



## **Bargoed Town Council**

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### **Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.**

Present: Councillors R Carroll; H Llewellyn; D Price; J Halvey; P Collins; A Collis.

Also in Attendance: Mrs H Williams, Town Clerk

Meeting Chairman: Councillor Reg Carroll

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record to be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Clerk.

Councillor A Higgs; Councillor D Morgan.

#### **2. Declaration of interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate.**

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Clerk.

Councillor Carroll declared an interest in item 13 on the agenda due to his involvement in the Greater Gwent Allotment Association.

#### **3. Press and public participation session.**

No requests received by the Clerk.

#### **4. To approve and sign the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

Minutes were approved by Members present and signed by the Meeting chairman in the presence of the committee.

#### **5. To consider recommendations from the Events Committee in respect of budget virements and approve expenditure on festive lighting.**

The Events and Environment Committee Chair briefed Members on the committee decision to cancel the fireworks event recommending that the budget is reallocated as follows: £10,000 to contingency funds, £7,500 to festive lighting. The Events Committee has worked with festive lighting suppliers and proposes new figurines for Aberbargoed, new tree lights for both Aberbargoed and the Park estate living trees, the use of the cone tree usually sited at the police station at St Peters Church in Aberbargoed, and new figurines for the North end of Bargoed, adjacent to the car park. RESOLVED to approve the recommendations of the Events and Environment Committee and approve expenditure of £20,525.

**6. Members noted there is no agenda item 6.**

**7. To receive a verbal report from Councillor Halvey on internal scrutiny of quarter one accounting records.**

Councillor Halvey reported on expanding his examination of the records to include the VAT allocation against expenditure. This quarter his examination was carried out on pre-reconciled spreadsheets and a small input error was identified to the value of £2.10. This was discussed with the Clerk and rectified immediately. All other records were accurate as usual.

The committee thanked Councillor Halvey for his report.

**8. To discuss additional internal scrutiny activity.**

Members considered ad hoc internal examination of administration and finance records. RESOLVED Councillors Morgan and Collins delegated.

**9. To consider the CCBC Community Empowerment fund and discuss opportunities for Town Council.**

The Mayor reported how the funding works, explaining the aims of the fund and the allocation to each CCBC ward Member. The committee discussed the eligibility requirements and RESOLVED to make Members aware of any voluntary organisations that may be considered.

**10. To receive a verbal report from the clerk and consider meeting schedules.**

The Clerk reported as follows:

- a) application to Unity Trust for a second bank account;
- b) £259.18 VAT refund claim for quarter one;
- c) the 9 LED balls will be collected next week;
- d) confirmed the MS Teams meeting with Rachel Carter on the Local Places for Nature Fund, which Councillor Price will be chairing;
- e) the HR & Staffing Committee has shortlisted 3 candidates for interview for the Assistant Clerk post, which will take place 29<sup>th</sup> July '21.
- f) the Clerk reminded the committee of the delegation policy and recommended this committee meets monthly from September, with full council moving to 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday on alternate months in the Autumn. Full council agendas will include increased ward feedback, guest speakers and police attendance with council business administration dealt with at monthly Policy & Resources Committee meetings, other than full council responsibilities such as budget setting, precept, approving accounts and audit etc. Members unanimously supported the recommendation on a trial basis. The clerk will circulate new meeting schedules to Members without delay.
- g) the Clerk sought Member's recommendation for support with drafting an Environment Policy. Councillor Collis volunteered to work with the Clerk on the first draft.
- h) hybrid meeting requirements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Covid-19 restrictions were explained with an emphasis on the town hall risk assessment and section 47 requirement of the Act which would make the meetings unlawful. Despite the alert level being reduced to one with a view to moving to zero in August, the instruction from Welsh Government is to work from home if you can. The clerk

has sought support and guidance from One Voice Wales and is working with the Mayor and this committee chair on technology requirements for hybrid meetings – September/October meetings will be planned to be MS Teams remote meetings.

The chairman thanked the Clerk for her report.

**11. To review the 2021-22 budget at end of Quarter One.**

The Clerk drew members attention to the insurance budget savings and the expenditure discrepancy because of the £2.10 typo identified earlier. Members discussed the quarter one records and RESOLVED to approve the review.

**12. To discuss Member training in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021; considering Standing Orders and Committees terms of reference.**

The Clerk reminded Members of their new duty to publish a training plan and recommended the One Voice Wales Member Training programme, (both free, online short courses as well as the 22 modular courses), as approved by Welsh Government be used as the basis for the town council plan. The Clerk reminded Members of the committee terms of reference for the HR & Staffing Committee mandatory requirement for committee Members to undertake “The Council as an Employer” module.

Members discussed training at some length, acknowledging the need to ensure town council has the appropriate skills and competencies to be effective in a rapidly changing environment while simultaneously protecting public money. The committee RESOLVED to research alternative, possibly free training options that could also be included in the training plan.

**13. To consider applications to the Town Council Small Grants programme.**

Councillor Carroll left the meeting at this point and the Mayor chaired the meeting.

Members RESOLVED:

Unique Ref 07/2021/01 St Margaret’s Street Allotment - £250 grant approved.

Unique Ref 07/2021/02 Valley Daffodils - £250 grant approved.

**14. To consider items for inclusion on the forward work plan to be reviewed in the Autumn session of Town Council.**

Councillor Carroll returned to the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Members RESOLVED to maintain the forward work plan amending the target dates by one year, to reflect the impact of the Pandemic.

**15. To receive any new items from Members for consideration at future meetings of this committee.**

Remembrance activities at each ward.

The meeting was closed at 18.40pm

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_