

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE POLICY AND  
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD  
ON WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

**In attendance:**

Councillor: Lizzie Hunt# (in the Chair)

and Councillors: Matt Ford# Gaynor James\*, Jon Horlor\* John Killick#,  
Jonathan Martin#, Jools Rogers\*, Bob Rogers\* and  
Caroline Price\*

Officers: Lisa McMail (Clerk)#, Mrs Cindy Challenger (Finance Manager)\* and  
Jane Wright (Assistant Clerk)#

\* 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
243.	<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>  No apologies.	
244.	<b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b>  Councillors Gaynor James, Jon Horlor 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
245.	<b><u>Schedule of Receipts and payments</u></b>  The Committee were asked to approve the Schedule of receipts and payments for September 2022.  The Chair referred to page 1 of receipts stating that the Council's interest has gone up significantly on our monthly dividend.  <b><u>Recommended:</u></b> that the receipts and payments for September 2022, as shown in the report, be approved noting the information outlined by the Chair.	CC
246.	<b><u>Use of Credit Card</u></b>  The committee was asked to approve the credit card payments for	

	<p>August 2022.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the payments made on the Council's credit card for August 2022, as shown in the report, be approved.</p>	
247.	<p><b><u>Financial Budget Comparison Report with Reserves</u></b></p> <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) received and considered the financial monitoring report to the end of September 2022.</li> <li>(b) to note the under/overspends for the six months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and discuss actions that may be necessary.</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk stated that she had reviewed the six-monthly figures and there were some underspends in the following areas:</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <p>There is a particular underspend in this area, however now that the Council are working on a training plan, and everyone is thinking about training she anticipates that this budget will be used by the end of the year and foreseeable future years. She has received a lot of interest from staff in relation to training which is extremely positive, and she wants to support them in relation to the areas of training they wish to undertake, as well as mandatory training. Some of the training providers would be Peninsula, One Voice Wales and SLCC who are running a good range of courses at present.</p> <p><u>Maintenance</u></p> <p>At present there is a £4000 budget for maintenance of which to date only £275.00 has been spent, the Clerk stated that there are several items coming up on the agenda which she anticipates will utilise all this budget with monies also having to be taken from reserves to cover these anticipated costs.</p> <p><u>Planning &amp; Environment</u></p> <p>The Clerk stated that the budget headings under the Planning &amp; Environment Committee need to be utilised and there are projects ongoing which will use some of these.</p> <p><u>Events</u></p> <p>In relation to Events there was very little underspend in relation to budget headings under this Committee.</p> <p>The Chair pointed out that Council reserves are still looking very healthy.</p>	

	<p><b>Recommended:</b> (i) that the financial monitoring report to the end of September 2022 be approved and the information contained in it be noted.</p> <p>(ii) that the information outlined by the Clerk in relation to the Council's under/overspends be noted and acted upon.</p>	
248.	<p><b><u>Local Voluntary Funding</u></b></p> <p>The Chair stated that an excellent spreadsheet is now in place in relation to Local Voluntary Funding which turns red if too much money is allocated to any one organisation; if a member puts in an LVF application and it gets rejected it means the allocated amount has already been spent for that organisation.</p> <p>The Committee were asked to approve the following Local Voluntary Funding applications which had been vetted by staff:</p> <p><b>Councillor G. Davies</b>  Garndiffaith Community Association - £400  Replacement Pads, Battery for Defib and funds towards Christmas Pantomime  <i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19</i></p> <p>[Please Note: Agreed in previous month  <i>Varteg Community Association - £300</i>  <i>Fairfield AFC - £200</i>  <i>Garnsychan Partnership Project - £500]</i></p> <p>Abersychan Comprehensive School - £600.00 (Project)  To help fund Christmas hampers for the families of children at need identified by school to ensure they are fed during the Christmas period. This is an annual event and covers all part of the ward  <i>Local Government Act 1972 s.137</i></p> <p><b>Councillor G. James</b>  1<sup>st</sup> Pontypool Brownies - £150  Enable them to continue by helping with rent and equipment  Pontypool Park Girling Bowling Club - £200  Help with running costs  <i>All – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19</i></p> <p><b>Councillor J. Killick</b>  Race Football Club - £400  To support junior football and help players  West Monmouth RFC - £400  To support the development of junior rugby through buying new</p>	

