

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7TH. JANUARY 2019

Present : Councillor J Edwards (Mayor)
Councillor G James (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors D Davies, T Evans, Z Hammond, R Weeks, N Turner, C Erasmus, J Griffiths
& M Gwynne

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors A Farina-Childs, J Williams, R Mills, D Jones, J Weeks & P Cook

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made

3. County Borough Report

In the absence of Borough Members there was no report

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reported on the following visits/functions attended –

The Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert was a great success, with probably the highest turnout for many years. He thanked Zoe & the Clerk for their efforts in organising same.

Attended the re-opening of Wetherspoons in Blackwood , with Councillor Mike Adams, Mayor of Caerphilly B.C. which had been a highly embarrassing experience, with little or no recognition of their attendance.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Wetherspoons by email and their Area Manager had phoned to apologise for the confusion, and hat he had also received an email of apology from the local manager.

The Mayor suggested to avoid future problems we double check things prior to attendance.

He reported on the Blackwood Primary School Nativity Play, which had been filmed and then shown at a special screening he had arranged at the Maxime Cinema, with teachers walking the children down from school and some 120 parents also attending. The new head teacher had remarked this had been one of the best experiences of her teaching career.

The Mayor also reported on a wonderful evening's entertainment at St. Margaret's Church where pupils of Blackwood Comprehensive School performed to over 100 guests at a special Christmas Show, remarking on the amount of exceptional talent a the school.

5. Correspondence

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

Cllr. Jan Weeks Request for Leave of Absence due to health problems

Notification that Cllr. Jan Weeks has resigned her position as Governor at Blackwood Primary School and requesting replacement nomination

Caerphilly C.B.C. A traffic regulation order preventing U-turns from 7pm-7am at roundabouts on High Street at the junctions with Cliff Road to the north and Gordon Road to south, was implemented experimentally in 2003 and made permanent in 2005 This was undertaken to assist in combatting problems associated with the nuisance and hazards created by ‘car crusiers’ persistently driving up and down the High Street.

There is no longer an issue with boy racers in the town centre, so residents have requested that the ban is removed, because they are being inconvenienced, particularly as they cannot turn right from Bridge Street onto High Street either. In light of the above, it is proposed to revoke the ‘Caerphilly County Borough Council (A4048) High Street, Blackwood Prohibition of U-Turns (7PM to 7AM) Order 2005.

I should be glad to receive any comments that you may wish to make on this Proposal by Friday 11th January 2019.

Rob Hartson I refer to your email of 17th December 2018 on behalf of Blackwood Town Council to the Interim Chief Executive, namely

I am uncertain when any decision is likely to be made by Council regarding the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre but would respectfully urge due consideration be given to our request that potential transfer of assets to community ownership be explored with the local community, leisure centre users and groups, partners and other stakeholders.

As you aware Cabinet agreed to defer the decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and to consider the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre once the Council’s Sport and Recreation Strategy 2019-29 had been adopted.. The Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 14th November 2018.

No timescale has been agreed for a further report to Cabinet regarding Pontllanfraith Leisure centre or indeed any of the other centres managed by the council. However, I can confirm that a separate report will be presented at the appropriate time for consideration and decision by Cabinet.

A Boulter

I have been asked to give you a call regarding your plans for the 200 year celebrations in 2020. I manage the Business Support team in the Council and have regular contact with a number of local businesses.

I understand that you are seeking support from the business community and I think we can certainly find that from some of the larger businesses in particular. Maybe we could meet up early in the New Year to discuss this. Email me back with some convenient dates or give me a call on the number below.

Sian Wolf-Williams
(CCBC)

Local Toilets Strategy Consultation

Under the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 we have a duty to prepare and publish a Local Toilet Strategy for the county borough.

We must publish our Local Toilet Strategy by 31 May 2019 and include a plan showing how we will meet identified needs. We are not required to provide and maintain public toilets themselves but must take a strategic view as to how facilities can be provided and accessed by our local population.

During Autumn 2018, an assessment of need, including a public consultation exercise, was completed to identify existing provision, current and future need and gaps in provision. Feedback and findings from this work are incorporated into the draft strategy. This information in full is published alongside the draft strategy which is now open to a period of consultation.

Residents of and visitors to the county borough are encouraged to respond to this consultation on our Draft Local Toilets Strategy. This consultation will run from 14 December 2018 to 8 March 2019.

