

# MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup>. APRIL 2018

**Present :** Councillor J Weeks ( Mayor )  
Councillor J Edwards ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors G James, D Davies, A Farina-Childs, N Turner, R Weeks, W Baber, Z Hammond, A Short & M Gwynne

## 1. *Apologies for Absence*

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors C Erasmus, D Jones, J Griffiths & P Cook

## 2. *Declarations of Interest*

Declarations Of Interest were made by Councillors D Davies & W Baber in respect of Applications for Financial Assistance under Item 9 on the Agenda ( Minutes of Policy & Finance Committee ) as members of British Legion & Moose International Blackwood and by Councillors A Farina-Childs & G James as members of Moose International.

## 3. *Police Report*

The Clerk reported that he had received apologies from Inspector Steve Drayton, who is on leave and Sergeant Philip O'Connell who unfortunately has a previous commitment.

He also reported that he had invited Lee Morgan ( Caerphilly CBC Licensing Section ) to the meeting to update members on the ongoing taxi problems in town, and had received the following e mail -

Thank you for your invitation to attend the Town Council meeting on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April, unfortunately I am unable to attend on this occasion due to personal commitments. However I can confirm that following contact from you on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018, that Licensing Officers spoke to Mr Robert Salter, the proprietor of Relay taxi's in person at the council offices on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 concerning the issues you had raised.

I then wrote to Mr Salter confirming that conversation, sending the letter by post and e-mail on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018. A copy of the letter sent to Mr Salter was also sent to Inspector Drayton at Gwent Police.

I subsequently attended an 'After Dark' meeting at Blackwood Police Station on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018, also attended by local Members where reference was made to an 'improvement' or a lack of further complaints in respect of licensed vehicles inappropriately parking in the town. I'd hoped that some improvement had been achieved following advice provided. However if you have information to suggest otherwise, then I would encourage you or the complainant to contact the Police concerning illegal / irresponsible parking in the first instance. I am aware that Gwent Police are active in this respect and promote their work in respect of illegal parking/obstruction in local communities via Social Media.

I hope that this will assist in providing meeting attendees with an update.

Whilst appreciating the update, several members reported ongoing issues regarding the unpleasant behaviour of certain drivers towards members of the public, and the number of taxis parked in and around the bus station. After some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk write to the Licensing Section seeking clarification on the number of taxis allowed to park there and the times and duration allowed.

## 4. *Mayoral Announcements*

The Mayor had nothing to report, albeit mentioned that some repair was required to the Chain of Office. The Clerk **agreed** to enquire if Everson's might be able to repair same or if it needed to be sent away.

## 5. Correspondence

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

Caerphilly C.B.C.	Update on Taxi issues in town Copy of Blackwood & Cefn Fforest Prohibition & Restriction of Waiting Order 2018 Copy of Cabinet Report re. Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Notification of Clerk's Workshop ( April 10 <sup>th</sup> ) – GDPR Compliance
One Voice Wales	Copy of Response to Independent Review Panel Notification of Larger Council's Meeting ( April 18 <sup>th</sup> ) Llandrindod Wells Notification of Area Committee Meeting ( 18 <sup>th</sup> . April ) 7.00pm @ Bedwas Notification that Motions for AGM ( September 29 <sup>th</sup> . ) required by May 31 <sup>st</sup> .
Cllr. K Etheridge	Meeting called regarding floodlights & lighting at Blackwood Comp. School Request made for Zebra crossing o/s Institute following Red Lion Devel. Meeting Still awaiting amended traffic & sewer impact at proposed Persimmon Development Request now made for Bats survey

In respect of the floodlighting /lighting issues at Blackwood Comprehensive School, Councillor A Farina-Childs reported that the issue would hopefully be resolved by tilting said floodlights.

Furthermore, regarding the Persimmon Development additional meetings were planned to discuss the Environmental Impact Survey and that members would obviously be updated at future meetings.

