

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
7<sup>TH</sup>. APRIL 2014**

**Present :** Councillor G Hale ( Mayor )  
Councillor G Erasmus ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, M Franklin, C Erasmus, S Lewis,  
& N Turner  
Sergeant Mark Thomas ( Blackwood Neighbourhood Policing Team )

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from R Dimond, A Parsons, J Criddle, M Veater MBE & P Cook

**2. Policing Matters**

The Mayor welcomed Sergeant Mark Thomas to the meeting and thanked him for his attendance.

The Sergeant commenced his report by identifying Crime and Anti Social Behaviour figures, which showed a reduction of 7.1% for Crime in Blackwood for 2013/2014 compared with the previous year, but an increase of 20.1% for ASB for the same period.

Cefn Fforest showed a 29.1% increase in crime and a 77.8% increase in ASB for the same period.

All other wards under the remit of the Blackwood Neighbourhood Team had shown decreases in both crime and ASB.

He reported that the ASB increase in Blackwood was mainly due to the Cliff Road & ASDA areas, and increased patrols are in place to address this.

The increase in crime and ASB in Cefn Fforest was due in part to the transfer of Upper Trelyn into the Cefn Fforest Ward, and a spike in the ASB last August has reduced since a working party was formed to address the issues.

Sean Davies a prolific offender from Pontllanfraith has been sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for a number of offences. This individual has been responsible for a numerous offences in the past throughout the Blackwood area.

On 15<sup>th</sup>. March an incident at Park Terrace, Woodfieldside where an officer attempted to stop a stolen vehicle from the Usk area, resulted in the vehicle ramming two police cars in an attempt to evade officers. The offender who is from out of the area was caught and is awaiting a court appearance.

A male who was stopped and searched on the High Street was arrested and charged with six offences of burglary, some being in the Blackwood area.

There have been a number of attempted break ins to commercial premises on the High Street, where shutters have been forced but no entry gained. Regular patrols are now taking place at the rear of premises during the night time.

A burglary initiative starts next week to make residents think about how easy they are making it for their properties to be burgled. When a burglary takes place there will be a leaflet drop to neighbours giving advice as to how they might prevent this happening to them. Within days they will receive a visit from PCSO's offering ultra violet marking pens and further useful advice.

This week is Rogue Trader week, and the Neighbourhood Policing Team have been giving advice to vulnerable people, by visiting different community groups in the area. Police officers working with Trading Standards are investigating a number of possible offences committed by these rogue traders.

The overnight crime operation continues, where a number of times a week officers from the Team are out patrolling in plain clothes trying to identify people acting suspiciously throughout the night and may be responsible for committing crimes.

Finally, the Sergeant thanked Town Council for their promise of support for the primary schools football tournament being held on Thursday 11th. April.

### **3. *Mayoral Announcements***

The Mayor reported on the following visits made –

Libanus Primary School Eisteddfod to present cheque in support of Environmental works on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Blackwood Primary School to present cheque in support of Environmental works on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Blackwood Comprehensive School to their Inter-generational Lunch Club on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014

He reported that he had received a very warm welcome at all three schools and how impressed he was with the work undertaken by the pupils at these schools.

He then invited all members present to the Launch of the new Art Gallery at Blackwood Miners' Institute on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April @ 7.00pm where local Art Groups would be exhibiting some of their works, and entertainment had also been arranged featuring local groups.

#### **4. Correspondence**

The Clerk presented his report on correspondence received, and all were noted.

The Invoices in respect Christmas lighting charges from SWALEC ( £371.29 ) and of Tax/N.I. contributions from Playworks ( £712.06 ) were **agreed** for payment.

In respect of the Festive Lighting Grant, Councillor Farina-Childs informed members that this may not be payable in future years due to County Borough cutbacks, and that we would have to factor this into future budgets.

In respect of the notification regarding the Repeal of Section 150 (5) of the Local Govt. Act 1972 ( the two signature rule ), the Clerk proposed that for the meantime, the Town Council continue with requirement.

#### **5. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup>. March 2014**

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

#### **6. Matters Arising**

The Clerk reported that the cheque to Polio Plus in memory of Richard Bullen had been returned, as this was not a recognised Charity name, and a request had been received that it be made payable to The Rotary Club, and would be forwarded together with other donations. This was **agreed**.

The Clerk reported that he had received apologies from both Bob Campbell and Clive Campbell regarding lack of consultation on road closures to accommodate road works in the High Street, and assured this oversight would not happen again.

Councillors A Farina-Childs & D Davies were concerned that Item 7 Minutes of Events Committee had not fully emphasised the debt owed to the volunteers over the years, and that without their input the Events held would not have been as successful as they had. It was generally agreed that more members need to become involved in the organisation of same, and that Events be placed on the agenda for next months meeting.

In respect of the Commission on Public Services Governance & Deliverance ( Town & Community Councils ), the Clerk read from a letter received by Bargoed Town Council from the Public Service Reform Division of the Welsh Government, which stated that whilst the role of Town & Community Councils was not part of the Commission's core remit it had made recommendations which clearly has an impact for them, which they will consider as they develop a response to the Commission's findings, and will set out their response in due course.

