

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 27 November 2019 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Cwmbran Community Council, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY**

**Present** Councillor KK Manneh (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, SJ Brooks, AL Bird, LG Johnston, J Rees, LM Ryan, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams

Also David Collins (Clerk) and Clare Facey (Administrative Officer)

**Absent** Councillors Rh Bennett, M Day, F Jones and M Johnston

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

**ESP19/034 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillor M Johnston (illness.)

Members also noted Apologies for Absence from Councillor PJ Cathcart, who was not a member of the committee.

**ESP19/035 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.

**ESP19/036 Neighbourhood Services**

Members had been asked to provide advance notice of any matters they wished to raise with the Executive Member (Torfaen County Borough Council). No new matters had been raised.

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

**ESP19/037 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters**

(a) Planning Lists

Members considered outstanding Planning Lists 1298 and 1299.

It was **recommended** that no objection is offered to Planning Lists 1298 and 1299, subject to any additional observations from Ward Members within the required timescale.

(b) Planning Decisions of Torfaen County Borough Council.

Members considered recent Planning Decisions.

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

(c) Disabled Persons Parking Places

Members considered a Notice in relation to Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment No.1) Disabled Persons Parking Places. Any objections were to be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council by 13 November 2019.

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

## **ESP19/038 “Managing our Green Infrastructure”**

Members considered progress in relation to a series of matters, which, taken together, contributed to the delivery of a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Members welcomed Andrew Osborne, Group Leader, Natural Environment Policy and Streetscene Operations, Neighbourhood Services (Torfaen County Borough Council). He updated the committee on the work of consultants appointed to undertake a mapping exercise of strategic green space as part of the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy. (Minute ESP19/030 (1) refers).

Andrew Osborne explained how the development of a Strategy would create a shared framework for the development of a connected and multi-functional network of distinctive, biodiverse and resilient natural spaces which would provide well-being benefits for people and nature.

Members noted that a Strategy would help ensure that natural resources and ecosystems were managed in sustainable ways to maintain, protect and enhance the network’s integrity and connectivity. The interdependency of the rich local biodiversity, landscape and heritage would also be widely recognised. The strategy would therefore play a key role in helping to deliver the Torfaen Well-being Plan.

The Strategy would also help create a common set of principles which would inform and support the implementation of local delivery plans and provide a wider context for local projects. Members considered the policy context for the development of a strategy and noted that stakeholder and public consultation would feature in its development. Connectivity would also be a key priority, to ensure links between green spaces and opportunities for the public to access areas such as woodlands, parks and heritage sites.

Members also welcomed Steve Williams, Team Leader, Ecology, Torfaen County Borough Council who was attending the meeting due to the unavailability of the new Biodiversity Officer, Rachel Edwards. He outlined Rachel Edwards’ background and explained that her role would be to advise Torfaen County Borough Council and other stakeholders on biodiversity, helping to ensure that biodiversity informed key planning decisions. She would also be developing priorities to support wildlife. He also outlined some of the ways in which the Council could encourage and support biodiversity. The Clerk highlighted the Council’s recently Biodiversity Action Plan, which had been welcomed by Welsh Government as an example of Best Practice.

Issues raised by Members in relation to the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy and Biodiversity included:

- the potential to access external funding to support new projects.
- projects already undertaken, such as wildflower planting and planting to encourage wildlife at The Council House.
- potential adaptations and improvements to the Council’s own premises, such as the introduction of nesting boxes.
- the Council’s proposal to increase tree planting locally.
- the potential for a programme to replace removed trees.

- the importance of partnership working and engagement (Andrew Osborne confirmed Torfaen County Borough Council's commitment to work with the Council. He also agreed to follow up Members' request for footpath maps (Minute ESP19/030 (3) refers).
- balancing the wider needs of the community with Biodiversity issues and creating access to green spaces.
- the positive impact on wider public well-being of access to green spaces.

Members also noted the current position in relation to other related matters. These included a commitment from the charity Fields in Trust to attend the meeting of the committee on 15 January 2019 (Minute ESP19/030 (2) refers) and the receipt of trees donated by the Woodland Trust to help celebrate Tree Charter Day as part of the Council's wider tree planting ambitions (Minute ESP19/031 refers). Some of these trees had already been distributed to local groups.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) Andrew Osborne and Steve Williams are thanked for their attendance and willingness to engage with Members.
- (2) copies of slides used by Andrew Osborne to illustrate issues associated with the development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy are distributed to Members.
- (3) progress in relation to the other matters described above is noted.

#### **ESP19/039 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.

#### **ESP19/040 Task Force**

Members considered performance information about the work of the Task Force. The Clerk to the Council highlighted information within the report which indicated whether previous jobs had been undertaken at each property. He also advised that a report on the potential to acquire an electric vehicle for use by the Task Force would be submitted to the next meeting.

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

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