



Pontypool Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Pont-Y-Pŵl

20 April/Ebril 2023

Dear Sir/Madam
Annwyl Syr/Fadam

You are hereby summoned to attend a **MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT 6:30 PM on WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2023.**

The meeting will be held remotely, using Microsoft Teams and physically for those who wish to attend the Council Chamber. Councillors have been provided with a link to attend the meeting. If any member of the public wishes to attend the meeting remotely, please contact the Clerk of the Council (by e-mail or telephone) at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk. The agenda for the meeting is set out below and relevant papers are attached.

Gofynnir drwy hyn i chi fynychu **CYFARFOD Y CYNGOR** yn yn Rhith Gyfarfod am **6:30 PM, DYDD MERCHER 26 EBIL 2023.**

Cynhelir y cyfarfod o bell ar Microsoft Teams. Mae cynghorwyr wedi derbyn dolen i fynychu'r cyfarfod. Os yw unrhyw aelod o'r cyhoedd yn dymuno mynychu'r cyfarfod o bell, cysylltwch â Chlerc y Cyngor (trwy e-bost neu dros y ffôn) o leiaf 24 awr cyn y cyfarfod.

Mae gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd yr hawl i ofyn cwestiynau yng nghyfarfodydd y Cyngor, mae gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd hefyd yr hawl i siarad yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, cyn belled ag y rhoddir tri diwrnod o rybudd ysgrifenedig o'r cwestiwn i'r Clerc. Mae agenda'r cyfarfod wedi'i nodi isod ac mae papurau perthnasol ynghlwm.

Yours faithfully/ Yr eiddoch yn gywir

Lisa McMail
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL/ CLERC I'R CYNGOR

A G E N D A

1. **Questions from the Public**
To receive any questions from the public on matters on the agenda.
2. **Apologies for absence**
To receive apologies for absence.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
Members are required to declare any interests they may have in any items on the agenda.
4. **Cyber Awareness**
To welcome Vivienne Collins from Welsh Government to give a presentation in relation to Cyber Awareness and Training available.
5. **Wellbeing Partnership with Blaenavon Town Council**
 - a. To receive a Presentation from Tidy Butt, a mental health charity.
 - b. To consider a joint Well-being project with Blaenavon Town Council. (attached: page(s) 1 – 2)
6. **Council Meeting – 29 March 2023 – Minutes**
To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record. (attached: page(s) 3 – 11)
7. **Policy & Finance Committee – 5 April 2023 - Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 5 April 2023 and adopt the recommendations of that committee (attached: page(s) 12 – 17)
8. **Planning & Environment Committee - 12 April 2023 – Minutes**
 - (a) To approve the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 12 April and adopt the recommendations of that committee (attached: page(s) 18 – 32)
 - (b) To receive an update from Cllr N Warren on a Forest Fun Day Session Quotation as part of Big Green Week and an offer to members to attend Nature Wise Training.
9. **Vacancy at Sebastopol West**
To inform the Elections Manager at Torfacn County Borough Council that there is now a vacancy in Sebastopol West due to non-compliance of member.
10. **Governor Vacancy – New Inn Primary School**
To seek a volunteer to fill the above vacancy.

To note: that Councillor JM the present nominated Council representative has indicated that he is unable to fulfil this role due to his work commitments clashing with governor meetings.

11. **King Charles III Coronation – 6 May 2023**

To approve the cost of a projector and screen to be sited in Pontypool Indoor market as the next Events meeting is not until June. Report (attached: page(s) 33)

12. **CCTV**

For the Council to consider whether to financially contribute to the repair and maintenance of CCTV. Deferred from P & F (e-mail attached from Mr Lyndon Puddy) (attached: page(s) 34)

13. **Myfanwy Haycock Poetry Trail**

(i) To receive a verbal progress update from Clerk from an update meeting held on 26/4/23. Refer Clerk

(ii) To seek volunteers from members to assist on the day to be stationed at points on the walk and provide leaflets and shared knowledge to the public.

14. **Draft Canal Strategy & Action Plan**

(i) To receive a briefing report from Alice Rees, Canal Co-ordinator at Torfaen County Borough Council (attached: page(s) 35 – 36)

(ii) Members to report back on any comments they wish to make in relation to this consultation.

15. **Waste Consultation**

(i) To receive a briefing report from Katie Jenkins, Engagement and Electoral Lead Officer at TCBC on the draft Waste Strategy Consultation (attached: page(s) 37 – 50)

(ii) Members to report back on any comments they wish to make in relation to this consultation.

16. **Policies proposed for adoption**

To propose the following policies for adoption:

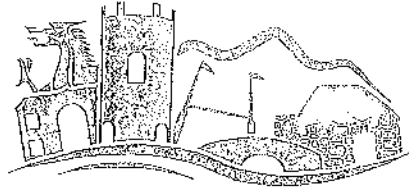
(a) Annual Investment Strategy (attached: page(s) 51 – 52)

(b) Fixed Asset Register Policy (attached: page(s) 53 – 54)

(c) Harassment and Bullying Policy (attached: page(s) 55 – 73)

These documents went to the Policy & Finance Committee on 5 April and were amended/approved/noted.

AGENDA ITEM 5



Pontypool Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Pont-Y-Pwll

Wellbeing Project Proposal

Title of project:

Tidy Butt Well Being Event - in Partnership with Blaenavon Town Council

Location(s):

Abersychan High School
St Albans RC High School.

Overview of Plan

To work in partnership with Blaenavon Town Council and Tidy Butt, a registered mental health charity, to deliver a full day well-being event for all year 10 pupils (age 14/15) in the specified high schools during July 2023. Over the two schools this event would reach around 700 young people.

Tidy Butt deliver wellbeing talks throughout South Wales to schools, businesses and sports teams. During these thought-provoking presentations, they discuss mental health and wellbeing by covering key elements that mental health is built around.

Tidy Butt also look at the connection between mental and physical health, the things that could impact mental health both negatively and positively and the things we can control to positively impact our own mental health and mood.

They will run the day alongside other facilitators and providers.

The Wellbeing Day consists of up to 5 sessions/workshops, pupils will rotate around all 5. This will be delivered in each school, during the school day, each session is approximately 45/60 minutes and run by a Tidy Butt facilitator.



Title of project: Tidy Bult Well Being Event - in Partnership with Blaenavon Town Council

continued

Feedback from Ysgol Gwynllw regarding the workshop already delivered.

'They delivered 5 workshops in total that focused on Low Mood, Stress and Anxiety, Nutrition and Movement, Expressive Arts and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. These workshops were selected because of the issues that young people in Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw experience, therefore we wanted to raise awareness of these issues and to provide pupils with the relevant tools to support their well-being. Each workshop was fun and engaging and included both practical elements and written elements. This allowed everyone to participate and to fully understand each of the workshops. Matthew & Rhys as well as other members of staff were very relatable and engaging which made the pupils feel instantly comfortable and at ease with expressing their emotions and any difficulties that they are experiencing. It was clear that the well-being day made the pupils feel seen, heard, and understood which is massively important when supporting the pupils. The well-being day had positively impacted both the school and the pupils. As a result of the well-being day, the teachers ensured that there was a well-being room in which pupils could visit during lunchtime. In addition to this, the teachers displayed the pupils artwork around the school and we are currently working in partnership to set up targeted well-being sessions. The well-being day also raised an awareness with the pupils that there are different ways in which that they can improve their well-being i.e. expressing their emotions through art, by exercising regularly, eating a balance diet and encouraging pupils to seek support from friends, family and members of staff. The well-being day was very positive and important, and I really do encourage other schools to have well-being days to raise an awareness around mental health and to help break down the stigma!'

Cost of Project:

Full day workshop cost £2000 per school x 2 schools
Abersychan High School
St Albans RC High School
= £4000

If 50% funded in partnership with Blaenavon Town Council-Total cost = £2000

Blaenavon Town Council have expressed a keen interest in joint funding the project, this will be discussed and ratified at their Full Council meeting on 26th April.

Note: No provision has been made for West Mon School as no Blaenavon students attend.

Recommendation:

That the committee considers this wellbeing project proposal.

I. McMail
Clerk
Pontypool Community Council

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF PONTYPOOL
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2023**

In attendance:

Councillor: Matt Ford# (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Nick Byrne#, Lynda Clarkson*, Anne Gunter#, Jon Horlor*
Lizzie Hunt# Gaynor James#, Jon James#, Nick Jones*,
John Killick#, Sue Malson#, Rose Matthews#, Jonathon
Martin#, Richard Overton*, Caroline Price*,

Officers: Mrs Lisa McMail, Clerk#, Ms Jane Wright, Assistant Clerk#

Also in attendance: Olivia Williams, Youth Lead#
Dave Leech, Chief Officer, Communities, Customer
Service and Digital (TCBC)#

* 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
457.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> There were no questions from the public	
458.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies received from the following Councillors: Jools Rogers, Bob Rogers, Nick Simons and Nathan Warren.	JW
459.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillors Nick Byrne, Lynda Clarkson, Jon Horlor, Gaynor James, Jon James, Rose Matthews, Caroline Price and Sue Malson 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

460.	<p><u>Youth Project</u></p> <p>The Council welcomed Ms Olivia Williams, Youth Project Lead to give a presentation and update on the Youth Project (attached as an appendix to the minutes).</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be welcomed and that OW be thanked for attending the Council and giving an excellent presentation on the work of the Youth Project.</p>	LM
461.	<p><u>Dave Leech</u></p> <p>The Council welcomed Mr Dave Leech (DL), Chief Officer, Communities, Customer Service and Digital (TCBC) in relation to a follow up workshop he had undertaken in relation (attached as an appendix to the minutes).</p> <p>Mr Lecch informed the meeting that the Clerk had given him the information that he had requested from when he last attended the meeting and thanked members and the Clerk for their input. The information would now enable him to map out the different organisations within the different wards that could benefit from grants, external funding etc that they may not be aware of; he would follow up with the Council in the next few months.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Mr Leech be thanked for attending the Council meeting and he would follow up again once he had mapped out the different organisations throughout the Pontypool wards.</p>	LM/ JW
462.	<p><u>Council Meeting – 22 February 2023 – Minutes</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 February 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	JW
463.	<p><u>Policy & Finance Committee – 1 March 2023 – Minutes</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Policy and Finance meeting held on 1 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	JW
464.	<p><u>Events – 8 March 2023 - Minutes</u></p> <p>The Chair of Events referred to minute 443 and read out an update in relation to the Fairground as follows:</p> <p><i>Since the events meeting the Project and Events Manager received a phone call from Mr Charles Deakin regarding him bringing the funfair to Party in the Park this year. Mr Deakin</i></p>	

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	<p><i>stated that he had tried contacting PCC via Mr Bendell to give the donation via cheque last year, but had not received a reply. Mr Deakin confirmed that should he be allowed to bring the fair this year, he would donate these years and last year's £1000 donation. He also commented that he and his family had been attending the event for many years.</i></p> <p><i>At the initial working party meeting for Party in the park, the Youth Leader and Torfaen Play service Leader had stated that without the Fair, there would be little entertainment for older youth.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, it is now suggested that Mr Deakin be informed to bring the funfair, with £2000 being paid to PCC. The free circus show and possibly some smaller fairground stalls (dependent on budget) would still be booked.</i></p> <p>It was unanimously agreed by Council that the funfair be booked for Party in the park subject to the £2000 being paid.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>(i) that the minutes of the events meeting held on 8 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>(ii) That Mr Deakin be informed that the Council have agreed to have the Fair at Party in the Park subject to the £2000 being paid.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>RC/AA</p>
465.	<p><u>Planning & Environment Committee – 8 March 2023 - Minutes</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 8 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>JW</p>
466.	<p><u>Water Station quotes for Pontypool Market</u></p> <p>The Council was asked to approve the best quote for a mains fed water station to be sited at Pontypool Indoor Market which would be funded by the Youth Council. Three quotes had been obtained and listed in the report. All quotes came with a 3-year contract. The preferred choice of the Youth Council was Eden Springs. Council unanimously agreed to go with their preferred choice which was also the cheapest.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the Council award the 3-year contract to Eden Springs at £20.70 per month, which includes free installation, bi-annual filter change and maintenance.</p>	<p>CC/OW</p>

