

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2ND. OCTOBER 2017.

Present : Councillor J Weeks (Mayor)
Councillor J Edwards (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, W Baber, R Weeks, G James, D Jones, N Turner,
C Erasmus, Z Hammond, A Short, J Griffiths & M Gwynne

PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING MEMBERS OBSERVED A MINUTE'S SILENCE IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIEND & COLLEAGUE COUNCILLOR JIM CRIDDLE WHO HAD DIED SUDDENLY ON FRIDAY 29TH.SEPTEMBER 2017

The Mayor handed over to the Clerk, who had known Jim for almost 60 years, and who paid tribute to the dedication of Councillor Jim Criddle to the work of the Town Council, to Blackwood & Pontllanfraith residents and said his knowledge and experience would be greatly missed and very difficult to replace. He read messages of condolences he had received from Iain Richards & Estelle Wilkinson (Directors of Velvet Coalmine) & Angie Tshiyane (Zim Voices).

Several members paid their own tributes and also highlighted condolences that had been passed to them from Governor Support Unit C.C.B.C., Blackwood Pontllanfraith & Cefn Fforest Junior Schools.

The Clerk promised to keep members informed of funeral arrangements

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Cook

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were made by –

Councillor A Farina-Childs regarding Schedule of Payments – Payments to Caerphilly C.B.C. as a member of that authority

Councillor Janet Griffiths regarding Correspondence – Application from GAVO as she works for the organisation

3. Police Report

There were no police in attendance, albeit the Clerk had forwarded details to the new Inspector, Stephen Drayton.

Other members commented that there had been no police present at other meetings they had attended.

It was agreed the Clerk write requesting attendance at the December meeting.

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on her attendance at several events during the Velvet Coalmine Festival and said she had thoroughly enjoyed them all, and commented on what a first class varied programme had been on offer in town over the two weeks.

She had also attended the Welcome service at the Methodist Church for the new Minister and a Harvest Festival event.

5. *Correspondence*

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

Caerphilly C.B.C. Household survey 2017 – available on CCBC website

Notification of Well Being of Future Generations – Making it Happen
Community Engagement Meeting on Friday 10th. November 10.00am –
12.30pm. at Libanus Christian Centre -

On Street Parking Enforcement- Gwent Police have announced they intend to
withdraw its officers and staff from activities that involve enforcing parking
restrictions as of 1st. April 2018

Pride in Your Place Awards 2017 - Environmental Awards

Copies of Town Centres – Unique Places & Blackwood Defining the Future

One Voice Wales Notification of RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee to be held 7pm on
Wednesday 4th. October at the Offices of Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen

Blackwood Street Pastors Invitation to all members to 8th Anniversary Celebration service on
Thursday 12th. October at Elim Baptist Church, Pontllanfraith

Bethan Moss (GAVO) Application for financial assistance – Halloween & Bonfire Project

Coun. K Etheridge Copy of letter forwarded to C.C.B.C. re. Parking in High Street

Matthew Godridge Application for financial assistance – Newbridge Under 8's Tag Rugby

Markham Colliery Band Invitation to all members to attend Remembrance Concert on Saturday
11th. Nov. at Blackwood Methodist Church 7.30pm.start – Tickets £6

Blackwood Primary School Thank you Card for helping to organise this amazing event (Velvet
Coalmine)

Greenhill Primary School Gelligaer Application for Financial Assistance

In respect of the Engagement Meeting on 10th. November at Libanus Lifestyle Centre, the Clerk
was asked to forward the names of Councillors J Weeks, D Jones & C Erasmus as wishing to
attend.

With regard On Street Parking Enforcement, members welcomed the decision and hoped this would
help alleviate many of the problems currently being experienced in town. However, members were
dismayed regarding likely timetable, and the Clerk was asked to seek reassurance from Caerphilly
C.B.C.

It was agreed that all applications for financial assistance, together with one from Lowri Williams,
received earlier that day, be considered by Policy & Finance Committee at a meeting planned
within the next 2 weeks.

