

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 13TH. MAY 2025

Present : Cllr. K Williams, G Etheridge, J Griffiths & C Erasmus

1. To Elect a Chair of the Committee

It was proposed by Cllr. G Etheridge, seconded by Cllr J Griffith & agreed by Cllr. C Erasmus that Cllr. K Williams remains as Chair

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. D Box & R Mills

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

4. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held 31st. March 2025

The Minutes were received and **unanimously agreed**, with no Matters Arising

5. Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported on the two applications reported to Town Council, namely

Blackwood Bowls Club – The request being for continuation of Sponsorship.

After some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk write to the Club asking them to submit an application form, together with the necessary financial information and pointing out funding is normally made to support a specific proposal

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Luncheon Club – The request being a contribution towards hire of coach to take the members on a Summer outing to Weston Super Mare

After some discussion it was **unanimously agreed to recommend** to Town Council that a Grant of £400 be awarded (50% of cost of hire) in recognition this the first application the Clerk could remember from the Club and for the sterling work undertaken for members of the community.

6. To Receive Update on Requirements of Full Audit and timescales

The Clerk gave a brief, yet comprehensive update on the requirements for the full Audit which he was currently gathering together.

He reported previously that 2 new questions on the Statement will need to be considered carefully by members –

In consultation with the community we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities.

Currently would consider recommend answering No

Whilst our Strategic Plan is identified within our Annual Reports, we did not during Covid actually consult the community on same.

The majority of the Plan is still relevant, and with a few minor amendments could be posted for consultation with the community on the website/ facebook page - and form a priority for 2025/26 in our Annual Plan

We have adopted a Code of Practice for members and officers and implemented an appropriate training plan for members to ensure all councillors understand their role and responsibilities

Currently would consider recommend answering Yes

We have adopted a Code of Conduct for members (may need to revisit same prior to signing off Statement), and members present ***agreed*** we should make training on same mandatory and look to organise online training courses via One Voice Wales at the Council Offices to assist those members less confident in joining individually. Furthermore, this should be arranged as a matter of some urgency.

The timetable to be followed is –

Statement of Accounts agreed by Council & signed by Mayor by 30th. June

Notice of Audit to be placed on Noticeboard & Website 16th. June

Exercise of Electors Rights – Inspection of Accounts – 1st. July to 28th. July

All information to District Audit Office in Cardiff by 8th. August

Monday 15th. September is the date the Auditor General has appointed from which electors can exercise their rights under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 to ask questions and make objections at audit

7. To Consider input to Annual Report 2024/25

The Clerk reported that he had updated the information in readiness for completion of the Annual Report for 2024/25 and had forwarded copy of same to members earlier in the day.

He read through his proposals, and in the main these were accepted by members. He had identified the outcomes against the priorities for 2024/25 and had also initially identified potential priorities for 2025/26.

He proposed he make the potential amendments/ additions, forward to all members and be placed on Agenda for the next Town Council meeting. This was ***agreed*** by members.

The Mayor reported that the toilets had again been operational at the bus station since January. Furthermore, with regards ASB it is now questionable whether CCBC actually has a statutory duty/ responsibility in respect of same, and if that is the case begs the question how could they then make the decision to withdraw the Community Safety Warden Scheme ?

8. To Consider Adoption of Model Financial Regulations

The Clerk & Mayor reported that they planned to amend said Model Financial Regulations to best suit the needs of Town Council, taking into account its size and functions, and would present to the next meeting of this Committee, with a view to recommending same to Town Council, possibly at a Special Meeting late June to ensure we meet the deadline for signing off the Accounting Statement

9. To Consider Adoption of Model Standing Orders

Again, as above the Model Standing Orders will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee with a view to recommending same to Town Council to ensure the deadlines are met for signing off the Accounting Statements.

10. To Consider Adoption of Press Policy (possibly part of updated Social Media Policy) & Other

Work continues on updating this Policy & Others that will be presented to future meetings of this Committee prior to recommending acceptance of same by Town Council

11. Induction arrangements for new Clerk Tuesday 20th. May

The Clerk reported that he had been keeping in contact with Hannah with regard the proposed start date, and he had suggested Tuesday 20th. as the Offices would be closed on Monday.

However, during email exchanges it came to light that Hannah was unable to get childcare arrangements in place on Tuesdays and had requested she work Wednesdays to Fridays 9.00am to 3.30pm, and other than Mondays when meetings occurred work from home, because she thinks it would be a more efficient use of time to do three longer days, and forwarded a proposed template for work over a 4 week period.

I said I would run this by Policy & Finance Committee members this evening, whilst reiterating per the Advert hours were Tuesday – Friday 10.00am till 3.00pm, but had seemed willing to compromise on the Monday / Tuesdays of meetings week, and that this was the first mention of not being able to work Tuesdays.

Members were dismayed at this information and request as nothing was mentioned at interview, and when asked stated she would be willing to consider potentially more hours in the future.

Furthermore, what is proposed doesn't meet the operational requirements of the Council, and would also cause some potential issues as regards lone working.

Cllr. G Etheridge stated this request is something that this Committee cannot decide on and he proposed an Extraordinary meeting of Town Council be called for Friday 16th. May at 6.30pm., and that in the meantime, the Clerk be asked to contact Hannah to see if she could meet with the Mayor & Deputy Mayor via Teams tomorrow Wednesday at 11.00am.

All members present **agreed** this be the best course of action.