

MEETING OF THE PLANNING, COMMERCE AND ENVIRONMENT (PlaCE) COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 30 May 2023 at 6.00 pm at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.

PRESENT

Councillors: Rob Phillips (Chair), Peter Adamson, Barrie Page, Nick Simmons and Chris Hill.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk)

Apologies: Josh Rawcliffe

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Josh Rawcliffe.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS

Rob Phillips declared a prejudicial interest in Item 5b i) as he is Secretary of Ffrindiau Tyleri.

Nick Simmons declared a prejudicial interest in Item 5b i) as he is Treasurer of Ffrindiau Tyleri.

3. MINUTES – 19 APRIL 2023

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true and correct record

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Rob Phillips reminded the Committee that he had informed the Committee and Clerk by email on 18 May 2023 that he did not wish to continue as Chair of the Committee.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to appoint Nick Simmons as Chair of the Committee.

Nick Simmons took the chair at 6.04 pm.

5. TOWN IN BLOOM

- a) The Clerk pointed out that VAT would take the total cost of the contract proposed by The Willows for 2023-24 to £14,400. The Committee had intended the main Town in Bloom budget to also cover the costs of theft and vandalism as well as maintenance of displays during the winter months, but funding for all but £50 of this additional work would need to be found from elsewhere. The Chair suggested that the costs of VAT should be ignored, as this would be claimed back by the Council. The Clerk stated that reclaimed VAT played no part in the Committee's budget and would not be credited to its available funds. Chris Hill asked for clarification of the terms of the contract proposed by The Willows for 2023-24. Peter Adamson explained that The Willows proposed providing new planting for 60 existing planters – not the provision of 60 additional planters. Hanging baskets would be watered by hand.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to reappoint The Willows as Town in Bloom contractors for 2023-24 and to authorise (under Section 40 of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) officers to enter into an agreement for the delivery of the third-year programme at a cost of £12,000 plus VAT as per the tender document submitted by The Willows in May 2021.

- b i) As the Chair had declared a personal interest, the Committee **RESOLVED** that Barrie Page would chair the meeting for this item.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that Ffrindiau Tyleri be given custodianship of six Town in Bloom floral planters outside Abertillery Workmen's Welfare Institute and to authorise (under Section 40 of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) the expenditure of up to £450 by officers in respect of bulbs, plants and materials.

Nick Simmons returned to the chair at 6.26 pm.

- b ii) The Committee **RESOLVED** that Abertillery and District Museum Society be given custodianship of two Town in Bloom floral planters outside Abertillery Museum and to authorise (under Section 40 of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) the expenditure of up to £150 by officers in respect of bulbs, plants and materials.
- c) Chris Hill proposed that the Committee should consider providing Town in Bloom displays in public parks where Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council no longer maintains floral displays. The Clerk stated that this had been discussed in a meeting of the Full Council when Town in Bloom was first mooted. The consensus had been not to include parks in the initiative but the Full Council had made no resolution to that effect. Therefore, there was nothing to prevent the Committee including public parks in the initiative but it would be wise to at least consider whether to seek the approval of Full Council before doing so.

The Clerk reminded the Committee of its long-term aim of reducing the costs of the main Town in Bloom contract by passing the custodianship of planters to local community groups. By automatically replacing adopted planters, the Committee was ensuring that the size of the main contract for succeeding years would, in fact, never reduce. Peter Adamson suggested that, where planters were adopted by local community groups, the Committee should consider augmenting displays in other ways such as by providing hanging baskets. Barrie Page said that Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association had asked whether neglected 15-year-old concrete planters near Llanhilleth Station could be included in the main Town in Bloom contract.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that it had provided funding for the adoption of some planters and other floral displays by local community groups in 2022-23 but had yet to make arrangements with those groups for 2023-24. The Committee agreed that the Clerk should contact those groups to ask for confirmation that they wished to continue the arrangements. Where that was the case, the Committee **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to make repeat payments with regards to those groups in 2023-24 in line with the relevant authorisations given by the Committee in 2022-23.

Peter Adamson noted that the Committee had authorised £600 of funding to Cwmtillery Litter Pickers at its meeting in April 2023. The planting by the group had subsequently suffered devastating damage and theft. He would speak to the group regarding the way forward. Chris Hill suggested that the Council should write to local allotment associations and to the area's schools inviting them to adopt local planters.

6. **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

The Clerk recapped the findings of a paper he had circulated to Committee Members that had concluded that the development of a community transport scheme was probably beyond the community council. Rob Phillips noted that a number of operators were expected to report that many commercial bus routes in Wales were now unviable and that there had been proposals for Transport for Wales to take over the management of Wales's bus services. The Clerk undertook that he would contact Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council and the Welsh Government for guidance as to the likely direction of future local transport policy.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

- a) Rob Phillips believed that the route through Rhiw Park from Blythe Street to the Abertillery multi-storey car park could be cleared in a matter of hours by only a handful of volunteers. The Committee asked the Clerk to check as to the availability of litter-picking equipment. Barrie Page agreed to ask Abertillery Youth Club whether they would be willing to provide volunteers. He would also make contact with the area's litter champions.
- b) The Clerk reported that he had contacted Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, who had confirmed their intention to report back to the Ebbw Fach Trail regarding the viability of proposals to renovate the A467 mural in Abertillery. The Clerk had registered his disapproval as the community council were leading the project while it was unclear whether the Ebbw Fach Trail was even a truly functioning group let alone having access to any funding. The Clerk had been promised a return call but had not received one. He would contact the borough council again for an update.