

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2ND. SEPTEMBER 2019.

Present : Councillor G James (Mayor)

Councillors T Jones, A Farina-Childs, R Weeks, D Davies, J Edwards, A Short, C Erasmus,
R Mills & Z Hammond

Also present County Councillor K Etheridge

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors N Turner, J Griffiths, P Cook & M Gwynne

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point

3. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor announced it had been a quiet period, but that he had visited DYT Dance Studio that morning to see the new floor

4. County Borough Report

County Councillor K Etheridge reported that he had received information from the Minister for Housing & Local Government indicating that the planning appeal by Persimmon Homes in respect of 300 houses will ultimately be her determination, given the nature and size of the proposal.

The inquiry is scheduled for 3rd. & 4th. October, and the Inspector has 7 weeks from the close of the Inquiry to submit the report to officials in the Planning Directorate who will provide her with advice. The indicative target for issuing a decision is 12 weeks from the date the Inspector's report is received.

It is unlikely, however, that a decision will be issued before Christmas.

5. Correspondence

The Clerk presented his report on the following items of correspondence received since the last meeting, and all were *noted* –

Caerphilly CBC

Notification of payment of 2nd. Instalment of precept £29,472

Notification of Emergency closure of Rear lane of Heol Tyewydd from 21st. August – maximum 21 days - Forwarded to members for information

Notification that after letter to Cabinet Member the proposed charge of £120 for use of Methodist Car Park for Carnival/ Beach Party has been waived

Gwent Police Notification of After Dark Meeting to be held 10.00am on 4th. September at Briefing Room Blackwood Police Station

One Voice Wales Copy of Practitioners Guide – Governance & Accountability for Local Authorities in Wales

Notification of Conference & AGM to be held on Saturday 5th. October at the Bont Pavilion in Pontrhydfendigaid

Mr C Mears Hi I recently was walking my dog and had to use a red dog bin but noticed there are none in Blackwood town or are you supposed to put them in with blacklitter bins what is your procedure for dog bins please in Blackwood town.

Dear Mr Mears,

I refer to your recent email sent to Blackwood Town Council regarding the above. There are no dog bins in the main part of the town as if installed they would be outside someone's business premise and could also cause environmental issues of their own in a busy area.

However, there are dog bins on the periphery of town i.e. at the far ends of the high street and on some spur roads leading off to residential areas. Some dog bins are the silver stainless steel type. You can as you mentioned, use the litterbins if there is no dog bins within a reasonable distance.

I trust the above information is of use but please do not hesitate to contact me further if you have any other queries.

Yours Sincerely,

IAN JONES

Technical Assistant/Relief Supervisor - Caerphilly County Borough Council

Cllr. Jan Weeks Letter tendering her resignation from Town Council citing ongoing health issues

BT Phone Box Closures – Consultation period ends 28th. October 2019

Blackwood Little Theatre Invitation for members to attend Theatre to see production of Catamba's Revenge – Thursday 19th. to Saturday 21st. September

Cllr. Kevin Etheridge

FOI Request

Discussion between Town Council. Taxi Association CCBC Officers and any other Partners on the re opening of the Bus Station Toilets Blackwood (including disabled provision)

Having submitted a 3000 named petition in March to keep the toilets open as the Blackwood Ward Member perhaps you could clarify if any internal or individual meetings have been held between the above parties with dates, current cost contribution , contents of discussions, agendas, cost on the precept, minutes who attended and was it by invitation only as I understand the town council has an agreement with CCBC on issues which affect Blackwood residents also were any business people invited like the cafe owner from the bus station in regard partnership working and effective communication and consultation with details of any decisions taken, and future meetings.

Kevin Etheridge

Joanne Cegielski Taylor

Complaint received from a Blackwood resident.

Hi Gerwyn, as you know I'm very upset with the exclusion of Kevin from Blackwood town council regarding the decision making on the toilets, for many reasons and one being he actually challenged CBC from shutting the toilets in various ways. I hope this is just an oversight but under the circumstances, community is finally coming together in a positive way. By not inviting Kevin to town council to discuss any proposals made with the future of the toilets highlights a lack of trust in our local democracy. Could you please forward my complaint to the clerk and subsequently a full apology to Kevin on Facebook page to ensure such an oversight doesn't happen again.

Blackwood Brownies

Letter of thanks for Financial Assistance, and invitation to attend carnival, which they thoroughly enjoyed and wish to become involved in future events

Stephen Blakeman

Good evening sir I Want to say short few words of gratitude to your town council for all the hard work you and your councillors do through out the year.