467.	<p><u>Co-option</u></p> <p>The Clerk informed members that three letters of Expression of Interest had been received. It was agreed that Dr. John Cox be the Council's preferred choice to be co-opted on to the Council for Garndiffaith & Varteg Vacancy.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Dr John Cox be co-opted on to the Council for the Garndiffaith & Varteg ward.</p>	LM
468.	<p><u>Myfanwy Poetry Trail</u></p> <p>The Clerk gave an update on the Myfanwy Poetry Trail, asking for the Council to earmark additional costs for the Trail which she outlined to them at the meeting. She was having a further meeting with Ms Jenni Craig on the 24th April so would be able to give an update in relation to exact costs after this meeting. The Chair and members felt that due to the prominence of the event and the increased publicity for Pontypool Community Council that additional funds should be made available. Unanimously agreed.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that the information outlined by the Clerk in relation to the Myfanwy Poetry Trail be received and noted. (ii) that the Council approve additional funds as outlined above. 	LM
469.	<p><u>One Voice Wales Training Needs Survey</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the Clerk bases the response on replies received as at the 30th March 2023 from the original e-mail she had sent in relation to this survey.</p>	JW
470.	<p><u>Levelling Up Fund and presentation</u></p> <p>The Council received the presentation delivered by Kelly Collins-Thomas at the information coffee morning on the 7th March 2023 in the Council Chamber of Pontypool Community Council offices.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the presentation be received and noted.</p>	
471.	<p><u>Local Voluntary Funding</u></p> <p>The Committee was asked to approve the Local Voluntary Funding applications (attached as an appendix to the minutes).</p> <p>In relation to the LVF funding project applications for New Inn in relation to a second speed awareness sign and the "Smart Water"</p>	

	<p>Project it was agreed that the amounts for £3000 and £1500 respectively be accrued subject to the exact cost being confirmed by TCBC in relation to the sign and the LVF form for the "Smart Water" being amended to state 3 batches of £500.00 to avoid losing the money.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the LVF applications as outlined in the appendix be approved, with the money for the LVF Projects for the New Inn Sign and "Smart Water" being accrued as outlined above.</p>	CC
472.	<p>Youth Festival</p> <p>The Council received an invitation from Condeixa inviting the youth and 3 representatives to attend the Youth Festival/Conference from Monday 21st to Sunday 27th August. It was agreed that the Council would participate but would not be able to let them know the names(s) until after the Annual meeting in May.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the invitation be received and accepted, with names being sent after the Annual meeting in May.</p>	LM/ RC/ JW
473.	<p>Reports/Minutes</p> <p>The following minutes were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) National Executive Committee meeting of One Voice Wales held on 16 December 2022. (ii) One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee held on 24 January 2023 (iii) Torfaen Community Transport committee meeting on Thursday 23 February 2023. <p>From the above reports/minutes it was agreed that the Police & Crime Commissioner be invited to a future Council meeting to answer members questions, in relation to crime statistics, community policing, closure of Pontypool police station.</p> <p>In relation to the One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee if for unforeseen reasons one or either of the nominated members was unable to attend it was agreed that Councillor NW be asked to attend in his role as the Council's biodiversity champion.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that the minutes of the meetings above received, and the information contained within noted. (ii) that the Gwent Police & Crime Commissioner be invited to a future Council meeting (iii) that Councillor NW be the reserve if either of the 	

	nominated Council representative(s) was unable to attend.	
473.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>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.</p>	
474.	<p><u>Establishment Committee - 1 March 2023 - Minutes</u></p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Establishment meeting held on 1 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.</p>	LM
475.	<p><u>Work Experience</u></p> <p>The Clerk informed members that she had been approached by ACT asking if the Council would approve a work experience placement for one of their learners for one day a week for them to gain experience in a workplace setting as well as supporting them in building their confidence. (As the person was 18 years of age then a risk assessment would not be necessary).</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the Council unanimously approve the request from ACT for a work experience placement for one day a week.</p>	LM

Signed by the Chair

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 29TH MARCH 2023

YOUTH PROJECT UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Ms Olivia Williams, Youth Project Lead to the Council meeting to talk and give an update on the Youth project.

OW thanked the Council for letting her attend and introduced herself to new members who had not met her yet and gave a presentation in relation to the work of the Youth Project.

OW stated that there are presently 3 open active young clubs held in the week, 2 in Sharon Church on a Wednesday and Friday evening and one in the Garndiffaith Millennium Hall on a Thursday. All these sessions are well attended by around 30 young people, some from social care, young carers, LGBT community, additional learning needs and the gypsy travelling community, so it is a real inclusive environment.

The activities that take place at these youth sessions include learning cooking skills, variety of arts and crafts and various other activities. The Garndiffaith Millennium Hall has two car parks so OW stated that they are lucky that they are supported by Sport Development in relation to sporting activities at this session which gives them the extra time to concentrate on cooking and other activities. One of the sessions at Sharon Church is also supported by Sport Development Wales although there is limited space here in relation to the sporting activities that can be undertaken.

They have a New Youth Logo which she presented to members, which is also now on social media, the young people helped design it, they thought it was cool and colourful, so they are presently using that with the PCC logo underneath as the Youth Project is funded through the Council.

OW explained that with the Youth Council it is really difficult to get consistent numbers but they are getting there, they have now have 5 young people who regularly turn up to the meetings each week, they went to Gwent Question time where they spoke to the Police & Crime Commissioner, the Child Commissioner for Wales and a lady from the sexual health board, the young people asked very interesting questions, so not only was it really empowering for them but they got to know how meetings work.

Some of the Youth have participated in the "take up Challenge for Torfaen Youth Service" where they have had volunteering certificates for volunteering hours, they have given to the Youth Service.

In February the Youth project ran several trips to Cwmcarn Forest trail, Rampworld Twice, and Alpaca my Boots. OW stated that the young people had such an amazing time with alpaca my boots, that they came back different young people, as they had

found it a wholesome and calming experience, and she would highly recommend this to anyone.

OW stated that the Youth Project are funding a Water Dispenser in Pontypool market of which there is an item on the Council agenda later, the youth have picked one that they feel is cool, not only was this is a fantastic idea, but it reduces single use plastic.

OW concluded by stating that any member(s) are more than welcome to drop in on any of the sessions to see for themselves the work being undertaken by the Youth Project.

The Chair and members thanked Miss OW for attending the meeting and giving the comprehensive update.

FULL COUNCIL

29th MARCH 2023

LOCAL VOLUNTARY FUNDING

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Power/Act to Ward Grant</u>
Cllr. G James	£50	Pontypool Park Bowling	Expenses	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19
Cllrs N. Jones and J. Martin	£500	New Inn Neighbourhood Association	To promote the safety of residents through literature signs and general running costs.	Power of Well Being s.2 Local Government Act 2000
Cllr B. Rogers and J. Rogers	£1300 (Project)	Garndiffaith Bowls Club	Contribution towards the excess costs of providing a ramp for disabled access.	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) act 1976, s.19
Cllrs N. Jones, J. Martin and R. Overton	£300	Pontypool Retired Men's Bowls	Organise community events	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19
Cllrs N. Jones, J. Martin and R. Overton	£1500 (Project) £500 x 3	"Smart Water"	Provide "smart water" packs, support, back up and training for the roll-out scheme	Power of Well Being s.2 Local Government Act 2000
Cllrs N. Jones, r. Martin and R. Overton	£3000 (Project)	Speed Awareness New Inn (TCBC)	Provide and install a Speed Indicator Sign	Power of Well Being s.2 Local Government Act 2000

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE POLICY AND
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL 2023**

In attendance:

Councillor: Lizzie Hunt# (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Gaynor James# Jon Horlor* John Killick#, Jonathon
Martin* Caroline Price*

Officers: Lisa McMail# (Clerk), Cindy Challenger* (Finance Manager) and Ms
J. Wright* (Assistant Clerk)

* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

Min. no.	Subject and decision	Action
477.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> No apologies received.	
478.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillors Jon Horlor, Gaynor James, and Caroline Price 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
479.	<u>Schedule of Receipts and payments</u> The Committee were asked to approve the Schedule of receipts and payments for February 2023. The Chair noted that there was a lot of LVT payments on the expenditure. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the receipts and payments for February 2023, as shown in the report, be approved noting the information.	CC
480.	<u>Use of Credit Card</u> The committee was asked to approve the credit card payments for January/February 2023	

	<p>RECOMMENDED: that the payments made on the Council's credit card for January/February 2023, as shown in the report, be approved.</p>	CC
481.	<p><u>Financial Budget Comparison Report with Reserves</u></p> <p>The Committee received and considered the financial monitoring report to the 28th of February 2023. The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the report. None were asked.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the financial monitoring report to the end of February 2023 be approved and the information contained in it be noted.</p>	CC
482.	<p><u>Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales</u></p> <p>The Committee received the IRP's recent Annual Report. The Clerk stated that there was only a slight variation in relation to expenses – page 20 £156.00 a year for reimbursement of extra costs and £52.00 reimbursement for consumables.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the IRPW Annual Report be received noting the information outlined by the Clerk.</p>	
483.	<p><u>Internal Auditor</u></p> <p>The Chair informed members that the Internal Auditor's three-year agreement has come to an end after completion of year end 31.03.2023 and asked Committee for agreement to advertise for a new internal auditor for three years for year end 23/24, 24/25 and 25/26. Unanimously agreed. The Chair asked the Clerk how the position would be advertised.</p> <p>The Clerk stated that she would contact One Voice Wales and be guided by them, she knew that OVW are presently putting together a criteria for an internal auditor so that would be helpful and she knew they had been contacting other local community councils to see if they could gather a group of people who may be willing to carry out the Internal Audit, at present a lot of the community councils are struggling to find an Internal Auditor. The Chair stated it may help that PCC is a larger Community Council.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the Council advertise for the position of Internal Auditor in liaison with One Voice Wales.</p>	LM

484.	<p><u>Renewal of One Voice Wales Membership</u></p> <p>The Committee was asked to consider renewing the Council's annual membership of One Voice Wales at a cost of £6600. Members unanimously agreed to renew its membership referring to the fact that One Voice Wales had been invaluable this last year. The Chair recommended to increase the budget allowance by £100 to cover the cost. Agreed.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that the Council renews its membership with One voice Wales for a cost of £6600. (ii) that an additional £100 be added to this budget line to cover the cost. 	CC
485.	<p><u>CCTV</u></p> <p>The Committee received a reply from Mr Lyndon Puddy in relation to CCTV funding. The Chair stated that he is essentially saying that if the Council do not pay for the replacement and maintenance of CCTV then the CCTV may be terminated. The Chair stated that if the Council were going to pay towards the costs of CCTV then they needed to have more decision-making powers. It was agreed that this item be deferred to Council for a full discussion, it was further agreed that the Clerk invite Mr Puddy to the next Council meeting in order that they could ask him a number of questions in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where all the cameras are • What state of repair the cameras are in • Does anyone check them • Why has Trevethin shops been added to the costs this year when the Council has never paid for these before • The Council has only ever agreed on a year-to-year basis to help fund CCTV costs, so why is it assumed that there is a rolling programme in place by the Council <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that the item on CCTV funding be deferred to Full Council and that Mr LP be invited to the next Council meeting.</p>	LM/ JW
486.	<p><u>Torfaen Community & Volunteer Awards 2023</u></p> <p>The Committee received a request from Torfaen Volunteer Alliance (TVA) to sponsor a Torfaen Community and Volunteer Award. The Committee agreed to sponsor a gold award at a cost of £550. The Chair asked members if they had any preference into which category they wished to sponsor from the list sent by TVA. As members had</p>	

	<p>It was unanimously agreed that the following amounts be awarded:</p> <p>Torfaen Tigers RC - £1000.00 (to come out of Junior Sponsorship budget line) and that their organisation be added to the Council's Junior Sponsorship mailing list for the future.</p> <p>Ty Hafan and Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod - £200 each (in line with the Council's grants policy on national organisations)</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the amounts as outlined above be awarded subject to Full Council approval.</p>	CC
<u>POLICY ITEMS</u>		
489.	<p><u>Pontypool Community Council Investment Strategy</u></p> <p>The Committee received and reviewed the Investment Strategy, as the three-year review is now due.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair moved that the Committee approve the Investment Strategy, stating that the last time the investments were checked the Council ensured it was meticulously done ensuring that the investments the Council made were ethical after a couple of questions had been asked. The Chair proposed that the word ethical is added as number 4 in the list of the Council's investment priorities, so the Council are seen as taking a responsible approach.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the Council's Investment Strategy be approved subject to the word "ethical" being added as number 4 as outlined above.</p>	LM
490.	<p><u>Fixed Asset Register Policy</u></p> <p>The Committee received and reviewed the Fixed Asset Policy, of which the three-year review was now due. The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the policy. None were asked.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the Fixed Asset Register Policy be approved for the next three years subject to Council approval.</p>	
491.	<p><u>Harassment and Bullying Policy</u></p> <p>RECOMMENDED*: that the Harassment and Bullying Policy attached to the agenda produced by One Voice Wales be adopted</p>	

	subject to Council approval.	
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Signed by the Chair

