

## ***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup>. SEPTEMBER 2015***

***Present*** : Councillor N Turner ( Mayor )  
Councillor B Baber ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, J Criddle, G Erasmus, C Erasmus, Z Hammond, P Cook

In the absence of the Mayor at the start of the meeting it was agreed by all present that Councillor W Baber ( Deputy Mayor) take the Chair.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Denis Pitman, Chair of Islwyn Branch of the Old Comrades attended to invite members to their Celebration Dinner being held at Blackwood Rugby Club on 30<sup>th</sup>. October at a cost of £20 per head including a 5 Course meal and entertainment.

### ***1. Apologies for Absence***

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors M Harris, M Veater MBE & G Hale

### ***2. Declarations of Interest***

No Declarations of Interest were recorded at this point

### ***3. Co-option of Members***

The Clerk reported that two of the original candidates – Ms Helen Parfitt & Mr James Davies had withdrawn.

The remaining candidates, Mr James Edwards and Mr Mark Gwynne were interviewed, and after some little deliberation, it was unanimously ***agreed*** they be co-opted as members for Blackwood Central Ward & Blackwood North Ward respectively.

Both completed the necessary Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms, and were welcomed to the meeting.

Councillor Edwards remained for the remainder of the meeting, but Councillor Gwynne apologised as he had a prior engagement.

### ***4. Mayoral Announcements***

The Mayor arrived, apologised for being delayed and took the Chair.

He reported that £195 had been raised for his Charity – CLAPA - at the Carnival.

He also reported that he had attended the Blackwood Comprehensive School Summer Festival, and several events at the recent Velvet Coalmine, all of which he had enjoyed.

## 5. *Correspondence*

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

In respect of the Petition relating to Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre, it was reported that the item had been referred back to Scrutiny Committee.

With regards the termination of security presence at the Bus Station, the meeting was informed that an After Dark Meeting was to be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>. September at 1.00pm, and it was agreed that Councillors Z Hammond & D Davies represent Town Council.

In respect of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting agenda items, it was proposed that the provision of defibrillators at strategic points throughout the town be discussed. It was also **agreed** that Councillor A Farina-Childs arrange for someone to make a presentation regarding this item to the next Town Council meeting, and that Town Council make a decision on possible provision of same, independently.

The Clerk reported that due to poor response, the planned Gwent Community Council Event with the Police & Crime Commissioner had been cancelled.

In respect of the St. Margaret's Church request for an update on the decorating of a tree on their front boundary for Christmas, given a rough estimate provided by Elsbury's, it was **agreed** further consideration would be required.

## 6. *Schedule of Payments*

The Clerk presented his report, and the payments identified as made/ due for payment were **agreed** ( *See Appendix 1* )

## 7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup>. July 2015*

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

## 8. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk reported that he had received a negative response regarding our request for notifications of licensing requests relating to the Town Council area, as the Licensing Act 2003 is very descriptive in respect of what the Licensing Authority can do in respect of advertising applications.

However, all such applications are posted on the Council website, and the Clerk intimated he would try and check these on a regular basis and report back to Town Council.

Currently, two had been identified –

Review of a premises licence for the Vanilla Bar, High Street, Blackwood (Chief Constable ) and Cefn Fforest Store, Bedwellty Road, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood ( Trading Standards )

**9. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup>. July 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received, and the following grants be made –

Valleys Eisteddfod	£250
St. Margaret's Church	£250
Better Life (Cystic Fibrosis) – In Memory of Bethan Sims	£250

At this point Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs declared an interest as the Sims Family were friends of his. He took no part in the decision making.

**10. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup>. July 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

**11. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee ( Carnival De-Brief ) Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup>. August 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

The Clerk reported that he had received a letter from a firm of Solicitors acting on behalf of the elderly gentleman who had sustained a fall, and that he had passed on the correct contact details for Classic Catering, whose trailing lead had supposedly caused the accident.

The Clerk promised to keep members abreast of any further developments.

