Minutes of the Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee held on Wednesday 9 September 2026 at 6.00 pm.

The recommendations below will be submitted to the Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 30 September 2026.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the meeting of the committee to be held on Wednesday 14 October 2026.

Venue: The meeting was held remotely and at the Council House, Ventnor Road, Cwmbran NP44 3JY in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Present Councillors A Bird, M Day, F Jones, P Jones, G Lloyd-Tolman, C Morgan (Chair), M Villars & W Walker

Also Andy Smith (RFO/ Deputy Clerk) & Oli James (Community Nature Connector TCBC)

Absent Councillors S Ashley, L Chaney, L Lloyd-Tolman, K Manneh, P Seabourne & S Wharton

(No Public Participation Session was held at this meeting)

ESP26/023 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were accepted from Councillors S Ashley, L Chaney, L Lloyd-Tolman & P Seabourne

ESP26/024 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.

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

ESP26/025 Minutes – 8 July 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2026 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and are approved and actioned therein.

Councillor C Morgan signed the minutes.

ESP26/026 Planning, Highways & Footpaths Matters

(a) **Planning Lists**

Planning lists 1609, 1610 & 1611 no objections.

(b) **Schedules of Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Decisions**

Members noted the Schedule of Planning Decisions.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) to note the Schedules of Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Decisions.

b) the position is noted.

ESP26/027 Neighbourhood Services/Partner Update

Members received a presentation from Oli James (Community Nature Connector TCBC) on the projects taking place to connect people to nature with volunteering and activities to improve wellbeing.

Projects include the floating pontoon and swift towers at the Cwmbran Boating Lake and across the borough events have been taking place building bird boxes and assisting with the pruning and pressing of apples at community orchards.

A major concern has been the recent wildfires with the assessment of the damage to nature and the peat ongoing. Another area of concern is Himalayan Balsam with the 'Big Balsam Bash' taking place and removing 50,00 plants which will prevent over a million seeds getting into the waterways.

Ongoing projects include Nature Schools, which is working with teachers and pupils to incorporate nature areas and pollinators into school grounds. Another area which they hope to expand is for 'women over 50' to help improve life expectancy.

Members thanked Oli James for his presentation and Councillor Walker enquired if areas in Llantarnam with Himalayan Balsam were included in the removal plans. Oli asked for details of the location which can then be included on the plan, the RFO/Deputy Clerk will forward the details. Concerns were also raised by members of an Orchard in Court Farm, which has been neglected and is overgrown with only a few of the original trees remaining.

Members were interested how projects connected with the canal and members were informed that there were walks and talks arranged for residents to connect with nature.

Members were also keen to find out about the projects in schools and informed Oli that funding of £500 per school in the Cwmbran Community Council area is available for nature projects. The RFO/Deputy Clerk will arrange a meeting to work together to co-ordinate projects.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) Oli James (Community Nature Connector TCBC) is thanked for his presentation.

b) the RFO/Deputy Clerk forwards details of the locations of Himalayan Balsam in Lantarnam.

c) the RFO/Deputy Clerk will arrange a meeting to look at working together and co-ordinating projects.

d) The position is noted.

ESP26/028 Environmental Reports

(a) Updates where Notified

No updates received.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) the position is noted.

ESP26/029 Reports regarding any Climate & Nature Emergency Activities

Members discussed attending the People's Emergency Briefing film and how the film showed how quickly climate change is accelerating and the importance of making changes now. Members agreed that the film should be available to all residents and approved the showing of the film at The Council House and other various locations.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) showings of the People's Emergency Briefing film are arranged at The Council House and other various locations.

b) the position is noted.

ESP26/030 Project Development

a) Wildflower Meadows and School Projects

Councillor C Morgan updated members on schedule of work starting by volunteers at Pontnewydd Parks wildflower meadow and the planting of pollinators, with work commencing on the weekend in preparation for the wildflower turf to be laid in October.

b) Cwmbran Futures Fund Bid

Councillor Bird informed members that administration was currently in the process of moving from Torfaen County Borough Council to TVA.

c) Canal Weed/Vegetation Cuts - TCBC

The RFO/Deputy Clerk informed members of the report received on the planned works to 2 sections of the canal which would involve a mix of weed cutting and dredging to commence in late September/October. Members were concerned that the work schedule only involving 2 sections of the canal not 5 sections as previously discussed. Members would like to receive feedback and clarification of the work schedule.

d) Pontypool links update

No update received.

e) Development of Extra Support for Volunteering Activity for Local Parks & Gardens

Members discussed the development of a Parks and Gardens Community Volunteering Fund with the maximum grant award available per project of £3,500, with a total budget allocation of £15,000 for the 2026/27 financial year. Members approved the Parks and Gardens Community Volunteering Fund in principle.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) The Parks and Gardens Community Volunteering Fund is approved in principle.

b) the position is noted.

ESP26/031 Exclusion of the Press & Public

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was agreed 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.

ESP26/032 Task Force

Members viewed the reports and received an update from the RFO/Deputy Clerk on the status of the gardening programme for 2026.

It was **recommended** that:-

a) the position is noted.

Signed ……..
(Chairman, Environment, Sustainability & Planning Committee)