

MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY USING MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2022 AT 5.30PM

In attendance: (all using Teams)

Councillor: Gaynor James (In the Chair)

and Councillors: Elaine Chilcott JP, Giles Davies, John Killick and Richard Overton

Officers: Richard Gwinnell (Acting Clerk) and Jane Wright (Assistant Clerk)

Also in attendance: Mr Dave Leech (Chief Officer, Communities, Customer Service & Digital at TCBC)

Observing (not members of the committee): Councillors Nicholas Jones and Norma Parrish

The meeting was recorded for minute taking purposes as agreed by Members.

Min No	Subject and Decision	Action
403.	<u>Apologies</u> Councillors Lynda Clarkson, Keith James and Jackie Taylor	JW
404.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillors Giles Davies, 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.	JW
405.	<u>COVID Recovery Fund</u> The Chair welcomed Mr Dave Leech (Chief Officer, Communities, Customer Service & Digital at TCBC) to the meeting to talk about the COVID Recovery Fund: Town Centre Enhancement.	

DL stated that in November 2021, Cabinet allocated £1.2 million to this fund. There are 9 projects in total ranging from business grants and mental health support to work on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal and discretionary housing payments, but one of the 9 projects is for “town centre enhancements” (which they also refer to as “green and clean”) in both Pontypool and Blaenavon to try to make the towns more attractive to visitors. DL then gave a visual presentation of the provisional programme and ideas of works for Pontypool to the Committee which included:

- 2 new green areas in the heart of the town centre. “Parklets” or Planter/Seats
- Shop Jackets/Vinyl coverings on 4 prominent buildings, three of which include Lion House, the Stead and Simpson building and the old Hyper value building (currently engaged with building owners for permission)
- Tidying up entrance at Riverside car park
- Re-painting of railings on Hanbury Road and commercial Street
- Redesign of Rosemary Lane planter with new biodiversity friendly planting to include plenty of colour
- Repairing paving (Hanbury road, including removing stump and Commercial Street)

He explained that greenery/foilage was important to the make the town look attractive and gave five key areas that were being looked at as follows:

- (i) Outside Boots
- (ii) By High Street Fitness (previously New Look)
- (iii) Entrance to the High Street by Iceland and
- (iv) Entrance to the High Street by Ragamuffins
- (v) Outside the market entrance.

At present he stated that there is not enough critical mass of greenery around these areas and the aim is to have the entrance to the town having a more avenue effect to improve the appearance of the town, help attract visitors and long-term investment, this may involve the relocation of current planters and seats as well as installing new planters.

	<p>The Chair referred to the work she was paying for in relation to the refurbishment and painting of all benches in Pontypool town to improve the appearance; due to the inclement weather the work had not been started yet.</p> <p>Although members were in favour of improving Pontypool Town Centre as DL had illustrated, they raised several concerns in relation to the maintenance of street furniture (especially the ward member for Pontypool who had personally spent a lot of time over the last 5 years maintaining these pots herself and had received a lot of complaints from traders over the years regarding these planters). Concerns were expressed as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planters used as glorified ashtrays • Traders complain about the condition of planters outside their shops • Constantly need weeding and deadheading flowers. • Children jump on pots and use trees to swing on. • Who is going to maintain the planter/pots going forward including watering them and weeding them to avoid future problems? <p>DL stated that in terms of the maintenance he understood entirely the issues raised and why members were concerned; he asked if he could put a maintenance plan in place in liaison with Street scene to establish what they can and cannot provide and fill in any vacant gaps and circulate this before PCC's next Council meeting on 16 March, would the Community Council be prepared to support this.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that Pontypool Community council support the proposed town centre enhancements, subject to DL providing a comprehensive maintenance plan.</p>	
406.	<p><u>Planning Applications</u></p> <p>Members received and considered details of planning applications submitted to TCBC, on which the Community Council was being consulted.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: 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.</p>	CP

407.	<p><u>Planning Determinations</u></p> <p>Members received and noted Torfaen County Borough Council planning determinations including reasons for approvals or refusals.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: that the planning determinations be noted.</p>	CP
408.	<p><u>Plenary Powers</u></p> <p>Members received planning application observations made under plenary powers.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: that observations, as outlined be approved.</p>	CP
409.	<p><u>Plant a tree for the Jubilee</u></p> <p>The Committee received a reply from TCBC Ecologist Steve Williams in relation to the most suitable location for the siting of a tree for the Queen’s Jubilee. He had suggested a suitable location to be any urban park that is well known for its treescape - Pontypool Park is the most obvious one but should PCC’s boundary extend to Abersychan then Glansychan park is also a good option. There was also Panteg Park in the South.</p> <p>A member proposed a tree be planted in all three locations, with the budget being increased to £1500 to cover the costs of a tree and plaque in each location. (Present budget £500). This was unanimously agreed.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that three trees be planted in Pontypool Park, Glansychan Park and Panteg Park (one in each) with £1000 being taken from reserves to cover the additional costs.</p>	

* This is a recommendation to the Council. The Council will make the final decision at a future meeting.