



21 November/Tachwedd 2024

Dear Sir/Madam, Annwyl Syr/Fadam

You are hereby summoned to attend a multi-location meeting of **PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD** at **6.30 PM** on **WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2024**.

The meeting will be held remotely, using Microsoft Teams and physically for those who wish to attend the Council Chamber. Councillors have been provided with a link to attend the meeting. If any member of the public wishes to attend the meeting remotely, please contact the Clerk of the Council (by e-mail or telephone) at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below and relevant papers are attached.

Gofynnir drwy hyn i chi fynychu rhith-gyfarfod **CYNGOR CYMUNED PONT-Y-PŴL** am **6:30PM, DDYDD MERCHER 27 TACHWEDD 2024**.

Mae cynghorwyr wedi derbyn dolen i fynychu'r cyfarfod. Os yw unrhyw aelod o'r cyhoedd yn dymuno mynychu'r cyfarfod o bell, cysylltwch â Chlerc y Cyngor (trwy e-bost neu dros y ffôn) o leiaf 24 awr cyn y cyfarfod.

Mae gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd yr hawl i ofyn cwestiynau yng nghyfarfodydd y Cyngor, mae gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd hefyd yr hawl i siarad yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, cyn belled ag y rhoddir tri diwrnod o rybudd ysgrifenedig o'r cwestiwn i'r Clerc.

Mae agenda'r cyfarfod wedi'i nodi isod ac mae papurau perthnasol ynghlwm.

Yours faithfully/Yr eiddoch yn gywir

Lisa McMail

Lisa McMail
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL/CLERC I'R CYNGOR

0801

A G E N D A

1. **Recording of meeting**
To approve recording of meeting.
2. **Questions from the Public**
To receive any questions from the public.
3. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
4. **Declarations of Interest**
Members are required to declare any interests they may have in any items on the Agenda.
5. **Council Meeting – 23 October 2024 - Minutes**
To confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 October 2024 (attached: page(s) 1 – 9)
6. **Finance, Governance & Policy Committee – 6 November 2024 - Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Policy Committee held on 6 November 2024 and adopt the recommendations of that committee (attached: page(s) 10 – 16)
7. **Planning & Environment Committee – 13 November 2024 - Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 13 November 2024 and adopt the recommendations of that committee (attached: page(s) 17 – 23)
8. **Events Committee – 13 November 2024- Minutes**
To approve the minutes of the Events Committee held on 13 November 2024 and adopt the recommendations of that committee (attached: page(s) 24 – 29)
9. **Resignation of Councillor S Malson**
To receive the resignation of Councillor S Malson (New Inn Upper) and note next steps (attached: page(s) 30)
10. **Local Voluntary Funding (LVF)**
To approve the list of Local Voluntary Funding (table as attached: page(s) 31) and copies of the applications are available on request.
11. **Testimonials**
To review the nomination form and note the deadline date for the return of testimonials for the Annual Celebration Dinner in March 2025 (attached: page(s) 32)

12. **Live' Christmas Tree Fencing**
To discuss and agree whether to have fencing erected once permission has being sought from relevant landowners
13. **Lights and Cherry Picker for Garndiffaith Millennium Hall**
To receive an update report on the cherry picker and installation of lights for Garndiffaith Millennium Hall tree (attached: page(s) 33)
14. **Storage of Solar Lights**
To discuss the storage of the solar lights for the 'Live' Christmas Trees.
15. **Outside Bodies**
To receive minutes from outside bodies as follows:
One Voice Wales Minutes of the Larger Council's meeting held on 9 October 2024 (attached: page(s) 34 – 44)
- Recording of Meeting**
Recording of meeting to be stopped.
16. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
17. **Full Council – 23 October 2024 – Confidential Minutes**
(i) To confirm confidential minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 23 October 2024 (attached page(s) 45)
18. **Establishment Committee – 6 November 2024 – Confidential Minutes**
(i) To confirm confidential minutes of the Establishment Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024 (attached page(s) 46 – 50)
19. **Finance, Governance & Policy Committee – 6 November 2024 – Confidential Minutes**
(i) To confirm confidential minutes of the Finance, Governance & Policy Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024 (attached page(s) 51)
20. **Budget and Precept 2025/26**
To review the draft budget requirements and precept for the 2025/26 financial year (attached: page(s) 52 – 55)

AGENDA ITEM 5

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF PONTYPOOL
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2024**

In attendance:

Councillor: Lisa Jones# (in the Chair)

Councillors: Nick Byrne*, Lynda Clarkson*, Matt Ford*, Anne Gunter*,
Jon Horlor*, Gaynor James#, Jon James#, Nick Jones*,
Rose Matthews#, Richard Overton*, Allan Peploe#, Nathan
Warren#

Officer(s): Lisa McMail# (Clerk), Kerrie Smith#, (Deputy Clerk, Minute
Taker)

Also attending: Helen Cooling and representatives from the Youth
Council#, Dave Leech (DL)#, Mark Thomas(MT)*, Torfaen
County Borough Council

* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

The meeting was recorded for minute taking purposes as agreed by Members.

Min. no.	Subject and Decision	Action
272.	<u>Recording of meeting</u> Members agreed that the meeting be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
273.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> There were no questions from the public.	
274.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Lizzie Hunt, Sue Malson, Caroline Price and Nick Simons.	
275.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) Nick Byrne, Lynda Clarkson, Jon Horlor, Gaynor James, Jon James and Rose Matthews declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council. <u>RESOLVED:</u> that the declarations of interest be recorded.	KS

276.	<p><u>Youth Council – Lonjumeau Twinning Presentation</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed representatives from the Youth Council who attended the meeting to give a presentation on their visit to France in September. The Group enjoyed meeting representatives from other countries and visiting different landmarks as well as joining in various activities and they are looking forward to the twinning event in August 2025.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> Members thanked the Youth Council for attending the meeting and providing their presentation.</p>	
277.	<p><u>Torfaen County Borough Council - ‘Place’</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed representatives from TCBC DL and MT.</p> <p>DL provided an overview of ‘Place’.</p> <p>MT informed the meeting that TCBC are keen to engage with the community and he is more than happy to attend future Council meetings to assess what Members feel are the priorities.</p> <p>DL asked members what would be their preference regarding engagement, would they like Officers to attend meetings, provide a list to TCBC or TCBC bring specific items to the Council?</p> <p>Cllr AP advised that it should cover all these things.</p> <p>Discussion took place and it was suggested that a meeting be arranged on the same day as the Regeneration Operational Working Group meetings (ie half an hour before) and invitations be sent to Members.</p> <p>DL advised that meetings that have worked effectively are those with a clear agenda which include specific items that have been provided in advance of the meetings.</p> <p>It was agreed that Members contact the Clerk with items they would like included on the agenda so that the Clerk can forward these through to DL/MT.</p> <p>It was agreed that the meetings would be held quarterly and the first meeting would be held in January 2025 and session(s) would be based around MT’s service area.</p> <p>MT informed the meeting that ‘Place’ covers highways maintenance, climate, nature and emergency strategic transportation planning, street scene, public lighting, waste and recycling. These are the frontline service areas that TCBC are</p>	LM

