

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup>. MAY 2019**

**Present :** Councillor J Edwards ( Mayor )  
Councillor G James ( Deputy Mayor )  
Councillors J Griffiths, R Mills, Z Hammond, A Short, A Farina-Childs, D Davies, T Evans,  
R Weeks, N Turner, P Cook & M Gwynne

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors C Erasmus, D Jones & J Weeks

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

**3. Outgoing Mayoral Report**

Councillor Edwards thanked members for their support during his year of office, with special thanks to Councillor Gerwyn James & the Clerk, and his wife Carol. He had been really honoured to represent the town and had enjoyed the whole experience. His main aim had been to raise the profile of Town Council, and he had done so whenever the opportunity arose.

Councillor D Davies thanked the Mayor on behalf of the Independents on Town Council for being the public face of the town and for all he had done during his year of office. These sentiments were echoed by Councillor R Mills on behalf of Plaid Cymru and Councillor P Cook on behalf of the Labour Party.

Councillor Edwards reported he had raised £700 to date for his nominated Alzheimer's Charity

**4. To Elect a Mayor**

It was proposed, seconded and **unanimously agreed** Councillor Gerwyn James be elected Mayor.

The Mayor thanked members for the honour bestowed on him and reported his Charity was Family Fund, a local Charity that provide support and respite to disabled children and their families.

**5. To Elect a Deputy Mayor**

Councillors J Griffiths & A Short were both nominated for the position of Deputy Mayor. After a secret ballot it was **resolved** that Councillor Janet Griffiths be elected Deputy Mayor.

**6. To Nominate Members to the following –**

The Clerk reported that part of the Audit requirements were copies of Committee Terms of Reference, and as none were on record, had presented proposed copies to members for their perusal. After some discussion it was resolved they be accepted, and are included as part of these minutes ( Appendix 1 ).

He also informed members he would be looking to present updated copies of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations over the next month or so.

**(a) Finance & Policy Committee**

It was **resolved** the following members be nominated –  
Councillors P Cook, Z Hammond, D Davies, J Edwards, T Evans, A Short & R Mills

**(b) Planning & Licensing Committee**

It was **resolved** the following members be nominated –  
Councillors D Davies, J Edwards, Z Hammond, R Mills & J Griffiths

**(c) Environment Committee**

It was **resolved** the following members be nominated –  
Councillors T Evans, J Edwards, C Erasmus, R Mills & J Griffiths

**(d) Newsletter/Web Page Committee**

It was **resolved** the following members be nominated –  
Councillors J Weeks, Z Hammond & P Cook

**(e) Twinning Committee**

This Committee be open to all members

**(f) Events Committee**

This Committee is open to all members

**7. To Nominate Members to the following**

**(a) Town & Community Council Joint Liaison Committee**

Three members were nominated for the 2 positions – Councillors Z Hammond, C Erasmus & D Davies, and after a secret vote it was **resolved** Councillors C Erasmus & D Davies be appointed

**(b) C.C.B.C. Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee**

Both Councillors D Davies & C Erasmus were nominated and after a secret vote it was **resolved** that Councillor C Erasmus be appointed with Councillor D Davies as Deputy

**(c) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group**

Four members were nominated for the 2 positions – Councillors R Mills, Z Hammond, M Gwynne & G James, and after a secret vote it was **resolved** Councillors Z Hammond & G James be appointed

**(d) Retail Partnership Group**

It was **resolved** Councillors J Edwards & A Short be appointed

**(e) After Hours/ Night time Economy Group**

It was **resolved** Councillors Z Hammond & G James be appointed

**(f) Bus Station Multi Agency Group**

Given the uncertainty regarding the future of this group, members **agreed** this be merged with the above and Councillors Z Hammond & G James therefore be appointed

**(g) One Voice Wales Area Committee & Larger Councils Committee**

It was **resolved** Councillor C Erasmus be appointed

**(h) Plas Mawr Community Centre Committee**

Whilst members reported that no meetings appeared to have been held recently, it was **agreed** Councillor J Griffiths be appointed

