

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY USING MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021 AT 6.30 PM

In attendance:

Councillor: Giles Davies (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Elaine Chilcott JP, Lynda Clarkson, Elizabeth Hunt, Gaynor James, Nicholas Jones, John Killick, Richard Overton and Norma Parrish

Officers: Ruth Tucker (Clerk), Richard Gwinnell (Acting Clerk), Jane Wright (Assistant Clerk), Lisa McMail (Accountant) and Olivia Williams (Youth Worker)

62. **Questions from the Public**

No questions had been received from the public.

63. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keith James, Janet Jones, Rose Matthews, Barry Taylor JP and Jackie Taylor.

64. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Lynda Clarkson, Giles Davies, Gaynor James, Nicholas Jones, John Killick, Richard Overton and Norma Parrish declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council.

65. **Minutes of the Council meeting – 26 May 2021**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 May 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

66. **Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee – 2 June 2021**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 2 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

67. **Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee – 9 June 2021**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 9 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

68. **Minutes of the Events Committee – 16 June 2021**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Events Committee held on 16 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

69. **Planning Applications**

Members received and considered Torfaen County Borough Council Planning Applications.

RESOLVED: that the observations (or absence of observations, as the case may be) outlined in the appendix attached to these minutes be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.

AA/CP

70. **Final Accounts 2020/21**

Council received the Final Accounts, the Annual Return and the Annual Governance Statement as well as the Internal Audit Report for 2020/21.

The accountant informed Council that the Annual Return was the summary of the Council's Annual Accounts and a breakdown of its income and expenditure, which was sent to the Auditor General for Wales as a legal requirement.

The Deputy Leader suggested that the balance at the end of the financial year 2020/21 be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee for further discussion.

The Annual Governance Statement was the responsibility of the Council to ensure that there was a sound system of internal controls within the Council, including the preparing of the accounting statements with several boxes to be ticked subject to the Council agreeing with all statements. This document was signed by the RFO and the Chair of Council. The Council agreed that all "Yes" boxes could be ticked.

The Auditor General for Wales' Audit Certificate and report was completed following the External Audit and then returned to the Council for publication.

The Acting Clerk referred to the main items of concern (1-4) of the Internal Auditor's report, stating that all were either in hand or bordering on completion and that he, the Clerk, the Accountant and the Finance and Events Manager had been working on an internal audit action plan which would be presented to the July Policy and Finance Committee.

Councillor Mrs Hunt referred to the Policies Review and the Acting Clerk stated that this would be discussed as one of the priorities at the Governance Working Group.

Councillor Nick Jones referred to the question asked by the auditor about whether money spent on LVF (Local Voluntary Funding) represented good value for money. Several members expressed the view that some organisations on which local people depended for support would possibly go under, were it not for the money they received towards overheads. While the grants awarded did not result in a financial return, the LVF grants had a major impact on health and well-being in Pontypool. Members considered that they had completed the review of the LVF scheme (suggested by the Internal Auditor) at this meeting and that the scheme was appropriate, fit for purpose and value for money.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Council approves the final accounts 2020/21
- (ii) that the Council approves the Annual Return 2020/21 and that every "Yes" box be ticked
- (iii) that the Council notes the matters raised in the Internal Audit Report 2020/21 and that an action plan will be presented to the Policy & Finance Committee
- (iv) that the year-end balance be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee for further discussion.

**RT/
RG
LM/
CC/**

71. **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales**

The Council received a letter from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales stating that the Council had not complied with the law, having failed to send a list of members expenses to the panel by 30 September 2021,

although it had been posted on the website. The Clerk explained that this had been an oversight and procedures were now in place to ensure that it does not happen again.

RESOLVED: that the Council notes that procedures have now been put in place to deal with the points raised.

72. **Annual (Well-Being) Report 2020/21**

Members were asked to approve the Council's Annual Report for 2020/21. The Leader and other members stated that it was an excellent report. All staff were thanked for their input with the contents of the report and their hard work throughout the year. The Acting Clerk stated that although he pulled together the report, it was a team effort and a fantastic reflection of how members and staff worked together to improve well-being in Pontypool.