	<p>able to assist with and the strategic side of things are planning and economic regeneration.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> (i)Members thanked DL and MT for attending the meeting. (ii) It was agreed that the 'Place' meetings would be held quarterly and the first meeting would be held in January 2025</p>	
278.	<p><u>Council Meeting – 25 September 2024 – Minutes</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the Full Council minutes held on the 25 September 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 25 September 2024 be confirmed as a true record.</p>	KS
279.	<p><u>Planning and Environment Committee – 9 October 2024 – Minutes</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the Planning and Environment Committee minutes held on the 9 October 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 9 October 2024 be confirmed as a true record and the recommendation(s) of the Committee be adopted.</p>	KS
280.	<p><u>Schedule of Receipts and Payments</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the schedule of receipts and payments for August 2024. These payments had been authorised by the FGP committee Chair and Leader Cllr GJ and checked for accuracy by the Clerk.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the receipts and payments for August 2024, as shown in the report, be approved noting the information.</p>	CC
281.	<p><u>Use of Credit Card</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the credit card payments covering 9 July to 31 July 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the payments made on the Council's credit card, as shown in the report for the above periods, be approved.</p>	CC
282.	<p><u>Financial Budget Comparison and Earmarked Reserves</u></p> <p>Members were requested to consider the financial comparison report and revised budget for 2024/25 and earmarked reserves to 30 September 2024.</p>	

	<u>RESOLVED:</u> that the financial comparison and earmarked reserved be approved.	CC
283.	<p><u>Local Voluntary Funding (LVF)</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the Local Voluntary Funding (LVF) applications in agenda item 12.</p> <p>All applications had been checked and vetted by the Finance Manager.</p> <p>Cllr GJ advised that the LVF table needed amending to state that Cllr N Byrne and Cllr J James were awarding £350.00 each from their LVF, totalling £700. Agreed by Council.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the LVF table be amended as detailed above and all LVF applications be approved (as detailed as an appendix to the minutes)</p>	KS/CP CC
284.	<p><u>Grant Funding Application</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve a funding application for junior sponsorship and grounds maintenance from Garndiffaith RFC.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Council funding of £1,000 be awarded to Garndiffaith RFC for junior sponsorship and £450 for grounds maintenance, both these amounts to be funded from general reserves.</p>	CC
285.	<p><u>Requests for Financial Funding</u></p> <p>Members received requests for financial assistance and agreed that a grant of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £300 be awarded to After the Bell (ii) £100 be awarded to George Street Primary (iii) £200 be awarded to Friends of Pontypool Town for their Halloween Event (iv) £200 be awarded to Piping Hot Bagpipe and Drum Band <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the Clubs listed above receive the relevant donations.</p>	CC
286.	<p><u>Internal Audit</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the renewal of the internal audit contract and to note the contents of the Annual Internal Audit Review checklist.</p>	

	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the renewal of the internal audit contract be approved (ii) the contents of the Annual Internal Audit Review checklist be noted. 	LM/CC
287.	<p><u>Live Christmas Trees Licence Agreement</u></p> <p>Members received a report to approve funding of a licence agreement for the planting of trees on TCBC land.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the funding of £250 for the licence agreement be approved.</p>	CC/CD
288.	<p><u>Gwent Wildlife Trust Proposal</u></p> <p>Cllr NW informed the meeting that he had met with Cllr RM and Gwent Wildlife Trust who attended the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting to discuss creating a Wildlife Youth Group based in Pontypool. Groups have already been set up in Newport and Ebbw Vale and the proposal is to take some green space within Pontypool and turn it into a sensory garden or pollinator garden.</p> <p>Members were asked to approve the agreement in principle as well as funding for year 1. The agreement would be for a 3 year project, the biodiversity budget is able to fund years 2 and 3 but there is no money in the biodiversity budget for year 1 and Cllr NW requested £5,000 to be taken from general reserves to set up the Group as Gwent Wildlife Trust will provide soil, seeds and tools and planters etc.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) agreement be approved in principle (ii) funding of £5,000 is approved from general reserves 	CC
289.	<p><u>Police & Crime Commissioner</u></p> <p>Members were informed that the Police and Crime Commissioner is attending Full Council on 27 November 2024 and the Clerk requested that any Questions be sent to her by 15 November 2024.</p> <p>Cllr LC asked if the questions that were sent through last year could be circulated.</p>	

	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) questions for the Police and Crime Commissioner are sent to the Clerk by 15 November 2024 (ii) a copy of last year's questions is sent to Members 	<p>Members</p> <p>LM</p>
290.	<p><u>SLCC & OVW Joint Conference – 20 November 2024</u></p> <p>Members received a copy of the draft agenda for the SLCC & OVW Joint Conference on 20 November 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Members contact the Clerk if they wish to attend.</p>	<p>Members</p>
291.	<p><u>Welsh Government Consultation into the role of Governance and Accountability of the Community and Town Council Sector</u></p> <p>The Clerk advised that Members have received the consultation documents and that the consultation period had closed on 18 October. The Clerk attended a feedback session on 23 October 2024 and feedback report from Welsh Government will be received in December 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	
292.	<p><u>Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Draft Annual Report 2025 - 2026</u></p> <p>Members received a copy of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2025-2026.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	
293.	<p><u>Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 – Publication of Consultation Paper</u></p> <p>Members received a copy of the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 consultation paper.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	
294.	<p><u>Community Council Review – Survey Results</u></p> <p>Members received a copy of the Community Council Review survey results.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	

	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) an additional fencing quotation be sought (ii) the Community Council's social media is kept updated on the project (iii) the tree in the Garndiffaith Millennium Hall be adopted and lit by PCC (iv) the solar lights be purchased at a cost of approx £500 and funds taken from general reserves 	<p>CD MW/CD MW/CD CC/MW/ CD</p>
296.	<p><u>Torfaen Play Priority Conference</u></p> <p>The Clerk asked if anyone would like to attend the above Conference which is being held in Victory Church, Cwmbran on 15 November 2024.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that Cllr AP would attend.</p>	
297.	<p><u>Outside Bodies</u></p> <p>Members were asked to note the contents of the minutes of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) One Voice Wales Larger Councils meeting held on 17 April 2024 (ii) One voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee meeting held on 9 July 2024 (iii) Mic Morris Memorial Sporting Trust meeting held on 11 September 2024 (iv) One Voice Wales National Executive Committee meeting held on 13 September 2024 <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	
298.	<p><u>POLICY ITEMS</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve and adopt the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Data Breach Notification (b) Flexible Working (c) Twinning (d) Overview of Personal and Prejudicial Interests Guidance <p>Discussion took place regarding the Twinning policy. Cllr GJ advised that the policy currently states Members pay for the flight of anyone accompanying them and suggested that the policy be amended to read that two persons flights would be paid for by the Council for each visit.</p>	

