

MINUTES OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 4th NOVEMBER 2020

In attendance:

Councillor: Mrs N. P. Parrish (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: Miss L Clarkson, Mrs G James, Mrs E Hunt, J Killick, Mrs R Matthews and R.Overton

Also in attendance: Councillors Mrs E Chilcott JP

Officers: Mrs R. V. Tucker, Mrs A. Ambrosen, Mrs C. Challenger, Mrs L. McMail and Mrs R. Cronin.

29. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs K Arthur and Councillor B Rapier.

RECOMMENDED: that the apologies be noted.

JW

30. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Mrs G. E. James, R. Overton and Mrs N. P. Parrish declared an interest on any item on the agenda relating to Torfaen County Borough Council.

RECOMMENDED: that the declarations of interest as outlined above be recorded.

JW

31. **Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

The Committee received and considered the schedule of receipts and payments for September 2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the schedule of receipts and payments for September be approved

CC

32. **Use of Council Credit Card**

The Council approved all credit card payments made in August/September.

RECOMMENDED: that the credit card payments made be approved.

CC

33. **Financial Budget Comparison (Monitoring Report)**

The Council received the Financial Budget Comparison report to the end of August 2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the Financial Budget Comparison to the end of August be approved.

LM

34. **Local Voluntary Funding**

Councillor Mrs G. James

Pontypool Veterans Association Running Costs - £100.00
Local Government Act 1972 S137.

Councillor Mrs G. James

Tranch F. C. - to purchase a lawn mower - £300.00
Local Government Act (miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976,
s .19

Councillor Mrs R. Matthews

Tranch F.C - to purchase a lawn mower - £200.00
Local Government Act (miscellaneous provisions) act 1976,
s.19

Councillor Mrs J. Taylor

Padre Pio Catholic School Christmas Party - £400.00
Local Government Act 1972, S .145

The Chair was concerned that there were no LVF forms in the pack.

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee approves the applications for Local Voluntary Funding as outlined above and staff ensure that all relevant paper work is enclosed for future meetings.

CC/CP

35. **IT Improvements**

The Committee was asked to consider quotes for improvements to the IT infrastructure at the Community Council.

Members discussed purchasing the Meeting Owl which is a 360-degree camera with a microphone and speaker at a cost of £800.

The Vice Chair stated that if the Council purchased the Meeting Owl people who do not have access to IT equipment at home could come into the Chamber and use it plus up to 15 people can use it via 1 computer and it alleviates the need for additional laptop purchases so it would cover every base.

The Chair agreed stating that laptops would cost £710 for one so it was a cheaper option.

Cllr Mrs LC asked the Clerk for the new capacity of people who could safely meet in the Chamber. The Clerk responded stating that up to nine people could now meet safely in the Council Chamber.

The Chair gave Cllr Mrs EC permission to speak and she stated that she agreed that the purchase would be more cost effective than purchasing laptops and supported the purchasing of the meeting owl.

Cllr Mrs LC stated that purchasing the meeting owl could be useful beyond Covid 19as the Council Chamber could be hired out and the meeting owl could be available for people to use. The Youth Council could also use it to speak to members of the Twinned Towns at their meetings.

A vote took place and it was unanimously agreed to purchase the meeting owl at a cost of £800.

The Finance and Events Manager enquired whether an additional laptop should be purchased as a spare in the case of a breakdown

A discussion took place on this and Members agreed that Orbits be asked the cost of a laptop, the response would be considered at a future Policy and Finance meeting.

CC

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that the Meeting Owl be purchased at a cost of £800.

CC

- (ii) that the Finance and Events Manager contact Orbits to enquire if they would provide a spare laptop if a repair was needed on a member of staff's laptop.
- (iii) Orbits be asked the cost of an additional laptop

CC

36. **Grants**

Members received a report on the review of the Grants Policy. The Clerk explained that this was a summary. The Clerk stated that most of the grants that are distributed by the Council throughout the year are presented at Presentation Evenings but this had not been possible this year.

