

**NEW TREDEGAR COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR CYMUNED TREDEGAR NEWYDD**

ANNUAL MEETING –14th May 2019

AGENDA ITEM 10

TO REVIEW AND ADOPT COUNCILS CODE OF CONDUCT

The council adopted the Model Code of Conduct as adopted by CCBC in 2008. It is recommended that this is periodically reviewed by members to ensure that members continue to be aware of the guidance contained within.

A copy of the document has been circulated for information

Members are asked to confirm they have reviewed the document and adopt it for the forthcoming year.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – TO CONSIDER THE PAYMENT OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

No subscriptions are currently in payment although the council has recently re-joined the Town and Community liaison committee and backdated subscription is due for 2018/19. Members are asked to consider continued participation in this group and payment for 2019/20. Other annual payments relate to public liability insurance and audit fees. These are both legal requirements and the continued provision of these should be noted.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – TO CONSIDER POLICY IN RELATION TO PAYMENTS OF GRANTS AND DONATIONS

The community council has a long standing policy of welcoming requests for financial assistance - it is a standing agenda item on the Finance Committee. A general policy applies to the nature and types of requests that are taken forward for consideration and the value of assistance given,

It is considered appropriate to review that the policy is reviewed and updated if necessary.

The existing policy is that requests are taken forward for consideration is a number of conditions are met. These are

- Types of request considered are those from voluntary bodies, charities, community groups sporting clubs or individuals representing Wales or the UK in a team or individual capacity.
- The group, body, charity, team or individual should be located in, be resident in or provide services to the New Tredegar wards or be of local relevance or interest.
- All requests must be in writing and supported by some financial information, balance sheets or other accounts which should be relevant and up to date.
- Requests should provide information about the reason for the requests and what they intend to spend any grants or donations on,
- Applications can be deferred pending supply of financial or other supporting information.
- Any grants or donations awarded are at member's discretion subject to the above conditions.

- Requests are not taken forward for consideration in consecutive years unless there is significant compelling reasons.
- In general an upper limit is applied * but this can be waived if there are significant compelling reasons that can be demonstrated,
- Recipients are requested to confirm receipt in writing for audit purposes.

*The current upper limit for general donations and grants was increased to £100 in 2018/19, with larger amounts allowable if exceptional circumstances arise, however it should be noted that Council reserves are healthy and the external auditors generally frown upon the build-up of large reserves in the absence of any planned expenditure and will enquire into this as part of the year and review and audit process.

Members are asked to consider this policy and review the conditions that are in place and whether these should be amended or varied.

Possible variations could be to

- Increase upper limits, this could mean that larger grants could be issued if it is deemed beneficial for the community, however without a minimum value small grants could still be issued if necessary. This could mean that larger one off projects or events could be funded without creating an expectation of receipt, increased flexibility over the amount granted may allow better targeting of resources to needs. This may help to counter any negative comments from external auditors over the building up of reserves that are not being used to the community's benefit. Care would need to be taken that high value items are purchased with then require specialist (expensive) storage, maintenance or that have a short life cycle and repeated demands may be made which are unsustainable in the longer term.
- Removing any upper limit with each application to be considered on its merits taking into account the needs and resources of each case individually
- Consider removing limit on annual requests – this may have the negative effect of creating a cycle of dependence on such funds, and stifle other fundraising activities, as above.
- Increasing publicity for the scheme and soliciting requests – the website has been updated with this information but other methods could also be used such as social media posters, contacting / canvassing youth, elderly or similar groups and asking if they need certain equipment or facilities. This may open up the council to requests from organisations that were not aware of the facility.
- Removing condition for financial accounts to be supplied. It is not considered good practise to do this as there is no way of determining whether organisations have a true need for the funds requested. It may also reduce the level of probity and governance over the process.
- It may actually be beneficial to require better or more extensive financial information or business plans etc. for larger value requests so consideration could be given to requesting additional further information in certain cases.

This list is not exhaustive

AGENDA ITEM 13 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES AND CHAIR PERSONS ALLOWANCE

It is customary for the Clerk & financial Officer to place proposals before the Council, at its annual meeting, in respect of the Chairperson's allowance. The Independent Remuneration Panel Wales publishes recommended allowances for all levels of Councils based on size and finances.

