

Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 6.00 pm

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on 21 July 2021.

Venue: The meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Present Councillor SJ Brooks (Chairman) Councillors AL Bird, SWJ Ashley, RhM Bennett, LJ Chaney, M Day, LG Johnson, F Jones, S Morgan, J Rees, WJ Walker and DH Williams,

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

Absent Councillors JS Davenne, M Johnston, RD Kemp, KK Manneh, LM Ryan, M Villars and LE Williams

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

CL21/013 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillor JS Davenne (personal), M Johnston (personal), KK Manneh (sickness) LM Ryan (personal) M Villars (holiday) and LE Williams (personal)

CL21/014 Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests they had and give details of the nature of their interest.

CL21/015 Voting

It was **Resolved** that the manner of any voting at this meeting would be by calling each name alphabetically with a response of "for" or "against" or "abstain."

CL21/016 Chairman's Announcements & Vice Chairman's Announcements

- (i) The Chairman of the Council announced that he had attended the following:

Flag Raising at the Council House to commemorate
D Day 4 June 2021

"Site Visit" to Cwmbran Centre for Young People 22 June 2021
(The Chairman described progress of recent building works at the Centre)

Flag Raising at the Council House to commemorate
Armed Forces Day 23 June 2021

The Chairman also announced that Canon John Griffiths would be leaving his post in Cwmbran shortly. The Clerk agreed to send the Council's best wishes to Canon Griffiths and welcome his replacement, Daniel Stanton.

- (ii) The Chairman also announced that his chosen charitable cause to support during his year of office was Cwmbran Churches Together.

There were no announcements from the Vice Chairman of the Council.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the information is noted.
- (2) the Chairman's attendance at events is approved.

CL21/017 Public Questions

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders the opportunity for public questions was included as an item on the agenda for the meeting.

No questions had been submitted.

CL21/018 Membership

On 16 December 2020, the Council approved the continued absence up until 29 July 2021 of Councillor M Johnston. (Minute CL20/103).

Councillor Johnston attended a Council meeting on 12 May 2021. It would not therefore be necessary to implement the above decision.

It was **Resolved** that the position is noted and endorsed.

CL21/019 Gwent Police Update/ South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update

Inspector Aled George was unable to attend the meeting. The Clerk agreed to forward any observations from Inspector George about issues previously raised to Members.

Members welcomed Station Commander Paul Simmons of South Wales Fire & Rescue. He updated Members on issues previously raised in relation to Dowlais Brook and referred to recent incidents at Sandybrook Park. He encouraged Members to draw attention to any local incidents of arson etc. and presented an overview of recent accidental and deliberate fires.

It was **Resolved** that Station Commander Simmons is thanked for his attendance at the meeting and the information provided.

CL21/020 Council Meeting 12 May 2021 & 19 May (Annual Meeting)

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the above meetings.

In relation to Minute CL20/200 (2021 Events), Members noted that the Chairman of the Council had agreed that flags would remain in place throughout the summer, to add colour and interest to the local street scene.

In relation to delegated powers granted to the Clerk, the Clerk confirmed that a flexible approach continued to be taken to staff working hours arrangements to ensure business continuity.

The Clerk also drew attention to a successful application made to Keep Wales Tidy for a Starter Package under the Local Places for Nature initiative.

The project would see the establishment of a small area at the Council House for planting to encourage pollinators.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the minutes of the meetings of 12 and 19 May 2021 are confirmed.
- (2) the removal of Blair Mwendo from the Council's banking arrangements is confirmed. (Minute CL21/009 (3) refers.).
- (3) Delegated powers granted to the Clerk remain in place until the next Council meeting. (Note: under this delegation any reference to a specific statute includes any statutory extension or modification or re-enactment of such statute and any regulations, orders or bylaws made there under.)

(The Chairman authenticated the minutes of the above meetings.)

CL21/021 Receipts & Payments March 2021 (amended) & April 2021.

Financial Regulations required details of receipts & payments and comparisons of expenditure against budget to be reported to the Council's Policy & Finance Committee. The regulations also required that bank reconciliations are verified by a member (Councillor M Villars) and that details are reported to the Council's Policy & Finance Committee. (Financial Regulations 4 and 2 refer.) Councillor Villars had verified and signed the information.

Due to the current Covid-19 outbreak, Council was recommended to confirm the suspension of these regulations to allow these matters to be reported direct to Council for the foreseeable future. This avoids the risk of the activity not being reported to Members in a timely manner. The risk of not doing so would cause a delay and a risk accountability, sound financial management and effective scrutiny.

Members considered Itemised Schedule of Receipts & Payments (March 2021 (amended) and April 2021).

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the suspension of Financial Regulations to allow these matters to be reported direct to Council for the foreseeable future is approved.
- (2) the information is noted.

