

Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Monday 28 September 2020 at 6.00pm.

Venue: The meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Present Councillor AL Bird, (Chairman). Councillors SWJ Ashley, RM Bennett, SJ Brooks, PJ Cathcart, JS Davenne, M Day, F Jones, KK Manneh, L Ryan, M Villars, DH Williams, LE Williams.

Also, David Collins (Clerk to the Council)

Absent Councillors RD Kemp, LG Johnson, M Johnson, J Rees and WJ Walker

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

CL20/055 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors J Rees (work commitments) and WJ Walker (personal).

Apologies for absence were also subsequently submitted by Councillor M Johnston (sickness).

CL20/056 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 SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/061(2) below (Council Meetings 9 September: Greenmeadow Community Farm Shadow Board) as Chair of the Shadow Board. He remained in the meeting during the discussions. He would reconsider the nature of the interest matter at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones and R Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/064 below (Planning Consultations) as members of Torfaen County Borough Council's Planning Committee. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matter at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Councillor JS Davenne declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/067 below (Play Provision) as Play Service Manager, Torfaen County Borough Council. He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/068 below (Grant Applications: Greenmeadow Allotments Association) as Chair of Torfaen Allotments Group He remained in the meeting during the discussions.

CL20/057 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":

CL20/058 Chairman's Announcements & Vice Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that he had attended the following events:

Flag Raising at the Council House: Dydd Owain Glyndŵr: 16 September 2020

It was **Resolved** that:

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

CL20/059 Public Question Time

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders approved on 25 June 2014, the opportunity for public questions was included as an item on the agenda for the meeting.

No questions had been submitted.

CL20/060 Police & Fire & Rescue Update

The Chairman introduced PC Rebecca Thrush of Gwent Police.

PC Thrush presented an overview of statistics relating to crime and anti-social behaviour locally. She described trends in public order offences, violence, criminal damage, drug dealing, town centre incidents, retail crime and dwelling burglaries. She explained how "anti-social driving" and offences relating to vehicle insurance had been the subject of recent police attention. A fair which had been held in Llantarnam recently had been monitored to ensure social distancing etc.

PC Thrush outlined restrictions which had been introduced to reduce the spread of coronavirus and protect public health in the county of Torfaen with effect from 6.00 pm on 28 September 2020. The main restrictions were:

- people would not be allowed to enter or leave the Torfaen County Borough Council area without a reasonable excuse
- people would no longer be able to form, or be in, an extended household (sometimes called a "bubble")
- this meant that meeting indoors with anyone who was not part of your household (people you live with) would not be allowed at the moment, without good reason, such as providing care to a vulnerable person.
- all licensed premises to stop serving alcohol at 10pm
- people must work from home wherever possible

PC Thrush explained how the police were working with the community to protect the public. She also outlined enforcement procedures using Fixed Penalty Notices and outlined conditions relating to the town centre.

PC Thrush also referred to arrangements in relation to Halloween and Guy Fawkes' Night. She was unaware of any planned activities to celebrate these occasions locally.

Issues raised by Members included:

- dwelling burglaries
- recent police intervention at Llantarnam, which was welcomed
- measures to discourage children calling at other houses during Halloween and the implications of extended households (“bubbles”) as part of Guy Fawkes’s Night celebrations (PC Thrush explained that the police would work with schools to raise awareness of current restrictions.)
- clarification about any incidents of anti-social behaviour in Sandybrook Park

Members noted that no representative of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was able to attend the meeting. The Clerk agreed to contact the Service about attending future meetings.

It was **Resolved** that PC Rebecca Thrush is thanked for attendance and willingness to answer questions.

CL20/061 Council Meetings 9 September 2020

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 September 2020 and the Annual Council Meeting held on 9 September 2020.

In relation to Minute CL2020/6 (Appointment of Members to Serve on Outside Bodies), Members noted that Councillor Fay Jones had indicated her wish to resign as the Council’s representative of the Greenmeadow Community Farm Shadow Board. Councillor Jones explained the circumstances relating to her decision. Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as Chairman of the Shadow Board. He remained in the meeting during the discussions. He would reconsider the nature of the interest matter at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

Members noted the following decisions taken by the Clerk under delegated powers (Minute CL20/022 (3) refers.)

- IT: A Website Accessibility Statement had been published. This could be viewed at www.cwmbran.gov.uk.
- Premises: Torfaen County Borough Council had resumed the use of the first floor at the Council House. The accommodation was being used by the West Cwmbran Well-being Team with limited staff numbers and appropriate safety measures in place. The arrangement was anticipated to last until around Christmas.
- Staffing: In order to manage the impact of Covid-19 whilst maintaining business continuity, a pragmatic approach was being taken to time recording & management. (The Clerk explained that staff time continued to be recorded. All staff also recorded details of work undertaken. The Chairman paid tribute to the dedication and hard work of the Council’s staff during the current crisis.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) subject to the amendment of the date of the Annual Council Meeting to 9 September 2020, the minutes of the above meetings are confirmed.

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

- (2) the new Member for the Greenmeadow Ward is appointed to replace Councillor F Jones as the Council's representative on the Greenmeadow Community Farm Shadow Board (Minute CL20/065 refers).
- (3) the decisions and actions of the Clerk are noted and endorsed.
- (4) Delegated Powers granted to the Clerk remain in place until the next Council meeting. 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 thereunder.

CL20/062 Receipts and Payments July 2020

Members considered the above information, including bank reconciliations. Councillor M Villars had verified the information. Members approved the suspension of Financial Regulations so that such matters could be reported direct to Full Council for the foreseeable future. A detailed Risk Assessment had been prepared in relation to the suspension.

