

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF
PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 June 2022 AT 6.30PM**

In attendance:

Councillor: Matt Ford# (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Nick Byrne#, Lynda Clarkson*, Anne Gunter#, Lizzie Hunt#, Gaynor James#, Jon James#, Nick Jones*, John Killick#, Jonathon Martin#, Rose Matthews#, Richard Overton#, Caroline Price#, Bob Rogers*, Jools Rogers*, Nick Simons# and Nathan Warren#

Officers: Richard Gwinnell# (Acting Clerk), Lisa McMail# (Finance Manager), Olivia Williams# (Youth Project Leader), Annette Ambrosen# (Events Officer) and Rebecca Cronin# (Events Officer)

Guests: David Leech* (see minute 69 below), Helen Cooling# (Torfaen Youth Service) and 3 Members of the Youth Council#

* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

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

Min No	Subject and Decision	Action
66.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> No questions had been received in advance from the public. The Chair welcomed the guests attending and asked members of the Youth Council if they wished to ask anything. They declined to do so.	
67.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keith James.	
68.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillors Nick Byrne, Gaynor James, Jon James, Rose Matthews, Caroline Price and Nick Simons 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.

69.

Engagement on the Community Council's Main Wellbeing Priorities

Council welcomed Mr David Leech, Chief Officer, Communities, Customer Service and Digital, Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC).

Mr Leech (DL) gave a powerpoint presentation (see appendix attached) on developing a communities approach and local well-being priorities.

DL stated that it may be a good idea that the Council engage in a workshop type event in the future to build this approach up.

DL explained his role and his ambition to cement the relationship between TCBC and its communities and the Community Councillors of those communities, with the aim to set joint strategies for wellbeing for these places together.

After DL's presentation, the Chair thanked DL and welcomed questions or comments from the floor.

Questions/statements were as follows:

- The Chair stated he thought that this had been tried before with the Communities First project and was unsuccessful as those deprived wards were still in the same position now as before
- DL stated this was not about service provision, it was all about the Community Council, Communities and Torfaen working well together and should be focused around the well-being priorities that were collectively set. This would help pass power back to communities and empower them
- Cllr JK welcomed the engagement with TCBC and suggested setting up a funding forum, as there would be some funds TCBC could apply for and some funds PCC could apply for. Some voluntary organisations may be too small to apply for funding and working together would be more effective
- DL agreed and stated that this may be part of the solution, once everyone agreed what the local well-

being goals needed to be. A funding forum could potentially come later

- Cllr LC questioned whether PCC could apply for more external funding (and help local groups to apply for funding)
- DL referred to the diversity of the Pontypool area and asked whether Pontypool should be considered to be “one” community, or more than one; he referred to the importance of building relationships with communities and setting priorities together, before coming up with solutions
- The Chair thanked DL and stated that he was sure the Community Council would work with him further in the future on this.

70.

Pontypool Place Plan

Council welcomed Mr D Leech (DL) again, who was speaking in the absence of Rebecca Hartley (Team Leader, Strategic Place Projects) and Kelly Collins-Thomas (Economy and Strategic Regeneration Programme Manager) of TCBC. DL gave a powerpoint presentation.

The presentation focused on TCBC’s Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid, which would include the Pontypool Cultural Hub and Café Quarter (including the following specific work packages):

- St James’ Church: Restoration of a vacant and derelict Grade II listed building in the Town Centre, considered to be significant to the local community, bringing it back in to beneficial re-use as a cultural hub;
- Pontypool Park Entrance Café: Creation of a strategically located high quality café on Hanbury Road, linking Pontypool Town Centre with Pontypool Park, a Historic Park and Garden catalysing further investment in the local economy; and
- Glantorfaen Road Car Park: Developing the cultural and night-time evening economy through the provision of safe and secure parking that instils the confidence of users and contributes to carbon reduction with the use of green technology in its operation.

Investment in this LUF package of interventions would act as a major catalyst for the regeneration of Pontypool Town Centre, hugely increasing footfall and enhancing visitor

experience and stay time, through the provision of a cultural and evening economy offer, supported by the provision of safe and secure parking, making the town centre much more vibrant and attractive to users.