People are quick to complain but never to say when people do good. I've noticed how popular the beach party has become once a year.

Please thank everyone involved it was great weekend. It makes a change to see good that people do. Thank you Stephen Blakeman (member of the public.

Mrs Hudspeth

The flower bed at Bloomfield Road was designed and planted by Blackwood Comprehensive Children with a wonderful display of flowers. With the school holidays in progress a neighbour has watered and cared for these plants on a regular basis.

Mr Darren Williams of 41 Bloomfield Road has done this on a daily basis and I was hoping the Town Council could recognise these efforts.

It was **agreed** that the letter regarding B.T. phone box closures be placed on the agenda for our next meeting.

In respect of Councillor Jan Weeks resignation letter it was **agreed** the Clerk write expressing our understanding of her situation and thanking her for all her hard work over the past years, especially for her successful year as Mayor.

In respect of the letter from County Councillor Etheridge, the Clerk reported that he had formally responded to his request. Councillor Etheridge acknowledged same and said he would get back to the Clerk if he felt it necessary.

The Clerk also reported that he would be formally responding to Ms. Joanne Cegielski Taylor's letter.

In respect of the letter from Mrs Hudspeth, members **agreed** a form of recognition should be made at the Civic Awards evening to Mr Darren Williams, but that the Clerk should also contact the school highlighting the problems that occurred during the school holidays

The Clerk also reported on a request from Emma Wilkins (Aneurin Bevan UHB) to attend Town Council to discuss the proposed Charity event Turn the Town Pink in support of a new Breast Unit at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr. Arrangements had originally been made for her to attend this evening, but unfortunately she had to cancel at relatively short notice.

After some discussion, recognising the event is to be held on 4th. October, prior to our next meeting, it was **agreed** an Events Committee meeting be called and that she be invited to attend.

6. ***Schedule of Payments***

The Clerk presented his report on payments made/ to be made, and the following were **agreed** –

		£. p
M Z Jones	Staging/ Sound System	725.00
CCBC	Room Hire – Institute	98.38
Elsbury's	Bunting	360.00
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. for July	272.99
John Hold	Salary/Reimbursements for July	940.80
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. for August	287.79
John Hold	Salary/Reimbursements for August	941.00

7. ***To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1st. July 2019***

It was **resolved** the minutes be agreed as a true record

8. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that the invitation to Caerphilly CBC officers/ members to attend a Special Meeting with Town Council and Representatives of the Save Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Group had not yet been sent, as there was a possibility the Authority might appeal against the ruling. However, no appeal has been made and so the invitation will be made over the coming weeks.

9. To Confirm the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Town Council held on 19th. August 2019

It was *resolved* the minutes be agreed as a true record.

The Clerk reported that to ensure Town Council meets its responsibilities, and due to the current uncertainties regarding how our payment /contribution towards purchase of the toilet entry systems will be made, requested that Standing Orders be waived to enable the tender to be negotiated, given the specialist bespoke nature of the goods concerned, and the urgency of the situation to get the facilities back for public use. There is a possibility Caerphilly CBC will act on our behalf regarding purchase as they did for Caerphilly Town Council.

Several members, not present at the Special Meeting queried whether there was anything in writing regarding ownership of the equipment reverting back to Town Council ownership, should for any reason the toilets close in the future, as this was public monies we are handing over

The Clerk responded by stating there was nothing at present but would discuss this issue with the Taxi Drivers Association, but did not foresee any issues. Furthermore, he stated he would contact the Borough Council to ask that this ownership issue is reflected in the Tenancy Agreement between them as landlords and the Association.

After further discussion it was *agreed* that Standing Orders be waived for the reasons stated above, and that the Clerk have a discussion with both the Taxi Association and the Borough Council to ensure Town Council's investment in the toilet system is recognised and secure.

10. To Receive the Minutes of the Bi Centenary Committee Meeting held on 12th. August 2019

It was *agreed* the minutes be received

11. To Receive the Minutes of the Community Council Liaison Sub Committee Meeting held on 13th. March 2019

It was *agreed* the minutes be received

12. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/ Caerphilly Area Committee AGM and Ordinary Meeting held on 24th. July 2019

It was *agreed* that both sets of minutes be received

13. Budget Monitoring Report to Period 4 - 31st. July 2019

The Clerk presented his Budget Monitoring Report to 31st. July, and reported there were no significant variations anticipated, other than the decision to contribute £8,900 towards the purchase of the Door Entry Systems at the Bus Station Toilets.

It was **agreed** the report be accepted.

14. Town Council Support for an Independent Wales

The Mayor explained that he had asked for this item to be placed on the Agenda following a request from a member of the public.

