

Minutes

At the start of the meeting Councillor Willis asked that in future meetings are held monthly going forward and that we do not leave a gap by moving dates

1. To receive apologies for absence - **none**
2. Disclosure of personal and pecuniary interest in items of business listed below in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
 - a. **Councillor Jordan Thorne declared a personal and pecuniary interest in item 13 as he has a business involved with branding/marketing.**
 - b. **Councillor Kelly Sherratt declared an interest in item 13 as is employed by NRW and knows one of the landowners personally.**
3. Public presentations to Council - **none**
4. To confirm minutes of the Council's monthly meeting of 9th November are a true record and discuss minor matters arising from them.
 - a. **The minutes were confirmed as accurate, no minor matters arising.**
5. To consider report on Council Payments and finances
 - a. **The Council confirmed payments in Oct, Nov and Dec 2023 and also implementation of 2023 Nationally agreed pay award for staff.**
6. To receive update on Community Events
 - a. **The Council considered the report on Community events. They also noted the positive comments about Pontyclun at Christmas in comparison with other nearby areas.**
 - b. **The Council agreed the following.**
 - i. **The Christmas tree light switch on improvement suggestions were accepted.**
 - ii. **The councillors decided that they wish to sell Mulled wine/hot chocolate at the Christmas light switch on and the Christmas fayre to raise funds for the Council.**
 - iii. **The date for the 2024 Christmas lights switches on was confirmed for 23rd November. Banners prepared for this event should be made flexible enough to be used with variable dates in November going forward. The council will fix each date annually.**
 - iv. **The suggested improvements for the Christmas fayre were agreed.**
 - v. **The Council agreed to increase the number of Community Group Christmas trees in shops this year to 15.**
 - vi. **The Council agreed to run a further Shop fronts competition this Christmas.**
 - vii. **The council agreed that a bid for Christmas event funding to RCT should include monies for**
 1. **A PA system**
 2. **Staging**
 3. **Increased Christmas lights for the area – for those areas with no lighting such as Miskin or small displays like Groesfaen**
7. To receive updates on Town Improvements
 - a. **The Council noted the report.**
 - b. **There was no update on beds at the schools or BT boxes other than YGGG school were looking for beds inside the school grounds and Council was happy to do so.**
 - i. **The clerk advised he had been approached by a resident who had a large hexagonal planter which they could donate to us and would be delighted for it to be near YGGG school as a grandchild attended the school.**
 - c. **The Council agreed to the Talygarn improvement plan.**
 - d. **The Council confirmed delegation of Powers to Clerk to pursue grants and funding for projects agreed by Council or which furthered Council aims and to commence works to implement if funding obtained.**
 - e. **The Council decided to purchase an "Owls and hedgehogs" bench for opposite the war memorial with a plaque commemorating Town status/175 years of Pontyclun.**

