

**PONTHIR COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR CYMUNED PONTIR**

**Minutes of Finance Meeting
26th November 2014**

1. **Present:** Cllr. R. Davies (Chair), Cllr. S. Bailey, Cllr. Mrs. J. Morgan, Cllr. Mrs. J. Bold, Cllr. T. Roberts.

Members of Public Attending: None

Clerk: Karen Price

2. **Apologies:** Cllr. D. Green, Cllr. P. Matthews, Tom Bold.

3. **Declarations of Interest:** None

4. **Matters Arising from the Monthly Meeting held on 12th November 2014**

a. The content of an e-mail received from PC Skinner, responding from concerns raised by Cllr. Huw Bevan, TCBC, over parking arrangements for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event was noted. Cllr. Davies has spoken to PC Skinner to confirm that as far as the Council was aware there were no problems with parking at last years' event and as similar numbers were expected this year, with most walking to the village hall, Council did not envisage any problems this year. Cllr. Davies has tried to contact Cllr. Bevan on a number of occasions but he has not been available and has not returned Cllr. Davies' calls.

b. It had been previously agreed to hire a band for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event. However, Cllr. Davies had not been able to hire a band before our last meeting and so it was then agreed to play prerecorded music. Yesterday Cllr. Davies was given the details of a local band, The Gate Crashers, who are available to play. This band would charge £100.00. Council agreed that Cllr. Davies should proceed with booking this band. (**Local Government Act 1972 s145**)

5. **Report from Cllr. Davies from a budget meeting with TCBC** – Council noted that TCBC's Chief Executive, Alison Ward, had invited the Chairs/Leaders of all the Torfaen Community Councils to a meeting held on 18th November. Representatives from the Community Councils, with the exception of Blaenavon Town Council, attended as well as members of the TCBC Cabinet. A request was made by TCBC for the Community Councils to consider providing funds to TCBC in order for TCBC to continue providing certain services. This request was made with the prospect of TCBC budget cuts. Services highlighted included the provision of public toilets, maintenance of TCBC sports fields and play areas and Pontypool Museum. The Chairs of the Community Councils agreed that they should meet separately prior to a second meeting with TCBC. Council agreed that TCBC's request was not acceptable and that Chair should attend further meetings to discuss this issue.

6. Council noted the content of the bank reconciliation as at 31st October 2014.

Chair recommended that the order of the agenda items be changed with the discussion concerning the Clerk's salary to be done first, followed by the Precept for 2015/2016 before then discussing the Annual Budget for 2015/2016. Council agreed.

7. **Review of Clerk's Salary 2015/2016** – Council noted the content of an e-mail from One Voice Wales detailing the agreement from the Local Government Association for a 2.2% increase for local government pay grades. Council agreed that the Clerk's salary should be in line with this nationally agreed rise. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts. (**Action: Clerk**

to forward updated salary details to TCBC payroll department and complete a standing order mandate)

8. **2015/2016 Precept** - Council noted the following points concerning it's 2014/2015 Precept:
- The annual precept payment had not been increased since 2012.
 - The total precept is calculated using the figure charged for a Band D property. This Band D figure also forms the basis for all other property band charges i.e. Bands below Band D pay less and those above pay more.
 - The current annual precept payment for our community area, based on a Band D property, is £21.33, which is currently the lowest of all the precepts set by Torfaen Community Councils.
 - The highest precept, based on a Band D property, currently set by a Torfaen Community Council is £46.63.

