

Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 6.00 pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held on
15 September 2021

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

Present: Councillor SJ Brooks (Chairman), Councillors SWJ Ashley, RhM Bennett, LJ Chaney, JS Davenne, M Day, LG Johnson, RD Kemp, KK Manneh, S Morgan, LM Ryan, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams.

Absent: Councillors AL Bird, M Johnston, F Jones, J Rees and LE Williams

(No public participation session was held at this meeting)

CL21/033 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors AL Bird (personal), F Jones (illness), J Rees (work commitments) and LE Williams (personal).

Members also noted an apology for absence from the Administrative Officer, who was unable to attend the meeting due to personal circumstances.

CL21/034 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.

Councillor M Villars declared a personal interest in Minute CL20/043 (Planning Consultations - item 6222 on Planning List 1374 Aboretum at Newport Road, Llantarnam. He declared the nature of his interest and remained in the meeting.

Councillors SWJ Ashley and RD Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/045 (National Play Day) as members of Torfaen County Borough Council. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matters at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

CL21/035 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".

CL21/036 Chairman's Announcements & Vice Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman of the Council announced that he had recently visited Our Lady of the Angels School and Maendy Primary School. He would report details to a future meeting.

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.

CL21/037 Public Question Time

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.

CL21/038 Gwent Police Update / South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update

No representatives of Gwent Police or South Wales Fire & Rescue attended the meeting. The Clerk agreed to forward any questions submitted to the representatives.

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

CL21/039 Council Meeting 23 June 2021

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the above meetings.

In relation to delegated powers granted to the Clerk, the Clerk confirmed that a pragmatic approach continued to be taken to working arrangements and office cover to reflect business needs, staff circumstances and annual leave/sickness absence.

In relation to Minute CL21/028 (Grants to Voluntary Organisations) the Clerk confirmed that he had written to the local MP as requested. A reply was awaited.

In relation to Minute CL21/029 (School Governor Vacancies) the Clerk referred to a vacancy which had arisen on the Federation of Blenheim Road and Coed Eva Governing Body. Details would be reported to the next Council meeting.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the minutes of the above meeting are confirmed.

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

- (2) 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.)
- (3) The Clerk is instructed to circulate details of the vacancy on the Federation of Blenheim Road and Coed Eva Governing Body to Members as soon as possible so that any nominations made could be considered at the next meeting.

CL21/040 Receipts & Payments May 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 were 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. The Chairman thanked Councillor Villars for his attention to these matters

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 (May 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.

CL21/041 Strategic Business Planning

Members considered a detailed report which described a series of initiatives to improve business planning and effectiveness within the Council. The initiatives built upon existing Best Practice within the Council and linked to the Council's corporate objectives and ways of working set out in the Annual Report.

Other proposals in the report included the introduction of a new template for reporting to Members, improved arrangements relating to meetings of outside bodies, a performance appraisal framework and ways to encourage and improve public involvement.

It was **Resolved** that the arrangements described in the report are approved, subject to a minor amendment to the organisational structure.

CL21/042 Financial Regulations 2021/22

Members Draft Financial Regulations are therefore attached. These reflected model regulations used throughout the town & community council sector.

The Clerk recommended an increase in the threshold for the need to obtain three competitive quotations from £5,000 to £6,000. This had not been reviewed for some time. Other related regulations were adjusted accordingly. Contract Standing Orders should also be amended to ensure consistency.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the attached draft Financial Regulations are approved.
- (2) Contract Standing Orders are amended as reported above.

CL21/043 Planning Consultations

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

Councillor Villars declared a personal interest in item 6222 on List 1374, Aboretum at Newport Road, Llantarnam. He explained the nature of his business and remained in the meeting

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

CL21/44 Coronavirus Update

The First Minister had announced a series of changes from Saturday 17 July, with limits for attendance at outdoor events removed. Home working would continue to be encouraged. Arrangements would remain under review. Members considered the potential to resume room hire for parts of the premises.

It was **Resolved** that the above matters remain under review

CL21/045 National Playday: 4 August 2021

Councillors SWJ Ashley and RD Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as members of Torfaen County Borough Council. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matters at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Members noted that the Council would be supporting the above event by helping to distribute play packs to local residents at Cwmbran Centre. Garden gnomes would also be distributed from the Council's offices during the same week. Protective measures would be in place to ensure safety.

