

# Ogmore Valley Community Council Cyngor Cymuned Cwm Ogwr



## Full Council Meeting

Cyfarfod Llawn y Cyngor

**Tuesday 28 March 2023, 6.30 pm via zoom**  
Dydd Mawrth 28 Mawrth 2023, 6.30 pm yng zoom

## MINUTES

### In Attendance

*Cllr Dhanisha Patel (Chair)*  
*Cllr Rhys Goode (left at 8.20pm)*  
*Cllr Margaret Lloyd (joined at 7pm)*  
*Cllr Hywel Williams (joined at 6.40pm)*  
*Cllr David Pound*  
*Cllr Sheryl Wasley (joined at 7.20pm)*

*Scott Allin – Clerk*  
*Charlotte Llewellyn – Assistant Clerk/RFO*  
*Ashleigh Davies – Warden (left at 6.45pm)*

### 140 Apologies for Absence

There were the following apologies from Councillors:-

Cllr David Newman – holiday commitments  
Cllr Angela Jones – work commitments

**Resolved: members unanimously accepted the apologies for absence.**

### 141 Public Address (an opportunity for members of the public to bring any issues to the attention of the council) TEN MINUTES SESSION ONLY

The following prospective councillors who had applied for co-option attended as public observers:-

- Craig Batchelor Howells (Evanstown)

- Geoff Sheriff (Nantymoel)
- Kevin Thorne (Blackmill)
- Finola Pickwell (Ogmore Vale)

It was noted that a separate meeting would be held on 3 April 2023 to formally interview the prospective Councillors.

#### **142 Declarations of Interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct & Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992**

There were no declarations of interest.

*Cllr Hywel Williams joined the meeting.*

#### **143 Warden's report**

It was noted that the Warden's activities included the following tasks:-

- Local Nature Partnership meeting in Bridgend.
- More Chainsaw training to complete the two tickets for Maintenance and Cross-cutting + Felling 200mm – 360mm trees.
- Passed the Chainsaw Assessment for both tickets.
- Met with BCBC at Aberfields pathway with Clerk to help with quotes.
- Sanding wood slices ready for scavenger hunt.
- Printing, laminating, and putting up Easter scavenger hunt flyers.
- Mini reptile survey with Pencoed students and Liam Olds. Worked with BCBC and contractor felling trees around the picnic area.
- Bramble along road leading up to Washeries car park has been cut

It was noted that the Warden's report would in future include the time spent on different activities for the Council to have a clearer understanding of resources requirements.

*The Warden left the meeting.*

#### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL**

##### **144 Approval of Minutes and Recommendations (a) Draft Full Council 28 February 2023**

**Resolved to Approve the Minutes of the 28 February 2023 Full Council meeting.**

### **(b) Draft Personnel Committee 27 February 2023**

It was noted that there were insufficient members of the Personnel Committee attending the Council meeting to approve the minutes.

**Resolved to defer approval of the Minutes of the 27 February 2023 Personnel Committee.**

### **(c) Draft Finance & General Committee 21 March 2023**

**Resolved to Approve the Minutes of the 21 March 2023 Finance & General Committee.**

#### **145 Matters Arising from previous meetings:-**

##### ***Council Meeting***

- ***PCSO***

It was noted that the PCSO meeting has been difficult to arrange and that instead a quarterly invite to Council would be appropriate as well as the Clerk joining the 'Cuppa with a Copper' events.

- ***Easter Scavenger Hunt***

It was noted that the Easter Scavenger Hunt was planned for 2 April 2023 at the Washeries.

- ***Christmas lights***

It was noted that a meeting with the contractors regarding Christmas lights had been arranged for 11 April 2023 as follows:-

Nantymoel – 1.30pm – Cllr Jones to attend  
Ogmore Vale/Wyndham – 2pm – Cllr Lloyd to attend  
Blackmill/Glynogwr – 2.40pm  
Evanstown – 3.30pm

Other Councillors are welcome to attend the meetings with the Clerk and contractor and further meetings would be arranged as necessary.

