

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cwmbran Community Council held on Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 6.00 pm.**

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the Council Meeting to be held remotely on 23 June 2021.

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

**Present** Councillor AL Bird, (Chairman). Councillors SWJ Ashley, RhM Bennett, SJ Brooks, LJ Chaney, JS Davenne, M Day, PM Johnston, F Jones, RD Kemp, KK Manneh, LM Ryan, M Villars, WJ Walker and DH Williams, LE Williams

Also, David Collins (Clerk to the Council)

**Absent** Councillors LG Johnston and J Rees

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

**CL20/184 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was accepted from Councillor J Rees (work commitments).

(An apology for absence was also subsequently submitted by Councillor LG Johnston – work commitments)

**CL20/185 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.

Councillors SWJ Ashley, F Jones and R Kemp declared a non-prejudicial interest in item CL20/205 (Joint Working with Torfaen County Borough Council) 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.

**CL20/186 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.”

**CL20/187 Chairman’s Announcements & Vice Chairman’s Announcements**

The Chairman of the Council announced that he had attended the following:

On-line events associated with Post-Covid economic recovery. Various dates.

Flying of Flags at half-mast at the Council House in tribute to HRH Prince Phillip 9 April 2021

The Vice Chairman of the Council was not present.

It was **Resolved** that:

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

**CL20/188 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.

**CL20/189 Membership: Lowlands & Avondale Ward**

Details of the process to fill the above vacancy were published on 6 April 2021. Candidates were interviewed on 29 April 2021.

One candidate was interviewed by a panel of Members appointed by the Council.

It was **Resolved** that the Council:

- (1) formally agrees the co-option of Susan Morgan on to the Council following the advertising of the vacancy and subsequent interview of the individual held on 29 April 2021.
- (2) invites Susan Morgan to make her declaration of acceptance of office before the next Council meeting.
- (3) agrees that Susan Morgan'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.

**CL20/190 Gwent Police Update/ South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Update**

Members welcomed Inspector Aled George of Gwent Police.

Inspector George explained that recent police priorities had focussed on the opening of hospitality premises, working in partnership with licensing officials at Torfaen County Borough Council. He also referred to recent shoplifting activities, work undertaken with schools and measures to control off-road biking. Forthcoming priorities would reflect existing challenges and emerging trends.

Issues raised by Members included:

- traffic calming measures in Greenmeadow.
- gatherings of young people in Pontnewydd Park.
- drinking outdoors at Court Road Industrial Estate.
- off-road biking near Court Farm Road.
- Traffic conditions in Pontnewydd.

Inspector George encouraged the public to come forward to participate in local initiatives to help control speeding.

Members noted that a representative of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was unable to join the meeting. The Clerk circulated a response to issues which had been raised by a Member.

It was **Resolved** that Inspector George is thanked for his participation and his willingness to answer questions.

#### **CL20/191 Council Meeting 24 March 2021**

The Chairman introduced the minutes of the above meeting.

In relation to Minute CL20/170 (Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IPRW) Annual Report 2021, the Clerk drew attention to arrangements for payment of allowances.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) subject to the amendment of the word ("**recommended**" to "**Resolved**" in Minute CL20/179 (Exclusion of the Press & Public) the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2021 are confirmed.
- (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.)

*(The Chairman to authenticate the minutes of the above meeting.)*

#### **CL20/192 Receipts & Payments March 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 avoided 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 to accountability, sound financial management and effective scrutiny.

Members considered Itemised Schedules of Receipts & Payments (and bank Reconciliations (March 2021) for March 2021, Members noted minor adjustments to the information reported by the Clerk.

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.

**CL20/193 Quarterly Financial Monitor; Quarter 4 January, February, March 2021**

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.

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

**CL20/194 Transfer of Funds**

In accordance with existing Financial Regulations, the sum of £100,000 had been transferred from the Council's Monmouthshire Building Society Account to its Co-operative Bank Account. This transfer took effect on 10 May 2021. A similar transfer would take place on 30 May 2021. The transfers would provide funds to enable core funding payments to be made to the Council's usual partners, as set out in the approved Estimates.

