

## **MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup>. MARCH 2018.**

**Present :** Councillor J Weeks ( Mayor )  
Councillor J Edwards ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors A Short, Z Hammond, R Weeks, W Baber, M Gwynne, P Cook & D Jones

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, G James , J Griffiths & C Erasmus

Apologies were also received from County Councillor K Etheridge

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

There were no Declarations of Interest made

### **3. Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor had no visits to report

### **4. Report by Borough Members**

In the absence of Borough members, the Clerk reported on the following issues highlighted by Councillor A Farina-Childs

Requested report on whether Asbestos and Condition surveys had been undertaken within Leisure Centres –

Cefn Fforest - Asbestos survey completed 3/2/2014 & Condition Survey 26/1/2018

Pontllanfraith - Asbestos survey completed 7/1/2010 & Condition Survey 27/2/2018

Request Bus stop agreed for Sunnybank Road

Numerous issues regarding current bad weather

Head teacher of Blackwood Comprehensive School is leaving

Gail Williams Caerphilly C.B.C. Interim Head of Legal Services has retired

School Funding – Caerphilly C.B.C. reported as being below Welsh average per pupil

In negotiation with Blackwood Comprehensive School for caretaker to take responsibility for locking & unlocking gates at the Showfield if agreement could be reached for the School to have use of car park.

Whilst members fully appreciated this possible solution to an ongoing problem, clarification would still be needed regarding weekend and school holiday opening and closing.

### **5. Correspondence**

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

Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod	Letter of Thanks for Grant
Relate Cymru	“ “ “
Islwyn Comrades	“ “ “
Tenovus Cancer Care	“ “ “

One Voice Wales

Membership 2018/19 £1,100 (£1,045 current year )

Letter from Chair of Committee urging member Councils to attend meetings more regularly

New Data Protection Laws - need to appoint Data Protection Officer. Some confusion at present whether Clerk can undertake the role or whether it needs to be completely independent.

Caerphilly C.B.C.

Notification of Town Centre Management Group Meeting to be held at 2pm.on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>. March

Independent Remuneration Panel  
For Wales

Copy of Annual Report which identifies the following in respect of Town/Community Councils -

**Determination 44:** Community and town councils in Groups A and B ( Blackwood Town Council come within this Group ) must make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.

In all cases, any individual member may make a personal decision to elect to forgo part or all of the entitlement to any of these payments by giving notice in writing to the proper officer of the council.

**Determination 47:** Community and town councils in Groups B or C are authorised to make an annual payment of £500 each to up to 5 members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses if that is claimed.

**Determination 48:** Community and town councils are authorised to make payments to each of their members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties. 8 Such payments must be the actual costs of travel by public transport or the HMRC mileage allowances as below: • 45p per mile up to 10,000 miles in the year. • 25p per mile over 10,000 miles. • 5p per mile per passenger carried on authority business. • 24p per mile for private motor cycles. • 20p per mile for bicycles.

**Determination 49:** If a community or town council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it may authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its members at the maximum rates set out below on the basis of receipted claims: • £28 per 24-hour period allowance for meals, including breakfast where not provided. • £200 – London overnight. • £95 – elsewhere overnight. • £30 – staying with friends and/or family overnight

**Determination 50:** Community and town councils are authorised to pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties as follows: • Up to £34.00 for each period not exceeding 4 hours: • Up to £68.00 for each period exceeding 4 hours but not exceeding 24 hours

**Determination 51:** All community and town councils must 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 must be for the additional costs incurred by members in order for them to carry out their approved duties. Reimbursement shall only be made on production of receipts from the carer.

**Determination 52:** Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Civic Head payment to the mayor/chair of the council up to a maximum of £1,500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

**Determination 53:** Community and town councils are authorised to provide a Deputy Civic Head payment to the deputy mayor/deputy chair of the council up to a maximum amount of £500 to undertake the functions of that office. This is in addition to the £150 payment for costs and expenses and the £500 senior salary if these are claimed.

There is also a requirement on community and town councils to publish details of all payments made to individual members in an annual Statement of Payments. This information must be published on council notice boards and/or websites (with easy access) and provided to the Panel by email or by post no later than 30 September following the end of the year to which the payments relate. The Panel draws attention to the requirements stipulated at Annex 4. The Panel is concerned that a significant number of councils are in breach of this requirement.

In respect One Voice Wales, it was **agreed** to continue membership for 2018/2019 in the sum of £1,100 and for the Clerk to keep members updated regarding New Data Protection Laws and whether there is need to appoint a Data Protection Officer.

In respect of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report, it was **agreed** this be placed on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting.



## 8. *Matters Arising*

Councillor A Short queried if there had been any progress regarding the promised meeting with Caerphilly B.C. officers and police in respect of the Chartist Bridge, that County Councillor K Etheridge had requested many months ago. The Clerk responded that he had heard nothing.

Members identified that a further two suicide attempts had apparently occurred over recent months and were adamant that Town Council should now take a lead and organise a meeting with Chief Executives/ representatives of all interested parties – Caerphilly C.B.C., Town Council, local Police, Police & Crime Commissioner, Assembly Members, M.P., Health Board, Fire Brigade, MIND, GOFAL, Samaritans, Comprehensive Schools, Pupil Referral Unit and possibly the PFI Contractors.

Members were disappointed that there did not appear to be meaningful statistics regarding the number of attempted suicides at the Bridge, and there seemed little willingness to discuss the problem and/or progress any possible improvements that may deter potential jumpers.

It was **agreed** the Clerk try to obtain any statistics that might be available for the past 5 years.