**(i) Bi-Centenary Committee**

It was **unanimously agreed**, given the very recent formation of this Committee that Councillor Gerwyn James ( current Chair ) be appointed

**8. To Consider Governor Representation – Ysgol Cwm Derwen , Ysgol Bro Sannan & Blackwood Primary School**

There appeared to be little enthusiasm from members to serve on any of these Governing Bodies, and it was suggested the Clerk contact EAS to seek advice regarding the possibility of Town Council nominating individuals to serve as Community representatives ( Co-opted by Town Council )

## **9. To Confirm Provisional Dates & Times of Future Council Meetings & Method of Notification (E mail)**

The Clerk presented his report, and the following dates for meetings, start times and notification of meetings to members via e mail were agreed -

3<sup>rd</sup>. June  
1<sup>st</sup>. July  
2<sup>nd</sup>. September  
7<sup>th</sup>. October  
4<sup>th</sup>. November  
2<sup>nd</sup>. December  
6<sup>th</sup>. January  
3<sup>rd</sup>. February  
2<sup>nd</sup>. March  
4<sup>th</sup>. April

All meetings start at 6.30pm.

Notification of Meetings be via E-Mail with hard copies of Agendas Minutes & Reports also available on the evening of the meeting

## **10. Correspondence**

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

One Voice Wales      Notification of next Caerphilly/Merthyr/RCT meeting to be held at 7.00pm. on 24<sup>th</sup>. July at Council Offices, Llwyn On, Penpedairheol

Copy of recent presentation by Planning Aid Wales

Independent Remuneration Panel – necessary Opt Out Form for £150 allowance

Copy of correspondence with CCBC Monitoring Officer

Dear Ms Bowden,

It has come to my attention the recent email exchange between you and Mr John Hold, Clerk to Blackwood Town Council, which I have copied below for ease of reference.

I am rather concerned that One Voice Wales will be using our consultation as an example of bad practice. It leads me to wonder what more Caerphilly CBC could have done in consulting on its budget proposals, which included the proposal to close the toilets in the four main towns in the county borough. I attach my email to Mr Hold which details the extent of the consultation undertaken and further, the minutes of the Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee, arranged under the Charter, when you will note in the penultimate sentence on item 9 that reference is made to the proposal to close the toilets. Clearly the proposed closure of the toilets was specifically raised and discussed at the meeting, which also had in attendance the Leader of Caerphilly CBC, Cllr Poole.

I hope that after considering my comments and the attachments that you will come to a different view and conclude that far from not directly engaging and consulting with the town and community councils in the county borough, the reality of the situation is that the consultation that Caerphilly CBC undertook is an exemplar of good practice.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards

Robert Tranter  
Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Dear Mr Tranter

Thank you for your email and attachments of 2nd April 2019 outlining the County Borough Council's multi faceted consultation process regarding the County Borough Council's annual budget proposals and the Public Convenience strategy and I apologise for the delay in replying but I have now had the opportunity to speak with Lyn Cadwallader, CEO, One Voice Wales.

It is noted that the budget proposals and Public Convenience strategy included plans to close the toilets in the four main towns in the County Borough, it is also noted that the County Borough Council's budget proposals were also discussed at a Community Liaison Committee although the closure of public conveniences did not appear to be raised.

However given the nature of the Community and Town Council sector with the only officer support often being a part time Clerk One Voice Wales would suggest that bespoke consultations about the closure of the toilets with the Community & Town Councils affected would have been desirable.

It is appreciated that the unprecedented cutbacks being asked of the County Borough Council impacts on its staffing resources but anticipating that the closure of public conveniences would have a major impact on communities a meeting with or email to the four Community/Town Councils directly affected by the proposals may have overcome adverse reactions from both Community and Town Councils and the public.

In liaison with the Welsh Local Government Association regarding partnership working, community asset transfers and delegation of services One Voice Wales is calling for more granular consultation with proposals being broken down into Community & Town Council areas such consultations would spell out how each Community & Town Council area would be affected and would give those Councils time to consult and if necessary budget to provide solutions.

