**CAERPHILLY CYNGOR**

**TOWN TREF**

**COUNCIL CAERFFILI**

**TOWN CLERK: TOWN MAYOR: CLERC Y DREF: MAIR Y DREF:**

**P. G. Davy Councillor Mike Prew**

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE CAERPHILLY TOWN COUNCIL HELD BY REMOTE ACCESS ON MONDAY 18TH JANUARY 2021**

**Present:**

Councillors P J Bevan, R Bidgood, C Elsbury, J Fussell, J Grenfell, J Hibbert, S Hodder, H Jackson, S Kent, S Morgan, M Prew, J Pritchard

**Apologies:**

**In Attendance:**

G Clifton, J MacDonald, Gwent Police

P G Davy, Town Clerk

**54 MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2020**

Minutes of the Ordinary Town Council Meeting held on 16th November were received and confirmed. Minutes to be signed by the Town Mayor when practical.

**55 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**56 COMMUNITY SAFETY MATTERS**

Crime such as burglaries, robberies and criminal damage were down by 10% (around 500 crimes) but there had been an increase in reported incidents primarily related to Covid 19. There is generally less traffic compared to normal levels. The Police were targeting people who were driving to locations to take exercise as guidance had now become law. There would be more enforcement and issue of fines. Members felt this may undermine the community support for the police.

It was reported that only one member out of the complement of 65 officers at Bedwas police station had contracted coronavirus.

An update was provided on two indecent exposure incidents at Bryncenydd and Castle View. One person had been caught and prosecuted.

**57 TOWN MAYOR’S DIARY**

The Mayor had helped Caerffili Lions pack and wrap parcels for the homeless.

The Mayor recorded his thanks to David Jones of South Wales Drones, P3nfold Photography, and Jeff Grenfell for producing the Christmas Lights video at no cost to the Town Council.

The Mayor recorded his thanks to Members involved in organising the Christmas Lights, Christmas Tree and distribution of selection packs to the primary schools.

The Mayor had received a rugby ball signed by the Welsh team which he will auction or raffle in due course to raise money for his charities.

**58 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

The following matters were raised:

* Pollution being caused by foul waste getting into storm drains
* Overflowing bins around the town centre
* Dog waste bins requiring more frequent emptying
* Mobile sweeper parked for long periods
* Gully jetting of highway drains

**59** **TOWN CLERK’S REPORTS**

1 Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2021-22

It was noted the maximum expenditure that can be incurred under both section 137(1) and (3) for the financial year 2021-22 will be £8.41 per elector.

2 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill – Update

It was noted that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill has completed the committee stages and has been passed by the Senedd, and is expected to receive Royal Assent in January 2021. Further information will be presented in due course in respect of new responsibilities that will affect the Town Council.

3 Risk Management

Members reviewed the Risk Assessment for 2021. Covid 19 had been included as an operational risk and was expected to impact on the Town Council’s activities during the early part of 2021. The timing of return to business as usual is uncertain and will make planning events for 2021 difficult.

It was resolved to approve the risk assessment for 2021.

4 Q3 Budget Monitoring (2020-21 Financial Year)

The budget monitoring report was noted. Expenditure was 59% of the revised estimate.

5 Christmas Selection Packs -Confirmation of Action

Following consultation with Members the Town Clerk agreed expenditure of £1701-32 in December 2020 for the purchase of Christmas Selection Packs which were distributed to primary school pupils. Expenditure authorised under section 137 Local Government Act 1972.

Members confirmed the action by the Town Clerk.

6 Coronavirus Update

Working arrangements were reviewed in light of the ongoing Tier 4 lockdown restrictions. It is anticipated that as vaccines are rolled out and community transmission of the virus declines there will be a gradual return to normality, but the timescale is far from certain.

It was resolved:

1 Staff continue to work from home and the position is reviewed in April 2021

2 Town Council meetings continue to be held by remote access and the position is

 reviewed in April 2021

**60 PLANNING MATTERS**

The following planning applications were considered, and comments made as follows:

20/1067/COU – no objections

20/1076/FULL – no objections

Councillor J Grenfell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or decision making on this application.

20/1081/FULL – no objections

20/1087/FULL – no objections

Councillor J Fussell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or decision making on any of the applications.

**61 PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

1 List of payments were noted and approved

2 Bank account balances were noted

3 **Applications for Financial Assistance**

 1 3rd Caerphilly (St Martins) Guides and Rangers

A grant of £150 was approved. Expenditure authorised under the Local Government Act 1972, section 137.

Councillor H Jackson declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or decision making on this grant application.

 2 Castle View Community Group

A grant of £250 was approved. Expenditure authorised under the Local Government Act 1972, section 137.

Councillor J Fussell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or decision making on this grant application.

**4 External Audit Report 2019-20**

Annual Return

Following examination of the Annual Return the auditor has concluded:

“In our opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.”

It was resolved to approve and accept the Annual Return.

Issues Arising Report

1 Accounting Statements – Trust Funds Disclosure Note

The issue raised is a simple typing error and no further action is required.

2 Expenditure powers – S137

The auditor is of the opinion that the Town Council has incorrectly recorded items as Section 137 payments when other statutory powers exist. A payment cannot be recorded under Section137 if another statutory power exists. The issue has been raised in relation to two grant payments. The Town Council is of the opinion that the alternative powers suggested are not appropriate and the auditor may have misinterpreted the specific circumstances.

The Town Council already follows the procedures recommended by the auditor and no further action is required.

It was noted that this will be the last year BDO LLP will be undertaking the external audit. Audit Wales will be taking over the external audit for 2020-21 financial year and beyond.

**62 CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

**63 MEMBER REQUESTS FOR FUTURE REPORTS**

A request was raised to consider additional Christmas activities such as best dressed shop front and best dressed house. This will be referred to the February meeting of the CIL Working Group. (Note the Events Working Group has not been scheduled until further information becomes available on the lifting of the lockdown restrictions in Wales).

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Note Councillor S Morgan and J Pritchard left the meeting early.