	<p>It was also requested by Cllr GJ that the invitation should be sent to the Chair in the first instance and if they are unable to attend then the invitation goes to the Vice Chair. If neither are available to attend then other Members are given the opportunity to attend.</p> <p>If no Members are able to attend then two members of staff be offered the opportunity to attend and the flights paid for.</p> <p>Councillor JJ informed the meeting that he agrees with this suggestion. No members disagreed.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Data breach Notification be approved; (b) Flexible working be approved (c) Twinning policy be amended (d) Overview of Personal and Prejudicial Interests Guidance be approved 	LM/KS
299.	<p><u>To review the following policies/criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Adoption Leave (b) Alcohol and Drugs (c) Bullying and Harassment (d) Capability (e) Criteria for sponsorship of Junior Sports Teams (f) Disciplinary and Grievance (g) Equality and Diversity (h) Maternity Leave (i) Shared Parental Leave (j) Stress Management (k) Training (l) Wellbeing (m) Whistleblowing <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> that the above policies be approved.</p>	KS
	The recording of the Council meeting was stopped at this point.	
300.	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p>By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.</p>	

Signed by the Chair of Council

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE FINANCE,
GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY
COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2024**

In attendance:

Councillor: Nick Byrne (in the Chair)#

and Councillors: Anne Gunter*, Gaynor James*, Richard Overton#,
Caroline Price*, Nathan Warren*

Also in attendance: Councillor Nick Jones*

Officers: Kerrie Smith#, (Deputy Clerk, Minute Taker),
Cindy Challenger#, (Finance Manager)

* Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

	<u>FINANCE ITEMS</u>	
313.	<u>Recording of Meeting</u> Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
314.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Matt Ford, Lizzie Hunt and Lisa McMail (Clerk).	
315.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) N Byrne, G James and C Price declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the declarations of interest be recorded.	KS
316.	<u>Schedule of Receipts and Payments</u> The Committee was asked to approve the schedule of receipts and payments for September 2024. These payments have previously been authorised by the Committee Chair and Cllr GJ and checked for accuracy by the Clerk.	

	<u>RECOMMENDED*</u> ; that the receipts and payments for September 2024, as shown in the report, be approved noting the information.	CC
317.	<u>Use of Credit Card</u> The Committee was requested to approve the credit card payments covering 22 August to 3 September and 11 September to 8 October 2024. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the payments made on the Council's credit card, as shown in the report for the above periods, be approved.	CC
318.	<u>Financial Budget Comparison and Earmarked Reserves</u> The Committee was requested to consider the financial monitoring report and earmarked reserves to the 30 September 2024. <u>RECOMMENDED*</u> ; that the financial monitoring report and earmarked reserves be approved.	CC
319.	<u>Internal Controls Checklist</u> The Committee was requested to consider the internal control checklist for completeness of the Council's annual accounting and reporting cycle. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the internal control checklist be received and noted.	
320.	<u>Local Voluntary Funding (LVF)</u> The Committee was requested to approve the Local Voluntary Funding (LVF) applications in agenda item 8. The Chair stated that all applications had been checked and vetted by the Finance Manager. <u>RECOMMENDED*</u> ; the LVF applications as outlined in agenda item 8 be approved. (attached as an appendix to the minutes).	CC
321.	<u>Grant Funding Application</u> The Committee was requested to approve the grant funding application for Penygarn and Trevethin FC.	

	<p>The Finance Manager advised that a late application for grounds maintenance from Tranch AFC had been received. There is no budget available for grounds maintenance so the funds would need be taken from general reserves.</p> <p>Cllr NW informed the meeting that Pontyfelin Bowls Club had contacted him on 5 November 2024 as they would like to submit an application for grounds maintenance and asked the Committee to consider approving this request.</p> <p>The Finance Manager stated that the Council's website had been updated advising that the deadline for applications has passed.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that they would like all of the above Clubs to receive funding and noted that the website had been updated.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: the following awards be made from general reserves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Penygarn and Trevethin FC be awarded £1,000 for junior sponsorship (ii) Tranch AFC be awarded £450 for grounds maintenance from general reserves (iii) Pontyfelin Bowls Club/Pontnewynydd Cricket Club be awarded £450 each for grounds maintenance (when the applications are received) from general reserves 	CC
322.	<p><u>Requests for Financial Assistance</u></p> <p>The Committee received requests for financial assistance and agreed that a grant of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £500 be awarded to Tidy Butt (ii) £200 be awarded to Urdd Eisteddfod and Arts (iii) £200 be awarded to Fforest Uchaf Horse & Pony Rehabilitation Centre <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the clubs listed above receive the relevant donations.</p>	CC
323.	<p><u>Sponsorship of Mic Morris Trust 10k</u></p> <p>The Committee received a request from the Mic Morris Trust for 2025 sponsorship.</p>	

	<p>The Committee agreed to sponsor £2,500 (the Platinum award).</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the payment outlined above be made.</p>	CC
224.	<p><u>Council Chamber Charges</u></p> <p>The Committee were asked to consider increasing the hourly charge for the Council Chamber to £10.00 per hour and refreshments to remain £1.00 per cup</p> <p>The Committee agreed that charitable organisations would be charged £7.50 and external organisations would be charged £10.00.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that the charges outlined above be made.</p>	CC
325.	<p><u>Food Banks</u></p> <p>The Committee were asked to consider funding for the following foodbanks. The budget allocation is £5,000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Trac 2 (ii) Eastern Valley (iii) Garnsychan Partnership (iv) Helping Hands (v) Noddfa Church (vi) Jayne's Baby Bank (vii) Panteg House <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u> that the above foodbanks each receive £1,000 and the additional £2,000 be taken from general reserves.</p>	CC
326.	<p><u>Christmas Lights</u></p> <p>The Committee received a report on additional infrastructure work relating to the Christmas lights installation. Following the anchor point testing, the report identified necessary remedial works at a cost of £588.00+VAT.</p> <p>Following a site visit by the installer, additional infrastructure work was deemed necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H&S requirements – estimated that 25 new RCBO units would be required at £1,540.75+VAT (the final cost will be based on the exact amount required); 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timers – if these need to be installed the cost would be £115.86+VAT per unit (estimated up to 5 could be required) <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the above quotations be approved and the Clerk and Chair of Finance, Governance & Policy be given plenary powers to approve the payments.</p>	LM/ MW/ CC
327.	<p><u>Thank you letter/acknowledgements</u></p> <p>The Committee received a thank you letter from Sparkles and acknowledgements from ArtRegen and TVA Wales in relation to grant funding.</p> <p>The Committee stated that it was very nice that they had acknowledged the Council for the financial donations.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that the Committee welcome the gratitude shown in relation to the financial donations awarded.</p>	
328.	<p><u>IT Equipment and License Update</u></p> <p>The Committee received an update report on IT equipment and licenses.</p> <p>CCSW have provided a report detailing the age and condition of the office IT equipment.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the recycling of the old laptops and docking stations.</p> <p>The Finance Manager stated that the laptops will only be replaced one at a time, all information will be wiped and they will remain in PCC's ownership.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> an update be provided at the next Finance, Governance & Policy meeting regarding the recycling of the laptops and the need for new docking stations; all Councillors adopt a PCC email address, with a monthly increase to budget line 2035/9 of £83.30. 	RC RC/CC
329.	<p><u>Cyber Essentials Self-Certification</u></p> <p>The Committee received a report on the proposed Cyber Essentials self-certification. Cyber Essentials certification is a way to show the public, partners and businesses that PCC</p>	

