

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7TH. NOVEMBER 2017.

Present : Councillor J Weeks (Mayor)
Councillor J Edwards (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors P Cook, Z Hammond, C Erasmus, D Davies, A Farina-Childs, D Jones, A Short,
G James, J Griffiths & M Gwynne

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors N Turner, R Weeks & W Baber
County Councillors K Etheridge & N Dix had also sent apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

The following Declarations of Interest were made by Councillors –

A Farina-Childs – Chair of Governors at Blackwood Comprehensive School
G James – Governor at Blackwood Comprehensive School
P Cook – Governor at Islwyn High School
D Davies – Member of British Legion

3. Borough Council Report

In the absence of County Councillor K Etheridge, Councillor A Farina-Childs gave a brief update on the following –

Grove Park Proposed Development – Good turnout at the public meeting. A petition is to be handed to Caerphilly C.B.C. An environmental impact survey requested on Fairview and a traffic impact assessment on Cefn Road and Harry's Hill

High Street Parking – Whilst having met with Police and CCBC Highways Officers/ contacted the Chief Constable and the Police & Crime Commissioner, there has been little or no support and the problems continue with parking on double yellow lines and pavements now a regular occurrence

Chartist Bridge – Continued calls for safety measures to be implemented, and it appears the police are looking to assist

Gym at Somerfields - Planning has been granted, albeit there should be no unacceptable impact on adjacent properties or land. Given the proposed hours of operation – 24 hours a day/7 days a week – a condition requires a detailed noise management scheme be submitted prior to opening – control of amplified music, noise insulation and internal layout.

Concerns regarding potential 24 hour parking becoming a magnet for boy racers has been addressed by suggestions the car park be closed between 23.30 -5.30 every night. During this 6 hour period, prospective gym users will be able to use the existing Council car park.

Potential issues from fascia lighting that may have impacted on neighbouring properties appear to have been negated with the positioning of the signs constricted to the south & west elevations overlooking the market place and car park

Members queried if there had been any indication of a meeting with Caerphilly C.B.C. regarding the Chartist Bridge, as there were rumours of another jumper very recently. The Clerk responded by saying that County Councillor K Etheridge had requested a meeting, and that Town Councillors be represented, but had heard nothing recently.

Members felt the Clerk should write requesting a meeting, and possibly ask for the Social Services & Wellbeing Committee to request a report given the obvious mental health implications of these very vulnerable individuals.

The Mayor thanked Councillor A Farina-Childs for his report

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following visits made –

Elim Baptist Church Service with Blackwood Street Pastors
Restart a Heart Campaign at Dragon Circle
Tenovus Fashion Show at Libanus Centre
Re-opening of Santander in High Street after refurbishment
Fireworks Display at Blackwood R.F.C.

The Mayor stated that she had thoroughly enjoyed all the above, but made special mention of the Firework Display which had been a wonderful Community Event, and an event worthy of Council support.

Other members supported this view, and the Clerk was asked to write a Thankyou to the Club for their hospitality on the evening.

5. Correspondence

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

One Voice Wales Copy of Community Review Guidance Document (Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales) - Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities

Notification of new Rate Bands for Land Transaction Tax & Landfill Disposals Tax as part of Welsh Govt. Tax Policy Report

Independent Remuneration Panel Draft Annual Report 2018/19 – for Consultation

Consultation on proposed amendments to Local Authority Capital Finance & Accounts Regs 2003 - ends 12/1/2018 and more relevant to Principal Authorities

Dates of the Larger Councils Committee Meetings for 2018

Wed. 24th Jan. – The Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells

Wed. 18th April – The Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells

Wed. 4th July – Conference Hafod a Hendre, The Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells

Wed. 17th Oct. – The Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells

Caerphilly C.B.C. Consultation on Implementation of Land Drainage Byelaws – ends 15th.
November

What is a Byelaw? Why is it needed?

A Byelaw is basically a local law made by a local council to address local issues which are not covered by the original legislation.

Under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 Councils in Wales were given additional powers and responsibilities for managing flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. As part of these new powers, the responsibility for consent (permission) for watercourse works passed from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to CCBC in April 2012.

