

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE FINANCE,
GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY
COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026**

In attendance:

Councillor: L Hunt (in the Chair)#

and Councillors: L Clarkson*, G James*, L Jones*, N Jones*,
S Lang#, R Overton*, A Peplow*, C Price*, N Warren*

Officers: Cathryn Drew, Clerk#
Cindy Challenger, Finance Manager#

* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

	<u>FINANCE ITEMS</u>	
508.	<p><u>Recording of Meeting</u></p> <p>Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.</p>	
509.	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor(s) N Byrne and J Horlor.</p>	
510.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Councillor(s) L Clarkson, G James and C Price declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they are members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that the declarations of interest be recorded.</p>	KS
511.	<p><u>Schedule of Receipts and Payments</u></p> <p>The Committee was asked to approve the schedule of receipts and payments for January 2026. These payments have previously been authorised by the Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Councillor Gaynor James and checked for accuracy by the Clerk and Finance Manager.</p>	

	<p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the receipts and payments for January 2026 as shown in the report, be approved noting the information.</p>	CC
512.	<p><u>Use of Credit Card</u></p> <p>The Committee was requested to approve the credit card payments covering 14 December 2025 to 8 January 2026 and 15 January 2026 to 25 January 2026.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the payments made on the Council's credit card, as shown in the report for the above periods, be approved.</p>	CC
513.	<p><u>Financial Comparison and Earmarked Reserves</u></p> <p>The Committee was requested to consider the financial comparison report and earmarked reserves to the 31 January 2026.</p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that on page 9, line 6001 there is a £2,500 overspend as they did not consider the fact that the Mic Morris funding had already been allocated when the core funding was given out. The Chair proposed that this be taken from the wellbeing budget.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the £2,500 overspend be taken from the wellbeing budget; (ii) the financial comparison reports and earmarked reserves be approved. 	CC
514.	<p><u>Local Voluntary Funding (LVF)</u></p> <p>The Committee was requested to approve the Local Voluntary Funding (LVF) applications in agenda item 7.</p> <p>The Chair stated that all applications had been checked and vetted by the Finance Manager.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones informed the meeting that he was not at the Full Council meeting but understood that there was an issue with a request that the New Inn Upper Members had submitted for funding and thought that they would have received an email following the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that they had sent an email to the Members on 3 March 2026.</p>	

	<p>Cllr N Jones asked if the issue was due to ongoing maintenance. The Chair advised that the application did not meet the criteria for a project.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones asked why an application for speed cameras been approved previously.</p> <p>The Chair advised that there is no ongoing maintenance costs with the cameras.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones asked what the ongoing costs were for the application that had been submitted and was advised that the application form stated “and any ongoing costs”.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones stated that they did not think there were any ongoing costs and would discuss this with the Chair outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr L Clarkson informed the meeting that she was aware that some cameras had been installed in New Inn recently but did not have any information as the Police don’t broadcast it but they appear to be ANPR cameras and they are looking into cameras that have been installed in their Ward as the ongoing costs relate to storage that is collected.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: the LVF applications as outlined in agenda item 7 be approved.</p>	CC/AA
515.	<p><u>Requests for Financial Assistance</u></p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that requests for financial assistance has been received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) TOGs Centre (ii) Torfaen Tigers Rugby Club (iii) ArtREGEN (iv) Padre Pio School (v) Llanyrafon Community Golf Course <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) TOGs Centre be awarded £1,000 from the wellbeing budget. Finance staff to investigate signposting the organisation to other funding streams. (ii) Torfaen Tigers Rugby League be awarded £1,800 from the junior sponsorship budget. (iii) ArtREGEN be awarded £600 from the wellbeing budget. 	CC/AA

