

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER 2002 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Councillor A.J. Pritchard – Vice Chairman Presiding

Councillors:

Mrs. M.E. Hughes, H.E. Styles and D.T. Wiltshire

Together with:

R. Gough (Personnel Manager - Advice and Consultancy), P. Neale (Health, Safety and Welfare Officer), M. Workman (Commercial Services Manager), P. Griffiths (Senior Corporate Safety Officer), D. Price (Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer), D. Griffiths (Insurance and Risk Manager), W. Griffiths (Senior Insurance Officer), G. Price (Admin Officer – Welfare and Central Support – Education and Leisure), Ms D. Llewellyn (Health, Safety and Back Care Adviser – Social Services) and Mrs. K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Safety Representatives

B. Barrowman, J. Reece, A. Jones, L. Horrocks, J. Poole, A. Morton and D. Williams.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.J. Bevan, P.C.W. Bailie and H. Price, Mrs. E. Thomas (Personnel Manager), B. Godsell (AEEU), Ms E. Davies (UNISON) and R. Agg (MPO).

1. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 9th May 2002 were received and noted.

REPORTS OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2. **European Week for Safety and Health at Work**

It was noted that the European Week for Safety and Health at Work would be held during week commencing 14th October and the Committee was informed that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had selected work related stress as the theme for the week.

To contribute to the event, the authority had therefore arranged for a half-day seminar to consider issues associated with stress management to be held at the Council Offices, Tredomen on the morning of Wednesday, 16th October. It was noted that invited speakers at the event would include the Principal Inspector HSE and an accredited Stress Management Advisor/Counsellor.

It was also noted that invitations to attend the event had been sent to all second and third tier officers and to members of the Corporate Safety Committee.

3. **Fire Safety Arrangements – Tredomen Offices**

The Committee noted the report that outlined details of the new fire arrangements and evacuation procedure at the Tredomen Offices, introduced following the recent movement of staff to and from the offices.

During consideration of this item, it was noted that the plan showing the evacuation procedure for the ground floor at Tredomen was incorrect and it was agreed that an amended plan would be produced for display in the Office.

4. **Proposed Changes to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.**

The report provided an update on the proposed changes to the Display Screen Equipment Regulations (L26) and the booklet entitled 'Easy Guide to the Regulations' (HSG 90).

Consideration was given to the main changes to the Regulations and it was noted that Regulation 3 was being amended to take account of a European Court case that had determined that the minimum requirements in the schedule should be applied to all workstations and not just those used by 'users' or 'operators'.

The increasing use of IT and display screen equipment by elected members was mentioned and the Committee discussed whether they would be included in the provisions of the new regulations. Following discussion, it was felt that the spirit of the new regulations should apply to elected members and it was therefore agreed that they should be circulated with copies of the 'Easy Guide to the Regulations' (HSG 90).

REPORTS OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

5. **Intranet**

The Committee noted the report that outlined details of the health and safety material that would be available on the authority's Intranet when it became operational.

6. **Sypol Update**

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the improvements to the system formatting Control of Substances Harzardous to Health (COSHH) assessments made by the authority.

It was noted that for a number of years, the authority had subscribed to Sypol, a commercial programme for making COSHH assessments. The system had recently been upgraded resulting in significant improvements for users and the authority had agreed to fund the extra cost of the upgraded system from the small surplus in the money set aside by each Directorate for the annual licence fee.

7. **Big Cheese**

The report provided details of the involvement of the Corporate Safety Unit in the running of the Big Cheese event during July 2002.

The Chairman and other members of the Committee commented on the efficient manner in which the event had been organised and wished to place on record their gratitude to all members of staff involved over the weekend and during the set up period and clearance of the site.

During discussion, reference was made to the growing popularity of the event and a Member asked whether consideration had been given to the provision of facilities for an air ambulance at the site.

Officers stated that they did not believe that this had been considered but agreed to raise the issue at the next Emergency Planning meeting.

8. Health and Safety Poster Campaign

The Committee noted the report that provided details of the poster campaign currently being undertaken by the Corporate Safety Unit in respect of needle-stick injuries and sun safety. It was also noted that posters on the subject of slips and trips would soon be distributed.

9. Health and Safety Seminar for Small Contractors

The Committee was informed that the Select Tender Working Group had expressed concern about the varying health and safety standards demonstrated by small contractors engaged in improvement grant and other small works on behalf of the authority. As a result, the Corporate Safety Unit had been asked to facilitate an awareness raising seminar for representatives of approximately one hundred companies.

The seminar was held at the Tredomen Offices on 10th September and included presentations from a representative of the Health and Safety Executive in respect of asbestos on small construction sites, the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996, personal protective equipment and a personal view of construction breaches of health and safety legislation.

The Committee acknowledged the benefits of providing health and safety information to companies undertaking work on behalf of the authority and it was suggested that small contractors should be required to attend similar seminars or events before being admitted to the Select Tender List.

Following discussion, it was agreed that this suggestion should be referred to the Select Tender Working Group for further consideration and that an update should be provided at the next Committee meeting.

10. Enforcement Action by the Health and Safety Executive

The Committee noted the report that provided details of enforcement action taken by the Health and Safety Executive in serving a Prohibition Notice on a building company working at a school within the county borough.

11. Proposed Legislation and Guidance

The Committee noted the report that provided an update on proposed changes in legislation and guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive and others.

12. Control of Legionella

The Committee noted the report that outlined the measures taken to prevent the generation and spread of legionella bacteria in premises operated by the authority.

13. Safety of Kitchen Floor, Tredomen

The report provided information on the results of the investigation into the condition of the flooring in the canteen kitchen at the Tredomen Offices.

It was noted that the Catering, Workplace Practices Manual required that on a daily basis, the kitchen, servery and washing up area floors were swept and wet mopped, using Caterclean 50 and

then allowed to dry.

In recent months, the daily wash had also been supplemented by a machine scrub every six weeks and it was reported that this would now be undertaken on a monthly basis to improve the situation.

The Committee noted the information provided.

14. **Accident Statistics**

The report informed the Committee of the numbers and types of industrial accidents which had occurred to staff, school pupils, clients of services provided by the authority and members of the public and which had been associated with the activities of the authority during the period 1st January to 31st March 2002.

During discussion, several members of the Committee emphasised the need to provide meaningful information in respect of the accident statistics and it was felt that comparisons with the previous quarter's statistics would be helpful as well as explanatory notes on any actions taken following a particular accident.

The Committee noted the information provided.

ISSUES RAISED BY SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

15. **Stress in the Workplace**

A Trade Union representative referred to cases of stress in the workplace and the Committee was advised of new guidelines to be followed when deciding whether or not to award damages for ill health caused by work related stress. The guidelines had been developed following a landmark Court of Appeal hearing that ruled that in future, employers would only be liable to pay damages for psychiatric injury caused by work related stress if it was reasonably foreseeable that a worker would fall ill as a result of their work and if the employer failed to take reasonable steps to protect the employee's health and safety.

Following discussion, it was agreed that a précis of the Court of Appeal judgement would be circulated to members of the Committee.

16. **Asbestos Issues**

Reference was made to the lack of asbestos awareness training for staff and to the fact that staff may have been exposed to asbestos during the course of their duties.

The Committee acknowledged the serious nature of the issues raised and felt that appropriate Trade Union representatives and Officers from the Corporate Safety Unit, Insurance Services, Property Services, Education, Housing and Technical Services should meet to discuss the issues in more detail. Following these discussions, a report could then be prepared for submission to Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Safety Committee to progress the issues further.

The meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.