Since taking on this consenting duty and wider flood risk management function, we have noted that powers under current legislation are limited and certain activities which are not currently subject to permission could potentially increase the risk of flooding, especially in more built up areas.

To address the above issue Welsh Government recently approved a set of updated Land Drainage Byelaws to help Councils in Wales to better manage land drainage and flood risk management functions.

By adopting a standard set of Land Drainage byelaws it will enable consistency across the Welsh Local Authorities.

We are seeking your views on the implantation of these Byelaws to help us better manage land drainage and flood risk in the Caerphilly Borough.

Local Development Plan up to 2021 6th. Annual Monitoring Report

Notification of Changes to Bus Services

Have your say on Savings – Budget Consultation Drop in sessions – Blackwood Library 30th. November between 10.30 am – 2.30pm

Notification of dates for -

Town & Comm. Councils Committee meetings 7th. Feb/ 12th. June/ 17th. Oct
Comm. Councils Liaison Sub Comm. meetings 14th. March/ 11th. July/14th. Nov

Notification of/Invitation to Mayor's Carol Service at 6.30pm.on Wednesday 29th. November at Rhymney Comprehensive School

Invitation to Planning Training Event - Wednesday 13th December 2017, 10:00 a.m. – 1:15 pm. Council Chamber, Penallta House, Tredomen, - 2 places available

Copy of Revised Boundary Comm. Report - No changes to previous proposals

In respect of the Community Review Guidance Document – Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities, it was **agreed** the Clerk arrange to forward a copy to members for the attention, and albeit whilst recognising this is for Caerphilly C.B.C. benefit **agreed** to agenda for a Special Meeting in the future.

Having read through much of the Consultation on Implementation of Land Drainage Byelaws, members **agreed** to support the proposed Byelaws to assist Caerphilly officers to better manage land drainage and flood risk in the Borough.

With regard the Invitation to Planning Training Event, it was **agreed** Councillors Z Hammond and J Weeks represent Town Council

The Clerk also reported on correspondence received earlier today from St. Margaret's Church which invited Town Council to take part in a Xmas Tree Festival which will run from Friday 15th. to Monday 18th. December culminating in a Carol Service on Tuesday 19th @ 7.30pm.

Participants are invited to supply a decorated tree, no more than 4ft. to be displayed inside the church and open for viewing between 11.00am - 4.00pm. Each tree will have a plaque with participants details attributed.

Members considered this a worthy event, and Councillors Z Hammond, C Erasmus and J Griffiths **agreed** to participate on behalf of Town Council. Members **agreed** a budget of £100, with any unspent monies donated to the Church

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
John Hold	October Salary + reimbursements	979.14
Playworks	Tax/N.I. October	278.51
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire/printing	31.40
St. John Ambulance	Attendance at Carnival	86.40
Blackwood R.F.C.	Sponsorship – Firework Display	1,000.00

7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2nd.October 2017*

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

8. *Matters Arising*

Item 5 Correspondence

Councillor P Cook asked if she could attend the Community Engagement Meeting and it was **agreed** the Clerk make the necessary arrangements

Item 10 Nominations for Civic Awards

The Clerk reported that he had been notified by Councillor D Davies that there had been some confusion regarding the nomination of the Stagecoach driver, and the person concerned was Alan Jones and not Alan Burley. It was **agreed** this was somewhat embarrassing, but since Alan Burley had not been officially contacted we should proceed and notify Alan Jones.

Councillor A Farina-Childs proposed that in future all nominations be made in writing, and considered by an Awards Committee and this was **agreed** by members.

Item 13 Restart a Heart Day

The Clerk thanked all members who had supported the event. There had been a disappointing response, especially from the local schools, albeit the weather may have been a contributory factor, with high winds and rain throughout. However those who had attended had commented what a very worthwhile event it had been. The Ambulance Service and Fire Brigade had attended, and ASDA had provided refreshments.

The Ambulance Service had offered to attend an additional session if one were arranged for the future. It was **agreed** to consider this early in the new year. It was also **agreed** to write thanking ASDA for their support of the event.

9. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 10th. October 2017

The Clerk presented the Minutes, and it was **resolved** they be received.

Councillor D Davies having Declared an Interest earlier took no part in the discussion or decision making.

The Clerk reported that as per the recommendation he had contacted all members regarding the sponsorship of the Fireworks Display and all were in favour. It was therefore **agreed** to sponsor the Blackwood RFC Firework Display for £1,000

In respect of the applications for financial assistance, it was **agreed** the following grants be awarded -

	£
Wales Air Ambulance	100
Blackwood Town Boys & Girls Football Club	250
Blackwood Cricket Club	250
GAVO	300
Lowri Williams	100
Cruse Bereavement Care Gwent	100
Former Mayor's Charity Appeal (Poppy Appeal)	250
Royal British Legion	100

10. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Larger Councils Meeting held on 5th. April 2017

It was **agreed** the Minutes be received

11. To Receive the Notes of the One Voice Wales Area Committee Inquorate Meeting held on 4th. October 2017

It was **agreed** the Minutes be received

12. To Receive the Draft Minutes of the Town & Community Councils Liaison Committee Meeting held on 18th. October 2017

It was **agreed** the Minutes be received.

It was also noted that Blackwood Town Council would be hosting the next meeting of this Committee.

13. Model Local Resolution Protocol

The Clerk reported that One Voice Wales had produced a Model Local Resolution Protocol for use by Community & Town Councils, as the Public Services Ombudsman has agreed in principle to refer some complaints against members back to them for a local resolution.

The following are the issues which could be considered under this process –

Minor complaints from Members about Members

Minor complaints from Officers about Members

Members alleged to have not shown respect and consideration to others – verbally or in writing

After much discussion it was **agreed** not to adopt this Protocol at present

14. Consultation on the Review of Community and Town Council Sector in Wales

The Clerk referred to the paper submitted, which identified the Panel are keen to hear views on –

What should Town & Community Councils be responsible for ?

How should they operate ?

What's standing in their way to deliver for the local community ?

How do Councils ensure they best represent their local community ?

After some little discussion it was **agreed** this be deferred to a future meeting, possibly a Special Meeting as views are requested be early next year.

15. Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre (closes 10th. November)

Councillors A Farina-Childs, G James and P Cook having previously Declared an Interest in this item, left the meeting and therefore took no part in any discussion.

Councillors Z Hammond, D Davies and P Cook reported that they had attended a meeting, together with County Councillor K Etheridge with Mark Williams and Steve Reynolds of CCBC, who had reiterated the reasons for recommending closure of the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

They reported that the closing date had now been extended to 24th. November.

Several members voiced their concern about the proposal, and after some discussion it was **unanimously agreed** that, given the extended deadline, a Special Meeting of Town Council be called next week, specifically to discuss this one issue and plan a suitable response in opposition to the proposal. It was also **agreed** each member be forwarded a copy of the CCBC Report on Proposed Closure in readiness for this meeting.

16. Proposed Commemorative Memorial Garden Area – Bottom of Gordon Road

The Clerk reported that he had received notification that CCBC Urban Renewal team are willing to assist in taking this scheme forward and would act as Agents for Town Council.

The Borough's landscape architects are also interested in assisting, and albeit it is difficult to gauge the cost of their time, fees tend to be approx 15% depending on budget and complexity, and is likely to increase above this if the budget is less than £30k, which this obviously will.

The next step must be to outline the main requirements for the site.

The Clerk has confirmed that this scheme does meet the necessary criteria for utilising the windfall from the Community Infrastructure Levy (currently approx £4,900), and that the British Legion are also likely to make a contribution to the scheme.

Councillor Z Hammond reported that it was hoped to include the prize winning artwork (Never Such Innocence) of Ethan Edwards, a former pupil of Libanus into any design.

After some discussion, members *agreed* that the outline requirements and estimated costs would be required before any decision is taken on method of funding this scheme.

17. Consideration of purchase of Flagpole for the town (approx cost £300 + fitting)

At the July meeting, on considering a request from the Seafarers U.K., the following was agreed -

In respect of the Seafarers U.K. request to fly the Red Ensign, this prompted debate as regards whether Town Council should look to provide a flag pole somewhere in town, and whilst not being in a position to assist on this occasion, it was *agreed* to agenda this for discussion at a future meeting of Town Council.

