

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON 15TH. MAY 2017**

Present : Councillor W Baber (Mayor)
Councillor J Weeks (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, J Edwards, R Weeks, J Criddle, Z Hammond, C Erasmus,
D Jones, A Short, P Cook & J Griffiths

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor P Dauncey

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

3. To Sign ‘Declarations of Acceptance of Office ’

All members present signed the Declarations of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk

4. Outgoing Mayoral Report

Councillor Bill Baber reported that he had enjoyed his time as Town Mayor and had tried to do his best for the town by being as involved as possible.

He had good relations with Ex-Service organisations, British Legion, Local Traders, Rotary Clubs & Moose International, and had met with the Director General of Moose International from America. He felt that fostering good relations with the various organisations helped keep the town in the picture and was mutually beneficial.

He thanked everyone who had helped and supported him throughout the year, with special thanks to the Clerk

He reported he had raised in excess of £700 for his Charity, the Poppy Appeal, with additional monies anticipated from a planned Poppy Appeal Concert. To date the total raised in Blackwood for the Poppy Appeal was £27,186.60, an increase over last year.

He stated he hoped to continue to assist Town Council in the future, and wished the new Mayor & Deputy Mayor every success. He also welcomed all new members and urged them to become as involved as possible in events organised by Town Council. The people of Blackwood deserved our best efforts to improve the town’s future without politics and ego’s getting in the way.

Councillor J Criddle thanked the Mayor on behalf of Town Council for becoming the public face of the town and for all he had done during his year of office.

These sentiments were echoed by members present.

5. *To Elect a Mayor*

Prior to the election of Mayor, Councillor D Jones queried whether Town Council should consider amending Standing Order 1b which currently states Any Councillor who has served on the Council and has not been appointed Mayor shall be appointed in preference to any other member who has been Mayor. He felt this may not always be beneficial to Council, or members, in so much that new inexperienced members may be appointed, when they themselves may not be confident to undertake the prestigious role.

After some discussion, it was ***unanimously agreed*** to amend the Standing Order accordingly.

It was ***resolved*** that Councillor Jan Weeks be elected Mayor.

6. *To Elect a Deputy Mayor*

Councillors J Edwards & P Cook were both nominated, and after a secret ballot it was ***resolved*** that Councillor Jim Edwards be elected Deputy Mayor.

7. *To Nominate Members to the following –*

(a) Finance & Policy Committee

It was ***resolved*** the following members be nominated –
Councillors P Cook, J Criddle, Z Hammond, D Davies, A Farina-Childs, W Baber & A Short

(b) Planning & Licensing Committee

It was ***resolved*** the following members be nominated –
Councillors J Criddle, Z Hammond, R Weeks, J Edwards & J Griffiths

(c) Environment Committee

It was ***resolved*** the following members be nominated –
Councillors C Erasmus, D Davies, A Farina-Childs, W Baber, D Jones, A Short & P Dauncey

(d) Newsletter/Web Page Committee

It was ***resolved*** the following members be nominated –
Councillors R Weeks, W Baber, D Jones, A Short & P Dauncey

(e) Twinning Committee

It was ***resolved*** the following members be nominated –
Councillors J Criddle, N Turner, D Davies, W Baber & J Griffiths

(f) Events Committee

This Committee is open to all members.

Given the Carnival is less than 2 months away, it was thought prudent to appoint a Chair & Vice Chair of the Committee immediately.

After a secret ballot, it was ***resolved*** Councillor W Baber was nominated as Chair of the Committee and Councillor Z Hammond then nominated as Vice Chair

8. To Nominate Members to the following –

(a) Town & Community Council Joint Liaison Committee

It was *resolved* that Councillors D Davies & Z Hammond be nominated

(b) C.C.B.C. Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee

It was *resolved* that Councillor D Davies be nominated with Councillor Z Hammond his Deputy

(c) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group

It was *resolved* that Councillors D Jones & W Baber be nominated

It was also *agreed* to seek clarification on membership of the Retail Partnership/After Hours & Bus Station Multi Agency Groups, and Councillors Z Hammond & D Davies as existing representatives, expressed their interest in continuing as Council representatives.