## 6. Schedule of Payments

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

Jacks Appeal	Defibrillator Cabinet	600.00
Caerphilly C.B.C	VAT on previous invoice	100.00
Mrs C A Hold	Admin. Services	324.30
John Hold	March Salary + reimburse	914.14
Playworks	March Tax/N.I.	364.71
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire & Printing	99.21
One Voice Wales	Registration Fee	1,100.00
Zurich Ins.	Insurance Premium	1,226.57

## 7. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup>. March 2018

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

## 8. Matters Arising

In respect of the Opening/ Closing of the gates at the Showfield, Councillor A Farina-Childs informed members the 3G Pitch was likely to be in use from October/November, and was still hopeful that if the School were allowed to use the Showfield for parking, this matter could be resolved.

## 9. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup>. March 2018

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

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

Moose International ( Blackwood )	£200
Blackwood Musical Theatre	£200
Aber Valley Wolves Junior Rugby League Team	£150
S W Davies ( SSAFA )	£200
Wales Int. Documentary Film Festival	£250
Police After Dark Team	£500
Blackwood & District British Legion	£200
Keep Wales Tidy	£350

Having already declared their Interest in this matter, Councillors D Davies, W Baber, A Farina-Childs & G James took no part in the decision making regarding Moose International ( Blackwood) Blackwood & District British Legion.

During deliberation it had been noted that Town Council had previously agreed support of £500 towards the After Dark Team's proposed pub breathalyser project which had unfortunately never progressed, and so it was *agreed* to support their planned Graffiti project over the Easter holiday period.

The Clerk reported that having queried the invoice in respect of the hanging baskets in town, highlighted at the last Town Council meeting, he had managed to agree a reduction in line with last years costs.

However, whilst in correspondence he had been informed that Caerphilly C.B.C. would no longer be organising the filling, placement and watering of the baskets on behalf of town/community councils and that we would have to organise this ourselves if we wished to continue. The Clerk had checked his e-mails and had not received this information that was apparently sent on 13<sup>th</sup>. December. On reporting same to CCBC they checked and admitted they had used a wrong e-mail address and apologised for the oversight.

A copy of this e-mail had recommended contact be made ASAP with Boverton Nurseries ( for supply of plants ) and J S Lee Ltd. ( for the erecting and watering ). Having made initial contact earlier in the day with these companies, it is obvious that the existing budget of £3,350 will not be sufficient and if members wish to continue with the provision of baskets an additional sum of approximately £1,500 will be necessary. He proposed this could be funded from savings/balances for the next financial year and further discussion as to how to proceed discussed at a later date.

After some discussion members *agreed* continuation of the hanging baskets for next year in line with the Clerk's proposal.

#### **10. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup>. March 2018**

The Clerk and Chair presented the Minutes, and the following were *agreed* –

The event should be better advertised, and whilst working with the Borough Events team, we should also separately promote the Carnival and our entertainment stage wherever possible.

We look to purchase new banners (to consider large cross street also), arrange separate posters and fliers and arrange radio coverage via Capital, Heart & Valleys radio stations.

We run with a Hawaiian/ Holiday theme, thus complimenting the Beach Party vibe.

Entrants be made fully aware that they must abide by the Events Committee ruling regarding costumes etc. On the basis that we are unlikely to gain sponsorship, it was tentatively agreed we purchase dresses/costumes for selected Queen/ Court.

We try and encourage entrants into the parade cash/voucher prizes be awarded for possibly 3 categories – Adult/ Children/Group.

That organisations that had supported the event over the years be offered first refusal on the pitches made available on the High Street running from Argos towards the Flour Mill, and that ideally they be free of charge, or if C.C.B.C. insist a charge be made, to be consistent with their policy, then a nominal charge and/or refundable deposit

The Dinosaur Show be booked for the Saturday of the Carnival, and possibly positioned near Preachers Bar, thus close to our Entertainments Stage ( alongside Argos ) in front of the Methodist Church and the Beach. Hopefully on the Sunday, the Churches Group Puppets might occupy the same spot. We would now need to provide entertainment over 2 days, and members were asked to consider possible acts, albeit C.C.B.C. were also willing to assist us with this.