Councillor S Lewis reported that whilst unitary authorities are likely to merge in the future, the Cardiff City Region, which covers the ten local authorities in South East Wales, whilst very much in its early days, will evolve when it takes on executive functions and specific powers, and perhaps consideration should be given to inviting the Chairman of the Board, Roger Lewis to outline his views for the future.

#### ***7. Secondary Rationalisation – Phase 1 Islwyn West – Consultation Report***

Councillor A Farina-Childs declared an interest as he is a member of the County Borough Scrutiny Committee.

The Clerk circulated copies of the Consultation Report, which included Estyn's response as requested.

The paper addressed the main issues raised, and concluded that whilst some concerns, have been raised, in the main there is overwhelming positivity about the proposal to build a new school at the Oakdale Plateau 3 and that they now propose to publish the relevant Statutory Notice.

It was ***agreed*** the Report be received and noted.

#### ***8. To Conduct Business not transacted at Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – not quorate***

The Clerk presented his report and explained that whilst the meeting called on 12<sup>th</sup> March was not quorate, the members present, namely Councillors G Erasmus ( Committee Chair ) and D Davies had considered all items on the agenda in detail, and that their proposals ( not recommendations ) were identified in the report.

##### ***(a) To Consider Insurance Quote received from our current insurers AON***

After some discussion it was ***resolved*** that the quote from AON for 2014/2015 be accepted, and that we renew for 3 years to receive an additional 5% reduction. Amount payable now being £1,316.73 ( compared with £1,452.37 for 2013/2014 )

**(b) To Consider Caerphilly C.B.C. request for funding towards Band in the Park Concerts**

After some discussion it was **resolved** that the Town Council support the Bands in the Park initiative at a cost of £331, and that we liaise with C.C.B.C. regarding venue & date.

**(c) To Consider Applications for Financial Assistance**

Members considered each of the applications, and after some discussion it was **resolved** the following grants be made –

£250 to support the 5 a side football tournament organised by local Community Support Officers Kelly Rees & Colin Davies at 10am. on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>. April at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

£200 to NSPCC Wales

£250 to Blackwood Cricket Club in support of Junior teams

£250 to Blackwood Cricket Club towards cost of ground drainage scheme

£50 to Kidney Wales Foundation- Walk for Life

£250 to Blackwood Musical Theatre Society

£250 to St. Margaret's Church

£250 to Cancercareline

**9. Car Parking Charges**

The Clerk presented his report on Car Parking Charges, which identified that broadly speaking charges are similar to those in Caerphilly & Bargoed.

However, whilst in Blackwood some 644 spaces are charged for, only 312 and 71 spaces respectively are charged for in Caerphilly & Bargoed.

In Caerphilly, 550 spaces at Castle Court are free for up to 3 hours parking and a further 11 spaces at Lawrence Street for up to 2 hours.

In Bargoed, 283 spaces in total are free of charges – 100 at Cardiff Road, 123 at Hanbury Road, 45 at the Ruby Club and 15 disabled at Bargoed Library.

In Blackwood, there has been a recent introduction of 3 hours free parking at ASDA, together with 2 hours free parking at the adjacent car park. Several free car parking spaces are also available at the Red Lion car park.

The Clerk reported that he had requested details of income generated at the 3 towns car parks and also sought clarification regarding ownership of land in Bargoed where parking is currently free.

Members thanked the Clerk for his report and **agreed** to await the further information requested.

## ***10. Update on Town Council Website***

The Clerk gave a brief report on what work had been undertaken regards the website. He apologised for not involving members, but due to various issues, most of the work has been via e-mail with Nick Rutter, the County Borough Council's web designer.

He had forwarded all copies of minutes and reports of Town Council meetings and its committees since May 2012 and lists of current members with contact details, and former mayors, together with a list of future meetings dates.

He has developed a Welcome Page, a brief history of the town, and famous people associated with the town. Details highlighting our Civic Awards Scheme recipients and details of our financial grants scheme. It is envisaged a separate page will highlight the Carnival, whilst a programme of future events is also included.

He reported that he was due to meet Nick over the next few weeks to finalise the initial website, albeit there will be opportunity in the future to amend/improve.

The Clerk was thanked for his efforts, and asked that mention of our Twinning with Protivin be identified somewhere on the website.

## ***11. Planning Applications***

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting, and it was ***agreed*** no objections be raised, albeit in respect of application 14/0155/NOTA, it was noted that several other applications had been received in respect of this applicant – Gelli Farm, Tredegar Road, Blackwood.

## ***12. Reports***

Members asked if any information had been received regarding the current status of Mornington Lodge, as rumours are that the premises has closed.

It was ***agreed*** to check out the situation and report back.

Councillor D Davies queried why the Civic Awards Board had not been positioned as previously promised, and again it was ***agreed*** to check out the situation and report back.