

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5TH. JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillor G Erasmus (Mayor)
Councillor N Turner (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, C Erasmus, P Cook, M Jackson, J Criddle &
M Veater MBE

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors A Parsons & G Hale

2. Interviews for Vacancies on Town Council

The Clerk informed the meeting that one of the three persons to be interviewed, Mr James Davies had withdrawn citing family issues.

The two remaining candidates were invited to join the meeting at this point.

It was ***unanimously agreed*** that since both Bill Baber & Mark Harris were already well known to most members that they be co-opted on to Town Council – Mark Harris to represent Blackwood Central Ward & Bill Baber to represent Cefn Fforest East Ward.

The Mayor congratulated both on their co-option, and they duly signed the necessary Acceptance of Office forms.

3. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on his attendance at the following –

Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert
Boys Brigade Christingel Service
Cancercareline Bake Sale

4. Correspondence

The Clerk reported on the following items of correspondence received since the last meeting, and all were noted –

National Joint Council For Local Government Services - Notification of 2014-2016 National Salary Award for Clerks to be implemented from 1st. January 2015

Caerphilly C.B.C. - Reminder that Budget Consultation ends 16th. January 2015

Notification of Meeting dates

Town & Community Councils Liaison C'ttee – 7pm. on 28/1// 24/6//28/10

Community Councils Joint Liaison C'ttee – 6.30pm on 4/3// 29/7// 2/12

Notification of Council Tax Base 2015/16 as £2,871.52 or Band D properties

Precept requirement to be notified to Caerphilly C.B.C. by 2nd. February 2015

One Voice Wales - Reminder that Welsh Govt. Consultation on Draft National Transport Plan ends February 2015

Copy of Revised Practitioners Guide relating to Internal Audit & Budget Setting & Monitoring

Aerial Project - Invitation to members to visit Outpatients Dept. at Neville Hall Hospital on Friday 30th. January 4.00pm – 6.00pm and /or Saturday 31st. January 11.00am – 1.00pm to see new Art Installations that residents of The Countryman Supported Accommodation Scheme for young people 16-24 years, who have become homeless, were involved in designing and making

Malarky - Invoice for £100 in respect of 36 lanterns for Parade

Local Govt. Finance & Performance Division - Notification of 2015/16 limit for Expenditure under Section 137 of Local Govt. Act 1972

Urdd National Eisteddfod - Application for Financial Assistance

Relate Cymru - Application for Financial Assistance

British Legion Poppy Appeal - Letter of Thanks for support and notification that total raised to 1st. December 2014 was £18,056.50, compared with £13,83.50 last year

The Clerk also informed members that Footfall figures for the period week commencing 8th. December to week commencing 22nd. December had shown that Blackwood received 11,630 more visitors than Caerphilly, and that this was probably partially to do with the success of the Maxime Cinema.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk report issues raised in the Practitioners Guide to the Policy & Finance Committee, that the invoice in respect of Malarky be settled and that Applications for Financial Assistance be forwarded to Policy & Finance for consideration.

5. To Deal with Business not transacted at the Town Council Meeting held 1st. December 2014

(a) To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 3rd. November 2014

With an amendment under Matters Arising to show that Councillor Jim Criddle reported on his first meeting as Governor at Cefn Fforest and not Blackwood, it was **resolved** the minutes be confirmed as a true record

(b) Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that he had made contact with the Cardiff Capital City's Region Board regarding possible attendance to outline the work of the Board and its possible impact for the town. The Officer explained that with such a small team they had anticipated they might attend the Community & Town Councils Joint Liaison Committee at some time in the future to explain/outline their proposals, rather than try to visit individual councils, albeit they did not dismiss the possibility out of hand.

(c) Community Infrastructure Levy

The Clerk reported that the main issue outstanding was Town Council's acceptance of the Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Agreement which outlines the administration and monitoring process of CIL funding.

He recommended acceptance of the terms outlined, and would report back when the actual agreement is ready for signature.

This was **agreed** by members.

(d) Consideration of New Honours Board – Young Citizen Award

The Clerk reported that he anticipated the costs to be in the region of £600.

It was **agreed** that arrangements be made to purchase an Honours Board to recognise the recently created Young Citizen Award. The Clerk suggested we contact Jason Howells, Traditional Signwriting Services to progress same

6. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 1st. December 2014

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

7. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

8. Islwyn West Secondary School Update

Councillor A Farina-Childs updated members on progress.

The School, which caters for 900 pupils is now scheduled to open January 2017, with Caerphilly C.B.C. trying their best to bring it in on budget.

He also reported that Caerphilly C.B.C. have now committed in writing to a £2 million investment in Blackwood Comprehensive School.

Some members still had concerns that the new school would be large enough to accommodate all pupils, especially given the potential new property influx.

9. To Receive Verbal Report on Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

The Clerk reported that the Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert had been a great success, and that he had received several compliments about the event on the evening.

The absence of a band leading the parade had been more than compensated for by the Sleigh leading the parade through the High Street, and the absence of the Silver Band at the Concert compensated for by an organ solo by Daniel Cushing and songs by Miss Alice Mee Bishop.

Whilst less refreshments were provided this year from Cwm Bakery, it was still a concern that we had again over catered, and it was **agreed** the Events Committee consider this next year.

It was generally agreed that Cancercareline who assisted in organising and serving the refreshments had done a first class job, giving members an opportunity to enjoy the evenings entertainment. It was **agreed** a letter of thanks be sent to Cancercareline thanking them for their assistance, not only at this concert but also at the Awards Evening and the Carnival.

It was suggested that we ask the Organisation if they would be willing to provide their services at future events, and it was **agreed** the Events Committee consider this approach.

10. Planning Applications

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

Councillor J Criddle asked that he and the Clerk be given delegated powers to follow up on the applications with Caerphilly C.B.C. before deciding what action should be taken.

This was **unanimously agreed**.

11. Reports

Councillor P Cook reported that whilst she was unable to attend the Blackwood Bus Station Problem Solving Group Meeting, she was aware that the police had identified that some of the problems were social issues relating to homelessness and not specifically policing matters. Local members had met with the Homelessness Officer who had offered temporary accommodation, but they had apparently refused the offer.

It was suggested that we invite the Homelessness Officer along to a meeting of Town Council to update members, and this was **agreed**.

Councillor Z Hammond reported that she was still not being informed of meetings, and the Clerk was asked to follow this up.

It was reported that a new Inspector had been appointed to the Neighbourhood Team, and that Mark Thomas had reverted to Sergeant. The Clerk reported that the new Inspector would therefore, be invited along to the next meeting.

Councillor B Baber reported that an article in the Caerphilly Campaign dated 31st. December 2014 had identified that projects that bring the local community and armed forces communities together in Caerphilly were being encouraged to apply for a funding grant.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant is funded by the Ministry of Defence and administered locally by the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum. It makes financial assistance available to projects that strengthen the ties or mutual understanding between members of the armed forces community and the wider community. The Forum is encouraging groups to submit bids for consideration of the panel by the submission deadline of 16th. January 2015.

After some discussion it was *agreed* the Clerk be given delegated power to make contact with the forum and explore the possibility of submitting a proposal.