Whilst it can be seen from your email and attachments of 2nd April that the County Borough Council did consult on its budget proposals with the Community & Town Councils as per the Charter agreement it is hoped that in future a more specific approach could be considered to identify how proposals will directly impact on Community & Town Councils.

This would enable the Community & Town Councils lean staffing structures to focus on the issues for their areas and hopefully assist to come to a satisfactory solution for the communities we all serve.

Yours sincerely

Shan Bowden  
Development Officer

NALC	Notification of Salary Increase for Clerks from 1 <sup>st</sup> . April 2019 – 2% increase equates to a £267 per annum increase to the Clerks annual salary
Aled George	Letter introducing himself as the new Inspector for Blackwood & Risca and requesting to attend Town Council on 1 <sup>st</sup> . July 2019
Caerphilly C.B.C.	Consultation on Review of Caerphilly Regeneration Grants – closing date 13 <sup>th</sup> . May( notification received 2 <sup>nd</sup> . May ) - extension requested

A report was presented to Caerphilly County Borough Council's Cabinet on the 27th February 2019 on the review of CCBC Regeneration Grants. The report sought Cabinet approval to consult more widely on proposals to merge several Council run grant programmes into a Caerphilly Enterprise Fund that focuses delivery on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities. The rationale behind combining the grants into a single fund is to offer improved support to start-up businesses, stimulate economic growth, fill identified supply chain voids and support job creation. In order to fund the new programme, officers propose discontinuing the current regeneration grants, including the Community Regeneration Fund. Although the grant regime will be open for community groups and social enterprises they will need to evidence that their projects focus on economic activity.

The Council is seeking your views on the proposals within the Cabinet report and would appreciate it if you could complete the questionnaire.

It is advised that you read the accompanying information prior to completing the survey.

The closing date for the consultation is 13 May 2019.

A further report outlining the results of the consultation exercise will be presented in due course to Cabinet.

Notification of payment of 1<sup>st</sup>. instalment of Precept for 2019/20 - £29,472.40

## Response from Monitoring Officer to my correspondence

Good afternoon Mr Tranter, your recent email to Cllr.Etheridge refusing his request for Call in on Closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre states that Blackwood Town Council was consulted and that a proper consultation process was undertaken. Reference to the Charter is irrelevant as the Town Council were consulted and properly aware of the proposal.

Of course we were always aware of the proposal, hence our detailed response to the initial consultation dated November 2017.

However, Town Council were promised a detailed response to this submission.

Having written to the Interim Chief Executive chasing up same I did receive a brief response from Robert Hartshorn that failed to satisfy the request regarding discussions with the local community, leisure centre users and groups, partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, no mention of exploring the potential of Asset Transfer of the Leisure Centre to community ownership and enabling all interested parties as described above to develop the most appropriate legal charitable operational model and also explore additional funding routes to ensure such a transfer of assets could take place.

We are still waiting !!! Empty promises again !!! Guess we'll have to await the Legal Challenge outcome. On another matter could I ask your professional view on the worth of the Town & Community Councils Charter Agreement ?

This appears to be the second time in a relatively short period that you have ruled the Charter to be not relevant.

In your opinion is a broad budget consultation document of 60+pages classed as meaningful consultation with town and community councils on specific matters affecting the well being of our towns and communities ?

One Voice Wales do not agree and they have referred same and we are now awaiting the views of Welsh Government.

I await your response

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Dear Mr Hold,

Thank you for your recent email.

Clearly where town/community councils are consulted on a proposal, then it would be unnecessary duplication to re-consult under the Charter. The Charter continues to be relevant, but there are situations where consultation has already taken place.

Whilst it is perfectly proper for the town and community councils to be consulted via the normal budget consultation process, you will be aware that a senior financial officer and the Leader met the town/community councils to discuss the budgetary implications of the draft budget at the Community Council Liaison Sub-Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018. I believe that you were invited to the meeting but were unable to attend.