Members were eager that at the next meeting responsibilities should be identified for all, meaning the workload being better shared than in previous years.

Prior to that, Councillor Z Hammond volunteered to work on a suitable poster for the Town Council activities, and also use a similar design for the application forms for Queen/Court.

The Clerk reported that Caerphilly C.B.C. had been successful in attracting additional funding towards the event this year, and were willing to acquire a Steel Band for both days as part of the entertainment. They had also suggested that to improve the parade perhaps we try to encourage local schools, community groups, shops etc. to decorate a supermarket trolley in the agreed theme, and that these trolleys are pushed in the parade and then judged, with perhaps prizes made available.

Members were in general support of this suggestion and it was *agreed* to make the necessary arrangements with local supermarkets for loan of trolleys and advertise same.

With regard the Velvet Coalmine Children's Literature Festival, members **agreed** that ideally the community should become more involved and supported the Clerk's suggestion for the Schools and Theatre Groups to concentrate productions around the Festival week if at all possible, and **agreed that** Town Council Events Committee organise a Close of Festival Event similar to that outlined - Local Choir/ Singers together with Zim Voices ( with any shortfall met by the Committee budget ).

Members highlighted that the recently refurbished Libanus Lifestyle Centre might be worthy of consideration as a potential venue for some events in the future.

**11. To Receive the Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup>. September 2017**

It was **resolved** the minutes be received.

**12. Vacancy on Town Council – Blackwood South Ward & Governor Vacancy at Ysgol Cwm Derwen**

The Clerk reported that a further Notice was posted on the Notice board requesting expressions of interest in Co-option to Town Council be forwarded to him by the closing date of Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>. April.

One expression of Interest has been received from Rhys Mills, 44 Caerbryn, Pentwynmawr, Newbridge NP11 4EL by the advertised deadline, however, a further expression had been received earlier in the day from Mr T Evans, 13 Westgil Pennffordd, Park Hill Estate, Blackwood NP12 1QS.

Some members queried whether this new expression of Interest could be considered, given that Mr Evans had been on holidays and thus missed the deadline. Other members pointed out that this was the second Notice inviting expressions of Interest, and after some discussion it was agreed this late interest should not be considered, albeit Mr Evans be bourne in mind for any future co-option.

The Clerk read the correspondence from Mr Rhys Mills, and after some discussion it was **agreed** that given the comprehensive information supplied and the fact he was known by many existing members that he be co-opted without interview and invited to take his place at Council at the Annual General Meeting.

Regarding the Governor Vacancy at Ysgol Cwm Derwen it was **agreed** Councillor Noel Turner be appointed. Councillor M Gwynne declared an Interest as a Governor at the School and took n part in the decision making.

Members queried if there was also a vacancy at Ysgol Bro Sannan following Councillor Jim Criddles untimely death, and it was agreed the position be clarified at the AGM.

**13. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report ( See Minutes for proposals )**

The Clerk referred members to the Minutes of the last meeting which highlighted the new proposals and reminded members that Determination 44 could not be decided by Council but was a personal issue for individual members.

**Determination 44:** Community and town councils in Groups A and B ( Blackwood Town Council come within this Group ) must make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.

**In all cases, any individual member may make a personal decision to elect to forgo part or all of the entitlement to any of these payments by giving notice in writing to the proper officer of the council.**

**Determination 47:** Community and town councils in Groups B or C are authorised to make an annual payment of £500 each to up to 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses if that is claimed.

**In respect of Determination 47, it was agreed no payments in respect specific responsibilities be made**

**Determination 48:** Community and town councils are authorised to make payments to each of their members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties. Such payments must be the actual costs of travel by public transport or the HMRC mileage allowances as below: • 45p per mile up to 10,000 miles in the year. • 25p per mile over 10,000 miles. • 5p per mile per passenger carried on authority business. • 24p per mile for private motor cycles. • 20p per mile for bicycles.

