

MINUTES OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2020

In attendance:

Councillor: Mrs N. P. Parrish (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: J. Killick, Mrs L. Clarkson, Mrs E. Hunt, Mrs G. E. James, R. Overton

Also in attendance: Councillors Mrs E. Chilcott JP, N. Jones

Officers: Mrs R. V. Tucker, Ms J. Wright, Mrs C. Challenger, Mrs L. McMail, Mrs R. Cronin

421. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs R. Matthews and B. Taylor JP

RECOMMENDED: that the apologies be noted.

422. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors G. Davies, Mrs G. E. James, R. Overton and Mrs N. P. Parrish declared an interest on any item on the agenda relating to Torfaen County Borough Council.

Councillor Mrs N. P. Parrish declared an interest in item 9 on the agenda as a Trustee of Age Connects Torfaen.

RECOMMENDED: that the declarations of interest as outlined above be recorded.

423. **Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

The Committee received and considered the schedule of receipts and payments for August 2020. Councillor Jones made reference to voucher number 113 for monthly payment of mobile phone £24.00 to British Telecom which seemed quite high. The Finance Manager informed the meeting that this was one of the old task force phones that was kept in the office for members to use if they went to a Conference or abroad or out of the Pontypool area. It was agreed that she would contact the current provider to see when the contract

came to an end and make enquiries with Orbits 123 regarding a cheaper alternative. It was also confirmed by the Clerk that it was a necessity for the Council to have a TV Licence.

RECOMMENDED: that the schedule of receipts and payments for August 2020 be received and approved and the information in relation to voucher number 113 be acted upon as outlined by the Finance Manager and the information in relation to the TV License noted.

CC

424. **Use of Council Credit Card**

The Council approved all credit card payments made in August/September (attached as an appendix to the minutes)

RECOMMENDED: that the credit card payments as attached to the minutes be approved.

CC

425. **Financial Budget Comparison (Monitoring Report)**

The Council received the Financial Budget Comparison report to the end of July 2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the Financial Budget Comparison to the end of July be received.

LM

426. **Desktop Computer**

The Committee considered purchasing an additional desktop Computer for the Clerk at a cost of £475.00. The Clerk informed members she is having extreme difficulty carrying her laptop to and from the office with her present mobility issues and it would much easier if she had a desktop computer in the office; she added that this would not only make it easier for herself but it would mean that there would also be a spare computer in the office if a member of the Council wished to come in and use it or if another member of staff ran into difficulties with their laptop there would be a backup computer in the office. The Committee unanimously agreed with the request.

RECOMMENDED: that an additional desktop Computer be purchased for the Clerk's Office at a cost of £475.00.

CC

427. **Local Voluntary Funding**

[Councillor Killick joined the meeting at this point]

The Committee received and considered requests received for Local Voluntary Funding. Local Voluntary Funding was confirmed as follows. The Chair confirmed that all appropriate checks had been undertaken by the Finance Manager:

Cllr Mrs G. E. James

Pontypool Retired Men's Society - £100.00
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Cllr Mrs J. E. Jones

Rectorial Benefice of Pontypool - £500.00
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Cllr G. Davies

Ward Christmas Competition Project - £350.00
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Cllr R. Mills

3rd Panteg Brownies - £300.00
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Cllr Mrs R. Matthews

Penygarn Junior Football Club - £500.00
Woodlands Field Neighbourhood Learning Centre -
£250.00
s.19 LGA 1972 (Miscellaneous Provisions)

4th Gwent Boys Brigade - £250.00
Woodlands Camera Club - £200.00
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee approve the applications for Local Voluntary Funding as outlined above.

CC/CP

428. **Running Costs**

The Committee considered applications for Running Costs for the following organisations:

- (i) Torfaen Museum Trust
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000
- (ii) Citizens Advice Bureau
Local Government Act 1972, s.142
- (iii) Age Connects Torfaen
s. 137 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

[The Chair of Policy & Finance took part in no discussion relating to the application for financial assistance to Age Connects Torfaen and the Vice-Chair took over in respect of this item]

It was unanimously agreed that £3000.00 be awarded to each organisation as outlined above.

RECOMMENDED: that £3000.00 Annual Funding be awarded to the organisations as stated.

CC/LM

429. **Grant Aid**

(Councillor G. Davies joined the meeting at this point)

The Council noted in the first instance that consideration to award additional funding to public halls as agreed at the Policy & Finance meeting held on the 2nd September 2020 (minute 399) be deferred to the Policy & Finance meeting on the 4th November.

