

Minutes of a Meeting of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 15 January 2020 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Cwmbran Community Council, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY

Present Councillors SWJ Ashley, SJ Brooks, AL Bird, M Day, KK Manneh, F Jones, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams

Also David Collins (Clerk)

Absent Councillors RhM Bennett, M Johnston, LG Johnston, J Rees and LM Ryan

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

Due to the late arrival of the Chairman, Councillor KK Manneh, it was agreed that Councillor AL Bird would take the Chair. Councillor Bird took the chair and remained in the Chair for the meeting.

(Councillor AL Bird in the Chair.)

ESP19/041 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors RhM Bennett (work commitments) M Johnston (illness) and J Rees (work commitments)

ESP19/042 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.

ESP19/043 “Managing our Green Infrastructure”

Members welcomed Rhodri Edwards, Wales Manager, Fields in Trust Cymru, an independent charity which protected parks and green spaces. The charity worked with landowners, community groups and policy makers to champion the value of parks and green spaces to achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level. (Minute ESP19/030 (3) refers.)

Rhodri Edwards described the background to Fields in Trust Cymru, which was the operating name of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) in Wales. He outlined ways in which the organisation protected, championed and supported green spaces and gave examples of protected sites in Cwmbran. Legal agreements were in place with Torfaen County Borough Council to protect the sites and the land could only be used for outdoor play, sport and recreation.

Members discussed the process for bringing forward sites for protection, referring to sites which had been subject to pressure for development. Rhodri Edwards suggested that initial approaches should be made to landowners, most likely to be Torfaen County Borough Council or Bron Afon Housing Association.

Other issues raised by Members included:

- “gating” of areas of open space used by sports clubs.
- homelessness in parks. (This was a management issue rather than a matter for Fields in Trust Cymru.)

- the nature of Fields in Trust Cymru's relationship with protected sites in Cwmbran

Rhodri Edwards referred to guidance produced by Fields in Trust Cymru, which contained advice for local planning authorities, developers, planners & urban designers, landscape architects and community councils on the planning and design of outdoor sport, play and informal open space. (Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard - Wales). The Clerk would circulate a copy of the guidance.

Members also received a short update on the Council's proposals to embark on a tree planting programme locally, including interest in the proposal from the wider community. Discussions would take place with various local stakeholders in February. Members discussed various options for taking the tree planting programme forward, such as distribution of seeds to local schools and other groups. Members also expressed concern at the number of trees felled as part of new developments and discussed potential areas for new planting.

Members also noted progress of the Council's initiative to take delivery of around 70 trees from the Woodland Trust (Minute ESP19/038 refers). The trees had been distributed to community groups locally. Some had also been planted at the Council House.

Members noted that Torfaen Public Services Board was expected to approve the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy for consultation on 22 January 2020. The Strategy would then be released for consultation.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) Rhodri Edwards is thanked for his attendance and willingness to answer questions.
- (2) A copy of Fields in Trust Cymru's "Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play Beyond the Six Acre Standard - Wales" is circulated to all Members.
- (3) Members' concerns about the removal of trees at development sites is taken forward in discussions with stakeholders as part of the Tree Planting Programme.

ESP19/044 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters

(a) Planning Lists

Members considered outstanding Planning Lists 1304 and 1305.

It was **recommended** that no objections are offered in respect of Planning Lists 1304 and 1305. (In relation to item 6011 on List 1304 (19/P/0627/FUL) Members sought clarification of the management arrangements for the HMO complex.)

(b) Planning Decisions of Torfaen County Borough Council.

Members considered recent Planning Decisions.

(Members also referred to a forthcoming event being held by Planning Inspectorate Wales and Planning Aid Wales to introduce Community Councils to the work of the Planning Inspectorate. The event would explore how Community Councils could engage with the planning system.

The Clerk agreed to attend the event and report back.)

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

ESP19/045 BT Consultation Exercise

Members considered proposals for the removal of additional public payphones in Torfaen. Observations were to be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council by 30 January 2020.

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

ESP19/046 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).

Members noted a response from the Executive Member following concerns expressed in relation to collection of waste and recycling materials over the recent Christmas period. Members expressed disappointment that town & community councillors had not been made aware of the information contained in the response at an earlier stage. Members asked to be kept informed of the outcome of further discussions being arranged by the Executive Member.

It was **recommended** the Clerk contact the Executive Member to request any additional information about the outcome of the further discussions referred to above.

ESP19/047 Committee Estimates 2020/21

Members received a proposal for the 2020/21 Committee Estimates.

It was **recommended** that the Committee Estimates are approved.

ESP19/048 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.

ESP19/049 Task Force

Members considered performance information about the work of the Task Force and the potential to acquire an electric vehicle for use by the Task Force.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the performance information is noted.
- (2) further enquiries are made in 2020/21 to research other options to lease an electric vehicle for Task Force in the future, including the potential to acquire a hybrid vehicle.

Signed
(Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council)