CL21/022 Quarterly Financial Monitoring quarter 4 January, February March 2021 (amended)

Members considered quarterly financial monitoring information which indicated expenditure against budget. The information included explanations of material variances, where appropriate. Members noted minor adjustments to the information reported by the Clerk. The Clerk explained some of the expenditure included within Code G11 (Cleaning & Hygiene Materials.)

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the information is approved.

- (2) the Clerk is instructed to undertake a review of all financial codes to ensure that they continue to reflect the Council's business needs and report back to Members.

CL21/023 Accounting Statements and Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Members considered the Annual Return and Accounting Statements 2020/21, Financial Statement for the year ended the 31 March 2021 and report of the Council's internal auditor, dated 4 June 2021. Members noted an amendment to information in relation to Fixed Assets, which did not affect the overall balances.

Members noted that a review of existing systems of internal control was undertaken annually.

In response to issues raised by a Member, the Clerk explained the way in which the management of General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves was overseen by Members.

It was **Resolved** that the Annual Return, Accounting Statements and Financial Statement are approved and that the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, together with the Chairman on behalf of the Council, signs the appropriate sections of the Annual Return for submission to the Council's external auditor.

CL21/024 Planning Consultations

Members considered details of recent planning applications from Torfaen County Borough Council, which had been circulated separately.

The Deputy Leader encouraged Members to provide the Clerk with any observations in relation to a study being undertaken to investigate potential transport improvements on the A4042 Corridor between Pontypool and Llantarnam.

It was **Resolved** that Members forward any observations on outstanding applications and other consultations to the Clerk so that any response can be submitted.

CL21/025 Coronavirus Update

The Council continued to share key messages relating to coronavirus and monitor any changes to restrictions. The current conditions would not bring significant changes to existing working practices though the position would continue to be closely monitored, particularly as far as Council events were concerned.

It was **Resolved** that the position is noted.

CL21/026 National Play Day: 4 August 2021

Members noted that Torfaen County Borough Council was keen on working in partnership again this year to distribute play resources in the community .

Pontypool Community Council were re participating and packs would be handed out at Pontypool Park with Council Members on the 4 August 2021 to promote this special day.

Members considered whether this was a project which they wished to support. Packs could be distributed at the Council House or from an outside venue such as Cwmbran Centre.

It was **Resolved** that the Council's participation in the above initiative is approved, using a venue such as Cwmbran Centre.

CL21/027 Cwmbran "Virtual" Big Event 2021

Members gave further consideration to the potential format for the above activity, which was due to take place on 18 September 2021. Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Standing Orders relating to Contracts had been waived to ensure a flexible, successful project and speed of decision making, including budgetary controls. (Minute CL20/200 refers)

Members noted that key partners such as Llantarnam Grange and Arts Centre and the Congress Theatre were willing to participate in the event and share resources. Details of other potential activities were also considered by Members.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the format described is supported in principle.
- (2) use of finance identified for the Big Event to meet any necessary costs, such as commissioning any external support or assistance with activities is approved. (Code LO5 Cwmbran Big Event. (£25,000.)
- (3) a further report is submitted to a future meeting.

CL21/028 Grants to Voluntary Organisations

Members gave further consideration to an application from RPD of Gwent (Retired Police Dogs) and other action which the Council wished to take as a result of issues raised. (Minute CL20/201 refers.). Members noted that the organisation had not been in existence for one year or more, which did not meet the Council's current criteria for awarding grants.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) no grant is awarded at the present time but the organisation is invited to apply for a grant in the future.
- (2) the Clerk is instructed to write to the local MP to express concern about the arrangements to support retired police dogs and police horses.

CL21/029 School Governor Vacancies

Members considered existing vacancies for Community members of the Governing Bodies at Llantarnam Community Primary School and Greenmeadow Primary School

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) Mr E Blackmore is appointed as a Community Governor at Llantarnam Community Primary School.

- (2) Councillor LJ Chaney is appointed as a Community Governor at Greenmeadow Primary School.

CL21/030 Date of Next Meeting

It was **Resolved** that the next meeting is held on 21 July 2021 at 6.00 p.m. The meeting to take place remotely via Zoom.

CL21/031 Exclusion of the Press & Public

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

CL21/032 Staffing Matters

The Administrative Officer presented a report on staffing matters.

Two members of staff were working additional hours to help compensate for the absence of a Clerical Officer who had left the Council. (Minute CL20/211 refers)

The report also described personal circumstances relating to the Clerk.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the arrangement for two members of staff to continue to work an additional four hours a week is approved, until 30 September 2021 to be reviewed at that point.
- (2) the matters relating to the Clerk are noted.

Signed (*Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council*)