

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 2 December 2019 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Cwmbran Community Council, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY

Present Councillor SWJ Ashley (Chair), Councillors AL Bird, SJ Brooks, M Day, RD Kemp, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams

Also David Collins (Clerk to the Council) and Clare Facey (Administrative Officer)

Absent Councillors RhM Bennett, PJ Cathcart, N Hopkins, LG Johnston, M Johnston and KK Manneh

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

PF19/061 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors PJ Cathcart (illness) N Hopkins (work commitments) and M Johnston (illness)

PF19/062 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.

PF19/063 Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre

The Chairman welcomed Louise Jones-Williams, Director of Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre, who made a presentation to Members about the work of the Centre.

Louise Jones-Williams described the current funding arrangements of the Centre and current projects. She outlined the aims & objectives within the Business Plan and described activities such as exhibitions, learning programmes and craft activities. Developing talent through initiatives such as Criw Celf also played an important role in the work of the Centre. Other activities included Saturday Art Club, mentoring activities and programmes to engage families and the wider community. She concluded by emphasising the importance of providing spaces for the people to come together and express themselves creatively in a nurturing environment. The support of agencies such as Cwmbran Community Council in sustaining this environment made a vital contribution to the work of the Centre and wider community Well-being.

Issues raised by Members included

- the potential for Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre to take part in the Cwmbran Big Event 2020 (Louise Jones-Williams indicated her support for this).
- funding pressures/Investment Review

- the potential for Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre to assist in the design of Christmas cards and decorations in future years. (Louise Jones-Williams indicated her support for this.)
- links to Coleg Gwent, the new education campus and Torfaen Museum.
- the positive opportunities for volunteers available at the Centre.
- the potential to develop a “Cwmbran Art Week.” (Louise Jones-Williams indicated her support for this).

The Chairman thanked Louise Jones-Williams for attending. Members welcomed the opportunity to learn about activities at the Centre and noted the positive ideas which the discussion had generated.

It is **recommended** that Louise Jones-Williams is thanked for her willingness to attend and answer Members’ questions.

PF19/064 Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (October 2019)

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliations.

Members noted that bird nesting boxes were about to be installed at the Council House (G10) and that options were being examined to purchase fleeces for staff to wear at events etc. (H02). Members also noted that some minor adjustments were currently being made to VAT records.

The Administrative Officer explained the circumstances relating to some duplicate payments which had been made. (C01)

Issues raised by Members included:

- Duplicate payment to SRS (H05)
- Insufficient Postage (H04)
- Replacement of faulty lock (G10)
- Room Hire income (G130)
- Unpresented cheques
- Petty Cash payments. Members noted that these payments were authorised in order to allow the Chairman to fulfil his role.

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

PF19/065 Estimates Timetable

Members noted the following arrangements for submission of draft estimates for the year 2020/21.

Events & Community Projects Committee	6 January 2020
Grants to Voluntary Organisations Committee	6 January 2020
Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee	15 January 2020
Policy & Finance Committee	20 January 2020
Full Council (to set Precept)	12 February 2020

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

PF19/066 Financial Regulations

Members considered draft Financial Regulations.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Annual Governance Statement (Regulation 1.5)
- Discussion re any changes to earlier regulations (general)

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

PF19/067 Fees & Charges 2020/21

It was **recommended** that consideration is deferred to the next meeting.

PF19/068 Governance Framework

Members considered an index of the Council's main policies and governance arrangements. Policies and documentation relation to issues such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) remained fit for purpose.

The committee considered that it was important that all Members had easy access to up to date copies of the documents. Members discussed the most efficient and cost effective way of putting this in place.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) electronic copies of all of the above documents are distributed to Members, with hard copies also available to any Members who require them.

PF19/069 Council House Maintenance & Other Matters

Members noted that the Annual Fire Safety Risk Assessment of the Council's premises would take place on 3 December 2019. The findings of the assessment would be reported to Members, together with a draft management response for Members to approve.

Members also noted that estimates were being obtained for the external painting of the Council House.

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

PF19/070 Torfaen Public Services Board (PSB)

Members noted progress in relation to issues discussed at a recent PSB workshop attended by representatives of the Council to help develop a Futures Risk Register (Minute PF19/056 refers). Potential actions suggested at the Workshop were being drawn together and the Council would be kept up to date on progress.

Members also considered the Future Generations Commissioner's latest newsletter which included information on cohesive communities, prosperity, education and involvement. Members confirmed the Council's excellent relations with community safety partners, which helped to deliver safe and cohesive communities.

Members also considered a report which set out details of a Welsh Government consultation exercise on a More Equal Wales – Commencing the Socio-economic Duty. The proposed duty which would require public bodies to consider how decisions might help to reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic advantage would apply to community councils. (The Duty would not apply to Community Councils in Wales, but Welsh Government wanted as many organisations and individuals to have a say on how the Duty could be implemented so were consulting widely. It was hoped, that even those not requested to implement the Duty would aim to implement the Duty into current working systems voluntarily.)

Members drew attention to the importance of receiving feedback on the outcome of such consultation exercises and the need for effective two-way dialogue with bodies such as Torfaen County Borough Council, citing a number of recent local examples to illustrate their concerns. Members looked forward to receiving details of the outcome of the consultation exercise.

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

PF19/071 Representation on Governing Bodies

Councillor David Williams' term of office as a governor of Pontnewydd Primary School's was about to end in January 2020. He had indicated that he was prepared to continue in this role as the Council's representative. Members were asked to confirm the appointment. Members also considered other current vacancies on School Governing Bodies.

It was **recommended** that the appointment of Councillor David Williams to continue as the Council's representative on Pontnewydd Primary School is confirmed.

PF19/072 Exclusion of the Press & Public

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was **recommended** that the following two 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.

PF19/073 Pensions

Members considered a number of matters in relation to pensions, including a letter from the Pensions Regulator about the re-enrolment and re-declaration. The Clerk answered Members' questions on issues arising.

It was **recommended** that

(1) the arrangements described in the report are noted and confirmed.

- (2) the Council confirms that all staff of Cwmbran Community Council are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from 1 June 2016.

PF/19/074 Provision of IT Support

Members considered a letter from the Chief Executive of Torfaen County Borough Council relating to the withdrawal of IT support by SRS on behalf of Torfaen County Borough Council. The letter did not indicate when this arrangement would end.

Members discussed various issues arising from the letter and wider issues associated with partnership arrangements between the Council and Torfaen County Borough Council and the Charter which governed these arrangements. Members were also uncertain about the relationship between SRS and Torfaen County Borough Council. Members also discussed the question of any compensation due to the Council.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the Clerk is instructed to seek clarification from SRS about the relationship between SRS and Torfaen County Borough Council and, in particular, enquire as to why the letter referred to above came from Torfaen County Borough Council rather than SRS.
- (2) the Clerk is instructed to examine options for alternative IT providers as a matter of urgency.
- (3) the Clerk is instructed to present a report to the next meeting on the benefits and risks to the Council arising from the charter with Torfaen County Borough Council, referred to above.

Signed
(Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council)