

**Summary (Notes) of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 27 July 2022 at 6.00pm**

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on 28 September 2022

**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:** Councillors: SWJ Ashley, RM Bennett, AL Bird, LJ Chaney, M Day, C Morgan, S Morgan, PJ Seabourne, M Villars & WJ Walker  
(Councillors Rh Bennett, C Morgan & S Morgan participated in the meeting via remote means)

Also Clare Facey (Interim Clerk)

**Absent:** Councillors JS Davenne, L Johnston, F Jones, P Jones, G Lloyd-Tolman, L Lloyd-Tolman, KK Manneh & S Wharton

(No public participation session was held at this meeting)

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors JS Davenne (work commitments), F Jones (holidays), P Jones (holidays), G Lloyd-Tolman (holidays), L Lloyd-Tolman (holidays), KK Manneh (work commitments).

**2 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.

**3 Chair's Announcements & Vice Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reported that he had participated in numerous meetings and events:-

- Bruchsal Society Meeting 23 June 2022

*(Members to consider extending the term of office for reps from 1 year to 5 years for consistency)*

- Funeral for the late Cllr Peter Thomas 30 June 2022
- Cwmbran Baroque Singers 9 July 2022
- Torfaen Museum Trust 13 July 2022
- Federation of Small Businesses 15 July 2022
- Closure of Barclays Bank Meeting 19 July 2022

*(Members proposed that the Chair write to Barclays Bank regarding the forthcoming closure of the branch in Cwmbran)*

- Welsh Government Climate Change 22 July 2022

*(Members discussed the opportunity in ways in which the Council can help to mitigate climate change)*

- Reaffirmation of the Conferment of the Freedom of the Borough of Torfaen by The Royal Welsh 23 July 2022

There were no announcements from the Vice Chair as she was currently on holidays.

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

#### **4 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.

#### **5 Gwent Police Update/South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update/Smartwater Presentation**

- (i) Members welcomed Inspector Hannah Lawton and Huw Rowlands – the Co-ordinator from We Don't Buy Any Crime to the meeting, who presented a report on Smartwater.

The Inspector reported that We Don't Buy Crime is a new department within Gwent Police, tackling crime throughout the Local Authority, with the support of the Office of the Police and the Crime Commissioner. We Don't Buy Crime demonstrates this commitment by taking an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods, whilst protecting the home and possessions, by making them less attractive to the would-be criminal.

The following key points were covered during the presentation:-

- Reduced burglary by between 30 – 50% consistently each year
- Improved service provision to victims and increased victim satisfaction
- Reduced repeat offending and victimisation
- Award-winning, evidence-based approach which has been identified by the Home Office as best practice.
- Holistic approach which encompasses a number of different strands; these work together towards a proactive, preventative and problem-solving approach.
- A forensic marking solution which contains a unique signature
- Enables the return of property to its rightful owners

- Helps to identify and link offenders to crimes
- 100% conviction rate in contested court cases
- Strong deterrent to offenders
- 74% of acquisitive crime offenders would not break into a building where a SmartWater sign was on display
- Research into burglaries has shown the following:
  - 41% of all domestic burglaries were within five days and 500m of another burglary. Of these, a quarter were within one day and 300m of another burglary.
  - Academic literature also shows that 76% of offenders returned to a number of houses to burgle them two to five times.
  - Ensuring a robust response to burglary recognises this and is vital in protecting communities and reassuring victims.
  - We Don't Buy Crime works closely with secondhand retailers, auction houses and scrap metal dealers to help prevent the sale of stolen goods:
    - Retailers signed up to the scheme receive a UV torch to help them identify if an item they are being offered for sale has been property marked.
    - Stolen property alerts are sent to all retailers signed up to the scheme by our business crime officers.
    - Businesses now have a clear process in place and guidelines for alerting the police to potentially stolen property being sold to them.
    - Working with communities to make them less attractive to criminals
    - Working with community councils to provide every resident with SmartWater and deterrent signage free of charge
    - Providing deterrent street signage to show criminals that this area is protected, working closely with the police and to be avoided
    - Wider work of WDBC team reinforces this message and provides wraparound support
    - Providing communities with proven crime prevention strategies which are sustained through police coordination and support.

The Inspector kindly answered Members questions and was thanked for her full report.

- (ii) The Inspector from Gwent Police was unable to attend the meeting to give an update to Members. Any questions by Members would be sent to the Inspector for her consideration.
- (iii) Members welcomed Station Commander Mark Bowditch from the Fire & Rescue Service. The Acting Clerk mentioned questions raised by Members at the last full Council meeting, regarding adequate fire cover (fire engines) stationed at Cwmbran. The Station Commander confirmed that there was efficient cover at the station with no shortages of fire engines. Mention was also made to the recent explosion near the old Autopia Car Centre and the fire risk of the area due to derelict grounds. The Station Commander reported that the explosions were tyres popping and that these incidents had been raised with the owner of the land.

The Station Commander kindly answered Members questions and was thanked for his report.

It was **Resolved**:-

- a) that Inspector Hannah Lawton and Huw Rowlands – the Co-ordinator from We Don't Buy Any Crime be thanked for the presentation and report
- b) that the questions raised are highlighted to the Inspector
- c) that Station Commander Bowditch is thanked for his attendance and willingness to answer members questions.

