

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4TH. JUNE 2018

Present : Councillor J Edwards (Mayor)
Councillor G James (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, P Cook, M Gwynne, Z Hammond, N Turner,
C Erasmus & D Jones

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Weeks, R Weeks, R Mills, J Griffiths & A Short.

Apologies were also received from County Councillor K Etheridge

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were made by –

Councillors J Edwards & P Cook in respect of Item 12, both being members of the Blackwood & District Heritage Association

Councillors G James & A Farina-Childs in respect of Item 15, both being Governors at Blackwood Comprehensive School

All members declared an interest in Item 6 Correspondence regarding request for funding/donation in respect of Walk for Velindre/Steffan Lewis

3. Letter of Resignation from Councillor W Baber – Resultant Vacancy Blackwood South Ward/ Committee Representation & Governor Representation Cefn Fforest

The Clerk read a letter of resignation from Bill Baber, stating that with deep regret, and due to his wife's failing sight he thought now the best time to leave, giving any new member more time to settle during this year. He reiterated in a second letter that his decision was not due to disagreements with any Councillors but purely for family reasons

All members paid tribute to Bill's work on Town Council and the sterling work he had performed in his year as Mayor, becoming the very public face of the town. Members wished him and his wife well for the future and were certain we would still see much of him in his continuing support of the towns events.

It was **agreed** the Clerk send an appropriate letter of thanks on behalf of Town Council.

It was **agreed** the Vacancy be advertised and the appropriate Notice be served regarding Elections. With regard vacancies on the various committees it was **agreed** these be re-visited at a future meeting. After some discussion it was **agreed** that Councillor Gerwyn James become Town Council's Governor Representative at Cefn Fforest School (currently a Parent Governor)

4. Borough Council Report

Councillor A Farina-Childs gave a brief report on current issues –

Civil Parking - a members seminar had been arranged for Wednesday 6th. June

Pupil Funding - seeking clarification as to why there were significant variations in pupil funding across the Borough, with Islwyn High receiving £300 per pupil more than Blackwood Comprehensive

Sirhowy Riverbridge Repairs - Sirhowy Valley Way Ltd. & Costains Ltd. had arranged a pre-works briefing on the remedial works to the bridge at Ty Penallta on Wednesday 13th. June at 5.00pm.

The Clerk **agreed** to make contact asking for Town Council representation at that meeting, and would inform members accordingly.

Members then raised the issue of potholes that have appeared on the Chartist Bridge and were concerned whether there were problems with its construction.

Attention then turned to the recent tragic event of yet another suicide at the Bridge, and after much discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk write to Costains (with copies to Marcus Lloyd & Sean Morgan) requesting a further specific meeting regarding the Chartist Bridge, where a technical discussion on all safety aspects could be held. It was **agreed** this letter should ideally be sent prior to the proposed meeting on Sirhowy Riverbridge and that County members for Penmaen & Blackwood also receive same.

5. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor updated members on the following –

He had made contact with Steve Reynolds regarding positioning of Defibrillator at Maxime Cinema who had offered assistance regarding fixing of same.

He had agreement from Rowlands Newsagents that they would be willing to post Agendas for Town Council Meetings in their window.

He assured members work on the Newsletter was progressing

He was in contact with Brinsons regarding the possible use of one of their empty shops in the High Street for a pop up space for Town Council

He was arranging with Councillor Z Hammond banners for the Carnival and that he would be highlighting his Alzheimer's Charity over the Beach Party Carnival weekend

6. Correspondence

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

Caerphilly C.B.C.	Temporary Prohibition of Driving Order B4254 Southern Cross Valley Link (Forwarded to Members) Request for Nominations – Caerphilly Volunteer Achievement Awards (Forwarded to Members) Armistice/ Armed Forces Communities Programme – Remembering and supporting their contribution Notification that Caerphilly Public Services Board have now published their Well being Plan (E mail copied to members with link to document) Detailed action plans to support the Delivery Plan are being developed
Cnty Cllr.K Etheridge	Request for info. on Toilet Block in High Street Notification of CCBC Members Seminar on Civil Parking Enforcement Copy of request to Heath Authority for various information Temporary suspension of Tan 1 Planning Request for a Homeless Strategy Policy – meeting arranged by CCBC with Shelter and Cornerstone
Ysgol Cwm Derwen	10 th . Anniversary Concert 5 th July – request for contact details
Blackwood Neighbourhood Policing Team	Request for funding towards Annual 5 a side football tournament & netball tournament being held on Thursday/ Friday 28 th /29 th . June
Vice Lord Lieut. of Gwent	Notification to make contact if Deputy Lieutenants are required for this years Remembrance Day Services (100th. Anniversary) – Forwarded to Bill Baber
Nia Lewis	Request for Sponsorship – Walk for Steffan & Velindre - July 14 th .