The investment would result in a derelict Grade II listed building being brought back into beneficial re-use as a cultural hub, the conversion of the public toilets into a café / restaurant to encourage an enhanced evening economy and the upgrading of an existing car park, to provide safe and secure parking for users of these facilities.

Community Council members enthusiastically welcomed the ideas and were very keen to see these developments progress and therefore supported the LUF bid.

Members were keen to encourage visitors into the town but were realistic that this would take time. Several members raised the matter of the upkeep of the town and litter, cleanliness and basic maintenance problems that had been an issue in the town centre of late. The public who used the town on a regular basis and any new visitors would like a clean environment to visit.

DL stated that a community approach would be ideal if local litter picking groups and the borough council worked collectively to keep the town centre clean. DL stated that a good starting point would be Community Council and TCBC representatives doing a walk-through the town together to note all the issues and then see if they could be addressed.

OW referred to the feedback from the Youth Council (which she had sent to TCBC) and cited Newport Indoor Market as a good example of food, drink and activities. She stated that currently people could not get meals in the pubs in the town centre.

DL stated that this was what TCBC were trying to create, to try and cater for things that were missing from the town. DL was very keen to work with the Youth Council and Community Council to improve the town centre and try to get new providers to invest in the town.

A member stated that a major employer was needed in the town, so that employment would rise and people would have money to spend in the town. Another member suggested a big attraction such as a cinema was needed.

Comments were also made about the need to make more use of the market (as happened a few years ago for French, Spanish and comedy nights) and to promote local bands, music, arts and the bandstand. It was also suggested that massive opportunities for the town could be achieved if the National Eisteddfod was brought to Pontypool. This would promote the Welsh language as well as the town itself.

Members thanked DL for attending.

71. **Youth Project – Trustee Board**

The Chair agreed to take this item (agenda item 17) next as the Youth Council representatives needed to leave.

The Chair nominated Councillor John Killick to serve on the Pontypool Youth Project Management Committee/Trustee Board. No nominations were made for the second position on the Committee/Board. Members were advised to email Olivia Williams at a later date to nominate themselves or to request further information.

Olivia Williams and the Youth Council members left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED: (i) that the process shown in section 2 of the report be agreed and
(ii) Councillor John Killick be nominated to serve on the Pontypool Youth Project Management Committee/Trustee Board, with the second position to be determined at a later date.

OW

72. **Annual Council Meeting – 18 May 2022 – Minutes**

The Acting Clerk proposed an addition to minute 13, paragraph 3, insofar as the Council also agreed to receive further information in due course about the new attendance allowance for councillors (and not to pay it in the meantime, pending that further information).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 18 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the above addition to minute 13.

73.

Council Meeting – 18 May 2022 – Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

74.

Policy and Finance Committee – 1 June 2022 – minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 1 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

75.

Planning and Environment Committee - 8 June 2022- Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 8 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

76.

Events Committee – 8 June 2022- Minutes

The Acting Clerk stated that Councillor Nathan Warren had been present at this meeting but his name had been omitted from the attendance list in the minutes.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Events Committee held on 8 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record (subject to Councillor Nathan Warren being added to the list of attendees) and the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

77.

Outside Bodies

The Acting Clerk gave a verbal update on the nomination of members to serve on outside bodies. He explained that the Torfaen Environmental Association had not met since 2018 and the Torfaen Local Access Forum had not met for several years, so they could be removed from the outside bodies list.

Torfaen Community Enterprises Association and Torfaen Community Transport appeared to be one organisation. They were still active and had reported that Norma Parrish was the representative for Pontypool. Norma Parrish was no longer a Pontypool Community Councillor (but was a TCBC Councillor).

Members agreed not to nominate anyone else (noting that Norma Parrish remained on the organisation).

RESOLVED: (i) that Torfaen Environmental Association be removed from the Outside Bodies list

RG

(ii) that Torfaen Local Access Forum be removed from the Outside Bodies List

RG

(iii) to note the position in regard to Torfaen Community Enterprises Association and Torfaen Community Transport.

