

## **MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup>. APRIL 2017**

**Present :** Councillor W Baber ( Mayor )  
Councillor J Weeks ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, J Criddle, Z Hammond, C Erasmus, M Veater MBE,  
G Hale, N Turner, J Edwards, P Cook & M Gwynne

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

Apologies were received from Councillor M Harris, who had also informed the Clerk he would not be seeking re-election due to increased work commitments.

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

No Declarations were made at this point

### **3. Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor reported his attendance at the following -

Denmark Street Big Band Concert at Blackwood Miners' Institute – Invitation from Peter Hughes who had queried Town Council and/or British Legion utilising their services in the future.

### **4. Correspondence**

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

Caerphilly C.B.C. Notification of Diversion of Footpath 104 - Rear of Rhos y Dderwen  
Existing footpath commences on Cefn Coed Road, runs up embankment to the rear of Rhos y Dderwen and runs north east between the rear boundaries of Rhos y Dderwen & Maes y Coed and terminates on Cefn Coed Road at rear of 1 Maes y Coed (273 metres)  
New path to a width of 1.4metres, commences at Cefn Coed Road at a point 23 Metres north east of 10 Linden Lea Drive and proceeds north westerly along footway, crosses access road to car park barrier and continues as a stone dust surface through metal pedestrian barrier as a stone dust footpath for 95 metres , then bears north easterly as a grassed surface for 90 metres where it terminates at the metal pedestrian barrier on Cefn Coed Road at the rear of 1 Maes y Coed (250 metres)

Notice of Elections – request to display relevant Notice on Notice Board

Blackwood CCTV System – Annual Review. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner has placed a responsibility on local authorities to justify any deployment of surveillance cameras via a Privacy Impact Assessment. Such assessments are required before deploying any new cameras and for assessing the need for continuing use of existing cameras. Town Council support is requested.

Notification of Consultation period on the Active Travel Integrated Network Map - Footpaths & Cycle paths see <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/actitravel> ends 19th. June

- One Voice Wales Notification of Larger Council Committee Meeting to be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>. April at the Media Resource Centre, Oxford Road, Llandrindod Wells 10.00 am for 10.30am.
- Wales Audit Office Report on Financial Management & Governance 2015/16 Pages 40-43 identify Auditor General's programme for 2016/17 – 2020/21 and highlights areas to be focussed on during coming years
- BDO Notice for advertisement of Annual Audit for year ended 31 March 2017
- Letter from Chief Clerk at Buckingham Palace, on behalf of the Queen, thanking Mayor/ Town Council/ Residents of Blackwood for the kind letter and conveying Her Majesty's thanks and good wishes to all.
- Cefn Fforest Angling Club Request for cheque ( Issued 1/2/2016 ) misplaced by former treasurer to be amended date wise and initialled by account signatories
- Wales Air Ambulance Request for financial assistance
- Oakdale Mini Rugby Request for financial assistance
- GAVO Request for financial assistance
- C'philly Comic Convention Request for financial assistance
- Tenovus Cancer Request for financial assistance
- Blackwood Musical Theatre Society Invitation to Concert for Mayor Sat. 29<sup>th</sup>. April @ Blackwood Institute

In respect of the Diversion of Footpath, there were no objections raised by members.

With regard the Annual Review of CCTV Systems, it was, after some discussion **agreed** to write offering Town Council's full support, considering the system very worthwhile, especially in tackling anti social behaviour in and around the bus station.

In respect of Wales Audit Office report, the Clerk reported that he needed to organise a letter of appointment for our Internal Auditor, and that he would forward a copy of same to members for any comments they wished to make.

The Clerk reported that the provisional date set for Audit would have to be amended due to his proposed holiday arrangements, and h would report further at the next meeting.

In respect of the applications for financial assistance, it was **agreed** they be discussed by the Policy & Finance Committee after the AGM. It was agreed a new cheque be issued in respect of Cefn Fforest Angling Club.

The Clerk reported verbally on a letter received from Blackwood Methodist Church seeking a letter of support from Town Council in their efforts to secure additional funding to enable further improvements at the Church. It was **agreed** a letter of support be forwarded.