(d) Mid Valleys East Steering Group

It was *resolved* that Councillor N Turner be nominated

(e) One Voice Wales Area Committee & Larger Councils Committee

It was *resolved* that Councillor J Griffiths be nominated

(f) Blackwood Town Centre Art Panel

It was *resolved* that Councillor C Erasmus be nominated

(g) Plas Mawr Community Centre Committee

It was *resolved* that Councillor J Griffiths be nominated

(h) Velvet Coalmine Festival Planning Group

It was *resolved* that Councillors J Criddle & Z Hammond be nominated. The Clerk also sits on the Group

9. To Determine Dates & Times of Future Council Meetings & Method of Notification (E mail)

It was *resolved* to continue with current arrangements – First Monday of each month commencing at 6.30pm at the Blackwood Miners’ Institute, unless first Monday is a Bank Holiday, and then we meet on second Monday.

It was also *agreed* method of notification to members be by e-mail, albeit paper copies of agenda/ minutes and reports be available at the meeting, and a copy of the Agenda will also be posted on the Town Council website and on the Notice Board in the Market Precinct

10. Bank Signatories

It was moved that current arrangements continue with Bank Signatories being Councillors J Criddle & A Farina-Childs together with the Clerk, and that these arrangements remain in place for the term of the Council, thus avoiding the need to undertake this onerous task on an annual basis.

Councillor D Jones queried whether Councillor A Farina-Childs, now serving as a Caerphilly County Borough member, might be seen to have a potential dual interest, and it was **agreed** the Clerk seek advice from the Borough and/or One Voice Wales.

11. To Consider the Co-option of a member to fill the Cefn Fforest East Ward Vacancy

Given the current vacancy in the Cefn Fforest East Ward, it was **agreed** the Clerk place a Notice on the Notice Board seeking expressions of Interest from individuals wishing to serve as a Co-opted Member on Town Council.

It was further **agreed** the Clerk agenda same for the next meeting, so that any such expressions can be discussed.

12. Correspondence

The Clerk reported on the following items of correspondence received since the last meeting and all were **noted**.

One Voice Wales - Notification that copies of updated Good Councillor Guide are available at www.onevoicewales.org.uk or www.wales.gov.uk

Copy of OVW response to Consultation Questions on White Paper Reforming Local Government - Resilient & Renewed together with OVW Manifesto which is an appendix to same.

Copy of developed Social Media Policy Template for council use – if relevant

Invitation to propose a maximum of motions for debate at AGM on Saturday 30th. September – Deadline for submission 30th. June – Motions must reflect a national issue or problem and not local issues that can be dealt with at Area Committee level

Guide to taking part in Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute & WW1 Beacons of Light 11th. November 2018

New Councillor Induction Training

Caerphilly C.B.C. Request for names of representatives to serve on Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee (1 member + reserve + Clerk) also Representatives to serve on Town & Community Council Liaison Committee (2 members + Clerk)

Copy of Blackwood & Cefn Fforest Prohibition & Restriction of Waiting Order 2017

Copy of GAVO Holiday Scheme Newsletter – offer of assistance in organisation of Summer play schemes, family events or youth programmes

Notification of payment of first instalment of Precept in sum of £29,226.60

Andrew Jervis Copy of Internal Audit Report (Copied for members Agenda Item 20)

Iain Richards Request for copy for Full Page Advertisement as Title Sponsors for inclusion in 48 page Programme (3,000 copy circulation) for this years Velvet Coalmine Festival

Clarke Telecom Consultation on proposal to install new radio base station at Lower Central Avenue Corner, Oakdale - Penmaen Ward Councillors & AM's have also been consulted prior to Planning application being submitted

Blackwood Town Boys & Girls F.C. Application for Financial Assistance

Blackwood Town Cricket Club Application for Financial Assistance

In respect of the correspondence from One Voice Wales, the Clerk stated that he would try and get copies of the Good Councillor Guide printed and circulated.

It was also **agreed** to contact Caerphilly CBC regarding any plans for Beacons Of Light 11th. November 2018 and also to make enquiries with OVW regarding possible New Councillor Induction Training being provided specifically for Town Council members.

With regard the Copy of Blackwood & Cefn Fforest Prohibition & Restriction of Waiting Order 2017, it was **agreed** the Clerk forward a copy to all members for their information.

The Clerk briefly outlined his intentions regarding the Advertisement in the Velvet Coalmine Festival Programme, and members **agreed** that with the addition of mentioning our Twinning & Coed Duon and the Blackwood & District Heritage Association, he should proceed as outlined.

It was also **agreed** the Applications for Financial Assistance be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee at its next meeting.

13. Schedule of Payments

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

		£. p
One Voice Wales	Membership Fee	1,045.00
Zurich Insurance	Insurance Premium 2017/18	1,195.51
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Power Supply to new Xmas lights	2,400.00
PCC Gwent	Financial Assistance – Football tournament	250.00
John Hold	April Salary + reimbursements	719.54
Playworks	Tax/N.I. Contributions for April	495.51
Velvet Coalmine	Sponsorship of Children's Literature Festival	5,000.00
Welsh Ambulance Trust	Donation in lieu (Cllr. Keith Reynolds)	50.00
Andrew Jervis	Internal Audit Fee	120.00

14. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd. April 2017

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

15. Matters Arising

7. Matters Arising - Reports

Councillor D Jones queried the current position regarding the Task & Finish Group Meeting on Car Parking, as this had been one of the major issues highlighted by residents during the recent elections. He questioned the possibility of a Special Pilot Scheme, whereby any surpluses on Car Parks in the town could be re-invested back into the town.

The Clerk ***agreed*** to forward copies of what had been submitted to the Task & Finish Group to all members for their information.

Some members were eager to meet in the Clerk's absence to try to ensure the Group were fully aware of members and residents views on parking in the town.

The Clerk advised that any such meeting be classed as a Working Party/Group, thereby negating the need to advertise same and save time.

16. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 11th. April 2017

Councillor Z Hammond presented the Minutes and it was ***agreed*** they be received. She reminded all members the Carnival was being held on Sunday 2nd July 2017, with the parade starting from near Blackwood Miners' Institute and ending at the Market Square with varied entertainment and stalls.

17. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Area Comm. Meeting held on 29th. March 2017

It was ***agreed*** the minutes be received

18. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Larger Councils Comm. Meeting held on 15th. February 2017

It was ***agreed*** the minutes be received

19. Consideration of Provision of Plaque at Blackwood Little Theatre recognising the Manic Street Preachers first gig

The Clerk reported that a suggestion had been made that consideration be given to the possible erection of a plaque at the Blackwood Little Theatre recognising the Manic Street Preachers first gig at the venue.

Having been one of the leading British bands for many many years, and having a large fan base, it was thought that such a recognition might encourage visitors to the town.

After some discussion, it was ***agreed*** the Clerk report back to a future meeting regarding likely costs etc.

20. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - Annual Report – Implications for Town Council

The Clerk referred members to Item 9 of the Minutes of the last meeting, held on April 3rd. After some discussion, it was **agreed** Council continue their current policy of only implementing Determination 46 - Mayor's Allowance which is currently set at £400 per annum

21. Financial Accounts 2016/2017, together with Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st. March 2017

The Clerk presented his report and the Accounts, and commented on variations to the original budget and previous monitoring report.

It was **resolved** the Annual Accounts be approved.

Some newer members queried the loan to Blackwood Little Theatre, and asked what guarantees were in place to safeguard Town Council's money. The Clerk responded that the Loan Agreement was similar to that used by Caerphilly C.B.C., and that repayments had been structured in such a way that the Theatre made regular monthly payments, together with additional payments coinciding with anticipated income from planned productions. Payments were being received in line with the agreement.

Members queried whether it might be advisable to meet with BLT sometime in the future to ensure things are progressing as planned and to see if we can assist with advice on their finances.

The Clerk then explained that the figures shown in the Accounting Statement was based on the figures in the Annual Accounts, and having compared same, members satisfied themselves all was in order, and it was **resolved** the Accounting Statement be approved and accepted.

Members then turned their attention to the Annual Governance Statements Part 1 & 2, and considered each in turn.

After some discussion, members were confident that Part 1 – Statements 1-8 could be answered positively, that Statement 9 was not applicable and that Part 2 – Statements 1-3 could also be answered positively.

It was **resolved** the Annual Governance Statements be approved and accepted.

Members then received and reviewed the Annual Internal Audit Report, and after brief discussion **resolved** it be approved and accepted.

The new Mayor, Councillor Jan Weeks signed the Approval confirming that the Accounting Statements and Annual Governance Statements had been **approved** by Town Council.

The Clerk ensured members that all other supporting information requested by the Auditors would be prepared and forwarded in advance of the new prescribed date of 19th. June 2017.

22. Planning Applications

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

It was **agreed** Councillor J Criddle, check with C.C.B.C. planning department and contact the Clerk if he felt any observations should be forwarded.

23. Reports

There were no reports