

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1ST. DECEMBER 2014

Present : Councillor G Erasmus (Mayor)
Councillor N Turner (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors J Criddle, Z Hammond & L Thomas

Inspector Mark Thomas

The Clerk informed those present that six members constituted a quorum, and that whilst additional members were expected, the meeting was currently inquorate.

It was, however, decided to continue with the meeting, and whilst not in a position to make decisions, would report back to the next Council Meeting to be held on 5th. January 2015

Councillor P Cook arrived late, and made the meeting quorate

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors C Erasmus, A Parsons, G Hale, D Davies, A Farina-Childs & M Veater MBE

2. Policing Matters

Inspector Mark Thomas reported that Crime in the Blackwood area had shown a reduction of 15.4%, which equated to 78 less victims, whilst Anti Social Behaviour had shown an increase of 1.2% , equating to 4 additional calls (based on statistics for the year to date). The current trend is a reduction in ASB and the increase is due to incidents earlier in the year.

Operation Arcade had run throughout November and will continue through December. This involves the CSO's spending more of their time on the town centre and in stores deterring shoplifting. They have been supported by the CSW's who are carrying out the patrols with the CSO's.

Over 40 fixed penalty tickets had been issued on the High Street over the past two months for people illegally parked.

CSO's have visited the coffee morning at the Baptist Church to give crime prevention advice and had also assisted at the recent switch on of the Christmas Lights.

The road closures had not been taking place on Thursday evenings recently as the illuminated signage had not been working, but CCBC were trying to rectify the position.

The Clerk mentioned the seminar attended where the Police Commissioner made a promise that police would be present at each monthly meeting of town and community councils, unless individual councils decided differently.

The meeting ***agreed to recommend*** that we stick to current arrangements – every other month, on the understanding the inspector could be contacted if any issues of concern arose in between.

3. *Mayoral Announcements*

The Mayor informed the meeting of his attendance at the following –

British Legion Dinner commemorating the Battle of Geleveldt
Seminar with the Clerk with the Police Commissioner Ian Johnstone
Three Remembrance Services at Blackwood Primary School, Blackwood War Memorial & Blackwood Market Place.
Civic Awards Evening
Switch on of Christmas Lights

4. *Correspondence*

The Clerk presented his report on correspondence received since the last meeting, and it was ***proposed*** all items be noted, and further ***proposed*** invoices be paid as identified in the report.

5. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd. November 2014*

Members present ***proposed*** acceptance of the minutes.

6. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk reported that he had made contact with the Cardiff Capital City Region Project and some additional information had been received.

With regards the possibility of someone attending Town Council meeting in the future, whilst not dismissed, the small support team indicated a preference to deal with community/ town councils via the Caerphilly County Borough Council, with whom they are working.

This is a possible future item for the Town/Community Council Liaison Committee.

7. *Community Infrastructure Levy*

The Clerk reported that there was not much more to add to what had been minuted, and that a decision was needed regarding the CIL Agreement mentioned.

8. *Consideration of New Honours Board – Young Citizen Award*

Decision deferred to next meeting

Councillor Pat Cook joined the meeting at this point and so became quorate

9. Vacancies on Town Council – Verbal Update

The Clerk reported that the necessary notices had been posted on the Notice Board in the Market Place and at the Post Office in Cefn Fforest on 13th. November, with an advertised closing date of Wednesday 26th. November.

By the said date, three expressions of interest had been received –

Mr Bill Baber, 27 Pontgam Terrace, Ynysddu

Mr James Davies, Flat C, 55 Blacksmith Close, Oakdale

Mr Mark Harris, 30 Coronation Road, Blackwood

It was **agreed** the three individuals be invited to the next meeting – Monday 5th. January 2015 for interview, and that the same format be used as previous – prior notification of questions (as previous) and only members present at the start of the process in a position to take part in the voting .

It was also **agreed** the Clerk ascertain which vacancies the individuals are interested in applying for, so that a decision can be made ion the evening.

10. Islwyn West Secondary School Update

It was **agreed** to defer this item to the next meeting.

11. Carnival 2014 - Out-turn

The Clerk presented the financial out-turn report which identified an under spend of £1,262 on the net budget of £8,200.

It was **agreed** the report be received and discussed in more detail at the next Events Committee Meeting.

12. Budget Monitoring Report – to 31st. October 2014

The Clerk presented the Monitoring report which highlighted anticipated variations between the original budget and estimated out-turn. Various small variations together with the previously reported under spend of £1,262 on the Carnival offset the spend on the office furniture recently purchased for our meeting room.

It was **agreed** the report be received, and form the basis of discussions at the next Policy & Finance Committee Meeting when precept requirements will be discussed.

13. Events Update – Verbal Report

The Clerk reported that the Civic Awards Evening had been very successful and enjoyed by all present.

He also reported on the Christmas Lights Switch On, which whilst very well attended had suffered problems with the sound system which had led to delays in the proposed street dance demonstrations and in turn to the actual light switch on.

The Clerk reported on an e-mail he had received from someone connected to DYT complaining that we had cut short the dance performance and some dancers had not had chance to perform.

The Clerk proposed he respond accordingly and this was *agreed*.

The Clerk then gave a brief update on the Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert being held on Thursday evening. Everything was in hand, albeit he had been notified earlier in the afternoon that the church hall had been double booked, but that was being sorted. He planned to visit the church to arrange seating etc. on Wednesday evening, and to pick up the remainder of the refreshments required for the evening. Cancercareline would be in attendance to receive the food from Cwm Bakery and lay up in readiness once the concert had finished.

The Clerk agreed to contact members with precise timings etc. if there were any changes.

14. Planning Applications

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

He explained that having contacted the Planning Section regarding Planning Application 14/0756/NCC for removal of conditions 18 & 19 of planning consent 13/808/FULL (to erect 5 new build link houses with associated gardens, landscaping, access and parking) at Lyndaryn Court, Cliff Road, Blackwood, he had been assured this was purely to reflect that the conditions to build to a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 had now been moved from planning to building regulations, and as such was to tidy up the permission.

It was *resolved* no issues be raised.

15. Reports

The Clerk reported on the seminar attended with the Mayor, meeting with the Police Commissioner and Chief Constable, who both pledged their support towards more engagement with the public, including town/ community councils.

Much emphasis was placed on the use of new technology in ensuring timely and accurate information was related to the public, and OWL was seen as a major success that can be built upon.

Councillor P Cook reported that a recent Blackwood Bus Station Problem Solving Group Meeting had been cancelled without prior notification. Issues had arisen again regarding homeless people sleeping rough and drug taking, and it was imperative a meeting be held soon to decide what action should be taken. She stated she had heard the next meeting was to be held possibly on the 10th December.

Councillor Zoe Hammond said she was not being notified of these meetings, and asked the Clerk to follow this matter through.