If you have difficulty accessing the survey via the website and would like to discuss an alternative method of completion, please contact the Policy Team, either by email

[:policyteam@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:policyteam@caerphilly.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01443 811368.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Local-toilet-strategy-consultation?lang=en-GB>

N Scammell (CCBC) Council Tax Base Notification for 2019/20 is £2,947.24 per Band D equivalent dwelling (compared with £2,931.10 for current year)
Request that Town Council provide precept figure by 1st. February – we are due to meet on February 4th.with a Policy & Finance Committee Meeting planned prior to that date to discuss budget

1st.Blackwood Brownies Request for Financial Assistance – will be discussed at next planned Policy & Finance Committee

The Clerk also reported on two further items of correspondence received since his report had been Circulated, namely –

One Voice Wales Notification of RCT/ Merthyr/ Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting to be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 30th. January at Maescywmmmer O.A.P. Hall

PC Daniel Allen Notification of Presentation of Anti Acid Kits at the Briefing Room at Blackwood Police Station at 10.00am on Tuesday 15th. January – Mayor to attend together with Cllr. Z Hammond

In respect of the request for Leave of Absence by Councillor Jan Weeks, members *unanimously agreed* to the request and wished her a speedy recovery.

Regarding her resignation as Governor at Blackwood Primary School, it was *agreed* to agenda this for discussion at the next meeting, together with any other outstanding vacancies.

With regard the Caerphilly CBC traffic order regulation, members were in agreement but queried if boy racer problems resurfaced that similar conditions could be introduced, albeit as some members pointed out the gate closure option was also available.

With regard the response to the Clerk's follow up email relating to Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, members *agreed* that a letter be sent seeking confirmation that Asset Transfer will be considered and that a face to face meeting with the Communities Director be held prior to any decision is taken by Cabinet.

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£. P
K & R Print	Fliers for Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert	38.00
Blackwood Town Cricket Club	Financial assistance	250.00
Playworks	Tax/ N.I. December	282.66
John Hold	December Salary/ Reimbursements	1,460.85

7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd. December 2018*

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

8. *Matters Arising*

There were no matters arising

9. *Notes of Inquorate Special Meeting of Town Council held on 12th. December 2018*

The Clerk presented the notes of the meeting, and after some discussion members supported the formal response made -

Blackwood Town Council are broadly in favour of the proposals and would welcome such a scheme that promises to help regenerate our town.

We will obviously retain our right to comment further and in more detail when the planning application is formally presented to Caerphilly County Borough Council for consideration.

Town Council were thankful for the presentation by Mr. John Steven (Consultant to FCFM Group) who kindly afforded us the opportunity to comment on the report he presented and to make suggestions or amendments we feel might make the proposal more attractive to the town –

- The proposals for the Artisan Market should in no way disadvantage existing businesses in the High Street
- Artisan should relate to home made/ crafted goods, specialist services and collectibles
- Consider identifying one unit for potential work with local schools, colleges to encourage entrepreneurial skills which could also be used as a potential location for test trading activity for pre start ups (possibly working with Business Wales to develop referral mechanisms & criteria for use and look to link with their mentoring & Big Idea Wales Schemes also)
- Query the possibility of a logistics hub to support the artisans and start up/ test traders with office/ back office support
- Query the possibility of one unit being identified as a Community Unit for use by the Heritage Association/ Historical Society/ Information Centre
- Existing businesses on the High Street and Gravel Lane currently have service entry access to their properties and this will need consideration
- Recommend the existing Market Precinct units become an extension of new development proposals with consideration of more realistic rentals to ensure full occupancy
- Is 7 day opening from 10am-7.00pm for single person/small family businesses realistic from the start ?
- Communal toilets planned are welcomed, but with existing toilets currently within the Bus Station wonder whether there may be room for negotiation with Caerphilly CBC if properly managed and maintained
- You state Application interviews for Artisan units will be undertaken by the Centre Manager – request consideration be given to a Town Council representative to assist in the process
- Artisan Market Community Board – request consideration be given to a representative from the Market Place businesses
- Consideration needs to be given to the definition of those who have lived in Blackwood etc. – will it be the Town Council area or wider ?
- The proposals for events being held on the site is welcomed and would recommend close working with the Town Council Events Committee and Caerphilly CBC Events team to ensure planned events for the town can benefit the Market Place/ Artisan Units

10. Verbal Report on Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert

Councillor Z Hammond reported on the event, echoing the Mayor's comments of it being one of the best attended for many years. She thanked those members who had assisted with the parade and preparing and serving the refreshments.

