



## COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE CHAMBER, PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT

Councillors:

A. McConnell, A. Gair, A. Hussey, J. Winslade, N. George, C. Gordon, L. Whittle, P. Cook, C. Thomas, T. Heron

Community Councils:

J. Rao, G. Davies, A. Gray, B. Campbell, C. Moss, F. Green, P. Bevan

Also Present:

H. Lancaster, V. Doyle, L. Lane, E. Sullivan, R. Barrett.

#### MEETING PROCEEDINGS

The Committee Services Officer reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website [Click Here to View](#).

**1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

It was moved and seconded that C. Councillor J. Rao be appointed Chair of the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee for the ensuing year and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that C. Councillor J. Rao be appointed Chair of the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

**2. TO APPOINT A VICE CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR.**

It was moved and seconded that Councillor A. Hussey be appointed Vice Chair of the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee for the ensuing year and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Councillor A. Hussey be appointed as Vice Chair of the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee for the ensuing year.

### **3. APOLOGIES**

Councillors: A. Angel, K. Etheridge, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, P. Leonard, T. Parry, J. Pritchard.

Community Councils: J. Hold (Clerk) and C. Councillor G. Edwards (Blackwood Town Council), J. Lloyd (Clerk) Aber Valley Community Councillor, A. Birkinshaw (Clerk) and Community Councillor P. Rosser (Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen Community Council), H. Williams (Clerk) and Community Councillor H. Llewellyn (Bargoed Town Council), C. Mortimer (Clerk – Llanbradach and Pwllpant Community Council and Gelligaer Community Council) and Community Councillor A. Stone (Gelligaer Community Council), D. Gronow (Clerk) and Community Councillor B. Gingell (New Tredegar Community Council), J. Garland (Clerk) (Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry Community Council), R. Hares (Clerk) (Maesycwmmmer Community Council), L. John (Clerk) (Nelson Community Council), A. Pallister (Clerk) (Darran Valley Community Council), H. Treherne (Penyrheol, Treceenydd and Energlyn Community Council), P. Davy (Clerk) (Caerphilly Town Council).

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the start or during the meeting.

### **5. MINUTES – 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

The minutes were received and noted.

### **6. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **7. COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FUND – PRESENTATION**

The presentation updated the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee on the Community Empowerment Fund. The Officer explained that over a number of years the Council has run regular Household Surveys or as they are now known the Caerphilly Conversation Resident Survey, one of the questions within that survey was around whether or not our communities felt that a community budget such as this one would be a good thing and more than three quarters of respondents thought that it would be a good idea and 98% of those in favour thought that opportunities like this would encourage communities to take even greater pride in where they live.

The establishment of the fund was agreed and a funding pot of just over £28,000 was allocated last year, this year it was noted that there had been a slight uplift with an allocation of just over £41,000 for this financial year to support community led initiatives. The Officer explained that Members agreed that the fairest way to allocate the fund was to divide it by the number of elected Members so last year it was split 73 ways and this year it has been split 69 ways in order to align the allocation to the number of County Borough Councillors there are now. This equates to an allocation of £4940 for every Councillors to work with their communities and spend on community projects.

The Sub Committee noted that due to the late launch of the fund in the Autumn of 2021 and the impact of the pre-election period only a couple of application rounds had been completed, and this meant that in several wards there have been underspends and it has been agreed that money from this first year would be rolled over into this year's allocation. Those Members who didn't spend some or all of their previous fund may find they have significantly more than £4940 in their fund pot.

The Officer outlined the type or themes of projects that would meet the funding criteria which were noted to be deliberately broad in order to invite in as many projects as possible within the 8 themes.

The Liaison Group noted the areas that could not be funded such as running costs, rents, energy or water bills etc. However newly formed groups that have come into existence within six months of them submitting an application can use funding for their start-up costs. However, that same project could not then reapply for year-on-year funding and retrospective costs could also not be recouped via the fund. Officers confirmed that as a Council, we were encouraging local groups to formally constitute themselves as this puts them in a stronger position to apply for various funding streams not just this one.

The Officer explained how the grant was very much targeted at grassroots community organisations and the voluntary sector and they must be non-profit making and based within Caerphilly County Borough. Groups must be incorporated and have an adopted constitution and must have a bank account in their own name. Charitable incorporated organisations which are registered with the Charity Commission can also apply if it can be shown that any profits are put back into the organisation itself.