Details have now been received and likely costs, excluding erection/ fixing are approx £300.

Given the ongoing discussion regarding a Commemorative Garden at the bottom of Gordon Road, members *agreed* consideration might be given to incorporate a flag pole there – a prominent position at the entrance of town.

18. Consideration of purchase of Silent Soldier (£250 each) to commemorate 100th. Anniversary of the end of WW1 in November 2018

The Clerk reported he had received the following from Royal British Legion

Do you know if Blackwood have any plans for the centenary? I wanted to make you aware of our most recent campaign the Silent Soldier concept and wonder if Blackwood Town Council would consider sponsoring a soldier and putting it on display in a prominent position in Blackwood.

Our “Silent Soldier” concept which marks the sacrifice of those who fell in the four war years leading up to the Armistice in November 1918 and hope that its something that Blackwood Town Council would be interested. Commemorative events will be held across the U K during 2018, 100 years after the end of the First World War, and you may wish to join Blackwood RBL in remembering those who lost life and limb all those years ago. Nearly 1.1 million British and Empire service men and women were killed during the First World War before the guns finally fell silent on Armistice Day 11th.November 1918. The RBL in Wales is keen to ensure that we pay respects to those who gave so much.

We are inviting companies and Local Authorities to sponsor the SILENT SOLDIER seen in the photo attached.

Silent Soldiers are already appearing in England and will appear across Wales as we commemorate the end of WW1. They will appear on buildings, and in gardens, fields, roundabouts and many other places. Companies, and individuals, can join the Nation in remembrance by displaying a Silent Soldier.

- Blackwood RBL is sure that British communities will come together in all sorts of different ways to consider and remember the huge sacrifice that so many people made during those war years. The Silent Soldier will be Blackwood's tribute – it references those who came home “silently”.
- The Silent Soldier can be fixed to buildings and walls or stand upright, fixed to posts.
- Demand is already high for the Silent Soldier, to find out more and to reserve a Silent Soldier please do contact me.

The Royal British Legion invites you to be part of this once only opportunity to show respect by displaying a Silent Soldier the cost of each soldier is just £250 they are available now for display up to December 2018. I hope that this is something that you will find of interest and hope that you are able to support us.

Given the ongoing discussion regarding a Commemorative Garden at the bottom of Gordon Road, members considered it would be ideal to incorporate a SILENT SOLDIER there – a prominent position at the start of the High Street. It was *agreed* a Silent Soldier be purchased

19. Proposal for an Award in memory of Councillor Jim Criddle as part of Velvet Coalmine Festival – Outstanding work in/ Furtherance of the Welsh Language

At the last meeting, members agreed we fund a cup/ shield in memory of Jim and would look to announce same at this year's Civic Awards evening.

Not wanting to lose momentum and wait a year before presenting same, it was agreed it be even better to present the inaugural award on the night.

Iain Richards(Velvet Coalmine) agrees and has even made a nomination – Clare e Potter

Clare went to Blackwood Comprehensive School and after studying in Swansea went to New Orleans which proved to be a place that inspired her first collection of poetry that was published on Cinnamon press.

She is a former winner of the prestigious John Tripp performance poetry award and as a distinguished Welsh speaker, translates for the current National Poet of Wales Ifor ap Glyn.

Clare is also the current Artist-in-residence for Wales Arts Review and performs regularly on the Welsh and British poetry circuit.

She has also worked and performed on all 4 versions of Velvet Coalmine (the only person to do so) and believes whole heartedly in the idea of Velvet Coalmine and in 2017 actually held a Welsh language workshop at Ysgol Bro Sannan.

Clare is also to be announced as the Poet in Residence for 2018 Children's Literature Festival

After some discussion, members *agreed* that Clare being a highly respected local poet as first recipient certainly gives added gravitas to the award, and that we can certainly look to how we move it on in the future - but it must most definitely be associated with the celebration of the Welsh language through literature.

It was *agreed* to invite Jim's children along on the evening to maybe even present the Prize

20. Civic Awards Evening Update

The Clerk gave a brief update on arrangements for the Evening.

