

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6TH. JANUARY 2020

Present : Councillor G James (Mayor)

Councillors A Farina-Childs, T Evans, D Davies. J Edwards, D Jones, A Short, R Mills,
C Erasmus & Z Hammond

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors J Griffiths, P Cook, M Gwynne & R Weeks

The Clerk reported that along with Councillor R Weeks apologies was a request for six months leave of absence. He explained that in November he had suffered a bad fall, resulting in hospitalisation following infection and now has to carry a machine with him wherever he goes. Members were fully sympathetic to the request and it was **unanimously agreed** six month leave of absence be granted.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

3. County Borough Report

Councillor A Farina-Childs reported briefly on an increase in anti social behaviour in the area, with many complaints of eggs and stones being thrown at both properties and vehicles. He stated that he had received contact from Cardiff City Football Club and a local Karate Club offering to undertake outreach work in the area in an attempt to assist in keeping young children more gainfully occupied. Other members commented on what appeared to be mindless acts of anti social behaviour and hoped the police would take a much tougher line with the perpetrators if apprehended.

The Mayor reported that the defibrillator outside the Maxime had suffered damage again, and that the machine has been removed and is being stored at the cinema until a replacement perspex panel, which the Clerk has already ordered, is received and fitted

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following visits made/ functions attended –

Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert – Another very successful event and he thanked those members who attended to assist in the parade and provision of refreshments. He also placed on record his thanks to the Clerk and Councillor Z Hammond in organising same.

Studio 54 Awards Evening where they were entertained by Jagger & Woody of Heart Radio

Annual meeting of CHAMPS (Chartist Help 4 All Mental Peer Support)

5. Correspondence

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

Caerphilly CBC Red Lion Car Park Temp. Closure from 12.00am Sunday 5th until 22.00 Monday 6th. January & from 12.00am Sunday 2nd. February until 22.00 Monday 3rd. February 2020

Albion Terrace Temp. Closure from 9.00am Monday 13th. until 18.00 Wednesday 15th. January 2020

Notification that Council Tax Base for 2020/21 is £2,955.96 at Band D Equivalent (£2,947.24 – 2019/20)

Welsh Govt. Consultation on Changes to planning and related application fees (to help improve cost recovery for local planning authorities) – Consultation ends 13th. March 2020

Councillor Judith Pritchard Notification she has been elected to represent Town & Community Councils on the Caerphilly Public Services Board

Lynne Matthews Request appointment to view accounts/ forward copies of last 3 years accounts

The Clerk informed members he would place the Consultation on Changes to planning and related application fees on the agenda for the February or March meeting for discussion.

He also reported that he had forwarded copies of the accounts as requested to Lynne Matthews

6. Schedule of Payments

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

		£. p
Studio 54	Interest Free loan	3,000.00
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. December	287.79
John Hold	Salary/ Reimbursements December	941.00
Elsburys	Transformer – Xmas Lights	120.00

7. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2nd. December 2019

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

8. Matters Arising

The Clerk referred members to Item 14 Consultation on Budget Proposals and stated these were considered by members to be amongst the most concerning and would be formally forwarded as the Town Council's response to the consultation exercise.

9. Vacancy on Town Council – Blackwood North Ward

Councillor J Edwards, declared a personal interest, as his wife was one who had expressed an interest. He took no part in any discussion or decision taken.

The Clerk reported that the following individuals had expressed an interest in being co-opted onto Town Council -

Mrs Carol Edwards 64 Sunnybank Road, Blackwood, NP12 1HZ

Dr George Edwards 34 Pencoed Avenue, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood, NP12 3LD

Mr. Ashley Davies 78 Derwendeg Avenue, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood , NP12 3LN

The Clerk recommended all three be invited for interview at the next meeting, and that the meeting start at 6.00pm to enable normal business to proceed.

This was unanimously *agreed* by members and it was also *agreed* the Clerk forward copies of questions previously asked for members agreement and/or amendment.

10. Verbal Report on Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

Councillor Zoe Hammond, Chair of the Events Committee placed on record her thanks to the Clerk for organising the event due to her other commitments, and to those members who assisted in marshalling the lantern parade and serving refreshment. Thanks also to Iestyn James, Mia Lewis and Kelsey Medina for their assistance on the evening.

She also wished to thank the Primary Schools for their continued support of this evening which seems to grow in popularity year on year.

The Clerk reported that he had received thanks from both primary schools for a very successful and enjoyable evening, and that Libanus had identified that they had some ideas for next years event, given our Bi Centenary Celebrations.

11. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 19/0947/COU

Location: Patchell Davies Solicitors Shop Unit 183A 181 - 183 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AA
Proposal: Change the use from A1 to A2

Case Ref. 19/0983/ADV

Location: H S B C 91-93 High Street Blackwood NP12 1PN
Proposal: Replace 1 No. existing external ATM signs with 1 No. new external ATM sign

Case Ref. 19/0989/FULL

Location: 31 Parc Plas Blackwood NP12 1SJ

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension

Case Ref. 19/0972/FULL

Location: 94/96 High Street, Blackwood NP12

Proposal: Erect a two storey building with A3 (Food & Drink)/ A2 (Financial Services) use at ground floor level and first floor flat

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** no objections be raised, but that in respect of 19/0972/FULL the Clerk contact CCBC pointing out the requirement of off street parking and that careful consideration be given to any disruption caused during construction.

12. Reports

The Mayor referred again to the defibrillators and the fact they should be checked at least annually to ensure the equipment is in proper working order, and he offered to undertake an audit of same once both were operational. Members thanked the Mayor and the course of action outlined was ***agreed***. He also made mention that the Health Authority website apparently identified our two defibrillators as not being accessible 24 hours or having disabled access and requested the Clerk contact to seek advice/confirmation of same.

Councillor Rhys Mills reported that he had received contact from Sainsbury's and Paul Taylor at the Rock Inn regarding ongoing problems/issues with Homeless persons over the Christmas period, and Councillor Andrew Short reported similar issues around the Bus Station area and his garage premises. It was reported that part of the problem was supposedly the later than normal opening of the Night Shelters, albeit there had been conflicting reports regarding numbers of homeless/ rough sleepers from Cornerstone over recent months.

Some members queried that if Town Council had a presence in town, whether we might be able to offer shelter to those in need. The Clerk suggested that even if we did have a presence in town the suggestion of providing shelter would be a potential minefield.

After some further discussion it was ***agreed*** to arrange a Special Meeting with all interested parties over the coming weeks to try and support the process of dealing with homeless/ rough sleeper problems in town, especially around Christmas.

Councillor Trefor Evans raised a number of issues –

Lyn Pask (Bi-Centenary Committee) and issues he is having with the Miners' Institute and the History Day on April 4th.

Code of Conduct training the Clerk had referred to at the last meeting

Position regarding DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service)

The Clerk assured the member that he had been in contact with Lyn Pask over the past week or so and as far as he was concerned everything was well in hand.

The Code of Conduct training was planned for 12th. February at the Council Chamber, Penallta House, and the Clerk agreed to forward details to all members so they might indicate if they wish to attend by 27th. January as requested.

With regard the DBS checks, the Clerk indicated there were some issues he needed to deal with under the Umbrella Body arrangements, and would progress soon.