

Un Llais Cymru - One Voice Wales

Minutes of the Meeting of the Caerphilly, Merthyr and RCT Area Committee held on the 19th January 2022 remotely.

Present:-

Helen Williams (Clerk)- Bargoed Town Council
Cllr Debbie Brown – Bedlinog & Trelewis Community Council
Cllr Carol Erasmus – Blackwood Town Council
Cllr Jayne Garland – Draethern, Waterloo and Rudry Community Council
Cllr Jenny Edwards – Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
Cllr Jenny Myring – Hirwaun & Penderyn Community Council
Cllr Brian James – Llantwit Fardre Community Council
Cllr Anthony Raines – Llantwit Fardre Community Council
Cllr Allan Matheson – Llantrisant Community Council
Cllr Jo Rao (Chair) – Maesycwmmmer Community Council
Cllr Ann Gray – Nelson Community Council
Cllr Sally Davies – Risca Town Council
Bob Campbell (Clerk) – Risca Town Council
Cllr Sheila Jones – Van Community Council
Michelle Moore (Clerk) – Van Community Council
David Ludlow (Clerk) – Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm Community Council

Apologies: -

Cllr Howard Llewellyn- Bargoed Town Council
Cllr Judith Pritchard – Gelligaer Community Council
Ceri Mortimer (Clerk) – Gelligaer Community Council
Cllr David Nicholas – Llantrisant Community Council
Cllr Laura Dufty – Nelson Community Council
Tony Graham (Chief Executive) – Pontypridd Town Council

In attendance: -

Nadia Bogdan – National Lottery
Shân Bowden - One Voice Wales

1. Councillor Mair Stephens, Former Chair One Voice Wales

The Chair informed the meeting of the sad news of the passing of Councillor Mair Stephens, former Chair of One Voice Wales, Deputy Leader of Carmarthenshire Council, Community Councillor at Llandyfaelog Community Council, Chair of Carmarthen Area Committee, NEC member amongst many other community representational roles.

Mair's passing had come as a shock to those in One Voice Wales and on the NEC who had worked or served alongside her. Mair had been a dedicated fully committed Councillor and community representative who had been a great support not only to the Chief Executive of One Voice Wales and other staff members but to the Chair as an NEC colleague.

The Committee then held a minute silence.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Guest Speaker** – The Chair welcomed Nadia Bogdan from the National Lottery to the meeting. Nadia informed those present that there was National Lottery funding available to help people and communities to adapt, recover and thrive. The best way to do this was to put people in the lead. Community and Town Councils could apply for funding, but they needed to demonstrate that they had engaged with and included the community in the project.

Nadia outlined the various funding streams: -

Awards for All - £300 to £10,000

People and Places: -

Medium Grants: - £10,001 to £100,000

Large Grants: - £100,001 to £500,000

The presentation gave examples of successful local projects and Nadia explained the application process included the timescale for processing an application.

Nadia's contact details could be found at the end of the presentation that she would send to Shân Bowden for circulation.

Q & As

Q. How difficult are the application forms to complete?

A. It depends on the level of funding required. The Awards for All form was a short simple form, but more details were required for higher levels of funding, but Nadia and her colleagues could give guidance.

Q. In the past funding was not available to Community & Town Councils?

A. That has changed, and Community & Town Councils are now able to apply

Q. Some applications required surveys or reports from specialists such as architects or surveyors was there funding for such services?

A. For large capital grants that required evidence based on specialist services there were capital development grants available to enable the applicants to prepare the application.

The Chair thanked Nadia for an informative presentation and Nadia said she hoped to see applications from councils within RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly in the near future.

4. Representation on Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) Stakeholders Group.

Only one nomination to be the community and town council representative on CTMUHB Stakeholders Group had been received by the deadline of 30th November 2021. The nomination was from Cllr Helen Donnan, Llanharan Community Council who had recently retired from a senior nursing position with CTMUHB.

Cllr Donnan had therefore been nominated as the community and town council's representative on the Stakeholders Group.

Cllr Donnan had been asked to provide written reports on her attendance at Stakeholders Group meetings which would be circulated to both this Area Committee meeting and Bridgend/Cardiff/Vale Area Committee.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th October 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2021 were approved.

6. Matters Arising

(i) Remote Access to meetings

Gelligaer CC representatives had emailed to clarify that the 360-degree microphone and blue tooth speakers that they used were effective. It was only on one occasion when the Clerk had set the equipment up incorrectly that one member had difficulty in taking part in the meeting.

(ii) Governance & Financial Management Toolkit

Gelligaer CC had also volunteered to take part in trialing the toolkit.

Bob Campbell reported that Risca Town Council had also volunteered to take part but had not heard anything.

Shân would speak with Paul Egan and report back to Bob.