## **6 Council Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022**

The Chair introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to minute CL22/024 whereby members resolved to adopt the final IRP for Wales Annual Reports Determinations, including Determination 49 Allowance Scheme. Members noted that a response had recently been received from the IRP clarifying that (Determination 49) the Attendance Allowance would cover official duties as a Councillor and it would be up to the Council to decide if it is for Committee meetings or what meetings that Councillors are representative of. Members decided that the Attendance Allowance would cover Committee and Full Council meetings but not meetings that Councillors are representatives of.

In relation to minute CL22/028 (Staffing Matters) members noted that interviews had taken place for a full time Clerical Officer and an appointment had been made, starting on 29 August 2022

In relation to minute CL22/028 (Installation of Traffic Speed Signs) Torfaen County Borough Council's Senior Traffic Management Officer, had confirmed that the units had been ordered with installation within 3-4 weeks. We would be contacted nearer the time to arrange photo opportunities.

It was **Resolved** that:-

- a) the Attendance Allowance would cover Committee and Full Council meetings but not meetings that Councillors are representatives of
- b) the appointment of the full time Clerical Officer is noted
- c) the Installation date of Traffic Speed Signs is noted
- d) that the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.

## **7 Events & Community Projects Committee 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Councillor M Day introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to minute ECP22/011 Cwmbran Big Event, the Acting Clerk informed members that a full report would be brought to the next Events & Community Projects Committee meeting in September.

In relation to minute ECP22/012 Summer Playschemes, the Acting Clerk reported that visits to Cwmbran Summer Playscheme sites were being arranged on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August at 9.30am and if any members were interested in attending to contact the office. This information would be on this week's Members Matters for all interested members.

Mention was also made to National Play Day which was being held on 3<sup>rd</sup> August and Cwmbran Community Council would once again support the event by helping Torfaen Play handout playpacks in the town centre.

In relation to minute ECP22/013 Provisional Programmes of Events, it was suggested that all Community Award nomination forms be brought to this Committee for consideration, closer to the event.

It was **Resolved** that:-

- a) that all Community Award nomination forms be brought to this Committee for consideration, closer to the event
- b) that the recommendations included in the minutes are approved.

## **8 Grants to Voluntary Organisations Committee 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Councillor P Seabourne introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

It was **Resolved** that the minutes of the above meeting are received.

## **9 Environmental Sustainability & Planning Committee 6th July 2022**

- a) Councillor M Villars introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to minute ESP22/016, Members received a presentation from Alice Rees Canal Co-ordinator, the Acting Clerk mentioned that it was minuted "Re-igniting the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Partnerships" this should have included the wording re-igniting the Canal Watch.

- (i) Members received a report from Councillor Bird regarding supporting Foodbanks of Cwmbran. Members recommended that the report is approved, supporting the funding of £10,000 (this amount includes the recent grant awarded to Co Star in the amount of £2250 (minute GVO22/014)). The amount requested would be funded from N10 (Well-being and Anti-Poverty budget).
- (ii) Members received a report from Councillor C Morgan titled the Winter Warmer Scheme. Members considered the report and different ways in which the scheme could work and be supported. Members felt that

more professional/legal advice would need to be sought including community participation (surveys) and discussions with various groups such as, Age Concern, Care & Repair, Costar, TVA, Melin, Bronafon, etc to help identify the key products that would help benefit the community this winter. Suggestion was also made to possible energy vouchers that could be distributed to the most vulnerable in the community. Members felt that further consultation and investigation was needed, plus the importance of raising awareness within the community.

As further investigation would be needed, Members suggested that as time was of the essence in preparing for this winter, that thermal blankets, together with information packs on how to keep warm this winter, would be purchased and made available to any vulnerable members of the community. It was approved (as per report) that £10,000 would be used from code N10.

- b) Planning Consultations – Members considered the outstanding planning lists and there were no objections to planning lists 1419 and 1420.

It was **Resolved** that:-

- i) the minutes of the above meeting are confirmed with the inclusion of the wording of “the re-igniting of the canal watch”.
- ii) the report from Councillor Bird regarding supporting Foodbanks of Cwmbran is approved, in the sum of £10,000
- iii) thermal blankets, together with information packs on how to keep warm this winter, would be purchased and made available to any vulnerable members of the community. It was approved that £10,000 would be used to fund the blankets and information packs.
- iv) no objection is offered to Planning Lists.

## 10 Policy & Finance Committee 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Councillor A Bird introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute PF22/021, the Acting Clerk confirmed that the external works to the building would be starting over the next couple of weeks.

It was **Resolved** that the minutes are approved.

## 11 Plenary Powers

The Council was asked to make a resolution for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, together with the Leader and Deputy Leader, to be granted plenary powers to respond to any matters requiring decisions to be taken during the summer recess period as no Council Committees or Council Meetings will be held from now until September.

Any matters dealt with under this procedure will be reported to the next Meeting of the Council.

It was **Resolved** that this is noted.

## **12 Notice of Vacancy**

Members noted that following the Notice of Vacancy for the Two Locks Ward, the Council had been informed that there would probably be an election as several requests were received for nomination packs. Members therefore noted that the deadline would be the 11 August 2022, with a possible Election date of Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

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