

**MINUTES OF POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER, PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Wednesday 2nd October 2019**

In attendance:

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

Councillors in attendance: J. Killick, Ms K. Arthur, Mrs E. Hunt,
Mrs G. E. James, Mrs R. Matthews and R. Overton

Also in attendance: Mrs L. Mcmail, Accountant

Officers: Mrs R. V. Tucker, Ms J. Wright

Before the meeting commenced the Chair of Policy & Finance welcomed the Council's newly appointed Accountant Mrs L. McMail. All members welcomed Mrs McMail.

Apologies

162. Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Miss L. Clarkson.

RECOMMENDED: that the apologies be recorded.

JW

163. **Declarations of Interest**

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

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

JW

164. **Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

The Committee received the schedule of receipts and payments for August 2019. As a point of information the Deputy Leader made reference to cheque number 116132 to M J Wooley and stated that this amount was for several buffets over the Youth Festival/Conference not just for one.

RECOMMENDED: that the schedule of Receipts & Payments for August 2019 be approved and the information duly noted.

165. **Monitoring Report**

The Clerk informed the meeting that as the Council has only just recently appointed the new Accountant then the Monitoring Report will resume again at the November Policy and Finance meeting.

RECOMMENDED: that the information in relation to the Monitoring Report be received and to note it will be presented to the next Policy & Finance meeting in November.

LM

166. **Internal Auditor**

The Committee received a letter of acceptance from the current Internal Auditor Mr Hugh O'Sullivan for the role of Internal Auditor for a further year 2019-2020. The Clerk explained that the Council has a legal requirement to advertise the post for a further three years and to this effect the Internal Auditor was accepting the position for 2019-2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee appoint Mr H. O'Sullivan as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2019-2020.

RT

167. **Local Voluntary Funding**

The Committee received and considered requests for Local Voluntary Funding.

The Clerk apologised for the Power/Act to award LVF grants being incorrect in some cases and she confirmed that the right Acts would be stated in the minutes to be approved by Council.

In respect of money being awarded to Churches the Clerk informed the meeting that the Council has been legally told that members are unable to allocate Local Voluntary Funding to Church Buildings or Church halls and recent guidance has indicated there is no power for churches to be awarded grants, however members would be able to award money to organisations that they know use the church halls and that would allow the Council to stay within the law. A few members felt that this was unfair. The Clerk stated that the Council can

only go from what they have been legally told and added that she is still trying to obtain more guidance.

Local Voluntary Funding was confirmed as follows:

Cllr Mrs E. Chilcott

Veterans of the Great War (Pontypool Association) -
£100.00

All Creatures Great and Small - £150.00

Huntingdon's Disease - £100.00

Pontnewynydd Allotment Association - £150.00

Pontnewynydd History Society - £100.00

s.137 LGA 1972

Garndiffaith Gleemen Male Choir - £200.00

Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act
1976 s.19

Cllr B. Taylor

Merchants Hill Baptist Church - £350.00

Cllr Mrs J. E. Jones

Cold Barn Farm - £500.00

S137 LGA 1972

Penygarn and Trevethin Junior Football Team -
200.00

Trevethin and Penygarn Luncheon Club - £500.00

Wainfelin and Pen Tranch Community Association -
£300.00

Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act
1976 s.19

Councillor G. Davies

Victoria Village Hall - £100.00

Victoria Village Senior Citizens Club - £100.00

Victoria Village Friends for Life - £250.00

Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
s.19

High Street Baptist Church - £200.00

s.137 LGA 1972

RECOMMENDED: that the Local Voluntary
Funding grants as listed above be approved and
the information noted.

CC

168. **Local Resolution Protocol and Complaints Policy**

The Committee received and reviewed the redrafted Local Resolution Protocol and Complaints. It was agreed in the first instance that in the document “Complaints How to be Heard” that the numbers are placed in sequential order.

Reference was also made to the important points to note in preparing a process for use by the Council where it states that the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair of Councils should consider receiving appropriate training in facilitation and mediation to be in a position to maximise the benefit of this process. The Chair felt that it would be beneficial for all members and the Clerk to receive this training and the Deputy Leader proposed that the first hour of a future Council meeting could be dedicated to this training. It was agreed that the Clerk contact One Voice Wales in respect of appropriate training. It was also clarified that if there was a complaint against the Clerk then this would be undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair of Establishment

RECOMMENDED:

(i) to approve the redrafted Local Resolution Protocol and Complaints Policy subject to the appropriate amendments being made.

JW

(ii) that the Clerk contact One Voice Wales in respect of appropriate training as outlined above.

JW

169. **Budget Day**

The Committee was asked to consider a date and time for the budget day. It was agreed that it take place on Wednesday 4th December at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber. It was agreed that a buffet would be provided at the budget day instead of full Council in December to accommodate those members coming straight from work.

In respect of the Council meeting in December it was agreed that if members wished to bring some mince pies/sausage rolls to have with a cup of tea/coffee at this meeting then this would suffice rather than paying for two buffets in December.

RECOMMENDED: that the budget day takes places on Wednesday 4th December at 5.00 pm

RT/
LM/

in the Council Chamber of Pontypool Community Council offices and a buffet to be ordered.

CC/

170. **Arrangements for making payments**

The Committee was asked to consider a report on arrangements for making payments. The Clerk informed the meeting that the External Auditor/Wales Audit Office have specifically said they will be looking at payments this year and what the Council's arrangements are at the moment and if there is scope to improve the Council's financial methods.

The Clerk informed members that the Internal Auditor has advised on a few occasions that the Council should introduce the method of payment by BACS transfer. Although this will take time to set up initially it is a far safer and easier method of payment. The Chair of Policy & Finance felt that with the introduction of BACS the Grants Presentation Evenings will become redundant and it would be extremely time consuming to obtain all the relevant bank account and sort numbers from all the various organisations that members award local voluntary funding to.

It was agreed that as the new Accountant was present that she look at ways of ensuring the easiest way of transferring to BACs including looking at ways of ensuring that all organisations that members give Local Voluntary Funding to is undertaken in the most easiest and convenient way for members. All recommendations of the report was approved.

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that the need to make changes and review the arrangements for making payments is acknowledged.

LM

(ii) that further reports are presented to the committee with updates on progress.

LM

(iii) that the financial regulations be updated and presented to the November Policy and Finance Committee.

LM

(iv) that the Accountant find the easiest way to transfer to BACs and report back to the Committee.

LM

171. **Council Chamber Usage**

The Committee received the Council Chamber Bookings for July and August 2019.

RECOMMENDED: that the Committee note the bookings.

Chair of Policy & Finance