8. To receive report on actions to commemorate Pontyclun's 175 anniversary.
 - a. **The Council agreed to consider the following actions to commemorate the 175th anniversary of Pontyclun.**
 - i. **Improvements to Picnic in the Park to include.**
 1. **An it's a Knockout style competition between local businesses**
 2. **To investigate the feasibility of a carnival parade**
 - ii. **To investigate options to hold a twinning event with Ravensburg, which is RCT twin for the old Taf Ely district.**
 - iii. **To seek to add names to the war memorial of individuals who should be remembered but currently may not and hold an appropriate ceremony to mark this.**
 - iv. **The Town Status working group has been delegated the responsibility for arranging these.**
9. To consider Council risk review for 2024
 - a. **The Council noted the position and confirmed acceptance of review.**
 - b. **In particular the risks due to staffing issues were noted and the actions being taken to improve resilience here. They noted that use of contractors could be part of the solution here.**
 - c. **Confidential report on Cyber security will be prepared in due course after the Clerk has attended some relevant training (already booked in)**
10. To receive update on Council plan 2023-24
 - a. **The Council noted the update.**
11. To discuss potential dumping of waste at land near Strawberry Lane
 - a. **Councillor Rhys Williams advised the members of issues around "dumping" at land near to Strawberry lane.**
 - b. **He advises that NRW are aiming to prepare a case for prosecution for some issues, however Councillor Kelly Sherratt advised that much of what is currently being deposited relates to farm matter (e.g. straw/manure) and this is allowed under regulations.**
12. To consider grant requests
 - a. **A grant of £250 was agreed for RCT Community wind band using S19 Local government (Misc. provisions) act 1976.**
13. To consider Town branding
 - a. **Councillor Thorne withdrew for this discussion.**
 - b. **The Council agreed that Councillors Paul Binning and Jordan Thorne could look at options and report back to Council at a future meeting.**
14. To consider report on Budget and Precept for 2024-25
 - a. **The Council considered the budget papers and agreed the following key matters.**
 - i. **Budget as per attached spreadsheet**
 - ii. **Earmarked reserve transfers as noted on the spreadsheet.**
 - iii. **To continue to fund the general reserve each year of the remaining Council term so that our policy of aiming to reach 25% of annual spending in reserve by the end of this council term can be achieved. This budget plans to increase the reserve by £7k in 2024-25**
 - iv. **To set a precept of £235970 for 2024-25, which is an increase of 14.98% on prior year.**
 - v. **The Clerk to hold off advising RCT CBC until 16th Feb in case RCT makes any announcements in its budgeting process which might significantly affect us.**
 - vi. **The appendix to these minutes detail the various ancillary decisions made during this process.**

Appendix – Budget decisions agreed by Council.

The key budget decisions reached are provided in the main minutes of the meeting.

These were informed by the following ancillary decisions.

1. The Council noted budget for tree works and the fact that this can be managed by us by changing the number of trees planned to be cut. Reducing work would of course extend the period that the woods remained partly closed.
2. The Council agreed grants budget same as 2023-4 and also
 - a. If Pontyclun RFC wish to apply for funding again then we would ask for details of how they are reducing reliance on our funding by looking at ways to increase other income and or reduce costs
 - b. The Council agreed that our Grants policy be changed to allow up to 20% of our general grants (£1k in 2024-25) to be offered proactively by us to help achieve our aims.
 - c. All groups being offered over £200 to be asked to undertake a community activity to support our objectives as a condition of the grant. E.g. a litter pick, support an event. If a group can demonstrate they are doing so already then, they would not be forced to do more.
3. The Council agreed a £10k events budget as described including.
 - a. Santa grotto to be run by Council and ideally funded by donations.
 - b. The Council agreed to spend £100 on large poppies for lamp posts at Remembrance time.
 - c. The Council declined to use CIL monies towards a Christmas tree at Cefn y Hendy /Ynysddu
4. The council agreed the one-off items in budget and also recommended method of payment outlined in papers.
 - a. It was noted that SEW Rivers trust may be able to provide funding towards the fencing at Riverside walk reducing amount required from Community Infrastructure funds.
5. The Council noted town improvements and budget requests.
 - a. £2k was set aside towards paying for works which could be used for contractors, donations to groups who may support or other options.
 - b. The council committed to support cost of a bus shelter for Cefn y Hendy to be agreed with RCT CBC who are believed to be installing 2 in that area. This would make 3 in total with locations to be decided later. Funding from CIL monies when received.
6. The council considered the Town status working group suggestions.
 - a. The Council agreed a newsletter subject to funding using advertising.
 - b. The Council agreed to fund up to 5 Freedom of the town awards.
7. The Council agreed the recommended transfers to earmarked reserves including.
 - a. £5k to replace the monies used for tree works in 2023 funded by Pontyclun park reserve.
 - b. No transfer to tree reserve
 - c. £2k transfer to Christmas lights reserve to reflect additional lighting now held.
 - d. Extra £5k to vehicle fund to give option to purchase electric vehicle on replacement.
8. The Council agreed to set budget to increase general reserve by £7k towards reaching out target of 25% of spending by the end of the Council term.
9. The Council decided that they would seek sponsorship of events and Councillors would gather ideas and present to next meeting.
 - a. As this is not guaranteed no sum was placed into budget but any raised would be used for next year or for additional activities/services

These are a copy of the minutes of the Council meeting of 1st Feb 2024. A signed copy can be viewed at the Council Offices.

