

# **A SHARED COMMUNITY – MODEL CHARTER**

**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

**and the**

**Town Council of Pontypridd**

**and the**

**Community Councils**

**of**

**Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm, Rhigos, Hirwaun, Llantwit Fardre, Llantrisant,  
Llanharan, Llanharry, Tonyrefail, Gilfach Goch, Pontyclun and**

**Taff's Well & Nantgarw have agreed to publish a Charter which sets out how  
we aim to work together for the benefit of the local communities**

## ***Introduction***

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Town Council of Pontypridd and the Community Councils of Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm Community Council, Rhigos, Hirwaun, Llantwit Fardre, Llantrisant, Llanharan, Llanharry, Tonyrefail, Gilfach Goch, Pontyclun and Taffs Well & Nantgarw have agreed to publish a Charter which sets out how we aim to work together for the benefit of local communities whilst recognising our respective responsibilities as autonomous, democratically elected statutory bodies.

The Charter is designed to build on existing good practice and embrace the shared principles of openness, to achieve the best possible outcomes of our residents and communities. This Charter is based on equal partnership and is not a top-down arrangement. It is a set of principles by which we will work together.

The Charter will form the basis for meaningful communication and liaison through the respective partners either individually or through Rhondda Cynon Taf's Community Liaison Committee. This charter aims to develop these relationships at a Member and Officer level.

The Charter will use the sustainable development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to deliver on outcomes for the benefits of the people who live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Charter was originally adopted in 2012 and has been updated and re-affirmed in 2019 following consultation with all Members.

### **Partners to the Charter**

The following Unitary Authority, Town and Community Councils are committed to the principles and statements as outlined in this Charter, for the benefit of local people:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Pontypridd Town Council

- Community Councils of:
  - Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm
  - Rhigos
  - Hirwaun
  - Llantwit Fardre
  - Llantrisant
  - Llanharan
  - Llanharry
  - Tonyrefail
  - Gilfach Goch
  - Pontyclun
  - Taff's Well & Nantgarw

## RECOGNITION

We recognise benefits of partnership working whilst at the same time recognising and respecting each other's roles. We aim to work together as a partnership of equals rather than tiers. Collaboration and involvement of each of the partners will ensure that all decisions taken forward are sustainable in the long term, whilst being mindful of the current needs of our residents.

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rhondda Cynon Taf<br/>County Borough Council will</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Town and Community Councils will</b></p>   |
|---|--|
| <p>acknowledge and recognises that Town and Community Councils are the grass roots level of local government. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, Town and Community Councils offer a means of engaging with local people, of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities.</p> | <p>recognise the strategic importance of the Unitary Authority and the economy of scale and equitable distribution of certain services they are able to achieve.</p> |
| <p>recognise and respect the diversity of Town and Community Councils and that their needs vary according to size and the extent to which they participate varies.</p>  | <p>recognise that Town and Community Councils come within the common umbrella of the Unitary Authority.</p>  |
| <p>recognise the principle of subsidiarity as a desirable goal.</p>   | <p>recognise the principle of subsidiarity as a desirable goal.</p>  |
| <p>recognise the need to manage expectations and to deliver realistic and proportionate responses to any emerging challenges, priorities or proposals.</p>  | <p>recognise the need to consider realistic and proportionate requests to any emerging challenges, priorities or proposals.</p>                                      |

support the delivery of the PSB Well-being Objectives as and when applicable.

