

## ***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12TH. OCTOBER 2015***

***Present :*** Councillor N Turner ( Mayor )

Councillor Councillor W Baber ( Deputy Mayor )

Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, G Erasmus, Z Hammond , M Veater MBE, G Hale,  
J Criddle, J Edwards, M Gwynne

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

Apologies were received from Councillors C Erasmus, M Harris & P Cook

The Clerk reported that he had received notification from Councillor Michael Jackson, that due to family commitments he was having to resign his position on the Town Council.

It was ***agreed*** the necessary arrangements regarding election/co-option be implemented.

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

No declarations were recorded at this point

### ***3. Policing Matters***

No Police were in attendance. The Clerk advised they would be invited to the next meeting.

### ***4. Presentation on Defibrillators***

Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs introduced Mr Tom Forbes who had kindly agreed to talk to members about Defibrillators.

Mr Forbes informed members that he used to work for the Fire Service, but left in 2011, since when he has been delivering First Aid & other Training, including the use of defibrillators.

He stated that he thought they were of paramount importance, and bought vital time for Paramedics and the Ambulance Service.

He fully supported the Jacks Appeal whose aim was to ensure that every Comprehensive School had a defibrillator, starting with those in Gwent & the Rhymney Valley, and he was pleased to report that the one at Blackwood Comprehensive had already helped save a life.

Jack's parents Grant & June have been working hard with medical practitioners and Welsh Hearts in order to reach this goal, and furthermore they have also made a case to the National Assembly of Wales for Jack's Law to take effect which will mean a defibrillator in every public place in Wales.

Mr. Forbes, when questioned on likely costs, reported there were various types on the market, but that approx. £1,000 – £1,200 incl. VAT would purchase a high quality, reliable machine. He stated that they usually carried a 7 year warranty, but that pads would need to be replaced every two years. Mr. Forbes stated that if Town Council decided to purchase he would help as much as he could in pointing Council in the right direction and also offered training on use of same free of charge. Members queried where he thought the best positioning of such machines in town would be. Whilst not committing himself, he did say that ASDA had one in store, and that one had donated to Blackwood Cricket Club. Ideally, unless placed externally, then ideally presumably somewhere that was fairly readily accessible to the public or relatively long periods.

After much discussion, members **agreed** we should pursue the idea of purchasing a defibrillator for the town, but to delay a decision as regards where it should be placed until later. It was also agreed the Clerk report same to Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting to see if they might consider purchasing an additional one for the town.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Forbes for his very interesting and informative talk, and for his kind offer of assisting Town Council in purchasing and training.

## 5. **Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor announced that he had received invitations to the following events –

Markham & District Colliery Band Remembrance Concert - 7.30pm. Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>. November at Blackwood Methodist Church

Annual United Carol Service of Nine Lessons & Carols – 6.00pm. Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December at Blackwood Methodist Church

The Deputy Mayor announced that he had attended the Opening of the Memorial Garden at Blackwood Comprehensive School and the Blackwood Primary School Harvest Festival. The Deputy Mayor reminded members tickets were still available for the Old Comrades Celebration Dinner at Blackwood Rugby Club on 30<sup>th</sup>. October. The Mayor indicated that he would attend that function.

## 6. **Correspondence**

The Clerk reported on the following correspondence received since the last meeting, and it was **agreed** that all be noted.

### **Caerphilly C.B.C.**

Former Blackwood Junior School – Community Garden Covenant

The Clerk circulated copies of the proposed plans for the development which highlighted both the existing and proposed Public Open Space. The existing space, some 417m<sup>2</sup> had been overgrown and it was doubtful whether the public even knew it existed at the southern end of the site, behind the Red Lion Car Park. The proposed space, some 690m<sup>2</sup> was now positioned at the north of the site and would be landscaped with several seating areas and more accessible to the public.

After some discussion, it was **agreed** the proposals be accepted.

Relocation of Licensing Offices

Notification had been received that the move would take place on 29<sup>th</sup>. September to Ty Penallta

Blackwood Library Improvements

Notification had been received that the necessary works to accommodate Customer Services at the Library would take place during October/ November

### **Councillor Delwyn Davies**

Notification that he had resigned as the Town Council Minor Authority Representative ( Governor ) at Blackwood Primary School

It was **agreed** this vacancy be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting

### ***Elsbury's***

Notification that PAT test costs would remain at £1.50 per unit as last year

### ***Western Power Distribution***

Request for requirements of temporary unmetered connections for Christmas Lighting  
It was ***agreed*** the Clerk forward this to Elsbury's for their attention.

### ***Aneurin Bevan UHB***

Request for Town Council to become part of a Network sharing information on health services in the area.

Members queried the apparent duplication with Community Health Boards, but ***agreed*** to request

### ***Aneurin Bevan CHB***

Copy of Patient's Voice Newsletter

### ***Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales***

Copy of Draft Annual Report. The Clerk reported there were implications for Town/Community Councils and it was ***agreed*** to Agenda for next meeting

### ***Groundwork Trust***

Potential new funding opportunity via Tesco 5p Bag Scheme

It was ***agreed*** to forward this information to the Blackwood & District Heritage Association as part of remit refers to community areas

### ***One Voice Wales***

Agenda for RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting being held at Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen Offices at 7.00pm on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>. October

### ***Welsh Audit Office***

Notification that BDO LLP will become the Town Council external auditors for 2015/16 to 2018/19

### ***St. Margaret's Church***

Notice of Concert on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>. October @ 7.30pm with Cardiff Polyphonic Choir - Tickets £5  
( Compositions by Huw Watkins )

## **7. Schedule of Payments**

The Clerk presented his report, and the following payments identified as made/due for payment were ***agreed*** -

		£. p
Better Life ( Cystic Fibrosis )	Grant	250.00
Valleys Eisteddfod	Grant	250.00
St. Margaret's Church	Grant	250.00
One Voice Wales	Conference Fee	75.00
Billyboard	Banners/ Badges etc	306.00
John Hold	Sept. Salary + reimbursements	684.10
Carole Hold	Admin. Payment	292.00
Noel Turner	Mayor's Allowance	400.00
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire – Stute	23.75
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. Payments	1,047.40

The Mayor informed members that he would be donating his Allowance to his Charity Appeal.

**8. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup>. September 2015**

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

**9. Matters Arising**

Item 15 – Welcome to Blackwood Posters

The Clerk reported that he had been informed that the proposed 4 visitor panels would be placed/ installed at the following locations –

The Dragon Circle  
High Street Car Park  
Blackwood Bus Station  
The Market Place

Item 21 – Reports – Task & Finish Group

Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs informed the meeting it was hoped dates for proposed meetings would be agreed by the next meeting.

**10. To Receive the Minutes of the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup>. June 2015**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

**11. Audit of Accounts Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup>. March 2015**

The Clerk reported that additional information had been requested by the Auditors whilst he was on leave, albeit the return had been forwarded by the end of June.  
The item will be re-visited once the Audit has been completed.

**12. Budget Monitoring Report - Period to 31<sup>st</sup>. August 2015**

The Clerk circulated his report which identified potential savings/under spends on Insurance ( £175 ) Postage/telephone ( £25 ), Printing/Room Hire ( £100 ), Clerk salary ( £350 ), Grants to Vol. Orgs. ( £750 ), Carnival ( £900 ) resulting in an overall under spend of £2,300

It was *agreed* the report be accepted

**13. Civic Awards Nominations**

After further discussion, it was *resolved* the following persons receive a Civic Award –

Posthumous Award to Bridget McNally - In recognition of her Charity Work  
June & Grant Thomas - In recognition of their Charity Work  
Peter Jenkins - In recognition of his dedicated service as a teacher at Libanus School

It was *agreed* that no Young Citizens Award be made this year

#### ***14. Confirmation of Arrangements for Remembrance Day Services***

The Clerk informed members of the arrangements as forwarded by Councillor W Baber, namely –

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>. November    War Memorial, Civic Centre, Pontllanfraith  
13.15 for 13.30 Service & Wreath Laying  
Church Service follows at St. Augustines – Refreshments at Church Hall

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>.November    War Memorial, Blackwood  
10.45 for Service 11.00 Wreath Laying  
Refreshments at Moose Hall  
Blackwood Rugby Club Buffet & Bar

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>. November    St. Thomas Church, Cefn fforest  
10.00 for Service  
10.40 March to War Memorial for Wreath laying at 11.00  
Refreshments at Moose Hall  
Blackwood Rugby Club Buffet & Bar

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>. November    Market Square, Blackwood  
10.40 for 11.00 Service Only

The Clerk informed the meeting that Markham Band would be in attendance at Blackwood

#### ***15. Velvet Coalmine 2016 – Proposed Children’s Literature Festival***

The Clerk circulated a paper prepared by Iain Richards, Festival Director that outlined the success of the 2015 Festival in Blackwood, and in his mind the exciting and exceptional opportunity for the town to position itself on the cultural map of Wales and the UK by hosting a Children’s Literature Festival.