78. **Torfaen Museum Trust**

The Council was asked to nominate a new representative to the above body, as Councillor Keith James was unable to continue serving on it due to work commitments.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Richard Overton be nominated as PCC's representative on the Torfaen Museum Trust.

RG

79. **Knowledge Partnership**

The Acting Clerk explained that he awaited a reply (as to whether the new Knowledge Partnership was operational and whether they wanted a PCC nominee(s)).

RESOLVED: to consider this matter further at a later date, when the position becomes clear.

RG

80. **Planning Applications**

Members received and considered details of planning applications submitted to TCBC, on which the Community Council was being consulted. No observations were raised on any of the applications.

Cllr NW commented that planning application 22/P/0371 was a significant change to the property and, whilst sympathetic, he wished to make sure that neighbours were aware.

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.

CP

81.

Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021

Council received the notice of conclusion of the audit of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021, from Audit Wales. The Acting Clerk explained that the accounts were qualified, as shown on page 43 of the agenda, as the Auditor General was of the view that the annual governance statement for that year was inconsistent with some of the governance arrangements in place during that year (specifically regarding deficiencies in internal controls related to payments as raised by the Internal Auditor). The problem was, the Internal Auditor had raised concerns in spring 2021 but the Council had ticked all the boxes on the annual governance statement (indicating that everything was fine). The Acting Clerk emphasised the need to take extra care when completing the annual governance statement (which the Council would be asked to do for the year ending 31 March 2022 in a few minutes). This was for the Council's information.

RESOLVED: that the conclusion of the audit for the year ending 31 March 2021 be noted.

82.

Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022

Council was asked to approve the final accounts, the Annual Return and the Annual Governance Statement and to receive the Internal Auditor's report for 2021/2022.

The Leader thanked the Finance Manager for all the work she had put into the report and welcomed the progress made on the issues raised last year. The Acting Clerk also thanked the Finance Manager.

The Acting Clerk commented briefly and answered questions, specifically pointing to the Internal Auditor's report, which highlighted the significant progress made on the issues he had raised in his report last year.

Re page 51 (the annual governance statement); it was proposed in light of the Internal Auditor's report that all the "Yes" boxes should be ticked (other than box 9, where "not applicable" was the correct response and the pack be sent to the external auditor.

In answer to a question, the Finance Manager explained that financial comparisons (budget monitoring reports) were submitted to every meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee. The next one would be available in July.

RESOLVED: (i) that the annual accounts be approved (ii) that the “yes” boxes be ticked against all questions asked on the annual governance statement (except the “not applicable” box be ticked against question 9) (on page 51 of the agenda) and (iii) that the annual accounts and annual governance statement be signed and sent to the Auditor General for Wales (with the attachments shown in the agenda).

RG

RG
Chair
LM

83.

TVA Gold Award

The Council was asked to nominate a member to attend the Torfaen Voluntary Alliance Community and Volunteer Awards event on Friday 21 October 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Chair of Council (Councillor Matt Ford) attend the TVA awards on behalf of the Council.

84.

Condeixa-a-Nova

Council received a letter from the Mayor of Condeixa-a-Nova in relation to the Clerk’s retirement.

The Leader stated that Mrs Tucker had worked tirelessly for over 20 years with Twinning and she was admired by all the Twin Towns. Members agreed that this was lovely to hear.

Cllr EH suggested that a copy of the letter be sent to Mrs Ruth Tucker. The Acting Clerk stated that this was already underway.

RESOLVED: That a copy of the letter be sent to Mrs R Tucker.

CC

85.

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.

86. **Establishment Committee – 1 June 2022 – Confidential Minutes**

RESOLVED: that the confidential minutes of the Establishment Committee held on 1 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and the recommendations of the Committee be adopted.

87. **Acting Clerk – Review of Contract**

All members of staff left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED: to extend the Acting Clerk’s contract by 1 month (to the end of July).

Signed by the Chair