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

MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL 2023

In attendance:

Councillor: Nick Byrne#(In the Chair)

and Councillors: Jon James, Lyn Clarkson*, Gaynor James#, Richard Overton*, Caroline Price* Nathan Warren#

Also in attendance: Councillor Jon Cox*
Representatives from Welsh Water

Officers: Mrs L McMail# (Clerk) Mrs R Cronin* (Projects and Events Manager) and Mrs A Ambrosen# (Projects and Events Officer)

* *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
492.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Councillor Sue Malson and Anne Gunter gave apologies for absence.	
493.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillors Nick Byrne, Lyn Clarkson, Gaynor James, Jon James, Caroline Price declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (Torfaen County Borough Council) as they were members of Torfaen County Borough Council, as well as members of Pontypool Community Council.	JW
494.	<u>Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water</u> The Chair welcomed representatives from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to update Members on a project that will help improve the water quality within the Afon Lwyd and reduce impact of pollution from our Combined Storm Overflow (CSO) located on Pont-y-felin Lane (NP4 0QF). (Presentation attached as an appendix to the minutes)	

	<p>RECOMMENDED: that the Welsh Water representatives be thanked for attending the meeting.</p>	
495.	<p><u>Afon Lwyd River</u></p> <p>The Committee received notice of a pre planning application in relation to the Afon Lwyd River to improve water quality on land at Pont-y-felin, Pontypool.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: that the notice be received.</p>	LM
496.	<p><u>Biodiversity Plan/ Working Group</u></p> <p>Cllr NW gave a verbal update on the Biodiversity Plan. Councillor Nathan Warren updated members on the Biodiversity Plan, he explained that Big Green Week was taking place from 10th -18th June and the Council would be funding a weekend of Forest Fun Sessions for families and also be trying to arrange a Council litter pick in which all members would be invited to participate.</p> <p>Councillor Warren stated that a Climate Summit would be happening soon and that it was £120 to attend. Councillor Warren stated that he could not attend the summit all day and was looking for other members to attend so that the day could be split between them. Members would be asked if they wished to attend.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: (i) that the update be noted. (ii) that Members be asked to participate in a Council litter pick in June (date to be confirmed). (iii) that Members be asked if they wished to participate in a Climate Summit at a cost of £120 per person.</p>	AA LM
497.	<p><u>Planning Applications</u></p> <p>Members received and considered the list of planning applications on which it was being consulted by Torfaen County Borough Council (Torfaen County Borough Council).</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: that the observations (or absence of observations as the case may be) as outlined in the appendix to these minutes be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.</p>	CP

498.	<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 as outlined be noted.</p>	CP
499.	<p><u>Planning Applications: Plenary Powers</u></p> <p>Members received the list of observations made on planning applications between meetings, under plenary powers.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: that the observations as outlined be noted</p>	CP
500.	<p><u>School Environmental Grants</u></p> <p>The Committee was asked to approve awarding a school environmental grant to West Monmouth School in line with the previous applications submitted now that their paperwork had been received. It was agreed that £1160 be awarded to West Monmouth School.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed a thank you letter from St. Alban's in relation to the school environmental grant awarded. Mrs A Ambrosen stated that other thank you letters had been received but after the agenda paperwork for the Committee had been sent out.</p> <p>Councillor Nathan Warren stated that the schools would be contacted to arrange for Members to visit and see how their projects are progressing.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: (i) that West Mon be awarded an Environmental Grant of £1160. (ii) that the schools be contacted in June to arrange a visit from Members to see how their projects are progressing.</p>	CC AA
501.	<p><u>Doggy Bins</u></p> <p>Mrs R Cronin explained that she had received two pieces of information from Street Scene which was a list of bins owned by the Community Council and also an email that had been received from a resident who belongs to Neighbourhood Watch in New Inn.</p> <p>The Clerk stated that she felt that it was a priority to upgrade some of the bins but also have a map which states</p>	

	<p>where exactly in the borough the Council bins are located.</p> <p>Councillor Warren stated that he thought there needed to be a list as to what type of bins they are and if they needed to be upgraded.</p> <p>The Vice Chair stated that Mrs Sian Williams from Street Scene in Torfaen County Borough Council had stated that they were at capacity for emptying the bins and this was a problem as the bins needed to be emptied regularly. The Vice Chair asked if there was anything the Council could do for Torfaen County Borough Council to increase Street Scene's capacity. He felt that a small increase in the budget for the bins would be appreciated by all residents.</p> <p>The Chair asked if signage could also be increased to encourage people to clean up their dog waste and dispose of it in the bins.</p> <p>Councillor Clarkson stated that Torfaen County Borough Council do have a mapping system online which states where the bins are and she would send the relevant link to members. Councillor Clarkson also stated that Torfaen County Borough Council have a street signage policy which limits how much street signage can be displayed. Councillor Clarkson also stated about some sites being overcrowded with bins and she felt that some may be needed to be spaced out better. In 2019 Torfaen was asked to report back to Council which bins needed to be emptied more frequently than others but to date that information had not been received.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: (i) that the report be noted. (ii) that the following be completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site list of Council bins and what type of bins they are be devised. • Overcrowding sites of bins be identified. • Torfaen be asked how/if the Community Council could help increase Street Scene's capacity of emptying the bins. • That Torfaen be asked how far forward they are with their Waste and Litter Strategy. 	<p>RC</p> <p>CC</p>
502.	<p>Notice Boards</p> <p>The Committee received a verbal update from R Cronin. She stated that four noticeboards are ready to be installed and Torfaen had agreed to install these. Mr Dean Groves would be carrying out the maintenance on</p>	<p>21</p>

	<p>the rest of the Council's noticeboards once the weather improves.</p> <p>The Vice Chair explained that the New Inn residents had asked for two new noticeboards to be installed in New Inn; one by the new park that had been installed and one by New Inn Primary School on Golf Road.</p> <p>The Vice Chair asked if this could be considered by the Committee.</p> <p>The Clerk explained that the remainder of the unused budget for notice boards (£4k) could be placed into an Earmarked Reserve and allocated into next years budget starting in April to cover the cost of future noticeboards. All agreed.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: (i) that the updated be noted. (ii) that two noticeboards be considered for New Inn</p>	RC
503.	<p><u>Play Equipment</u></p> <p>The Committee received an updated from Henrietta Lucas at Torfaen County Borough Council on play provision at Pontnewynydd as requested from the last meeting. It was suggested a representative attend a future meeting to work together with regards to play equipment projects and finding priorities. Members agreed to invite Ms Lucas to a future meeting.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: (i) that the information be noted. (i) that Henrietta Lucas TCBC be invited to a future meeting.</p>	LM
504.	<p><u>Committee Budget</u></p> <p>The Committee received the budget (and reserves) within its remit and the spend to date.</p> <p>The Clerk suggested that:</p> <p>A balance on Community Noticeboards (£4k) can be transferred to an Earmarked Reserve.</p> <p>Playground Equipment budget of (£1.6k) had not been spent in the year and this could be transferred to the earmarked reserve. Councillor Warren stated that if match funding could be requested from Torfaen County Borough Council on Play equipment it could possible help towards providing play provision in Pontnewynydd.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: that the information be received and the spend to date be noted.</p>	CC LM

Planning and Environment Committee

Wednesday 12th April 2024

Welsh Water

Information prior to Mr Nathan Jones from Welsh Water speaking at Committee:

My name is Nathan, I am the Customer Engagement Officer for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's Capital Investment Programme. I'm emailing with regards to a project that we're working on that will help improve the water quality within the Afon Llwyd and reduce impact of pollution from our Combined Storm Overflow (CSO) located on Pont-y-felin Lane (NP4 0QF).

I would like to provide you with some background to CSOs and why we're planning to invest in this area along with our proposals.

Combined Storm Overflows

Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs) play a vital role in preventing homes being flooded following rain and storms because most of our network is a combined system that collects surface as well as wastewater. The operation of our CSOs – which mainly release surface water that enters our sewers due to rainfall – is highly regulated. We are pleased that our investment in recent years has played a part in helping reduce the number of spills by 10% in 2021 – even with us adding monitors to an additional 198 CSOs in the same year. This means that we now have monitors on over 99.5% of our CSOs. We are also fully transparent with the data from our monitors and publish this on our website.

Whilst we cannot completely remove CSOs from our system as it would cost anywhere between £9-£14 billion and involve digging up almost every street in Wales, our CSOs are mainly operating as designed and permitted. However, we recognise that with environmental legislation tightening and customer expectations changing, more needs to be done to improve their performance. That is why we're investing £836m in our wastewater network over the five years to 2025. We have also just announced an additional £100million investment which will include further improvements to CSOs.

As part of this investment, we are looking at delivering nature-based solutions which will not only help boost the local environment but provide communities with areas that can help support health and wellbeing, giving people the opportunity to reconnect with their local environment.

Pontyfelin CSO

We have a below ground CSO located on Pont-Y-Felin Lane which discharges into the Afon Llwyd. We are looking to invest around £8 million to improve the way this CSO operates which will help boost the water quality in the Afon Llwyd and river Usk. To do this, we are planning to install a screening chamber to the CSO as well as features such as a mechanical screen, motor control centre (MCC) and MCC kiosk to operate it. Our plans also included building an access road which would provide our operational teams adequate access to the asset for routine maintenance.

As well as the work on the CSO, we are proposing to enhance the space by creating areas for health and wellbeing, giving people the opportunity to reconnect with their local environment. This

includes footpaths, a constructed wetlands, benches and educational areas. The area that we are proposing to do is already used for recreational purposes, but our proposal provides an opportunity to enhance the space for the area

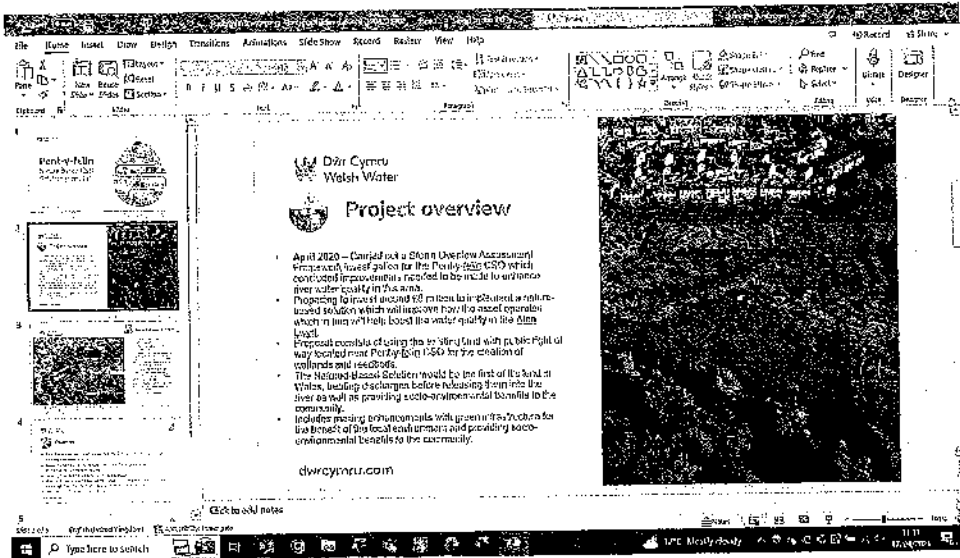
Planning and Environment Committee

Wednesday 12th April

Welsh Water Presentation

Members were shown the following slides regarding the project that will help improve the water quality within the Afon Llwyd and reduce the impact of pollution from their combined storm overflow (CSO) located in Pont – Y – Felin lane. (NP4 0QF)

