

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH. JANUARY 2018

Present : Councillor J Weeks(Mayor)

Councillor J Edwards (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors Z Hammond, N Turner, P Cook, C Erasmus, R Weeks, W Baber, A Short, G James,
J Griffiths & Gwynne

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor D Jones, A Farina-Childs & D Davies.
Apologies were also received from County Councillor K Etheridge

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor G James Declared an Interest in Item 11 (Update on Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre) as a
Governor at Blackwood Comprehensive School

3. County Borough Report

In the absence of both County members the Clerk reported on an e-mail received from Councillor A
Farina-Childs giving a brief update on current issues –

The school crossing patrol is to be re-instated at Blackwood Primary School on Attlee Road
Overgrown foliage cut back on Cliff Road which has been causing problems for vehicles
Various road junctions and bus stops re-painted around Blackwood
Traffic surveys being carried out on various streets/roads around Blackwood
Fly tipping items removed from a lane at Cwmgelli
New fencing installed in the Thornecombe Road Car park

Other issues will be highlighted under Correspondence

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following events attended -

Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

Moose Dinner

Veteran's Dinner at the Statistics Office in Newport – welcomed by Mayor of Newport

Blackwood Primary School Concert

St. Margaret's Church Carol Concert

She stated she had thoroughly enjoyed the varied events and thanked fellow members for their
support.

5. *Correspondence*

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

Llangollen Int. Musical Eisteddfod	Request for Financial Assistance
Relate Cymru	“ “ “
Urdd National Eisteddfod	“ “ “
Islwyn Comrades	Additional information in support of Application for Financial Assist.
Libanus Lifestyle Centre	Thanks for donation towards Xmas trees/lights
One Voice Wales	Notification of Larger Local Councils Meeting to be held on 24 th . January at Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells. Start 10.00 for 10.30am.
	Reminder of Community & Town Councils Consultation Events and the 4 Questions
	Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 – Section 8 – Local Toilet Strategies – Local authorities to prepare, consult and publish a local toilet strategy for their area
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Notification of next Caerphilly Public Service Board Standing Conference on 23 rd . February at Ebenezer Baptist Chapel Centre, River Terrace, Pengam - Taking the Pulse- Measuring Well Being
	Decriminalisation of Parking –Copy of Report identifying Gwent Police are due to relinquish responsibilities from April 2018 – Options Paper
	Notification of Council Tax Base for 2018/19 - £2,931.10 per Band D Equivalent Dwelling compared with £2,922.62 for 2017/18
	Details regarding criteria for Free School meals
Councillors Etheridge/ Farina-Childs	Local Development Plan & 5 year land supply
	Information requested on Community Regeneration Area Forum Fund – Allocations/ spends/ schemes etc
	Continued issues regarding parking issues in town and potential remedies
	Proposed Memorial Garden bottom of GordonRoad/ opposite Library - estimated costs from CCBC £20k (inclusive of fees)
Law Commission	Consultation paper on planning law in Wales – closing date for responses Thursday 1 st . March
Sandra Bray	Nomination for Civic Award – June Parfitt of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church – Luncheon Club – 25+ years preparing weekly meals

In respect of the applications for financial assistance the Clerk reported they would be considered at the next meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee scheduled for later in the month.

Members *noted* the correspondence on Local Toilets Strategy and await any revision from Caerphilly C.B.C.

It was *agreed* the Clerk forward any additional information received to members regarding the Caerphilly Public Service Board Standing Conference and also to forward each member the details regarding criteria for free school meals.

In respect of Decriminalisation of Parking, members complained that the current position in town is becoming a nightmare. Whilst the police continue to book some offenders, they can never be expected to deal with all culprits and the problems continue. Whilst the options paper highlights the possibility of the Borough taking on responsibility for these offences, members are concerned what happens in the interim, as the Police had originally identified in February 2017 that 1st. April 2018 was the date they intended to withdraw its officers and staff from activities that involved enforcing parking restrictions.

In respect of the quote for the proposed Memorial Garden, members voiced their disbelief that such a relatively simple proposal on what is a relatively small plot of land could cost £20k.

The Clerk stated he could see no reason why we could not contact other local landscape gardeners (possibly Sunningdale) or similar to quote for this work. After some discussion it was *agreed* that the Clerk try to make arrangements for a landscape gardener to meet on site the members who had previously attended meetings regarding same – namely Councillors A Farina-Childs, Z Hammond. W Baber and D Davies.