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## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

We will be clear about the expectations that we have of each other in order to facilitate a smooth working relationship. In this regard, we will define the way in which we interact with each other. We will be clear about the role of Councillors at all levels in the relationship and community leadership taking forward cohesive communities across the County Borough.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| <p>Continue with the establishment of the Community Liaison Committee as agreed at its Council Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.</p> <p>This Committee comprises of the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Regeneration &amp; Housing and also the Chairs and Clerks to the Town and Community Councils.</p> <p>The Council will give all Members the opportunity to contribute to the items of business at the meetings to ensure it is not led by the Council and to ensure that the agenda better reflects the requirements of Community Councils.</p> <p>Meetings will be convened at locations across the County Borough and will be hosted by each partner as and when appropriate.</p> <p>Going forward the Committee will convene at least 3 times a year with the provision of extra meetings being called as and when necessary.</p> <p>The Community Liaison Committee will be chaired by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business. The Vice Chair will be a representative</p> | <p>Contribute towards the agenda of liaison meetings and participate proactively to the attendance and discussion.</p> <p>Will provide where practical and able to do so venues for hosting meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>Will appoint a Vice Chair to the Community Liaison Committee.</p> |

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| from the Town / Community Councils and will be elected at the Committee   |   |
| hold one to one liaison meetings with representatives of all Town and Community Councils that wish to take part; and will be convened as and when felt appropriate to assist in the sharing of knowledge and to strengthen partnership working. | welcome one to one liaison meetings as and when necessary to further promote the partnership working arrangements |
| ensure that a nominated member of staff within the Authority will undertake the Liaison Officer duties and will be the point of contact between the Authority and the Town and Community Councils.  | contact the nominated Officer on the agreed issues and make them aware of any difficulties being encountered.     |
| administer the holding of Town and Community Council elections.   | I notify the need for elections in a timely manner.   |

## ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT

We recognise the importance of meaningful engagement and involvement and set out a genuine commitment across all parties to consult on matters of mutual concern. We will agree clear, specific and time limited procedures and processes for engagement. Strengthening the community involvement in the Consultation processes taken forward allow for valuable feedback to be provided on any proposals taken forward which impacts upon the wellbeing of the residents of the County Borough. Taking a partnership approach to engagement allows for the responses to reflect the diversity of the communities across the County Borough.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| publish dates of public meetings and agendas & reports for Cabinet, Council and other Committee meetings on the Council's website as soon as possible.   | make full use of the papers available to them to inform local decision-making.   |
| ensure Officers attend meetings with Town and Community Councils (or groups of Councils) at a mutually agreed time to discuss matters of common interest when requested to do so and will be given sufficient notice.  | ensure that County Borough Councillors and Officers will be given the opportunity to speak at Town and Community Council meetings on matters of mutual interest.   |
| encourage Scrutiny Committees to liaise with Town and Community Councils on relevant local issues and will take forward stakeholder involvement and engagement in workings groups if and when appropriate.   | respond to requests to input views to Scrutiny Committees.   |
| email links to consultation proposals to Town and Community Councils for information and to allow for participation as and when necessary.<br><br>Where possible, consultation items will be presented to the Community Liaison Committee at its meeting to ensure all Members are involved in the process | respond to consultation and engagement opportunities in a timely manner, addressing the key issues in the consultation document.<br><br>participate and be involved in the consultation when addressed at Committee. |



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

We acknowledge the need for timely, clear and relevant information and communication in fostering good relationships and better joint working for the benefit of local people. It is important that such engagement through these methods is meaningful and effective.

Improved information and communication will assist in enabling solutions and early interventions at the right time to make progress in achieving the well-being goals of the County Borough. This prevents any problems and challenges being viewed in isolation and prevents a 'reactive' approach to situations.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils</b>  |
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| <p>provide to Town and Community Councils a list of named contacts, telephone numbers and where possible email addresses. In times of uncertainty, the Clerks can go direct to the nominated Liaison Officer.</p>   | <p>utilise the agreed contact points and respond in the most appropriate and timely method.</p>   |
| <p>communicate by providing sufficient numbers of documents for members of Town and Community Councils as appropriate.</p> <p>Welcome the Town and Community Councils to adopt the Council's approach to a paper light Council and to utilise the Council's website for information and or correspondence by email.</p> | <p>ensure that all town and community councillors have access to the appropriate documents.</p> <p>Will utilise the Council's website or email communication in the first instance to relevant officers for access to relevant and necessary information.</p> |
| <p>provide information on the Council's website in relation to the town and community councils</p> <p>Contact details, directing the public where available to the respective Councils websites</p>   | <p>provide updated contact information to the Council for publication on the Council website, including individual website links if available.</p>  |
| <p>provide information bilingually in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards.</p>   | <p>provide information bilingually as in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards.</p>  |