A host of well known writers have already performed at previous festivals, and the event already occupies a position in the Welsh Literary calendar.

The event would use multiple venues across the town and involve and engage as many schools, clubs, organisations and children in the area as possible. Advice and expertise is currently being assembled from other major events of a similar nature around the UK to enable the delivery of such an ambitious project effectively.

The aim for the event is to grow into the largest Children’s Literary event in Wales and proudly position Blackwood as a cultural hub in the UK. As a result the wider perception of Blackwood would be transformed and unquestionably attract more investment opportunities and elevate the overall quality of schools in the area and children’s chances.

He estimated the cost of a 40 event/workshop festival over 4/5 days as approximately £12,000, and is hoping Town Council funding together with Arts Council for Wales funding together with fundraising events at schools throughout the area and potential patrons could meet these costs.

The Clerk reported that Iain had a planned meeting with the Welsh Arts Council the following day, and would ideally be able to indicate Town Council support over a 3 year period.

Much discussion took place, and members were wholeheartedly in favour of the proposals, and could envisage the potential benefits to the town over the years.

Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs whilst fully supportive did caution over reliance on schools to part fund the festival as their budgets were under extreme pressure over the next few years.

It was pointed out that the funding was earmarked as via fundraising events and not specifically from school budgets.

Councillor Jim Criddle informed members that he had met with Iain and had been impressed by his enthusiasm and contacts that he appeared to have across both music and literature.

The Clerk echoed those remarks, and stated that he had agreed to arrange a meeting with Headmasters and/or their representatives of schools in the former Islwyn area for Iain to outline his proposals as Iain sees engaging with the children and schools as being crucial to the success of the Festival.

It was finally **resolved** to support the Children's Literature Festival over a 3 year period at £2,500 per annum.

## **16. Planning Applications**

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting, and it was agreed that the following observations be made –

15/0570/COU - Change of use from a dwelling to residential care home at The Laurels, Tredegar Road, Cwmgelli, Blackwood

Ensure adequacy of parking facilities within the curtilage of the property and proper access given its proximity to the Ambulance Station

15/0767/FULL - Erect 8 new build link houses with associated gardens, landscaping, access and parking at Lyndaryn Bungalow, Cliff Road, Blackwood

Ensure adequate stability and drainage given the contours of the proposed development

The Clerk took the opportunity to inform members that Caerphilly C.B.C. had received an application for a Premises Licence from Skarla Retail Ltd. in respect of 144/146 High Street, Blackwood.

Some members were aware of this Company, who are better known as Bargain Booze and reported that there had apparently been problems with their premises supplying alcohol.

Much discussion took place regarding this being yet another premises where drink could be obtained, and questioned the timing especially given all the hard work undertaken by the various agencies in tackling drink related problems in and around the bus station.

It was **agreed** the Clerk write to Caerphilly C.B.C. Licensing Department objecting to the licence on the grounds outlined during the discussion.

## ***17. Reports***

Councillor Granville Hale reported that Plas Mawr Community Centre whilst having improved its usage have plans to increase further.

With regard the Heritage Association, he recognised much of their work over the past 12 months or more had been related to the Centenary of WW1, with the books having toured the area and are now on display at the Winding House Museum.

He anticipated that Coed Duon would now become a focus of attention for the Group.

Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs reported that with regard 21<sup>st</sup>. Century Schools, a recent Scrutiny Committee he had attended had received a report outlining the costs of the new school had increased to £23.8million, an increase in excess of 30% on previous estimates. Furthermore, completion is now estimated to be April 2017.

He also reported that as part of the Budget savings exercise, 4 community centres were earmarked for closure.

He also reported that he hoped, with the assistance of someone at his workplace, to make progress on re-establishing links with Protivin.

With the influx of new members he proposed lanyards be purchased, and to ensure all members are supplied with same. This was ***agreed***.

Furthermore, he reported that he had been approached by County Borough members querying the whereabouts of the plaque that was previously on the wall of Chartist House at the southern end of town. Work was ongoing at the property but wished to seek assurances that the plaque would be replaced. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries regarding same.