Kind regards Robert Tranter Head Of Legal Services And Monitoring Officer Caerphilly County Borough Council

Noah's Ark Charity Blackwood ATC Llangollen Int. Music Eisteddfod DYT Dance & Drama	Letters of thanks for Town Council's generous donations
Bobath Children's Therapy Centre & Fitzroy Lodge Residents Group	Applications for Financial Assistance – to be referred to Policy & Finance Committee for consideration

With regard the pay award members agreed implementation.

The Consultation on Review of Caerphilly Regeneration Grants was due to end today, and even after approaches for an extension by a number of Town /Community Clerks had been told that because the issue did not directly affect the town/ community councils no extension would be granted.

After some discussion it was agreed the Clerk respond by registering our disappointment that only 11 days were given for consultation on this issue, and that it feels yet again that the Borough are only paying lip service to town and community councils this being yet another example of the mockery the supposed meaningful consultation process with us has become.

Furthermore, that members were dismayed to hear that the grant regime will now focus entirely on support to start up businesses, stimulating economic growth and supporting job creation.

Worthy as this focus may seem, the effect on the wider social aspects by community groups and social enterprises having to evidence that their projects focus on economic activity seem to have been misguided. It seems likely many of these groups will now struggle to come to terms with the new requirements and it must be questionable how many will continue to provide their services into the future. Again it seems likely that many will now be approaching town and community councils for funding.

### ***11. Schedule of Payments***

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

		£. p.
K & R Print	Application Forms & Flyers for Carnival	60.00
Playworks	April Tax/N.I.	292.79
John Hold	April Salary + reimbursements	941.00
Islwyn Art Project	Financial Assistance – Schools pilot project	291.00

### ***12. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 15th. April 2019***

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



### ***13. Matters Arising***

The Clerk reported that he had received a response regarding our request to sponsor a Blackwood Inspirational Volunteer of the Year Award. Unfortunately, were our request supported, then other Town & Community Councils might follow suit, thus making the event unmanageable. They have asked if we would consider sponsoring the Volunteer of the Year Award for the whole of Caerphilly County. It's the final award of the evening, and the winner is chosen, by the Judging Panel, from every nomination received.

For £250 sponsorship we are offered -

- A place on the Judging Panel for all the awards categories
- Two tickets to the event
- An opportunity to meet the Lord Lieutenant and other dignitaries who attend the event
- Presenting the actual awards to the winner and runner-up
- Media profile before and after the event, including photographs - this is supported by our colleagues and partners in the PR team at Caerphilly County Council

After some discussion, members ***agreed*** this was a worthy event to support, and since held in Blackwood, would be an ideal opportunity to increase our profile throughout the area.

### ***14. To Receive the Minutes of the Bi-Centenary Committee Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup>. April 2019***

It was ***agreed*** the minutes be received

### ***15. To Receive the Minutes of the One Voice Wales Caerphilly/ Merthyr/ RCT Area Committee Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup>. April 2019***

It was ***agreed*** the minutes be received

### ***16. Financial Accounts 2018/2019, together with Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup>. March 2019***

The Clerk presented his report and the Accounts, and commented on variations to the original budget and previous monitoring report. The Internal Auditor was not available, and so he proposed to present the Annual Return to the next meeting.

It was ***resolved*** the Annual Accounts be approved.

## ***17. Application for Financial Assistance - Islwyn Arts Project***

The Clerk reported on the e-mail he had forwarded to all members regarding same, namely -

Good morning all, I have received a time sensitive application - project due to start 3rd.May- and am contacting you to gauge your approval or otherwise.

The application is from Elizabeth Millington ( Islwyn Arts Project ) and the application is for art materials / tutor fees totalling £291.92 which will enable artists with learning disabilities to go into Libanus School and work with Year 5 pupils.

Elizabeth attended our Bi-Centenary Committee meeting on Monday evening and explained that this initial pilot project if proved successful would then be replicated in other schools - Blackwood, Cefn Fforest and possibly local comprehensives. The aim is to enable people with a learning disability to play a more active role within our community and encourage the children to interact with them.

The Islwyn Arts Project are currently working on a Bi Centenary logo for the committee and have been supportive of the carnival and christmas activities in the past.