- ***Pop-up banner***

It was noted that the Assistant Clerk has been liaising with the supplier regarding a design for the pop-up banner and this design would be shared with Councillors for comments before finalising.

**Resolved – To share draft pop-up poster design with Councillors for comments.**

- ***Windfarm Allocations***

It was noted that all payment details had been sent to Pennant Walters and it was expected that the payments would be made by the end of March 2023.

- ***OV Awards***

It was noted that photos and a summary of the 2022 awards ceremony had been posted on the OVCC website and facebook page together with the nomination form for the 2023 awards.

- ***Evanstown Buses***

It was noted that a meeting had been arranged on 4 April 2023 at 5pm in Evanstown with Cllr Pound and Cllr Wasley to discuss a letter to the bus company.

- ***Evanstown Bus Shelters etc***

The Clerk noted that he had contacted Janine Nightingale in BCBC regarding the community feedback about issues reported on Fix My Street not being actioned. A reply is awaited.

Cllr Goode also noted that he has raised the issue of lack of progress on FixMyStreet with BCBC.

***Personnel Committee***

- ***Succession planning***

It was noted that the process for replacement of the Clerk will start in June 2023.

- ***Holidays***

It was noted that all Councillors were around in the next month apart from Cllr Patel and Cllr Goode who have a few days off around 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April.

*Cllr Margaret Lloyd joined the meeting*

## ***Finance & General Committee***

### ***- Annual Returns***

It was noted that 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 Annual Returns were qualified due to the issues reported previously in the Audit Wales 'Inadequacies in Governance Arrangements, Financial Management and Internal Control'.

It was noted that the 2019/20 and 2020/21 Annual Returns were unqualified but that there is currently a qualification on the 2021/22 Annual Return relating to cash received relating to the Windfarm and VAT as well as a reconciliation issue that is being followed up by the Clerk.

### ***- Internal Audit responses***

The responses outlined in appendix 1 were noted and agreed.

### ***- Investments***

It was noted that the Clerk, RFO and Cllr Pound would review potential savings accounts and report back.

### ***- Fixed Asset Register***

The new Fixed Asset Register was noted and agreed.

### ***- Payments***

It was noted that payments are authorised by Full Council with supporting evidence and the Chair usually then makes the actual payment by electronic bank transfer. However, in February 2023, the Chair had issues accessing the bank account, so on the Chair's authorisation, the Clerk made the payments and sent the Chair confirmation from the bank via statements that the payments had been made correctly. It was agreed that this was an acceptable back-up process in emergencies but that the Vice Chair should also be given access to the bank in order to provide another level of resilience in the system.

**Resolved – Clerk to makes payments in emergency cases with authorisation of Chair and confirmation of actions. The Financial Regulations and Internal Audit response at appendix 1 to be amended as above.**

## **146 Finances – 2022/23**

### **(a) formal approval of payments March 23**

It was noted that Community Councillors who are also senior local authority councillors cannot be paid any money apart from money for care and personal assistance, travel, food and accommodation. It was noted that there are still some bank details for Councillors outstanding before payments can be made.

**Resolved to approve the Schedule of Payments as attached as appendix 2.**

### **(b) formal approval of the bank reconciliation February 23**

**Resolved to approve the bank reconciliation from February 2023**

### **(c) expenditure against the budget end of February 23**

It was noted that at the end of February 2023 Council spend was £67k from a budget of £107k. There is approximately a further £13k to be spent in March 2023 which would give spend of around £80k for the year. The reason for £27k underspend is mainly £12k less on staffing costs as the RFO post was vacant during the year and £10k less on elections due to insufficient candidates.

It was noted that the Council is finally starting to receive the invoices from Audit Wales.

**Resolved – To approve the expenditure versus budget report to end of February 2023.**

## **147 Blackmill bus shelter**

BCBC had noted that the panels of the bus shelter at Dimbath Avenue, Blackmill are blurred from the paint/graffiti and eight panels and need replacing at a cost of around £750. BCBC has asked for a contribution from the Community Council.

It was noted that bus shelters are the responsibility of BCBC but that the Community Council could contribute towards the works.