The Clerk added that the Annual report was required to be sent to the External Auditor as part of the Audit documentation.

RESOLVED:

(i) that the Annual (Well-Being) Report for 2020/21 be approved.

(ii) that the Acting Clerk and all staff be thanked for producing the report and for their hard work during the year.

**RG
and
staff**

73. **Member Champions**

RESOLVED: To re-appoint the following Member Champions:

Councillor John Killick – Well Being Champion
Councillor Lynda Clarkson – Environment & Biodiversity Champion.

74. **Governance Working Group**

The Council was asked to establish a working group to progress a variety of governance issues and report back to the Policy and Finance Committee (and on to Council). A member raised that the Chair of Council for 2021/22 should replace the Chair of Council for 2020/21.

It was agreed that invitations for meetings would be sent to all other members (who were not on the working group)

so they could choose to attend if they so wished. It was clarified that all notes/actions of the Governance Working Group would be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee for approval or otherwise and circulated to all members of the Council to ensure transparency.

All recommendations of the report were approved plus an additional requested by the Acting Clerk on a date for the first meeting.

RESOLVED:

(i) to establish a working group for the civic year ahead.

(ii) to name the working group the “Governance Working Group”

(iii) to appoint the following people to serve on the working group: Councillors Lynda Clarkson, Giles Davies, Elizabeth Hunt, Gaynor James, John Killick and the Acting Clerk.

(iv) the Chair will be selected from the working group

(v) that the working group reports to the Policy and Finance Committee with recommendations where appropriate (and that committee in turn reports to the Council with recommendations (where appropriate).

(vi) that the working group’s remit be extended: “to consider any matter relating to the governance of the Council, including but not limited to policies, procedures, standing orders, audit recommendations and the implications of new legislation and national guidance, and report to the Policy and Finance Committee with recommendations where appropriate.

(vii) that the first working group meeting be held on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 6.30 pm.

**RG/
RT**

75. **A4042 Corridor**

The Council received from Atkins the WeITAG stage two stakeholder engagement pack in relation to the A4042 Corridor from Pontypool to Llantarnam. Members felt that the information provided in the pack was unclear and the map on page 2 and the images on page 3 were impossible to decipher as they were too small and difficult to read. To this effect it was agreed that the Clerk/Acting Clerk write to Atkins asking for clearer images and what the implications for the A4042 through the Council’s area might be and to clarify the deadline date as there was no

date on the feedback form. It was agreed to report back at the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED: to action as outlined above and to report back to the next Council meeting.

**RT/
RG/
JW**

[Councillor Elizabeth Hunt left the meeting at this point]

76. **Mynydd Llanhilleth Wind Farm Proposal**

Council received a letter from Thirty 4/7 Communications and Pennant Walters in respect of the Mynydd Llanhilleth Wind Farm Proposal. The Vice-Chair of Planning suggested that the Council comment on this when it reached the planning application stage. Other members concurred.

RESOLVED: to note the letter and comment when a planning application is received.

**RT/
RG/
JW**

77. **Reports/Minutes of other Meeting**

Council received and noted the minutes of the One Voice Wales Larger Councils meeting held on the 28 April 2021. The Deputy Leader stated he had brought some of the issues raised to a previous Council meeting. He added that the delay in receiving minutes from external bodies was not helpful.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the One Voice Wales Larger Councils meeting held on the 28 April 2021 be noted.

78. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

79. **Confidential Minutes - Establishment Committee - 2 June 2021**

The minutes were confirmed as a correct record. SLCC was clarified as the Society of Local Council Clerks. Council unanimously agreed to a request by the Clerk to call a special Establishment meeting on 7 July prior to the Policy & Finance meeting to consider a staffing matter.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the confidential minutes of the Establishment Committee held on 2 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- (ii) that a Special Establishment Committee meeting be called for Wednesday 7 July 2021.

Signed by the Chair: