

## MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup>. JUNE 2014 .

**Present :** Councillor G Erasmus ( Mayor )  
Councillor N Turner ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors J Criddle, Z Hammond, L Thomas, G Hale, D Davies, A Farina-Childs, M Franklin &  
M Veater MBE

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors P Cook, C Erasmus & A Parsons

### **2. Policing Matters**

The Clerk reported that he had received an e-mail from Inspector Mark Smith informing Town Council that he was transferring to the Force Control Room at Police H.Q., and that in the interim, Sergeant Mark Thomas will be temporarily promoted to the rank of Inspector.

The Inspector had thanked all members for their support during his time in post.

The Clerk stated he had taken the opportunity at the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group to thank the Inspector on behalf of Town Council for the time, effort and hard work within the local community, and also wished him well for the future.

Acting Inspector Mark Thomas had given his apologies for not attending this meeting, but he was attending the Argoed PACT meeting, and unfortunately his replacement sergeant had not yet taken up post. He will, however, make every effort to attend the July meeting.

### **3. Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor announced he had attended a function at the renovated Drill Hall, the base for Blackwood Army Cadets.

He also informed members that his chosen charity was Cancercarelink.

The former Mayor Councillor Granville Hale asked if he could take this opportunity to thank the Clerk for his support and assistance during his year of office, and also to pass on an invitation to the new Mayor to the Official opening of the Wind Turbines at Croespenmaen.

#### 4. *Correspondence*

The Clerk circulated his report on correspondence received since the last meeting, and all were noted.

In respect of the Survey of Remuneration by the Independent Review Panel for Wales, it was again **agreed** by members that no allowances/ reimbursements be paid in respect of telephone, IT etc.

In respect of the Welsh Government Consultation Document on Access to Information on Town & Community Councils it was **agreed** this item be placed on the Agenda for the July meeting.

In respect of the correspondence from the Royal British Legion, it was **agreed** the Lights Out Poster be posted on the Council Notice Board, and a reminder be given to members at the next meeting. It was further **agreed** the offer of assistance in attaining a military presence for carnival parade/day be passed to the Events Committee to follow up.

The Clerk also reported on an application for financial assistance received from CANDO, and it was **agreed** this be passed to the Policy & Finance Committee for determination.

#### 5. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 12<sup>th</sup>. May 2014*

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

#### 6. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk confirmed that representation on the Plas Mawr Management Committee was only one Town Councillor.

The Clerk confirmed he had received footfall figures as requested, but they proved fairly meaningless for any comparative purposes, since many weeks for all centres were missing due to camera breakdown.

The Clerk reported that after the last meeting he had trawled the internet for office furniture, and found the same items considerably cheaper. He reported this to the Manager of the Institute, who in turn contacted the suppliers – they have now revised their quote downwards by £400, resulting in an anticipated contribution by Town Council of £1,150 ( down from £1,450 )

With regard to the opening of the Maxime Cinema, there was nothing further to report, other than a delay in progressing work on the site. Blackwood Rotary have told the Clerk they will keep him informed.

In respect of the Events Committee, Councillor Zoe Hammond had informed the Clerk that due to family issues, she felt she could not devote enough time to being Chair of the Committee. After some discussion, and a little persuasion it was **agreed** Councillor Granville Hale be nominated Chair of that Committee.

**7. To Receive the Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup>. February 2014**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received.

**8. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/ Merthyr/ Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting held on 23d. January 2014**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received.

**9. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup>. May 2014**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received.

**10. Carnival**

The Mayor had asked that this item be placed on the Agenda, since attendance at the recent Events Committee was very poor, and for the event to be a success needed the support of the whole Council.

Councillor D Davies remarked that the letter the Clerk had sent to our sponsors Lillys & Lace had compromised Julie Farina-Childs and her daughters. The Clerk apologised if this were the case, but could not see how as he had only tried to ascertain, as requested by the Events Committee, whether they would be sponsoring the event this year or not, and thanking them for their generous support in the past.

Several members re-iterated what an extremely onerous and time consuming task this event was, and that without volunteers and a commitment from all members of Town Council, success would not be guaranteed.

Councillor L Thomas stated whilst his work often prevented him from attending or assisting, and this could be the case in respect of other members, he was fully supportive of the event, and queried whether we should consider appointing someone specifically to assist in the organisation of this major event in the Town Council's calendar.

The Clerk responded by saying that whilst onerous and time consuming, much was a case of revisiting past years contacts, and as such additional paid help was not really necessary.

What has made this year all the more difficult was the wealth of knowledge and expertise lost in organising the Carnival Queen & Court and the Parade, almost entirely down to the immediate past Chair of the Events Committee and his family, ably assisted by the past Vice Chair.

However, with various members now taking responsibility for parts of this shortfall, and the promise of a detailed list of duties etc. on the day, it is hoped, with actual physical support of other members and continued assistance from the past Chair & Vice Chair together with paid assistance of Caerphilly County Borough Stewards on the day, the event will again be successful. It certainly will not be from the lack of effort of the stalwart members of the Events Committee.

Councillor Farina-Childs raised the issue of safeguarding any volunteers we have on the day, in so much that information he possessed shows Council insurance does not necessarily cover volunteers. The Clerk promised he would take this point up with our insurers.

Councillor Farina-Childs also raised the issue of CRB checks for anyone working with children on the day.

### ***11. Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2014***

The Clerk presented his report and it was ***resolved*** that the Statement of Accounts and the Statement of Assurances be approved.

Furthermore, it was ***agreed*** that the Annual Internal Auditors Report be accepted and approved.

The Clerk informed members that the necessary Notice of appointment of the date for the exercise of electors' rights will be placed on the Council's Notice Board in the Market Place on 9<sup>th</sup>. June 2014 .

### ***12. Town Council Website***

Several members commented on how informative the website was, and also pointed out a few errors – Mayor / Vice Mayor needs updating, but the Clerk reported this was in hand.

Councillor Farina-Childs stated his disappointment that the Council crest was not anywhere on the website, and the Clerk stated he would try to resolve this issue during a planned meeting with Nick Rutter of Caerphilly C.B.C.

### ***13. Planning Applications***

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting. Councillor Criddle reported he had no issues to raise, but would take the opportunity to check out the planned dormer window at Ty Gwyn, Libanus Road.

It was ***agreed*** no objections be raised.

Councillor M Franklin informed members that residents of David Street & Thornecombe Road and Warne Street were aggrieved that work on the sites near their properties had stopped, and the areas were untidy, since the developers, Greenhill Construction had apparently ceased trading.

## ***14. Reports***

Councillors C Erasmus & Z Hammond reported briefly on the recent Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting.

A new Protocol on Advertising Materials on the Public Highway has been developed. The Council recognises many small businesses consider A boards a valuable method of advertising their business and attract customers, and so they are introducing a Voluntary Code of Compliance for such boards. The conditions will place certain restrictions on such use where pedestrian passage is compromised. Certificates will be issued, that will be displayed at the premises enabling use of A boards. A fee of £25 is associated with the Code.

A Choose the High Street promotional campaign will be rolled out in Blackwood during the summer, which will focus on raising awareness of the importance of consumer choice and uses various marketing platforms to encourage people to use their High Street more often. It will also encourage new businesses to open in the town centres.

Members raised the point at the meeting that the new disabled parking bays in the High Street have still not been implemented, and in fact the recent resurfacing of the High Street had re-emphasised the old bays. Members thought the new markings could and should have been implemented during resurfacing. It was agreed this matter would be reported to Bob Campbell.