**Resolved – To fund 50% of the costs of the replacement panels up to a maximum of £375.**

*Scott Hancock (HALO) joined the meeting between 7.25pm and 7.40pm*

## **148 Active For Life**

Scott Hancock of Halo joined the meeting and noted their application for funding for Active For Life camps for 2023.

It was noted that 2022 was a successful year which had on average 30 children between 8-12 yrs old in attendance where they were kept active while gaining valuable knowledge of local emergency services and charities.

It was noted that the playscheme would be 2 weeks over the Easter Holidays, 6 weeks over Summer Holidays and 1 week at October Half term and would be based on 2 staff potential for 1,350 sessions at a cost of £4,500.

It was noted that a proposal for Summer Playscheme in Evanstown would be very strongly welcomed.

It was noted that any publicity should make it clear that this is funded by Ogmores Valley Community Council.

It was noted that Community Councillors would be welcome to join the celebration of 30 years since the opening of the Halo Centre with a small event on 8 May 2023.

### **Resolved**

- **To approve a budget of £4,500 for 9 weeks of playscheme at Halo, Ogmores Vale.**
- **To request a proposal from Halo for a Summer Playscheme at Evanstown.**

### **149 Evanstown Warden Bid to Pennant Walters**

The draft bid for a Pennant Walters supported and branded Warden for Evanstown and Glynogwr was discussed.

It was noted that Pennant Walters set aside £60,000 per annum and that £10,000 would fund a fixed term one-year part time Warden for Evanstown and Glynogwr who could:-

- make minor repairs to public amenities such as benches and cleaning bus shelters;
- keep footpaths clear of weeds and overhanging branches so the communities can enjoy the open spaces especially parents with prams and older people with disability issues;
- working with external organisations such as Tanio, to provide wildlife projects such as Children's Scavenger hunts.

It was noted that the Community Council would underwrite any unforeseen costs above £10,000 and would share materials and equipment.

**Resolved – To support the bid to Pennant Walters for a fixed term one-year part time Warden for Evanstown and Glynogwr.**

## 150 Benches

It was noted that the Council is still waiting on the decision of CTNN regarding funding for benches in the Washeries and Aberfields but in the meantime it would be appropriate to address the other benches in the valley with the underspend in the 2022/23 budget.

It was noted that Ogmore Priide had undertaken a survey of benches in the valley excluding Evanstown and that this would be shared with the Clerk.

It was noted that Ogmore Priide could refurbish benches for around £80 each while complete replacement benches varied in price from a few hundred pounds to over £1,000 depending on size etc. The Clerk would use the Ogmore Priide bench survey to provide a costing of the total size of the issue.

It was also noted that while the vast majority of benches are the property of BCBC, there were some benches in Blackmill that were thought to be Community Council property while others could be owned by V2C. Cllr Goode agreed to pursue with V2C more detail on their ownership of benches.

Finally, it was noted that if the Council replaced benches it would need to agree who would undertake the ongoing maintenance.

**Resolved – To allocate £5k per ward to replace/restore benches as a first call but the allocation to be flexible and could be used for a different purpose if agreed by the Ward Councillors.**

## 151 Flowers

It was noted that in May 2021 the Council agreed to make £75 available annually for each of the four wards (Nantymoel, Blackmill, Ogmore Vale and Evanstown) to spend on Flower Bulbs. Some of the wards have used their funds while others have not and it was agreed that the actual spend would be identified.

It was proposed to increase this sum to £100 per ward.

**Resolved – To agreed £100 per ward to be spend in conjunction with the Warden on flower bulbs.**

## 152 To consider applications for donations and grants

There were no applications this month although it was thought that a proposal to celebrate the coronation would be received in April 2023.



## ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND UPDATE

### **153 To receive a Report from the Clerk - Aberfields CAT**

The Council agreed at its last meeting that the Clerk would draft a letter on behalf of Borough Cllrs Williams and Goode requesting BCBC to provide a timetable for a 3G training pitch and floodlights at Aberfields as outlined in the Labour manifesto. However, the Labour manifesto outlining the promise has not yet been located so further investigation will be undertaken before the letter is sent to the Leader and John Spanswick in BCBC.