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

| | | £. p |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Caerphilly C.B.C. | Contribution towards Armed Forces Day | 100.00 |
| Caerphilly C.B.C. | Community Council Election Recharge | 292.72 |
| Velvet Coalmine | Sponsorship | 2,500.00 |
| John Hold | September Salary + reimbursements | 929.14 |
| Carole Hold | Administrative Assistance | 324.50 |
| Playworks | Tax/N.I. - September | 364.51 |

7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4th. September 2017*

With the amendment that under Reports, the Tenants Handbook should read the Blackwood Handbook, it was **agreed** the minutes be confirmed as a true record

8. *Matters Arising*

With regard the proposed 200th. Anniversary of the first recorded houses in Blackwood, the Clerk reported that an initial meeting had been held between the Blackwood Historical Society & the Heritage Association, and that he would be looking to arrange a meeting of Town Council (or Events Committee) with both parties sometime in the new year, to see how we might look to progress things.

9. *To Receive the Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting held on 28th. February 2017*

It was **agreed** the minutes be received

10. *Nominations for Civic Awards (Awards Evening Wednesday 22nd.November @ Institute)*

The Clerk reported that no additional nominations had been received since the last meeting, and so each of the previously reported nominations were duly considered.

The Clerk reported that he had requested information from members who had made nominations, he had received some, but was still eager for more to ensure the Award Certificate better reflected the rationale for same.

After some discussion it was agreed the following be worthy of a Civic Award –

Margaret Veater MBE (nominated by Cllr. A Farina-Childs) – for her work on Town Council and as a stalwart and champion of numerous organisations and charities including Disability CANDO, Cancercareline, University of the Third Age, Heritage Association and many others

Colin Arthur (Natty) Thomas (nominated by Keith Edwards) - for his unstinting voluntary work as NUM Compensation Secretary covering South East Wales dealing with the various requirements of miners and their widows – form filling and sound advice whenever needed

Alan Burley (nominated by Cllr. D Davies) for his numerous years service as a Stagecoach driver and the kind and considerate way he dealt with elderly and disabled passengers

David Rideout (nominated by Cllr. M Gwynne) for his long association with Mynyddislwyn Choir many as its Chairman, and recognising his charity work and his encouragement of the Choir community involvement

It was also agreed that the Young Persons Award be made to Jacob Allen (nominated by Cllr. Gerwyn James) for his involvement and dedication to Youth & Schools Rugby and especially to his work in the advancement of female rugby.

11. Arrangements for Remembrance Day Services

The Clerk reported the following arrangements per British Legion information received -

Friday 10th. Nov. 11.00am. Market Square, Blackwood

Saturday 11th. Nov. 1.30pm. Pontllanfraith Council Offices
Wreath laying followed by Church Service at St. Augustine's Church,
Pontllanfraith

Sunday 12th. Nov. 10.00am. Church Service at St. Thomas Church, Waun Borfa Road, Cefn Fforest
10.40am. March to War Memorial in Cefn Fforest Square for Wreath laying at
11.00am

Sunday 12th. Nov. 10.00am. Church Service, Moose Hall, Blackwood
10.45am. War Memorial for Wreath laying

12. Verbal Report on Velvet Coalmine Festival

The Clerk gave a verbal report on the Festival, and thanked members for their support at various events throughout the Festival.

He read a letter from Iain Richards thanking the Velveteers (Volunteers) for all the amazing support and efforts in delivering this years events. He also paid special tributes to Jeff Mudford of Blackwood Methodist Church and Jane Mather of Blackwood Primary School.

Regardless of the major difficulties with ticket sales, the festival had been an enormous success with many lives impacted on and hopefully changed for the better. (For example Peter Kent Marrast who runs Taekwondo Wales estimates he has reached 1,200 children in a week)

The fact that we had attracted the likes of Niamh Bryne (Manager of Blur & Gorrillaz), Jade Jones, Marty Jopson, Tongue Fu, Into the Ark and Africa Writes to Blackwood was nothing short of amazing.

A letter sent to the Schools from the Education Programme Manager for the Royal African Society thanking them for the warm and enthusiastic reception given to the poets and facilitators highlighted the children were engaged and responsive to the workshops and feedback was very positive. There was also a promise of continued dialogue with the schools.

Iain has identified Tuesday 21st. November as the date of the next meeting of the Group, to reflect on this years event.

Next year's event will provisionally be Monday 17th. - Friday 21st. September, with no week-end or ticketed events, just school workshops. The personal risk to himself and Estelle is far too great and they have lost a significant amount of money at this year's event, which is a shame, but doesn't overshadow the volume of good that has been achieved in many areas.