	<p>(iv) Padre Pio School be advised that they will need to delay until the next financial year and apply for the environmental grant.</p> <p>(v) Llanyrafon Community Golf Course. Finance staff to contact them for further information, how many people from Pontypool use the course etc.</p>	CC/AA
516.	<p><u>CCLA Account</u></p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that this item had been referred to the Committee from the Regeneration Working Group meeting in that a Member questioned in the meeting why the regeneration fund itself does not get any interest. The interest is paid to Pontypool Community Council and does not get divided up into different budget pots.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones advised that he thinks this makes sense.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Finance Manager if it would be possible to take a percentage of the interest from the CCLA account in line with the amount of money in the regeneration fund so that the regeneration fund tops itself up as well as the Council topping it up.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the Finance Manager identifies the possibility of taking a percentage of the CCLA interest in line with the amount of money in the regeneration fund and report back to the next Finance, Governance and Policy Committee meeting.</p>	CC
517.	<p><u>Thank you letter(s)/acknowledgement(s)</u></p> <p>The Committee received and noted the thank you letter(s)/acknowledgement(s) from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Beehive Group (ii) Griffithstown Allotment (iii) St Alban's After School Dance Club (iv) Torfaen Museum Trust (v) Urdd 2025-2026 Fund for All <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the information be noted.</p>	
518.	<p><u>Community Engagement Strategy</u></p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that a Draft Community Engagement Strategy has been prepared by the Projects and Events Manager and if the Committee were happy for this to be taken to Full Council for approval.</p>	

	<p>Cllr N Jones raised a question relating to the existing events in the community, specifically bullet point 3 - annual gatherings of grant recipients (October, March, April) tbc as they thought this had been rolled into one.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that:</p> <p>(i) the dates stated in bullet point 3 be removed and the wording to read “annual gathering of grant recipients”;</p> <p>(ii) the strategy is added to the Full Council agenda for March 2026.</p>	<p>CC/ KS</p>
<p>519.</p>	<p><u>POLICY</u></p> <p><u>To review the following policies/criteria:</u></p> <p><u>Business Continuity Plan:</u></p> <p>Cllr N Warren reiterated that if there are any changes to the policies we need to have the Constitution changed to reflect those changes. Within the Constitution all powers around recruitment are deferred to the Establishment Committee but they don't not think this is how it should be as this leaves some room for the Establishment Committee to undo some things that have been agreed by Full Council so they have three proposed changes that they would like to make.</p> <p>Cllr L Clarkson questioned if some contingency needs to be built into the plan around accessing OVW and email accounts as this had proved an issue in the past and storage of critical documents which are stored at the Clerk's home (page 36, point 2.51), consideration of fireproof storage to be investigated and in relation to paragraph 3.2 on page 37 should this also include stall holder charges?</p> <p>Cllr N Jones asked if there is a separate recruitment policy for the Clerk?</p> <p>The Chair advised that there is not a separate policy.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones informed the meeting that the issue that they raised previously was there is still a potential in between Full Council meetings to lose, recruit, advertise and appoint a Clerk in between two Full Council meetings and this is not right and proper and this needs to be remedied.</p> <p>Cllr N Warren advised that currently the Establishment Committee has carte blanche to make the appointment but</p>	