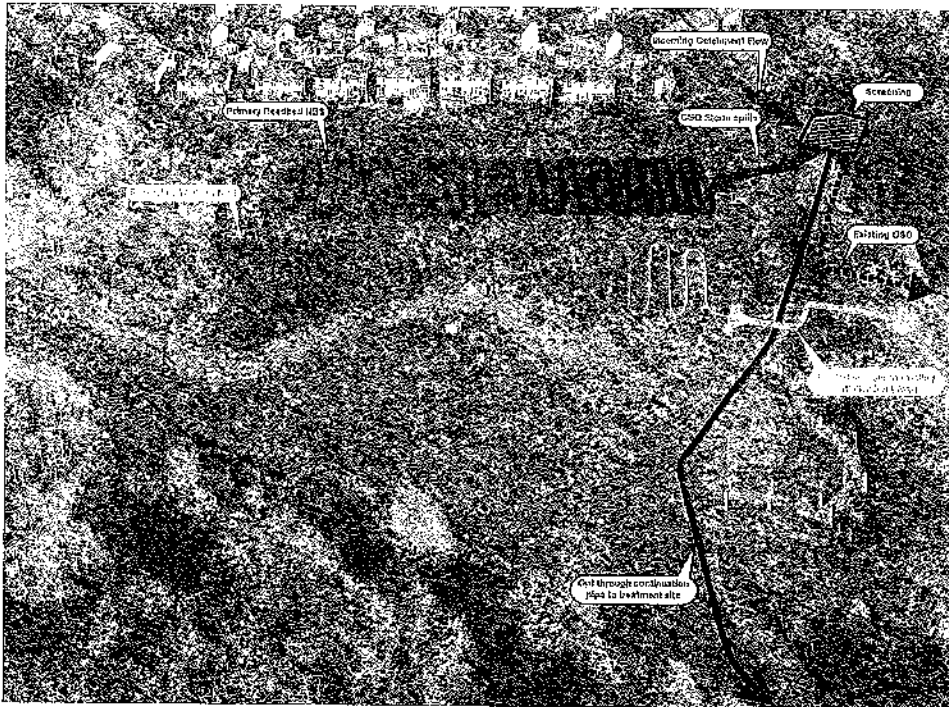
Slide 1



Project Overview

- April 2020 -- Carried out a Storm Overflow Assessment Framework investigation for the Pont-y-felin CSO which concluded improvements needed to be made to enhance river water quality in this area.
- Proposing to invest around £8 million to implement a nature-based solution which will improve how the asset operates which in turn will help boost the water quality in the Afon Llwyd.
- Proposal consists of using the existing land with public right of way located near Pont-y-felin CSO for the creation of wetlands and reedbeds.
- The Nature-based Solution would be the first of its kind in Wales, treating discharges before releasing them into the river as well as providing socio-environmental benefits to the community.
- Includes making enhancements with green infrastructure for the benefit of the local environment and providing socio-environmental benefits to the community.

Slide 2



Nature-based solution, which consists of:

- Aerated reed beds
- Two wetlands, with a pontoon observation deck.
- A compound, consisting of screening chambers aeration blowers for the reed beds, a below ground overflow chamber and maintenance areas to serve each of these assets.
- Access and maintenance tracks
- Footpaths and walkways to allow pedestrian access between different entry points of the site.
- Amenity infrastructure and educational areas, including seating areas and an outdoor classroom.
- Biodiversity enhancements

Slide 3

Benefits:

- Treat the wastewater currently spilling at the CSO which in turn will boost the local river water quality.
- Retain the storm water flows before they reach the watercourse.
- Improving the current landscaping
- Creating sites to enhance biodiversity and ecology.

Answer - Something that was raised today in the session we are to enhance the area rather than promote it as a visitor attraction centre so we have not perceived an increase of traffic to the area but we will take these comments on board. There is a public footpath already on the site.

2 - The filter equipment is there a noise related to them.

The aeration plant will have some blowers and these will create noise. Welsh Water had carried out a noise assessment with receptors placed in Afon Close – the results were below what is considered to be a noise nuisance. There will be a 3.6 increase in decibels and this is a marginal increase.

Councillor Warren

A lot of your habitat assessment seems to be based on the River Usk rather than the Afon Llwyd and in the Afon Llwyd there is white claw cray fish which is a protected species and there are no mention of them in that report. Is the report based on the river Usk or the Afon Llwyd.

We have done a phase one assessment on the River Usk and no evidence of White Claw Crayfish was found.

Councillor Warren stated that for information White and Red Claw Cray fish have been found in the Afon Llwyd.

What is the capacity of the site in terms of what volume of sewage can go through before it starts to cause a problem with odour perhaps or the quality of the water?

Currently the water quality is moderate and the CSO is having an impact on the river. We have assessed the water quality against good status so we will model the solution and we will have no impact against the good status. The database solution seeing 450 litres a second coming through from catchment then 34 litres a second will be sent for treatment at Ponthir and the storm flows will spill over through a mechanical screen will get treated by the database solution that can accommodate 200 litres per seconds and anything above that (extreme flows) will be for bypass and will go into the river. It will in be an extreme situation.

Councillor Warren -How many times last year was the relief point triggered?

The average spill rate was 130 plus on this CSO over the last four years –as we move forward we will see 138 flows spilled into the reed bed 17 of them will flow through the bypass and

you have to appreciate that they will still be screened and will be the very high intensity storms so the most dilute flows will then rear off untreated into the bypass.

Is there any other activity on Afon Llwyd planned for the Afon Llwyd as there is a lot of spillages into the Afon Llwyd. The New Inn CSO accounts for 8% spills so there is 92% of other spills into the river. Is anything else planned to address this.

Christian at Welsh Water answered – stating he has a presentation on his laptop regarding all of the assets within Torfaen all the ones we know the impact on. He stated he did not believe there was anything planned for this 5 year cycle but subsequent 5 year funding cycle starts in April 2025 and Welsh Water are looking at around the £300 million mark investment level into CSO's. Christian stated he would be happy to come along to a future meeting to run through the details on that and the prioritised sites.

Initially we can let you know what the assets and data for that are.

Planning and Environment Committee

Wednesday 12th April 2023

Planning Applications commented on

<i>1</i>	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0106	Pontypool	Public Convenience, Hanbury Road, Pontypool	

Proposed improvements to and replacement of existing path and steps between the Italian Gardens and Listed Memorial Gate and associated works including new walls.

This Council has no observations

<i>2</i>	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0132	Snatchwood	Methodist Chapel, Snatchwood Road, Abersychan	

PROPOSAL: New build 3 bed detached property.

This Council has no observations

<i>3</i>	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0144	Griffithstown East	Sunnybank Nursing Home, Sunnybank Road	

PROPOSAL: Conversion of a storeroom of an existing care facility into additional living quarters, to increase the overall bed capacity from 24 to 25.

This Council has no observations

<i>4</i>	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0157	Pontypool	Tesco, Lower Bridge Street, Pontypool	

PROPOSAL: Retrospective application to install 1 x 42" LCD Media Screen 2 x 1250 mm x 700 mm flag pole signs with overall height 2450 mm.

This Council has no observations

5	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0158	Pontypool	Tesco, Lower Bridge Street, Pontypool	

PROPOSAL: Retrospective Application to install 1x Media EV Charger with Screen 1x Fast EV Charger and 2x Steel Flag poles.

This Council has no observations

6	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	23/P/0164	Snatchwood	11 Oaks Court, Abersychan, Pontypool	

PROPOSAL: Construction of roof terrace on existing garage flat roof.

This Council has no observations

Full Council Committee

Wednesday 26th April 2023

Kings Coronation 2023

1.0 Purpose of report

To provide an update on minute 439 from the March Events meeting.

2.0 Indoor/Outdoor screen

2.1 At the March Events meeting it was recommended that the indoor/outdoor screen for streaming the Kings Coronation live, be put on hold until an update was received from the Market Manager Mr Shane Kennedy.

2.2 On 13th April it was confirmed by Mr Kennedy that the celebration in Pontypool Town would take place on Saturday 8th May and the Projects and Events Manager was asked to hire the indoor screen and speaker system to be used in the indoor market on Saturday 8th May to stream the Kings Coronation live at a total cost of £640 (exc VAT).

3.0 Budget

It should be noted that the provision of the screen and speaker will come out of the Events Additional Budget line and there is sufficient funds available.

4.0 Resolved:

That the Council agree to provide the indoor screen and speaker system for the Kings Coronation at a cost of £640.

Rebecca Cronin
Projects and Events Manager – 17.04.23

Jane Wright

From: Puddy, Lyndon <Lyndon.Puddy@torfaen.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 March 2023 10:02
To: Jane Wright; Lisa McMail
Cc: Lear, Sharon; Lilly, David; Leech, David
Subject: RE: Quote QUO00110 from Audio Visual Alarms Fire and Security ltd for

Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning and thank you for your response.

As previously notified to the Pontypool Community Council, we do not have the budget for CCTV in terms of ongoing replacement and maintenance of CCTV and will now make a decision on CCTV for Pontypool going forward. We have paid for this service and was expecting to recharge for the coverage up to and including September 2023. This will now be reviewed and may result in the maintenance and replacement being terminated from this date.

I will notify you of the Councils decision.

Best wishes

Lyndon

Lyndon Puddy
Head of Public Services Support Unit (PSSU)/Pennaeth Uned Cefnogi Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus (UCGC)
Public Service Support Unit (PSSU) / Uned Cefnogi Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus (UCGC)
Torfaen County Borough Council / Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Torfaen
Glantorfaen Road, Pontypool, NP4 6YB

Tel / Ffôn: 01495 742304
Email / Epost: Lyndon.puddy@torfaen.gov.uk



From: Jane Wright <JWright@pontypoolcc.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 March 2023 09:52
To: Lisa McMail <LMcMail@pontypoolcc.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: Quote QUO00110 from Audio Visual Alarms Fire and Security ltd for

Hi Lisa,
Information below as per previous e-mail.
Kind Regards
Jane

From: Richard Gwinnell <clerk@pontypoolcc.gov.uk>
Sent: 14 July 2022 11:58

314

Briefing Note:

Torfaen Canal Strategy and Action Plan 2023 - 2033 Public Consultation

April 2023

The purpose of this brief is to alert Community Council Members that Torfaen County Borough Council are currently consulting on the draft Torfaen Canal Strategy and Action Plan, to provide details on how Members can take part in the consultation, and to provide a brief summary of the Strategy.

Background

- In October 2021, Torfaen County Borough Council appointed a Canal Coordinator to, in partnership, develop a Strategy and Action plan for the canal within the Council's ownership.
- During 2022 the Canal Coordinator has met with canal experts and enthusiasts in the local area and other stakeholders to develop a shared Vision for the future of the canal in Torfaen.
- In October 2022, Torfaen County Borough Council led a public engagement survey to gather views on the canal from the wider public. 1200 detailed responses were received through this engagement session.
- During November 2022 to April 2023 Torfaen County Borough Council have developed a draft Strategy and Action Plan for the canal within the Council's ownership, using this feedback.

The public consultation

- A public consultation on the draft Strategy and Action Plan is currently underway. This consultation will close Monday 8th May. The online consultation form can be found at the following link:
<https://getinvolved.torfaen.gov.uk/draft-canal-strategy>
- Public drop-in sessions will be held on the following dates/times and venues:

10am – 1pm, Thursday 4th May 2023
Pontypool Indoor Market

3pm – 6pm, Thursday 4th May 2023
Cwmbran Community Council Community Hall

The Torfaen Canal Strategy

- This Strategy and Action Plan relates to the 4.5mile section of the canal owned by Torfaen County Borough Council. This includes the canal from Bridge 47 (Soloman's Bridge) in Sebastopol to the administrative boundary with Newport City Council. It covers the 'canal corridor', which includes: the water channel; the towpath (footpath running along the waterway); and the adjoining bank and boundary features. Within this section there is 0.75 miles of navigable canal to Five Locks Road and a further 3.75 miles of remainder, un-navigable canal through Cwmbran.

- The Strategy and Action Plan will harness the positive opportunities presented by the canal and its immediate environment by providing a framework for action. This will support better collaboration, partnership working and co-ordination of activities along the canal corridor to maximize the benefits of all stakeholder activities.
- The strategic Vision for the canal has been developed in partnership with the community and key stakeholders. The future Vision is:

By 2033, a well maintained and thriving navigable waterway has been created, connecting Cwmbran Town Centre to the wider northern canal network. It is a vibrant corridor for recreation and leisure, providing investment, employment, training, and participation opportunities along its length. The canal supports the local economy and is a major contributor to quality of life in the area.

In order to achieve the Vision, a phased approach is required over a ten year period. The phasing is set out below.