Councillor Z Hammond asked if the Clerk had received any communication from the Borough regarding Rights on Land, which they had apparently promised to forward. The Clerk responded that he had received nothing.

6. Schedule of Payments

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

		£. p
A Tshiyane (Zim Voices)	Civic Awards Evening	200.00
Oakdale Silver Band	Xmas Entertainment	50.00
Mrs S Cooper (Treble C)	“ “	100.00
Pullen (Side By Side)	“ “	100.00
KLA Dance	“ “	150.00
M Z Jones	Staging/ Sound System Xmas Entertainment	600.00
Mynyddislwyn Choir	Carol Concert	100.00
Blackwood Methodist Church	Hire of Church – Carol Concert	100.00
Pont Rotary Club	Donation – Sleigh	100.00
Dancelicious	Xmas Entertainment	150.00
Miss C Davies (DYT Dance)	“ “	150.00
Caitlin Nedahl	“ “ + Carol Concert	75.00
Cwm Bakery	Civic Awards (£876 incl £146 VAT) + Carol Concert (£15)	1,026.00
Markham Band	Xmas Entertainment + Carol Concert	150.00
Libanus Lifestyle Centre	Donation – Xmas Trees/ Lights	153.00
Playworks	Tax/N.I. December	278.51
John Hold	December Salary + Reimbursements Carol Concert etc.	1,489.60
Caerphilly C.B.C	Civic Awards (incl.£39.35VAT)	236.07
Caerphilly C.B.C	Room Hire/ Printing (incl.£8.34VAT)	121.29
St. Margaret’s Church	Agreed Balance – Donation Xmas Tree Festival	90.00

7. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4th. December 2017

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

8. Matters Arising

The Mayor stated there were ongoing problems reported about disturbances at the Showfield due to the non locking of the gates. The Clerk reported that he was still awaiting a response from the Borough regarding other potential options highlighted.

The Clerk reported briefly on continued correspondence regarding free parking. After the last meeting the Clerk voiced Town Council's disappointment that no concessions were passed on to Blackwood, pointing out that a London Based Company by offering 2 hours free parking were doing more for visitors and businesses in town than the Borough Council, who collect almost £440k each year in car parking charges. Furthermore, wondering whether the ongoing parking problems in the High Street and the apparent abuse of disabled parking spaces could be an underlying response to peoples unwillingness to pay for parking.

Earlier today Councillor Sean Morgan had replied, saying he could not comment on the old Somerfield Site car park as it was privately owned but disputed they do more for the town than the Borough, quoting the Events held in town that helps attract visitors and the fact there is a town centre manager who works with local businesses and traders to benefit them and the people of the town, something most councils do not do.

He also believes the parking problems are not down to an unwillingness to pay, but due to the lack of parking enforcement within the borough. Police are struggling with the same austerity measures as the council, and resources are being diverted away from parking to concentrate on other matters. He does state he will endeavour to do the best for all traders in the borough and treat Blackwood as equally as possible to Caerphilly.

Councillor P Cook queried if we had been notified of the revised timescale for the Report from the Task & Finish Group on Car Parking and wondered if Councillors Farina-Childs & Etheridge might be able to find out via the Forward Work Schedule what the position is. It was also queried whether the matter might be followed up by the Town & Community Council's Liaison Committee.

9. Verbal Report on Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

The Clerk reported on another very successful Lantern Parade/Carol Concert and thanked all members who had attended for their support.

There had been some concern that Blackwood Primary might not be able to attend due to a prior commitment but thankfully they did appear and perform as usual, albeit perhaps not in their usual numbers.

All feedback had been positive for what had proved a varied programme of entertainment on the evening.

10. Budget Monitoring Report to Period 8 – 30th. November 2017

The Clerk presented his Budget monitoring report for the Period ending 30th. November 2017 which highlighted a potential under spend of £2,890 (the majority £1,797 due to savings in Election costs due to there being no contested elections, coupled with savings on Audit Fees (£278), Insurance (£305), Printing/ Room Hire (£200), Clerk's Salary (£200) & Carnival (£200))

The Clerk explained that due to the specific revised treatment of the Loan to BLT, (previously excluded from the Report) income of £3,320 was projected, which now resulted in an identified overall surplus of £3,288 compared with an estimated deficit of £2,885 .

11. Update on Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Closure & associated matters

Councillor Gerwyn James having declared an interest in this matter, took no part in the discussion or decision making process.