## JOINT WORKING AND COLLABORATION

The Charter defines `Partnership` as working together towards a common set of goals based on equality in terms of ownership, decision-making and recognition of each party's distinctive contribution. It is recognised that an equal and effective partnership brings benefits and responsibilities to all those involved. Local government at both tiers must work together to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of our area. If doing things differently achieves a better service, we will seriously examine these methods. Working in such a collaborative manner allows for integration and involvement allowing for the production of timely, people focused outcomes.

The purpose of taking such a collaborative approach is to recognise the different roles that the Council and Town / Community Council has to play in tackling long-term challenges, and to ensure actions are complimentary therefore maximising their collective impact. Similarly the approach allows the opportunity to create cohesive communities ensuring that that communities stay well connected and strengthening the communities' resilience.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| provide opportunities for Clerks of Town and Community Councils to meet to discuss common concerns and will endeavour to resolve issues | encourage participation by Clerks in opportunities to network and share common concerns.                              |
| be clear about how devolved services can be discussed and agreed.   | use the agreed procedures, if there is a wish, to progress devolved services.   |
| give due consideration to devolving services that would provide better value for money and/or enhanced services.                        | be clear about how any devolvement of services will provide better value for money and/or enhanced services.          |
| encourage accountability for all acquired activities.   | take responsibility for aspects of joint working that are signed up to.   |
| promote opportunities to work jointly with town and community councils to communicate and consult with local people and communities     | identify opportunities to work with the unitary council to communicate and consult with local people and communities. |
| be provided with information as and   | receive information when appropriate in   |

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| when possible in relation to the 'RCT Together' programme and any potential asset transfer within the ward area | respect of the 'RCT Together' programme. |
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## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

We accept the benefits of training and development for Councillors to assist them in undertaking their role and for the benefits of further effective joint working. Ensuring all Members are provided with the opportunities for training allows equality of provision.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| provide opportunities for Town and Community Councils to partake in its training and development programme.               | encourage its Members to attend training sessions offered by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council         |
| provide Code of Conduct training on an Annual basis or as and when appropriate.   | encourage its Members to attend Code of Conduct training offered by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. |
| provide Service updates / legislation updates at the meetings of the Community Liaison Committee as and when appropriate. | receive updates at the meetings of the Community Liaison Committee as and when appropriate.                   |

## LAND USE PLANNING

Town and Community Councils know and understand their local area and must be able to comment effectively on planning matters. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is able to take an overview of the needs of the whole local area and make decisions, taking local views into account.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| uphold its statutory duty to consult Town and Community Councils on all planning applications in their communities.  | make appropriate responses to the Unitary Authority recognising the parameters imposed by planning law and agreed planning policy.               |
| ensure that details of any site visit applications are made available on the Councils' Website for Members to view.  | access the Councils' webpage to gain knowledge of the site visit applications being undertaken by the Councils Planning & Development Committee. |
| ensure that Councillors receive training on planning issues and have a sound understanding of how planning law works.  | encourage its Members to partake in any training in respect of planning issues that the Unitary Authority may provide.                           |
| publish the outcome of all planning decisions taken by the Council's Development Control Committees in minutes format, on the Council's website, 10 working days following the date of the meeting.  | review decisions of the Planning & Development Committee either through the website or through contacting the Council Business Unit directly.    |
| make available details of forthcoming Planning & Development Committee meetings on the Council website, with publication of the agenda and relevant planning applications under consideration being available 7 days prior to the meeting. | encourage Councillors to take up the opportunity to attend Planning & Development Committee meetings of the Unitary Authority when applicable    |
| consult on any development or preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) with town and community Councils.   | cooperate in the preparation of SPG as provided for by current planning legislation  |