	<p>equipment to support their development  Pontymoile OAP Hall - £400  To pay for utility bills so the group can provide activities and a meeting place for the elderly in the area at minimal cost to them.  Gypsy and Traveller Association - £500  To engage the young people in new activities and continue the development of their garden. This involves the young people directly in addressing both their own and their community's health and well-being.  Pontymoile Community Hall - £400  Towards the increasing utility costs  <i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19</i></p> <p><b>Councillors N. Byrne, G. James, J. James, R. Matthews, C. Price, N. Simons</b>  Dean Groves Painter and Decorator - £6000 (6 x £1000 each from Councillors LVF) for ongoing project  Complete refurbishment of the roofed bench in Pontypool Park with new paintwork  <i>Local Government Act 1972 s.137</i></p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the Local Voluntary Funding applications as outlined above be approved.</p>	
249.	<p><b><u>Foodbank</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was asked to consider allocating additional monies to Abersychan Food Bank as per the request and details outlined by Councillor G. Davies.</p> <p>The Chair stated that this is a new initiative based in Abersychan school for the whole community; she stated that when the Council allocated foodbank money at the previous meeting this foodbank was not included so asked if the Committee would be happy to approve £2500 from the Council general reserves to give to this organisation in line with the other foodbanks who had received the same amount. The Committee unanimously agreed to this request.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that £2500 be allocated to Abersychan Food Bank as outlined above. *</p>	CC
250.	<p><b><u>Policy review/update</u></b></p> <p><u>Local Resolution Policy</u></p> <p>The Chair stated that the Council cannot fully adopt this policy at</p>	

	<p>present as the Council does not have an Internal Complaints process to link in with it. It was agreed that this be deferred to the January Policy &amp; Finance meeting in order that the Clerk in liaison with Peninsula can provide us with an internal complaints procedure.</p> <p><u>Social Media Policy</u> This is required to be updated every six months. One addition had been made and that was the inclusion of What's App under 1.1 It was further agreed by members that Tik Tok as well as snapchat be added. This was the importance of reviewing this policy every six months.</p> <p><u>Press Relations Policy</u> This is required to be updated yearly. The amendment that had been made was to refer to the Council's "press officer" instead of the name of the person. The Council's Press Officer Cllr B. Rogers did not have a problem with this.</p> <p><u>Recruitment and Selection Policy</u> This was highlighted because the Council did not have one in place when they appointed for the positions of the Clerk and Finance Manager so this will solve any issues going forward. The Policy is all quite self-explanatory, the Chair stated that all records are kept for one year, if people need a medical check, then they can have one, there is also an interview evaluation form to be completed at each interview and kept as a record, this is extremely useful if there is a tie then you can refer to the form. It could also be taken to Council as evidence of the interview.</p> <p><b><u>Recommended:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) that the Local Resolution Policy be placed as an agenda item on the January Policy &amp; Finance Committee</li> <li>(ii) that the remaining policies be taken to November Full Council for approval*.</li> </ul>	
251.	<p><b><u>Independent Remuneration Panel - Draft</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the draft Independent Remuneration Panel report and discuss/answer and give feedback for the consultation questions as the end of the IRP report. The Chair read out each question as attached to the agenda. The Committee formulated the following answers:</p> <p><b><u>Question 1</u></b> No opinion</p>	