It was **Resolved** that the above arrangements are supported.

CL21/046 Cwmbran "Virtual" Big Event 18 September 2021

Members noted arrangements which were being put in place in relation to the above. The event would include contributions from VIPs and other organisations. A further report would be submitted to the next Council meeting. The Deputy Leader agreed to contact the Congress Theatre about any support they could provide.

It was **Resolved** that the arrangements are noted.

CL21/047 Remembrance Sunday 2021

Members noted that new restrictions relating to coronavirus could mean that a parade could take place on Remembrance Sunday with an Act of Remembrance at Cwmbran Park. The Clerk advised that enquiries had already been received about any arrangements. Members emphasised the importance of holding discussions with representations of any veterans with an interest in the parade. Members also noted that Torfaen County Borough Council had appointed Councillor Jon Horler as Armed Forces Champion.

An Act of Remembrance was expected to take place in Pontnewydd. A wreath would be laid at the clock tower (Council House) on 11 November 2021 by the Chairman of the Council.

Additional large scale Event Poppies could be purchased to help commemorate Remembrance via a donation of £3.50 per poppy to the Royal British Legion. The use of a PA system would also be required. The Council is required to approve the use of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for such purposes.

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the staging of a Remembrance Sunday Parade is approved in principle, along the route used for the last parade, subject to suitable safety and risk assessment measures being put in place.
- (2) in pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, expenditure up to £2,250 is approved in relation of the above event (Code L10 Remembrance), to include the costs of hiring a PA system (if required), wreaths, Event Poppies and any other associated expenditure.

CL21/048 Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Members noted that One Voice Wales had advised that if Councils wished to meet in public, they must provide remote access for any members of the public wishing to participate. The implications of this were under consideration.

It was **Resolved** that the arrangements are kept under review

CL21/049 One Voice Wales/Planning Aid Wales On-line Seminar: Regenerating Welsh Towns and Communities Post Covid-19. 23 June 2021

Members considered an oral report from Councillor SWJ Ashley, who had attended the above event. The Clerk undertook to circulate information about the seminar to Members.

Members welcomed the potential opportunities for regenerating towns and discussed the role of shopping centres etc in the local economy.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the Council's Environment, Sustainability and Planning Committee is given responsibility for monitoring the progress of developments in relation to the matters referred to above

(2) the Clerk to the Council is instructed to circulate details of local shopping centres to all Members.

CL21/050 Consultation on Qualifications of Clerks in Wales

Members noted that Minister for Finance and Local Government had published the consultation: 'Eligible Community Councils (General Power of Competence) (Qualifications of Clerks) (Wales) Regulations 2021'

The consultation documents proposed that the Clerk should hold one of the following qualifications.

- the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Governance
- the Certificate of Higher Education in Community Engagement and Governance
- the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy.

Members noted that the Clerk to the Council currently held the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

Members endorsed the need for Clerks to be suitably qualified and underlined the commitment shown by the Council in ensuring that the Clerk held the CiLCA qualification, which they recognised as the principal qualification for local council clerks.

It was **Resolved** that the Clerk forward the above observations to Welsh Government as part of the above consultation process.

CL21/051 Date of Next Meeting

It was **Resolved** that that the next Council meeting is held on 15 September 2021 at 6.00 p.m. The meeting to take place remotely via Zoom.

CL21/052 Exclusion of the Press & Public

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

CL21/053 Cwmbran Centre for Young People. Refurbishment Works

Members noted that, in order for works to continue, it was necessary for the Council to be named as Joint Employer for the Works. (CL20/160) This would ensure that insurance remained in place. This required suspension of the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Standing Orders relating to contracts to ensure that the works were insured and that the conditions of contract are appropriate to the nature of the work. This mitigated against the risk of the works being unable to be undertaken without the necessary safeguards and conditions in place.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the suspension of the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Standing Orders relating to contracts in relation to works at Cwmbran Centre for Young People, as described above, is confirmed.
- (2) the Council is named as Joint Employer for the works.

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