At this point Councillor Delwyn Davies declared an in interest as he had been called as a witness to the accident.

**12. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee Annual General Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup>. October 2014**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

**13. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup>. April 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

**14. Recommendation to waive financial regulations to contracts to enable a price to be agreed with Blachere Illuminations for purchase of new lamp pole mount Christmas motifs and cross street decoration in order to meet very tight timescales, and ensure delivery and erection in time for Christmas. All negotiations are well within existing budget provision**

The Clerk reported that he and Councillor Zoe Hammond had met with Dean Hankins of Blachere on the High Street, having previously met with Richard James of Elsburys who had identified this company as one of the best in the business, having decorated towns and cities worldwide. He had promised to prepare a couple of mock ups of how the High Street might look and those had been circulated to members who attended the Finance & Policy & the Events Committees last month, where the preferred option had been identified as Option C. Copies were distributed for members information.

The quote received amounted to £14,592.75 ( excl. VAT ) for 38 polemount motifs ( Sparkle Star/ Tree/ Stars ) together with mounts/ plugs etc.

The Clerk reported that he had also asked for a quotation for a new customised Cross Street decoration which reads Merry Christmas from Blackwood Town Council, but was still awaiting same, albeit was expected to cost in the region of £1,750 - £2,200. It was also the intention if a suitable location could be identified at the northern end of town to commission a similar Cross Street with Welsh translation, and budget available might also allow additional lamp posts to be brought on stream, ideally at the north of town.

Councillor D Davies suggested further investigation of locations before placement of order for second Cross Street, and this was **agreed**.

The Clerk stressed the timescales required for specific requirements had been quoted at 8/10 weeks, and if we were to approach other companies for quotations it was unlikely any new decorations would be in place in time for our scheduled switch on date.

Given the reputation of Blachere Illuminations, a negotiated 15% off list price, the urgency of the situation and the fact we are well within budget provision, the Clerk recommended that financial regulations to contracts be waived, and an order placed in the sum of £14,592.75 for polemount motifs and for Cross Street decoration if within anticipated price range ( plenary powers to Clerk to proceed )

It was **agreed** a recorded vote be taken on the Recommendation to waive Financial Regulations on Contracts.

Those in favour – Councillors N Turner, G Erasmus, J Criddle, P Cook, W Baber, J Edwards,  
Z Hammond, C Erasmus

Those against - Councillors D Davies, A Farina-Childs

It was therefore **agreed** the Clerk place the necessary order as outlined

### ***15. Request from Caerphilly C.B.C. Tourism Section or use of Town Council Notice Board to place Welcome to Blackwood poster***

The Clerk presented his report outlining the request to use approximately 60% of the Town Council Notice Board for a Welcome to Blackwood Poster, and circulated a provisional copy of the poster, which would also need to be bi-lingual.

Whilst members were supportive of the provision of such a poster, some were adamant that the Notice board should be more widely used by local organisations, which was the original intention at the time of purchase.

After further discussion, and on the casting vote of the Chair, it was ***decided*** the request be refused. It was, however, ***agreed*** that members should do all they can to encourage local organisations to make better use of the facility.

Furthermore, it was ***agreed*** the Clerk try to ascertain what other alternatives have been explored by the Tourism section for the Welcome to Blackwood posters.

### ***16. Blackwood in Bloom Competition Results***

The Clerk presented his report, and it was ***agreed*** the following winners be notified and invited along to the Civic Awards Evening on Wednesday 18th. November -

13 Tree Tops Avenue  
19 Sunnybank Road  
87 Montclair Avenue  
14 Thornecombe Road  
6 Twynyffald Avenue  
52 Bloomfield Road  
62 Cefn Road  
58 BeaumarisWay

### ***17. Nominations for Civic Awards***

Much discussion took place on possible nominations, namely -

A posthumous award to Bridget McNally  
June & Grant Thomas  
Peter Jenkins  
Barry Hemmings

Members were reminded that the award was originally introduced to recognise local individuals who have/had made a contribution to the wellbeing of the town over a period of years, and that the more recent Young Citizens Award was to recognise similar achievements, but obviously over a lesser period.