	<p>take keeping information secure seriously and once the Essentials certificate is achieved then the logo can be displayed on the Council's website.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that:</p> <p>(i) the costs of £2,260 for the Council to achieve the Cyber Essentials certification be taken from the office IT equipment and IT support budget (3015/2)</p> <p>(ii) the Cyber Essentials certification be renewed yearly and the cost of £840 be budgeted for on an annual basis.</p>	<p>RC/CC</p> <p>RC/CC</p>
330.	<p><u>GOVERNANCE ITEMS</u></p> <p><u>Financial Regulations 2024</u></p> <p>The Committee received a copy of the updated Financial Regulations for 2024.</p> <p>Cllr NW stated that local or responsible sourcing is not included and asked is covered anywhere else. Should this be included in the financial regulations or is it covered elsewhere?</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the information be noted and the Clerk/Deputy Clerk to feedback on local or responsible sourcing.</p>	LM/KS
331.	<p><u>POLICY ITEMS</u></p> <p><u>To approve and adopt the following policies:</u></p> <p>(a) Business Continuity Plan</p> <p>(b) Credit Card Policy</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the above policies be approved and adopted.</p>	KS
332.	<p><u>To review the following policy/criteria</u></p> <p>(a) Social Media Policy</p> <p>(b) Criteria for Sponsorship of Junior Sports Teams</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that the above policy and criteria be approved.</p>	KS
333.	<p><u>One Voice Wales Practice Development Notices</u></p> <p>The Committee received copies of the practice development notes issued by One Voice Wales:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Annual Financial Timetable of Actions (ii) Members' Allowances Timetable of Actions (iii) Pre-election Period Timetable of Actions (iv) Annual Report Timetable of Actions (v) Multi-location Meetings Timetable of Actions (vi) Policies and Powers (vii) Attendance by Members – the 6 Month Rule (viii) Code of Conduct – Members and Officers (ix) Terms of Reference for Council Meetings <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the information be noted.</p>	
	The recording of the Council meeting was stopped at this point.	
334.	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p>By virtue of The Public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.</p>	

*This is a recommendation to the Council. The Council will make the final decision at a future meeting.

Signed by the Chair.....

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2024**

In attendance:

Councillor: Jon James (in the Chair)#

and Councillor(s): John Cox* (connection issues), Anne Gunter*,
Gaynor James#, Lisa Jones*, Richard Overton*,
Allan Peploe#, Caroline Price*

Officers: Kerrie Smith, (Deputy Clerk, Minute Taker)#,
Miriam Watts# (Projects and Events Manager)

* *Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams*

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

The meeting was recorded for minute taking purposes as agreed by Members.

Min No	Subject and Decision	Action
348.	<u>Recording of Meeting</u> Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
349.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received from Councillor(s) Nick Byrne, Lynda Clarkson and Nick Simons.	
350.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) Gaynor James, Jon James and Caroline Price declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as members of Pontypool Community Council. Councillor Richard Overton declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 – planning application 24/P/0654 as he is a member of the Scout Group. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the declarations be noted.	KS

351.	<p><u>Planning Applications</u></p> <p>Members received and considered the list of planning applications on which it was being consulted by Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC).</p> <p>Cllr RO requested that comments be sent to TCBC in relation to agenda item 4 – planning application 24/P/0608. “Is the siting of the container permanent, how large is it going to be and is it going to be an eyesore?”</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the comments/observations stated be submitted to Torfaen County Borough Council.</p>	CP
352.	<p><u>Planning Determinations</u></p> <p>Members received and noted Torfaen County Borough Council planning determinations including reasons for approvals or refusals.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the planning determinations be noted.</p>	CP
353.	<p><u>Planning Applications: Plenary Powers</u></p> <p>Members noted observations on planning applications which had already been submitted between meetings.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the plenary powers applications be noted.</p>	CP
354.	<p><u>Biodiversity Sub Committee</u></p> <p>Members were asked to approve the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting which was held on 9 October 2024.</p> <p>Cllr AG asked for an amendment to be made to paragraph 8 – “the community orchard has not been established, the much needed community support has been established the actual orchard plan is still ongoing.”</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u> that the minutes of the Biodiversity Sub-Committee held on 9 October 2024 be confirmed as a true record, subject to the above amendment.</p>	KS/MW/ CD

355.	<p><u>The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Action Plan 2025</u></p> <p>Members received a copy of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Action Plan 2025.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that the information be noted.</p>	
356.	<p><u>Noticeboards, Bins and Benches</u></p> <p>Members received an update report on the status and current commitments of noticeboards, bins and benches.</p> <p>Replacement of the noticeboard outside Panteg Cemetery and the new noticeboard request for Snatchwood will be considered in the next financial year.</p> <p>The bin at East View is still ongoing. Cllr AG is still in negotiations.</p> <p>The Project Officer will contact Streetscene to see if they will consider emptying the two new bins at Pontymoile Basin before the Council commit to purchasing the bins. A further update will be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>Streetscene have reviewed the bench in Brynwnern, costs for maintenance will be identified and an update provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>Two new requests have been received for benches along the canal and a new picnic bench in Pantygasseg.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the Projects Officer carry out an inspection of the benches along the stretch of the canal from Pontymoile and an update be provided for the next meeting.</p> <p>There are no more funds in benches at the moment so any requests received, including the above, will be considered in the next financial year.</p> <p>The Projects Officer will be carrying out a full audit of benches throughout the Pontypool area within the next few months and a report will be brought to Committee before the next financial year.</p>	

	<p><u>RECOMMENDED*</u>: that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the information be noted; (ii) the noticeboard outside Panteg Cemetery be reconsidered for replacement in the next financial year, subject to budgets; (iii) the noticeboard request for Snatchwood be reconsidered in the next financial year, subject to budgets; (iv) Streetscene are contacted to see if they would be able to empty the two new bins on the Canal Basin in Pontymoile; (v) the benches on the Pontypool stretch of the canal be considered in the next financial year (vi) following the bench audit a report is prepared for the Committee before the next financial year. 	<p>MW/CD</p> <p>MW/CD</p> <p>CD</p> <p>MW/CD</p> <p>MW/CD</p>
357.	<p><u>Consultation – Road Traffic Orders, Torfaen County Borough Council: Notice of Proposals</u></p> <p>Members received a letter from TCBC's Legal Team Members received a letter from TCBC's Legal Team which stated that the order for East Avenue, Griffithstown had been omitted from the original correspondence.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that the information be noted.</p>	
358.	<p><u>Committee Budget</u></p> <p>Councillors received a copy of the budget (and reserves) within its remit and the spend to date.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED</u>: that the information be noted.</p>	

*This is a recommendation to Council, the final decision would be made by Council.

