



## Bargoed Town Council

Bargoed Town Hall, Bargoed Police Station,

Hanbury Road, Bargoed. CF818XF

Telephone 01443 830184 / 07789321664

E-mail: [clerk@bargoedtc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@bargoedtc.org.uk)

Website: [www.bargoedtc.org.uk](http://www.bargoedtc.org.uk)

### Minutes of the Special Full Council Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Present: Councillors J Bissex; R Price; R Carroll; T Williams; D Ingram-Jones; P Collins, H Llewellyn; J Davies; C Andrews; M Ingram-Jones; S Hamer-Thomas; D Price.

Also in Attendance: Ms Emily Janes (Caerphilly Observer); Mrs H Williams, Town Clerk.

Meeting Chair: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

1. To receive Apologies for Absence
2. To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate.

No declarations received.

3. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Councillor Williams moved; Councillor Collins seconded the minutes as a true record of the meeting. Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes and instruct the mayor signed them in the presence of the council.

4. Press and Public Participation Session.

Cllr R Price joined the meeting at this point.

Ms Emily Janes (Caerphilly Observer) was present. No requests to speak from members of the public.

5. To receive draft unapproved minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee special meeting 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023, consider recommendations and discuss the first draft budget for 2023-24.

The mayor invited the committee chair, Councillor Reg Carroll to give a verbal report to the meeting and present recommendations from the committee members.

Councillor Carroll thanked all members of the P&R committee for their hard work in analysing the town council current financial situation, looking at forecasts for the following financial year and talking over options for the town council to maintain a similar level of activities in the community whilst not placing a heavy burden on residents at a time of considerable hardship and a cost-of-living crisis that is unprecedented in current times. Councillor Carroll advised the meeting that the committee had worked on their proposals for over two hours the previous week and that was in addition to the time he had spent working on figures with the Clerk.

The proposals have been made taking account of a quarter three budget review along with a forecast of the free reserves at the end of financial year.

- i) Council supports the comprehensive programme of activities that have been planned for 2023-24 inclusive of further renewal of festive lighting; joint working with CCBC on Winter events and Christmas activities; continued expansion of floral displays, geocache, gaming and sport activities for young people and a development budget for

new project opportunities. Library events such as Harry Potter theme with the OWLs sanctuary be continued along with OAP afternoon tea events and an open-air cinema. The total projects budget of £91,125

- ii) Staff Costs have been calculated with a 5% increase assumed, this is difficult to predict as the NJC will not advise of their annual salary uplift until later in the year. Any additional uplift can be met from contingency funds if necessary. The two existing part time posts of Clerk and Assistant Clerk continued (22.5hrs and 16hrs respectively).
- iii) Member costs total budget as per instruction from the Independent Remuneration Panel includes a Mayor and Deputy Mayor allowance of £1,000 & £500 respectively; Two senior salaries of £300 for the committee chairs E&E and P&R which is a reduction from £500; Care costs reserves increased by £1000 this financial year; training budget maintained at £3,000; removal of the attendance allowances £20 per meeting which equates to a saving of over £3,000; the introduction of a civic budget of £400 for presentation bouquets etc; the introduction of consumables budget per Member of £52; and mandatory annual allowances of £156 per Member. Loss of earnings to be considered on a case-by-case basis and covered by contingency funds.
- iv) The budget for premises and office services costs includes a reduction of £500 in general office costs which has been allocated for any health and safety related premises costs; the IT support and memberships budgets have both been slightly reduced (£500 and £200 respectively); translation budget maintained, and the insurance budget increased by 14% to reflect market rates.
- v) Due to the considerable uncertainty that exists at the moment the committee recommend increasing the All-Risks Contingency budget from £10,000 to £15,000. This will allow for any additional increases to staff costs over 5%; and shortfall in VAT recovery on project activity and any unforeseen costs that arise.
- vi) The Committee recommends the small grants scheme budget of £6,000 is maintained; and both the running costs reserves, and the growth fund are increased by the annual £1,250.

Councillor Carroll advised that should members be happy to accept the recommendations of the committee the precept demand with the existing financial forecasts considered would be £172,059. This would equate to a precept per band D household of £46.54, which is a rise of £6.08 per year, 0.12p per week.

The mayor thanked Councillor Carroll for his presentation and asked if any members had questions.

A member asked for clarification on band D properties. Councillor Carrol explained that CCBC notifies town council of the number of band D properties in the town council area shortly before the end of the year. Calculations for precept rates across Wales are all made using band D as the average household, however in the Aberbargoed, Bargoed and Gilfach areas the majority of households fall into either band A or band B, in which case the precept will not be as high as £46.54.

A member commented that they were impressed by the comprehensive work of the committee and how they had managed to keep the precept as low as they could. An expression of thanks was extended to all members of the committee.

A member commented that the committee felt it was important to keep the precept as low as possible bearing in mind the current cost of living crisis, while also having one eye on ensuring the same level of community activities and support was maintained. It was a huge challenge.

The mayor sought a show of hands from the meeting to support putting the draft budget to the next ordinary meeting of full council when the town council has its full compliment of members to make the final precept decision. Town Council resolved to approve all the recommendations from the P&R committee as presented.

6. To co-opt to fill a casual vacancy at Aberbargoed ward.

A member sought permission from the mayor to propose a suspension of standing order 3V to allow a secret ballot. The mayor asked for a show of hands in respect of the member proposal. RESOLVED.

A secret ballot was conducted.

RESOLVED to co-opt Mr M Harry to the vacancy at the Aberbargoed ward.

The mayor advised this concluded the business on the agenda. He thanked the member of the press for her attendance and everyone for their contribution to the meeting. The meeting was closed at 19.05pm