

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD REMOTELY  
ON 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021**

Present: Cllr. R Mills ( Mayor )

Cllrs A Farina-Childs, G James, G Edwards, D Davies, T Jones, C Erasmus, A Davies &  
P Cook

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. J Edwards, D Jones, M Gwynne & A Short together with those from County Cllr. K Etheridge, Inspector A Boucher & P.C. Adam Lang

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Declarations of Interest were made by Cllr. D Davies in respect of Item 10 Remembrance Service as a Member of the British Legion & Cllrs A Farina-Childs & G James in respect of Item 11 Civic Award Nominations (Mrs Linda Price) as fellow serving Governors at Blackwood Comprehensive School

**3. Police Report**

In the absence of the Police, the Clerk read through the Report that had been forwarded by Inspector Andrew Boucher and already forwarded to members, and which forms part of the minutes of this meeting.

The report was received.

**4. County Borough Report**

County Cllr. Andrew Farina-Childs gave a brief update, much already mentioned in the police report regarding anti social behaviour – at the Interchange/ Bus station, Palmer Place, Ty Isha & Addison Street ( stones being thrown & bins tipped over ).

Continuing problems with drainage issues at Cwmgelli, Bloomfield Road & Lilian Road.

He and fellow Borough members are working closely with Environment, Housing & Police to help solve the numerous issues brought to their attention by residents.

He thanked Cllrs. Rhys Mills & Gerwyn James for their assistance in erecting & taking down the lamp post poppies, whilst identifying several purple ones had disappeared.

He placed on record his congratulations to County Cllr. Kevin Etheridge on his recent much deserved award as Community Champion of the Year and it was agreed Town Council acknowledge this success

**5. Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor reported that he had been selling raffle tickets on behalf of his nominated charity – Ty Hafan

## 6. Correspondence

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

Caerphilly C.B.C. News Online etc. - forwarded to members

Footfall information – forwarded to members

Sustainable transport measures – experimental pedestrian & cycle zones have been in operation outside Libanus School for some 14 months, and a decision is to be made whether to make permanent or be removed.

Having contacted Nicola Williams, Headmistress at the school her views are

With regards to the road restriction outside our school; I think it is an excellent measure in principle and I would like it to continue. However there are two major issues with it.

1. Over 50% of our pupils are out of catchment and are unable to walk to our school as they live too far away. This means that they have to park their cars somewhere near the school and walk from wherever they park.

No thought has been put into where they can park. I have asked that the car park opposite the police station be given over to this at drop off and pick up time but highways have said no. In reality it means that residential streets are annoyed at the congestion in their streets during these times. I have had a few complaints. A designated car park for our parents is really important for this scheme to really work..

2. The scheme is very poorly patrolled by law enforcement officers. In the beginning this was quite regular but unfortunately in the last year there has only been one day when the officers were there. I am told that there is not enough staff for this to happen more frequently. Therefore many of our parents use the road as normal and take no notice of the restriction. This is an accident waiting to happen and it is only law enforcement that will change this.

This has been an extremely disappointing part of the scheme.

Place Shaping – Your Homes, Your Future - Forwarded to members

Civic Xmas Card – Forwarded to members

Aneurin Bevan UHB Covid Updates – forwarded to members

One Voice Wales Remote Training sessions –forwarded to members

Notification of Welsh Govt. Defibrillator Grant – Forwarded to members

Local Election ( Principal Areas) ( Wales ) Rules 2021 & Local Elections ( Communities) ( Wales ) Rules 2021 – also Forwarded to members

As the consultation document made clear, the majority of the rules governing local elections remain the same as for previous years excepting changes made necessary by the extension to the franchise. However, there were also several additional draft rules included which gave effect to the proposals contained in the Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales consultation. Following the consultation on the draft rules, Ministers have made decision on how these and other changes will be progressed as follows:

- Candidate's home address

In line with the approach taken in other elections, candidates will be required to include with their nomination paper a separate home address form. This will allow a candidate to state that they do not want their home address to be made public or published.

- Statement of political party affiliation

A new draft rule was included in the consultation which required candidates to include, on nomination forms, details of political party membership in the preceding 12 months. This provision will remain in the final rules but is amended to make clear the intention that Returning Officers will not be required to check the information (which will be publically available) or to act on accusations of false information.

- Personal statement for candidates

Given the delay in making these Rules due to Covid, Ministers have taken on board feedback and have decided that candidate statements will not be implemented for the local elections in 2022. However, they will be subsequently taken forward in the near future given the importance of supporting electors in accessing information around those wishing to represent them.

- Electronic submission of candidate nomination forms

This provision in the draft rules allows for the Returning Officer to consider offering an option to candidates to submit the nomination electronically. The draft rules proposed that the decision to do so should rest with the Returning Officer. The revised rule will make it a requirement for Returning Officers to enable candidates to submit nominations electronically. We expect most local authorities to receive the nominations by email, but if the local authority is able to provide for online submission, the Returning Officer will be able to do so. In any event, they must be able to receive nominations by at least one of these arrangements. The option for candidates to submit nomination in person remains as well.

So there is no dispute as to whether a nomination submitted electronically has been submitted in time, the new rule will require the nomination paper to have appeared in the host authority's computer system before the close of nominations. It will be incumbent on the candidate to make sure the nomination paper has been received in time – in the same way as it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure their nomination paper has been delivered manually before the deadline and is correct

- Counting Agents and polling agents formula

The draft Rules removed the current formulas associated with polling and counting agents and allowed numbers to be determined by the Returning Officer. However, in light of responses to the consultation and learning from the Senedd election the formulas are reinstated in the final Rules.

- Independent/ Annibynnol

Further provision has been made in the Rules for an independent candidate to include on a nomination paper the term “Independent”, “Annibynnol” or both those words.

- Timetable and Consequential rules

In order that the current timetable for having the Rules come into force in December may be met, certain consequential amendments arising from the changes introduced in the Rules will need to be made in a secondary set of regulations. These consequential amendments will be mainly technical in nature (for example, amending both sets of 2006 Rules so they no longer apply in Wales) and are not necessary for planning the election to commence.

*Gwent Police*

We Don't Buy Crime

We Don't Buy Crime Department Gwent Police November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you as clerk of your Community Council to invite you to work with us to address acquisitive crime within your locality. We understand the impact that acquisitive crime, including burglary and theft, can have and we are committed to protecting our communities against these crimes.

Please find attached an information leaflet detailing some of the work of the We Don't Buy Crime Team, our acquisitive crime taskforce, and how we hope to work with you in the near future to continue this work through our Safer Neighbourhoods strategy.

We are happy to arrange a presentation to you and your community council members to provide further information about the scheme and answer any queries you may have.

To arrange this, please contact the team at [wedontbuycrime@gwent.police.uk](mailto:wedontbuycrime@gwent.police.uk)

Kind regards,

Inspector Hannah Lawton

We Don't Buy Crime Lead Gwent Police

- Welsh Government** Section 137 Council’s Discretionary Expenditure Limits – Notification that the limit has increased to £8.82 per elector for 2022/23 an increase of 4.8% on previous year ( £8.41 )
- Royal British Legion** Invitation to Clerk & Mayor to attend 100th. Anniversary Service of Blackwood Branch on Friday 10<sup>th</sup>. December @ 7.00pm at St. Margaret’s Church
- Boverton Nurseries** Quotation for Hanging Baskets for Town in 2022 in the sum of £1,262.80 + VAT compared with £1,201.00 for current year ( 5.1% increase ) The Nursery required an urgent response, so as per last year, the Clerk reported that he wrote to Blackwood Nurseries enquiring whether they might be in a position to quote, but have had no response – this year whilst they were not in a position to carry out the work due to the Covid uncertainties they did quote at approx 7% higher than Boverton.  
Given the need to respond asap to guarantee delivery, and on the basis they have supplied without any issues/problems since we took over responsibility from Caerphilly Borough Council and are still more competitive than the quote received from Blackwood for the current year, the Clerk reported he had confirmed acceptance and requested members support of his actions.

In respect of the Sustainable Transport Measures at Libanus, it was **agreed** the Council support the views expressed by the Head teacher and that the Clerk write to CCBC accordingly

In respect of We Don’t Buy Crime, it was **agreed** the offer of a presentation to Town Council be accepted, and the Clerk arrange same for a future meeting

In respect of Boverton Nurseries, members **supported** the actions of the Clerk in accepting the Quotation for Hanging Baskets for 2022.

It was also the Clerk make enquiries regarding the cost of Tower Baskets, with Town Council livery, similar to those that were kindly donated last year and positioned opposite the Blackwood Miners Institute

## 7. Schedule of Payments

The following payments have been made/are due or payment –

		£. p
Andrew Short	Plants/ Materials Remembrance Garden	388.00
John Hold	November Salary plus reimbursements ( incl. Prize monies/ poppy wreath/ Blackwood Rotary donation )	1,166.00
Inland Revenue	Tax/ N.I. Contributions – November	290.76
Playworks	November fee	20.00
John Hold	Reimbursement – Christmas Selection Boxes/ Chocolates	1,406.25

## **8. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup>.November 2021**

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

## **9. Matters Arising**

Police Report - The Clerk reported that CCBC acknowledged their systems, like many other local authorities were not compatible with the Police NICE system, but that they were working hard on finding a solution

Correspondence – Domain Ownership Issues – apparently CCBC records were out of date, and our new web hosts United Graphic Designs already have this in hand

Christmas Activities – The Clerk reported that having undertaken quite a comprehensive comparison of Selection boxes online and at several local stores ( £2.99 on Cadburys own website ) the best price was £1.50 at B&M Blackwood. Having spoken to the Manager they have ordered and storing 775 boxes, and also agree a further 10% reduction to £1.35 per box.