Signed by Chair

Planning and Environment Committee

Wednesday 11th November 2024

Planning Applications commented on

1	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0608	New Inn Lower	New Inn AFC, Woodfield Road, New Inn	

PROPOSAL: Siting of a container.

Member's Comments to be sent to TCBC.

"Is the siting of the container permanent, how large is it going to be and is it going to be an eyesore?"

2	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0641	Abersychan and Cwmavon	Abersychan Comprehensive School, Incline Road	

Proposed conversion of former canteen to Special Needs Resource Base and associated works.

This Council has no observations.

3	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0645	Pontypool	Pontymoile Primary School, St Matthews Road	

PROPOSAL: Variation of Condition 1 - Approved drawings - of Application: 15/P/00535 - Demolition of existing structures and erection of 39 dwellings and formal recreation area.

This Council has no observations.

4	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0650	Pontypool	Advance Factory, Trico, Skewfields Roundabout	

Proposed removal of link corridor, creation of new entrance opening and associated works.

This Council has no observations.

5	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0651	Abersychan and Cwmavon	Forge House, Cwmavon Road, Blaenavon	

Proposed alterations and two storey extension to existing dwelling including driveway alteration's.

This Council has no observations.

6	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0654	New Inn Upper	1 St Panteg Scout Hall, The Highway, New Inn	

Proposed replacement of windows.

This Council has no observations.

7	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0655	Garndiffaith and Varteg	The Jays, Neville Street, Garndiffaith	

PROPOSAL: Erection of a dwelling house, replacement garage and associated development thereto.

This Council has no observations.

8	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0662	New Inn Lower	Fensaler, Sluvad Road, New Inn	

PROPOSAL: Variation of Condition 2 of 24/P/0256/HH, a revised design is proposed, which lowers both the eaves and ridge of the extension and introduction of two gables at the front.

This Council has no observations.

9	<i>Plan Number</i>	<i>District reference</i>	<i>Site reference</i>	<i>Other reference</i>
	24/P/0663	Abersychan and Cwmavon	Brynteg Nursery School, Brynteg, Abersychan	

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing former nursery and out buildings.

This Council has no observations.

**MINUTES OF A MULTI-LOCATION MEETING OF THE EVENTS
COMMITTEE OF PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2024**

In attendance:

Councillor Rose Matthews# (in the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: Councillor(s) Jon Horlor*, Gaynor James#, Lisa Jones*, Caroline Price#

Officers: Miriam Watts# (Projects & Events Manager), Sarah Fussell# (Events Officer, minute-taker)

* *Attending remotely via Microsoft Teams*

Attending physically in the Council Chamber

The meeting was recorded for minute taking purposes as agreed by Members.

Min. no.	Subject and Decision	Action
336.	<u>Recording of Meeting</u> Members agreed that the Council meeting could be recorded for minute taking purposes.	
337.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies received from Councillor(s) Nick Byrne, Nick Symons and Nick Jones	CP/KS
338.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Councillor(s) Caroline Price, Gaynor James, Rose Matthews and Jon Horlor declared personal and non-prejudicial interests in any agenda items relating to Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) as they were members of TCBC, as well as being members of Pontypool Community Council. <u>RECOMMENDED:</u> i. that the declarations of interest be recorded.	KS

339.	<p><u>Community Celebration Evening</u></p> <p>Members received a debrief report on the 2024 Community Celebration Evening.</p> <p>Cllr GJ stated that one of the guests that didn't attend, Pontypool AFC, has since given apologies that no one could make it on the evening.</p> <p>It has been noted that there were a lot of no shows this year.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <p>i. that the information be noted.</p>	
340.	<p><u>Christmas Costume Fundraiser</u></p> <p>The committee received a debrief report on the Christmas Costume Fundraiser where funds were raised for the Chair's charities.</p> <p>Members stated that it was a successful fundraising activity and that it was a good atmosphere on the day being part of the market.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <p>i. that the information be noted.</p>	
341.	<p><u>Christmas Cavalcade</u></p> <p>The committee received a report on the final plans for the Christmas Cavalcade.</p> <p>The Projects & Events Manager stated that formal changes and updates to the day regarding the location of the Grotto had now been made and ratified at the Establishment Committee meeting the week prior. The Projects & Events Manager referred to the recommendations at the end of the report to flag up further updates for consideration.</p> <p>It was noted that on Thursday 21st November the Events Officer & Projects Officer will be setting up the grotto in the market.</p> <p>Discussion was had regarding the chamber being manned from 4-5pm on this day only. If any councillors require access before this time, they are to find a PCC member of staff to obtain keys and return once finished.</p>	

	<p>It was confirmed that Crane Street Baptist Church will be open all day for members to use as well as the green room for performers as planned.</p> <p>The Projects & Events Manager will be getting in touch with all Councillors regarding attendance and support for the lights switch on. It was reconfirmed that as Cllr CP is unavailable Cllr LJ would announce the light switch on. Cllr RM stated she could help as needed as well as stewarding throughout the day. Cllr GJ confirmed that she would be in the parade as usual after the grotto has closed.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. that the information be noted. ii. That the Council Chamber is manned by the Clerk 4-5pm on Cavalcade day, and can access a key from PCC staff if earlier use required. iii. That the Projects & Events Manager liaise with Councillors regarding attendance and support for the light switch on. 	<p>MW/LM</p> <p>MW</p>
342.	<p><u>Christmas Markets Bus Trip</u></p> <p>The committee received an update report on the upcoming trip to The Bath Christmas Markets.</p> <p>At the time of writing the report, there were 24 seats booked. The Events & Projects Manager updated the committee, stating that there were now 34 attending (including two staff members for safety/organisational purposes).</p> <p>There are 51 spaces available in total.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. that the information be noted ii. that the committee and all members continue to share details of the trip with their networks 	<p>MW/SF</p>
343.	<p><u>Photography Competition</u></p> <p>The committee received a written proposal for the 2024/25 Photography Competition.</p>	

	<p>Events & Projects Manager spoke about the Photography Competition due to take place 2024/25 and went through the proposal in the report including potential prizes, topics and how the presentation of winners could be organised if the competition went ahead.</p> <p>Discussion was had over the merits of running the competition again, as numbers were low at only 16 entrants in the previous competition.</p> <p>The decision was put to a vote as to whether to run the competition and it was unanimously agreed not to continue.</p> <p>Members present suggested that new ideas be considered in the New Year.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Council do not run the Photography Competition in 2024/2025. ii. All members share new ideas for in future. 	<p>MW/SF</p> <p>MW/SF</p>
344.	<p><u>School's Eisteddfod 2025</u></p> <p>The Committee received an update on the organisation of the 2025 Eisteddfod.</p> <p>The suggested voucher prizes were detailed for the committee's consideration as follows:</p> <p>Art: 1st prize £20, 2nd prize £15, 3rd prize £10 Group on Stage categories: 1st prize £30, 2nd prize £20, 3rd prize £10</p> <p>It was noted that these amounts are in keeping with the previous year's event.</p> <p>Discussion was had about a suitable compere for the event. Members present requested that Cllr Anne Gunter be asked to compere the 2025 Eisteddfod.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED*:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. that the information be noted ii. that Cllr Anne Gunter be asked to compere the event. 	<p>SF/MW</p>