The Clerk suggested that a small working party be set up to discuss grants and a way forward to combine them all.

The Chair agreed and stated that the information from the working party would need to come back to Committee.

It was agreed that the following Members serve on the working party - Chair and Vice-Chair of Policy and Finance, Leader of Council and Vice Chair of Planning and Environment.

And that a meeting would take place before February's Policy and Finance committee in order for the information to be provided at the February meeting

RECOMMENDED:

(i) It was agreed that a small working party be set up consisting of the following members - Chair of Policy and Finance, Vice Chair of Policy and Finance, Leader of Council and Vice Chair of Planning and Environment

CC/
AA/
CP

(ii) the information from the working party meeting to be provided at the February Policy and Finance meeting if possible.

AA

37. **Grounds Maintenance**

The Committee considered Grounds Maintenance applications from Garndiffaith RFC and Garndiffaith Bowls Club. It was agreed that both sports groups receive grants of £350.

The Committee received the criteria in relation to the Grounds Maintenance grants.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that Grounds Maintenance Grants of £350 each be awarded to Garndiffaith RFC and Garndiffaith Bowls Club
- (ii) that the report on Grounds Maintenance be noted and be taken forward to consider at the grants working party

AA/CC

AA

38. **Fixed Asset Policy**

The Committee received a report regarding the Fixed Asset Policy as well as a list of the assets the Council owns which was deferred from the October Policy and Finance Meeting. The policy is due to be reviewed in June 2023.

The Chair stated that the report was very thorough and thanked the Finance Manager and Accountant for producing it.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that the Council note and approve the Fixed Assets documents, the Register will be updated annually, and the Policy reviewed in June 2023
- (ii) that the Finance Manager and Accountant be thanked for producing a thorough report.

LM/CC

39. **Available Money for 2020/2021**

The Committee received a report from the Finance and Events Manager as agreed at the last meeting regarding the available money that had not been spent this financial year and that could be spent elsewhere subject to Council approval.

The Chair was concerned that items had been brought to the meeting that were not on the agenda and stressed that a paper trail was always needed for audit purposes. The item could be brought to the Budget meeting in December and at that meeting the Council could see the amount that would be available

The Clerk stated that this could all be considered at the Budget meeting on the 8th December and that would then negate the need for an extraordinary meeting.

The Finance and Events Manager stated that the Budget meeting incorporates a 6-month review of the budget from this year.

The Chair stated that the Finance and Event Manager had provided a report and according to that report a figure of around £30,000 was remaining. Consideration could be given to any other unallocated meeting at the budget meeting.

The Chair asked if members agreed to having a working party but recommended that Senior staff be in attendance to go through the costings to make sure that the amounts presented at that meeting are correct.

The Chair of Policy and Finance re-iterated that the Council needs to be fair to all areas of Pontypool.

The Vice Chair of Planning stated that money was available, and the Council could direct Organisations to apply for that money via TVA.

The Clerk stated that there was not enough time to do that exercise prior to setting the budget but the Council could ensure that any money that is surplus could go into special reserves.

The Chair agreed that TVA was doing a very good job, but this would be a separate pot of money

It was suggested that a working group be set up, which would blend in with the budget process

The Chair asked which members wanted to serve on the working group. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair of Policy and Finance, Leader of Council, Chair of Events, Vice Chair of Planning and Councillors Mrs E Hunt and R Overton become the members of the working group.

The Chair stated that all the information from the working group would need to be presented to the next Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED: that a working group be set up to discuss the option of spending available funds from the 2020/21 budget and that the following members serve on the working party group:

The Chair of Policy and Finance the Vice Chair of Policy and Finance, the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Events, the Vice Chair of Planning and Councillors Mrs E Hunt and R Overton

RT
LM/
CC

40. **Energy Review**

The Finance and Events Manager explained to the Committee that unfortunately no information on the energy review had been received. The Chair deferred the item to the next Policy and Finance Committee.

RECOMMENDED: that this item be deferred to the next Policy and Finance meeting.

CC

Chair of Policy & Finance