Ultimately it was ***agreed*** to Agenda this item for further discussion and recommendation of Recipients at the next meeting

### **18. Sponsorship of Comedy Stage at Velvet Coalmine Festival**

The Clerk presented his report, and after some discussion, members formally **confirmed** the Clerk's actions in sponsoring the Comedy Stage at the Festival.

The Clerk further reported that he and Councillor J Criddle had met with Iain Richards, the Festival Director who informed them that the Festival was already being planned for next year, and is likely to be over a longer period.

He reported that he has secured funding for a Recording Studio, as is currently checking out several options within town, and is hoping to include a Wales Guitar Week within the festivals programme. His vision is also to include a Children's Literary Festival, the first in Wales, and that he is currently in discussion regarding likely sponsors for this exciting venture. The Clerk and Councillor Criddle agreed to try and organise a meeting with all local Head teachers, so that Iain could outline his plans.

Several members were enthusiastic with regards the Council having a possible input into what could become the major Children's Literary Festival in the country, and it was **agreed** to agenda this for further discussion at the next meeting.

### **19. Notice of Motions to be discussed at One Voice Wales A.G.M. on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>. October 2015**

The Clerk referred members to the copy of the Notices of Motions included in the pack circulated earlier.

Discussion was had on each motion, and it was ultimately **agreed** to support the following –

Cwmbran Community Council motion on urgent clarification of the roles of Community & Town Councils.

Llanelli Town Council motion on re-direction of funds from Unitary Authority block grants to Town & Community Councils that are taking responsibility for delivery of services.

Saltney Town Council motion to ensure regular dredging of rivers.

Penarth & Barry Town Councils motion that Community & Town Councils are fully engaged in the proposal that principal councils be responsible for reorganising the Community & Town Council sector.

Saltney Town Council motion on rural bus service provision.

Tredegar Town Council motion to allow Community & Town Councils to benefit from grants and funding available to other non profit making organisations.

In respect of the remaining motions, it was **agreed** to leave these to the discretion of Councillor J Criddle

## **20. Planning Applications**

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

At this point Councillors D Davies & C Erasmus declared an interest as Governors of Blackwood Primary School re. 15/0658/LA and Councillor J Edwards declared an interest as a friend and neighbour re. 15/0468/RET. They took no part in the decision making.

Councillor J Criddle advised members that he would be seeking further clarification/ information regarding the following –

15/0403/RET	Rhos Y Dderwen
15/0510/FULL	1 The Meadows
15/0529/RET	59 Coronation Road
15/0545/FULL	47 Woodbine Road

## **21. Reports**

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported the following –

An update on 20<sup>th</sup>. Century Schools was to be presented at Scrutiny Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup>. September

The Civic Carol Service was to be held on 10<sup>th</sup>. December

He passed on his personal thanks to Councillor W Baber and Yvonne Radford re. the Memorial Garden

He had attended the Exhibition in relation to the planned development at the Civic Centre Site, and intimated that from what had been stated, the site might still be available for the Carnival next year

Following on from the above, he proposed a Task & Finish Group be established to report back to Town Council during January/ February next year on the future of the Carnival – this will inevitably mean meetings with Paul Hudson on the longer term future. This was **agreed**.

The Web site information needs updating – the Clerk responded by saying he had planned to meet Nick Rutter of C.C.B.C. to discuss how he could personally update the web page.

Councillor D Davies informed members of the untimely death of Mr. Don Jones, Manager of Phoenix Transport.

Councillor P Cook asked that contact be made with Arthur Roper to ensure attendance of Markham Band at the Remembrance Service at Blackwood

## **22. Date of Next Meeting – Proposed postponement by one week from 5<sup>th</sup>. October to 12<sup>th</sup>. October 2015 to accommodate Clerk's annual leave**

It was **agreed** the date of the next meeting be 12<sup>th</sup>. October 2015