	<p><b><u>Question 2</u></b> Yes – consumables to be paid for yearly.</p> <p><b><u>Question 3</u></b> The IRPW should gather evidence from all Councils not just principal councils on how the role of Councils have changed.</p> <p><b><u>Question 4</u></b> (Part a) The Council would like to access information and guidance from the IRPW as follows: Summary report with links to detailed guidance Easy to use guidance notes Frequently asked questions Website Information Events</p> <p>(Part b) When the IRPW refer the Council to detailed guidance it would be extremely helpful if they highlight the pages in relation to specific topics that link in with community councils for ease of reference.</p> <p><b><u>Question 5</u></b> (Part A) It is important that community councils who only have a small number of members are given the same opportunity as larger community councils to benefit from face-to-face meetings, therefore it would be helpful if the IRPW held a face-to-face meeting for several community councils in one venue as this would be far more beneficial to all.</p> <p>(Part B) Yes the Council would like to be involved in future engagement events.</p> <p><b><u>Recommended:</u></b> that the Clerk to send feedback on the consultation document to the IRPW as outlined above, subject to Council approval.</p>	
252.	<p><b><u>Quotes received for Emergency Lighting</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that at the Council’s recent Fire Alarm service, it had been advised that the Emergency Lighting throughout the building was not fit for purpose and required total replacing. The</p>	

	<p>Clerk stated that there is no emergency lighting on the bottom stairs down to the basement and some of the other emergency lighting is not working. To date she had only received one quote but was hoping two more quotes would be available by the end of the week. It was unanimously agreed that the Committee gives the Clerk plenary powers to obtain the best outcome to proceed with the total replacement of Emergency lighting to ensure staff safety.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the Clerk be given plenary powers to deal with the emergency lighting as outlined above.</p>	LM/ CC
253.	<p><b><u>Quotes received for Fire Risk assessment and Procedures review</u></b></p> <p>The Chair proposed to the Committee that the Clerk be given plenary powers to deal with this issue; unanimously agreed. She added that the Fire Brigade was very disappointed with the Council's current risk assessments and the policies were very out of date and urgently needed updating. She stated there is a health and Safety Budget of £1500 of which to date only £38.00 has been spent which would cover this cost. The Chair of Council informed members that he had met with the Clerk suggesting that the Council go on to the Ramis system that Torfaen schools use, this system reminds you of when your emergency lighting, alarm testing, legionnaires testing, fire risk assessments etc are all due, sending out reminders so you do not go out of compliance. The Clerk informed the meeting that she had contacted them but had not heard anything back yet. The Chair stated that he would provide her with the link of the person he deals with.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the Clerk be given plenary powers as outlined above to deal with this matter.</p>	LM/ CC
254.	<p><b><u>Flood Damage to basement</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk informed the meeting that Torfaen had been and cleared the basement of all the articles and boxes in the basement and had asked for a purchase order before they came to clear it. In addition, they had been changing the dehumidifiers regularly in the basement (twice a day). The Finance Manager clarified that most of the property belonged to Pontypool Community Council. The Clerk had left a message of thanks with Sian Watkins they had worked hard in clearing the basement.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair stated that he was concerned that the reason the basement was in the condition it was, was down to the building itself, although he understood that the Council are responsible for the</p>	

	<p>inside of the building he stated that Torfaen are actually responsible for the outside of the building and if moisture had been coming in from outside and the building had not been properly tanked then the result of the damage in the basement was due to the problems from the exterior of the building. It was agreed to wait until the invoice came in from Torfaen and then the Council could refer to the points made.</p> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the information in relation to the flood damage to the basement be noted and further action be taken if necessary.</p>	
255.	<p><b><u>Use of Reserves</u></b></p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that the use of Council reserves had been allocated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Election Expenses Invoice - £10834.09 Earmarked Reserve funds allocated.</li> <li>(b) Party in the Park - £12892.96 from 2020 had been fully allocated and spent on the 2022 Party in the Park.</li> <li>(c) Youth Festival Flights – Earmarked twinning Reserve to be allocated to cover cost of unbudgeted Twinning costs including flights.</li> <li>(d) Youth Project monies received from Summer of Fun £1820 to be allocated to cover equal spend.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommended:</b> that the Committee note the use of allocated Council reserves.</p>	
256.	<p><b><u>Grants Review</u></b></p> <p>The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair Councillor JK who had undertaken a lot of work on these forms.</p> <p><u>Junior Sports Group Sponsorship</u>  <i>Application Form</i> – box added asking if the organisation has a Welsh Language Policy. Although this makes no difference if the club does not, we still must ask the question. This has been added to all forms.  <i>Criteria</i> –  3 – At the end of the sentence of 3, add all sexuality.  6 – Only one team from each club can apply each year.  7 – The first sentence remains with the following three sentences removed.</p>	



Groups applying for financial assistance for Core Costs

This will be known as Core Costs as it previously went by three different names in the Council's policy.

