

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF
PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY USING MICROSOFT TEAMS ON
WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY 2022 AT 6.30PM**

In attendance:

Councillor: Giles Davies (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Elaine Chilcott JP, Matt Ford, Lizzie Hunt, Gaynor James, Nicholas Jones, John Killick, Jonathon Martin, Rose Matthews, Richard Overton, Norma Parrish and Ben Rapier

Officers: Richard Gwinnell (Acting Clerk), Jane Wright (Assistant Clerk) and Lisa McMail (Accountant)

Also:

Katie Jenkins, Electoral Participation Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council

Min No	Subject and Decision	Action
339.	<p><u>Questions from the Public</u></p> <p>No questions had been received from the public.</p>	
340.	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Byrne, Lynda Clarkson, Janet Jones, Nick Simons, Jackie Taylor and Barry Taylor JP.</p>	
341.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Councillors Giles Davies, Gaynor James, Nicholas Jones, John Killick, Richard Overton and Norma Parrish declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council.</p> <p>Councillor John Killick also declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the request for a representative on the Mynydd Maen Liaison Group, as he had already been invited to serve on that group as a member of TCBC.</p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>

Electoral Participation

Katie Jenkins (KJ) gave a brief presentation on her work as Electoral Participation Officer (EPO). This primarily involved helping young people to register to vote and encouraging them to vote (since the change in the law to enable 16 and 17 year olds to vote in Welsh elections). She was visiting schools, colleges, youth clubs etc to speak to young people and help them register to vote, as well as promoting registration via social media.

In answer to questions from members, KJ explained (in summary) that:

- her post was funded only for a year, but she hoped to continue longer term, involving schools and teachers in the work of promoting voting among young people
- she was at the Torfaen Learning Zone this week
- TCBC had a number of resources (e.g. polling booths) and had helped with school elections in the past; it was hoped this work would continue after the May elections and after the Covid restrictions ended
- children and young people were often engaged in politics and voting if their parents were
- the biggest challenge was to engage those who were disengaged, those whose parents were not interested and those who were home schooled or did not attend school
- attitudes of young people varied; some could not wait to vote for the first time, while others knew nothing about it or were not interested
- she would make further enquiries at TCBC about the possibility of involving local councillors in going to speak to young people about voting and the role of a local councillor
- there were barriers to young people registering to vote and voting, including the fact that letters were addressed to households or parents, not young people themselves; letters addressed to young people rather than parents were being developed
- not every council had an Electoral Participation Officer, but many were in the process towards this
- national resources were available from the Electoral Commission and others but they were not attractive or appealing to young people necessarily
- the “backdrop” behind her on screen was developed by TCBC in the style of “Banksy” street graffiti, to help attract young people and engage with them

- TCBC had been asked by Welsh Government and others if they could use the same backdrop
- she would be running “pop up stalls” in various places including vaccination centres, to reach more people
- she had met the Member of the Youth Parliament for Torfaen today and was working with others to help engage better with young people.

Members congratulated Katie on her appointment, thanked her for the work she was doing and wished her well with the project to get more young people registered to vote and voting in elections.

RESOLVED: that the information relayed by Katie Jenkins, Electoral Participation Officer at Torfaen be noted.

343. **Council Meeting – 15 December 2021 – Minutes**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

344. **Policy & Finance Committee – 5 January 2022 – Minutes**

RESOLVED: (1) that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 5 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (2) that the recommendations of the committee be adopted, except for the recommendation that Anne Evans (Torfaen Voluntary Alliance) be invited to the next Policy and Finance Committee meeting and (3) that Anne Evans be invited to a future Council meeting instead.

JW

345. **Events Committee – 19 January 2022 – Minutes**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Events Committee held on 19 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair and that the recommendations of the committee be adopted.

A member asked whether Pontypool Active Living Centre was available in the third week of May for the Schools Eisteddfod. The Acting Clerk undertook to let members know as soon as possible.

RG

346. **Budget and precept 2022/2023**

The Acting Clerk reminded members of their previous consideration of the budget at the meetings held on 30

November, 15 December and 5 January. This was the final stage of budget consideration. He also thanked LM (the Accountant) for all her work in getting the budget done.

RESOLVED: that the Council approve a budget and precept of £715,987 for 2022/23 (this equates to a 2.8% or £1.48 per annum increase in Council Tax at Band D, with a Band D equivalent charge of £54.33 per household) and Torfaen County Borough Council be informed to this effect.

