

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE POLICY AND  
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD  
ON WEDNESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

**In attendance:**

Councillor: Lizzie Hunt# (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Matt Ford# Gaynor James#, Jon Horlor\* John Killick#,  
Jonathan Martin#, Bob Rogers\* and Jools Rogers\*

Also in attendance: Nick Byrne\*

Officers: Mrs Cindy Challenger# (Finance Manager) and Jane Wright#  
(Assistant Clerk)

\* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

# Attending physically in the Council Chamber

Min. no.	Subject and decision	Action
	<b>FINANCIAL ITEMS</b>	
368.	<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>  Apologies received from Councillors Nick Jones and Caroline Price	
369.	<b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b>  Councillors Gaynor James and Jon Horlor 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.  Councillor Matt Ford declared an interest in the item on Local Voluntary Funding in relation to St. Alban's RC School.  Councillor John Killick declared an interest in the item on Local Voluntary Funding in relation to Citizens Advice, TOGs and Cwmffrwdroer Primary School.	JW
370.	<b><u>Schedule of Receipts and payments</u></b>  The Committee were asked to approve the Schedule of receipts and payments for November & December 2022.  <b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b> that the receipts and payments for November & December 2022 as shown in the report, be approved noting the information.	

371.	<p><b><u>Use of Credit Card</u></b></p> <p>The committee was asked to approve the credit card payments for November/December 2022.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that the payments made on the Council’s credit card for November/December 2022, as shown in the report, be approved.</p>	
372.	<p><b><u>Financial Budget Comparison Report with Reserves</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received and considered the financial monitoring report to the end of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the report. None were asked.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that the financial monitoring report to the end of December 2022 be approved and the information contained in it noted.</p>	CC
373.	<p><b><u>Earmarked Reserves 2022/2023</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received a report of Earmarked Reserves available as at 30.11.22. The Chair stated that as the report was to the 30<sup>th</sup> November, changes have been made since then.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b> that the report of Earmarked Reserves be received and the information outlined by the Chair noted.</p>	CC
374.	<p><b><u>Local Voluntary Funding (LVF)</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was asked to approve the Local Voluntary Funding applications (attached as an appendix to the minutes).</p> <p>The Chair stated that if any members wished to see a copy of any of the LVF applications forms that had been submitted they would be available on request from the office. She confirmed that all applications had been checked and vetted by staff.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b> (i) that the LVF applications as outlined in the appendix be approved.</p>	CC
375.	<p><b><u>Table of LVF funding awarded to date</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received a list of LVF funding that had been spent to date. The Chair asked members if they had any queries in relation to this item. None were raised.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the information was provided for members in</p>	

	<p>order that they could note what organisations/groups money had been awarded to; she explained that that the highlighted red text meant the financial limit had been reached in line with LVF criteria unless it was specifically for a project, giving the example of Pontypool Retired Men’s Society; where the limit of £500.00 had been reached in relation to LVF (page 28), but money had been awarded separately to them (page 30) for a project.</p> <p>Cllr JM referred to an LVF project in relation to a speed sign signal being erected at New Inn that Mr Keith James (previous Councillor for New Inn) in conjunction with two fellow Councillors at that time had submitted towards the installation and erection of the speed sign. Cllr JM believed the money had been paid out but the sign had not been installed and he and his fellow Councillors wanted to do another LVF project to have another speed sign signal on the opposite side of the road. It was agreed that enquiries be made in relation to this LVF with a footnote being added to the minutes.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b></p> <p>(i) that the LVF applications as outlined in the appendix be approved.  (ii) that enquiries be made in relation to the LVF Project Application for the installation and erection of the speed sign for New Inn.</p> <p>[Footnote: Refer Finance Manager/Clerk]</p>	
376.	<p><b><u>Request for a Laptop for New Role</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received a report on additional IT equipment requirement in relation to a new laptop for the new Community Development role at a cost of £675.00 plus vat. The Chair stated that there was money available in the budget and secondly it would be a necessity for the postholder who would be commencing the role in April. It was unanimously agreed that a laptop be purchased.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u></b> that a laptop be purchased at a cost of £657.00 plus vat.</p>	
377.	<p><b><u>Pontypool Public Toilets Contribution</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that an invoice for £20,000 (£5,000 per year running costs) had been received from Torfaen for the agreed contribution to Pontypool Public toilets.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Council does have monies earmarked for this which had already been budgeted for. The invoice related to the following years: 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. It was unanimously agreed that the invoice be paid.</p>	

	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that the Council agree and pay the invoice for £20,000.</p>	
378.	<p><b><u>Request for Annual Maintenance of CCTV in Pontypool</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received an e-mail from Mr L. Puddy, Head of Public Services Support Unit in relation to CCTV maintenance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023. in relation to Pontypool Town Centre and Trevethin shops. The Chair of Council stated that although the Council had previously helped towards the costs only for the CCTV in the Town Centre a resolution had been passed by Council the previous year stating that PCC would make no commitment to contribute to similar costs for replacement or repairs in future of which TCBC were informed. He therefore proposed that a letter be sent to TCBC stating that the Council's position remained the same with a copy of the e-mail that was sent last year attached to the letter.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that TCBC be informed of the Council's decision as outlined above.</p>	LM/ JW
379.	<p><b><u>Grants Distribution Lists</u></b></p> <p>The Chair informed members that the Grants Distribution Lists would be sent out by e-mail to all members to inform them when grants are due to be distributed. The Chair referred to the grant aid list stating that there may be a lot more halls/associations that would be eligible to apply who were not on the list so they would not have been sent a letter informing them that they could apply, so if any member(s) knew of any organisation(s) in their region that could be eligible, to let the office know so the list could be updated, likewise for Junior Team Sponsorship.</p> <p>In relation to Core Funding, she stated that the same organisations had been given financial assistance over several years so members may know of other groups that could benefit from this funding. The Chair was confident that the Schools Environmental Grant list was up to date.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair of Policy &amp; Finance asked that staff be thanked for the well-presented report with the criteria clearly being shown in relation to the respective grant applications.</p> <p>The Chair of Council proposed that the Council reintroduce the Grants Presentation Evening(s) as not only were they an excellent opportunity to showcase the work of the Council they also give the organisations/groups that the Council awards money to a chance to say how this money is helping them. This was unanimously agreed. The Chair stated asked that an item be put on the next</p>	