	<p>they would like to recommend that the Committee can only recommend the appointment of the Clerk to Full Council.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones pointed out that Full Council were not informed that the Clerk had resigned at the time it happened, they were informed at the next Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr L Clarkson asked if the minutes could be checked as they thought that it had been reported to Full Council.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u>* that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) paragraph 3.2 includes “refunds to stall holders will be considered on an individual basis”; (ii) the confidential minutes of Full Council on 28 January be checked in relation to the scoring bar. <p><u>Recruitment and Selection Policy:</u></p> <p>Cllr N Jones suggested that there ought to be a set period for advertising especially senior positions, the timeline adopted for the recruitment of the Clerk was too short to achieve this effectively.</p> <p>Cllr L Clarkson advised that this should be looked at on a case by case basis. It was advertised widely but there was some issues around putting induction in place so the Council should look at the notice period for the Clerk.</p> <p>The policy could include that all posts should be advertised for a minimum of 2 weeks.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones suggested the following:</p> <p>Paragraph 8 – interviewing: under this paragraph, one of the criteria is that the interview panel should include members of the majority group and the opposition, the opposition were not invited and this was not enacted. There should be a minimum bar set for scoring. As a Council standards should be set, ie 75% as a minimum to be included in the testing section of the policy as they were informed that a bar of 50% was used when interviewing for the Clerk’s post.</p> <p>Cllr N Warren advised that this was a question that Cllr Jones raised with them and they said that their personal minimum was 50% no one else on the panel took this position so there was no minimum set.</p>	<p>KS</p> <p>CD</p>
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<p>Cllr L Clarkson asked if OVW should be contacted to see what they would advise?</p> <p>Cllr A Peploe advised that if you set the bar too high the candidates that come through will be minimal. When the gap is identified between what they score and what they need to score this identifies the needs for development.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Clerk to contact OVW to ask them if setting a minimum bar is in line with what other Councils around the country are doing.</p> <p>Cllr N Jones advised that the decision that Full Council was asked to make at the meeting in January was just on scores only and that is why they propose that there should be a minimum standard.</p> <p>The Chair advised that there is a spelling mistake in paragraph 9.3 (the number 3 needs to be removed).</p> <p>Cllr N Jones suggested that a reference from the line manager would need to be backed up and 3 references should be asked for, one being from their immediate past employer which is standard practice across industry.</p> <p>Internal candidates need to provide references from their line manager. References must include an immediate/past employer and to change the two to three referees.</p> <p>Cllr Clarkson advised that checks need to be made in relation to asking for 3 referees as it is not always possible to get a reference from a direct line manager if line managers are not available for any reason.</p>	
<p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that:</p>	
<p>(i) the Clerk to contact OVW and ask them if setting a minimum bar is in line with what other Councils around the country are doing and report back to the next meeting and how many references be requested;</p>	<p>CD</p>
<p>(ii) the number 3 needs to be deleted in paragraph 9.3;</p>	<p>KS</p>
<p><u>IT Policy:</u></p>	
<p>There were no changes or amendments made to the IT Policy.</p>	
<p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the IT policy be approved.</p>	<p>KS</p>

LVF Policy and Criteria:

Members reviewed and approved the LVF policy.

The Chair informed the meeting that there is separate criteria for projects and that they would like to include the following wording in point (l) going forward “that such reserve funds should be spent in the following financial year or they will also be returned to the General Fund”.

Cllr L Clarkson informed the meeting that there still needs to be more clarity about where the projects and the LVFs are different.

The Chair advised that for a project Members can give more than £500.

It was agreed that the following wording replace point (a) in the criteria - “Project funding would be part of a Member’s allocation of £2500 per annum”.

Cllr NJ advised that we now have GPOC and there is nothing saying that a project cannot be supported with an LVF onward going. To make a stipulation that a capital project cannot be subject to an ongoing revenue support because all the LVFs effectively or the majority of them are some form of revenue support.

Cllr N Warren advised – LVFs can be used for revenue support for outside bodies and if we withdrew support there would be no obligation on the Council to provide any revenue whereas if we are putting in infrastructure which we own which then has an ongoing revenue cost then we are unable to exit from.

Cllr A Peploe informed the meeting that the LVF funding then Panteg Foodbank would not exist.

Cllr N Jones informed the meeting that they would never put a project forward that would bind the Council to commitments going forward.