As an aside the Blackwood Musical Theatre Society who are planning to perform a production of the Forgotten ( Chartist based) identified the possibility of this planned project assisting in the production of banners/ placards etc for the advertising of / and for the show itself.

I believe Bi Centenary Committee members saw the potential benefits of this proposed project and realising the Islwyn Arts Project based in Blackwood could become an important part of the community locally.

Personally I believe that for a relatively modest outlay we could encourage and nurture something that will be a benefit to the town.

Your support would be appreciated and if the majority of members respond positively I will arrange transfer of funds as a matter urgency to ensure the project starts as planned later this week.

Regards

John

Having received positive support from the following members - G James, T Evans, P Cook, J Griffiths, A Farina- Childs, D Davies, Z Hammond, A Short, J Edwards & M Gwynne, together with C Erasmus ( but who declared an interest as Governor For Libanus School ), the Clerk had made payment of £290 to ensure the project started on time.

The Clerk requested Town Council's ratification of his actions. Members ***agreed unanimously.***

### ***18. Update on Toilets Closure and possible interim solution***

The Clerk reported on recent correspondence regarding the Toilets, namely -

Good evening , I see from the Council web page that there have been discussions with the developers of the proposed artisan market regarding a potential interim solution.

All very good news, but yet again officers are totally by-passing Town Council and our Charter Agreement. You are aware that One Voice Wales are of the same opinion as Town Council that the Charter has not been properly adhered to and feel separate meaningful consultation should have taken place on the closures ( and not via a 60+ page budget strategy consultation ) and have passed the information through to the Welsh Government for their views.

The strength of feeling against the closure is well documented with a 3,000 signature petition and Councillor Kevin Etheridge's attempt for a Call in against the decision, but yet again Town Council have not had the courtesy of any communication regarding any potential solution, but at least you are consistent in that respect.

Instead we have to pick up the information via other sources.

Does our Charter Agreement really have any relevance anymore, apparently not.

To say Town Council is disappointed and disgusted at the seemingly contemptuous attitude of the Borough towards us is an understatement.

I await your response with interest

Good afternoon John

The chief executive has asked me to respond to your email below.

Before referencing the potential new development, I will deal with the issues you have raised regarding consultation.

I am content we followed the principles of consultation as outlined in the charter. In terms of process, the proposed closure of the public toilets was emphasised in the draft 2019/20 budget consultation and was one that we categorised as having high public impact. In addition, on the webpage that we used for our budget consultation we included the proposed toilet closure in a list of just 8 bullet points highlighting some of the savings proposals. This same list including the proposal to close the public toilets was also contained within the email sent to Town and Community Councils Clerks on 22nd November 2018 regarding the consultation on the draft budget. I am also aware that the Leader of the Council attended the Town and Community Council Liaison Committee Meeting on 21st November 2018 in connection with the draft budget consultation where the proposed closure of the public toilets was discussed. The final budget proposals were circulated to Clerks on 18th February 2019. It is quite clear that Town and Community Councils had ample opportunity to respond to the budget consultation and to consider whether they wished to respond on the potential closure of public toilets. No response was received from Blackwood Town Council in relation to the proposed closure of the public toilets.

It is stated below that the consultation was via a '60+ page budget strategy' – It is important to point out that the actual budget consultation document consisted of a 5 page document that clearly set out the savings proposals in tables (and a clear indication of impact). This was included in Newline that was distributed to over 80,000 properties. There was also far reaching face to face engagement which included two separate dates in Blackwood Town Centre.

When the 2019/20 budget and associated savings were discussed at full council in February 2019, none of the Blackwood ward members raised a direct objection to the inclusion of public toilet closures.

More recently this matter was discussed at the Blackwood Town Centre Management Group when officers made it clear that they would welcome any interest from Blackwood Town Council in running the public toilets. Indeed, the Town Centre Management Group agreed to write to the Town Council regarding this. Turning now to the proposed Artisan Market development, Officers have worked proactively with the developer of the Artisan Market (those discussions were initiated by one of the Blackwood councillors) in discussing alternative provision. Whilst those discussions are ongoing we have put out a statement to inform the public of that. If a third party chooses to include toilets within their development proposals and ultimately to make those toilets available for public use then It is a matter for the planning process on which the town council is a direct consultee. Once we have received confirmation of the developers intentions then I am happy for Rob Hartshorn (as the relevant head of service) to let you know exactly what is being proposed.