Reference was made as to why grant aid/grounds maintenance had not been put on to this agenda. The Chair informed the meeting that the Clerk had asked her to defer them to the next meeting. The Clerk informed the meeting that the reason she had done this was that she wanted to update the policy in relation to grant aid with accurate information and she would not have been able to do that within the timescale that this agenda was sent out. In respect of the Grounds Maintenance for Garndiffaith Bowls and Garndiffaith RFC she was now able to confirm that they would

be able to go on to the November Policy & Finance meeting for approval; she added that there would be a separate item on the Grant Aid Policy.

A member stated that all of the Council policies should be able to be accessed on-line by members through a private link on the Council's website as well as ensuring a hard copy of Council policies is in the Council Chamber ready for when meetings are able to resume normally. The Clerk said unfortunately they were not all up-to-date and said this is something she is presently working on. The Chair of Establishment said that this was something that the Administration Officer could assist the Clerk with. Another member made reference to standing orders and the Clerk said she was presently updating these and as soon as she had reviewed them, she would ensure all members received a copy.

In relation to members having a private link to access the website it was agreed that the Finance Manager make enquiries with Orbits in relation to the 365 Licence. [Only members with PCC Licence are able to access council documents – unless a private link could be sourced].

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that the Grounds Maintenance applications for Garndiffaith Bowls and Garndiffaith RFC will be placed on Policy & Finance in November as well as a separate item in relation to Grants/Grant Aid.

(ii) Clerk to send out revised Standing Orders to all members once she has completed them.

(iii) Finance Manager to contact Orbits regarding members having a private link to access website documents and policies.

(iv) Administration Officer to assist Clerk with updating all Council policies.

All staff to assist Clerk with updating Grants Policy

CC

RT/CP/
JW

430. **Fixed Asset Policy**

The Committee received a report on the Fixed Asset Policy as agreed at the August Council meeting. The Chair of Events felt that this should be deferred as members needed to be made aware of the current assets the Council own before

approving the document, this was agreed by the Chair of Committee and members. To this effect it was agreed that this item be deferred to the next Policy & Finance meeting in order that the Finance & Events Manager and Accountant could provide the necessary information requested in order for the Fixed Asset Register Policy Document to be approved at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: that the Fixed Asset Policy be deferred to the November Policy & Finance Committee as outlined above.

LM/CC

431. **Covid 19 Policy**

The Committee received and approved the Covid 19 Policy for the office produced by Mrs R.C. Events Officer. In the first instance the Chair and members thanked Mrs R.C for producing a very informative comprehensive report. Secondly it was agreed that as this was an ongoing issue that this be placed as a rolling item on future Policy & Finance meetings in order for the Council to continual update the policy in line with guidance from Welsh Government.

RECOMMENDED: that the Covid 19 Policy as produced by Mrs R.C be approved and that a standard item be placed on future Policy & Finance agendas as outlined above.

RC

432. **Torfaen Play Service**

The Committee considered a request from Torfaen Play Service to support another play pack project for Christmas at a cost of £28.00 per pack. The Clerk and Deputy Leader who had distributed some of these packs at the Leisure Centre said that these play resource packs had been extremely well received over the summer with families stating that they had been an important lifeline during the pandemic. A member queried the cost of £28.00 asking was it value for money as it seemed quite high. Councillor Davies informed members that he had seen what was included in the packs and each pack was made up of a selection of arts and crafts, board games, materials, plates, balls, cups, glue, child friendly scissors, chalk and activities. Each pack was able to offer enough activities for two children from one family to last a period of time so he felt they were excellent value for money. It was

therefore unanimously agreed that 150 play packs be purchased at a cost of £28.00 total value £4,200.00.

Some members felt that with unused money not spent in this financial year in relation to Youth Project, Events, Spring Flowers etc that there may be an opportunity to purchase more play packs and support other good causes to promote Pontypool Community Council. It was agreed before any decision could be made in relation to this that an item be placed on the next Policy & Finance meeting with a breakdown from the Finance & Events Manager and Accountant on what had not been spent in this financial year so that the Council could then make an informed decision.

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that 150 play pack projects be purchased at a cost of £28.00 per pack – total value £4,200.00 for Torfaen’s Play Service.

(ii) that an item be placed on the next Policy & Finance Agenda with a breakdown from the Accountant in relation to monies unspent in this financial year as outlined above.

CC

LM/CC

Chair of Policy & Finance