He reported that invitations to Recipients and past recipients together with Blackwood in Bloom winners and dignitaries, church leaders police etc. were to be finalised over the next day or so. He was liaising with Velvet Coalmine regarding invitations to School heads and winners.

Zim Voices (personal friends of Jim Criddle) had agreed to sing on the evening, and it was anticipated Clare Potter would do a short reading from her works.

The necessary agreement had been reached with the Institute for layout of tables (with somewhere in the region of 150 adults and 20 children likely to attend), hire of glasses etc. (on the understanding we would provide our own wine) and the buffet had been ordered from Cwm Bakery.

He asked members to arrive by 6.45pm with a 7.00pm start anticipated.

21. Proposed Christmas Celebrations - Christmas Light Switch-on (Xmas Market Saturday 2nd. December) Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert – Thursday 7th. December

Christmas Lights Switch On

The Clerk reported that Pontllanfraith Rotary would again be bringing their Sleigh with Santa from the top end of town, near the Institute down the High Street to the entertainment stage where the lights will be switched on at 4.30pm. Newport Pipe & Drums Band will be leading the Sleigh.

Entertainment is being organised from approx 11.00am. onwards and currently includes DYT Dance Group, Caitlin Mae Nedahl, Side By Side (Choir), KLA Dance Institute.

Blackwood Little Theatre, Blackwood Musical Theatre, Oakdale Silver Band and Markham Brass Band are yet to be confirmed

Lantern Parade/Carol Concert

The Parade will gather at the Market Place from approx 6.45pm., and at 7.00pm will start walking up the High Street to the Methodist Church, where the Carol Concert will start shortly afterwards.

Blackwood and Libanus Primary Schools will be performing as usual with Mynyddislwyn Male Choir and Markham Brass Band together with Daniel Cushing and Caitlin Mae Nedahl.

Seasonal refreshments will be served after the Concert wit non alcoholic mulled wine or similar and teas/ coffees

22. Planning Applications

The following planning applications have been received since the last meeting –

Case Ref. 17/0800/CLPU

Site Area: 8647m² Location: ***Vision House High Street Blackwood NP12 1BE*** (UPRN 000043055417)

Proposal: Obtain Lawful Development Certificate for proposed installation of new Plant

Applicant: Mr M Douglas 5th Floor Fiveways House Islington Row Middleway Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 1SL

Case Ref. 17/0848/FULL

Site Area: 567m² Location: **10 Pembroke Close Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1JL** (UPRN 000043049792)

Proposal: Convert garage to bedroom

Applicant: Mrs Owens 10 Pembroke Close Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1JL

Case Ref. 17/0803/LA

Site Area: 2973m² Location: **Blackwood Comprehensive School Ty Isha Terrace Blackwood NP12 IER** (UPRN 000043048142)

Proposal: Remove existing steel framed open canopy structure and replace external eating area it covers with an infill building as a linking extension to the two adjacent existing dining halls

Case Ref. 17/0868/CLPU

Site Area: 373m² Location: **15 Rhodfa Glascoed Blackwood NP12 1GW** (UPRN 000043039378)

Proposal: Obtain a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed removal of conservatory roof and replace with pitched tiled roof with velux roof lights

Applicant: Mr M Reese 15 Rhodfa Glascoed Blackwood NP12 1GW

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

23. Reports

Councillor Z Hammond reported on the recent After Dark meeting and their “ How will you get home tonight Campaign ” with special posters being developed prior to the Christmas period.

They also identified their priorities over the next 6 months –

- Autumn Internationals
- Operation Check
- Christmas Parties
- Bleak Fridays
- Boxing Day

The Body Cams initiative is to be reviewed, and it is suggested these be funded by the private premises and maybe made a condition of licence for the more problem premises.

A review of management of data issues regarding ownership needs to be undertaken

An update on the GAVO Cinema & Diversionary events over Halloween And Bonfire Night had been provided (Town Council contributing to same)

Councillor Hammond reminded members they had provisionally agreed funding for the RU 2Drunk Campaign (£500), but since this had never progressed, asked if the funding might be earmarked for any future initiatives, and this was **agreed** in principle.

