

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND  
ON TUESDAY, 8 APRIL 2014 AT 4.00PM

Present:

Councillor M E J Nott OBE - Leader and Chairperson

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
S Aspey	H E Morgan	M Reeves	H J Townsend
M W Butcher	D G Owen	D Sage	D B F White
E Dodd	C E Rees	C E Smith	R Williams
E M Hughes	C L Reeves	R L Thomas	

Town and Community Councillors:

Brackla	-	C L Jones
Coity Higher	-	A Davies
Coychurch Higher	-	N Oram
Garw Valley	-	T Jenkins
Llangynwyd Middle	-	G W Davies MBE
Ogmore Valley	-	M Jenkins
Pencoed	-	R J Hancock OBE
Porthcawl	-	M Clarke
Pyle	-	M Kearns

Officers:

A Hobbs	-	Group Manager - Street Works
J Norman	-	Finance Manager
A Rees	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor T Berrow	-	Other Council Business
Councillor R D L Burns	-	No reason given
Councillor B Nash	-	No reason given
Councillor Y Nott	-	Unwell
Councillor M C Wilkins	-	Unwell

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

55 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Council Forum of 14 January 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record.

56 TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUND 2012-13 THROUGH TO 2014-15

The Finance Manager reported on a proposal to allocate funding identified in the Capital Allocation for Community Projects for 2014/15 to Town and Community Councils. She stated that due to the number of bids received in 2012/13, Cabinet had resolved to approve that the £50,000 budget available for 2013/14 would be added to the 2012/13 budget, allowing a total of £78,600 to be distributed. Funds underspent in previous years increase this to £88,507. No bids were therefore sought in 2013/14 with the two year full allocation being approved by Cabinet in 2012/13.

The Finance Manager highlighted the criteria for allocation of the Town and Community Council Fund and also highlighted the projects approved in 2012/13, totalling £88,507.

The Finance Manager reported on the bids for funding from the 2014/15 budget were invited from all Town and Community Councils and she highlighted the bids received and proposed allocation which totalled £62,755, which exceeded the amount of funding available by £4,766. The budget available represented 92% of funding requests and Cabinet agreed that all applications received 92% of the requests.

A Member of the Forum queried why two bids which had been agreed by Brackla Community Council but had not been listed in the programme for 2014/15. The Finance Manager indicated that no bids had been formally submitted by Brackla Community Council. All bids received had been included in the report presented.

In response to a question from a Member of the Forum, the Finance Manager stated that she would provide details to the Town and Community Councils on the Council's Improvement priorities which the projects approved must be at least one of.

The Leader commented that communities throughout the County Borough had benefitted from the funding for community projects which had been well spent.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the content of the report.

57 CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS STREET CLEANSING

The Group Manager - Street Works reported on the level of financial contribution made by Town and Community Councils to Bridgend County Borough Council, towards the cost of street cleaning activities in their areas. He stated that street cleansing is a statutory function and is a duty of all local authorities to ensure that all relevant land is, so far as it is practicable, kept clear of refuse, litter and detritus. He informed the Forum that it is a high profile service as all residents and visitors would be directly affected by the level of service provided and the standard of cleanliness of streets. Standards of street cleansing were increasingly perceived as a measure of how well a local authority is performing. He highlighted the principle activities of street cleaning in the County Borough which was provided by a directly employed workforce.

The Group Manager - Street Works detailed the levels and purpose of contributions received from Town and Community Councils to enhance cleanliness standards in their areas in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The Group Manager - Street Works informed the Forum that resources available to Bridgend County Borough Council would come under increased pressure and

that street cleaning services along with other visible front line functions would not be able to escape their share of budget cuts, which was likely to result in less resources being deployed on litter picking and other street cleaning activities. He stated that in order to maintain the levels of service enjoyed by Town and Community Councils for the recent years to improve on these levels of service, Town and Community Councils may wish to consider expanding the current collaborative working relationships with the County Borough Council and either directly employ operatives, or making increased financial contributions towards the cost of street cleaning services, where they wished to see an increased standard of cleanliness in their area.

A Member of the Forum commented that Pencoed Town Council had recently engaged two part time employees to undertake a range of cleansing, grounds maintenance and grass cutting duties, with the ambition of employing on a full time basis,

A Member of the Forum commented that Brackla Community Council had recently changed the perspex in bus shelters and provided litter bins, but there was a need to work with the County Borough to ensure the bins were at the right locations to be emptied. The Group Manager - Street Works the location of the bins with Brackla Community Council, however there could be difficulties operationally in the bins being emptied at certain locations.

A Member of the Forum relayed the frustrations of Bridgend Town Council in that it had provided funding for jet washing and gum clearing in Bridgend Town Centre, only to find that more gum appears on pavements as a result of littering, which is a concern in all communities at the level of gum deposited on pavements.

Concern was expressed by a Member of the Forum at the possibility of staff in the cleansing service being made redundant and the numbers of agency staff engaged by the Council. The Group Manager - Street Works informed the Forum that the establishment in the cleansing service was made up of full time employees and as a result of staff leaving the Authority opportunity had been taken to avoid compulsory redundancies in the service by filling posts on an agency basis. He informed the Forum that he had spoken to all employees to discuss changes to the way in which services would be delivered and would be reduced in size due to the need to make savings according to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was likely that there would be a change of approach in cleansing in that there would be a team approach designated to clean in particular areas.

A Member of the Forum expressed concern at the accumulation of litter in wooded areas in Coity Higher and there was a need to the public as to the consequences of litter and rubbish being dropped. The Group Manager - Street Works informed the Forum that the Council had a statutory duty to remove litter and clear land of fly tipping on all land within its ownership and on the adopted highway network. The Council did not have a duty in respect of rubbish removal and fly tipping from private land which was the responsibility of the landowner.

A Member of the Forum expressed his utmost appreciation for the work undertaken by the team in Street Scene who had to work in difficult conditions and commented on the difficulties some Town and Community Councils would have in employing operatives directly.

The Deputy Leader informed the Forum that the Council had recently been awarded Viable and Vibrant Places Funding which would see improvements being undertaken to Bridgend Town Centre. The Leader informed the Forum that

the Council had been successful in securing funding of £6m under the Viable and Vibrant Places programme.

The Deputy Leader also commended staff in Street Scene for the excellent service they provide and more recently during the bad winter weather where they had supported communities in alleviating flooding.

A Member of the Forum commented that Porthcawl Town Council employ a handyman who concentrated on hot spots in Porthcawl Town Centre. Concern was expressed at the shorter opening hours during the winter time of the Thythegston tip which was very well run. The Group Manager – Street Works informed the Forum that he would discuss the matter of the opening hours of Tythegston tip with the Waste Disposal Contractor.

The Group Manager - Street Works informed the Forum that it was intended to maintain the current level of street cleansing in the four town centres in the County Borough.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report.

58 SCHEDULE OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees presented a report on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, which informed the Forum of requests for items to be presented at future meetings.

He also reported that all Town and Community Councils had been issued with the grant agreement in order to draw down funding for Town and Community Council Websites. He stated that completed grant agreements were needed to be signed as soon as possible to enable the grant to be drawn down.

In response to a question from a Member of the Forum, the Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees stated that he would arrange for a response to be made on whether Town and Community Councils who already have a website can make a claim for funding.

RESOLVED: That the Forum noted the report and the items to be considered at future meetings of the Forum.

The meeting closed at 4.57pm.