	<p>Events Committee as this is now in their remit.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) that the information conveyed by the Chair be noted; with:</li> <li>(ii) Grants Distribution Lists are sent to all members by e-mail as above.</li> <li>(iii) that the staff be thanked for the well-presented report.</li> <li>(iv) that an item on Grants Presentation Evenings be placed on the next Events Meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>CC</p> <p>JW/ RC</p>
380.	<p><b><u>Grant Aid</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was asked to consider an additional application for Grant Aid from Varteg Community Association. The Chair proposed £500.00 in line with the previous organisations that had been awarded this amount. This was unanimously agreed.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that £500.00 be awarded to Varteg Community Association.</p>	<p>CC</p>
380.	<p><b><u>Grants to be awarded in this financial year due to budget capacity.</u></b></p> <p>The Chair informed members that Junior Sponsorship had been awarded the previous financial year, however due to a delay this financial year it is recommended to the Committee that Junior Sponsorship of £6,000 be transferred to an earmarked reserve as of 31.03.23 and the new Community Development Role have this budget for April 2023 as a first allocation. Members felt that this made a lot of sense as it would give the Officer a positive foundation when being introduced to local groups.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that £6,000 be transferred to an earmarked reserved and be allocated as a first task to the new Community Development role.</p>	<p>LM/ CC</p>
381.	<p><b><u>Feedback from food banks</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received and noted the feedback report from the Food Banks that the Council had supported and who the Clerk had been in touch with. The Chair stated that information had been sent by Panteg House that day and members should have had an e-mail to this effect. The Chair read it out as follows:</p> <p><i>Panteg Community Foodshare provide support for families in the Griffithstown, Sebastopol, New Inn Cwmfields areas. Requests for support are made via a Facebook link or dedicated telephone helpline 07395 945697.</i></p> <p><i>From November 2022 to date (24<sup>th</sup> January 2023) the service has</i></p>	

	<p><i>provided 224 food and hygiene parcels to families. This equates to supporting around 700 people of which approximately 360 were children of school age.</i></p> <p><i>The support group spends approximately £150 weekly on basic food items. This is through grants the Foodshare is able to access, along with donations from the public and organisations, all of which is needed to make a vital contribution to the items that families need and receive.</i></p> <p>The Chair added that families had added some testimony at the end of how important these foodbanks were to them.</p> <p>Members felt that it was important to continue to support these foodbanks, stating it was alarming how many people had now come to depend on them.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b> that the report on foodbanks be received with the updated information from Panteg House being noted.</p>	
382.	<p><b><u>Levelling up Funding</u></b></p> <p>The Leader informed the meeting that Pontypool had been awarded a £7.6 million grant, one of only 11 projects in Wales to receive grants from the UK Government’s Levelling Up Fund which aims to create jobs and grow the local economy. She stated that the investment would help transform St. James Church, a derelict Grade II listed building into a thriving cultural hub; convert public toilets into a landmark café/restaurant and renovate an existing car park into safe and secure parking for users of these facilities and the town, stating that the work needed to be completed by the end of 2024 which was one of the conditions. The Vice-Chair of Policy &amp; Finance stated that he thought the time scale was rather ambitious in view of the amount of work to be undertaken. It was agreed that Torfaen be contacted for an Officer to attend a Council meeting to discuss this further.</p> <p>The Chair and members referred to the Pontypool Regeneration Partnership meetings and it was agreed that these meetings be reconvened subject to Council approval in order that there is better partnership working going forward, by reconvening the meetings it means that Officers involved with the Regeneration of the town including the transformation would be able to answer queries/discuss ideas going forward at these meetings.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) that the information outlined by the Leader in relation to the Levelling up Fund be noted; and that Torfaen be contacted for an Officer to attend a Council meeting to discuss the transformation.</li> <li>(ii) that Pontypool Regeneration Partnership meetings be reconvened subject to Full Council approval.</li> </ul>	LM/ JW

383.	<p><b><u>Financial Request(s) for Financial Assistance</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received requests for financial assistance from the following organisations:</p> <p>(a) Bullies Out (b) Cerebral Palsy</p> <p>The Chair stated that these were both national charities. It was unanimously agreed that in line with Council policy that £200.00 be awarded to each charity.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED*</u></b>: that £200.00 be awarded to each charity as outlined above.</p>	
	<p><b><u>POLICY ITEM(S)</u></b></p>	
384.	<p><b><u>Absence Policy</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was asked to review the Absence Policy for approval. The Chair stated that this policy would link into the staff handbook which is currently being formulated and will go to the next Establishment meeting. The Chair of Council proposed that the Council adopt it stating that it was very well written.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDED*</u></b>: that the Absence Policy be put forward to Full Council for adoption.</p>	

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

Signed by Chair .....