CYNGOR CYMUNED GOETRE FAWR COMMUNITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD BY TELE-CONFERENCE ON TUESDAY 5th APRIL 2022 @ 18.00

## **Present**: Community Councillors Andy Barnes, Rose Thayers, & Jonathan Lazenby as Clerk/RFO

**Apologies**: Community Councillor Nigel Morrey

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|  |  | **ACTION** |
| 1 | Welcome and apologies for absenceThe meeting commenced at 6.00pm with the Clerk/RFO welcoming everyone to the meeting.  |  |
| 2 | Approval of Minutes of the Previous MeetingThe minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 10th January, were reviewed. The following minor amendment was made:1. Item 5 should be titled ‘Audit **2020/21** update’ not ‘**2021/22’**

Following this amendment, the minutes were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Thayers. | Clerk/RFO |
| 3 | Matters Arising(updates not covered as separate issues under the various agenda items below). * 1. Item 5 – Audit 2020/2021 update – the Clerk / RFO confirmed that a ‘clean’ unqualified audit had now been received from Wales Audit with no observations or recommendations.
	2. Item 6(ii) – Zurich Insurance are unable to take instructions to insure the Llanover assets until at least one month before the insurable date.
	3. Item 6(iii) – A national salary increase of 1.75% was subsequently confirmed by the employers, although this was not available in time for the Clerk’s salary review in February.
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| 4 | Cashflow and accounts – 2021 / 2022 year-end 1. The Clerk/RFO provided those present with a copy of the March 2022 (end of year) cashflow position, together with the Unity Trust Bank (UTB) statements covering Jan, Feb & Mar 2022. The cashflow balances were verified to the closing balances in the UTB statements at the end of Jan/Feb/Mar 2022, with Councillor Barnes signing to confirm in accordance with section 2.2 of the Community Council Financial Regulations (Wales).
2. The Clerk / RFO also provided the end of year Accounts, together with the Bank Reconciliation for confirmation before they formally presented to Council on 25th April for acceptance. They will subsequently form part of our internal and external audit submissions. The Clerk/RFO demonstrated that the closing balances on each document were in alignment with those on the cashflow and the Unity Trust bank statements.

After review, all the documents were confirmed by the committee, with agreement that they should be presented to full Council for formal acceptance. This was then proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Thayers. | Clerk/RFOClerk/RFO |
| 5 | Audit 2021/221. Internal Audit. EH Accountancy have now signed our standard terms of engagement. Clerk / RFO is preparing papers to send.
2. External Audit. The external audit papers have now been received. It has been confirmed that our 2021/22 review will be subject to the new 3-yearly full transactional audit. The key dates of the audit are:
	1. (By) 20th June – the Notice of Audit to be published on the Noticeboard and on the Web site for a minimum of 14 days (then see iii below).
	2. 30th June - latest date for Council approval of the annual return
	3. 4th July to 29th July (20 working days) - the period for all accounts, books, vouchers, receipts etc to be made available for public inspection.
	4. 15th July – final date for receipt of annual return by Audit Wales.
	5. 12th September – date from which electors can exercise their rights under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.
	6. 12th September - No audit opinions issued before this date.

Clerk / RFO confirmed that the dates were in line with previous years and none should pose any difficulty.  | Clerk/RFO |
| 6 | 1. Budget 2022/23Clerk / RFO advised that our year end reserves had reduced to c£15k, down from £32.4k at the end of the last financial year. This was due to originally setting a budget deficit to bring them more into line with an appropriate level of reserves (c50%), coupled with the unforeseen maintenance expenditure on the Goytre Public Conveniences and Little Mill Park (Asbestos removal / cutting down of diseased / damaged trees). A similar budget deficit (£10) has been set for 2022/23. However, the Clerk / RFO explained this was no longer appropriate given the reduced level of reserves. Although traditionally, the CC has underspent on its planned budget, next year it will need to be particularly careful with any discretionary expenditure. The Clerk felt that a balanced budget now needed to be set, and has already prepared figures for review. It is possible that some budgeted expenditure may well not come to fruition. For example:
2. Councillor allowances / honoraria – c£1k
3. Attendance Allowances / care costs  - c£3k
4. Election Costs £1k

However, in the meantime the CC also has some other options to reduce spend as outlined below. 1. Donations - £1500 – reduce to  £1000 (max single donation to be £250?)
2. Capital expenditure spend £5k –  remove? Saves additional £1000 VAT

(vii) Maintaining fortnightly dog waste collections throughout the year?  Saves £1261 + £252 VAT (viii) Remove £1000 budget for annual  report – publish electronically (viii) Remove £250 ‘in case of need’ budget for Parks + £50 VAT (ix) Remove £250 budget for bus shelters (never spent).The RFO has now recast the figures as below:Original forecast deficit - £10,002.00 Savings under six reductions  (v to ix) above +£9563.00Increased forecast VAT reclaim (£4882.78 vs £4244.00) +638.78Queens jubilee fund (added afteroriginal budget) - £700.00Increases Wages - £33.00 New Forecast Deficit **- £533.22**After discussion it was proposed that the above recommendations be put forward to Full Council to consider at its April meeting under standing orders regulation 7(a). This was proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Thayers. | Clerk / RFO |
| 7 | Risk Review (inc Health & Safety schedule)1. Income – Precept - First payment of 2022/23 precept due end April 2022.
2. Income – Precept - Budget review to be undertaken by Full Council in April to reduce forecast budget deficit based on new proposals (see agenda item 6 above).
3. Salaries & wages – updated wage details for cleaners forwarded to Beverley & Williams (B&W) for payment from April 2022 onwards. Standing orders for both employees updated to reflect new salaries. B&W advised of Clerk/RFO’s new salary.
4. VAT Recovery – Clerk to submit claim for VAT of £4882.78 for 2021/22 financial year.
5. Training of Staff - Clerk/RFO sent email to S&A Fodden 30/03/22 asking for confirmation of adequate safety supplies / materials safety guidance / training issues. Response awaited
6. Training of Staff – A training plan will be required from May 2022
7. Assets – Insurance renewed 2nd February 2022 (adjustments for new boundaries from May 2022 cannot be made until 1 month before changes)
8. Health & Safety - Annual safety inspection by MCC of Little Mill children’s playground undertaken 11/02/22. Recommendations:
* Bug Climbing Frame - would recommend treating moss growth on surfacing. Councillor Deakins to address.
* Goal Posts are leaning but still secure in the ground - will need to monitor for any further deterioration
* x2 fence bolts nearest main entrance to be tightened. Clerk has requested Councillor Deakins to address
* Following the tree safety assessment report from MCC, the diseased Ash Tree and dead / dying Willows were removed 28/03/22
* Removal of Asbestos from Goytre Public Conveniences now complete
1. Maintenance of Proper Records - Prompt signing of Full Council meeting minutes continues to be an issue – Minutes for December 2021 and January 2022 remain outstanding. Closed meeting minutes of Feb 2022 from Chair not yet received by Clerk.
* Clerk’s outstanding expenses claims now signed off and complete

The risk assessment updates were accepted by the meeting and proposed by Councillor Barnes and seconded by Councillor Thayers. Clerk / RFO will propose at next Full Council meeting for sign-off. | Clerk / RFOClerk / RFOClerk / RFOClerk / RFO |
| 8 | Date of Next MeetingAs neither Councillor Barnes nor Thayers are standing for re-election in May, the Clerk took the opportunity to personally thank them for their contributions to the Finance Committee over the past years. Next meeting provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 5th July 2022, 6.30pm – with attendance by teleconference | Clerk / RFO |

Council member Date:

Clerk / RFO... Date: