

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7TH. NOVEMBER 2016.

Present : Councillor W Baber (Mayor)
Councillor J Weeks (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies, J Edwards, Z Hammond, C Erasmus, J Criddle, G Hale,
M Veater MBE, M Gwynne, N Turner, R Moore
Inspector Jason White

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors M Harris & P Cook

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point

3. Policing Matters

The Mayor welcomed Inspector White to the meeting.

The Inspector reported that Shop Lifting had seen a relatively significant increase in the area, with ASDA & Boots two of the main targets. Officers had visited the stores and discussed their product placement strategy with a view to moving certain items from near the doors. This initiative together with targeting known individuals did result in a reduction during October, and given the upcoming Christmas period Operation Tinsel has been introduced, with both overt and covert surveillance.

Parking on the High Street has been another problem on the increase, and some 200 tickets were issued over the past weeks.

The Bus Station continues to be a problem area, with one individual arrested 6 times, and this requires longer term management.

At the recent Town Centre Management Committee meeting the problem of car cruisers had been raised, but officers had had no reported incidents during October, but were not complacent and the situation will continue to be monitored.

Regarding Drugs, a warrant was obtained on the High Street and 2 arrests made for possession of Class B drugs, also 30 cannabis plants seized with potential street value of £8,500

There was a planned meeting of the Night time economy group, and the plan was for local officers, supported by street pastors and special constables to be visible in town on Fridays & Saturdays.

The Inspector also reported a significant reduction in problems (approx 70%) associated with Halloween and Bonfire Night due in no small part to the cinema passes initiative.

The priorities identified at the local ward meetings highlighted parking and the bus station to be the most important.

He also informed members that there were 11 Remembrance Services in the area and that all would have a police presence.

Inspector White asked members if they had any issues they wanted to raise –

Councillor M Gwynne referred to the fact that some of the toilets at the bus station appeared to be damaged, but this was identified as a matter for C.C.B.C.

Councillor W Baber referred to a mugging incident that had been reported and apparently captured by CCTV but that the victim had not been attended to - the Inspector stated he would check this out.

Councillor Baber also voiced concerns regarding a former employee at the Market Place who still seems to think he has some responsibilities and is regularly on site.

Councillor Jim Edwards stated that whilst there were undoubtedly ongoing problems at the bus station he felt there had been improvements over the past few months.

The Mayor thanked the Inspector for his attendance, and he left the meeting.

4. Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor announced his attendance at the following -

16 th . October	Armed Forces Day
3rd. November	Concert Blackwood Primary School

He reported that he had also received an invitation from Risca Town Council to an Armistice Service on 11th. November.

The Mayor took the opportunity to remind members of the various Remembrance Services organised by Blackwood & District British Legion and encouraged members to attend where possible.

5. Correspondence

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

Welsh Government	Update on Local Government reform
	Consultation on Welsh Government's new Welsh Language Strategy
	Call for Events for Programme 2017 – Wales Remembers 1914-1918
	Any Commemorative events planned and considered for publication should be added to website www.walesremembers.org/events by 1 December. Also invitation to First World War Partnership Day at Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells on 26 January 2017

Notification of Innovative Practice National Awards 2017 – Categories are
Best Annual Report
Best Environmental Project
Best Website
Best Community Engagement Initiative
Best Tourism Initiative
Best Sustainability Initiative
Best Youth Engagement

National Conference - Mark Drakeford AM Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Local Government with positive message regarding town & community councils having an important role to play in the future of public services provision and proposed an initial 8 point action plan for the sector

1. Produce a toolkit to support community councils in working through what is required in taking on new services and assets, building on experiences of the key ingredients
2. Press ahead with legislating for the **General Power of Competence**, shaped by the suggestions made in response to the previous Government's consultation, for innovative ambitious councils looking for more freedom to serve their communities.
3. Re-energise ties between community councils and local authorities and provide a platform to share the good examples across Wales, bringing the new cadre of county and community councillors together after the Local Government elections next year at a **conference** focused on strengthening these key relationships
4. Facilitate the creation of **clusters** of smaller community councils, making some modest funding available to support the initial setting up of joint arrangements.
5. Legislate to make it an obligation on councils to **consider and plan for their training needs** and review it regularly.
6. Ensure citizens are kept informed and have the right to **make representations** on any business conducted at a council meeting. Learn from where this is done well and look for a legislative opportunity to strengthen current provisions.
7. Commission the **Local Democracy and Boundary Commission** to draw up guidelines for local authorities to secure consistency in the manner in which community reviews are conducted.
8. Support community councils to **raise awareness and encourage participation** in community council elections and to increase diversity, with an initial focus on the elections in 2017