Phase 1 2023 – 2025 Building the Foundations
By 2025, success looks like: Five Locks Basin developed to attract more visitors
Phase 2 2025 – 2028 Reaching the Locks
By 2028, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated up to Mount Pleasant Road
Phase 3 2028 – 2033 Reaching Town Centre
By 2033, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated to a new canal destination within Town Centre

- To inform the phased approach to achieving the long-term vision for the canal, five strategic themes have been identified to capture the rich and varied values of the canal and the project opportunities that they present. Each is underpinned by a series of objectives which set a clear context for action. :
 1. Sustainable Maintenance and Management
 2. Destination Development, Leisure and Travel
 3. Community and Partnership
 4. Resilient Heritage
 5. Achieving Restoration and Navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre
- A detailed Action Plan is available in Part 2 of the Strategy which outlines how the Vision will be achieved through a series of linked interventions. The Plan identified potential delivery partners, whether funding is required and provides indicative time frames. The Action Plan will be regularly updated.
- The full Torfaen Canal Strategy and Action Plan is available to download here: <https://getinvolved.torfaen.gov.uk/draft-canal-strategy>

Working Together for a Greener Torfaen

Why: We must respond to the climate and nature emergencies, recycle more and make improvements to the local environment



Why: To do this we must reduce what is sent for incineration and reduce, reuse and recycle more



Why: We must reach the 70% recycling target set by Welsh Government or face fines



Why: 40% of homes don't put out food waste on the kerbside for collection



Why: 25% of people do not recycle cardboard



What's in an average skinny bin that is recyclable

Food waste and plant materials
39%

Paper and card
15%

Plastic film
9%

Hard plastic 5%

Textiles 5%

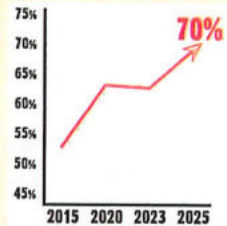
Metals 3%

Glass 2%

Small electricals 1%

Non recyclable
20%

Why:
2015 53%
2020 64%
2023 63%
2025 target figure 70%



How: Increasing collections, education and enforcement

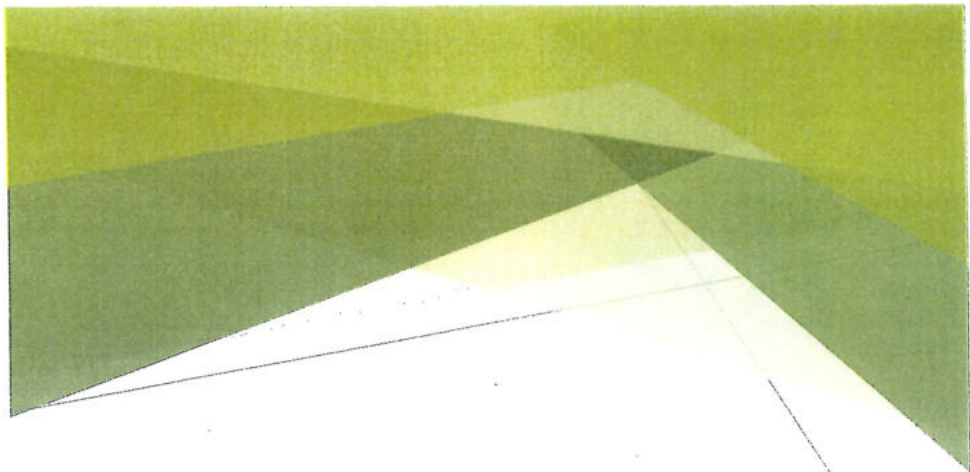


How: Increasing collections from flats and businesses



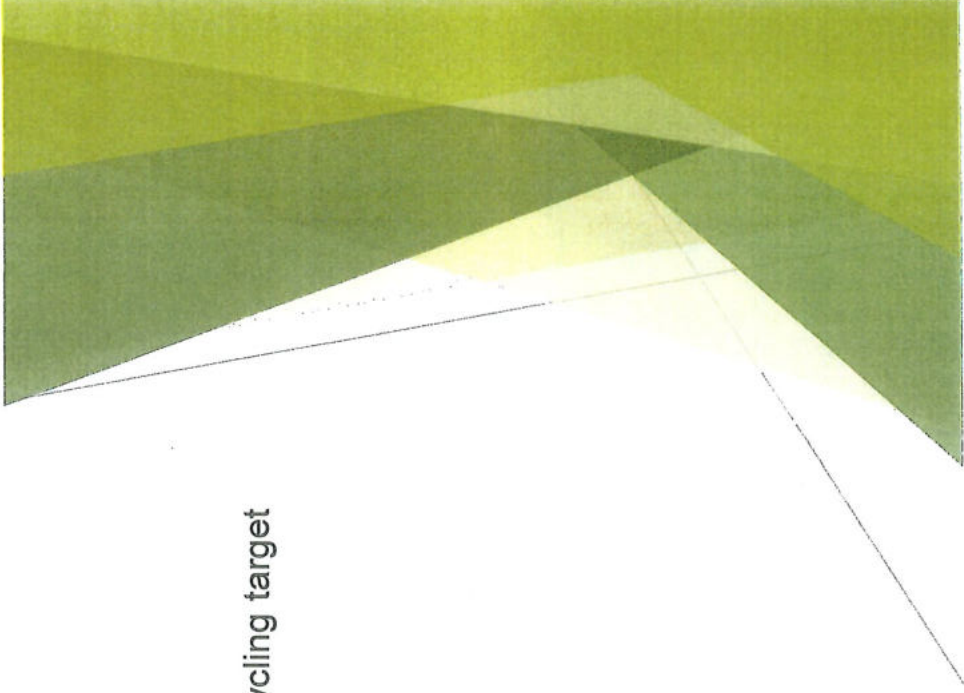
But most of all we need **you to help**

The future of residual waste in Torfaen

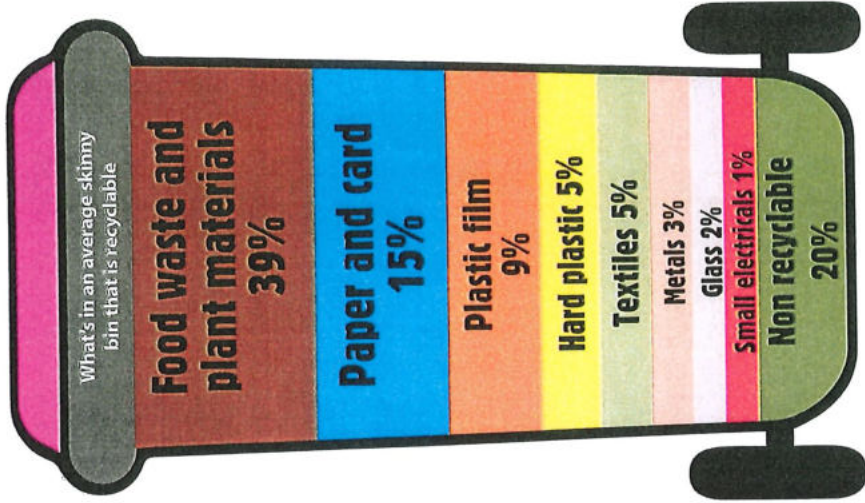


Background

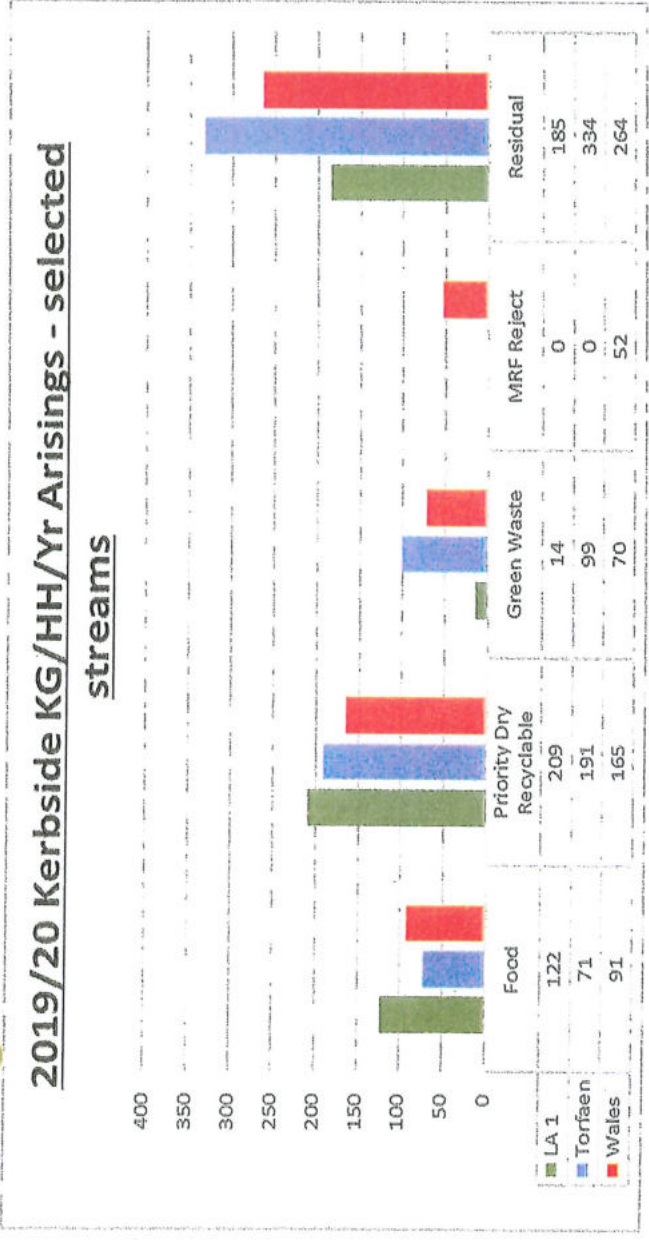
- ▶ WG targets – £100,000 fine per 1% under statutory recycling target
- ▶ Recycling Rate Target 64% every year from 2019-24
- ▶ Currently TCBC recycling 62.7%
- ▶ Recycling Rate Target 70% from 2024-25



What does Torfaen's waste look like?

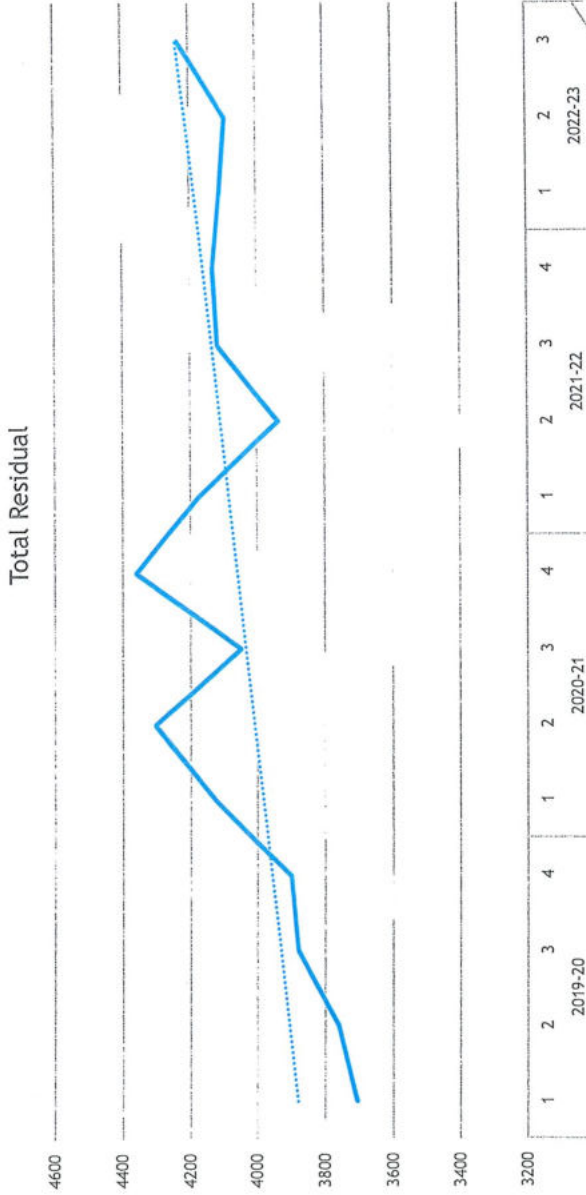


We produce more residual waste and not enough food!



7

Residual Waste Tonnage









Since April 2019, the overall residual trend for both kerbside and HWRC collected waste is increasing.