Members were full of praise for the Festival, and individuals commented on the first class events they had attended throughout. They were disappointed that the decision is to run with school workshops only and no other ticketed events, but fully understood given the financial burden rested with themselves. Many stated they hoped they may change their minds if additional funding could be guaranteed. Certain members questioned the advertising of the Festival and the promotion of individual events. The Clerk responded by saying much of the problem related to non buy in by several schools, and they couldn't blame lack of knowledge or poor advertising as each child in the cluster schools had a programme to take home.

The Clerk identified that with the untimely death of Councillor Jim Criddle, Town Council now required a replacement representative to attend Velvet Coalmine meetings and after some discussion it was **agreed** Councillor Darren Jones serve on the Group.

The Clerk questioned given that Jim was such an integral part of Town Council and the Velvet Coalmine Festival whether we should consider sponsoring an award in his memory (a cup or trophy plus say £50 prize money) for writing in/ furthering the Welsh language. He said he had briefly mentioned same to Iain Richards who thought it was an excellent idea, and which we could announce/ launch on Civic Awards Evening.

Members wholeheartedly supported the suggestion, and it was **agreed** the Clerk make progress on same.

13. Monday 16th. October - Restart a Heart Day

The Clerk reminded members of the request we had received via Rhianon Passmore AM to assist in securing placement of defibrillator near the Maxime Cinema, and the subsequent meeting at her office attended by himself, Councillor W Baber, June Thomas and Phil Hill (Aneurin Bevan H B), where it was agreed Town Council would assist in organising an event to celebrate Restart a Heart Day.

The event has been organised for Monday 16th October at between 3.00pm.& 6.00pm.at The Dragon Circle, adjacent to ASDA in Blackwood.

The focus for the Resuscitation Council UK event this year is to teach children what to do in an emergency including how to save a life using an Automated defibrillator.

Whilst no training is needed to use one (it talks to you, whilst the 999 dispatcher does) many people feel more confident by having a go on a manikin first whilst hoping they'll never need to use their new skill.

The Emergency services will be in attendance with their vehicles to show people what to do and will also take other first aid questions such as how to treat choking and baby CPR.

13 Schools in the area have been contacted, as have local youth groups such as Boys Brigade, Scouts, Guides and

Welsh Hearts have also agreed to send a representative along to officially hand over the defibrillator (purchased by Town Council) to the Mayor, and local press will be notified of the event.

This is a timely event as Town Council has been working with Jacks Appeal and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to install two 24 hour Public Access defibrillators in the town one at the Bus Station,(fully funded by Town Council) and the other outside the Maxime Cinema in the High Street (Defibrillator donated by Jack's Appeal (via Welsh Hearts) and the Cabinet funded by Town Council)

The Clerk urged members to show their support.

14. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 17/0640/COU

116 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AF

Proposal: Change the use from A1 shop to a booking office plus A1 shop

Applicant: Relay Taxis, Mr R Salter, Cwm Roly House, Lon Maes Yr Haf, Croespenmaen NP11 3BR

Case Ref. 17/0681/OUT

Land at Beaumaris Way Cefn Fforest

Proposal: Erect residential development together with associated open space, landscaping and parking provision and seek approval of access and scale

Applicant: Persimmon Homes E. Wales, Mr J Price, Llantrisant Business Park, Llantrisant CF72 8YP

Case Ref. 17/0752/COU

Unit A 12 The Market Place Blackwood NP12 1ZP (UPRN 000043076288)

Proposal: Subdivide the existing retail (Class A1) unit into three units and change the use of one new unit from retail (Class A1) to gym (Class D2) use

Applicant: SF247 West Limited ,T/A Snap Fitness C/O Bidwells, Mr T Eyres, 25 Old Burlington Street, London W1S 3AN

Case Ref. 17/0754/ADV

Former Somerfield Stores Unit A 12 The Market Place Blackwood NP12 1ZP

Proposal: Display 2 no. internally illuminated fascias and various window manifestations

Applicant: SF 247 West Ltd, Mr J Dhillon, Unit 25 Market Place, Blackwood NP12 1AU

and reported verbally on the following received earlier that day

Case Ref. 17/0785/CLEU

Long Barn The Fairways Blackwood NP12 1HX

Proposal: Obtain a Lawful Development Certificate for the existing C3(b) use as residential accommodation for up to six residents who live as a single household for in excess of 4 years

Applicant: Linc Cymru Housing Assoc

Case Ref. 17/0790/FULL

12 Bryn Derw Blackwood NP12 1SN

Proposal: Erect two storey side extension

Applicant: Mr L Exton 12 Bryn Derw Blackwood NP12 1SN

Case Ref. 17/0801/ADV

Vision House High Street Blackwood NP12 1BE

Proposal: Erect fascia sign and projecting sign

Applicant: Engie Mr M Douglas 5th Floor Fiveways House Islington Row Middleway Edgbaston Birmingham B15 1SL

After much discussion, it was **unanimously agreed**, that in respect of Planning Application 17/0681/OUT Land at Beaumaris Way to object to the application for the residential development of the site on the grounds that it contradicts Local Unitary Plans and will have considerable environmental impact.