Although the criteria had not asked them to be specific in relation to what their core costs are it now asks why core costs would benefit the organisation.

Grant Aid for Community Halls and Community Facilities Funding - Grant Aid

The Finance Manager clarified that Grant Aid had been awarded to Community Halls for numerous years. She added that a one-off letter had been sent to community halls/organisations after Covid 19 to see if the Council could offer financial assistance.

The Chair stated that there is £5000 in the budget, it states in the information that forms to be returned to the office no later than 15th December for consideration at the January Policy and Finance meeting, therefore it was agreed that these letters be sent out with immediate effect.

The Information sheet to be amended to read "applications submitted" instead of "applications considered" after this time will not be considered.

Local Voluntary Funding LVF and Project forms

Approved use of both application forms and criteria(s)

Sporting Organisations or Groups applying for a grant for Grounds Maintenance

First sentence on criteria form to be amended to read Pontypool Community Council awards grants for grounds maintenance to amateur sporting clubs.

All sexuality to be added to end of item 3

Application and Criteria for awarding School Environmental Grants

In relation to the criteria for this Grant the Clerk had suggested that point 4 be broken down into bullet points. Agreed.

In relation to the application form the Vice-Chair stated that there had never been an application form in relation to school environmental grants, so the application form was completely new. He stated that in the past when schools have been invited to send a letter in for funding the letters the Council had received had been extremely varied, some very detailed while others have only

	<p>contained three sentences. The application form now relates to specific questions which will make it easier for the person/school bidding for the money in relation to the environmental project and easier for the Council to decide on who to award the money to.</p> <p>It was agreed to add an item on to the criteria that any monies awarded by Pontypool Community Council to a specific project would need to be shown through the Headteachers report to governors.</p> <p><b><u>Recommended:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) that all Grant applications forms, criteria and information details be taken to Full Council for approval including amendments/inclusions as outlined above.</li> <li>(ii) that letters be sent to all community halls/associations asking them to submit their application for grant funding by no later than 15 December.</li> </ul>	
257.	<p><b><u>Health &amp; Safety in the Workplace</u></b></p> <p>The Committee were made aware of several contracts and works by the Clerk that have become outdated and require urgent review or renewal due to Health and Safety guidelines as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Radon Gas &amp; Asbestos checks will be carried out in January by Torfaen CBC – Clerk awaiting costs</li> <li>(b) Annual PAT testing – Clerk awaiting costs from Torfaen and will look at some other companies to get quotes.</li> <li>(c) Legionella testing to be investigated – when the person comes to undertake the office/fire risk assessment they would be able to let the Clerk know if the Council needs to have this in place.</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk would keep the Council updated.</p> <p><b><u>Recommended:</u></b> that the information outlined by the Clerk in relation to Health &amp; Safety in the Workplace be noted; with further updates to follow.</p>	

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

Signed by Chair .....

**PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**CYNGOR CYMUNED PONT-Y-PŴL**  
**Declarations of Interest Declared**

**MEETING: POLICY & FINANCE**

**DATE: Wednesday 2 November 2022**

<u>Name of Member</u>	<u>Interest Declared</u>	<u>Signed</u>
Councillor Jon Horlor	A personal and non-prejudicial interest in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as a member of TCBC, as well as a member of Pontypool Community Council.	Yes
Councillor Gaynor James	A personal and non-prejudicial interest in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as a member of TCBC, as well as a member of Pontypool Community Council.	Yes
Councillor Caroline Price	A personal and non-prejudicial interest in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as a member of TCBC, as well as a member of Pontypool Community Council.	Yes

