

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
4TH DECEMBER 2017**

Present : Councillors J Weeks (Mayor)

Councillors W Baber, Z Hammond, D Jones, A Short, R Weeks, D Davies & G James

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors A Farina-Childs, N Turner, C Erasmus, P Cook, J Edwards, J Griffiths & M Gwynne.

Apologies were also received from County Councillor K Etheridge

2. Declarations of Interest

A Declaration of Interest was made by Councillor Gerwyn James, in respect of Item 8 - Special Meeting (Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Closure) as he is a Governor at Blackwood Comprehensive School.

3. Police Report

There were no Police in Attendance to give a report and the Clerk reported he had had no contact from Inspector

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following events attended –

Remembrance Services on Friday at Market Square and Sunday at the Moose Hall, together with Concert at the Methodist Church on Saturday evening.

The Civic Awards Evening at the Blackwood Miners' Institute

A visit and welcome to the Wales Air Ambulance Charity Shop in the Precinct on Friday 1st. December

The Christmas Lights Switch On on Saturday 2nd. December

5. Correspondence

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

Information from County Councillors K Etheridge/ A Farina-Childs re -

Plans to resurface Caldicot Close in 2018

Confirmation that Blackwood Post Office (despite some rumours) is not closing

Request for pedestrian crossing outside Blackwood Miners' Institute

Request for locking and opening of Showfield Gates

Police Contacts – Inspector Steve Drayton/ Sgt. Phillip O'Connell/ CADRO Adam Lang

Chief Executive Chris Burns tendered his resignation and Christine Harry to act as Interim CEO

Helen Morgan retires mid December

Minister overturned CCBC decision and has given permission to Persimmon to build 175 houses on Oakdale Golf Course

Problems reported regarding Boy Racers in Aldi car park – Mountain Close residents
Request for traffic flow study – Sunnybank Road
Request for amendment to parking arrangements on Pentwyn Road/Chastons Hill
Request for re-design and evaluation of pavement/kerbs for vehicle access to Tuckers Villas

Aneurin Bevan UHB	Major Trauma Services in Wales Public Meeting Caerphilly Miners' Centre - 9 th . January 3.00-6.00pm.
One Voice Wales	Review of Community & Town Councils – Consultation exercise Henllys Village Hall, Cwmbran 5 th . December 2.00-4.00pm.
Caerphilly PSB	Consultation on Draft Caerphilly We Want Well Being Plan ends 18 th . December
Welsh Govt.	Section 137 Expenditure Limits for 2018/19 £7.86 per elector Planning Law in Wales – Consultation Paper, response by 1/3/2018
Clare e Potter	Thank You Card – Jim Criddle Award Presentation

Councillor A Short declared an Interest in the Aldi Car park item, as he has a pecuniary interest in the site.

With regard the item relating to the locking and opening of the Showfield gates, several members identified this as a serious problem. Members were reminded that this issue had arisen previously, and County Councillor N Dix had supposedly arranged for volunteers to have keys and undertake these tasks. Members reported that insurance issues had apparently meant this alternative had never really materialised.

After much discussion regarding other possible alternatives for locking and opening the gates, members requested the Clerk make enquiries relating to who opens and closes Bedwellty Cemetery, and whether or not this might be carried out by the same individuals.

Mention was also made regarding the opening and closing of the Cefn Fforest Eco Park, and whether Community Safety Wardens had ever acted as key holders.

The Clerk also reported on an e-mail received from Pontllanfraith Rotary Club, asking Town Council to consider making a donation towards the costs of the Sleigh, and it's visits around the area, but more importantly to the Lantern Parade. It was pointed out by Rotary that they make no collection during the Parade through town, as they consider it a very worthwhile community event that they have been pleased to support over the years.

Councillors A Short & D Jones both declared an interest at this point as they had that afternoon attended a Businessmen's Lunch organised by Pontllanfraith Rotary. Neither member took part in the discussion or decision making.

After some discussion it was *agreed* a donation of £100 be made to Pontllanfraith Rotary. Members accepted the Clerk's suggestion that the donation be met from the Christmas Entertainment budget rather than the Grants to Voluntary Organisations budget.

The Clerk referred members to the letter he had written to Sean Morgan, Deputy Leader of Caerphilly C.B.C. regarding the possibility of free parking in Blackwood, thus mirroring the decision taken re. Caerphilly (Members had been forwarded a copy).

The response indicated that Cabinet had agreed to waive parking charges in response to the major road works and the impact on local businesses. Consideration was apparently given to extending same across other town centres, but it was agreed not to, as the Caerphilly were experiencing this unique set of circumstances. Furthermore, in order to implement free parking, a traffic order is required which is subject to statutory process and timescale. The report was taken as an urgent decision, not subject to call in, as the traffic order timescale was extremely tight and had to start immediately following the Cabinet decision. If a secondary decision was taken in respect of other town centres, the decision could not be implemented due to insufficient time to undertake the statutory notice process.

Members congratulated the Clerk on his original letter, and fully supported the content.

