

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
2ND.SEPTEMBER 2013**

Present : Councillor G Erasmus (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, R Dimond, C Erasmus, M Franklin,
M Veater MBE, J Criddle

In the absence of the Mayor it was formally **resolved** that Councillor G Erasmus (Deputy Mayor) chair the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors G Hale, A Parsons, P Cook & D Ellis

2. Policing Issues

Inspector Mark Smith was welcomed to the meeting, and he then reported on the following –

Overall crime had shown a 3% increase, and Anti social behaviour a 6% increase for the Blackwood Ward when compared with the previous year (the previous 2 years had seen significant decreases). Staff had worked hard throughout the summer to reduce the ASB levels, which despite showing a 6% increase had reduced somewhat.

There were a significant number of forged £20 notes in circulation, and there had been a recent large scale seizure in the Risca area.

Steven Powell had been charged with Arson at Poundstretcher, and remains in custody.

Several Drugs Warrants had been executed at addresses in the Blackwood area, all with positive results.

A Licensing Review in respect of the Vanilla Bar in the High Street was to take place at Caerphilly C.B.C. offices on Thursday 5th. September

One fast food premises are in the process of being prosecuted for serving food outside their licensed times.

During several days throughout the summer period, Police Officers, Community Support Officers and Cadets have worked with the local Crime Prevention Panel members/ Neighbourhood Watch on an Items and Houses on View Initiative. In one afternoon alone, 140 vehicles and 20 homes were noted, and owners have been written to.

Marketing material in respect of the Eyes Project is now in use in the Blackwood area in an attempt to reduce crime and ASB levels. They are already in place at the Bus Station.

There has been a recent increase in calls regarding Car Cruisers throughout the Blackwood & Pontllanfraith areas on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening. Police are working closely with the ASDA store, whose staff are issuing Banning Notices to unwanted vehicles/occupants. Two specific operations had been planned – the first took place on 30th. August, with the second taking place in October. The Special Constabulary will continue to actively enforce the Thursday evening road closure.

Blackwood High Street has a high proportion of Crime & ASB incidents between 10.00pm – 3.00am. In an attempt to reduce this, and make the area safer, getting visitors home swifter and safer, a Marshalling Scheme is proposed in conjunction with C.C.B.C.. There is a suitable bay near the Bingo Hall/ Wilkinson's, and the plan proposal is to use 2 Marshalls each Friday & Saturday night from 15th. November – 31st. December. Taxi's/ Hackney Carriages would line up in this bay and Marshalls will ensure there are no queue jumping/ public order issues. The cost for the trial period will be approx £2,500, and funding for this initiative is being sought.

The Inspector was thanked for his comprehensive report, and it was agreed by all present that the request for funding in respect of the Marshalling Scheme be discussed by the Finance & Policy Committee at its next meeting.

3. *Mayoral Announcements*

In the absence of the Mayor, there was nothing to report.

4. *Correspondence*

The Clerk presented his report in respect of correspondence received, and all were noted.

In respect of the C.C.B.C. letter re. Welsh Govt. Grant for Development of Website, it was **agreed** the Clerk accept the offer to develop and host a website with an ongoing £500 annual charge.

In respect of the C.C.B.C. letter outlining Changes to Bus Services affecting the Blackwood Area, members were pleased to note that many of the points raised during the consultation exercise had been acted upon.

In respect of the letter from Asst. Chief Constable – Gwent Police, it was **agreed** Councillor Zoe Hammond be the Town Council representative at the Community Engagement Workshop.

5. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1st. July 2013

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

6. Matters Arising

Blackwood in Bloom -

Councillor A Farina-Childs informed members that the winners of the competition had been chosen, and would be presented with their certificates and cheques at the Awards presentation Evening as last year.

Planning –

The Clerk informed members that notification had been received that the application in respect of change of use from dwelling house to non residential institution for use as 34 place children's day nursery at 82 Cefn Road, Blackwood had been rejected on similar grounds to that raised by Town Council, namely traffic issues

7. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 29th. July 2013 & the Events Committee (Carnival De-Brief) Meeting held on 14th. August 2013

Councillor A Farina-Childs, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes and it was *resolved* they be received.

He reported that feedback on the Carnival had been very positive (albeit road closure issues had been problematical). He wished to place on record his thanks to all volunteers on the day.

8. To Receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 14th. August 2013

Councillor J Criddle, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes and it was *resolved* they be received.

He reported that the one contentious application was referred to in the Clerk's report to follow.

9. Planning Applications

The Clerk informed members that no new planning applications had been received since the Planning Meeting held on 14th. August referred to above

As referred to above, an application had been received from the Seren Group (13/589/FULL) to demolish the existing building with C2 use and construct a new 22 bed residential building again under C2 classification at Ty Sirhowy Hospital, Lon Pennant, Cwmgelli, Blackwood.

Councillor Criddle reported that he had made enquiries regarding this application, and although the proposed building was slightly larger than the existing, there was likely to be little visual impact.

The new unit was intended for younger dementia sufferers, but the category of use would be a licensing issue rather than a planning issue.

After some discussion it was *agreed* that no objections be raised on planning grounds.

10. To Receive the Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Committee Meeting held on 20th. February 2013

It was *resolved* the minutes be received.

11. Audit of the Annual Accounts for the Year ended 31st. March 2013

The Clerk presented his report and it was *resolved* that the Annual Return be approved and that Section 3 be signed by Councillor G Erasmus, as Chair of the meeting, in accordance with Regulation 9 (3) Accounts & Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005

12. Reports

The Clerk gave a brief report on the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting held on 3rd. July, where the Group voted 4 to 3 for the recommendation to change the Pelican crossings to Zebra crossings on the High Street (Town Council representatives & Huw Edwards, Blackwood Retail Partnership voting against)

It was also agreed unanimously agreed to relocate the existing on street disabled parking bay from Woodbine Road to the High Street.

Councillor J Criddle gave a brief report on the One Voice Wales AGM held on 18th.July, where Councillor Kerry Jones (Nelson C.C.) was re-elected Chair.

It was also agreed, that for future years, the chairship would rotate amongst member councils based on alphabetical order commencing from P.

13. Request for Unpaid leave of Absence by the Clerk

The Clerk left the meeting while the request was being discussed.

It was ***agreed*** unpaid leave of absence of 2 weeks be granted, and that the next meeting be scheduled for Monday October 21st.

It was ***agreed*** plenary powers be granted to Chair of Events to progress matters in the Clerk's absence.