It was noted that the maximum any group can apply for is generally £4940, the annual allocation for each Member, but the level of allocation would be a matter of discussion between the group with the individual Member as they may wish to support multiple projects and might not wish to give the funding to one group. Larger projects can approach the fund in a number of ways including match funding with a fund from another source or from their own funding. The Liaison Group noted that multiple ward Members can pool their allocation and give a greater sum to a single organisation. The minimum application under the fund was £1000 but this can be composed of mini projects making up that minimum requirement.

In terms of Community Councils although they were not eligible in their own rights to make an application, they did have an important role to play in successfully delivering the fund as their knowledge of community groups and organisation would be essential to raising awareness of the fund in communities.

Community Councils would be aware of community groups operating quite informally within communities that they might be able to work alongside to get on a more formal footing. There were also a number of support avenues available to groups including GAVO and the Council's Caerphilly Cares Team who would work alongside them to get them into a position where they would be able to bid into the Community Empowerment Fund.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the presentation and for their attendance.

Clarification was sought on the amount of money currently available in the fund, and concerns were expressed that this funding should not just sit in the Council's budget reserves unallocated. Members were advised that there was approximately £229,000 to be shared amongst the various wards, around £4940 per member. However, some wards would have considerably more than others and Officers would be working with these Members to try and identify projects to come forward and utilise the funding available. Officers agreed with the concerns raised and assurances were given that the Council would be working hard to get this money out to communities and making a difference. The Member then queried who made the final decision on funding approval and the Officer confirmed that an Officer Panel would consider every

application that comes in, should there be a need the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer would have overall responsibility.

Clarification was sought in relation to declarations of interest and what would happen if the County Borough Member proposing a project had a close association with the community group. It was noted that a lot of Councillors sat as Chairs and Vice Chairs of Community Projects. Officer confirmed that an in-depth session on declarations of interest had been a key element of the process, there was a special form that Members could complete, and it should always be remembered that applications may be supported by a fellow Ward Member. There was also the option to appeal to the Standards Committee for a dispensation and advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer.

Members queried whether Communities would be advised on what projects were or were not successful and the rationale for a refusal. Officers confirmed that the Community would be informed. Members agreed that they would like to see successful projects promoted.

Officers advised that very few projects were not supported, if a proposal meets the application criteria and is supported by the Local Ward Member then it would be funded. Members noted that the aim was to get as much money as possible out of the door and into communities.

Reference was made to the Area Forum Budget and any funding remaining within it and Members were advised to contact Tina McMahon for further information.

Officers emphasised that they wanted to see this money spend in Communities but were reliant on applications coming in and asked both County Borough and Community Councillors to promote the fund to any groups in their areas.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the presentation.

## **8. BRIEFING NOTE ON ISSUES RAISED BY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

### **Code of Conduct Training**

The Liaison Officer confirmed that a second Code of Conduct training session had been arranged for 4pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

### **Cost of Living Support**

Members expressed their concern over the length of time being taken to answer calls made to the Council and for those residents who did not have bank accounts or digital connectivity.

The Officer confirmed that she would feedback the points raised to Financial and Customer Services and advised that an option to use Post Office vouchers was being explored and asked Members to be mindful that thousands of applications were being processed in a short space to try and get as much money out to as many people as possible in a short space of time and therefore wait times were inevitable.

### **Charging for Community Events in Council Parks and Sports Pitches**

The Clerk of Risca Town Council outlined how they had been charged for an event at Tredegar Park, Risca and expressed his disappointment in the charge made and the requirement for the bond payment to be made by cheque.

The Liaison Officer noted the concerns raised and confirmed that although she did not know the rationale behind the charging structure the 'bond' or deposit was put in place in case restitution works were required as a result of any damaged caused by the event.

The Clerk to Risca Town Council considered it to be unfair that the community were being charged to hold a community event in a community park. A Member suggested that a further report come forward on charging and perhaps an Officer from the Parks Section be invited to attend the next meeting. The Liaison Officer confirmed that she would make the request.

Community Council representatives expressed their frustration at the lack of Senior Officer presence at the meeting and the general lack of attendance at Liaison Committee meetings.

The Liaison Officer agreed to work proactively with Officers to see if she could raise Officer presence at meetings to ensure that any topics brought forward by Community Councils could be fully questioned and answers provided.

The content of the briefing note was considered and accepted.

Meeting closed 19.26pm