The Clerk and Cllrs Goode and Williams will try to locate the Labour manifesto document.

### **- Evanstown CAT**

It was noted that the Clerk is working with BAVO on setting up a new charity for the Community Centre as the current trustees are resigning at the end of March 2023.

Following discussion with the Charities Commission there is no definitive recommendation on which charity model (CIO) to go for between the following and a steer from the Council would be useful:-

- *The 'foundation' model – the CIO will have a 'narrow' membership of only trustees/managers.*
- *The 'association' model – the CIO will have a wider membership, including members other than the charity trustees, who will have the power to vote, for example, at an annual general meeting.*

It was agreed that the Foundation Model should be followed at least initially.

### **Resolved – To follow the Foundation Model.**

### **- Washeries Bridge**

It was noted that despite the replacement of the Washeries Bridge being a priority amongst the local community, BCBC has yet to find the funding to replace it. It was noted that BCBC has tried to restrict access to the bridge but this is problematic as people still use it, as the main path is seen to be busy with bikes.

### **Resolved – Clerk to attempt to identify a capital funding source that includes future maintenance costs.**

*Cllr Rhys Goode left the meeting at 8.20pm*



## **Responses to Ogmore Valley CC FY2021-22 Internal Audit Recommendations**

### **Review of Accounting Records & Bank Account Management**

Recommendation 1 – The Town Clerk/RFO and Members should consider the acquisition of a fully functional accounting package, such as Rialtas Business Systems Alpha platform, for its current and future financial management and recording needs, including regular financial reporting.

#### **Council Response**

***The Council reviewed Rialtas and decided that the current spreadsheet cash book is sufficient for the Council's current needs. However, a new RFO has been appointed in September 2022 and this decision will kept under review.***

### **Review of Expenditure**

R2 The Clerk should consider acquiring an invoice certification stamp (as above). The stamp should be applied to each payment document, and the required authorisation information entered into the relevant field for each payment document.

#### **Council Response**

***The Council considered this recommendation and decided that the current system whereby all payments are authorised at each Council meeting and all supporting evidence is also provided to all Council members is sufficient. Furthermore, the Chair also checks supporting invoices for evidence prior to making the actual payments and often requests further information.***

***Clerk to makes payments in emergency cases with authorisation of Chair and confirmation of actions.***

### **Review of Budgetary Control & Reserves**

R3 The Clerk should ensure that the full value of the Precept being levied is recorded in the Minutes of the Full Community Council, in addition to the 'Band D' charge.

#### **Council Response**

### **Extract from 31 October Finance Committee**

#### **13     *Review of 2022/23 Budget, Precept for 2023/24 and Budget for 2023/24***

***The spend figures from 22/23 were reviewed by the Committee and uprated for inflation and any adjustments such as the full year effect of changes plus any new initiatives. A small reduction of £250 for the Postage, Stationery and Printing budget for 2023/24 was agreed to reflect that less items are being posted out and more work is being done virtually which also reduces the Council's carbon footprint.***

***It was also noted that the Council will review ways of reducing energy costs through, for example, more solar powered Christmas trees and changing the dressing of trees to solar power.***

***It was noted that the Working from Home Allowance and officer's wages would be reviewed at the Personnel Committee. It was noted that the insurance budget included a contingency for any further insurance increases and that there was also a reserve of £30k set aside for Audit Wales costs.***

***Consideration was then given to budgeted levels of income for the forthcoming year by calculating the precept based on an estimate of 2,575 households paying £36.01 per annum. The spending and income were then reviewed together to see how affordable the plans are. It was decided not to increase the precept for 2023/24 given the pressures on the community from the cost-of-living crisis together with the fact that the Council still had balances from the Covid period which have yet to be spent. Reserves will be used to fund the gap between acceptable precept level and spending plans.***

***Resolved – To approve the revised budget for 2023/24 as outlined in Appendix 1 and to retain the Precept at £36 per household.***

#### **Extract from 28 November Full Council Meeting**

##### ***- 2023/24 Precept***

***It was agreed that given the cost of living pressures on households, the precept should remain at £36 per household which given the level of inflation would be a real terms reduction.***

***Resolved – To approve the Precept at £36 per household***

#### **Fixed Assets**

R4 The Clerk should ensure that a Spreadsheet Fixed Asset Register is developed for the Council's Fixed Asset Register requirements. A sample spreadsheet has been provided as an attachment to this report, for the Clerk's information.

