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A meeting of the Procedures Review Committee was held on Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 6:30pm. The Chairperson, Cllr Anne McCreary, presided.

Present: Cllr Sue Lewis Cllr Jackie Brown, Cllr Robin Young, Cllr Zoe Storer and Mrs Vanesa Owens (Clerk)

Due to Covid-19 the meeting was held electronically

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave Addison.

Existing policies were reviewed:

Standing Orders

Financial Regulations

Complaints Policy – it was agreed to set up a register to record complaints that trigger the complaints policy requirements

Risk Assessment

Policy on Unacceptable Actions by Individuals

Welsh Language Policy

Freedom of Information – Cllr Sue Lewis and the Clerk to review and ensure that where possible information is available on the website.

Play Provision Policy

The Clerk provided a Data Protection Policy; this was approved

The Clerk provided a new Equality & Diversity policy; this was approved.

The Clerk provided a draft Media Communications Policy for approval.

It was suggested that the existing PR policy and social media policy are incorporated into this; Clerk to review.

Cllr Sue Lewis felt that the face of the Community Council is the Chairperson and that communication should come from the Chair. She agreed that individual councillors can release individual statements and press releases as long as the Clerk is made aware.

Cllr Sue Lewis also noted the potential need for Councillors to use the media in the event of campaigning at election time. Allowances for this are included in the policy.

Cllr Zoe Storer noted her concerns about social media comments coming from the Clerks and Councillors personal accounts and suggested that a community council social media account would be a better way of communicating on this platform.

Cllr Anne McCreary agreed and suggested that information can be put onto the website and the links made available on community facebook to include monthly meeting information, minutes etc..

Cllr Sue Lewis agreed on a collective voice on social media; that Councillors need to take care on distinguishing between own opinion and council agreed stance.

Cllr Robin Young felt as long as it the Councils democratic decision which is passed to delegated person to make announcement/statement

Cllr Sue Lewis suggested that the community council could record the meetings and then make them available to the public online; Cllr Jackie Brown was against this stating that minutes are available.

The committee reviewed requirements under the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act:

General Power of Competence is to replace the powers of wellbeing in Wales (this is already available in England)

The Council has to adhere to a number of requirements to be eligible for Power of Competence which includes a suitably qualified Clerk and meeting a number of audit requirements. The Clerk

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advised that having the Power of Competence allows the community council to spend money differently and does not have to comply with identifying relevant powers or relying on s137.

The Clerk has been successful in securing a Welsh Government Bursary to undertake the CiLCA training.

The new legislation allows for the Council to continue holding remote meetings and it is acceptable for the Council to tailor its meetings to suit Councillors and public wanting to attend.

There is a recommendation to review the council’s procedures and meetings with a view to make public participation easier.

The committee agreed that the zoom links to meeting should be made available to the public and not only provided on request.

There will be a requirement to produce an Annual Report from April 2022 – this needs to cover the period April 1st 2021 to March 31st 2022 and to be published as close to April 2022 as possible

The Clerk advised that some town and community councils are already doing this and there are some good examples. She felt that it was important the report was user friendly whilst ensuring it included all the relevant information; that it will need to be concise and interesting.

The committee agreed; Cllr Sue Lewis asked how the Council would approach producing the report and the Clerk was happy to undertake the initial draft for approval.

There will be a requirement to produce a training plan by May 2022. The aim is to establish that members have the understanding and be able to specialise in areas to ensure that the Council has all the required knowledge necessary to function.

The Clerk noted the elections due in May 2022 and the potential for any training plan to be amended at that time.

Cllr Robin Young asked how will the Council identify different councillors to undertake different roles?

Cllr Anne McCreary felt it would be beneficial to undertake a skills analysis.

The Clerk suggested that Aberporth Community Council should make some of the training such as Code of Conduct mandatory.

Cllr Sue Lewis noted that the Councillors were volunteers.

The Clerk noted that whilst she appreciated they are volunteers they have accepted a position of public office and as part of their role accept that there legal responsibilities in being Councillors.

The committee reviewed the Independent Remuneration Panel Annual Report.

Clerk to draft a form for completion/signature regarding remuneration. Previously a minuted decision by the Council was sufficient but it is now necessary for individual councillors to all sign an agreement.

The Clerk advised that changes to the financial requirements will be reviewed by the Finance committee. The Clerk is to undertake Advanced Financial Training and Cllr Sue Lewis and Cllr Zoe Storer are booked to complete financial training this month.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 07.30pm.