In respect of the requests for funding, it was *agreed* a donation of £250 be made towards the Schools Annual Football & Netball Tournament organised by the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

With regard the request from Nia Lewis, whilst all members had declared an interest by virtue of the fact they knew Steffan personally as a former Town Councillor and now our Assembly Member, the Clerk advised as there was no direct pecuniary interest, and that the monies raised went direct to Velindre, a facility that benefits numerous local people, members could discuss and make a decision. After a short discussion, it was *unanimously agreed* a donation of £500 be made to this most worthy request.

7. Schedule of Payments

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

		£. p
Playworks	May Tax /N.I.	275.47
John Hold	May Salary/ Reimbursements + £500 Carnival Cash Float	1,499.14
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Room Hire/ Printing	33.26
Andrew Jervis	Internal Audit Fee	120.00

8. To Confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Town Council held on 8th. May 2018

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

9. Matters Arising

Item 8 Nomination of Members

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported that having made enquiries the Mid Valleys East Steering Group & the Blackwood Town Centre Arts Panel are no longer in existence.

Item 9 Consider Governor Representation

The Clerk informed members he had requested the necessary DBS check forms and would circulate to members shortly for their completion

Item 12 Schedule of Payments

Councillor D Davies thanked members on behalf of Moose International and informed the their defibrillator was now operational and that 17 members had received training

10. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 29th. May 2018

Councillor Z Hammond, Chair of Events presented the minutes and it was **agreed** they be received

11. To Receive the Minutes of the Newsletter/Web Page Committee Meeting held on 29th. May 2018

The Clerk presented the Minutes and explained that whilst the meeting was technically inquorate members present had discussed content of proposed Newsletter.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted CCBC regarding access to the website and had been assured this had now been attended to. Members details were now also up to date.

Members queried whether the website had to be managed via Caerphilly C.B.C. or whether same could be done by a private company or WCVA Social Enterprises Web-Site Service.

It was **agreed** to discuss this further at the next meeting of the Committee.

12. Blackwood & District Heritage Association – Confirmation of Town Council Financial Support towards Coed Duon Project

Councillor J Edwards & P Cook having declared their interests earlier took no part in the discussion or decision making

The Clerk reported that he had accepted an invitation to meet with the Association who were eager to progress works at Coed Duon in readiness for the town's bi-centenary in 2020, as we all know it is this area of woodland from which the town derived its name.

To assist in attracting other funding, the Association have requested confirmation of Town Council's previously agreed earmarked financial support of £10,000 for this project.

After some discussion which centred around what the Association's proposals were for the wood, it was ***agreed*** that representatives from the Association be invited along to the next meeting to share their plans. It was noted this was public money and must be seen to be spent wisely and for the benefit of the town.

13. Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return for Year Ended 31st. March 2018

The Clerk presented his report and 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 Jim Edwards 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 date of 9th. July 2018.

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

14. Blackwood in Bloom

The Clerk requested that members work together and submit 2 nominations plus a reserve for Best Front Garden for each of their respective wards by end of June. Winners will receive £25 plus certificate which will be presented by the Mayor at the Civic Awards Evening at Blackwood Miners' Institute.

Members queried whether it might be possible to have photographs of the winning gardens to put on display at the Civic Awards Evening, which after all is held well after judging takes place. It was **agreed** approaches be made to Blackwood Comprehensive School to see if any photography students might be interested in this project.

15. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref.18/0397/LA

Proposal : Replace existing astroturf pitch with new 3G sports pitch to include replacing floodlighting with new and all associated fencing and drainage

Applicant Caerphilly C.B.C. – Blackwood Comprehensive School, Ty Isha Terrace, Blackwood

Councillors G James & A Farina-Childs having declared an interest took no part in the discussion or decision making albeit having been questioned specifically with regard any potential with flood lighting affecting neighbouring properties Councillor Farina-Childs informed members that meetings had been held and the positioning of the pitch had been amended to ensure no problems would arise.

After some discussion it was **agreed** no objections be raised

16. Reports

Councillors A Farina-Childs & G James informed members that Cerith Lewis, Deputy Head at Blackwood Comprehensive was due to retire after 30+ years at the School. It was **agreed** the Clerk send letters to Cerith and Jane Mather-Thomas (Blackwood Junior School) for their unstinting service to their respective schools over many years.

Given his service, it was **agreed** that consideration be given to nominating Cerith Lewis for a Civic Award, similar to that **agreed** in respect of Jane Mather-Thomas.

Councillor D Jones requested the Clerk find out the proposed timescales regarding the Recreation & Leisure Strategy as things seem to have gone very quiet of late,