## PRACTICAL SUPPORT

In order to be effective, elected members and officers must be appropriately-trained and have the support they need to carry out their roles.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>                          | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| where practical, offer Town and Community Councils access to support services | follow procedures set out to access the Authority's support services, but will also have the opportunity to make their own arrangements. |

## EXPERTISE

We will encourage continuous development of Officers and Members in both Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the Town and Community Councils, either in their individual groupings or together. Improved expertise leads to professionalism and more effective joint working.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| Offer assistance in identifying and helping to meet the training needs of community and town councils.   | ensure that councillors and clerks are trained to undertake their role effectively.                   |
| offer Member induction training to Town and Community Councillors to enable them to understand the role and functions of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. | provide an induction to newly elected Councillors to enable them to undertake their role effectively. |
| provide service-specific support materials and training as appropriate, subject to resources being available.  | provide an induction to new clerks to enable them to undertake their role effectively.                |
| offer Code of Conduct Training to Members on an Annual basis   | take forward any offers of training as and when appropriate.  |

## ETHICS

We will provide an ethical service to local people, following the appropriate standards and Codes of Conduct.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| through the appointed Monitoring Officer, support community and councils in the timely consideration and provision of advice in relation to the application of the Members Code of Conduct | act in an appropriate manner under the Code and will provide all such information as required by the Monitoring Officer to enable him/her to carry out his/her function effectively. |
| encourage links between community and town council clerks and the Council's Standards Committee.   | actively participate in Rhondda Cynon Taf's Council Standards Committee  |

## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Both Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and town and community councils recognise the need for clarity and transparency in financial arrangements. In developing and implementing financial arrangements, relevant national and local priorities will be taken into account.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| set the level of council tax for the Area, and will have regard to services being delivered by community and town councils in its area, and the funding thereof. This will be with a view to avoiding double-taxation. | In setting the annual precept, shall have regard to the plans for services provided by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council for the coming year as set out in the Corporate Plans. |

## DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SERVICE PROVISION

Services should be delivered in the most appropriate manner, with regard to value for money and added value for local people. This approach allows for a healthier and more prosperous County Borough.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| actively consider cases for the delegation of service delivery to community and town councils, thinking creatively about how services will be delivered to ensure value for money.  | recognise that there are mutual opportunities to consider how services can be delivered to achieve value for money.  |
| Where it is not appropriate or desirable to delegate service delivery, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will seek ways in which local information from communities might be used to enhance service delivery to better meet citizen needs. | engage with the citizens in the communities they serve to understand better their needs and convey these needs in a coherent and constructive manner to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, such that they can be taken account of in service design and delivery |

## **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015 & CORPORATE & STRATEGIC PLANNING.**

We will work in ways that will meet the sustainable development principles arising from the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) Act 2015. i.e. to improve the Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

These principles are reflected in the Council's strategic priorities contained within its Corporate Plan, which was adopted as its Well-being Plan in March 2017. This Plan sets out its key priorities of Economy, People and Place, and describes how we will work to build a strong local economy, promote independence and positive lives for everyone and create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work. The principles are also reflected in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan, i.e. the local Well-being Plan which sets out the Cwm Taf Well-being Objectives of Thriving Communities, Strong Economy, Healthy People and Tackling Loneliness and Isolation.

Both of these plans are underpinned by the need to implement the 5 Ways of Working and maximise the contribution to the seven national goals as required by the Act.