Consideration must surely be given to the impact such a development will have on highways, schools and surgeries in the area.

In respect of Applications 17/0640/COU, 17/0754/COU & 17/0790/FULL it was **agreed** Councillor Hammond make enquiries with the Planning Section, and liaise with the Clerk if it is considered necessary to make objections.

Councillor Hammond intimated that she was having problems with some planning officers, who appeared unwilling to speak to her by phone and had advised all contact should be via letter/e-mail. It was **agreed** the Clerk and/or Councillor A Farina-Childs try to identify if the Borough's previously adopted practices have changed recently.

15. Reports

The Clerk and Members who attended gave a brief report on the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group meeting held on 19th. September.

County Councillor Kevin Etheridge had requested that the Group, in the true spirit of co-operation and joint working consider to allow a member of Town Council to become Chairman of the Group, and that they also have a vote in election of Chair & Vice Chair. After much discussion it was agreed this be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, albeit this Group could not be seen to be treated differently to the other Town Centre Groups, and presumably ultimately their support would be needed before any formal approach were made to Cabinet.

Subsequently Councillor Tom Williams (Cefn Fforest) was appointed Chair of the Group and Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs appointed Vice Chair

Members expressed their disappointment in the way the request was treated and stated they felt like the poor relations of the Group. Members agreed that other Town Councils with Centre Management Groups be contacted to try and gain their support.

The Clerk stated that much of the other business reported upon – Aldi Redevelopment, Red Lion Update, Toilet Block Update & Parking Enforcement had already been reported to/ discussed at Town Council.

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported on meetings he had attended with various officers of Caerphilly C.B.C. and representatives of the local British Legion Branch in respect of the proposed commemorative project on the area around the Torque, opposite the Library. All were very positive, and it is hoped to progress this project further. Councillor Zoe Hammond had identified that Ethan Edwards, a former pupil of Libanus School had been awarded a runners up prize in the International Never Such Innocence Art competition, and it was hoped that with permission some representation of his work could become part of this project. Members were pleased with the progress and would await further updates.

Councillor Z Hammond reported that the recent After Dark meeting was very poorly attended, with no police presence. It had been decided to call another meeting for 10th. October so a plan could be formulated. She referred to the fact that the previously planned breathalyser scheme had not been backed by pub watch and asked that the £500 previously allocated by Town Council be set aside to help finance any new initiative. She promised to update at the next meeting. Members agreed the monies be set aside and would await further details of any new initiative.

The Clerk reported that Councillors W Baber, P Cook and A Short had met as the Task & Finish Group in respect of the Bus Station toilets.

After much discussion it was agreed the Clerk contact Ian Jones at Caerphilly C.B.C. to gather the following information -

A copy of the Cleaning Schedules for said toilets ie. Times of cleaning/ frequency/ duration and also information relating to chain of command - ie. Cleaner/ Supervisor/ Manager etc.

Identify opening and closing times and who is responsible ?

Identify what constitutes a normal cleaning of the toilets and what constitutes a deep clean ?

Identify the total annual costs of cleaning said toilets ? and also identify cleaning costs of other toilet facilities in the Borough ?

What is the reporting mechanism for necessary repairs (& who undertakes same) and the need for replenishment of soap/ toilet rolls etc.?

It was also agreed that over the next few weeks, members would continue monitoring the situation, taking photographic evidence if possible and also logging times/dates etc.

It was also agreed the Clerk try to gather information regarding cost of toilets at Abertillery for comparison.

Members were generally pleased with the progress, and during further discussion it was *agreed* that Councillor Janet Griffiths join the Group as she has significant experience regarding rotas/ schedules

Councillor A Farina-Childs informed the meeting of the untimely death of Steve Andrews (Lillys & Lace) long time previous sponsors of our Carnival. The funeral was to be held at 1.00pm. on Friday 13th. October at St. Thomas's Church, Cefn Fforest.

It was *agreed* the Clerk organise flowers on behalf Town Council