

## ***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup>. MARCH 2019.***

***Present :*** Councillor J Edwards ( Mayor )  
Councillor G Evans ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors Z Hammond, C Erasmus, D Davies, P. Cook, T Evans & J Griffiths  
P.C. Phillip Griffiths

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors N Turner, M Gwynne, R Weeks, R Mills, A Short & A Farina-Childs

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

Councillor D Davies Declared an Interest in the correspondence item from County Councillor G Simmonds as a member of a club in Cefn Fforest.

The Clerk reported that he did not anticipate this being discussed but passed to Policy & Finance Committee for deliberation and recommendation

### ***3. Police Report***

The Mayor welcomed P.C. Phillip Griffiths to the meeting who reported on the following –

Total crimes reported for period January & February 2019 was 168 compared with 148 for the same period last year, whilst ASB numbers increased from 63 to 69 for the same period.

Since the Public Spaces Dispersal Order had been granted for the Bus Station area, much of the ASB problem had now moved to ASDA, but officers were keeping a watch on the situation. Councillor Z Hammond reported that youngsters congregate there in the evenings because free wi-fi is achievable from Stagecoach and that perhaps problems could be mitigated if this ceased at 6.00pm.

He reported there had been a number of issues relating to the homeless couple camped opposite ASDA , with drugs and drink attracting attention from others.

Homelessness was a particular issue that needed to be tackled by various departments of the Borough Council and other Agencies.

The majority of the problems seemed to be caused by youngsters aged between 10 – 18 together with a few known adults.

Councillor Z Hammond queried whether an Outreach or Engagement team might be able to engage with the youngsters and provide fairly regular distraction events similar to those held by the Basement previously. It was agreed this issue be raised at the next Blackwood Town Centre Management Group for discussion.

The officer said shoplifting was still an issue for the town, but that the majority of problems were by serial perpetrators.

Councillor D Davies congratulated the police for the Mini Police in Schools initiative which seemed to be a great success. The officer agreed and was hopeful they could perhaps be used to educate parents with regard the dangers of parking near schools.

The Mayor thanked the officer for his attendance and he left the meeting.

#### 4. *Mayoral Announcements*

The Mayor reported on a visit to Blackwood ATC 277 Squadron and said he had been very impressed with some 25 -30 young people attending aged from 8- 18years. He remarked the discipline instilled into the youngsters via this organisation was bound to benefit them in later life.

#### 5. *Correspondence*

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

Air Cadets ( Blackwood 277 Squadron )	Application for Financial Assistance
Llangollen Int. Musical Eisteddfod	Application for Financial Assistance
Heddlu Gwent Police	Application for Financial Assistance
One Voice Wales	Notification of RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee meeting to be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> . April at Maesycwmmer OAP Hall  Copy of presentation by Wales Audit Office to Larger Councils Committee meeting.  Membership Fee for 2019/2020 - £1,164 ( compared with £1,100 for current financial year ) – based on 3,640 chargeable dwellings @ 32p per dwelling + 5.8%
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Consolidation of Traffic Regulation Orders re. parking and waiting restrictions in readiness for Civil Parking Enforcement across the Borough  Notification of 2019 Events Programme - Winter Fair Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> . November  Notification of Tax Setting Resolution 2019/2020 - County Borough Levy £1,131.21 for Band D equivalent properties  Copy of Budget Proposals & Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 – 2023/2024
Independent Remuneration Panel For Wales	Annual Report 2019/2020 plus Summary of new and updated Determinations contained in the report
Planning Aid Wales	Invitation to free training event – 4th. March @ Rhiwderin, Newport
Zurich Insurance	Renewal Quote for 2019/20 – £1,246.17 (compared with £1,226.57 current financial Year – 1.5% increase which includes additional defibrillator
Local Democracy & Boundary Commission for Wales	– Consultation on Review of Electoral arrangements for County Borough Of Caerphilly – Comments by 29 <sup>th</sup> . May 2019

County Coun. G. Simmonds

Request that Town Council consider contributing towards  
Christmas lights in Cefn Fforest

The Clerk also reported verbally on an application for Financial Assistance received from DYT Dance & Performing Arts Group, together with an invitation to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and their wives to attend an event at Fleur de Lys Institute on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>. March at 6.00pm.