Councillor G James wished to place on record his thanks for all the hard work Zoe and Malcolm had put into making all the lanterns, and these sentiments were unanimously supported by members. After some discussion, it was agreed the Clerk write thanking Adam at the Market Place and Jeff at the Methodist Church for their continued and much appreciated support of this event.

11. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 18/1010/FULL

Site Area: 776m² Location: 9 Sunnybank Road Blackwood NP12 1HY (UPRN 000043054771)

Proposal: Erect two storey extension to rear of dwelling and alterations to windows and doors on side elevation

Case Ref. 18/1002/TPO

Site Area: 425m² Location: 2 Llwyn Coed Blackwood NP12 1FT (UPRN 000043076380)

Proposal: Carry out various works to Oak tree to raise crown and crown reduction (Tree Preservation Order 66/72/MCC)

It was **agreed** no objections be raised

The Clerk also reported verbally on a further application received –

Case Ref. 18/1080/) OUT

Location – Land at Grid Reference 317561 196510 Libanus Road, Blackwood

Proposal: Erect up to 8 no. Dwellings with associated works

The Clerk reported he had contacted the Planning Department and had been informed permission had been originally granted in 2004 for 8 x 3 storey dwellings / Renewed 2010 & 2013 and that this remains in force until 29/5/2019.

After some discussion members **agreed** comments be forwarded as previously, namely the impact on nearby properties in terms of privacy distance and off street parking provision. Members also queried rumours of asbestos on site and request an environmental report be obtained prior to any decision.

12. Reports

The Clerk gave a brief report on the recent Multi Agency Group meeting that had received a report and presentation by Tom Skinner of ARUPS regarding potential works to the bridge. Members present had voted in favour of further consideration being given to a new pedestrian barrier and it was recommended a structural assessment of the bridge be undertaken to determine the impact that these proposed changes would have on the structure and determine whether any modifications would be required to accommodate these changes. Furthermore, a costing analysis should be undertaken to ascertain the full cost implications.

The Clerk reported there did seem a genuine willingness to progress matters.

The Mayor queried if there had been any progress on the Velvet Coalmine Finance position. The Clerk stated that with the Christmas festivities he had not progressed same, but did report that he had earlier in the day received the following letter from Iain Richards.

Dear Blackwood Town Council,

It has been brought to my attention that there is dissatisfaction and disapproval amongst council members that Blackwood Town Council are the title sponsors of the Velvet Coalmine festival that has been held in Blackwood every September for the past five years.

When this five year sponsorship was announced in the autumn of 2016 it immediately enabled the festival to grow into a 10-day event in 2017, bring a whole host of stars and first-class performers to Blackwood and allowed us to engage with the Welsh Assembly Government's Major Events Units with a view to growing it into a flagship arts event for the Valleys.

A tremendous amount of work was put into this to create a platform to engage other, more influential parties and much of this was down to the sustained and continued work of John Hold, Zoe Hammond and crucially Jim Criddle who is fondly remembered for his contribution.

Having worked so hard to establish this event, I certainly don't wish to work with people under the cloud of disapproval that clearly exists, so having considered my position with my co-director Estelle Wilkinson we have decided there will be no Velvet Coalmine festival moving forward and therefore an issue removed for council members to discuss.

On behalf of myself and Estelle, I would like to thank the Town Council for their financial contribution but particularly thank John, Zoe and Jim from the bottom of my heart for their unwavering support – often in difficult circumstances – and their willingness to support the vision and potential of the event for the wider benefit of Blackwood as a Town and crucially its young people.

I wish Blackwood Town Council every success for their plans for the 200 year anniversary of the Town and its role representing the wider benefit of the people of Blackwood – a Town that will forever be my home.

Iain Richards

Festival Director & Founder Velvet Coalmine

Members were somewhat surprised to receive the letter, but after some discussion it was agreed to receive the letter terminating Town Council's sponsorship of the event.

It was agreed the Clerk formally write to Iain & Estelle thanking them for all their hard work over the years in bringing the Festival to the town and for all the opportunities afforded to the schools and their pupils. Members were adamant that we try to build on this work over the coming year in readiness for our 2020 celebrations.

It was also agreed a letter of thanks be forwarded to Helen Greenwood of Blackwood Rotary Club for her support and hard work over the past few years.