It was **Resolved** that the transfer of funds is noted.

**CL20/195 Outstanding Debts: Invoices 1055 and 1098**

The above invoices related to work undertaken by the Task Force. Invoice 1055 was in the sum of £90.00. Invoice 1098 was in the sum of £10.00. In each case, the debtor had passed away. The Chairman of the Council's Policy & Finance Committee has been consulted on the most appropriate action to take.

It was **Resolved** that the above debts are written off as part of the preparation of the Council's end of year accounts.

**CL20/196 Reserves**

On 16 December 2020, the Council approved the transfer to Earmarked Reserves (EMR) of any balance on the following Budget Headings unspent at the year-end 2020/21. (Minute CL20/107 refers.)

G10 Premises Maintenance/Asset Replacement.  
H02 Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings.  
I13 Regeneration Projects  
O02 Cwmbran Centre for Young People Building Maintenance Fund

Members considered the allocation of further funds to Earmarked Reserves.

It was **Resolved** that any balance on the following Budget Headings is also transferred to EMR for the appropriate cost headings.

K01 Grants & Contributions  
L Events & Community Projects Committee  
N05 Environmental Projects/New Projects

**CL20/197 Audit Arrangements 2020/21**

Members considered a report following an interim, internal audit of the Council's financial arrangements 2020/21. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it had not been possible to conduct the interim audit by 31 March 2021. The audit

had been undertaken remotely on 20 April 2020. The report described a satisfactory position.

Members also considered details of revised external audit arrangements.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the arrangements for carrying out the Interim Audit are confirmed.
- (2) the report of the Council's Internal Auditor is noted.
- (3) details of external audit arrangements are noted.

#### **CL20/198 Planning Consultations**

Members considered details of recent planning applications from Torfaen County Borough Council, which had been circulated separately. No objections were offered to item 6192 on Planning List 1363 and Planning List 1364.

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

#### **CL20/199 Coronavirus Update**

Members noted current restrictions associated with Coronavirus. For the time being, these arrangements were unlikely to impact on the Council's working arrangements. Council meetings would continue to take place remotely. Staff would continue to work from home as far as possible, though a limited amount of office attendance was being piloted, with suitable controls in place. The Task Force had recommenced gardening services.

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

#### **CL20/200 2021 Events**

Members noted that flags had been flown at the Council House to commemorate VE Day on 8 May 2021. The anniversary had also been acknowledged by the Council via social media.

Flags would also be flown to commemorate Armed Forces Day (23 June 2021) and Merchant Navy Day (3 September 2021) though no formal ceremonies were proposed to take place on these occasions. Members discussed other occasions when appropriate flags could be flown.

Members also considered a potential operating model to stage a "Virtual" Big Event on 18 September 2021. (Minute CL20/183 refers.)

It was **Resolved** that

- (1) the Council fly appropriate flags to commemorate Armed Forces Day (23 June 2021), VJ Day (15 August 2021), Pride Cymru (24 August 2021), Merchant Navy Day (3 September 2021) and Owain Glyndwr's Day (16 September 2021) in accordance with any restrictions relating to Covid-19 which may be in force at the time.
- (2) the operating model for delivery of the 2021 Big Event is approved, provided Covid-19 related restrictions and conditions allow.

(3) Financial Regulations, Standing Orders & Standing Orders Relating to Contracts are suspended for all aspects of the Virtual Big Event project (including budgetary control), should this prove necessary.

(4) a further report on the Virtual Big Event is submitted to the next Council meeting.

**CL20/201 Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

Members considered an application from RPD of Gwent (Retired Police Dogs.) Members voted on whether to award a grant, reject the application or request further information.

It was **Resolved** that consideration is deferred for further information.

**CL20/202 School Governor Vacancy: Woodlands Community Primary School**

Members considered an application for a community governor, which was supported by the Headteacher of the School.

It was **Resolved** that Victoria Rogers is appointed as a Community Governor to Woodlands Community Primary School.