Furthermore, he had now received an amended Loan Agreement ( which now includes security for the loan against the building ) from BLT and stated he would be arranging signature of same by the Mayor on behalf of the Town Council within the next two weeks.

In respect of the One Voice Wales Membership for 2019/2020 and Zurich Insurance Quote for 2019/2020, it was **agreed** OVW membership be agreed in the sum of £1,164 and the Zurich quote of £1,246.17 also be **agreed**.

In respect of the Applications for Financial Assistance and the request from County Councillor G Simmonds it was **agreed** these be considered by the Policy & Finance Committee, which is likely to meet on Monday 16<sup>th</sup>. March

## 6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
John Hold	February Salary + reimbursements	918.10
Playworks	February Tax/ N.I.	282.66
Blackwood Boys & Girls F. C.	Financial Assistance	340.00
Blackwood 1 <sup>st</sup> .Brownies	Financial Assistance	250.00
Blackwood Little Theatre	Interest Free loan	5,000.00

## 7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup>. February 2019*

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

## 8. *Matters Arising*

Councillor Z Hammond reported on her attendance at the PREVENT training event and reported that it may be beneficial if the same presentation be given to members at a future Town Council meeting. It was **agreed** the Clerk look to arrange same in the near future

## 9. *To Receive the Minutes of the Town & Community Councils Liaison Committee meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 & 13th. February 2019*

It was **agreed** the minutes be received

**10. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup>. January 2019**

It was *agreed* the minutes be received

**11. To Receive the Minutes of the Inaugural Bi-Centenary Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup>. Feb. 2019**

The Clerk presented the minutes and after some discussion/explanation it was *agreed* they be received

**12. Planning Applications**

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

**Case Ref. 19/0076/FULL**

Site Area: 267m<sup>2</sup> Location: 44 Montclaire Avenue Blackwood NP12 1EF (UPRN 000043053773)  
Proposal: Erect part two storey, part single storey rear extension

Councillor Z Hammond reported there seemed no problem with the application and it was *agreed* no objection or observations be forwarded

**13. Reports**

Councillor Z Hammond informed the meeting that the Bus Station toilets were due for closure at the end of March. She stated that she had contacted the Clerk to see if we had received any correspondence regarding same.

The Clerk reported on correspondence he had forwarded to Caerphilly C.B.C. regarding lack of meaningful consultation with Town Council and also querying if the Bus Companies had been consulted on the issue.

The initial response indicated that consultation had been part of the budget savings paper which had identified the remaining toilets in the borough ( other than Caerphilly Tourist Information Centre ) were to close.

The Clerk had replied asking if it were reasonable for the Bus Companies to trawl through 50+ pages of a report on budget savings to identify same and consider this meaningful consultation. He indicated this seemed contrary to our Charter arrangements with the Borough Council and had asked why no discussion had taken place regarding other potential methods of keeping the facility open – no indication of costs given or the opportunity for Town Council to even consider potential funding. Councillor Hammond indicated she had met with the Café proprietors and whilst they have a current lease with the Borough Council had not had the courtesy of any consultation on an issue that might have significant effect on their business. She had also met with County Councillor K Etheridge and they had confirmed that the Bus Companies and taxi businesses were also unaware of the closure decision.

After much discussion, members were of the opinion this was yet another example of the supposed open and transparent local government administered by Caerphilly County Borough Council, and *agreed* this decision to close toilets at the recognised transport hub for the town could have significant consequences for the wellbeing of the town and its visitors/ shoppers, and that we should do all we can to ensure proper meaningful consultation with all parties involved.