7. Draft Minutes of the Larger Councils Committee 20th October 2021 and National Executive Committee, 17th December 2021

The minutes of both meetings were noted

8. One Voice Wales Conferences 2022

The Innovative Practice Conference would be held in July, and it was hoped an Annual Conference and/or AGM later in the year.

Depending on COVID and Welsh Government guidance and regulations it was hoped some face-to-face conferences could be held during the year.

9. Training & Consultancy

Wendi Patience, One Voice Wales continued to circulate details monthly of training sessions.

Training modules continued to be held remotely but once it was safe to do so courses would be offered on both a face to face and remote learning basis to accommodate individual preference.

Following the elections in May Code of Conduct and Introduction to Local Councils sessions would be held to meet demand.

10. Developments in Relation to Charters/Devolved Services/Asset Transfers

There were no reports of devolved services or asset transfers.

Lyn Cadwallader was a member of Ystadau Cymru the Welsh Government Committee that oversaw the progress of community asset transfers in Wales. If any council was having difficulty in negotiating a community asset transfer, they could contact Lyn who would try to assist through his colleagues on Ystadau Cymru.

11. Consultations Correspondence and Information

A list of current consultations, items of correspondence and information had been circulated with the agenda and included: -

A Welsh Government consultation on the Town & Country Planning Act re: new classes for “Second Homes”

Gwent PSB on its draft Wellbeing Assessment

The Eligible Community Councils (General Power of Competence (GPOC)) (Qualifications of Clerks) (Wales) Regulations 2021 - recognising CILCA as the qualification ***

plus, information regarding: -

Welsh Government reports on councillor remuneration and citizen engagement

Welsh Government's draft budget for 2022/23

Save a Life Cymru – funding information

Welsh Government's People's Practice peer to peer network re climate change or biodiversity emergency

Welsh Government decisions re Elections & Electoral Reform

National Lottery funding available for Queen's Platinum Jubilee

*** a discussion took place regarding CILCA and those present were informed that only if a council wished to resolve itself to be an eligible council its clerk would need to be CILCA qualified.

In addition to CILCA training the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) also ran an online “Introduction to Local Council Administration” course it was recommended that all new clerks undertake the ILCA because it gave the clerk a basic understanding of the local council sector.

12. News and Reports from Councils

Those present were asked if they wished to report any news from their councils.

At its last meeting the Gwent Valleys Area Committee instead of inviting a guest speaker had set aside the time for councils represented at the meeting to highlight their successes over the previous five years or give a report on the work of their councils.

The session had been informative and had highlighted the very different ways in which local councils served their communities.

Those present had found the session informative and would enable individual councils to share good practice and offer advice and support to other local councils.

Bob Campbell suggested this was the sort of information that would form the annual report for 2020/21 that every Community & Town Council had to produce and publish later in the year.

13. Membership of Area Committee

There were five non-member Councils in Caerphilly and two in RCT there was only one Community Council in Merthyr, and it was in membership of One Voice Wales.

It was hoped that after the May elections the non-member councils may be persuaded to join One Voice Wales.

14. Guest Speakers

The Area Committee had previously suggested inviting Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC) to the meeting however, One Voice Wales was going to offer all PCCs the opportunity to speak to all Community & Town Councils in their areas.

The Committee had previously suggested the following guest speakers:-

Mick Antoniw – Senedd Member – Counsel General & Minister for the Constitution
Rebecca Evans, Minister for Finance & Local Government
Senedd Members for Southeast Wales
Speaker on the Green Infrastructure
Representative from National Resources Wales Community Engagement Team

It was agreed that Shân try to arrange a guest speaker but if unsuccessful councils would be given the opportunity to give a verbal report on the work of their council or a project or service that the council was proud of.

15. Annual Audit 2020/21

Bob Campbell reported that Wales Audit Office (WAO) had not yet signed off on his council's audit for 2020/21. Shân was aware that WAO were dealing with a backlog. It had been affected by staff absences because of COVID and/or isolation.

Risca TC was not the only council whose audit had not been signed off. Just because the audit had not been signed off it did not mean there was anything wrong.

16. Police Reporting

Ann Gray asked if other councils were finding that there was no longer a police presence at their meetings. Nelson CC received written reports but without access to a police presence it was not possible to ask for explanations about the content.

Other councils reported a lack of presence at their meetings, some regularly received written reports whilst others said reports were received irregularly.

It was agreed that it was understandable that there was no physical presence where meetings were being held face to face but not so understandable when access to meetings was through remote means.

Debbie Brown reported that Bedlinog & Trelewis CC had needed to contact the local Superintendent of Police to secure a police presence at their meetings.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place remotely at 7pm on Wednesday 27th April 2022.

Signed..... Date 27th April 2022.
Chair