**CL20/203 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

The above Act 2021 gave qualifying local authorities a general power of competence. Authorities may use the general power to do things for a commercial purpose. Welsh Government was currently consulting on Regulations which would require authorities to prepare a business case before using the general power in this way.

Welsh Government was also consulting on the proposal that a community council eligible to exercise the general power be provided with a power to trade in their ordinary functions. Members considered the consultation document and draft regulations. Comments were requested by 11 June 2021.

It was **Resolved** that:

(1) Members forward any observations in relation to the above consultation exercise to the Clerk so that any response can be submitted.

(2) the Clerk continue to prepare for the implementation of the above act and report progress to Members.

**CL20/204 Annual Report 2020/21**

As part of the external audit of accounts 2020/21, the Council was required to provide Audit Wales with a copy of the Council's report on how it is contributing to the wellbeing of its area.

Members considered a draft Annual Report which described how Cwmbran Community Council was contributing to the wellbeing of its area, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The requirement to produce an Annual Report (from April 2022) also featured in the Local Governments and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

It was **Resolved** that the Annual Report is approved.

**CL20/205 Joint Working with Torfaen County Borough Council**

Councillors SWJ Ashley, F Jones and R 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.

The Clerk referred to discussions about potential areas where the Council could increase its engagement with Torfaen County Borough Council to add value to some work, notably within the Neighbourhoods, Planning and Public Protection service area. This could include Active Travel improvements, environmental and ecological improvement schemes. Details were currently discussed and would be reported to a future meeting.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the position is noted.
- (2) the Executive Member for Environment is invited to attend a future meeting of the Environment, Sustainability and Planning Committee.

**CL20/206 Community Venues Lottery Funding**

On 16 December 2021, Members considered a report on an application made to Welsh Government on behalf of the Local Councils in Partnership Committee (LCP) to support the recruitment of a community development post in partnership with Torfaen Voluntary Alliance, (TVA) utilising lottery funding. (Minute CL20/117 refers.). Members agreed to the provision of £2500 pa for three years commencing in 2021/22 from Regeneration funds (I13) is approved (Local government Act 2000 s.2 Power of Well-being).

TVA had recently advised that they had received a decision from the National Lottery not to approve the community venue application. TVA was now working to submit applications to other funders.

The Council had therefore been asked to confirm that its support would continue for the purposes of the project and applying to other funders.

It was **Resolved** that Members confirm the financial contribution, provided additional, external funds are in place.

**CL20/207 Date of Next Meetings**

The Council had agreed that the Annual Council Meeting would be held remotely on 19 May 2021. (Minute CL20/172 and Minute CL20/176 refer.)

It was **Resolved** that the next (ordinary) meeting is held on 23 June 2021 at 6.00 p.m. The meeting to take place remotely (Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.)

**CL20/208 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.

**CL20/209 Council House Heating & Plumbing Update**

Members considered a report on progress to decommission and exhaust gas in an existing pipeline. Work would commence on 17 May 2021. (Minute CL20/182 refers.)

It was **Resolved** that progress is noted and endorsed.

**CL20/210 Renewal of Lease: Task Force Vehicle BT18GWA**

Members considered a quotation to renew the above vehicle for a period of six months. It was noted that any changes to contract term or mileage and associated change in rentals would be at the discretion of the vehicle provider. Members also considered information about the provision of an electric vehicle. (Minute CL20/182 refers.)

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) the lease on the above vehicle is continued for six months.
- (2) options to utilise electric vehicles remain under review.

**CL20/211 Staffing Matters**

Members considered a report which described minor amendments to the arrangements relating to the return to work of an officer who would now be returning to work following maternity on 17 May 2021 (37 hours a week Monday to Thursday.) The officer who had been providing support during the above absence would be ending his employment in the near future, though some crossover was likely in order to ensure business continuity.

Two existing Members of staff were currently working additional hours to help compensate for the absence of a Clerical Officer who has left the Council. (Minute CL20/181 refers.) This would be reviewed in June.

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

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