

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4TH. SEPTEMBER 2017.

Present : Councillor J Weeks (Mayor)

Councillor J Edwards (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, A Short, W Baber, P Cook, M Gwynne,
D Jones, R Weeks, M Gwynne, G James

County Councillor K Etheridge

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Griffiths, N Turner, C Erasmus & J Criddle

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest made at this point

3. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported that she had attended the rescheduled Into the Ark Concert as part of the Velvet Coalmine Festival at Blackwood Methodist Church on Friday 1st. September and had thoroughly enjoyed the evening, as did everybody who attended.

4. Correspondence

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

Pontllanfraith Rotary Club

Seeking Assistance towards Rotary Tree Challenge

Caerphilly C.B.C.

Placement of Defibrillator at Bus Station

Notification of 2nd. Precept Instalment (£29,226.60)

Copy of Code of Conduct Training Session

Promote your Local Community – nomination accepted

Copies of various correspondence via Cllr. Farina-Childs regarding Bus Station toilets that will be covered in later report

Blackwood Musical Theatre

Thank you letter for being invited to perform at Carnival

In respect of the Rotary Club Tree challenge, the Clerk reported that Cllr. Gerwyn James had identified a potential site on land adjacent to the renewed footpath leading to Morrison Street from Wesley Road car park, however, having been in contact with CCBC officers it had been decided that Islwyn Park, Pontllanfraith represented a better alternative. Rotary Club were hopeful that this challenge might be rolled out to local schools and community groups in the future.

With regard the placement of the Defibrillator, CCBC had suggested an external wall near the middle of the Bus Station to ensure CCTV coverage. Various problems had been pointed out in similar projects in Blaenau Gwent and in Ystrad Mynach, and it was reiterated that any damage caused to the fabric of the Bus Station property via vandalism would become the responsibility of Town Council.

After some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk proceed with placement of the Defibrillator.

5. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. P
Elsbury's	Erection of Bunting for Carnival	360.00
John Hold	August salary + reimbursements	911.83
Playworks	Tax/NI - August	278.31
One Voice Wales	Conference Fee	90.00

6. *Report from County Councillors Kevin Etheridge & Andrew Farina-Childs*

The Mayor welcomed County Councillor Kevin Etheridge to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance. Councillor Etheridge in turn thanked Town Council for the invitation and said he hoped we could all work together in the future for the benefit of the town and its residents.

Councillors Etheridge & Farina-Childs referred to the briefing note from C.C.B.C. Highway Network Engineer, previously circulated to members regarding the Chartist Bridge, and also outlined their various concerns namely –

- * Possible improvements to the bridge – higher fencing and/or netting to break any attempted jump
- * Audio facilities on the bridge
- * Lighting on the bridge
- * CCTV coverage and monitoring of same
- * The perceived increase in incidents at the bridge
- * Apparent lack of being able to identify repeat offenders and the associated mental health facilities available locally

Town Council Members were fully supportive of the actions taken by the County members, and Councillor A Short reported that he was aware of a petition asking for remedial works on the bridge to help alleviate what appeared to be an ever increasing problem. He was aware that supposed loading problems in design apparently negated the possibility of higher railings/ netting provision, and that he had been trying to verify same.

Other members were dismayed that one of the main reasons given for a review of lighting was that it would interfere with the darkness required for bats - are bats now more important than human life ? Members were also concerned that no apparent records were kept of offenders and identified the associated mental health issues as a major problem that needed significant input by Social Services and Health professionals

Councillor Etheridge informed members that as Town Council had an obvious interest that he had requested a meeting with C.C.B.C. officers to discuss the concerns in greater depth, and had asked that Town Council be granted representation at that meeting. After some discussion, it was agreed that we seek 2 representatives from Town Council and that they be Councillors D Davies and A Short.

Councillor A Short was asked if he had any specific questions/points he wished to raise, and he agreed to consider and forward same to the Clerk

Councillors Etheridge & Farina-Childs then reported on the Toilet Block issue in the High Street, acknowledging that the Clerk had also raised the issue with C.C.B.C. Apparently Enforcement Notices under Section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 have been drafted, which will require the overgrowth is cut back and the resulting materials together with any rubbish, litter etc. be removed from the land.

The next item discussed was the Bus Station toilets, and both members informed the meeting they were having continued dialogue relating to the cleanliness of same, as this did not give a good first impression to visitors to the town. Councillor Farina-Childs has asked for details of how much it would cost to employ a full time cleaner, but was still awaiting the information. He had also been in contact with Caerphilly Tourist Information Centre to enquire how their toilets were manned, and was informed the responsibility might soon rest with the Centre itself rather than the Cleansing Department of C.C.B.C.

Several town councillors, A Short, J Edwards & W Baber confirmed they had witnessed the cleaner supposedly cleaning same, but upon inspection shortly afterwards were disappointed with the results. The Clerk reminded members that they had formed a task and finish group and that he would try to call a meeting of same prior to the next Town Council meeting. It was suggested that these potential competency issues regarding the cleaning of the toilet be reported to Ian Jones, but it was agreed the Group discuss this matter together with any other issues and seek a meeting with C.C.B.C. officers at a later date.

Councillor D Jones placed on record his thanks to the two members for updating Town Council, and for their ongoing work on the issues highlighted in their report. These sentiments were echoed by all members present.

The Clerk suggested that if the County Councillors were willing this could become a regular item for our Agenda, maybe every other month, with the Police attending the other meetings. This was **agreed** by all present.

7. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7th. August 2017

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

8. *Matters Arising*

Item 4 Mayoral Announcements

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Tenovus offering possible assistance regarding siting of their Mobile Unit, and was thanked for Town Council's kind gesture. We were now awaiting further contact.

Item 5 Correspondence

Promoting the local community - The Clerk had submitted Christine Lehaj, and had been informed by CCBC that she had been featured on Facebook, as it had been considered more of a recognition campaign. However, certificates were being prepared and we were asked whether Town Council might like to present same. It was unanimously ***agreed*** to invite Christine to the Civic Awards Evening and hopefully present it there.

Defibrillator - The Clerk reported that he had received agreement from Adam Cunard owner of Maxime Cinema for placement of second Defibrillator in town to be located near the Cinema, and had offered to contribute towards siting of same and to look after the unit once positioned.

9. *To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Area Committee AGM & Ordinary Meeting held on 12th July 2017*

It was ***agreed*** the minutes be received

10. *Change of Account Signatories – Necessary Resolutions*

The Clerk reported that Co-operative Bank required the specific resolutions he had read to the meeting to enable the required change of Accounts Signatories.

It was unanimously ***agreed*** the said resolutions be accepted.

11. *To Discuss Town Council's Contribution towards Armed Forces Day*

The Clerk presented the following report -

On 16th. May (the day after our AGM) we received notification that Blackwood had been chosen to host this year's Armed Forces Day Celebrations at 10.30am on Monday 19th. June on the Dragon Circle, adjacent to ASDA.

We were asked to contribute to the refreshments for the event.

Due to the Clerk's absence, the point of contact was Councillor W Baber, and he in conjunction with the Borough Council and other members ensured the event was a great success.

There were various e-mails regarding the refreshments to be provided and the likely costs, with the Borough firmly of the opinion Town Council had agreed to fund the cost of 50 x tea; 50 x coffee; 100 x juices (mix of apple & orange) - £192.00 including delivery. (As an aside Cllr. Baber also organised welsh cakes etc. at no cost to the Council)

After much discussion, where several members pointed out that we had been asked for a contribution towards the refreshments and not to cover the full costs, it was **agreed** a contribution of £100 be made.

12. Budget Monitoring Report for Period to 31st. July 2017 .

The Clerk presented his Budget Monitoring Report for the period to 31st July 2017 which highlighted a potential under spend of £2,983 (the majority £2,000 due to savings in Election costs due to there being no contested elections, coupled with savings on Audit Fees (£278), Insurance (£305), Printing/ Room Hire (£200) & Carnival (£200))

The Clerk explained that due to the specific revised treatment of the Loan to BLT, (previously excluded from the Report) income of £3,320 was projected, which now resulted in an identified overall surplus of £3,402 compared with an estimated deficit of £2,885 .

It was **agreed** that the Clerk's report be accepted

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

The Clerk reminded members that at the last meeting two nominations had been put forward, namely Nat Thomas and Margaret Veater MBE.

After much discussion, further nominations were identified -

Mr Alan Burley, Stagecoach driver who was always helpful and considerate to passengers

Mr David Rideout, for his unstinting work over many years with Mynyddislwyn Choir

A nomination was also made in respect of Jacob Allen for the Young Persons Award recognising his involvement and dedication to Youth & Schools Rugby

It was **agreed** that all nominations, together with any others that may be received, be discussed in more detail at the next meeting, and a decision taken regarding Awards to be made.

14. Planning Applications

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

17/0699/CLPU	Mr & Mrs K French	Obtain Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed Single storey sitting room/ kitchen extension to side and rear of dwelling 21 Cilgerran Way, Cefn Fforest Blackwood
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It was **agreed** no objections be raised.

Members had been forwarded a copy of the Appeal decision in respect of Land at Cwmgelli, Blackwood, whereby the Appeal was allowed and Planning permission granted for residential development, public open space, landscaping, highway improvements and associated engineering works with certain conditions.

15. Reports

The Clerk reported on an issue that had caused a great amount of stress to the Velvet Coalmine Festival Organisers who had been contacted by an individual who alleged Velvet Coalmine had infringed his registered trade mark by use of its logo. He also accused VC of theft of intellectual property generally and referred also to copyright infringement. Specialist legal advice had been sought, and VC categorically deny all allegations.

On a more positive note, the Clerk reminded all members of the Reception at the Woodbine Club on Thursday evening followed by the Tongue Fu event at the Little Theatre. And urged all members to make every effort to attend. He also reminded members of the Comedy Night at the Little Theatre on Sunday and urged them to attend if possible.

The Clerk then reported that he had received a phone call from Blackwood Historical Society, asking if Town Council were planning any celebrations to mark the 200th. Anniversary in 2020 of the first recorded houses in Blackwood. As Councillor Jim Criddle had identified this previously, the Clerk suggested that perhaps the Historical Society, the Heritage Association and representatives from town Council meet to discuss same in the not too distant future. Members *agreed* with the suggestion.

Councillor D Davies reported that he had received queries from residents regarding the supposed provision of Community Garden facilities at the new Pentwyn Road scheme. The Clerk responded by confirming such provision had been included in the plans and was situated near the footpath adjacent to the Moose Hall.

Councillor Farina-Childs reported that he had raised the issue of the planting area around the Torque opposite the library with borough officers. It is currently planted as a natural meadow, but he had enquired whether something special could be created to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War, with possible involvement of local schools and Town Council. Members were fully *supportive* of this suggestion.

Councillor Short raised the issue of the Tenants Handbook that had been circulated to residents and queried whether Caerphilly C.B.C. or Town Council had any involvement, as some complaints had been raised regarding some of the advertised companies. The Clerk responded by stating that as far as he was aware that this was a private enterprise and presumably C.C.B.C. had been asked for contact details, as had Town Council.

Members reported that the old Somerfield car park was now charging again, that Adam Oldham was now Regional Manager and that planning applications had apparently been submitted in respect of the old store for at least three new units, one of which was a proposed gym.