In 2018/19 the Panel recommended that all Town and Community Council members could be granted an annual allowance of £150 per annum, this was to cover phone, travel and other consumables incurred in performance of their duties. This was not adopted by New Tredegar as the only annual allowance currently payable is the Chairs allowance.

These proposals have been amended slightly and now the Panel states that Community and town councils in Group with income / expenditure less than £30,000 per year should make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc., and other out of pocket expenses incurred may be reclaimed at standard rates or upon submission of receipts. This payment must be rejected individually by members and this must be recorded

Members are asked to note this information and individual members consider whether they require to submit individual claims for cost incurred up to the permitted maximum, or if they wish to refuse the allowance and record this formally.

CHAIRS AND VICE ALLOWANCE/S

The Independent Remuneration Panel Wales publishes recommended allowances for all levels of Councils based on size and finances, the current suggested maximum of a Council in band C for Deputy Mayor or Vice Chair persons allowances is £500. Currently New Tredegar does not pay any vice chair or deputy allowances

The Independent Remuneration Panel Wales publishes recommended allowances for all levels of Councils based on size and finances, the current suggested maximum of a Council in band C for Mayor or Chair persons allowances is £1500.

The Chairs allowance is presently set at £1290, in 2009/10 the allowance was frozen at its present level. It can be seen that the allowance is £210 less than the recommended maximum, so there is capacity to increase the allowance to take account of 8 years of inflation and other increases and for it to still remain within or lower than recommended values.

1 Members are asked to consider whether any deputy or vice chairs allowance should be paid and if so the value

2 Members are asked to consider whether a Chairs allowance should be paid and if so the value taking into account the current allowance and the permitted maximum together with any other allowances that may have been approved in relation to standard members allowances and vice chair or deputy mayors allowances

PUBLICITY

Member's allowances both specific and general paid in a year should be disclosed to the public and displayed on the website by 30th September each year.

AGENDA ITEM 14. CLERK & FINANCIAL OFFICER'S SALARY & ALLOWANCES.

The current salary is £ 2929 per annum, a 1% increase was applied in 2018/19 after a long period of no increases from 2012.

A payment of £100 per quarter is also made to cover telephone, broadband and office accommodation. This amount has not increased for several years

The Local Government employers paid an increase to Local Government officers in 2019 of 2% payable from April 2019.

The clerk is an employee of the Council whose members must be aware that all relevant employment law conditions are complied with. The Council can pay the Clerk and Responsible officer any wage it determines fit provided that it is above the National Minimum Wage in relation to working hours and paid holidays.

It should be noted that increasing regulatory requirements have crept in over the years such as RTI income tax and PAYE, the website requires updating as external auditors check and verify this as part of their audit.

Members are asked to consider what level of pay award is to be applied to the salary .

AGENDA ITEM 15 –MEETINGS CYCLE.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is customary for the Clerk & financial Officer to place proposals before the Council, at its annual meeting, in respect of the meeting cycle for the next year.

2. Bank Holidays 2020

In general meetings of the Council are held on the second Tuesday in each month. In 2019/20 bank holidays are as follows:-

New Year's day 1.1.20 (Wednesday), Good Friday 10.4.20, Easter Monday 13.4.20 May day 4.5.20 (Monday) Spring bank holiday 25.5.20, (Monday), Summer Bank holiday 31.8.20 (Monday) Christmas day 25.12.20 (Friday) Boxing Day substitute 28.12.20 (Monday)

There are meetings due to fall on the Tuesday following a bank holiday Monday in April and May so it is proposed that the cycle of second Tuesday is amended and the meetings put back by one week.

Meeting dates are proposed as follows

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As in previous years some flexibility may be required due to short notice of illness or inclement weather but in those cases meetings will be rearranged at the most suitable date either in advance of or following the proposed dates as shown on the calendar and any changes will not be made without approval of the chair.

A calendar of meetings will be provided and up loaded onto the website and members are recommended to access this and review the website as necessary .