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
Markham Brass Band	Fee –Remembrance Service 2016 & 2017	200.00
Blackwood Cricket Club	Financial Assistance	250.00
Blackwood Boys & Girls	Financial Assistance	200.00
GAVO	Halloween & Bonfire Initiative	300.00
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire/ Printing	50.70
Wales Air Ambulance	Financial Assistance	100.00
Lowri Williams	Financial Assistance	100.00
Cruse Bereavement Care	Financial Assistance	100.00
Mayor’s Charity (Poppy Appeal)	Financial Assistance	250.00
Royal British Legion	Financial Assistance	100.00
K & R Print	Printing costs – Awards/ Christmas	114.00
Town & Comm. Councils	Subscription Fee 2017/18	100.00
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. November	278.31
John Hold	Nov. Salary + Reimbursements (Civic Awards)	1,385.64

7. *To Receive the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 6th. November 2017*

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

8. *To Receive the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 15th. November 2017*

The Clerk presented the minutes of the Special Meeting, and it was *agreed* they be confirmed as a true record. Attached to the minutes was a copy of the response (previously circulated to all members) composed by the Clerk and Councillor D Jones.

The Clerk placed on record his thanks to the amount of time and effort Councillor Jones had given to the response, and thought that the outcome was a very powerful submission.

Members thanked the Clerk and Councillor Jones for their sterling efforts.

The Clerk reported that he had received very positive feedback from Pontllanfraith Borough members Mike Adams and Gez Kirby stating Town Council has put together an excellent package of reasons why Cabinet members need to look longer and deeper into the conclusions of the report, and thanked members for the excellent and comprehensive submission. They reiterated their solid opposition to the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

It was noted the Cabinet meeting was scheduled for 13th. December, and after some discussion it was **agreed** that if the decision was made to close the Centre members consider formally writing to the Well Being Commissioner asking that the decision be looked into, and also check that the Caerphilly Public Services Board are formally consulted

9. Events Update – Verbal Report

(a) Civic Awards Evening

The Clerk reported that he had received very positive feedback from several people present on the evening. Approximately 150 people had attended, and he thought Zim Voices had proved a very popular addition to the evening, especially given the timely overthrow of the Mugabe regime. Councillor D Jones, who had not attended for several years congratulated the Clerk on organising and compering what had proved to be a very successful evening.

The Clerk took the opportunity to thank members for their presentation on the evening recognising his 10 years as Clerk to the Council.

(b) Christmas Market/ Light Switch On

The Clerk reported that the day had proved very successful, and placed on record his thanks to Councillors W Baber and Z Hammond for their assistance throughout the day, and to other members who supported and assisted.

The Entertainment stage had been busy throughout the day, with performances from Blackwood Little Theatre Younger Generation, Oakdale Silver Band, Markham Brass Band, Side By Side Choir, DYT Dance, KLA Dance (with Special appearance by Owen Money), Dancelicious, Treble C and Caitlin Mae Nedahl.

The day concluded with the Sleigh, courtesy of Pontllanfraith Rotary Club being led through town by the Newport Pipe & Drums Band to the Stage, where the Mayor and Santa switched on our Christmas Lights. The reception was probably the best for many years, with the Band being a definite added attraction.

There had been a few issues reported throughout the day regarding the noise from the rides outside Emily's Market and Wilkinson's, and it was **agreed** that we contact Caerphilly C.B.C. to discuss these issues and request greater input into positioning of rides/stalls and entertainment stage in future years.

(c) Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

The Clerk reported that everything was well in hand for Thursday evening, albeit there was a possibility that Blackwood Primary School may not be there in numbers due to a prior commitment. The Parade would gather at the Market Place from approx 6.30pm. and walk through the Precinct up the High Street to the Methodist Church, where the Carol Concert would start as soon as the parade had settled.

The programme for the evening includes Mynyddislwyn Male Choir, Markham & District Brass Band, Daniel Cushing, Caetlin Mae Nedahl together with Blackwood & Libanus Primary Schools.

10. To Consider request from Libanus Lifestyle Centre for funding towards Christmas Trees & Lights

The Clerk reported that a request has been received from the recently refurbished Libanus Lifestyle Centre for assistance towards the purchase of a 12ft. Christmas Tree for erection outside (£50) together with lights (£50) and a smaller 6ft. tree inside the centre (£30)

Various classes for well being services and fitness and exercise ensure the centre is well used, and there are also rooms available for hire for meetings etc.

They are holding a Carols with Cava evening on 14th. December for Tenovus Cancercare and all are welcome to attend. They will advertise (if successful) that the tree and lights have been sponsored by Town Council, and will ensure it is positioned in a prominent position at more or less the gateway to the town.

The Clerk reminded members that it had been a wish that a Christmas tree be erected somewhere near the entrance to the town, but that previous sites had proved unsuccessful.

After some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk have a conversation with the Centre regarding the potential erection of a tree and lights somewhere near the corner of the site close to the main road and clearly visible from the highway. It was **agreed** the Clerk negotiate up to £300 if this were achievable, but if not to consider a contribution in line with the original application.

10. Planning Applications

The Clerk reported that the following planning applications had been received since the last meeting -

Case Ref. 17/0968/LA

Site Area: 258m² Location: Garage Site Bedwellty Road To Addison Street North Cefn Fforest (UPRN 000043175300)

Proposal: Demolish 11 garages and construct 10 sectional pre-cast garages on the existing slabs

Applicant: CCBC (Building Consultancy) Mrs M Bower Ty Penallta Tredomen Business Park Ystrad Mynach Hengoed CF82 7PG

Case Ref. 17/0980/FULL

Site Area: 465m² Location: 28 Rhodfa Glascoed Blackwood NP12 1GW (UPRN 000043078586)

Proposal: Erect two storey extension to rear of property

Applicant: Mr McNiel 28 Rhodfa Glascoed Blackwood NP12 1GW

After some discussion, it was **agreed** there were no objections to the above

12. Reports

There were no reports.

The Clerk was presented with a framed certificate recognising his 10 years Service as Clerk to the Town Council