The Clerk presented his report, and led members through a number of copies of correspondence relating to the proposed Closure of the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

Members were disappointed at the Borough Council's continued stance and were adamant in their opposition to the closure.

Councillor Zoe Hammond confirmed to members that the date for the call in of the Cabinet Decision to close the Centre was Thursday of this week 18th. January and would come before the Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee. She informed members that several individuals had made application to speak at the Committee and proposed a representative from Town Council should also apply to speak, especially given that the Town Council were actually quoted within the call in request.

Members were fully supportive of this proposition, and after much discussion it was ***agreed*** that given Town Council's opposition was cross party, the Clerk as a totally independent person was probably best placed to deliver Town Council's contribution to the meeting.

Councillor Hammond, with the support of Councillor Darren Jones (apologies due to ill health) moved that Town Council consider the following Notice of Motion -
Blackwood Town Council resolve to investigate options for the authority to take potential legal action against Caerphilly County Borough Council to determine if the following can be undertaken:

1. To suspend the closure plans, whilst a legal challenge is mounted
2. To build a legal case to force CCBC to rescind their closure decision based upon Blackwood Town Council's objections contained within its consultation response report
3. To work in partnership with CCBC and others to either support continued LA management of the centre or to investigate alternate management and ownership arrangements

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** a Special Meeting of the Council be called within the next two weeks to discuss this Notice of Motion

12. To Consider Vacancy on Town Council – Blackwood South Ward

The Clerk presented his report, and after some discussion it was ***agreed*** the Clerk contact Caerphilly C.B.C. regarding arrangements to advertise the Vacancy for the Blackwood South Ward following the untimely death of our friend and colleague Councillor Jim Criddle.

It was also ***agreed*** that the vacancies on School Governors be discussed at a future meeting.

13. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 17/0866/FULL

Site Area: 189m² Location: Shop Unit 55 High Street Blackwood NP12 1BA
(UPRN 000043055529)

Proposal: Install a new shop front

Applicant: Mr V Price 55 High Street Blackwood Caerphilly NP12 1BA

Case Ref. 17/1033/FULL

Site Area: 1127m² Location: Land At Grid Ref 317269 196829 Coronation Road East Lane
Blackwood (UPRN 000043175339)

Proposal: Construct seven dwellings and associated works

Applicant: Pobl Group Mr Taylor C/o LRM Planning Ltd 22 Cathedral Road Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Case Ref. 17/1089/FULL

Site Area: 272m² Location: 28 Coronation Road Blackwood NP12 1EA (UPRN 000043053682)

Proposal: Erect two-storey rear extension and attic room

Applicant: Mr & Mrs D Edwards 28 Coronation Road Blackwood NP12 1EA

After some discussion, it was ***agreed*** to oppose planning permission (***Case Ref. 17/1033/FULL – Construction of 7 dwellings at Coronation Road***) on the grounds of concerns regarding access to the site.

Members were also led to believe that several local residents together with the local borough members have very similar concerns.

14. Reports

Councillor W Baber raised the following issues with the Clerk –

- (a) Could he arrange copies of a local map identifying the Blackwood Town Council boundary.

The Clerk promised to contact Caerphilly C.B.C. to try and obtain copies for members information

- (b) An update on the placement of defibrillators in town

The Clerk apologised for the delay and stated he would chase up the presentation of the defibrillator purchased via Welsh Hearts and confirm an order for a new cabinet via Jacks Appeal for the defibrillator to be donated to the town by June Thomas. Once received arrangements will be made to place same at the agreed locations in town and arrange publicity of the event.

- (c) When would the Task & Finish Group set up to discuss the Bus Station toilets re-convene.

The Clerk apologised that this meeting had not been called, but with the organisation of the Civic Awards Evening the Christmas Events and more recently the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre issue he had to prioritise matters, and this albeit important item had slipped. He would look to re-convene over the coming weeks.

(d) Are lanyards now available for all new members

The Clerk reported that Granville Hale had delivered these and that he had handed over most to new members. On checking with members present he was confident the majority had been delivered or were in his possession, but it did appear that perhaps the Mayor's was still outstanding, and would follow this up.

Councillor Z Hammond and the Mayor reported that the Planning Training event they had attended was excellent and that they had made good contacts within the Borough Planning Department.

The Mayor reported that she had been contacted by Cefn Fforest Institute regarding the apparent non collection of rubbish. The Clerk asked whether they had been in contact with the relevant Borough Council department to report same.