Members felt Town Council had much more pressing matters to contend with at present and it was **agreed** this item be deferred until a future meeting.

15. Blackwood in Bloom Winners

The following Gardens have been judged by the Mayor & Chair of Events Committee as the winners, and will be invited to the Civic Awards Evening to receive their certificates and cash prize -

13 Morrison Street

62 Cefn Road

13 Tree Tops Ave

10 Chartist Way

35 Chartist Way

7 Greenwood Road

58 Beaumaris Way

52 Bloomfield Road

Both members agreed that the standard this year had been excellent and that it had been a difficult task to choose the winning gardens. They asked that a letter be sent to the following congratulating them on being nominated and wishing them luck in future Blackwood in Bloom Competitions

14 Thorncombe Road

30 Lillian Road

39 Lillian Road

64a Cefn Road

7 Fairfield Close

33 Chartist Way

11 Harlech Close

10 Bryn Derw

9 Lon Pennant

13 Caernarfon Place

Councillor A Farina-Childs agreed that this year the standard was very high, and remarked that in Chartist Way, a significant number of houses had made an effort, and asked that this be acknowledged at the Awards Evening.

After further discussion, it was **agreed** the following points be discussed at a later date regarding next years competition - possibility of introducing a Best Street Award, a Best Back Garden Award and to consider approaching local garden centres regarding possible additional prizes of seeds or plants

16. Civic Awards Evening - Wednesday 16th.October – Nominations

The Clerk reported that at the last meeting Councillor A Farina-Childs had nominated Leon Gardner for a Civic Award recognising his outstanding work over many years representing the local community and requesting that consideration be given to a new Award Category, namely an Environmental Award and nominating Sali Daniels & Donna Szarun as being the founders of the Blackwood Action on Litter Community Group.

After some discussion, these proposals were **agreed**.

Further discussion took place regarding other possible/potential nominations, and the following were **agreed**, namely Ruth Powell (Athletics Coach), Basement Youth Team (celebrating their 20 years in town working with disaffected youths) and P.C. Colin Davies who retires shortly having served the local community of Blackwood for many years.

It was also **agreed** that if members have any other nominations, especially the Young Persons Award they forward details to the Clerk so they can also be discussed at the next meeting.

Given the relatively short time between the next Town Council meeting (October 7th. and the Awards Evening itself, members are asked to consider the actual inscription wording for the Awards, so they can be agreed at the next meeting.

17. Planning Applications

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting -

Case Ref. 19/0683/COU

Location: 54 High Street Blackwood NP12 1HP

Proposal: Change the use to a fish and chip takeaway with internal seating for approximately 30 people

Case Ref. 19/0694/FULL

Location: Land At 94-96 High Street Blackwood

Proposal: Erect a two storey building with ground floor A2 use (financial services) and first floor flat

Case Ref. 19/0703/FULL

Location: 41 Lilian Road Blackwood NP12 1DN

Proposal: Erect single storey extension to side of dwelling

Case Ref. 19/0607/FULL

Location: Lloyds TSB Bank Plc 112-114 High Street Blackwood NP12 1YJ

Proposal: Remove one external ATM and aperture infilled and replace with one ATM

Case Ref. 19/0514/FULL

Location: 1 Oak Street Blackwood NP12 1PY

Proposal: Erect rear extension and remove lean-to

Councillor Z Hammond reported that she was of the opinion there were no significant issues relating to the above applications, and it was ***agreed*** no objections be raised.

It was ***agreed***, however, that with regard Case Ref. 19/0694/FULL members request consideration of parking facilities for two vehicles as part of the scheme.

18. *Reports*

Councillor Delwyn Davies reported briefly on the Community Council Liaison Committee Meeting he had attended as Councillor Carol Erasmus's deputy, where much of the meeting concerned the Toilet Strategy and Civil Parking Enforcement Traffic Orders and the potential for Electric Car Charging points across the Borough.

Councillor A Short reported on the increasing homeless/ rough sleepers problem in and around the town, stating he had several sleeping rough around his garage opposite the bus station. Furthermore, he reported that there were seven tents pitched recently on Libanus Fields. Councillor Z Hammond stated the latest number reported was 38.

After much discussion it was ***agreed*** we take a proactive approach and invite all key stakeholders to a Special Meeting of Town Council to try and find a solution to this increasing problem. It was suggested invitations be sent to CCBC Homelessness Officer, Cabinet Member Councillor Nigel George, Andrew Clark (Cornerstone), Rev Sue Phillips, Police and Blackwood Borough members.