When discussing the Precept for 2015/2016 the following points were discussed:

- The implications of possible cuts to TCBC's 2015/16 budget and what impact that would have on our community area.
- The Community Council's ongoing commitment to improve the Children's Play Area in Ponthir.
- The Community Council's desire to continue supporting local community groups, which provide an invaluable service to our residents, both old and young, via the awarding of Community Council Grants
- The future financial ability to consider other improvement works for Ponthir and Lower Llanfrechfa.
- Taking all the above points into account Council agreed a rise of 5%. This would mean an annual rise of £1.07 to £22.40 for a Band D property. Even after this rise this would still be one of the lowest precepts set by a Torfaen Community Council. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and Seconded by Cllr. Bold (**Action: Clerk to inform TCBC**)

9. **Annual Budget 2015/2016** – The Clerk had produced a draft budget for discussion. Whilst setting the 2015/2016 Budget the following points were made:
- Over the past two years the total budget for Office Expenditure and Other Costs has been significantly reduced by nearly £5K. This has meant that the Council has been able to plan a number of projects e.g. Improve the Play Area in Ponthir, install a new noticeBoard in Llanfrechfa, conduct a maintenance programme for the village benches and undertake a programme of replacing Village Planters.
 - It was noted that in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 £3,035.00 had been allocated to match fund a local scheme but had not been used. Council agreed that this should now be allocated towards the Play Area Project with immediate effect.
 - Council agreed that a separate bank account should be opened for the Play Area Project. This would allow the funds for this project to be kept separate for accounting purposes. Once opened £8,035 to be transferred into the new account, which represents the £5K budget set for the project for 2014/2015 and the £3,035.00 as noted in point 9a. A further £4K would be transferred in the new financial year. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts. (**Action: Clerk to arrange additional bank account. Clerk to arrange a meeting with TCBC Officers to go over proposals for Play Area**)
 - Cllr. Bold noted that in Hyde Park there was a sculpture with plaques detailing donations received. If residents wished to make a donation towards the Play Area project this is something the Council could consider.
 - Xmas Tree Lights** – (**Action: Clerk to review Christmas Tree Light Contract**)
 - Best Kept Village** – New planters would be ordered in the Spring. The possibility of hiring a village handyman/ awarding a maintenance contract was discussed. There was some debate on how many hours work would be required and what work would be expected and allowed

to be done. Council agreed that the budget for the Best Kept Village should be £2K.

Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts. It was agreed that this would be discussed again in the New Year. **(Action: Clerk to include in January's Agenda)**

- g. The arrangements for the Christmas Tree Lighting Event 2015 to be discussed in January.

Council agreed to purchase mince pies for this year's lighting event. **(Action: Clerk to include 2015 Event in January's Agenda)**

- h. Council agreed the following Budget for 2015/2016. Proposed by Cllr. Bailey and seconded by Cllr. Roberts.

<u>Office Expenditure</u>	<u>Budget</u>	
Room Rental	£360.00	
Stationery and Postage	£400.00	
IT & Office Equipment	£200.00	
Telephone	£50.00	
Staff Costs	£7,200.00	
Subscriptions	£250.00	
Insurance	£400.00	
Internal Audit Fees	£100.00	
External Audit Fees	£210.00	
Sub-Total		£9,170.00
<u>Other Costs</u>		
Chair's Allowance	£150.00	
Publicity (Including Newsletters)	£1,200.00	
Community Event Catering	£250.00	
Travel Expenses	£200.00	
Training	£300.00	
Grants and Donations	£6,000.00	
Christmas Decorations	£1,000.00	
Best Kept Village	£2,000.00	
Sub-Total		£11,100.00
<u>Future Programmes</u>		
Contribution to War Memorial	£100.00	
Community Improvements	£500.00	
Play Area Project	£4,000.00	
Sub-Total		£4,600.00
General Contingency Fund	£2,319.44	
Sub-Total		£2,319.44
Total		£27,189.44
Funded By:		
Estimated Balance Brought Forward	£9,377.94	
2015/2016 Precept	£17,043.74	
VAT to Be Refunded (This is likely to be higher by March 2015)	£767.76	
Total		£27,189.44

Meeting Closed at 9.25pm

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or e-mail below/Mae dogfen yma yn ar gael mewn gwefan ni www.ponthircommunitycouncil.gov.uk
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