

Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 6 March 2023 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 29 March 2023.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the meeting to be held on 17 April 2023

Present: Councillor R Bennett (Chair), A Bird, L Johnston, F Jones (Vice Chair), P Jones, C Morgan, P Seabourne, WJ Walker

(Councillors SWJ Ashley & M Villars participated in the meeting via remote means)

Also: Gareth Davies (Clerk), Katie Jenkins (TCBC Engagement and Electoral Participation Lead Officer) & James Vale (TCBC Head of ICT & Digital)

Absent: Councillors L Chaney, M Day, L Lloyd-Tolman, K Manneh, S Morgan

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

PF22/075 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors L Chaney (personal), L Lloyd-Tolman (personal), K Manneh (personal), S Morgan (illness)

PF22/076 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.

PF22/077 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

In relation to minute PF22/073 Traffic Speed Signs Councillor Villars confirmed that there are still on going issues with the Speed Signs to be resolved.

PF22/078 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (December 2022 & January 2023)

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliations. The Acting Clerk confirmed that corresponding statements and reconciliations had been verified by Councillor M Villars, in accordance with financial regulations.

The Clerk reported that he had received a reply from the Citizens Advice Bureau, and they had confirming that £1000 had been spent in February supporting residents in the Cwmbran area from the £10000 funding payment received and a full report will be available for the next Full Council Meeting.

Members discussed the current Task Force Service offered to residents which is subsidised by the Council. Members agreed to review the service to look at the costs, expenditure and promoting the service going forward at a future meeting.

It was **recommended**:-

- a) that the Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments for December 2022 and January 2023 are noted
- b) that Councillor Villars is thanked for verifying the accounts.
- c) The CAB report is deferred to the next Full Council Meeting.
- d) Review the Task Force Service.

PF22/079 Council House Matters

Members discussed the plans for the internal alterations to the Council House. Members suggested that the plans and use of the building need to be evaluated, with areas to be assessed including the footfall and accessibility of the building and how the services could be promoted, and the use of the building extended. The Clerk will look at the building use including the tenants using the upstairs offices and to report to the Members at the next meeting.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) The building is evaluated and deferred to the next meeting.
- ii) that the information is noted.

PF22/080 Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) for Cwmbran

Councillor P Jones informed Members that the Community Alcohol Partnership which sits within the Community Safety Partnership is on going and he will make enquiries and report back to the next meeting.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) Deferred to next meeting.
- ii) that the information is noted.

PF22/081 Torfaen County Borough Council Consultations

The meeting was attended by officers from TCBC Katie Jenkins (Engagement and Electoral Participation Lead Officer) and James Vale (Head of ICT & Digital)

- a) Waste & Recycling Consultations: Katie Jenkins (TCBC Engagement and Electoral Participation Lead Officer) reported to Members that the Waste & Recycling Consultation was on hold until 27th March and she would like to attend the next full Council meeting to give a full report.

Members received an update on the County Residents Survey with the results published online highlighting some areas requiring improvements. Information on services will be delivered to all Torfaen residents in the next 2 weeks.

- b) Digital First Customer Strategy: Members received a presentation from James Vale (TCBC Head of ICT & Digital) on the planned use of technology.

The plan aims to provide excellent and efficient services, with customers and staff empowered to thrive in a digital world. Providing innovative and effective use of secure robust joined up systems using a tiered approach for customers to self-serve using digital services, while maintaining support to vulnerable customers with more complex needs.

Members expressed concerns with isolated elderly residents being able to access services as many of them are unable to use digital services. Members were also concerned with the call waiting times and were advised that the new service would provide a call queuing system with the option to hang up and receive a call back instead of waiting on the line.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) Katie Jenkins is invited to the next full Council Meeting to report on the Waste and recycling Consultation and the Canal Consultation.
- ii) The position is noted.

PF22/082 One Voice Wales Membership Renewal for 2023-2024

Members considered the invoice from One Voice Wales and it was agreed that it provides a valuable service to the Council which is required and should be retained.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) Payment of £6683 is made to One Voice Wales to renew the membership.
- ii) The position is noted.

PF22/083 Seminars & Outside Bodies

Members noted the following meeting has taken place:-

- i. The Congress Theatre – Councillors Bird and Ashley updated members on the current situation with the Congress Theatre. The Theatre is leased from Cwmbran Shopping and currently has a leaking roof. Councillor Ashley has written to Joe Gordon on behalf of the Theatre. Councillor Bird reported that the Congress Theatre were pleased to receive a slight increase in funding.

Members asked Councillor Ashley if they could have a written report of the Congress Theatre.

- ii. CCYP – Councillor Bennett provided a report to members that the building is currently undergoing building work. They are working hard to build stronger connections while providing Warm Hubs, Foodbanks and food hampers.

They have also distributed the blanket packs. The Clerk will look at the distribution from various organisations and provide a report.

- iii. Friends of Bruchsal Society & Trust – Councillor Bird informed members that he had politely declined an invitation to attend a 200 year Celebration at Bruchsal and he will instead attend digitally.

- iv. Communities Agenda Meeting – Councillor Bird confirmed that it falls under two meetings initially with Dave Leech and Anthony Hunt and the next day with the Local Partnership Committee Meeting. Councillor P Jones updated members as chair of the Local Partnership Committee the main current topic is the work by Dave Leech drawing up the key priorities for the Communities Agenda. Members are encouraged to bring any issues to the next Partnership meeting.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) Members receive a written report on the Congress Theatre.
- ii) The Clerk is to report on the blanket distribution at the next meeting.
- iii) Communities Agenda Meeting – report back after Consultation.
- iv) The position is noted.

Signed(Chair, Policy & Finance Committee)