	<p>iii. that members approve the voucher amounts of:</p> <p>Art: 1st prize £20, 2nd prize £15, 3rd prize £10 Group Stage categories: 1st prize £30, 2nd prize £20, 3rd prize £10</p>	SF/MW
345.	<p><u>Community Testimonials & Celebration Dinner.</u></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal update on the Community Testimonials & Celebration Dinner regarding the process.</p> <p>The Projects & Events Manager confirmed that Testimonials will be included in March's event. Following November Full Council testimonial nomination forms will be distributed to Members. The deadline to receive these back will be set as the 17th January and they will go to Full Council that month.</p> <p>The date for the Community Testimonials & Celebration Dinner has been set as 21st March 2025 (min 193).</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <p>i. that the information be noted.</p>	
346.	<p><u>Overview of Annual Competitions</u></p> <p>The Committee received an overview of Annual Competitions, and discussion was had whether these competitions should continue.</p> <p>The Projects & Events Manager stated that following the debrief reports regarding the Garden and Poetry competitions submitted to September's Events meeting, min 186 and min 187 resolved that discussion on whether such competitions be re-evaluated at the next committee meeting.</p> <p>The report showed a breakdown of what costs and number of entrants from the last few years for comparison to aid discussion, noting that any decision by the committee would still be subject on the 2025/2026 budget.</p> <p>Discussion was had, with key points being that the numbers of entrants are low across all categories, and the same people are entering each competition. It was also noted that the Garden Competition had been put on pause previously due to low numbers and despite the push it still hasn't had a big impact.</p>	

	<p>A vote was taken and the committee unanimously decided that the competitions should not continue in the next financial year, and that new ideas be sought going forward.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the information be noted ii. The Council do not run the photography, garden or poetry competition in the 2025/2026 financial year, with new ideas being sought instead 	MW/SF
347.	<p><u>Committee Budget</u></p> <p>The committee received the report detailing the budget, reserves within its remit and spend to date.</p> <p>No comments were made.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDED:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the information be noted 	

*This is a recommendation to the Council. The Council will make the final decision at a future meeting.

Signed by Chair

Kerrie Smith

AGENDA ITEM 9

From: Clerk
Subject: FW: Resignation

Sent: 10 November 2024 17:03
To: clerk@pontypoolcc.gov.uk
Subject: Resignation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Evening Both , totally appreciate that you want read this email until tomorrow, I wish to resign from my post within Pontypool Community Council with immediate effect due to health reasons I'm stepping down from the political roles i currently serve.

It's been a pleasure working with you All and i mean that very truely.

Take care keep up the good work you All do.

Best wishes Sue

Sent from [Outlook for Android](#)

AGENDA ITEM 10

Full Council

27TH NOVEMBER 2024

LOCAL VOLUNTARY FUNDING

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Requested Amount</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Councillor G. James and Councillor C. Price	£400 (£200 x 2)	St. John Ambulance Cymru	Support Community responders this Christmas.
Councillor G. James And Councillor R. Matthews	£500 £250 x 2)	Fuelling Innovative and Resourceful Education (fire) Home Education	The grant will be used to pay for activities for the children.
Councillor C. Price	£200	Ysgol Feithrin Pontypŵl	We recently experienced a break in and now wish to install a new security light, camera and ring door bell over each entrance to ensure the building is safe and secure at all times.

PONTYPOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OPERATES UNDER THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE



Pontypool Community Council
Cyngor Cymuned Pont-Y-Pŵl

NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL TESTIMONIAL

Please ensure this form is returned to the PCC office by Friday 17th January to be considered at January Full Council

NOMINEE NAME:

ADDRESS OR WORKPLACE:

CONTACT EMAIL:.....

(nominee will only be contacted if successful, and confirmation received from the nominator first)

1. *Outstanding service to the community.
2. *Outstanding achievement.
3. *Overcoming adversity.

*Please indicate category they are nominated for and give reason for nomination below:

Nominated by (Name):

Contact details (email):

(telephone):

Address/Ward:

Date:

Signed:

**Full Council
Wednesday 27th November 2024
Lights & Cherry Picker for Garndiffaith Millenium Hall**

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the hire costs for a cherry picker to assist with lighting the adopted tree at Garndiffaith Millenium Hall.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Min 295 Full Council confirmed the plan to adopt and light the existing tree at Garndiffaith Millenium Hall.
- 2.2 The Project Officer has contacted a local contact and arranged for the hire of a cherry picker and personnel to dress the tree at a cost of £200.
- 2.3 As the tree has been previously lit using a mains power supply, the intention would be to light the tree using surplus plug in lights from storage.

3.0 Budget

- 3.1 Cherry Picker quote = £65 per hour plus labour costs.
- 3.2 Estimated time is 1.5- 2hours, resulting in an overall cost of £200.

4.0 Recommended

- 4.1 That the information be noted.
- 4.2 That the funds be vired from general reserves as part of the wider "Live Christmas Tree" project.

**Projects & Events Manager
November 2024**

AGENDA ITEM 15

Larger Local Councils 9 October 2024

One Voice Wales

Minutes of the Larger Council's Meeting held remotely on Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 10.30am

Present: Members

Councillor Phillip Ashe	Bay of Colwyn Town Council
Councillor Phil Bowyer	Abergavenny Town Council
Councillor Alison Davies	Welshpool Town Council
Councillor Paul Fletcher	Abergele Town Council
Councillor Simon Griffiths	Brackla Community Council
Councillor Jane Harris	Pontarddulais Town Council
Councillor Alan Hunter	Abergele Town Council
Councillor Elizabeth Hunt	Pontypool Community Council
Councillor Gwenfair Jones	Gwersyllt Community Council
Councillor Jim MacTaggart	Chepstow Town Council
Councillor Carol Marubbi	Llandudno Town Council
Councillor Louis McGrath	Pentyrch Community Council
Councillor Sian Meredith	Llandrindod Wells Town Council
Councillor John Miller	Neath Town Council
Councillor Glyn Morvan	Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council
Councillor Ali Musaied	Neath Town Council
Councillor Mike Theodoulou	Pembrey and Burry Port Town Council (Chair, One Voice Wales)
Councillor Carrie Townsend Jones	Mumbles Community Council
Councillor Martin Williams	St Brides Minor Community Council

Present: Clerks and other officers

Karen Brown	Buckley Town Council
Kathryn Charles	Neath Town Council
David Davies	Llanedi Community Council
Mandy Evans	Abergele Town Council
Tony Graham	Pontypridd Town Council
Ryan Grimward	Abergele Town Council
Lisa McMail	Pontypool Community Council
Susan Rodaway	Pontarddulais Town Council
Sandra Rosser	Abergavenny Town Council
Will Rowlands	Aberystwyth Town Council
Dave Sheridan	Gwersyllt Community Council
Dylan Thomas	Towyn & Kinnel Bay Town Council

Apologies for Absence: Members

Councillor Mike Cuddy	Penarth Town Council (Chair)
Councillor Mal Davies	Llantrisant Community Council
Councillor Robert Hatton	Monmouth Town Council
Councillor Steve Parker	Cornelly Community Council
Councillor Gareth Rice	Briton Ferry Town Council

Apologies for Absence: Clerks and other officers

Emma Boylan	Penarth Town Council
Tina Earley	Bay of Colwyn Town Council
Ed Humphries	Newtown and Llanllwchaearn Town Council
Vanessa Lewis Camacho	Haverfordwest Town Council

One Voice Wales: Officers in attendance

Lyn Cadwallader: Chief Executive
Paul Egan: Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager
Emma Goode: Cost-of-Living Crisis Project Manager
David Collins: Governance and Policy Practice Development Officer

Councillor Mike Theodoulou took the Chair in the absence of Councillor Mike Cuddy.