It was **agreed** the Clerk draft an invitation letter and potential mailing list, whilst looking to book the Bar area of the Institute for Monday 21<sup>st</sup>. May, with a proposed start time of 6.30pm, with tea/coffee/biscuits being made available. Members accepted that if we were to organise this meeting we would need to discuss in some detail how we hoped it would be structured on the evening. It was **agreed** to place on the Agenda for the next meeting and members asked to consider what specific issues/topics they believe should be covered.

## 9. *Vacancy on Town Council – Blackwood South Ward & Resultant Governor Vacancy at Ysgol Cwm Derwen*

The necessary Notice of vacancy had been posted, with the closing date Monday 26<sup>th</sup>. February 2018.

No request has been received by the Returning Officer for an Election, and we can, therefore, make arrangements to co-opt to fill the vacancy.

The Clerk reported that he had not received any expressions of interest, and it was **agreed** to post another notice on the notice board, and report on responses at the next meeting.

## 10. *Update on Proposed Closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre*

The Clerk referred members to the copies of correspondence attached to the reports, a response to Town Council from the Commissioner for Future Generations Office and also a copy of the Commissioners response to Caerphilly C.B.C's extended consultation.

The Clerk had been asked by County Councillor Kevin Etheridge to place on record his thanks for the sterling efforts of Town Councillor Zoe Hammond in supporting the Save Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Campaign Group.

The Clerk stated that the work of the Campaign Group, coupled with the correspondence from Town Council had undoubtedly had a great influence in the Council's decision to defer the closure. However, the decision on its future will now be seen as part of the major review to be undertaken of its leisure strategy and the future of leisure service provision across the county borough.

Councillor Z Hammond asked members whether we should consider a Special Meeting with the Campaign Group to build on the work already done and consider any future strategy. Members **agreed** this would be a good idea.

After further discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk write to Caerphilly C.B.C. welcoming the decision to defer closure and ask for a debate with Town Council and other interested parties regarding continued service provision. Furthermore, Town Council would request the Review of Leisure Services be an Independent Review, carried out by a Critical Friend Authority

## 11. *To Receive the Minutes of the Town & Community Councils Liaison Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup>. February 2018*

It was **resolved** the minutes be received

## 12. *To Receive the Draft Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/ Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup>. January 2018*

It was **resolved** the draft minutes be received.

### 13. Planning Applications

The following planning applications have been received since the last meeting –

#### *Case Reference 18/0095/RET*

Site Area: 406 m Location: 13 Pembroke Close , Blackwood NP12 1JL ( URPN 000043049795 )

Proposal: Retain means of enclosure to the rear and side boundaries consisting of retaining block wall combined with brick/timber element

Applicant: Mr S Smith, 13 Pembroke Close, Blackwood

#### *Case Reference 18/0166/COU*

Site Area: Highfields Amenity Area

Proposal: Extend rear gardens of 14-21 Rhos Y Dderwen, which will incorporate old public footpath No. 104

Applicant: Mrs M Reeves, 14 Rhos Y Dderwen, Blackwood

After some discussion it was **agreed** to register Councils disappointment that public land is passing into private ownership

### 14. Reports

The Clerk reported on a meeting with Stacy Francis & Sarah Kate Ackerman of Caerphilly Events team attended by Councillors W Baber & Z Hammond ( Chair & Vice Chair of Events Committee ) to discuss our continued involvement in the Beach Party Weekend & Christmas Fair. All were keen to build on the success of the events, and look to make improvements.

After significant discussion it was agreed to recommend to Town Council that Blackwood Carnival revert back to the Saturday of the Beach Party weekend - Saturday/Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup>. June - and that Town Council provide entertainment ( with the assistance of CCBC ) on both days on our stage to be positioned near Argos in the High Street. It is also proposed to start the Carnival, probably from near the Market Square at approximately 3.00pm and walk up the High Street to the stage where the Queen and Court will be introduced.

Borough officers suggested that Town Council organise our stalls ( provided by them ) between Argos and Pentwyn Road, thereby trying to ensure visitors are attracted the whole length of the High Street, and hopefully benefitting the charitable groups who have suffered due to poor footfall at the Market Place over the past couple of years. It is also hoped the very popular Dinosaur Show might perform just off the High Street near Preachers Bar. Further meetings were planned to agree layout of staging and stalls.

After some discussion members **agreed** to the proposals outlined, and were hopeful these would prove popular with the town and visitors alike.

The Clerk then reported on a meeting held with Gail Devine ( Groundwork Caerphilly ), again attended by Councillors W Baber & Z Hammond ( Apologies received from Councillor A Farina-Childs ) to discuss the proposed Memorial Garden. The ideas and design, incorporating the Silent Soldier, poppies and potentially a flag pole and how we might use Ethan's artwork were discussed, and did not seem to present any problems.

Ms Devine mentioned they may be in position to attract some funding, and after some discussion /deliberation a sum of approximately £5,000 was identified as a budget provision for the project.

Ms Devine agreed to draw up a scheme, and members will be kept informed of progress.

Councillor Z Hammond reported briefly on the recent meeting she attended on continuing issues at the bus station. There had been recent problems at the top end of the station, where glass windows had been broken near Stand 9. Unfortunately the CCTV cameras were not working at the time, but there is an issue that where the cameras are positioned at present, the area in question is a bit of a black spot. She and County Councillor Kevin Etheridge have suggested that Carl Nestling request a quotation for an additional camera e installed somewhere near the centre of the station. It had also been noted that the view from another camera was partially blocked by a sign, and Roger Reynolds is looking to move that in the meantime.

Councillor Hammond informed members that Adam Lang had designed an incident reporting document that outlined what needed to be done when incidents occur. It is very basic and self explanatory, the aim being to get the CCTV stills quickly in order to identify the offenders, whether that be criminal or anti social behaviour. Once identification has been made a decision can be taken on the appropriate action required.