**In respect of Determination 48 , it was agreed no such payments be made**

**Determination 49:** If a community or town council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it may authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its members at the maximum rates set out below on the basis of receipted claims: • £28 per 24-hour period allowance for meals, including breakfast where not provided. • £200 – London overnight. • £95 – elsewhere overnight. • £30 – staying with friends and/or family overnight

***In respect of Determination 49, it was agreed no such payments be made***

**Determination 50:** Community and town councils are authorised to pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties as follows: • Up to £34.00 for each period not exceeding 4 hours: • Up to £68.00 for each period exceeding 4 hours but not exceeding 24 hours

***In respect of Determination 50, it was agreed no such payments be made***

**Determination 51:** All community and town councils must provide for the reimbursement of necessary costs for the care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or formal carers) and for personal assistance needs up to a maximum of £403 per month. Reimbursement must be for the additional costs incurred by members in order for them to carry out their approved duties. Reimbursement shall only be made on production of receipts from the carer.

***In respect of Determination 51, Town Council must provide for reimbursements as and when they occur***

In respect of Determinations 52 & 53, Councillors J Weeks, R Weeks & J Edwards declared their Interests as Mayor ( & spouse ) and Deputy Mayor, left the meeting and took no part in discussion or decision making.

**Determination 52:** Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Civic Head payment to the mayor/chair of the council up to a maximum of £1,500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

It was proposed by Councillor W Baber and seconded by Councillor M Gwynne that the payment to the Mayor be increased to £600 per year.

An amendment was made by Councillor A Farina-Childs and seconded by Councillor Z Hammond that the payment to the Mayor remain at £400

A Recorded vote was requested.

The amendment was supported by Councillors A Farina-Childs, Z Hammond, N Turner, D Davies & A Short

Councillors W Baber & M Gwynne voted against the amendment and Councillor G James abstained

The original proposition was supported by Councillors W Baber & M Gwynne

Councillors A Farina-Childs, Z Hammond, N Turner, D Davies & A Short voted against the proposition and Councillor G James abstained.

***In respect of Determination 52, the authorised payment to the Mayor remains at £400***

**Determination 53:** Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Deputy Civic Head payment to the deputy mayor/deputy chair of the council up to a maximum amount of £500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

***In respect of Determination 53, it was agreed no payment be made to the Deputy Mayor***

There is also a requirement on community and town councils to publish details of all payments made to individual members in an annual Statement of Payments. This information must be published on council notice boards and/or websites (with easy access) and provided to the Panel by email or by post no later than 30 September following the end of the year to which the payments relate. The Panel draws attention to the requirements stipulated at Annex 4. The Panel is concerned that a significant number of councils are in breach of this requirement.

#### ***14. To Discuss Proposed Meeting with Partner Agencies & Other Interested Parties regarding the Chartist Bridge***

The Clerk reported that he had received information from County Councillor Kevin Etheridge that he had attended a meeting with the Caerphilly C.B.C. Highways Engineer two months ago, and had received answers to 23 questions he had asked. He had been invited to meet with the Engineer following submission of these questions at relatively short notice and did not have opportunity to request Town Council representation.

Having contacted the several residents who had raised some of the issues with the responses received, the issue has not progressed further.

The Clerk apologised for not identifying the original e-mail previously, but thought before Town Council went ahead and looked to organise any meeting with partner agencies etc. members should be aware of the questions raised and the answers given, as many presumably would be the same/similar to potential questions we might look to ask at any meeting. Furthermore, unless there are substantially additional queries to those already raised, the likelihood of a positive turnout to and outcome of any proposed meeting may be compromised.

The Clerk provided copies of the questions and responses received, and after some discussion it was agreed the proposed meeting be postponed so that members have time to reflect on the information now received and the matter be revisited for further consideration, possibly at a Special Meeting to decide the best course of action.