## 5. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Website Maintenance	600.00
Welsh Hearts	Defibrillator	900.00
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire – February & March	38.00
Katherine Watkins ( Playworks )	Tax/N.I. March	568.18
Safety Tec	Defibrillator Housing	467.40
John Hold	March Salary + reimbursements	720.16
Carole Hold	Administrative Assistance	292.00

## 6. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup>. March 2017*

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

## 7. *Matters Arising*

### **13. Reports**

Councillor Z Hammond reported on her attendance at the Task & Finish Group Meeting on Car Parking. She stated that representatives from other Town/ Community Councils who attended did not seem fully aware of the purpose of their attendance and had not been properly briefed or prepared. On the whole she was disappointed with the meeting, as little or nothing seemed to be achieved, and Blackwood had not received any response to the issues we had raised Furthermore, given the timing of the meeting, she queried whether any decisions will be reached, given the probability of different individuals serving on the Task/Finish Group and relevant Committees and wished Town Council's dissatisfaction be forwarded to Caerphilly C.B.C. ***This was agreed.***

Councillor Hammond, also informed members that they had been advised of £3million Grant funding across Wales for Improvement/Investment in town centres, and hoped Caerphilly will be making applications against same.

## 8. *To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Caerphilly/Merthyr/RCT Area Committee Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup>. January 2017*

It was **agreed** the minutes be received

## **9. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales - Annual Report – Implications for Town Council**

The Clerk presented the following report -

The Panel has responsibility for the remuneration of community & town councils since the measure of 2011 and its first determinations came into effect in 2013/2014.

The following determinations are permissive powers which requires a formal decision by each community/ town council annually. A council can adopt any or all of the determinations, but if it does make such a decision, it must apply to all its members albeit an individual member may make a personal decision to elect to forgo part or all of the entitlement to any of these allowances by giving notice in writing to the proper officer of the council.

**Determination 44** - Authorisation to make a payment to each of their members of a maximum amount of £15 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.

**Determination 45** – Authorisation to make an annual payment not exceeding £500 each to up to 3 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment above if made.

**Determination 46** - Authorisation to provide a civic allowance to the mayor/chair of the council at an amount they deem appropriate to undertake the functions of the office, again in addition to the £150 payment above if made.

**Determination 47** – Authorisation to provide a civic allowance to the deputy mayor/chair at an amount deemed appropriate etc., again in addition to the £150 payment if made.

**Determination 48** – Authorisation to make payments to each of their members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties ( outside the area )

**Determination 49** – Authorisation if a community or town council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay to reimburse subsistence expenses to members at specified maximum rates set on the basis of receipted claims

**Determination 50** – Authorisation to pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has occurred, for attending approved duties ( Up to £34 for each period not exceeding 4 hours / up to £68 for each period exceeding 4 hours but not exceeding 24 hours )

**Determination 51** – Authorisation to 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 shall only be made on production of receipts from the carer.

There is a requirement for councils to publish details of all payments made to individual members in an annual Statement of Payments. The information must be published on council noticeboards and/or websites and provided to the Panel by email no later than 30 September following the year end to which the payments relate.

To date Town Council has only ever implemented Determination 46 Mayors Allowance, currently set at £400 per annum

Given the forthcoming elections, it was **agreed** these decisions should be left until the Annual General Meeting.

**10. To discuss Application for Financial Assistance from Blackwood Neighbourhood Policing Team for Annual Schools Football Tournament to be held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup>. May**

The Clerk explained that since the proposed event was to be held prior to the next meeting, there was a need for a decision to be taken at this meeting.

After some discussion, where members took the opportunity of praising the success of previous such events, it was **unanimously agreed** to award a grant of £250.

**11. Council Insurance 2017/2018**

The Clerk presented the following report -

The quotation has been received from our current insurers Aon ( Maven Underwriters ) in the sum of £1,721.97 compared with £1,371.31 ( an increase of 25% - presumably, at least partially, due to the recent claim ) for 2016/2017.

Whilst there are relatively few Insurers who deal with Town, Parish & Community Councils, I have approached another insurer for a quote, and based on similar cover (significantly improved cover in some instances ) a quote has been received from Zurich Municipal in the sum of £1,313.73 or £1,195.51 if we agree a 3 year Agreement to insure.

This equates to a differential of approx £526

Budget provision is set at £1,500, therefore, a potential saving of approx £305.

After some discussion, it was **unanimously agreed** that Town Council insures with Zurich Municipal and insure for a 3 year period.

**12. Unresolved/ Outstanding Issues of this Council**

The Clerk reported that the following issues are currently unresolved/outstanding -

Coed Duon	It was anticipated that this issue would be dealt with by the Blackwood & District Heritage Association
Defibrillator	Orders have been placed for the Defibrillator and its cabinet/housing, and discussions are ongoing with Caerphilly C.B.C. regarding the ideal site for its position near the bus station. Once agreed perhaps June & Grant Thomas could be asked to officially unveil same, possibly with a small plaque in remembrance of their son Jack
Chartist Plaque	It is hoped the repaired plaque will be re-positioned and unveiled by the Mayor early in the new Council year
Christmas Lights	Only outstanding issue is the Cross Street planned for the northern end of town near the Institute and possible siting of Christmas trees in town
Newsletter	Whilst no newsletter has been produced for the past couple of years, the ideal time will be early in the new Council year, identifying the new Council members with contact details etc. etc.

Councillor M Veater MBE thanked the Clerk for his report, and after some discussion the contents were *noted*

With regard Coed Duon, Councillor G Hale expressed his hope that the Heritage Association, maybe working in conjunction with Woodland Trust could make progress in the fairly near future.

Councillor Z Hammond suggested the positioning of the Defibrillator near the bus station should be determined by CCTV coverage.

It was also suggested that when the plaque is repositioned at the old Coach& Horses Site, that Visit Wales be informed of same.

### **13. Planning Applications**

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

17/0082/ADV	KFC	Install new entrance portal and replace KFC internally illuminated letters 1 North Court, High Street, Blackwood
17/0238/FULL	Mr G Williams	Erect first floor rear extension 20 William Street, Blackwood
17/0230/FULL	Ixon Developments	Demolish the Red Lion Inn and redevelop to provide 17no. residential apartments, together with associated vehicular and pedestrian accesses, car parking, amenity areas, landscaping and ancillary development, site preparation, clearance, treatment, re-profiling and the installation of new services and infrastructure Red Lion Inn, High Street, Blackwood
17/0237/ADV	Pearce Signs	Retain 1 No. fascia sign and 1 No. projecting sign Everything Everywhere 141 High Street, Blackwood

After some discussion, it was agreed the only application worthy of further consideration was that from Ixon Developments, and members agreed that if the plans were in line with those previously considered by Town Council, there was unlikely to be any objections. Councillor J Criddle stated he would meet with Borough Officers to ensure there were no significant changes envisaged.

### **14. Reports**

There were no reports

### ***15. Provisional Dates of Future Meetings - Clerk's Holiday***

With the elections to be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>. May, it is proposed to hold the Annual General Meeting on Monday 15<sup>th</sup>. May.

Under normal circumstances the next meeting would be scheduled for Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June ( 3 weeks later ) but I am hoping to take my annual leave soon after the elections and am, therefore, hoping members will agree to forego the June meeting and meet again on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>.July.

Arrangements for the Carnival ( Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>. July ) are in hand, and most will be sorted prior to me going away, albeit I will be contactable via e-mail during my leave for any urgent matters that might require my attention.

Dates for meetings following the 3<sup>rd</sup>. July meeting are provisionally as follows –

7<sup>th</sup>. August  
4<sup>th</sup>. September  
2<sup>nd</sup>. October  
6<sup>th</sup>. November  
4<sup>th</sup>. December  
8<sup>th</sup>. January 2018  
5<sup>th</sup>. February  
5<sup>th</sup>. March  
9<sup>th</sup>. April  
7<sup>th</sup>. May AGM

Prior to closing the meeting, the Mayor paid tribute to Councillors Margaret Veater MBE & Granville Hale for their services to Town Council and the community, since neither would be seeking re-election.

He presented Margaret with a bouquet of flowers and Granville a bottle of wine and wished them all the best for the future.

Several members spoke echoing the sentiments expressed and saying it would seem a very different Town Council without Margaret present, having been one of its first members and apart from a short spell, ever present and always fully supportive of town events and initiatives.

Margaret & Granville both responded saying it had been a pleasure and privilege to serve on Town Council, thanked members and the Clerk for their friendship and support and wished Town Council well for the future, whilst urging information on forthcoming events and issues to be well advertised.

Councillor Jim Criddle stated that as this was the last meeting of this Council, he wished to place on record Town Council's thanks to the Mayor for all his excellent work in representing the town throughout the year.