The Act also places a duty on <sup>1</sup>certain community councils to take all reasonable steps towards meeting the objectives set out in the local Well-being Plan

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| assist Town and Community Councils by providing information on sustainable practices                                  | proactively assess the sustainability of current practices and processes.  |
| outline how it is actively pursuing sustainable development.  | investigate projects which contribute to sustainability where beneficial to the community                                    |
| assist town and community councils to adopt electronic working to achieve improved communication and to reduce waste. | work towards adopting electronic methods of working wherever feasible to achieve improved communication and to reduce waste. |

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<sup>1</sup> Where either gross expenditure or gross income was at least £200,000 for each of the preceding three years



| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>  |
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| assist relevant Town and Community Councils to address and fulfil their duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 by sharing good practices and information and also providing opportunities for engagement and involvement.   | consider how they may contribute towards meeting the local Well-being objectives included in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan   |
| work with the town and community councils to protect the biodiversity.  | work with the Rhondda Cynon Taf Council to protect and increase biodiversity.  |
| involve Town and Community Councils in the development / revision of the Council's Corporate Plan as and when appropriate.  | contribute to the development / review of the Councils Corporate Plan as and when appropriate.   |
| involve Town and Community Councils in the implementation of the Corporate Plan.  | respond actively and fully to implementation of the Corporate Plan   |
| <p>ensure that monitoring reports in respect of the Council's Corporate Plan and Cwm Taf Well-being Plan are placed on the agenda for consideration by the Community Liaison Committee to ensure that all partners are delivering the priorities expected for the benefits of all residents of RCT.</p> | <p>consider the monitoring reports in respect of Council's Corporate Plan and Cwm Taf Well-being Plan are placed on the agenda for consideration by the Community Liaison Committee to ensure that all partners are delivering the priorities expected for the benefits of all residents of RCT.</p> |

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

We will ensure that elections are fairly contested and encourage local people to become involved in local democracy.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>  | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| involve community councils in the planning process for community Council elections.   | encourage participation by members of the local community in the Community Council election process |
| involve community councils in any awareness raising/publicity to encourage nominations for candidacy at community council elections.                                    | ensure wide publicity of vacancies on community councils to maximise community representation.      |
| help to publicise forthcoming community council elections on behalf of community councils.  | publicly display statutory notices for forthcoming community council elections.                     |
| brief community council clerks on the nomination process so that they are equipped to assist any potential candidates who come forward for community council elections. |   |
| provide help and assistance with the legal and administrative processes and procedures for community council elections.   |   |
| inform members of the Community Liaison Committee about election matters on a regular basis.  |   |

## ACTION PLAN

This Charter will be supported by the development of an annual Action Plan addressing each of the individual topics contained therein. The Action Plan will be developed on a joint basis and shall attribute responsibilities to each partner. Actions will be accompanied by a timescale and will be reported on annually.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| nominate a lead Officer for the development and monitoring of the Action Plan.   | collectively agree priorities for inclusion in the Action Plan.   |
| ensure that the responsible Officers of the Authority will have due regard to the Action Plan and include relevant actions in their workplan for the year. | have due regard to the Action Plan and include all actions relevant to them during the course of the year |

## MONITORING & REVIEW.

The Charter will be fully reviewed every five years following elections or more often if there is a need to do so. The Community Liaison Committee will measure progress annually in achieving the measures set out in the Charter through the setting and reviewing of actions contained in an action plan. The Community Liaison Committee can recommend the need for a mid-term review of the Charter if appropriate.

| <b>Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will</b>   | <b>Town and Community Councils will</b>   |
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| arrange and actively contribute for the Charter to be reviewed when appropriate  | actively contribute to the review of the Charter.                               |
| arrange for the development of an action plan linked to the Charter and will actively contribute to achieving the action plan. | actively contribute to the development and delivery of the Charter action plan. |

## **Partners to the Charter**

The undersigned Unitary Authority, Town and Community Councils are committed to the principles and statements with the Charter, for the benefit of local people.

### ***Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council***

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Deputy Leader of the Council

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Director – Democratic Services & Communications

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Dated

### ***Pontypridd Town Council***

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Chair Dated

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Clerk Dated

***Ynysybwl & Coed y Cwm Community Council***

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Chair Dated

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Clerk Dated

***Rhigos Community Council***

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***Hirwaun Community Council***

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***Taff's Well & Nantgarw Community Council***

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