

**Minutes of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee held on Wednesday  
11 October 2023 at 6.00 pm.**

The recommendations below will be submitted to the Council Meeting to be held on  
Wednesday 8 November 2023

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the meeting of the committee to be held on  
Wednesday 22 November 2023.

**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, A Bird, M Day, L Johnston, C Morgan, M Villars &  
WJ Walker

*(Councillor R Bennett & L Lloyd-Tolman participated in the meeting via  
remote means)*

Also Gareth Davies (Clerk) & Andy Smith (RFO/Deputy Clerk)

**Absent** Councillors LJ Chaney, G Lloyd-Tolman, KK Manneh & P Seabourne

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

**ESP23/024 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors LJ Chaney (Personal),  
KK Manneh (Personal) & P Seabourne (Personal)

**ESP23/025 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 SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute  
ESP23/027 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters. He remained in the  
meeting during the discussions.*

**ESP23/026 Minutes – 6 September 2023**

Members would like to thank Councillor Mandy Owen for her response  
concerning the free compost available to residents, which was confirmed as  
only suitable for soil conditioning and mulching. At present residents are only  
permitted to collect two bags per household and members would like to  
enquire if Volunteer Park Projects would be able to access a substantial  
amount, this would save the cost to the project of purchasing the compost

from local businesses.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and are approved and actioned therein.

Councillor Ashley signed the minutes.

## **ESP23/027 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters**

*Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in Minute ESP23/027 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters. He remained in the meeting during the discussions.*

Councillor Walker updated members on a drop in event he attended concerning proposed plans for footpaths and safe routes in the community. Issues were also highlighted with parking at the school around Court Farm and James Prosser Way and the danger at the junction. The Clerk is to contact Councillor Mandy Owen concerning the issues raised.

### **(a) Planning Lists**

No objections are offered to Planning Lists 1477 & 1478.

### **(b) Schedules of Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Decisions**

Planning application 23/P/0364/PNT installation of a footbridge at Cwmbran Station. Councillor Bird is concerned with the site access, with most of the site work being carried out from the Station Farm side, causing more disruption to Station Farm. A letter is to be sent to Torfaen CBC Planning Department.

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Decisions.

It was **recommended** that:-

- i) no objections are offered to Planning Lists
- ii) to note the Schedules of Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Decisions.
- iii) the Clerk to contact Councillor Mandy Owen.
- iv) a letter is sent to Torfaen CBC Planning Department concerning planning application 23/P/0364/PNT
- v) The position is noted.

## **ESP23/028 Neighbourhood Services**

Councillor Mandy Owen, Executive Member for Environment (Torfaen County Borough Council) was unable to attend the meeting.

Councillor Walker informed members of a plot of land used for allotments in Oakfield which has been put up for sale by Torfaen CBC. The land can only be used for allotments, Councillor Ashley will make enquiries.

Councillor Bird was concerned with missed waste collections in Northville, due to road works being carried out to lay cables. No provision has been made to collect the waste with smaller vehicles and the waste has been left uncollected.

It was recommended that:-

- a) enquires to be made into the sale of the allotment land in Oakfield.
- b) the position is noted.

## **ESP23/029 Environmental Reports**

### **Canal Update**

An update had been received from Alice Rees, Canal Coordinator on the work to clear weeds funded by Cwmbran Community Council.

Aquaclear were contracted to clear the weed between Llandowlais Street and Ty Coch Lane. Two days were spent successfully removing the weed (mostly water lilies) which were left on the banks and collected by TCBC for disposal.

Approximately £4000 remains of the original funds awarded which could be used for further maintenance tasks if allowed by the Council. Including a weed cut south from Ty Coch Lane and towards the removal of some saplings/trees growing from the banks along the Ty Coch Lane section.

Councillor Walker was concerned that weeds were still present in the Canal including blanket weed, which will cause toxins when it dies and drops to the bottom of the canal.

The report also confirmed that repairs to the aqueduct have been completed in September. The contractor repaired damaged sections of the canal wall and reinstated the overflow which had been found to be cracked and dropped. Members also discussed concerns with the water levels, which are being recorded and investigated.

Members asked the Clerk to write to Alice Rees, expressing their concerns with the weeds, overgrowth and water levels.

It was **recommended** that:-

- a) the Clerk contacts Alice Rees.
- b) the position is noted.

**ESP23/030 Reports regarding any Climate & Nature Emergency Activities**

Councillor Ashley chaired a recent Torfaen CBC meeting, the meeting was a report back on the Boroughs approach to look at what they can do? Bio-diversity and Habitat, Community and Planning.

Members suggested inviting Climate Action Torfaen and the Local Food Network Summit to attend a meeting and give a presentation.

Councillor Bird suggested looking at a new project to tie in with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Members discussed options including planters, hanging baskets and working with the local parks.

Councillor C Morgan enquired about the plans for the Local Parks Group, which needs to move ahead soon for the parks to co-ordinate and share good practices. The Clerk confirmed he is waiting for some replies and contact details.

It was **recommended** that:-

- a) the position is noted.

**ESP23/031 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.

**ESP23/032 Task Force Performance Information**

Members considered the performance information regarding the recent work of the Task Force. The Clerk informed members that the Task Force is running at capacity with waiting lists for both Decorating and Gardening.

Members had a discussion on how the service could be expanded with the possibility of adding another team and vehicle. Suggestions also included a handyman service and collecting large items from resident's homes which they are unable to dispose of themselves due to the cost of having the item removed or not having a vehicle to take waste to the Recycling Centre.

Councillor Bennett highlighted the issues with hoarding, with residents requiring help clearing and maintaining their property, this would also need to include providing assistance with mental health issues.

Providing community skips across various wards was also discussed as an option to assist residents with clearing unwanted items.

Members asked the Clerk to look at the costs involved with adding another team with a vehicle, skips and what is being done in the borough to bring to the next meeting.

It was **recommended** that:-

- a) the Clerk looks at costs to expand the Task Force and other options for the next meeting.
- b) the Task Force performance information is noted.

**ESP23/033 BUDGET 2023/24**

Members considered the attached report. The RFO/Deputy Clerk reported to members that the budget process had been started with the figures on the report showing up to September 2023. He would now be looking at the budgets to give members the chance to look at them and plan for the year end and come back with ideas for next year's budget.

It was **recommended** that:-

- a) the position is noted.

*Signed .....*  
*(Chairman, Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee)*