Offer to member Councils a range of Consultancy Services including
Human Resources & Employment Law
Accountancy Services
Value Added Tax Legislation
Health, Safety & Welfare
Community Engagement & Development
Community Engagement, Asset Transfer, Partnership Working & Funding

Llangollen 2017 Brief Report on Llangollen 2016 & request for funding for the future

Cancercareline Notice of Closure from 31st. December 2016

Penllwyn Primary School Looking to expand their links with the community in order to enrich children’s learning, and wonders if Town Council would be interested

In respect One Voice Wales Innovative Practice National Awards 2017, Councillor J Criddle queried whether we might consider proposing our involvement with the Children’s Literature Festival under Best Youth Engagement Category.

In respect of the letter from Cancercareline, members expressed their disappointment and concern at the closure, but fully understood the position taken by the Trustees.
 Councillor M Veater MBE stated the loss of the earmarked Carer’s monies had been the start of the problems, and with the county Borough & Health Authority both looking to make savings, realistic funding requirements had brought about the position.
 After some further discussion, it was **agreed** a letter be sent to Cancercareline thanking them for their services to the town over many years.

6. *Schedule of Payments*

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

		£	p
Blackwood Little Theatre	Interest free loan	10,000.00	
Eversons	Past Mayor badges etc	111.00	
Blachere Illuminations	Christmas Lighting	4,234.73	
Peter Karrie Productions	Grant	250.00	
Blackwood Rugby Club	Grant	250.00	
Playworks	October Tax/N.I.	485.10	
Town & Comm. Councils	Subscription Fee	100.00	
Mr & Mrs A Hughes	Blackwood in Bloom - Prize	25.00	
Mr & Mrs B James	“ “ “	25.00	
Mr & Mrs P Dury	“ “ “	25.00	
Mr & Mrs Davies	“ “ “	25.00	
Mr & Mrs M Butler	“ “ “	25.00	
Mr & Mrs D Rees	“ “ “	25.00	
Mr & MRS D Boulton	“ “ “	25.00	
Ms M Harris & Mr D Lewis	“ “ “	25.00	

7. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3rd. October 2016*

With the addition of Mynyddislwyn Choir to the Opening Night under Item 3 Report on Velvet Coalmine Children’s Literature Festival, it was **resolved** the minutes be confirmed as a true record.

8. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk reported the Christmas figurines had been received and lamp posts identified. Furthermore, he had negotiated a 15% discount on the figures quoted at the last meeting, resulting in savings of approx £600.

9. *To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 17th. October 2016*

Councillor Roger Moore declared an Interest at this point being a Committee Member of Blackwood R.F.C., and took no part no the discussion or decision making.

Councillor J Criddle presented the minutes, and after some discussion it was resolved they be received.

In respect of the Council Highway Owned Car Parking Task & finish Group, members agreed the recommendation.

Similarly, they also agreed the recommendation regarding the Report by the Boundary Commission of Wales

It was *unanimously agreed* the following grants be made –

Peter Karrie Productions	£250
Blackwood Rugby Club	£250

Councillor J Criddle reported that during the signing of the Loan Agreement, Janine O’Callaghan had mentioned that during the refurbishment of the Theatre a significant amount of old memorabilia had come to light, and he had suggested they contact Gwent Archives and the Libanus Lifestyle Centre before deciding to discard anything.

It was agreed that Agenda Item 13 Additional Financial Support be discussed at this point of the Agenda

10. *To Consider Additional Financial Support to future Velvet Coalmine Literature Festivals*

Councillor J Criddle referred members to the copy of the Clerk’s Report to Policy & Finance Committee Meeting (17th. October) attached to minutes of that meeting, which identified a financial strategy which should ensure Town Council being the main named sponsor of this prestigious event, and the recommendations from that meeting are that -

- (1) Of the ongoing potential savings associated with the Carnival, £500 be earmarked towards the Literature Festival, the remainder (£1,500) invested back into other Events
- (2) £1,500 be earmarked from balances each year for the next 5 years towards the Literature Festival, possibly £750 each from Projects Reserves and General Reserves
- (3) The Precept for 2017/2018 be increased by £1, thus raising an approximate additional £3,000 per annum that be earmarked specifically for the Literature Festival

The resultant effect being to recommend that Town Council becomes the Title Sponsors for the Children's Literature Festival (with the acceptance of Velvet Coalmine) in the sum of £7,500 for the next 5 years

After much positive discussion it was *unanimously agreed* the recommendations be accepted, and that Town Council look to sponsor the Velvet Coalmine Children' Literature Festival in the sum of £7,500 each year for the next 5 years.

The Clerk indicated that it was planned to announce this new sponsorship deal at the Civic Awards Evening later in the week.

11. To Receive the Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held on 19th. October 2016

Councillor Z Hammond presented the minutes and it was *resolved* they be received.

She asked members present to indicate whether they would be attending the Civic Awards Evening, as numbers were likely to be in excess of 150.

Councillors M Gwynne, A Farina-Childs, J Edwards & R Moore tendered their apologies

12. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales RCT/Merthyr/Caerphilly Area Committee Meeting held on 13th. July 2016

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

13. To Receive the Minutes of the Town & Community Council's Liaison Committee Meeting held on 29th. June 2016

It was *resolved* the minutes be received

14. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales- Draft Report – Implications for Town Council

The Clerk reported on the Implications for Town Council being similar to previous years ie. the right to make payments to members in respect of printing etc.

It was agreed to defer discussion until the actual Report is received, albeit members views were that other than the Mayoral allowance, Town Council should not consider making other payments.

15. Planning Applications

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

16/0826/FULL Mr T Brewer Erect extension and conservatory to side of property to form restaurant and function room
Brewers Lodge, Gordon Road, Blackwood

16/0838/RET Mr & Mrs V Lusardi Retain wooden outbuilding in rear garden
9 Gordon Close, Blackwood

16/0920/FULL Mr T Layman Erect rear single storey lounge extension
64 Cae Collen, Blackwood

Also, the following were applications not reported at October meeting –

16/085/ADV Amin & Sons Install a fascia panel and a projecting blade
65-73 High Street, Blackwood

16/0722/COU New Eagle SA Convert 2nd floor vacant premises above 123,125 & 127 High Street into 3 new residential units, infill flat roof portion to rear of property to increase internal floor area providing access directly off High Street via door adjacent to 127
123 & 125-127 High Street, Blackwood

16/0743/FULL Mr & Mrs V Lusardi Erect single story extension to side and rear of bungalow
9 Gordon Close, Blackwood

It was *agreed* that no objections be raised in respect of these applications, and that members were pleased to see the application for residential units at the troublesome Vanilla Bar site.

16. Reports

Councillor J Criddle reported that the proposal to Conference

- 1) That the business and assets of the Association be transferred to Un Llais Cymru – One Voice Wales Limited (the “Company”) on the terms and subject to the conditions set out in the transfer agreement to be entered into by the Association and the Company, (a copy of which is appended to this notice).
- 2) That, following the transfer of the business and assets as set out in resolution 1 above, the Association be dissolved pursuant to rule 7 of the constitutional laws of the Association.

was not adopted, since 20% of membership agreement was required, and sufficient numbers were not in attendance.

Councillor Z Hammond reported that rough sleeping was becoming a major problem in the area, with the Night Shelter at Elim Baptist Church already over crowded, which proved the desperate need for single person accommodation.

She stated she was looking to organise a collection of clothing and toiletries for the rough sleepers prior to Christmas, and asked if Town Council would support this initiative.

After some further discussion it was *agreed* Town Council give their support, and if necessary consideration be given to financial support on receipt of an application.