Proposed Changes

70% recycling by 2025

3 weekly residual waste collections

Receiptacle	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✗	✗	✓
	✓	✗	✓	✗

4 weekly residual waste collections

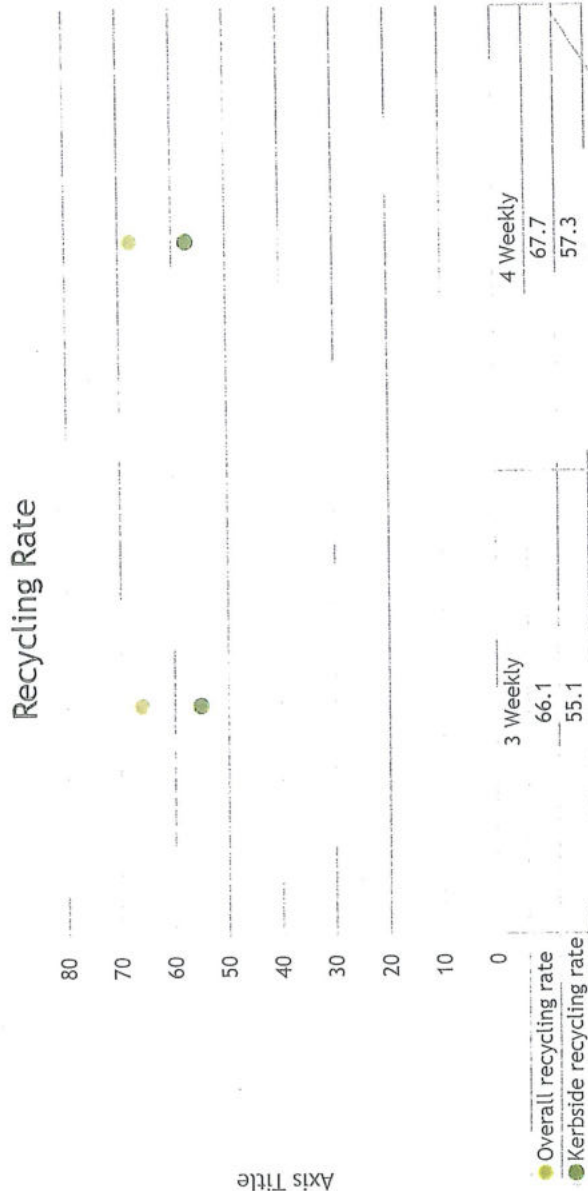
Receiptacle	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✗	✗	✗
	✓	✗	✓	✗

Options for Modelling

- ▶ To achieve the recycling targets set out by Welsh Government, one of the key proposals to increase performance is for Torfaen to restrict the amount of residual waste householders can place out either 3 Weekly or 4 weekly

Recycling Options Performance

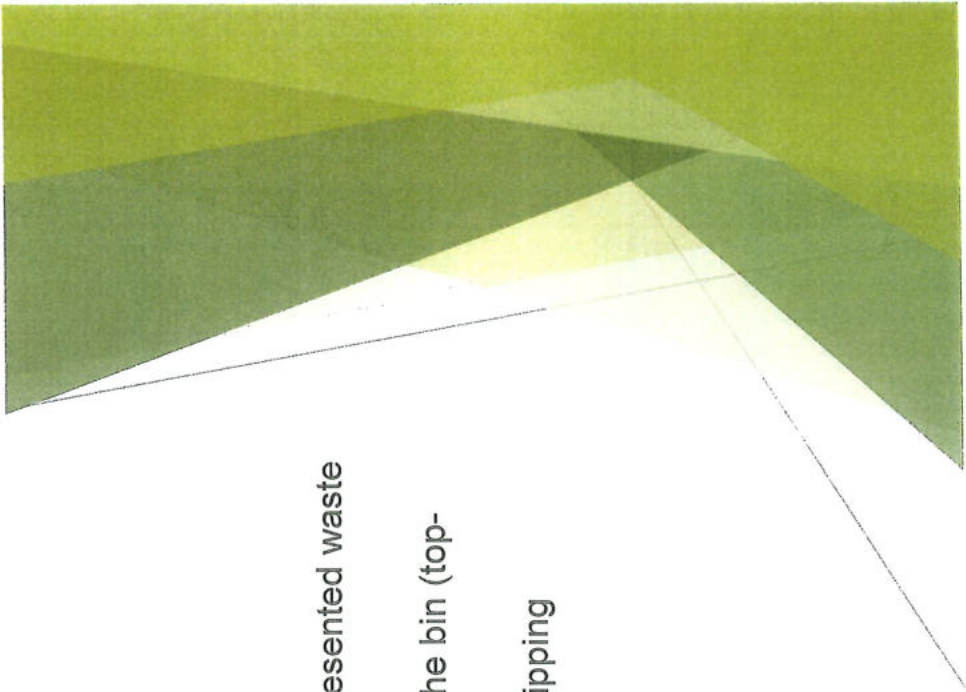
Changes still wont achieve 70%



Side Waste

► Findings

- Out of 4,643 properties monitored, 267 (6%) misrepresented waste at the kerbside
- The majority of side waste was presented on top of the bin (top-hatting)
- Mis-presentation of waste is often confused with fly-tipping



Can we stay as we are?

Pros

No change to the public

Politically acceptable in short term

No service planning disruption so existing resources can be put onto education / service quality

No set up costs / expenditure / investment required

Cons

Will fail future statutory recycling targets

Risk of fines (worst case £c.£990k over 4 years)

Officers believe the risk is real if no action is taken **given other Council's are taking similar action** as proposed

Reputational impact - "failing service / failure to act" - are there more strategic consequences?

Risk of no further WG investment in waste / recycling

Are we serious about our carbon / environmental / County plan commitments

Recommendations

Doing nothing is not an option

- ▶ That approval is given to go out for consultation on 3 or 4 weekly options
- ▶ Introduce an Enforcement Policy to ensure residents are not presenting more than 140L residual waste every three weeks.
- ▶ There will be clear guidance and education on how to recycle
- ▶ Review the nappy/hygiene service to ensure suitable collections of waste.
- ▶ Round order and performance monitoring of collections to ensure crews are collecting the correct capacity and stickering and leaving any excess waste
- ▶ We are digitalising the service to improve service delivery

Torfaen Recycles **70%** Recycling by **2025**

Black Box

- ✓ Newspapers, magazines, envelopes, paper, junk mail
- ✓ Glass bottles and jars
- ✓ Tins, cans, aerosols, clean foil and tetra pak
- ✓ Clean mixed plastics and cartons
- ✓ Bagged textiles, clothes and shoes
- ✓ Used batteries in a clear bag



- ✗ Toys, coat hangers, flower pots and trays
- ✗ Broken glass
- ✗ Disposable nappies
- ✗ Polystyrene, plastic wrapping and bags
- ✗ Crisp packets

Cardboard

- ✓ Cereal boxes or any cardboard packaging
- ✓ Tubes and egg boxes
- ✓ Greetings cards and corrugated cardboard



- ✗ Cardboard with plastic attached, like plastic windows
- ✗ Cardboard decorated with or covered in foil

Food Waste

- ✓ Meat, fish and bones
- ✓ Fruit, vegetables and peelings
- ✓ Eggs, cheese, other dairy products
- ✓ Breads, cakes, pastries
- ✓ Rice, pasta, beans
- ✓ Leftover food from plates
- ✓ Tea bags, coffee grounds



- ✗ No food packaging
- ✗ No liquids or liquid fats

Coming soon to kerbside recycling! Small electricals.



Stretchy Plastic

We're working with Capital Valley Plastics to provide collection points. To find out where your nearest one is visit www.torfaen.gov.uk/recycle



Scan for A-Z of recycling



Recycle for Torfaen
City of Wales Group
www.torfaen.gov.uk



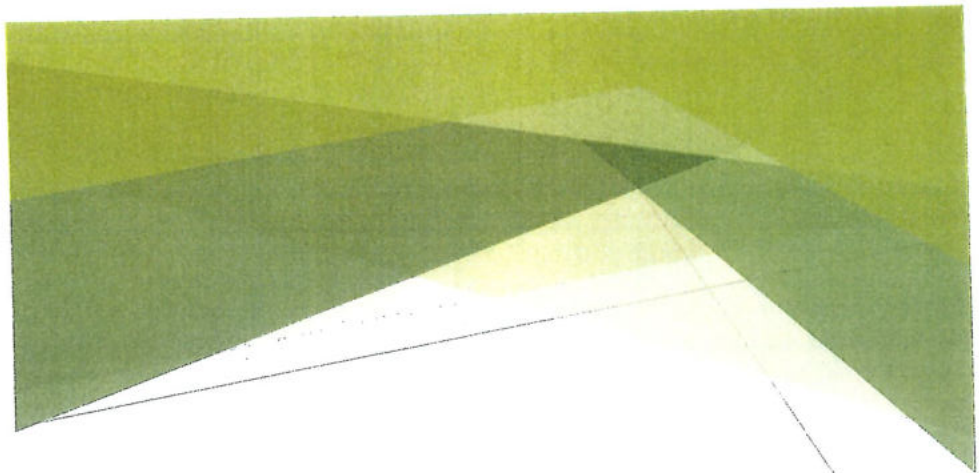
PLASTICS & RECYCLING

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Consultation Drop In Sessions

Date	Location
28/03/2023	Blaenavon Primary Care Centre 10 am - 3pm
29/03/2023	Pontypool Indoor Market 10am - 3pm
31/03/2023	Torfaen Access Forum 10am - 12pm
31/03/2023	Torfaen Peoples Panel 6pm - 7pm
01/04/2023	Pontypool Market (Easter Event) 10am - 3pm
04/04/2023	Blaenavon Primary Care Centre 10am - 3pm
04/04/2023	Blaenavon 50+ Forum 2pm - 4pm
05/04/2023	Blaenavon Active Living Centre 5pm - 8pm
06/04/2023	Cwmbran Customer Care 10am - 3pm
11/04/2023	Pontypool 50+ Forum 1.30pm - 3.30pm
13/04/2023	Cwmbran Customer Care 10am - 3pm
18/04/2023	Cwmbran Shopping Centre 10am - 3pm
19/04/2023	Civic Centre Pontypool 10am - 3pm
20/04/2023	Pontypool Active Living Centre 5pm - 8pm
25/04/2023	Cwmbran 50+ Forum 2pm - 4pm
27/04/2023	Cwmbran Customer Care 10am - 3pm
02/05/2023	Cwmbran Shopping Centre 10am - 3pm
04/05/2023	Cwmbran Stadium 5pm - 8pm

Questions?



PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020 – 2023 (3 YEAR PLAN)
Reviewed April 2023

INTRODUCTION

Pontypool Community Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing all funds held on behalf of the community by the Council.

This strategy complies (as appropriate) with the revised requirements set out in Guidance on Local Government Investments issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government in April 2019. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Financial Regulations.

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

In accordance with Section 15(1) of the 2003 Act, the Council will have regard (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

The Council's investment priorities are as follows in order of priority:

1. Security of Capital
2. Liquidity
3. Yield (The effect of any charges should be taken into account when considering investments)
4. Ethical

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

The Department for Communities and Local Government maintains that borrowing of monies purely to invest or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

The Council's Finance Committee will monitor the risk of loss on investments and only recommend investing in institutions of high credit rating. Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.

- The Council holds its general funds in a current account with the Cooperative Bank and 2 investment accounts with:
 1. Public Sector Deposit Account - CCLA
 2. Gateway Credit Union, Pontypool
- In order to spread the risk of investment the Council invests the majority of it reserves with Public Sector Deposit Fund - CCLA Investment Management Limited (AAA Rated Deposit Fund) – unspecified term withdrawal within 1 day. CCLA is one of the UK's largest charity fund managers according to the latest Charity Finance Survey, managing investments for charities,

religious organisations and the public sector. The balance must be continually reviewed by Responsible Finance Officer.

This Annual Investment Strategy is prepared in accordance with the statutory guidance on Local Government Investments issued by the National Assembly for Wales.

All cash, bank balances, financial assets, borrowings and credit arrangements are defined as a part of the Council's treasury management activities. This Annual Investment Strategy will concentrate on the Council's surplus resources (or other financial assets it holds) and the investments it undertakes of these resources.

The Council undertakes to ensure that for all its investments, priority will be given to security and liquidity rather than to yield. In drafting this Annual Investment Strategy the Council has made appropriate arrangements for:

- identification, management and control of risks in the investment/treasury management activities it undertakes,
- budgeting, accounting and audit arrangements,
- its cash and cash flow management requirements,
- segregation of responsibilities, organisational arrangements, adequate documentation and the identification of a responsible officer for investment/treasury management activities,
- corporate governance,
- procedures to ensure it is alert to the possibility it may become subject to an attempt to involve it in a transaction involving the laundering of money.

All investments undertaken by this Council will be made and repaid in Sterling.

L McMail
Clerk

Implemented June 2020
Review due June 2023

PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2023

FIXED ASSET REGISTER POLICY DOCUMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

The Fixed Asset Register Policy Document is now due for review.

