

## ***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup>. APRIL 2016.***

***Present*** : Councillor W Baber ( Deputy Mayor )

Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, M Veater MBE, J Criddle, C Erasmus,  
J Weeks, M Gwynne & J Edwards

In the absence of the Mayor, it was ***unanimously agreed*** that Councillor W Baber, Deputy Mayor, take the Chair.

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors P Cook, L Thomas, N Turner, M Harris & G Hale, together with those from Inspector Jason White

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

Councillor A Farina-Childs declared an interest in Item 9 as Chair of Governors for Blackwood Comprehensive School

### ***3. Policing Matters***

The Clerk reported that he had received apologies from Inspector Jason White, who due to staffing shortages and other priorities had been unable to attend this evening.  
He had promised that there would be a police representation at the next meeting

### ***4. Mayoral Announcements***

Due to the Mayor's absence, there were no announcements.

### ***5. Correspondence***

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

In respect of the correspondence regarding the effectiveness of CCTV cameras in Blackwood, and the Requirement by the Surveillance Camera Commissionaire to justify the use of the cameras, it was ***agreed*** we should write in support of the use of cameras as an important support to monitoring what goes on in town, especially with the reduced number of officers on the beat.

Members were mindful that the evidence recorded on camera did assist in the closure of the problematical Vanilla Bar.

It was also ***agreed*** the offer of a visit to the Control Centre be followed up, and that the Clerk try to arrange a visit one evening for members that were interested.

In respect of the Freedom of Information requests it was **agreed** the Clerk deal with these accordingly, however, members were disappointed that the individuals had not just written requesting the information, rather than instigating an FOI

## 6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. p
John Hold	March Salary + reimbursements	706.30
Carole Hold	Administrative assistance	292.00
Playworks	Tax/N.I. March	560.70
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Web hosting + maintenance 2015/16	600.00
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire – March	14.25
One Voice Wales	Membership subscription 2016/17	1,016.00

## 7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup>. March 2016*

It was **resolved** the minutes be confirmed as a true record.

## 8. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk was asked for an update of the plaque/ railings at 242 Blackwood Road. He reported the plaque was being repaired and that he had made enquiries with Caerphilly officers regarding potential funding streams.

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported that Mr Tom Forbes was awaiting further information from the suppliers of the defibrillators.

Councillor D Davies reported that it was hoped an external defibrillator would be positioned at the Moose Hall.

The Clerk reported that the necessary Notice had been placed on the Notice Board for the Town Council vacancy.

The Clerk reported that he had received a response from the Planning Inspectorate regarding our query of what constituted a development of national significance.

Such developments are wide ranging but will usually be large scale infrastructure projects – Construction/alteration of a railway, rail freight interchange, dam or reservoir, water treatment plant, hazardous waste facility, underground gas storage facilities, LNG facility, gas reception facility, electricity generating station, airport development.

**9. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup>. March 2016**

Councillor A Farina-Childs having declared an interest took no part in the decision making.

Councillor J Cridde, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes and it was *resolved* they be received.

It was *unanimously agreed* that the following grants be awarded –

£1,500 to Blackwood Comprehensive School in support of the WRFU Coaching Scheme at the school

£250 to Blackwood Cricket Club in support of their Youth teams

£250 to Blackwood Neighbourhood Policing Team in support of the football and netball tournaments they were organising amongst local schools

Members *agreed* to support the policy of funding local Cancer Charities and not National ones.

**10. To Receive the Minutes of the Special Planning & Licensing Committee Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup>. March 2016**

Councillor A Farina-Childs declared an interest as family members may be affected by the proposals.

Councillor J Criddle, Chair of the Committee, presented the minutes and it was *resolved* they be received.

It was *agreed* the following be forwarded to Caerphilly C.B.C. as the Town Council response to the Replacement Caerphilly C.B.C. Development Plan up to 2031 -

Blackwood Town Council wish to oppose ( consistent with our previous opposition ) the designation of site H1.14 Cwmgelli Farm for housing, having particular regard to policy CW9 ( the site has no significant value as ... an area of visual amenity ) and policy CW4A ( development proposals would have no acceptable impact on the amenities of adjacent properties or land ). There might also be potential conflict with policy HPG2.

To ensure adequate housing provision in the area, consideration might be given to extend H1.15 north and/or east to accommodate 420 houses, as it would be less damaging visually than H1.14.

We also express concern at the inclusion of Blackwood Golf Course within the settlement boundary, and its designation as a white area, as this affords no protection against future applications for housing development.

Furthermore, we are concerned to note on Map 20 that the Plasmawr Fields were designated a white area, and would request they be designated as recreation space.



**11. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Caerphilly, Merthyr & RCT Area Committee Meeting held on 27th. January 2016**

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

**12. Council Insurance 2016/17**

The Clerk presented his report, which outlined the cover included in the policy, which he considered more than adequate for Town Council purposes, and after some discussion members *agreed* that the quote in the sum of £1,371.31 be accepted

It was also *agreed* that for 2017/18 additional quotes be requested from other insurers.

**13. Verbal Update on Velvet Coalmine Blackwood Children's Literature Festival**

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the Children's Literature Festival Launch at 7.30pm. on Friday 29<sup>th</sup>. April at the Stute.

He had forwarded invitations all Town Councillors, Caerphilly County Borough Mayor & Councillors for Blackwood and neighbouring wards, members and officers serving on the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group, Chris Evans M.P., Gwyn Price, Ian Johnstone, Cllr. Keith Reynolds, representatives from the Freeman of the City of London in Islwyn Association & the Argus.

Jane Mather had forwarded invitations to the Cluster Head Group, and Iain Richards, the Festival Director had also invited various contacts.

Iain was due to meet Blackwood Rotary Club later in the week to seek their support and would obviously be inviting representatives along on the Launch.

After some discussion, it was agreed invitations be forwarded to other local Schools, namely Pontllanfraith, Bryn, Penllwyn, Aberbargoed & Oakdale.

The Clerk reported that he was hoping that youngsters from local schools would be invited to give some readings, ideally from some of their own work or from Roald Dahl books.

The Clerk emphasised how important it was that Town Council showed their support in numbers on the evening.

**14. Planning Applications**

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting, and it was *agreed* there were no issues to be raised.

## ***15. Reports***

Members raised the issue of vacancies on the High Street and in the Precinct, and voiced concerns of the retailers regarding car parking charges contributing to the reduced footfall in town.

Councillor Farina-Childs reminded members that Town Council had made several requests to the Borough over the years to reduce parking charges, and given the current financial position it is very unlikely this would be acceded to now.

Members accepted that whilst this was obviously a contributory factor, the opening of stores on the Retail Park had also taken trade away from the High Street.

Councillors Hammond & Erasmus reported that the issue of vacant shops was a regular item for discussion at the Town Centre Management Group Meeting, and proposed that Andrew Highway should be approached to provide details of current vacancies, together if possible with the business rates and rents/ leases due on each of the properties.

It was ***agreed*** the Clerk make the necessary approaches.

Councillor Hammond reported that Gwent Now has basically replaced OWL

It was ***agreed*** that the Clerk contact Councillor Hale and ask if he could make the necessary arrangements to produce identity cards for new members.