As stated above. One option is a commitment from the town council to take over the management of the public toilets in blackwood (some other community councils are also considering this approach). Again, Rob Hartshorn would be happy to discuss that with you if required.

Regards

Mark S. Williams Interim Corporate Director of Communities| [Caerphilly County Borough Council](#)

Many thanks for your email Mark.

Whilst you state Blackwood Town Centre Management Group were to write to Town Council I do not appear to have received any such direct correspondence and I have in fact been chasing information on breakdown of costs etc. for some time ( Robert Hartson did contact me on 24th. April, identifying costs as £17,888 )

As you will appreciate an amount like this would represent some 30% of Town Councils precept and equate to an additional £6/£7 on our existing £20 charge at Band D.

Rob,

I have on several occasions requested an additional breakdown of the costs already provided.

Am I to assume there is no charge for water usage ??

Thanks

JohnClerk to Blackwood Town Council

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Hello John,

I understand that your request for a more detailed breakdown of the figures was passed directly to our Finance section in my absence. I apologise for the delay. As Finance have been dealing with the end of year close down of the accounts, they have only now been in a position to provide the attached figures.

You will see that the actual total provided is £17,888, this is less than the £20,500 figure previously provided which was an estimate based on part year figures.

I am still waiting for clarification of water charges and will confirm this with you once received.

Regards

Rob

Hello John,

The figure that I have for the last full year of water charges is £2287. That would be on top of the £17,888 for other items given below.

Regards

Rob

Many thanks. I thought it unusual for no water charges.

Presumably there are no more costs - rates not payable on toilets ?

Regards

NNDR is met by the "landlord" - the Council's Integrated Transport Unit. My service has never been recharged for NNDR; as the toilets are part of the bus station and building the ITU will incur NNDR whether the toilet element is open for use or closed.

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Thanks for the clarification.

Am I right in assuming that the bus companies have separate toilet facilities and that their costs are not included in those costs quoted ?

That's right – Stagecoach have a restroom with a toilet and they pay separately for water and electric for that.

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Response re. Porthcawl

The subject of public conveniences is one that is going to affect all towns across Wales and I have been on BBC Radio Wales on two occasions now warning that any non-statutory obligation currently being undertaken by local authorities is under threat of closure, and these include public conveniences, leisure centres, libraries, community centres etc so do keep a very close watch on any of those I've listed that are important to residents in Blackwood.

The public conveniences in Porthcawl are one of the most important things that our town needs as we attract over a million visitors each year and we have 3 of them. The most important one is located in our main shopping area (John Street)....originally opened in 1924 and subsequently bestowed Grade II listed status which created a much more difficult situation for Porthcawl Town Council.

BCBC notified us of their intention to close them on 2<sup>nd</sup> January and this was further complicated by the fact that there was a local authority employee that was responsible for cleaning them. Originally there were 4 employees responsible for maintaining them although 3 had already been made redundant, with the remaining one still in situ and all costs associated with current salary and pension contributions would then have become the responsibility of the town council under TUPE rules, and that was something that we couldn't afford to do.

So, the toilets did close on Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> and the last remaining employee was made redundant prior to their closure.

Prior to their closure Porthcawl Town Council made arrangements for a temporary portable facility to be situated in the car park behind the original ones and these were in place for a period of 6 weeks at a cost of around £4000 to the town council.

During that period we had discussions with BCBC over possibility of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) although we wouldn't be able to proceed until a full structural survey was undertaken by them.

This is still outstanding and therefore the town council were granted a 12 month licence to operate agreement by the local authority, whereby the town council would be responsible for the cleaning and minor maintenance but BCBC still being responsible for the structure..eg the roof blowing off in a storm.

The town council obtained 2 quotations for contract cleaning and this was awarded to a company called DANFO who already maintain the public conveniences for Pembrokeshire & Carmarthenshire councils. The costs for this are £34,000 per annum although this not only includes John Street toilets but also Griffin Park and they are responsible for opening/closing them as well as cleaning and supplying of toilet paper/sanitary bags.

Our toilets re-opened on 14<sup>th</sup> February and we still have a fair way to go as I understand that there are structural defects on both our public conveniences which will need to be resolved before any finalization of a CAT transfer

Members thanked the Clerk for his report and again voiced their dismay that locally elected representatives seemed to be excluded from meetings.

Councillor Z Hammond reported that no planning application had yet been made in respect of the potential solution, supposedly along the back wall adjacent to the Café, but was aware that the Café owners would probably have objections to any such proposals. She was also aware that County Councillor K Etheridge was trying to arrange a meeting with John Stevens ( Consultant ) regarding proposals and likely timescales for the works.

The Clerk reported on further correspondence he had regarding the fact that Caerphilly C.B.C. had apparently been in discussions with the local Taxi Association regarding them taking over responsibility for Caerphilly Town toilets. They confirmed the initial approach had come from the Taxi Association, but no such approach has been received regarding Blackwood, and suggested any collaborative proposal for Blackwood might warrant contact with them.

After some further discussion members were of the opinion that it was very unlikely the local taxi companies or bus companies would be willing to contribute to any such proposal, but felt we really needed to ascertain the likely timescales for the Artisan Market solution before making any such decisions, whilst understanding the ongoing detrimental effect on the town the lack of such facilities is having on businesses.

## ***19. Planning Applications***

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

### ***Case Ref. 19/0268/COU***

Site Area: 101m<sup>2</sup>

Location: 113 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AD (UPRN 000043064336)

Proposal: Retain part existing retail unit and convert/change the use to its rear into 1 No. studio apartment and 1 No. two bed maisonette

### ***Case Ref. 19/0269/FULL***

Site Area: 128m<sup>2</sup>

Location: 161 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AA (UPRN 000043055453)

Proposal: Retain part existing retail unit and convert/change the use to its rear into 2 No. studio apartments and the construction of a new storey at roof level to provide 2 No. one bed apartments

### ***Case Ref. 19/0314/FULL***

Site Area: 786m<sup>2</sup>

Location: 9 Sunnybank Road Blackwood NP12 1HY (UPRN 000043054771)

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

Councillor Z Hammond Chair of Planning highlighted that the applications in respect of the High Street proposals are both from the same company and both propose only retaining part of the current retail units. This, without a proper local development plan in place by the Borough Council could become a trend on the High Street. Whilst members were concerned they also acknowledged that at least some provision was being retained for retail units, and this was preferable to even more empty properties on the High Street. It was agreed no objections be raised but that our concerns be forwarded together with additional concerns regarding adequate parking provisions

Councillor Hammond also confirmed that notification had been received from the Planning Inspectorate that an appeal has been submitted by Persimmon Homes concerning the 300 homes at Heol y Cefn. The documentation submitted with the appeal is currently being worked through, following which the appeal will be assessed or validity. The local planning authority will notify those parties involved at application stage of the commencement of the appeal and advise of the due date for comments.

## **20. Reports**

The Clerk reported on the two mindless attacks on the defibrillator outside the Maxime Cinema. The first, notified by Councillor Gerwyn James, ( April 9<sup>th</sup>. ) was a deliberate burning of the perspex front to the machine, which did not, however, compromise the machine itself. The second attack, notified by Councillor Zoe Hammond, ( May 2<sup>nd</sup>. ) actually smashed the Perspex and a decision was taken to remove the defibrillator for safety and place inside the cinema. The Clerk having consulted with both these members ordered a replacement part £25, and Councillor James fitted same when received on 8<sup>th</sup>. May. The defibrillator is again 24/7 operational.

Members fully supported the Clerk and Councillors actions, and after some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk should order a further 2 perspex panels as an insurance against any further incidents, consider if/how we could make them more vandal resistant and issue press release.