Expenditure - excluding items from Earmarked reserves or where agreed to pay from General reserve or one offs paid for by grants

Item	2022-23	2023-24		2024-25
	Actual	Budget	Projected	Recommended budget
Staffing costs	112096	126500	125200	134110
Utilities	922	500	500	500
Street lighting	196	600	600	650
Refuse	1048	1170	570	600
Non domestic rates	2016	2120	2005	2130
Vehicle running costs	2869	2100	2500	2400
Tree costs	320	1000	19032	20000
Grass cutting	2125	2235	2232	2370
Maintenance & minor projects	10754	3000	3000	4250
Planting	1942	1900	2050	2200
Tools & Equipment	821	600	400	600
H&S / Protective equip	390	900	620	900
Cleaning costs	1054	1350	7000	0
Telephony/Broadband	779	920	910	920
Insurance	1357	1500	1405	1500
Website	300	300	300	300
Software/Hardware	984	1200	1200	1200
Training	470	500	500	500
Travel expenses	32	50	50	50
Subscriptions	1406	1500	1506	1600
Office rent	4133	4600	4550	4830
printing	238	380	300	940
Audit cost	470	1700	900	1600
Admin & stationery	421	500	500	500
Remembrance Sunday	120	160	110	0
Community Grants	3833	8000	8000	8000
Community Events	5142	9600	9600	10000
Councillor allowances and	600	1000	1200	1000
Room hire	0	400	0	0
Total costs	156838	176285	196740	203650

INCOME

Item	2022-23	2023-24		2024-25
	Actual	Budget	Projected	Recommended budget
Caterer rent	602	0	0	0
Grass cutting	300	300	300	300
Other income	5566	1500	1900	1000
Donations	2450	0	300	250
Grants	23383	16150	17181	0
Event pitch hires	0	1000	1942	2000
Footpath grant	480	480	480	480
Fundraising events	0	500	500	500
Total income	32781	19930	22603	4530

Net expenditure	124057	156355	174137	199120
Transfer to earmarked reserves in annual budget	12400	23300	23300	32450
Funding general reserve (minus means transfer from general reserve)	-2840	5000		7000
One off items planned for in budget				7400
Café 50 net position				-10000
Precept	132584	205225	205225	235970

14.98%

Ear Marked Reserves position (Excluding sinking reserves for specific items)

Reserve	Estimated fund at year end	Policy recommends to trf	Transfer in 2023-24	RFO recommendation for 2024-25
Street furniture	4580	3500	3350	3500
Pontyclun park	22154	7500	12500	17500
Trees	0	2000	2000	0
Hardware/ Software	1571	0	0	0
Vehicle	16000	2000	2000	7000
Machinery/tools	3000	300	300	300
Elections	6934	1350	1350	1350
Office	600	100	100	100
Christmas	1000	1000	1000	2000
Floral planters replacement	3121	700	700	700
CIL	39000	infrastructure fund	0	0
Training	350	balance of budget not spent	0	0
TOTALS	98310	18450	23300	32450

One off items requested for consideration at budget

Item	Estimated cost	Comments
Ward budgets	3000	£1k per ward
Xmas fixings testing	2000	includes 750 for repairs
Bus shelter C-y-Hendy	0	Use next tranche of CIL
garage door repair	1900	
Total	6900	

Town centre Working group actions for budget

Item	Estimated cost	Comments
Newsletter	0	Council decided to use advertising to fund this
Freedom of the Town	500	
Total	500	

Café 50 related matters

Item	Amount	Comments
Coordinator grant	-10000	
Room hires	-2000	
RCT payment for costs	-7350	
Cleaner costs	8700	Higher of contractor or in house cleaner
Cleaning materials	450	
Other	200	
Total	-10000	

Community Infrastructure Levy spending planned

Item	Estimated cost	Comments
Caretaker storage	3500	
Fencing at Riverside W	2000	Balance to complete fence and steps
Muga panels	10000	For 2025 works
Phone box door	1500	Box in Miskin
Additional staffing	2000	8 hrs per week over summer
Total	19000	