#### **OVCC Response**

***Agreed – a new spreadsheet has been designed for year ending 2022/23***

#### **Review of Investments and Loans**

R5 The Clerk and Members should accelerate the development and adoption of the proposed Treasury Management Policy to ensure that, as far as it is practicably possible to do so, the Council's reserves remain protected.

#### **OVCC Response**

A new Investment Strategy has been agreed

R6 The Clerk and Members should consider investigating investment opportunities, both to mitigate the risk of having all its funds held on deposit with the Co-operative Bank and to maximise the return on its funds on behalf of its constituents.

### **OVCC Response**

The Council examined this issue at the Finance Committee – see extract below. However further review of CCLA indicated that it was not covered by the FSCS leading to the 21 March 2023 Finance Committee discussion – see also below.

### **Extract from 6 September 2023 Finance Committee**

*It was noted that the Council's cash balance at the end of July 2022 was £240,017 and was all held with the Co-operative Bank. Advice was that £85,000 of this sum was protected by the FSCS guarantee to protect against financial institutions going bankrupt. It was recognised that the risk of financial institutions going bankrupt was low. It was also noted that there was a balance to be struck between banking charges, the level of service provided, interest paid, cost of administration and security of deposits. It was noted that CCLA had been operating for over 50 years and was used by many local authorities and charities so had a track record of protecting public funds although it was recognised that all investments had some risk.*

**Resolved – To recommend to Council that:**

- ***a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund be set up and to transfer £120,000 to this account leaving the remaining funds with Co-op.***
- ***the Investment Strategy as outlined in appendix 1 be approved.***

**At the 21 March 2023 Finance and General Committee, the following was agreed**

*It was noted whilst many Councils use CCLA to deposit spare cash, they are not covered by the FSCS as they are funds rather than cash. It was noted that there are instant cash savings accounts such as Unity Bank which are covered by FSCS and it was agreed that in the current market uncertainty the preference is to deposit funds in a savings account covered by FSCS.*

**Resolved – Clerk, RFO and Cllr Pound to review potential savings accounts and report back to Committee.**

**Appendix 2**

**March Payments 2023**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ref</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Scott Allin	Clerk Salary	10323	£1,228.65
Charlotte Llewellyn	RFO Salary	20323	£578.86
Ashleigh Davies	Warden Salary	30323	£734.71
Scott Allin	Clerk Expenses	EXP29	£47.69
Ashleigh Davies	Warden Expenses	EXP30	£32.17
Charlotte Llewellyn	RFO Expenses	EXP30	£39.90
Scott Allin	Home as Office quarter expenses	1HOQTR4	£54.00
Charlotte Llewellyn	Home as Office quarter expenses	2HOQTR4	£27.00
Ashleigh Davies	Home as Office quarter expenses	3HOQTR4	£13.50
HMRC	Tax – not including councillor allowance	615PB00145091	£611.49
Ogmore Vale Con Club	Windfarm – element from OVCC	DON10	£6,554.00
David Newman	Councillor Allowance	CLLR01	137.50 GROSS
Andrew McKay	Councillor Allowance	CLLR02	112.50 GROSS
Angela Jones	Councillor Allowance	CLLR03	137.50 GROSS
Margaret Lloyd	Councillor Allowance	CLLR04	137.50 GROSS
Ray Searle	Councillor Allowance	CLLR05	£62.50 GROSS
Sheryl Wasley	Councillor Allowance	CLLR06	£62.50 GROSS
Dhanisha Patel	Chair's Allowance	CLLR07	£1,200.00 GROSS
One Voice Wales	Membership	1019	£1,471.00
SWWS	Web training for RFO	19047	£60.00