### **15. Planning Applications**

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

**Case Ref. 18/0159/FULL** Location: Nant Heulog 31 Y Cedrwydden Blackwood NP12 1FD

Proposal: Erect two storey rear extension and balcony

Applicant: Mr S Woods Nant Heulog 31 Y Cedrwydden Blackwood NP12 1FD

**Case Ref. 18/0188/FULL** Location: 1 Attlee Road Blackwood NP12 1QE

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension and detached double garage

Applicant: Mr S Hudspeth 1 Attlee Road Blackwood NP12 1QE

Councillor D Davies declared an Interest as Governor at Blackwood Junior School, who had been consulted separately.

**Case Ref. 18/0200/FULL** Location: 99 Bloomfield Road Blackwood NP12 1LY

Proposal: Erect detached garage to the rear of property

Applicant: Mr W Jones 99 Bloomfield Road Blackwood NP12 1LY

**Case Ref. 18/0219/FULL** Location: 28 Tree Tops Avenue Blackwood NP12 1JF

Proposal: Erect two storey extension to rear of dwelling

Applicant: Mr C White 28 Tree Tops Avenue Blackwood NP12 1JF

**Case Ref. 18/0221/RET** Location: 9 Rhos Y Dderwen Blackwood NP12 1HB

Proposal: Retain off-street parking to front of property in relation to planning consent 15/0403/RET

Applicant: Mr J Daly 9 Rhos Y Dderwen Blackwood NP12 1HB

**Case Ref. 18/0233/COU** Location: Woodies 3 Gravel Lane Blackwood NP12 1AG

Proposal: Change the use of part of retail area into dining area for café

Applicant: Mrs S Wareham Panteg Lodge Ladysmith Road Blackwood NP12 1DJ

**Case Ref. 18/0236/FULL** Location: 5 Rhos Y Dderwen Blackwood NP12 1HB

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Barry 5 Rhos Y Dderwen Blackwood NP12 1HB

**Case Ref. 18/0237/FULL** Location: 50 Addison Street Blackwood NP12 1EN

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension, detached garden room and porch to front

Applicant: Mrs R Smothers 50 Addison Street Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1EN

**Case Ref. 18/0276/FULL** Location: 98 Cefn Road Blackwood NP12 1JA

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension and store outbuilding

Applicant: Mr N Priest 98 Cefn Road Blackwood NP12 1JA

After some discussion it was agreed there were no real contentious issues, and that whilst Councillor Z Hammond would be contacting the Planning section for some clarification, no objections be raised.

## **16. Reports**

Members gave a brief report of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group meeting.

The Terms of Reference for the Group do not allow a Deputy to attend in the place of one of the Town Council's two nominated representatives, and given there is very little likelihood of the meeting times being amended, perhaps Town Council should take this into consideration when nominating at the AGM.

The majority of the meeting was devoted to the planning proposals in respect of the Former Red Lion Site, and the Clerk provided copies of the design/plans for members to peruse.

Members again referred to the continued problems at the Bus Station toilets, and asked when the Working Group would re-convene, as serious consideration should in the future be given to the Town Council paying for an attendant.

It was reported that Risca Town Council had apparently employed an attendant quite recently, and other members were aware Abertillery employed an attendant.

The Clerk stated he would contact both Risca & Abertillery to establish costs etc. and look to call a meeting next month.

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported that outstanding lanyards should be ready for the AGM, and also asked that the provision of Grit bins be placed on the agenda for the June meeting.

## **17. Date of Annual General Meeting**

The Clerk reported that the date of the AGM would normally have been Monday May 14<sup>th</sup>., ( The first Monday 7<sup>th</sup>. May being a Bank Holiday ) however, due to miscommunication the Clerk is on leave from Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>. – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>. May. Members were asked to consider possible alternative dates.

After a short discussion it was agreed the Annual General Meeting be held on **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup>. MAY**