LLC 2024/49 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for Absence are set out above.

LLC 2024/50 Declarations of Personal Interest.

None

LLC 2024/51 Local Government and Housing Committee

Senedd Cymru's Local Government and Housing Committee was undertaking an inquiry into the [role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector](#). The terms of reference for the inquiry were reported.

The Chief Executive outlined the background to the inquiry and its timetable. He also described the steps which One Voice Wales had taken to consult Member Councils, which included an on-line consultation event held on 1 October 2024. Councils were encouraged to submit observations direct to the inquiry by Friday 18 October 2024, and to One Voice Wales to help shape a response.

The Chief Executive referred to discussions held with the Chair of One Voice Wales and Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government about the inquiry. He had sought to clarify certain aspects of the review with the Cabinet Secretary. She had indicated that the holding of a review into the Community and Town Council sector in 2025 would depend on the outcome of the current inquiry and the work of the Democratic Health Task and Finish Group.

The Chief Executive highlighted concerns about the timing of the inquiry and the short consultation period. He considered that this had hampered the ability of Councils and One Voice Wales to fully consider any response.

The Chair drew attention to the changing environment within which Community and Town Councils were performing and the need to put in place structures to respond to change. He highlighted some of the factors which he considered had informed the development of the terms of reference for the inquiry.

Councils considered each aspect of the work of the inquiry in turn. Observations are set out below. Comments made in the chat menu were also recorded. The Chief Executive updated Larger Councils on issues raised on 1 October 2024 as part of these discussions.

- (i) The role and value of community and town councils in Wales.
- Councils were being asked to take on more services and responsibilities. Community and Town Councils were now more valid than ever. The timing of an inquiry into the role and purpose had therefore come as a surprise to some.
 - There was widespread recognition that many services were best delivered closest to local communities.
 - The direct level of democracy was an important feature of Community and Town Councils. Councils helped to intervene in resolving local issues and provided an important representational role at the grass roots of communities.
 - There was a need to focus on service delivery.
 - Councils discussed the rationale for a de minimis size for Community and Town Councils. Councils varied considerably in their size and shape. One size did not fit all.
 - Larger, expanded Councils would lead to increased precepts with the cost per household being evenly applied. Larger Councils could become hubs if amalgamations took place.
 - Banding together smaller councils might lead to friction occurring between the competing demands of long-established communities
 - Some Councils considered that the requirements for exercising the General Power of Competence were too restrictive. This was a barrier to widespread adoption and use of the power.
 - The delivery of place-based services by Councils could play an important part in any future model for Community and Town Councils.

- It was important that Welsh Government gave a clear message about how it saw the purpose and role of Community and Town Councils.
- (ii) Whether the sector is fit for purpose in an evolving local government landscape.
- It was important that Members had the ability and capacity to receive and understand new information about responsibilities, powers, and service delivery. Training for Members was key. Some mandatory training was considered necessary.
 - There was a need for Councils to invest in staff development.
 - There was a need for more praise and support from the WG and principal councils for the work of Community and Town Councils.
 - The view was expressed that there should be limitations on the number of times Members could stand for re-election. A more regular turnover of Members could help to ensure that Councils remained vibrant.
 - It was important that Councils received the recognition for their achievements and services. Credibility was critical to ensure that Councils were seen as relevant and meaningful.
 - Many Councils made important contributions to wider community resilience and the development of effective partnerships with County Councils and others.
 - Adverse publicity and dialogue across social media could act as a deterrent to encourage candidates to stand for election.
 - Attendance and quoracy could be adversely impacted through some of the external pressures referenced above.
 - There was limited evidence to support a reduction in numbers of councillors.
 - Some 8,000 Members provide considerable local resources for community benefit and a greater workload level might discourage local people from standing for election.
 - There would undoubtedly be mounting pressures for a considerable increase in remuneration for Members.

- (iii) Governance and scrutiny arrangements and its impact on accountability and transparency.
- The Chair echoed the observations expressed by Councils on 1 October 2024.
 - Some Councils reiterated concerns that the requirements for exercising the General Power of Competence were too restrictive. This was a barrier to widespread adoption and use of the power. A rigid external audit regime meant that it was too easy to lose the ability to exercise the power.
 - Councils who received a qualified audit opinion should be supported to help them introduce improvements and understand the audit requirements. There was a role for SLCC in working with Clerks to understand the reasons and causes of qualified audits.
 - There was consensus amongst Larger Councils that many audits gave rise to qualified opinions as a result of administrative or clerical failings which could be dealt with more sympathetically by auditors. The time taken to complete audits was highlighted as a cause of concern. Delays could impact on Councils claiming eligibility to exercise the General Power of Competence and also have implications for setting budgets.
 - The increased governance and financial obligations on Community and Town Councils could lead to significant resource implications and higher precepts. Councils received limited support in resolving these challenges.
- (iv) Scope of digital and new technology to improve decision-making, service provision and participation in local democratic processes.
- The benefits of digitalisation placed some Councils at a disadvantage if they lacked the capacity or skills to fully embrace digital solutions.
 - Some Councils suggested that there could be a role for One Voice Wales in providing IT support. There were calls for the development of a basic digital framework to include use of email. Support was also requested in relation to security and Cloud-based storage.
 - Hybrid meetings brought particular challenges for simultaneous translation.
 - The role of One Voice Wales in providing practice development guidance and training was highly valued.

- (v) How new powers and responsibilities for this tier of government are utilised to support communities.
- Initiatives such as the introduction of the General Power of Competence failed to address any shortcomings in Members' competence where training was so important.
 - Candidates were dissuaded from standing for election to Councils for a wide range of reasons which needed to be addressed.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) The observations set out above in relation to the lines of inquiry to be followed by the Local Government and Housing Committee are used to inform a response to the inquiry by One Voice Wales.
- (2) One Voice Wales expresses the view that major, structural reviews such as the above inquiry should feature a consultation period of at least three months in order to allow meaningful consultation and preparation of responses.

