

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH 2025**

In attendance:

Councillor: Jon James# (in the Chair)

and Councillor(s): Lynn Clarkson*, Caroline Price*, Gaynor James*, John Cox*, Richard Overton#, Anne Gunter#, Lisa Jones#

Officers: Cathryn Drew# (Projects Officer)
Miriam Watts* (Projects & Events Manager, Minute Taker)

* *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
538.	<u>Recording of Meeting</u> Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
539.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Nick Byrne	CP
540.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) Jon James, Lynn Clarkson, Caroline Price, Gaynor 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
541.	<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).	

	The following observations/comments were made: Item 1 – LC confirmed that this was just a slight variation. Item 3 – JJ gave context on the Pontymoile Gates project and the work taken to get to this stage of submitting a planning application. This included a survey paid for by the PCC Regeneration Fund and further consultancy work paid for by TCBC, all to ensure a thorough proposal is presented to Cadw. RO ask for clarification regarding colour of the gates. JJ confirmed that TCBC had agreed that black and gold would be the preferred choice. GJ thanked the Chair for his work to move this forward. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the comments/observations stated be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.	CP
542.	<u>Planning Determinations</u> Members received and noted Torfaen County Borough Council planning determinations including reasons for approvals or refusals. Item 1 / Item 2 – JC noted that two different plan numbers (23/P/0228 and 25/P/0229), had the same written content. Item 5 – JC noted that one of the reasons for refusal stated the reliance on a private motor car and failure to encourage sustainable modes of transport, thus querying whether the issue of not being on a bus route would result in many proposal being refused. LC stated that the issue regarding transport is part of TCBC's Sustainable Places Plan. This application in particular had a number of factors adding to its complexity and the original application did not include enough information to satisfy all the criteria. JC commented that the details given in the refusal could be more accurate. LC advised that JC should bring this up with planning direct. Item 9 – AG commented that a replacement tree, specifically a purple cherry tree, will be planted.	

	<u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the planning determinations be noted.	CP
543.	<u>Planning Applications: Plenary Powers</u> Members noted observations on planning applications which had already been submitted between meetings. No observations were made. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the plenary powers applications be noted.	CP
544.	<u>Biodiversity Sub-Committee – 26 February 2025</u> Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting which was held on 26th February 2025. The Projects Officer gave a brief overview of the meeting and clarified any finance related recommendations within the minutes that required the committees comment and approval as follows: P10, Item 5 Gwent Wildlife Trust – that £300 licence agreement be paid from the Biodiversity Budget. Members supported this recommendation. P10, Item 6 Community Green Grant – that £500 be awarded to Stump up for Trees application and £250 be awarded to Friends of Fishponds Park. Members commented that the Biodiversity sub-committee are doing a great job and supported this recommendation. P11, Item 7 Live Trees – the Project Officer advised that the Biodiversity Committee discussed taking requests from Councillors for more live trees and communication regarding this would be made in due course. P13, Item 9 Swift Bird Box Pilot Project – that £500 payment be made to Project Nestbox, as originally proposed in the project plan and budgeted for out of the Local Places for Nature funding. Members supported this recommendation and noted that funds would come from the Swift Box earmarked reserve and not the Biodiversity Budget.	

	P14, Item 10 Sweet Chestnut Tree Action Plan – that the mighty Oaks quote of £2,040 be approved should the work not be suitable to be undertaken by TCBC. The Project Officer clarified that this would be paid from the current year’s Biodiversity Budget as opposed to being split over 2 year’s as previously planned. The quote was very detailed and covered 10 trees in total, not just one. On this understanding members felt that though expensive it was appropriate and that it was important the work be conducted properly to ensure the survival of the ancient trees. Members supported the recommendation The minutes were received. <u>*RECOMMENDED:</u> i. that the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee held on 26 February 2025 be confirmed as a true record and recommendations of the Sub-Committee be approved. CD ii. that a £300 licence agreement be paid from the Biodiversity Budget for the Gwent Wildlife Trust project. CC/CD iii. that the Community Green Grants of £500 to Stump up for Trees and £250 to Friends of Fishponds Park be awarded from the Biodiversity Budget CC/CD iv. that £500 payment be made to Project Nestbox from the Local Places for Nature funding. CC/CD	
545.	<u>Noticeboards, Bins and Benches</u> The Projects Officer gave a verbal update on progress as follows: Actions from the previous meeting have been progressed however the Project Officer is now awaiting updates on several items from TCBC Property Services and Streetscene. The new noticeboard in Trevethin is due to be installed w/c 17th March. The slabs around the noticeboard at Berry’s Corner, New Inn are due to be installed w/c 17th March.	

	A new request had been received from Cllr Allan Peploe for a replacement bin in Sebastopol. Whilst a response was still awaited from Streetscene, it was suggested that the committee make a decision so that, subject to Streetscene approval, the request can go ahead this financial year. Members approved this request subject to Streetscene's approval. RO shared photographs of a potential location for the replacement bin in New Inn as part of an ongoing request. These details will be sent to the Projects Officer so that the area can be discussed with Streetscene. JJ will send details to the Project Officer regarding a bench that requires maintenance so that it can be logged as part of the bench audit. *RECOMMENDED: i. that a request for a new bin in Sebastopol be approved subject to sign off from Streetscene. ii. That RO send location details to the Project Officer iii. That JJ send bench maintenance details to the Project Officer	CD CD/RO CD/JJ
546.	<u>Park Equipment</u> Members received a report on two Playground equipment installations that Pontypool Community Council had funded this year, one in Pantygasseg and the other in Pontnewynydd. GJ stated that they had been well received and well done to the team for supporting this work. The report was noted. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the report be noted.	MW
547.	<u>Hanging Baskets</u> Members received a quote of £4250+VAT to supply and install hanging baskets around Pontypool Town Centre for spring/summer 2025, with coordination of install being arranged by Pontypool Indoor Market. The Projects and Events Manager clarified that the quote was more expensive than previous years, and thus would	

	result in an overspend of £250 in the Budget Line dedicated to this (4106 Town Improvements) for the 25/26 financial year. Following discussion, it was suggested that an unspent balance of £250 from budget line 4020 Benches in 24/25 be allocated to an earmarked reserve for Hanging baskets for 25/26. *RECOMMENDED: i. that the quote of £4250 for hanging baskets be approved ii. that an unspent balance of £250 from budget line 4020 Benches be put in an earmarked reserve for Hanging Baskets 25/26	MW/CC CC/LMc
548.	<u>Growth and Spatial Options Workshop</u> Members received details of an invitation to the Growth and Spatial Options Workshop on 17th March. The deadline to respond had passed, the information was noted. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the information be noted	KS
549.	<u>Abertillery Wind Farm</u> Members received updated information from Planning & Environment Decisions (Wales) regarding the project. LC stated that the inspector had asked for further consultation and that the project was ongoing. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the information be noted.	KS
550.	<u>Committee Budget</u> Councillors received a copy of the budget (and reserves) within its remit and the spend to date. Members were asked to approve the spend of £625 from the Swift Box Earmarked Reserve. The costs are for the additional callers for the Swift project at £125, and £500 to Project Nestbox as detailed in minute 544 above.	

	*RECOMMENDED: that members approve the payment of £625 from the Swift Box Earmarked Reserve for the Swift Project.	CC/CD
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*This is a recommendation to Council, the final decision would be made by Council.

Signed by Chair