

**MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
12<sup>TH</sup>. NOVEMBER 2018**

**Present :** Councillor J Edwards (Mayor )  
Councillor G James ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, T Evans, Z Hammond, R Mills, A Short & P Cook

Also present Councillor C Erasmus

**1. Apologies for Absence**

No Apologies for Absence were received

**2. Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point

**3. To appoint a Chair & Vice Chair of the Committee**

After some discussion it was **unanimously agreed** that Councillor A Short be appointed Chair and Councillor D Davies Vice Chair of the Committee

Councillor A Short took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting

**4. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup>. March 2018**

It was **resolved** the Minutes be received

**5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

**6. Continued Funding of Hanging Baskets in High Street**

The Clerk presented his report as follows -

At the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held 26<sup>th</sup>. March 2018 , the Clerk reported that having queried the invoice in respect of the hanging baskets in town, highlighted at the last Town Council meeting, he had managed to agree a reduction in line with last years costs ( a saving of £1,465 ). However, whilst in correspondence he had been informed that Caerphilly C.B.C. would no longer be organising the filling, placement and watering of the baskets on behalf of town/community councils and that we would have to organise this ourselves if we wished to continue. The Clerk had checked his e-mails and had not received this information that was apparently sent on 13<sup>th</sup>. December. On reporting same to CCBC they checked and admitted they had used a wrong e-mail address and apologised for the oversight.

A copy of this e-mail had recommended contact be made ASAP with Boverton Nurseries ( for supply of plants ) and J S Lee Ltd. ( for the erecting and watering ). Having made initial contact earlier in the day with these companies, it is obvious that the existing budget of £3,350 will not be sufficient and if members wish to continue with the provision of baskets an additional sum of approximately £1,500 will be necessary. He proposed this could be funded from savings/balances for the next financial year and further discussion as to how to proceed discussed at a later date.

After some discussion all members present ***agreed to recommend*** to Town Council continuation of the hanging baskets for next year in line with the Clerk's proposal.

Invoices have now been settled in respect of the current year at a cost of £4,128 ( based on watering from May to September ).

After some discussion members ***agreed to recommend*** to Town Council that we continue to provide Hanging Baskets in the High Street and that a more realistic budget provision based on the current years costs be set at £4,300 for 2018/2019.

Members queried whether it might be feasible to get the baskets planted locally or by volunteers. The Clerk stated that the County Borough had used the suppliers for several years and was of the opinion it would be extremely time consuming for baskets to be delivered to volunteers to fill whilst it was considered too late to change for next year as Council had agreed at the last meeting to accept the quotation for hanging baskets - 14 half baskets/ 28 cup & saucer baskets in the sum of £1,008 + VAT – as current year.

Discussion then turned to several areas in and around town that could potentially benefit from planting etc. to improve the look of the area, and again the possibility of volunteers to plant and maintain these areas was raised. Whilst supportive in principle it was ***agreed*** to defer these discussions to a later date.

## ***7. Consider quotations for Newsletter printing***

Councillor G James ( Deputy Mayor ) reported that he had requested quotations from K & R Print, Billyboard & Cheetah Printers.

K & R Print had quoted £495

Cheetah Printers had quoted £620

No response from Billyboard

The Clerk reported that we had used K & R Print for many years and had had no real issues, finding them very helpful and professional.

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** K & R Print be engaged to produce the Newsletters at the quoted price of £495 for 4,000 colour 8 page A4 .

## 8. *To Consider Applications for Financial Assistance*

The Clerk presented his report as follows -

Whilst there had not been a Policy & Finance Committee until now, several Grants have been agreed by Town Council, namely –

		£
Police & Crime Commissioner	Schools Football/ Netball Tournament	250
Mia Rose Lewis	Assistance towards Miss Teen Pageant	250
Libanus Lifestyle Centre	Assistance towards Garden Project	500 +
Velindre NHS Trust	( Steffan Lewis Walk )	500
Blackwood Basement	Youth Diversion Event	500 ( transfer )

The Clerk reported that the payment to Libanus Lifestyle Centre should arguably be met from the Environmental Projects Reserve Fund, and after some short discussion it was agreed to recommend this to Council.

He also pointed out that the payment to Blackwood Basement had already been accounted for Previously, and was not therefore a charge against the current years budget of £5,000 .

The Clerk then reported on Applications received to date.

Councillor A Farina-Childs declared an interest in the application from Blackwood Boys & Girls Football Club as a President and took no part in the discussion or decision making.

All the applications were discussed in some detail, and after deliberation it was agreed to recommend to Town Council that the following grants be awarded

Blackwood Boys & Girls Football Club	£250 ( plus cost of Council logo on kit )
Blackwood Town Cricket Club	£250
Past Mayor's Charity	£250

The application from Llamau ( a registered homeless charity ) applying for funding to ensure disadvantaged young people in Caerphilly supported housing projects receive a Christmas present was deferred as none of the projects were in the Blackwood area, and the Clerk had asked if any of the young people living in the projects are from our area.

Members queried that only £1,750 had to date been committed against the budget of £5,000 and that perhaps we ought to advertise on our face book page for applications to ensure the budget was spent. Another suggestion was that perhaps an allocation be given to ward members to distribute within their areas.

The Clerk urged caution saying the majority of applications for whatever reason appear to be received between January & March, and that advertising ( other than our newsletter ) may lead to expectations being raised that Council could not fulfil. He would certainly advise members against making grants themselves via ward allocations as they could easily be accused of favouritism, hence why members are currently asked to declare an interest.