RECOMMENDED*: that the criteria be amended as follows:

- (i) the following sentence be included in point (l) - “that such reserve funds should be spent in the following

KS

	<p>financial year or they will also be returned to the General Fund”</p> <p>(ii) the following wording replace point (a) - “Project funding would be part of a Member’s allocation of £2500 per annum”.</p>	KS
520.	<p><u>GOVERNANCE ITEMS</u></p> <p><u>Constitution</u></p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that Section 5, parts 4 and 6 of the Constitution needs to be reviewed.</p> <p>Cllr N Warren suggested that the appointment of a Clerk should be recommended by the Establishment Committee to Full Council, the Establishment Committee do not have the right to appoint a Clerk.</p> <p>It was agreed that this be approved by Full Council.</p> <p>Cllr N Warren suggested that the Establishment Committee should not be able to undo anything that Full Council has agreed so proposed that if there were any changes to the delivery of services or a change to the staffing budget that should also be approved through Full Council, ie if the staffing budget is set at the start of the financial year and someone was given a large salary increase then this would go over the budget and this would need to go to Full Council for approval. This would also apply to any new roles as well as how the Council manages natural wastage, maternity, long term sickness and redundancy. Anything that affects the delivery of any other Committees should also go to Full Council.</p> <p>Cllr Clarkson suggested that any amendments that are going to be made to the Constitution should be run past OVW to make sure the Council are not overstepping or overreaching what we are able to do as a Community Council.</p> <p>Cllr N Warren informed the meeting that P Egan from OVW is working up a cost to review the Council’s Constitution, Standing Orders and Committee structure, therefore would it be best to wait for this review to be completed?</p> <p>The Chair suggested that the Council put in what the proposed changes are as part of what P Egan is going to look at when he reviews the Constitution.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that Members are asked for any suggestions they would like to make for this part of the</p>	

	Constitution and for them to be emailed to the Clerk on the Clerk's email address so that they be added in so that the document is ready to be looked at which what the potential changes could be at Full Council.	Cllrs
521.	<p><u>Biodiversity and Sustainability</u></p> <p>How has this meeting contributed to the Council's duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems?</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that it was a hybrid meeting and paperless.</p>	
	<p><u>Recording of Meeting</u></p> <p>The recording of the Council meeting was stopped at this point.</p>	

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

Signed by the Chair.....

FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & POLICY

4 MARCH 2026

LOCAL VOLUNTARY FUNDING

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Councillor S. Lang	£495.00 (PROJECT)	After the bell children's centre (ATBCC)	Providing for the community families trips/day trips, events /family.
Councillor S. Lang	£1,010.00 (PROJECT)	Trevethin and Penygarn Community Centre	To expand local community wellbeing side of hub with private space.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Family's Need Fathers	To continue the charity's work.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	TOG's	To help with running costs.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Helping hands r us	To help with running costs and continue with the charity's good work.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Cwmffrwdor Sports Group	To help with running costs.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Newport and Gwent Samaritans	To allow the charity to continue its good work.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Torfaen Mind	To continue the charity's good work.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	Merchant's Hill Baptist Church Women's Guild	To help with running costs.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	4 Mind's Ltd	To continue the organisation's work.
Councillor N. Byrne	£250.00	New Inn Stroke Group	To help with running costs.
Councillor A. Gunter, Councillor E. Hunt, Councillor A. Peploe and Councillor N. Warren	£50.00 (£12.50 each)	Knit & Natter	Equipment and hall rent.

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Councillor A. Gunter, Councillor E. Hunt, Councillor A. Peplow and Councillor N. Warren	£250.00 (£62.50 each)	Vitalise Radio	Maintenance and equipment.
Councillor A. Gunter, Councillor E. Hunt, Councillor A. Peplow and Councillor N. Warren	£499.00 £124.75 each)	Tidy Butt	Maintenance costs.
Councillor A. Gunter, Councillor E. Hunt, Councillor A. Peplow and Councillor N. Warren	£100.00 (£25.00 each)	Cwmbran Carving	Upkeep and maintenance, equipment.
Councillor A. Gunter, Councillor E. Hunt, Councillor A. Peplow and Councillor N. Warren	£150.00 (£37.50 each)	Panteg House Archery	Equipment and maintenance
Councillor S. Senior & N. Jones	£500 (£250 each)	New Inn Neighbourhood Watch	Help with running costs
Councillor N. Byrne	£50	Pontypool Retired Men's Society	Help with running costs

PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OPERATES UNDER THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE