

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2025**

In attendance:

Councillor: Jon James# (in the Chair)

and Councillor(s): John Cox*, Gaynor James#, Lisa Jones*,
Richard Overton#, Allan Peploe#

Officers: Kerrie Smith, Deputy Clerk# (Minute Taker),
Cathryn Drew# (Projects 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
184.	<u>Recording of Meeting</u> Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
185.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Nick Byrne, Anne Gunter and Nick Simons.	
186.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) Gaynor James and Jon James 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 members of Pontypool Community Council. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the declarations be noted.	KS
187.	<u>Biodiversity Sub-Committee</u> Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting held on 23 July 2025.	

	<u>'Live' Christmas Trees</u> The Chair asked if there is a maintenance plan in place to replace the trees that had died. The Project Officer advised that the tree maintenance inspection was undertaken in July 2025 which identified that 3 of the trees had died. They have received 2 new requests for additional trees this year in the Brynwern and Snatchwood Wards and that this will be discussed at the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting on 24 September 2025 following which approval will be sought from Full Council to replace the dead trees and to purchase the new trees. The Chair requested an addition tree for Pantygasseg. <u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that: (i) the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting held on 23 July 2025 be confirmed as a true record; (ii) additional trees are purchased for Brynwern, Snatchwood and Pantygasseg; (iii) Members approved the £250.00 contribution from PCC (from the Biodiversity budget) towards the Torfaen wide Eco Championships (iv) £600.00 is committed to the annual inspection (February 2026) of the current swift bird boxes; (v) the remaining balance of £244.00 from the LPfN project budget is earmarked for broadband provision on the current bird boxes (vi) £261.00 is committed for the IPCamlive web broadcast subscription.	KS CD CD/MW/ CC CD/MW/ CC CD/MW/ CC CD/MW/ CC
188.	<u>Planning Applications</u> Members received and considered the list of planning applications on which it was being consulted by Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC). <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the comments/observations stated be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.	CP

189.	<u>Planning Determinations</u> Members received and noted Torfaen County Borough Council planning determinations including reasons for approvals or refusals. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the planning determinations be noted.	
190.	<u>Planning Applications: Plenary Powers</u> Members noted observations on planning applications which had already been submitted between meetings. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the plenary powers applications be noted.	
191.	<u>Varteg Community Wood Lease</u> The Committee received a letter from Pontypool Park Estate advising that the annual rent for the lease of the Varteg Community Wood will increase to £162.00. A survey of the woods was undertaken in September 2023. A plan was then put in place but at the time it was felt that specific expertise of the trees was required. Gwent Wildlife Trust's report came in recent and a summary and recommendations will be discussed at the Biodiversity Sub-Committee. The Chair informed the meeting that they would like to visit the site. The Projects Officer will raise this at the Biodiversity Sub Committee and make arrangements for Planning and Environment Committee Members to visit the site as some of the areas are inaccessible at the moment. The Project Officer will provide maps and further information at the next meeting. <u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that; (i) the lease for the Varteg Community Wood be renewed at a cost of £162.00; (ii) a site visit is organised for P&E Committee members;	CD/MW/ CC CD

	(iii) maps and further information be provided at the next meeting.	CD
192.	<u>VJ80 Benches</u> The Committee were informed that 16 benches have been ordered and the installation contract is in place. 80% of the due diligence checks have been signed off and 13 have been completely signed off. Relevant consultation has taken place with relevant parties. Installation date is to be confirmed and the intention is to have an unveiling of the benches on Thursday 6 November 2025. Only 7 wards have replied advising they would like an unveiling ceremony and the Project Officer is currently liaising with TCBC on the licence agreements. The Chair advised that Pantygasseg would like an unveiling ceremony. Match funding discussions are being held with TCBC as well as engaging with Torfaen's Communications Team to ensure there is social media around the unveiling of the benches. <u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that: (i) the information is noted; (ii) Members advise if they wish to have an unveiling ceremony in their Wards.	
193.	<u>Notice Boards, Bins and Benches</u> Committee received an update on the noticeboards, bins and benches. <u>Noticeboards</u> There are 2 noticeboards outstanding in Snatchwood and Pentwyn. The consent to advertise is now complete with installation be undertaken within the next few weeks. The noticeboard in Trevethin has been vandalised and it will cost £70 for parts and £110 to fix it.	

	Noticeboards budget was set at £2,000 and due to the increase in costs for noticeboards and installation costs the budget is overspent. The Chair informed the meeting that this will need to be discussed at the Budget Priorities Day. <u>Bins</u> The request for a bin by St Mary's Church, New Inn have been removed. Replacement bins in Snatchwood and Pentwyn have both been approved, waiting for installation dates from TCBC. A new request has been received for a bin on Newport Road, New Inn opposite Lancaster Road. Cllr RO advised there are already two bins in this location but consideration should be given to a bin being located at by the housing estate leading to the Wetlands. The Chair requested a new bin for Pantygasseg and they will contact the Projects Officer with the exact location. The Project Officer informed the meeting that there is £668.00 remaining in the budget. <u>Benches</u> The replacement bench in Sebastopol has been installed in The Ellipse which was funded from last financial year. The Project Officer informed the meeting that the bench audit will be completed shortly and a report will be brought to the meeting in October. The Chair requested a bench in George Street opposite the school instead of a memorial bench. This will be included within the bench audit. <u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that (i) the information be noted (ii) discussion around additional budget take place at the Budget Priorities Day;	LM CD CD CD
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	(iii) repairs to the noticeboard in Trevethin are approved at a total cost of £180.00. (iv) a replacement bin be purchased and installed by the housing estate leading to the Wetlands; (v) a new bin request be considered for Pantygasseg; (vi) the report on the bench audit will be provided at the meeting in October.	
194.	<u>Abertillery Wind Farm Proposal</u> The Committee received a letter from Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales advising that the determination period for the application has been suspended for a period of 3 additional weeks, the determination period will resume on 22 September 2025. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the information be noted.	
195.	<u>Committee Budget</u> Members received a copy of the budget within its remit including reserves. No observations were made. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the information be noted.	
196.	<u>Biodiversity and Sustainability</u> How has this meeting contributed to the Council's duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems? <u>RESOLVED:</u> that the meeting was a multi-location meeting, the agenda had been sent electronically, discussions held on the Varteg Community Wood, VJ80 benches consultation and noticeboards, bins and benches.	

*This is a recommendation to Council, the final decision would be made by Council.

Signed by Chair