncertain future.
- It should be strength, asset-based: This means that we should focus on what the community (or its individual members) are good at rather than what's wrong with it.
- It should be bottom-up: This means that community members need to be involved in setting the priorities, building the institutional capacity and implementing activity on the ground
- It should be delivered within defined geographical boundaries: Whilst 'digital' activities can be arranged along "communities of interest", the fabric of most of our communities in Torfaen (groups, clubs, shops, churches, neighbours, etc) is still largely organised by 'place'
- What does a resilient wellbeing community normally have?
- Where might we need to provide support?
- Need an online presence
- Volunteering
- Hub Coordination & "community connecting"
- Information Advice & Guidance around community wellbeing
- Information regarding Community Connectors
- **Where should we focus community development resources?**
- **What are the wellbeing priorities and do these align with the data?**
- **What are the community (hubs, volunteers, neighbours etc) doing currently around wellbeing?**
- **Where is the community council investing currently?**
- **Where can we work together?**

Members thanked the Officer for his presentation.

It was suggested that a workshop is arranged to discuss this in greater detail, with the emphasis on Members looking at the last highlighted bullet points above, in relation to their individual wards. The Acting Clerk was asked to email the presentation to all Members of the Council for information.

It was **recommended** that:

- a) David Leech is thanked for his report
- b) that a workshop is arranged, inviting all members to attend, to discuss Community Engagement within their wards
- c) the presentation is emailed to all Members.

#### **PF22/020 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (April 2022)**

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliation. The Chair confirmed that corresponding statements and reconciliation had been verified by Councillor M Villars, in accordance with financial regulations. No issues were referred to the committee as a result of this process. Councillor Villars was thanked for his continued dedication to this role.

It was **recommended** that the Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments for April 2022 is noted.

**PF22/021 Council House Matters**

Councillors M Villars declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute PF22/021a Council House Matters, quotes for external works.

He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

- a) Members noted that three quotes had been received in the office to prepare & paint fascia boards, walls, downpipes, windowsills and woodwork to The Council House and a decision was made to accept the first quote received (subject to timescales/deadlines involved and minimising any disruption to Council events held at The Council House frontage)
- b) At the last meeting members asked to receive information on Defibrillator training. The Acting Clerk mentioned that all staff would be updating their First Aid training over the next couple of months which included the defibrillator training. It was suggested that all training availability is emailed to Members via Members Matters for interested members.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i. The first quote received in the office for external painting to The Council House is accepted, subject to timescales, with deadlines being met and minimising any disruption to Council events
- ii. That defibrillator and first aid training courses are listed on Members Matters for interested members
- iii. To note the position.

**PF22/022 Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) for Cwmbran**

Members noted that the next Community Alcohol Partnership meeting would be held on 28 July 2022

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

**PF22/023 Seminars & Outside Bodies**

Members were asked to note the following meetings:-

- (i) Torfaen Shared Prosperity Funding Overview & Engagement

*There was an online presentation which all members were invited to participate in and give feedback. The key messages were:-*

- *It is the UK replacement for the EU Structural Funds but sourced from the UK and not the EU*
- *One of the key financial instruments to deliver the wider Levelling Up agenda*

- *TCBC must develop a Local Investment Plan that will form part of the SE Wales Regional Investment Plan*
- *It should complement the Levelling Up Fund and 2021 Community Renewal Fund*
- *SE Wales allocation is the largest in the UK*
- *Plans going to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> July*
- *Needs to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.*

(ii) AGM & Gwent Valleys Area Committee

This will be reported to members at the next Policy & Finance Committee.

(iii) Friends of Bruchsal Society

Councillor Bird attended this meeting and reported to members. The Friends of Bruchsal Society has a completely new board of members, who are eager to commit to the Society and encourage more activity. They have also enlisted the help of a management consultancy company. In order to maintain consistency and momentum of the group it has been suggested that representation is held over term of office for (5 years) rather than changed annually.

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

**PF22/024 The Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021: Statutory Guidance for Community and Town Councils**

Members noted the recent release of the above publication by Welsh Government.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 delivers a package for reforms to strengthen and extend the powers available in local government.

The legislation builds on the strengths of local government to empower councils to have greater impact for their communities. Welsh Government's policy is to provide an enabling and encouraging environment for community and town councils to expand their activities where they could, and should play a greater role based on local need.

The enabling approach needs to be accompanied by sound governance and effective management of public money.

The new measures directly affecting the community council sector includes the availability of the General Power of Competence to those councils that meet the eligibility conditions set out in the legislation.

The Acting Clerk elaborated on the conditions for eligibility and explained the current powers that were in place under s137/Well-Being spending limits.

It was **recommended** that the above guidance is noted.

**PF22/025 Financial Regulations 2022/23**

Members noted that the Financial Regulations were last adopted by Cwmbran Community Council in July 2021 and was therefore due for review and adoption.

It was **recommended** that the Financial Regulations are adopted.

**PF22/026 Smartwater – We Don’t Buy Crime – Gwent Police**

The Council recently received information from Gwent Police regarding the impact that acquisitive crime, including burglary and theft can have and Gwent Police are committed to protecting our communities.

Gwent Police will be presenting a report to the next Council meeting being held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

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

**PF22/027 Exclusion of the Press & Public**

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

**PF22/028 Staffing Matters**

Members noted that the fulltime Clerical Officer position has now been advertised with a closing date of Friday 15 July 2022.

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

*Signed .....(Chairman, Policy & Finance Committee)*