

**MINUTES OF POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER, PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 2019**

In attendance:

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

Councillors in attendance: J. Killick, Ms K. Arthur, Miss L, Clarkson, Mrs G. E. James, B. Taylor JP

Also in attendance: Mrs E. Chilcott JP, Mrs J. Taylor

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

109. **Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors G. Davies, Mrs E. Hunt and Mrs R. Matthews.

RECOMMENDED: that the apologies be noted.

110. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Mrs G. E. James 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

111. **Schedule of Receipts and Payments**

The Committee received the schedule of receipts and payments for June and July 2019. The Clerk circulated a breakdown sheet of the Party in the Park budget as there were a number of receipts and payments on the schedule that related to this event. A member made the point that important information like this should be sent out with the agendas and not circulated on the evening as it did not give members enough time to go through the information. The Clerk noted this for future reference. The Clerk clarified that the balance between income and expenditure would be put straight back into the Party in the Park budget for 2020 subject to the Council agreeing to take it on.

Reference was made to cheque numbers 116068 and 116069 and a member asked why there was not a detailed

breakdown. The Clerk outlined the circumstances that had arisen making the cost for the Chair's trip to Condeixa so high. The Clerk stated that a report would be going to the next Events Committee with a detailed breakdown of this cost. In addition a policy will be drafted to be approved to avoid this happening again.

RECOMMENDED: (i) that the schedule of receipts and payments for June and July 2019 be received and approved.

CC

(ii) that the Committee note there will be an item on the next Events Agenda in respect of trips abroad.

CC

112. **Use of Council Credit Card**

The Committee received a report to consider and approve use of the credit card. It was unanimously agreed that the recommendations of the report be approved.

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that the credit card may be used for purchases without reference to the council or committee providing that there is already a budget for the item and said purchase(s) does not take it over budget. Permission to be sought from the Clerk or Finance Manager

CC

(ii) All credit card purchases will be listed for the Policy & Finance Committee to approve as they are at the moment.

CC

113. **External Audit**

The Committee received an e-mail from the External Audit (BDO) stating that the audit would be qualified as the notice for the Exercise of Elector's Rights under s56 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013; to give the public notices electronically had not been complied with. She informed members that she had sent a reply to the Welsh Council Audit Team. The Clerk informed the Committee that as Clerk/RFO she took responsibility for this omission however outlined the exceptional circumstances in respect of the Accountant's work. A member asked for all Councillors to see a copy of the reply. She said this would be done when the official report from BDO is received.

RECOMMENDED: that the qualification be noted and that the Clerk provides members with a copy of the reply to the Welsh Council Audit Team.

RT

114. **Local Voluntary Funding**

The Committee received and considered requests for Local Voluntary Funding. Local Voluntary Funding was confirmed as follows:

Cllr Mrs E. Chilcott JP

Ebenezer United Reformed Church - £200.00
s.137 Local Government Act LGA 1972

Pontnewynydd Community Centre - £200.00
Cwmffrwdoer Sports Club - £400.00
Pontypool Park Mens Bowling Club - £100.00
Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. S.19

Pontnewynydd Friends for Life - £100.00
Ebenezer Ladies Group - £100.00
s.145 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Merchants Hill Baptist Church - £150.00
s. 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

Cllr R. Mills

New Inn Stroke Support Group - £200.00
New Inn Community Group - £300.00
s.145 LGA 1972/Power of Well Being s2 LGA 2000

Cllr G. Davies

Fairfield AFC - £100.00
Cwmavon Village Hall - £250.00 s.19
Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Cllr N. Byrne

Cwmavon Village Hall - £250.00
s.19 Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

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

CC

115. **Financial Assistance to Churches**

The Clerk advised members on information received from One Voice Wales in relation to providing financial assistance to Churches. This was being brought to the attention of local councils as there had been a number of queries received regarding the legality of these financial applications, from the various town, community and parish councils throughout Wales and England.

The powers in the LGA 1894 prohibits the Council's involvement in property or improvements of buildings or land or contribution to the costs relating to the affairs of the church.

Whilst there is legislation that appears to override this (details on the NALC legal note LO1 – LO18) there is an accepted legal principle applied by the courts which is that in interpreting what an Act of Parliament means, a specific provision overrides one of a general nature. Thus the specific provision would prevail.

NALC/One Voice Wales official view is that the 1894 Act is still valid as there are no further statutes that contradict or prohibit this. Whilst there is no consensus on this issue, a council that considers making payment in these circumstances needs to consider whether it is prudent to take a course of action that it cannot be certain is legally valid.

The members noted this advice from NALC/One Voice Wales

RECOMMENDED: that the Council notes the advice given by One Voice Wales.

116. **Grant Application**

The Committee received a grant application for financial assistance from the Royal Ordnance Glascoed Retirement Fellowship. It was proposed and seconded and unanimously agreed that £200.00 be awarded and they be invited to the Grants Presentation Evening.

RECOMMENDED: that £200.00 be awarded under s137 LGA 1972 to Royal Ordnance Glascoed Retirement as outlined above.

CC/
AA

117. **Pay Policy**

The Committee was asked to approve a redrafted pay policy document. A member made reference to point 5 indicating that

training should be part of an employee's personal development and not seen as a reward, to this effect it was agreed that the 2 words "reward and" be taken out so point 5 reads as follows:

It is recognised however that pay is not the only means of supporting staff and will offer other benefits such as access to training and development and pension arrangements.

Subject to this amendment the Committee unanimously agreed to adopt the Pay Policy for 2019/2020.

RECOMMENDED: that the Pay Policy for 2019/2020 be approved subject to the appropriate amendment being made as outlined above.

RT

118. **Thank you letters**

The Committee received a thank you letter from the Wales Air Ambulance Charity. Members complimented Wales Air Ambulance on the contents of their reply.

RECOMMENDED: that the thank you be received and welcomed.

Chair of Policy & Finance