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 financial information reported is noted.

CL20/063 Financial Comparison 2019/20 & 2020/21

Members considered a report which compared income & expenditure for 2019 and 2020, in order to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances. The report included a commentary on factors behind the figures.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the report is noted.
- (2) the Clerk provide Members with additional information relating to any items of unforeseen expenditure or loss of income as a result of Covid-19.

CL20/064 Planning Consultations

Councillors SWJ Ashley and F Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as members of Torfaen County Borough Council's Planning Committee. They remained in the meeting during the discussions. They would reconsider the nature of the interest matter at County Borough Council level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations.

The Chairman encouraged all Members to submit any observations in relation to recent planning applications in the usual way.

The Clerk reminded Members of some online training provided by Planning Aid Wales about responding to planning applications.

Members noted that an extraordinary meeting of Torfaen County Borough Council would take place on 29 September 2020 in relation to the impact of the Coronavirus on the Replacement Local Development Plan.

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

CL20/065 Greenmeadow Ward: Co-option

Members considered the recommendation of a panel of members appointed to interview candidates for the above. (Minute CL20/021 refers)

Members unanimously accepted the recommendation to co-opt Mr L Chaney onto the Council.

It was **Resolved** that the Council:

- (1) formally agrees the co-option of Mr LJ Chaney on to the council following the advertising of the vacancy and subsequent interview of the individual held on 17 September 2020.
- (2) invites Mr Chaney to make his declaration of acceptance of office.
- (3) agrees that Mr Chaney's contact details and information about the filling of the vacancy is notified to the Returning Officer at Torfaen County Borough Council.
- (4) agrees that details of the above are published on the Council's website and in the locality.

CL20/066 Remembrance Sunday 2020

Members received an oral report from the Clerk on potential arrangements in relation to Remembrance Sunday.

Members noted that, under current restrictions, up to a maximum of 30 people could meet outdoors but for the time being they would need to be people who also lived in the Torfaen County Borough Council area. People should continue to socially distance from people outside their household.

Remembrance events across Torfaen seemed unlikely to include parades. Flags could be flown at the Council House.

A small gathering was expected to take place at Pontnewydd with wreath laying and the Last Post. There would be no parade.

Members considered that a wreath could be laid/unveiled at the Council House on 11 November 2020 by the Chairman of the Council, subject to sufficient safeguards being put in place. Event Poppies were to be purchased for local display. Morrisons & Asda were currently allowing sale of poppies. There could also be opportunities to donate online.

Further discussions about potential local arrangements across Torfaen would take place on 30 September 2020 with representatives of Torfaen County Borough and local town & community councils. The

Clerk also agreed to circulate the latest advice from Welsh Government.

It was **Resolved** that Members continue to keep the above matters under review in the light of advice from Welsh Government and other agencies

CL20/067 Play Provision 2020

Councillor JS Davenne declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as Play Service Manager (Torfaen County Borough Council). He remained in the meeting during the discussion.

Members considered a report which described the way in which Play Provision was delivered in Cwmbran this summer by Torfaen Play Services, with the support of Cwmbran Community Council. (Minute CL20/012 refers)

The model ensured that play provision could continue to be delivered in the light of Covid-19. Key features included:

- delivery of play over a series of local hubs.
- delivery of play resources to local families during school holidays by Cwmbran Community Council staff from the Council House. (see appendix)
- support for National Play Day on 5 August 2020.
- a lively social media campaign throughout the summer to maintain interest.

Issues raised by Members included provision for children with Special Needs.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to all those who had helped deliver the model, including the Council's own staff.

It was **Resolved** that the success of Play Provision this Summer is noted.

CL20/068 Grant Applications: Greenmeadow Allotments Association

Councillor SWJ Ashley declared a non-prejudicial interest in this item as Chair of Torfaen Allotments Group. He remained in the meeting during the discussion.

It was **Resolved** that a grant of £1,000 is awarded to assist with the provision of wind turbines and associated items and security cameras. (Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908.)

CL20/069 City Trees

Members considered an update from the Clerk on proposals to introduce additional tree planting across Cwmbran. (Minute CL20/040 refers). Discussions were continuing with Torfaen County Borough Council about initiatives such as "Wilding Cwmbran" or schemes using Heritage Lottery Funds. The Clerk also agreed to circulate information about the Local Nature Partnership.

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

CL20/070 Defibrillator

Members noted that discussions were continuing about the installation of a defibrillator at Cwmbran Boating Lake. (Minute CL20/041 refers.) The Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of Cwmbran Community Council taking the lead role in relation to this project.

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

CL20/071 Date of Next Meeting

It was **Resolved** that the next meetings of the Council take place remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 on 4 November 2020 and 16 December 2020. Each meeting would commence at 6.00 pm.

CL20/072 Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounting statements and an Annual Return which summarises the Council's accounting records and confirms and provides assurances on these matters. The process is subject to external audit by BDO.

Members noted that, given the number of councils that were likely not to have accounts available by the end of June 2020, Audit Wales had set a new date for all councils across Wales. The new inspection period commenced on Tuesday 1 September and ran until 28 September inclusive. BDO closed their offices in response to COVID-19 and would not issue audit opinions until early October, following the completion of the inspection period. Therefore, by 30 September 2020, all councils would need to publish their unaudited annual return and a notice explaining that the audit opinion has not been issued. The Clerk confirmed that such a notice had been published. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council paid tribute to the hard work of Council staff in complying with the requirements of the audit process and confirmed that the Council had approved its accounts by 30 June 2020

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

Signed (*Chairman, Cwmbran Community Council*)