

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 2 March 2020 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, M Villars 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, KK Manneh and WJ Walker

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

**PF19/089 Apologies for Absence**

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

**PF19/090 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-pecuniary (personal) interest in Minute PF 19/100 (iii) (Seminars & Outside Bodies: Local Councils in Partnership Committee 2 February 2020. He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

**PF19/091 Finance & Audit Items**

**(i) Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (December 2019)**

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliations.

Issues raised by Members included:

- Clearance of blocked manhole (G10).

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

**(ii) Quarterly Financial Monitoring 2019/20: Quarter 3 (October, November, December 2019)**

Members considered the above information. The Clerk advised Members of an overspend in relation to expenditure on cleaning & hygiene materials (Code G11.) Full details would be reported to Members at the next opportunity. Members underlined the importance of maintaining a safe and hygienic office environment, with particular regard to current concerns over the coronavirus. Members emphasised the

importance of following any national guidance in relation to business continuity arrangements.

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

**PF19/092 Interim Internal Audit**

Members considered a report of the Council's Internal Auditor following the Interim Internal Audit which took place on 10 February 2020. The audit revealed a generally satisfactory position. Some matters would be examined further at year end.

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

**PF19/093 Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales (IRPW) Annual Report 2020**

Members noted receipt of the IRPW's Annual Report, February 2020 and a covering letter from the Chair, Mr John Bader. The report would have effect for the financial year 2020 / 2021. Section 13 of the Report related specifically to Community and Town Councils. Members noted that the Council must discuss and vote on all of the determinations relevant to Community & Town Councils in Section 13. Some determinations were mandatory. Members noted that an individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wished. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to the proper officer to do so (i.e. the Clerk).

The Council had also received an electronic copy of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales draft Supplementary Report – the principles relating to the reimbursement of costs of care, together with a covering letter from the Chair, Mr John Bader. Comments were due by 9 April 2020.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the Council adopts Determinations 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49 and 50 of the Report.
- (2) in relation to Determination 44, payment of £500 is paid to the Leader and Committee Chairs.
- (3) a time limit of one month is set from the date on which an entitlement to travelling or subsistence allowance arises during which a claim for those allowances must be made by the person to whom they are payable. However, this does not prevent an authority from making a payment where the allowance is not claimed within the period specified.

**PF19/094 "Twin Hatted Members": Declarations of Interest**

Members considered advice of the Monitoring Officer (Torfaen County Borough Council) in relation to the Members who were Members of both Cwmbran Community Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.

It was **recommended** that the advice of the Monitoring Officer is implemented.

**PF19/095 Contract Standing Orders**

Members considered the need to clarify some aspects of the Council's Standing Orders relating to contracts, pending a wider review during 2020/21

It was **recommended** that Contract Standing Orders 12 (Assignment) and 15 (Cancellation) are amended to confirm that these controls apply to contracts exceeding £10,000.

**PF19/096 Annual Report 2020**

The Clerk reported that work would shortly commence on the preparation of the Council's Annual Report, which would include details or progress towards wider Well-being goals.

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

**PF19/097 One Voice Wales Membership 2020/21**

Members considered information about the role of One Voice Wales and a request for payment of the Council's membership for the forthcoming year. The Leader outlined some of the governance arrangements relating to the way in One Voice Wales operated. The Clerk identified examples of support received from One Voice Wales and the Council's success in One Voice Wales' Innovative Practice Awards.

It was **recommended** that the Council renews its membership of One Voice Wales for 2020/21 in the sum of £5497.00

**PF19/098 Community Awards & Grants Presentation Evening 30 January 2020**

Members considered a short report on the success of the above event. The Council's Events & Community Project had recommended that responsibility for the organisation of the Community Awards/Grants Presentation Evening (including any budgetary issues) is transferred to the Council's Events & Community Projects Committee.

It was **recommended** that

- (1) the report is noted.
- (2) the recommendation of the Events & Community Projects Committee is noted.

**PF19/099 Cwmbran Park Bowls Club**

Members considered a request to take out an advertisement in the club's handbook for a donation of £50.00. The cost of the advertisement would help sustain the club.

It was **recommended** that the expenditure is approved. (Local. Local Government Act 1972 s 142 (Para 1A))

**PF19/100 Seminars & Outside Bodies**

Members considered reports in relation to seminars and meetings of the following outside bodies, attended by representatives of the Council.

- (i) One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee 21 January 2020

The Clerk undertook to circulate details of Time Credits, which had been discussed at the committee meeting, to Members.

- (ii) South Wales Larger Councils Forum 24 January 2020

- (iii) Local Councils in Partnership Committee 2 February 2020

(Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a personal interest in this item as he is member of Torfaen County Borough Council. He remained in the meeting during the discussions. He said he would reconsider the nature of the interest matter at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.)

The Clerk confirmed that concerns raised by Members about the relationship with Torfaen County Borough Council had been raised at the meeting. In particular, he confirmed that Members' disappointment about being unable to speak at Members' Seminars had been raised. Members confirmed their disappointment, which they considered to be a missed opportunity for effective engagement. Members also discussed the role of Dr Sarah Aitken, Director for Public Health at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to the work of the Public Services Board. She was responsible for the local Public Health Wales team across Gwent. The Leader of the Council clarified the reporting arrangements in relation to the work of the Board.

It was **recommended** that the reports re noted.

**PF19/101 Exclusion of the Press & Public**

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is **recommended** 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.

**PF19/102 Outstanding Debts**

The Clerk reported arrangements to obtain payment of a debt in relation to invoice number 00732, which related to work undertaken by the Council's Task Force in 2018. Despite a number of attempts to obtain payment, payment had not been forthcoming. The debtor would no longer be able to use the Task Force service

It was **recommended** that

- (a) the above debt is written off.  
(b) the debtor is considered to be no longer eligible to utilise the services of the Task Force as a result of the non-payment.

**PF19/103 Staffing Matters: Maternity Cover**

(The Administrative Officer left the meeting prior to the consideration of this matter.)

Members considered a report on proposed arrangements to be put in place to cover forthcoming maternity absence. A series of options were presented together with details of costs and grades.

An existing full-time member of staff would act up during the absence to cover aspects of the Administrative Officer's role and a temporary member of staff would be engaged to cover work in relation to accounts etc. An existing part-time Member of staff would also work additional hours (one extra day a week) to provide further cover.

It was **recommended** that the above arrangements are approved.

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