2.0 Fixed Asset Register

2.1 A Fixed Asset Register has four main purposes, it

1. forms a basis for completion of box 9 in the 'Annual Return'.
2. forms a basis for decisions on risk and insurance issues.
3. provides information on the age and potential lifespan of certain items.
4. provides assurance of the continued existence of Community Council's property.

3.0 Transparency and reasonableness

3.1 In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Community Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:

- land and buildings held freehold or on long term lease in the name of the Council
- community assets
- vehicles, plant and machinery
- assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance
- other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase or resale value of £100
- long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council

3.2 Community Councils must maintain an asset register to ensure fixed assets are appropriately safeguarded. Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Concepts of depreciation and impairment adjustments are not appropriate for local/community councils.

3.3 The Register is adopted by the Community Council at the end of each Municipal Year but is a working document over the following Municipal

Year, during which Council Officers will update and amend details as necessary.

4.0 **RECOMMENDED**

- 4.1 That the Committee approves the above policy until it is due to be reviewed in March 2026 and the information contained within the report be noted.

L. McMail,
Clerk,
Pontypool Community Council

This Report is jointly published by:

SLCC

For Local Council Professionals

Un Llais Cymru



One Voice Wales

Bullying and Harassment in Councils

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Introduction

One Voice Wales & the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) are committed to improving the performance of community and town councils in Wales. One aspect of improvement is around behaviour by both elected members and council employees. While serious issues with behaviour are limited to a small number of cases each year, the impact of these cases is significant for those involved. Unacceptable behaviour can impact on the effectiveness of Councils undermining both loyalty and commitment and a souring of relationships which is in no one's interests. At its very worst it can result in ill-health and sickness absence which is clearly unproductive and very costly to those Councils which experience relationship issues of this nature.

This guidance has been developed by Paul Egan (One Voice Wales) and Naomi Bibi (SLCC) to support both councils and clerks when issues do arise.

Lyn Cadwallador, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales gives his full support to the production of this guide which he considers will help all Councils and employees to understand the nature of unacceptable behaviour and have a toolkit to help everyone ensure that Councils foster effective governance and employment practice. In his view, it is essential that Councils take all necessary actions to root out poor behaviour on the part of members and/or officers so that together a cohesive and focussed approach is adopted in achieving the best outcomes for local people.

As the professional body for local council clerks and chief officers, SLCC is similarly pleased to support the development of this guide. Rob Smith, Chief Executive of SLCC, gave his full support to the production of the guide and noted the value of its aims of improving behaviours, engendering positive relationships and helping councils and employees to deliver for their communities.

Effective Councillor and Officer Relationships

Councillors have different enthusiasms and interests, so celebrate this. Councillors have different skills and attitudes; for example, some work with ideas while others are very practical; some like accounts while others prefer reports. The community or town council needs a range of skilled people to work as a team.

Your chair has the roles of team leader and umpire at meetings. Some councils appoint a separate council leader, but this party-political role has no status in law. The clerk provides advice and administrative support and takes action to implement council decisions. The clerk may have to act as a project manager, personnel director, public relations officer or finance administrator. The clerk is not just a secretary and is not at the beck and call of the chair or other councillors; the clerk is answerable only to the council as a whole. The clerk is the **proper officer** of the council in law. Legally councils can agree to delegate decisions to clerks because they are professional officers whose independence allows them to act on behalf of the council. Clearly the clerk must be treated with respect. The best councils will have a clerk and councillors who work as a team to serve the community.

What is bullying and harassment?

Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse and includes bullying.

What are bullying and harassment? These terms are used interchangeably by most people, and many definitions include bullying as a form of harassment.

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is: Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority such as a manager or councillor) or involve groups of people. It may be obvious, or it may be insidious: Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour include: spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour (copying e-mails that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know, ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail), exclusion or victimisation, unfair treatment, overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position, unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected, making threats or comments about job security without foundation, deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism, preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur in written communications, email, phone, through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) and automatic supervision methods such as computer recording of downtime from work or the number of calls handled if these are not applied to all staff.

Bullying and harassment can make someone feel anxious and humiliated. Feelings of anger and frustration at being unable to cope may be triggered. Some people may try to retaliate in some way. Others may become frightened and de-motivated. Stress, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem caused by harassment or bullying can lead to job insecurity, illness, absence from work, and even resignation. Almost always job performance is affected and relations in the workplace suffer.

SLCC's Research

In 2017 Hoey Ainscough were commissioned by the SLCC to survey their members on issues relating to council governance, the Code of Conduct and standards arrangements under the Localism Act 2011.

Although the research focussed on England and its regime, Welsh members were included in the survey and the responses were consistent between the regions and countries.

The Localism Act (which does not apply in Wales) arrangements, which deregulated standards arrangements, are now over five years old and SLCC have been receiving increasing anecdotal evidence from their members that in some places standards are deteriorating and the lack of effective sanctions in the legislation for serious or persistent misconduct by councillors was having a negative effect on the governance of some parishes. SLCC therefore wanted to establish on a more systemic basis whether what they were hearing anecdotally was in fact true; if so, what was the scale of the issue and what were the effects. This evidence would be used, where appropriate, to help SLCC decide whether it felt it would wish to push for changes to the English/Welsh statutory framework and to identify what further support its members and the sector might need.

A survey in November 2017 was sent to all SLCC members with a series of questions designed to identify what clerks felt about certain key standards issues. In parallel a shorter questionnaire was sent to the English Monitoring Officers (MOs) of the principal authorities (In Wales, the Public Services Ombudsman investigates complaints) who have oversight of parishes under the legislation to see what impact, if any, parish governance issues were having on their role. We received 801 responses to the clerk questionnaire and 55 responses to the Monitoring Officer survey.

Summary of the findings

The findings from the survey were:

1. The number of complaints against councillors does not appear to have changed since before and after the introduction of the Localism Act, with roughly the same number reporting cases had increased as saying they had decreased

2. Most parish/community councils do not have issues with member behaviour, however a significant minority (some 15%) do have serious issues
3. In those councils with problems, it is generally caused by one or two councillors who are consistently disruptive although there is a smaller minority of councils where the whole council is seen to be acting inappropriately because of factional splits or significant governance failures
4. While the number of cases has remained roughly constant, there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with how those cases are now handled and particularly resolved, with the vast majority of respondents pointing to the lack of powers (unlike in Wales where there is a Public Services Ombudsman that receives complaints concerning alleged breaches of the code of conduct) to remove councillors from office as seriously damaging to the governance of councils where there are significant behavioural issues
5. Most clerks believe they are well supported by the principal authority's Monitoring Officer in helping them deal with issues but a sizeable minority are very dissatisfied with the support they receive (Not necessarily the case in Wales as Monitoring Officers have more of an advisory role to community councils)
6. Most clerks, however, are dissatisfied with the outcome of complaints and the way they have been handled with a minority saying they (and in some cases their councillors) no longer see the point in making a complaint
7. There is a significant feeling that the current legislative framework means certain individuals now believe they are 'untouchable' and are given free rein to cause disruption and that problems therefore go on longer without coming to a resolution (see section below on the Ledbury Town Council Judicial Review 2018)
8. Disruption generally seems to be either because of personal animosities between councillors or else because individuals or small groups of councillors are challenging the 'status quo' and see themselves as outsiders who wish to change the way that the council has traditionally been run
9. There is a small minority of councils where the behavioural issues are aimed directly against the clerk or other staff, but more generally the clerk tends to get caught in the crossfire, either as part of the general targeting of the way the council is run or because they are having to manage the behaviour or reconcile the factions. However, a minority of respondents said they had left a previous role as a clerk because of the way they were being treated and a handful of respondents were either currently engaged in an employment dispute with their council or actively considering it
10. Some councils and their councillors struggle to understand the rules around declarations of interest and a minority of councillors appear routinely to ignore the rules as they do not believe there will be any consequences

11. Councillors (particularly longstanding councillors) are resistant to receiving training, either because they see no benefit or feel they have received training in the past, or simply because they are volunteers who cannot commit the time. The availability and cost of training is also seen as a major barrier to getting councillors to go on training courses.

What is the difference between a grievance and a Code of Conduct complaint?

In simplest terms, a grievance is a complaint by an employee about the actions of his or her employer, their terms and conditions of employment, work they are being asked to undertake or the working environment. It may relate to the conduct or attitude of a colleague.

In the Community and Town Council sector, a grievance is a complaint about the Council as a corporate body and an employer. A grievance cannot be just about the behaviour of an individual councillor. It may be linked to the behaviour of a councillor but only to the extent that the Council as an employer has not prevented or managed the unacceptable behaviour. A grievance may be about a person's line manager if they are another member of staff.

A line manager cannot raise a grievance about a more junior member of staff – if there is an issue of this nature that should be dealt with through normal staff management processes. Nor can a councillor raise a grievance about a member of staff – this should also be managed through normal management processes.

A council has a duty to redress the grievance of an employee promptly and fairly.

A Code of Conduct complaint relates to behaviour by an individual who may have breached the formal Code regulating the behaviour of councillors or the separate Code for officers. Behaviours that are unacceptable are set out in the Codes of Conduct. A Code of Conduct complaint against a councillor is dealt with by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and cannot be dealt with by the Community or Town Council under the statutory framework. However, One Voice Wales has developed a 'Model Local Resolution Protocol' for dealing with low-level complaints about members which the PSOW supports (see later in this guidance).

The Code of Conduct for officers forms part of an employee's terms and conditions of appointment. A complaint that an officer has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct is a disciplinary matter for the relevant Community or Town Council. The Ombudsman has no power to investigate a breach of the employee Code of Conduct. That said, where the alleged conduct results in potential maladministration by the Council, that aspect may fall within the Ombudsman's powers to investigate a complaint by the person directly affected.

What should you do to resolve the complaints in the first instance?

In either case attempts to resolve matters informally should always be attempted before any formal process is contemplated. Ways of doing this can be as simple as an open and frank discussion or a more involved facilitated mediation. In these situations, nobody has anything to lose by trying to resolve a situation before it escalates.

Raising a formal complaint is not something that can or should be undertaken lightly. Even the most justified complaints damage relationships in the workplace in both the short and longer term.

Making Complaints to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

The Ombudsman considers that resources should not be used to investigate matters which are trivial, or which have little or no impact on the public. It is important that PSOW focusses its investigations on matters that are serious and have the potential to undermine the relationship between councillors and the public they serve, such as corruption, bullying and misuse of power in public office.

The Ombudsman uses a two-stage test when receiving complaints about breaches of the Code.

The two-stage test

The process requires the application of a two-stage test. Where she is satisfied that a complaint is supported by direct evidence that a breach has taken place, initially the public interest is considered in deciding whether a complaint against a councillor can and should be investigated. She considers the public interest again during an investigation to ensure that it should continue and, finally, again, when determining whether a matter should be referred to a Standards Committee (SC) or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) for consideration.

There is no widely accepted definition of public interest, but it has been described as "something which is of serious concern and benefit to the public". The public interest therefore relates to something which has an impact on the public and is not merely a matter the public finds to be of interest or a matter that impacts solely on an individual (although an individual may be more directly impacted by the matter than the wider public).

The published public interest factors the Ombudsman considers are set out below:

- the seriousness of the breach
- whether the member deliberately sought personal gain for themselves or another person at the public expense

- whether the circumstances of the breach are such that a member has misused a position of trust or authority and caused harm to another
- whether the breach was motivated by any form of discrimination against the victim's ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity

It is clear therefore that councillors or Clerks making a complaint about harassment or bullying should ensure that there is sufficient evidence to support its consideration in terms of the impact on the individual concerned and how it may impact on the work of the Council and in turn the services delivered to the town or community. It goes without saying that witnesses who may be able to support a complaint should be identified in any complaint or statements in support of allegations should be provided to support the complaint.

Considerations

Then taking any of the above factors into account, relevant considerations can include the circumstances of the complaint; the extent to which the councillor was responsible for, or was to blame for, the alleged breach; whether the alleged conduct was premeditated and/or planned and whether the alleged conduct has caused harm or impacted on another person, group or body. Views expressed by the complainant, or any other person affected by the alleged conduct, relating to the impact and effect should also be considered. Other considerations may be:

- whether there is evidence of previous similar behaviour on the part of the member
- whether the Councillor has been the subject of any previous complaints or investigations, or been referred to the Standards Committee (SC) or the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) for a similar matter? Is the alleged conduct ongoing, repeated or is there evidence of escalating behaviour?
- whether the investigation or referral to an SC or the APW is required to maintain public confidence in elected members in Wales
- whether investigation or referral to an SC or the APW is a proportionate response. Consider whether it is likely that the breach would lead to a sanction being applied to the member and whether the use of resources in carrying out an investigation or hearing by an SC or the APW would be regarded as excessive, when weighed against any likely sanction.