RG

347. **Accessible Roundabout and Extension of Playground at Pontypool Park**

The Acting Clerk explained progress with the accessible roundabout and TCBC's recent proposal to extend the playground in Pontypool Park. Pontypool Community Council's (PCC's) proposed roundabout was now part of a much bigger scheme and PCC needed TCBC to agree to and facilitate the installation of this roundabout, along with any other new equipment they were installing. The play area was owned and managed by TCBC, so PCC could not go ahead unilaterally. The funds granted to PCC were £16,415 for the purchase and installation, with £5k for maintenance for the next few years. The funds were granted on the basis that they would be spent by the end of March. TCBC had made clear that the costs may be greater than £16,415 as the existing ground surfacing would need to be removed and disposed of safely. The company which had quoted for the roundabout (in June 2021) had also recently stated that the price had increased slightly since then. He recommended that the Council agree to pay more if needed (up to £2,000 more approximately if needed) to ensure the roundabout was installed and take those additional funds from the playground equipment reserve. It may also be necessary to obtain other quotes, although the roundabout was bespoke and Council had already chosen specifically what it wanted. Given that the park belonged to TCBC, PCC may need to hand the project and funds over to TCBC and commit the spend before the end of March, to ensure success, but members should expect a delay of some months.

Members discussed the issue, with the following main points arising:

- members supported the expansion of the play area and Pontypool RFC had also supported it
- PCC should pay more if needed to get the roundabout installed

- a member had attended another meeting recently where it had been suggested the works may not be completed until November
- it was understood there was a national shortage of playground equipment and play equipment was normally installed in the autumn, to prevent playgrounds being closed in the peak summer season
- PCC had already agreed to pay £16,415 for the roundabout and installation (before it received the grant), from the play equipment reserve
- the grant meant PCC would save £16,415, so the spending of £2,000 or so from PCC reserves was well within existing expectations and was already agreed
- the grant for maintenance of £5k was for maintenance of the PCC roundabout only and not for the whole playground
- was it possible to locate the roundabout elsewhere in Pontypool Park?
- no; this would need the consent of Pontypool Estates and was unlikely to happen; it would also take longer and may require other permissions e.g. planning
- PCC could attempt to pay for the roundabout itself as soon as possible, with installation to follow at a later date, to fit into TCBC's wider playground works
- PCC should hand the funds over to TCBC, for TCBC to manage the purchase and installation as part of their bigger scheme at the playground
- the PCC reserve was intended to pay for maintenance of PCC play equipment.

On a motion from Councillor JK, it was:

RESOLVED: that relevant TCBC officers be asked to liaise with each other and secure the purchase and installation of PCC's agreed roundabout; that PCC pay the funds granted (£16,425) to TCBC for this purpose if needed; that PCC pay additional sums if needed (in the region of £2,000) from the play equipment reserve; that the £5,000 for future maintenance of the new roundabout be kept in a reserve for that purpose; and that TCBC be informed of the funds available for future maintenance of the PCC roundabout.

RG
CC
LM

348. **Ethics and Standards Committee: Community Councillor representative**

The Acting Clerk informed members that the term of office of Councillor Steve Brooks (on the Ethics and Standards Committee) had been extended, as a result of the change in

term of office of councillors from four years to five years. PCC would be asked after the May 2022 elections to consider who it wished to appoint after May. That would normally be considered at a meeting of the Local Councils Partnership Committee.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

349. **Change of signatories for Gateway Credit Union**

The Accountant recommended that the signatories on the Gateway account be changed, as the current list was out of date and access to the account and statements needed to be speedier.

RESOLVED: that the signatories on the Gateway Credit Union account be changed; from Ruth Tucker, Barry Taylor and Giles Davies; to Giles Davies, Gaynor James and Lisa McMail.

LM

350. **Planning Applications**

Members received and considered details of planning applications submitted to TCBC, on which the Community Council was being consulted.

RESOLVED: that the observations (or absence of observations, as the case may be) outlined in the appendix attached to these minutes be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.

CP

351. **Planning applications: Plenary Powers**

Members received the list of observations made on planning applications between meetings, under plenary powers.

RESOLVED: that the observations outlined be approved.

352. **Mynydd Maen Wind Farm Community Liaison Group**

Councillor JK stated that he was already a member of this group (representing TCBC) so it may be better if someone was chosen to represent PCC.

Members suggested that Councillor Lyn Clarkson may be interested in being on the liaison group (although she was absent from this meeting).

Councillor JK suggested that, if Councillor LC did not wish to be PCC's representative, someone else should be asked (by email) to volunteer. If no one volunteered, he would be happy to represent PCC as well as TCBC on the group.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Lyn Clarkson be asked to represent PCC on the liaison group; that other members be asked to volunteer to do so, if Councillor LC did not wish to do so; and that Councillor JK represent PCC on the liaison group, if no one else volunteered to do so.

JW

NB the Chair announced at this stage that the Chief Executive of TCBC would be attending the Council meeting on 23 February 2022. If any members wished to raise any issues with the Chief Executive, they should let the Acting Clerk know by 16 February, so that advance notice of those issues for discussion could be given.

353.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - 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.

Signed by Chair: