

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3RD. JUNE 2019

Present : Councillor G James (Mayor)
Councillor J Griffiths (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors Z Hammond, D Davies, R Weeks, N Turner, C Erasmus, A Short , R Mills &
D Jones

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors J Edwards, T Evans, A Farina-Childs, P Cook, M Gwynne & J Weeks

Councillor Darren Jones took the opportunity to thank the Clerk and members for their messages of condolence and floral tribute during the recent loss of his father.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

3. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following visit made –

Blackwood Musical Theatre Society's evening of an ensemble of music by BMTS with the support of Gwent Police Choir.

Blackwood NPT Football Tournament, another brilliant day. The talent shown by the youngsters was second to none, let's hope they have a venue to accommodate future events.

The Basement celebrated 20 years in Blackwood and he joined the celebrations with CCBC Mayor, ward member Kevin Etheridge & Town Councillor Zoe Hammond. The support offered to children and young adults between 11 – 25 is amazing and he wished them continued success.

National Day of Prayer for the Police, the first time that Elim Baptist Church had held this service which had been well attended by police and public. Whilst there Rev. Sue Phillips had talked of their work with the homeless over the winter and the ongoing work with the Street Pastors

4. County Borough Report

There were no Borough Members in attendance

5. *Correspondence*

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

Caerphilly CBC Closure of Bloomfield Road planned for 3rd.June has been cancelled due to Concerns re. Wildlife.

Blackwood Basement Invitation to Celebrations on Thursday 30th May

Islwyn Art Project Invitation to Annual Summer Exhibition at Libanus Lifestyle Centre
7.00pm Saturday 29th.June

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
John Hold	May salary + reimbursements	964.80
Playworks	May Tax/ N.I.	292.99
Gerwyn James	Mayors Allowance	400.00

7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Annual General Meeting held on 13th.May 2019*

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

8. *Matters Arising*

Minute 8/13/5 - The Clerk reported that having contacted the Governor Support Unit they advised that Town Council nominating individuals to serve as Community representatives is an option.

Sometimes schools put forward people they are aware of that would make good community/school representatives, and they would encourage any town council to contact their Head teachers to ask if they have anyone in mind they wish to put forward.

After some discussion it was *agreed* the Clerk contact the relevant schools seeking nominations that should then be forwarded to Town Council for agreement

9. *To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Larger Council's Meeting held on 17th.April 2019*

It was *agreed* the minutes be received

10. Verbal Report on Bi Centenary Committee Presentation on 20th. May 2019

The Clerk gave a brief report on the presentation made by Lyn Pask. Unfortunately the attendance was relatively poor, but those present certainly learnt a significant amount about the history of the town and the Moggridge family.

The Mayor (Chair of the Bi Centenary Committee) informed members that a logo had now been agreed and would be highlighted on the Facebook page.

11. Independent Remuneration Panel – Necessary Opt Out Forms for £150 Councillor's Allowance

The Clerk referred to the need for members to sign the necessary opt out forms, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members present signed same and handed to the Clerk

12. Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return for Year Ended 31st. March 2019

The Clerk presented his report and explained that the figures shown in the Accounting Statement were 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, and that Statement 9 was not applicable.

The Clerk reminded members that Part of this years audit concentrates on Town Council's adoption and compliance of /with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations & Committee Terms of Reference.

Members had agreed Terms of Reference at the A.G.M. and the Clerk advised, albeit we do have Standing Orders & Financial Regulations in place, he will be submitting updated versions for members approval over coming months, based on models recommended by One Voice Wales and Audit Office, therefore members were confident in answering positively Statements 1 & 3 of Part 2.

With regard Statement 2, whilst most of our contracts would be considered to be for work executed or for goods and materials supplied which constituted an extension of an existing contract by the Council – Christmas Lighting and Hanging Baskets for example during last year Town Council let a contract to Groundwork Trust for the Design/ Construction of the Commemorative Garden at the bottom of Gordon Road.

Members will recall that initially Caerphilly C.B.C. were approached to assist but their consultancy fees alone were considered excessive and they had estimated the scheme to cost approx. £20k.

Sunningdale Nurseries had been contacted but showed no interest, and on members instruction Groundwork Trust Wales (Registered Charity) were approached for assistance. There were issues regarding the requirement of a land agreement licence to allow Town Council to proceed with the project and planning permission was also required.

Given the need for progress to ensure the Garden was completed in time for the 100th Anniversary of the start of World War 1, the contract was agreed with Groundwork in the sum of £6,600 (increased to £7,100 to cover the work and fees in completing the necessary planning application. The Clerk admitted it was remiss of him not to minute the necessary application to waive standing orders to enable this tender to be negotiated, and after some discussion members **recommended** retrospective agreement to waiving of Standing Orders due to the urgency to ensure the completion of the scheme in readiness for 2018 Remembrance Day.

Given this retrospective agreement, members **agreed** that Part 2 – Statement 2 should probably be answered negatively, albeit with the express understanding that in future all contracts, including continuation contracts be discussed and reported to the Policy & Finance Committee.

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 Gerwyn James 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.

The Clerk was thanked for his sound financial stewardship of Town Council

13. Blackwood in Bloom

The Clerk presented his report stating that this competition relies on them to nominate front gardens (visible from the public highway) within their respective wards, to be judged soon after by members of the Events Committee. For this to be successful, it is necessary for members to play their part in the process, which entails some time and effort given to touring their respective wards and identifying the best front gardens in view. Members in each ward should confer and agree on 4 nominations.

This competition has not commanded much attention/ enthusiasm from members over recent years and if members wish to continue with the competition, each of the 4 wards should identify their nominations and forward to the Clerk by end of July at the very latest, so that judging can be arranged for the following week.

After some discussion where members accepted their responsibilities, it was agreed that an effort via Social Media be made, thereby requesting nominations for best front gardens. This would not

14. Planning Applications

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

19/0360/ RET Location – 64 Cae Collen, Blackwood
Retain and complete a rear single storey garden shed/ store

Councillor Zoe Hammond reported that she had attended a meeting on site with Borough members Kevin Etheridge & Andrew Farina-Childs together with a neighbour who had identified various issues of concern, namely -

1. The number of retrospective planning permissions submitted to CCBC for this property.
2. That the shed could be used as an office for AL Landscaping as many of their vehicles have

- already been parked outside the property causing issues with pedestrian safety.
3. During the construction of the shed apparently trees were cut back in Y-Coed-Duon which may have TPO's on.
 4. Bats roost in the woods therefore if the trees have been cut back was a survey undertaken to assess the impact on the bats?
 5. During the construction of the shed apparently excess cement was washed down the drains. arge
 6. Concerns over flooding of existing properties in Llwyn Coed that are adjacent to 64 Cae Collen due to the amount of buildings now covering the back garden of the property preventing rain water to soak away, therefore causing it to run off to the road and then into the properties in Llwyn Coed

After some discussion it was *agreed* the Clerk write to the Planning Department expressing our significant concerns as highlighted, and supporting the request by Borough members for an investigation be undertaken, not least the fact planning permissions always appear to be retrospective.

15. Reports

Councillor Andrew Short queried whose responsibility it was for the area adjacent to our Commemorative Garden as some residents had complained to him how untidy it was looking. The Clerk responded that he would have to check with the C.C.B.C. Parks Section, as Town Council had been granted a licence on an area of ground to enable the works to proceed and he was uncertain if maintenance responsibility now rested with us.

The Commemorative Garden area itself would need maintaining, and once the above issue has been determined, we can then proceed with options.

Councillor Gerwyn James queried whether it might be possible to paint the poppy emblem, so it stands out, and during further discussion members raised other matters that had been considered, namely a Silent Soldier type figure, Flagpole and Bench.

It was agreed to agenda this for discussion at a later date, once the maintenance problem has been satisfied.