Public interest will not be decided based on resource alone, but this is a relevant consideration when making an overall assessment. A balanced view should be taken and consideration of the outcomes of previous cases considered by SCs across Wales and the APW will be helpful in achieving this.

The list is not exhaustive and not all factors will be relevant to every case.

The role of the Council and Chairman

The legal position

Councils as employers are responsible for preventing bullying and harassing behaviour. It is in their interests to make it clear to everyone that such behaviour will not be tolerated — the costs to the business of the Council may include poor employee relations, low morale, inefficiency and potentially the loss of staff. An organisational statement to all councillors and staff about the standards of behaviour expected can make it easier for all individuals to be fully aware of their responsibilities to others.

Councils are encouraged to adopt a policy setting out its expectations and approach to dealing with identified cases of bullying and harassment by individual councillors towards other councillors and employees and relating to bullying and harassment by employees. One Voice Wales and the SLCC can provide model policies to assist Councils.

The Code of Conduct

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales has published guidance to assist councillors understand their obligations under the Code. The guidance makes it very clear that bullying and harassment constitutes a breach of the Code. The guidance can be accessed from the following web-link:

<https://www.ombudsman.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Code-of-Conduct-Guidance-Community-Councils.pdf>

One Voice Wales has also provided member councils with a model informal resolution process which can be used to deal with low level complaints from employees (other than the Clerk) against councillors and from councillors against councillors. The Ombudsman is very supportive of this process and encourages all councils to adopt it and use it whenever possible to resolve issues at an early stage before problems escalate. Wherever possible consideration should be given to using the informal resolution process which will enable the following matters to be considered in a more timely way and enable the individuals concerned to reach an appropriate form of agreement which is mutually acceptable. Those matters that are suitable for local resolution are:

- Minor complaints from Members about Members
- Minor complaints from Officers about Members
- Members alleged to have not shown respect and consideration for others – either verbally or in writing
- Repetitive low level and frivolous complaints

Please note that even when a council has adopted an informal resolution process these are only appropriate for these types of complaints and the Ombudsman may decide to investigate any cases which the Ombudsman considers raise more serious matters.

The role of the Chair of a Council

It is the Chair's responsibility to preserve order in the conduct of those present at meetings of the Council. It is also likely to be the case that the Chair will be the person whom the Clerk will approach for information about the Council and the community/town, to seek to informally discuss matters with and informally consult on decisions that are in the Clerk's remit to make or pass back to a formal meeting. In the context of the formal role at meetings, the Chair has a duty to ensure that the behaviour of members is appropriately monitored and if there are clear examples of bullying or harassment relating to councillors or the Clerk, the Chair should warn those concerned to desist from such behaviour. In extreme cases, the Chair or any other member can put a motion to the meeting to expel a councillor from the meeting.

The Council's Values and Beliefs

Although cases of bullying and harassment in Councils are probably limited to a minority of Councils it may be helpful for all Councils to consider adopting a values and beliefs statement that demonstrates to both councillors, employees and the public its position in relation to human interrelationships within the Council. Some examples are: -

Example 1

Trust and respect

We trust residents to make choices and decisions that are best for them. We will help when we are needed. The way we work together as staff, councillors, and partners reflects trust and respect for each other.

Pride

Our elected councillors and our staff are proud to work for us. They are committed to making our town a great place to live, and even a better place to do business.

Working as a team

The way we work together as councillors and staff makes sure we are the best we can be. We avoid duplication, tackle inefficiency and improve services and experience of residents and customers.

Being valued

We recognise our many responsibilities for keeping the area and our residents safe and prosperous. We recognise our councillors and staff for their contribution and for our success.

Example 2

Leadership -- Councillors are elected to represent their communities and to lead on issues that will affect the lives of local people.

Integrity -- operating with integrity, being ethical, trustworthy and reliable and treating others with respect.

Tenacity/ Persistence -- work proactively to achieve the decision of the Council even if it takes a long time and a great deal of effort.

Communication -- to give the public the opportunity to ask questions and engage with the Council, and to publicise the work of the Council.

Strong financial management -- to ensure that the Council's resources are managed effectively and efficiently, at least cost, yet maintain quality.

Training -- to support relevant training for Councillors and staff members.

Working as a corporate body -- to respect decisions made democratically

These would serve to ensure that the Council is observing the ten principles that underpin the Code of Conduct which are:

A) Selflessness - Members must act solely in the public interest. They must never use their position as members to improperly confer advantage on themselves or to improperly confer advantage or disadvantage on others.

B) Honesty - Members must declare any private interests relevant to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest.

C) Integrity and Propriety - Members must not put themselves in a position where their integrity is called into question by any financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their duties. Members must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

D) Duty to Uphold the Law - Members must act to uphold the law and act on all occasions in accordance with the trust that the public has placed in them.

E) Stewardship - In discharging their duties and responsibilities members must ensure that their authority's resources are used both lawfully and prudently.

F) Objectivity in Decision-making - In carrying out their responsibilities including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members must make decisions on merit. Whilst members must have regard to the professional advice of officers and may properly take account of the views of others, including their political groups, it is their responsibility to decide what view to take and, if appropriate, how to vote on any issue.

G) Equality and Respect - Members must carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for all people, regardless

of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion, and show respect and consideration for others.

H) Openness- Members must be as open as possible about all their actions and those of their authority. They must seek to ensure that disclosure of information is restricted only in accordance with the law.

I) Accountability - Members are accountable to the electorate and the public generally for their actions and for the way they carry out their responsibilities as a member. They must be prepared to submit themselves to such scrutiny as is appropriate to their responsibilities.

J) Leadership - Members must promote and support these principles by leadership and example so as to promote public confidence in their role and in the authority. They must respect the impartiality and integrity of the Council's statutory officers and its other employees.

Ledbury Town Council Judicial Review 2018 and its relevance in Wales

Introduction

Although the Ledbury case was a judicial review in England the decision's underlying principles are relevant to Wales and are founded in the legislative framework and the Code of Conduct in Wales. Caselaw such as the Heesom and Calver cases also provide useful context for the application of the Code in Wales.

The Ledbury Case

The case arose after the Clerk & Deputy Clerk raised grievances about the conduct of two councillors. It was alleged that the councillors were bullying and harassing staff and preventing them from carrying out their duties. The grievances were investigated by the Council's advisor and the grievances upheld. The councillors appealed the outcome of the grievance.

Cllr Harvey believed that the matter was purely a Code of Conduct matter and self-referred to the Monitoring Officer. In May 2016, the Town Council put in place measures that restricted Cllr Harvey's access to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, removed her from committees and outside bodies, prevented her from acting as a substitute for another councillor and informed other bodies of its decision.

On 11th May 2017 the Council resolved to maintain and extend the prohibitions. Shortly after that the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the investigation of Cllr Harvey's self-referral had concluded there was no breach of the Code.

What were the issues at Judicial Review?

Cllr Harvey challenged the 11th May 2017 decision on the grounds that the decision was ultra vires as it should have been dealt with as a Code of Conduct complaint by the Principal Authority and not an internal grievance.

She also claimed the decision was substantively unfair as it breached her Article 10 rights to freedom of expression or substantively unfair at common law.

She further claimed procedural unfairness through the absence of investigation, detail of complaints about her, failure to disclose the full evidence to the Council and its failure to allow Cllr Harvey to defend herself.

The Council's view was that it was acting to protect its staff and that it had the powers to do so.

The Decision

The Court agreed that the correct process for dealing with councillor behaviour is through the Principal Authority and the Code of Conduct under the Localism Act 2011. This follows the reasoning in previous cases and to a certain extent could have been expected as an outcome.

The Court while not having to consider the second and third issues found some of Cllr Harvey's argument persuasive. The discussion in the judgement providing useful guidance.

Implications of the Judicial Review

Where a complaint relates to the conduct of a councillor in Wales and falls into the provisions of the Council's Code of Conduct, the Council can and should attempt to resolve it informally. If this informal approach fails then it may be passed to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) as a local council has no powers to deal with the matter. Where the PSOW investigates a complaint and decides that the complaint should be referred to either a local standards committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, where breaches of the Code are found, they may decide to impose a sanction such as censure or suspension on the councillor.

Any complaint about a councillor's conduct should be regarded as a Code of Conduct complaint even if the complainant is an employee and it is raised in a grievance.

A complaint may fall outside the Code of Conduct in which case the Council must carry out or arrange for a proper investigation. There may also be overlapping issues that the Council as an employer should address in addition to any Code of Conduct being considered by the PSOW. The procedure followed must identify the issues in full, separating the issues as necessary. It must also ensure that the subject of the allegations is provided with details of the allegations and evidence so that they can provide a response.

Any subsequent measures taken as the employer must be proportionate and limited to the minimum required to stop the issue recurring. The measures should be kept under regular review and their effectiveness evaluated.

Further Commentary

In the wider context of regulating employment relations between a council and its staff the Ledbury decision does not obviate a council's duty of care towards its employees. Nor does it invalidate the principle of employers' vicarious liability established in the Bude Stratton case. This principle is clear that a council as a corporate body may be legally liable for the actions of individual members.

It is still possible for a Council to protect its employees if done correctly and that Councils have both preventative and reactive protective measures that they can apply. These are:

Preventative

Dignity at work policy

Member Officer protocol (perhaps with limitations on officer contact time)

Good induction of new members and ongoing training for existing members

Good policies to support effective governance

Reactive

Must be temporary (for example pending the decision of the PSOW)

Regularly reviewed

Relevant and proportionate

Not punitive

Still enables a councillor to carry out their role

Make a corporate Code of Conduct complaint – supported by/supporting the employee

Support for Councils and Clerks

There are several available sources of support including:

Mediation

In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider engaging an external mediator to assist in the handling of complaints relating to bullying and harassment. There are a range of sources of this form of service and One Voice Wales does engage a qualified consultant who can assist in such cases.

Training of Members

One Voice Wales offers six training courses that are relevant in this context and they are:

Code of Conduct

Council as an Employer

Equality and Diversity

Effective Staff Management

Mediation Skills

The Councillor

Support available for individuals

SLCC members can access a wide range of training and personal development opportunities which can support them. By developing their professional skills and knowledge they can equip themselves to better manage some of the demands of their role. Available opportunities include ILCA, CiLCA, the Community Governance degree, and continuing professional development courses.

SLCC members also have access to a free counselling service to provide individual support when they are experiencing distress in their personal and professional lives. Details of this can be obtained by logging into the SLCC website.

In addition to this SLCC members who are also members of the Association of Local Council Clerks are entitled to individual employment advice and support from the trade union. Details of this can be found at www.alccunion.co.uk. Clerks may also be members of other trade unions who can offer individual employment advice and support.

Making a complaint and evidencing it

One Voice Wales and SI.CC are aware that bullying and harassment allegations have primarily originated from Clerks in several Councils in Wales and in all cases, it has related to the approach of individual councillors rather than the Council. We are also aware that Clerks who have submitted complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales have often been dissatisfied with the result that the case has not been investigated. This has occasionally resulted in councillors often wrongly assuming that they have been exonerated. In those cases where Clerks have not been able to resolve such issues within the Council itself, the following checklist has been put together to assist them in formulating any complaint they may wish to submit to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Making a Complaint of Bullying and/or Harassment

Checklist

Factual Evidence

- Can you document the dates, times and location?
- Do you have any witnesses who will support you?
- Are the witnesses prepared to write and sign a witness statement to accompany your complaint?
- Are the witnesses prepared to be interviewed if an investigation is undertaken by the PSOW or by the Council in the case of a grievance?

Read and Understand the Code of Conduct

- Identify which parts of the Code have been breached and how
- Explain how you consider the member has breached the Code

Collection of Written Evidence

- E-Mails
- Letters
- Memos
- Comments on social media
- Other

What support has been provided to you

- Staff
- Chairman/Mayor
- Other Councillors
 - SLCC
- A.I.C.C/ trade union

What is the impact on you personally

- Feeling undermined
- Illness (Describe)
- Absence from Work

Conclusion

The purpose of this guide is to help Councils and their employees develop a greater awareness and understanding of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, the impact it can have on individuals and the Council as a whole and above all, what steps can be taken to address such issues when they occur.

Useful Links & Materials

OVW website - www.onevoicewales.org.uk

SLCC website - <https://www.slcc.co.uk>

PSOW website - <https://www.ombudsman.wales>

ALCC website - <https://www.alccunion.co.uk>