LLC 2024/52

Keynote Speaker: Emma Goode, Cost-of-Living Crisis Project Manager, One Voice Wales

The Chair welcomed [Emma Goode](#) to the meeting. Emma presented to Larger Councils on the work of the Cost-of-Living Team. Her detailed presentation helped Councils understand the challenges facing communities and the ways in which One Voice Wales could help Councils address the cost-of-living crisis. Potential initiatives for Councils included food banks, Warm Spaces, Lunch Clubs, Hobby Groups, Coffee Mornings and other wellbeing activities, Webinars, social media activity and other networking opportunities helped to engage Councils and raise awareness of challenges, opportunities and case studies. The development of community transport facilities was highlighted as an important example of an area where Councils could help connect individuals to vital services.

Emma considered that the work of many Councils in tackling the cost-of-living crisis was an important factor to highlight to the Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector. It was an example of how Councils could make a real impact in their communities and take a lead in supporting and delivering community initiatives.

Copies of Emma's presentation were available from the Team.

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It was **Resolved** that Councils are encouraged to seek guidance from the Cost-of-Living Crisis Team if they were considering ways of introducing anti-poverty measures in their communities

LLC 2024/53

Minutes of meeting held on 17 April 2024

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 April 2024.

It was **Resolved** that, subject to the addition of the name of Councillor Carol Marubbi (Llandudno Town Council) to the list of Members present and the removal of an entry in the attendance list relating to Councillor Sian Meredudd (Llandrindod Wells Town Council), whose name was recorded twice, the minutes are confirmed as a correct record.

LLC 2024/54

Matters arising from the meeting held on 17 April 2024, not otherwise included on the agenda

It was **Resolved** that any other matters arising from the minutes are addressed under the appropriate agenda items set out below.

LLC 2024/55

Improved working arrangements with Principal Councils/WLGA.

Larger Councils received an oral report on progress from the Chief Executive. He confirmed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had been agreed with the WLGA. The MoU would provide a framework for the relationship between One Voice Wales and the WLGA. It would be formally launched at the National Conference on 16 October 2024. The Chief Executive outlined the broad terms of the MoU.

Members discussed the position of the WLGA in relation to the Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector.

Members also discussed issues relating to community asset transfers. The Chief Executive advised that, wherever possible, assets should be acquired on a freehold basis. The Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager referred to training which was available from One Voice Wales in relation to transfer of assets and devolution of services.

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.

LLC 2024/56

One Voice Wales National Conference Wednesday 16 October March 2024

Larger Councils received an oral report on progress from the Chief Executive. He outlined the agenda for the event and the range of speakers who would be in attendance. He explained that the conference would provide an opportunity to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the creation of One Voice Wales and 50th anniversary

of Community and Town Councils. The conference would also coincide with the Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector, which gave a renewed focus to the event. The conference would showcase the work of individuals Councils and One Voice Wales

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.

LLC 2024/57

Sharing of Best Practice: Attendees to share examples of their own areas of best practice.

Councils were invited to give a brief description of initiatives that are being planned or have been implemented in the past 18 months. This would assist in the sharing of good practice.

It was **Resolved** that, in view of the amount of business under discussion at the meeting, Councils are encouraged to submit any examples of Best Practice direct to the Chief Executive .

LLC 2024/58

Good Practice Guidance

Larger Councils received an oral update from the Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager.

A Practice Development Note would shortly be circulated in relation to putting in place terms of reference for Council committees. The preparation of guidance in relation to event management was also under consideration. New model financial regulations would also be issued in the near future, following translation.

Members noted that information in relation to the 2004 Pay Scheme for Clerks had been included within guidance circulated about the recruitment and retention of staff. It was noted that the 2004 pay scheme was being reviewed nationally by NALC, OVW and SLCC.

The [Finance & Governance Toolkit for Community & Town Councils](#) was due for review later in 2024. The toolkit had proved a valuable resource for Councils.

Information would be available to support those Councils affected by any changes arising from Community Boundary Reviews would be available in due course relating to financial, governance and employment issues. The Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager also explained procedures which would affect Clerks should their Councils be merged or abolished.

It was **Resolved** that Larger Local Councils submit any suggestions for future Practice Development Notes to the Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager.

LLC 2024/59

Joint One Voice Wales/SLCC event

Members noted that the Annual Joint OVW and SLCC Event would be held remotely on Wednesday 20 November 2024 on the general theme of 'Democratic Health and Effective Governance in an Ever-Changing World. The Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government would attend the event along with Deryck Evans of Audit Wales and a representative of the Democratic Health Task and Finish Group.

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.

LLC 2024/60

Councillor Training and Consultancy work

Larger Councils received an oral report from Paul Egan, Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager.

There were still free places available to attend certain core modules, but it was important that Members who had intended to take up the free places attended the courses rather than withdraw at short notice.

Members noted that new training would be provided in relation to digital health. Consultancy services continued to offer considerable support to Councils. New consultants would be sought to extend the service available.

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.

LLC 2024/61

Policy Matters

Larger Councils received an oral report from the Chief Executive.

The Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into the role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector represented a current policy priority for the organisation and the Community and Town Council sector as a whole. Members also discussed issues around community asset transfer.

It was **Resolved** that:

- (1) Councils are encouraged to submit observations direct to the Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry.
- (2) Councils are also encouraged to provide any information to inform the response of One Voice Wales to the inquiry.
- (3) Councils are encouraged to provide the Chief Executive with any examples of recent transfer of community assets.

LLC 2024/62

Communications Matters

Larger Councils received an oral report from the Chief Executive.

Members noted that good progress was being made in relation to the development of a new website.

Communications would be streamlined via the rebranding of existing digital communication tools. A bimonthly newsletter would include items of general policy information such as progress re community assets, Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing etc. A fortnightly bulletin would provide practice-based information such as details of training, vacancies, and public appointments.

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.

LLC 2024/63

Finance Matters

Larger Councils received an oral report from the Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager.

Members noted that Audit Wales would soon be consulting Councils on new audit fees. The Deputy Chief Executive and Resources Manager also explained that Councils themselves were required to fund any costs arising from audit investigations of objections to Council accounts submitted by electors.

There was consensus amongst Larger Councils that many audits gave rise to qualified opinions as a result of administrative or clerical failings which could be dealt with more sympathetically by auditors. This had important implications for the exercise of the General Power of Competence. The Chief Executive confirmed that he had raised this with the Cabinet Secretary.

It was **Resolved** that Councils are encouraged to respond to the consultation exercise being undertaken by Audit Wales in relation to audit fees.

LLC 2024/64

Guest Presenters for Future Meetings

Members were invited to offer any proposals for guest speakers at future meetings. Suggestions included Rachel Carter (Local Places for Nature Officer), Save a Life Cymru and Derek Walker (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales)

It was **Resolved** that the above suggestions for speakers are agreed. *

LLC 2024/65

Matters to be referred to the National Executive Committee

There were no matters which Members wished to refer to the National Executive Committee.

It was **Resolved** that the position is noted.

LLC 2024/66

Dates of future meetings

Members noted that forthcoming meetings would be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday 12 February 2025
- Wednesday 16 April 2025
- Wednesday 2 July 2025 (Innovative Practice Conference)

It was **Resolved** that the information is noted.