Having contacted the schools, delivery will be made week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Chocolates for residential homes are likely to be purchased from Tesco Ystrad Mynach and the Clerk reported he is in the process of trying to obtain a small reduction for the purchase of 100 boxes.

Reports - Petition Children's play park at Plas Mawr fields - The Clerk reported that correspondence he had been copied into seemed to indicate that CCBC were under the misapprehension that Town Council had agreed to finance the scheme. He had written informing them that whilst supportive of the petition, no discussion and certainly no commitment to funding same had been made, whilst pointing out that if any proposal was likely to cost anywhere near the replacement costs of the Civic Centre play park, there was very little likelihood without significant funding from other sources that this could ever proceed.

A recent e-mail from Mike Headington CCBC to Cllr. Etheridge ( there has been no direct contact with Town Council ) estimated the costs at £70k plus planning fees

This will be placed on Agenda for January meeting

Reports – Update of Notice Boards to acknowledge Chartists Movement – The Clerk reported that after contacting CCBC they were conscious the boards probably needed updating, and that this was something that could be considered, subject to budget availability and queried whether Town Council would be willing to contribute towards any such replacements

Reports – Benches at/near Library – The Clerk reported he was awaiting contact from Gavin Barry, Highways Operations Manager, currently on leave

## **10. Remembrance Service**

Having Declared an Interest in this item Cllr D Davies took no part in the discussion or decision taken

The Clerk reported that several members had raised issues regarding the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph, which they felt reflected badly on the British Legion and the town itself.

Members of the public also voiced similar concerns.

It has been suggested Town Council offer assistance to the British Legion to ensure the shortcomings are not repeated in future years.

Members highlighted the need for music at the Service, ideally by a local brass/silver band and/ or Choir. After further discussion it was **agreed** that we offer assistance to the British Legion, and the organisation of same be considered by the Events Committee.

It was also agreed to contact the Borough Council to establish their responsibilities regarding assistance in organising Remembrance Services/ Parades, as indicated by the Royal British Legion Gwent Branch

## **11. Civic Awards - Nominations**

Having Declared an Interest in the first nomination – Mrs Linda Price, Cllrs. A Farina-Childs & G James took no part in the discussion or decision taken.

The Clerk reported on the following nominations received -

**Mrs Linda Price** for a Civic Award in recognition for her services to the Community.

Linda has been a Governor at Blackwood Comprehensive School for 25 Years this September (A truly amazing achievement). Linda is also a very long standing member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (Blackwood). Beyond just being a member, over the years she has undertaken a number of significant leadership roles including as Sunday school teacher, Girls' Brigade Officer and, perhaps most notably, as the long-serving Church Treasurer - a key role within the leadership of the church.

In all these roles, Linda's willingness to freely offer her time and skills has meant that many people in and beyond the life of Mount Pleasant have been encouraged and enabled to flourish in their own lives. Her Christian commitment is unwavering, her service through Mount Pleasant is extensive, and the time and effort that she has willingly offered is appreciated by many in Blackwood.

**Jaxon Darknell** for a Young Persons Award.

This young lad rode a mile on his bike every day in May raising money for Velindre. In all winds and weathers, he remained stalwart and determined to raise funds for Velindre, as his mother Karen has had breast cancer. He raised in excess of £1,000 and Velindre appointed him a Young Ambassador for the centre. He is a very kind caring child and everyone is proud of his efforts

After some discussion it was **agreed** Awards be made to both individuals

The Clerk also reported that he had received a phone call nominating Pino the Hairdresser at the southern end of town, who had recently retired after some 50 years service.

Members **agreed** this was certainly worthy of recognition, and the Clerk stated he would make contact with his family to come up with a suitable narrative for the certificate.

## **12. Model Local Resolution Protocol**

The Clerk presented the Protocol, that had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting, and after some little discussion it was agreed this be accepted and implemented by Town Council.

The Protocol forms part of the minutes, and will also be uploaded to our website

### ***13. Applications for Financial Assistance***

The Clerk reported that an Application had been received from Treowen Stars Girls Football Club for assistance towards costs of indoor training facilities during the winter months.

A Copy of the Application had been forwarded to members for their perusal under separate cover. After some discussion it was agreed a grant of £250 be awarded.

The Clerk also reported an application had been received from Wales Air Ambulance, and after some discussion which recognised this was a worthy charity that had been supported by Town Council over many years, it was agreed a grant of £250 be awarded.

It was suggested that perhaps a mock up cheque could be purchased for photo opportunity purposes and used for presentations for these and future awards

### ***14. Planning Applications***

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

#### ***Case Ref. 21/1098/FULL***

Location: 284 High Street Blackwood NP12 2BN

Proposal: Erect front porch

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ☐ 07874 641749 ☐ [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

#### ***Case Ref. 21/1077/FULL***

Location: 1 Llwyn Coed Blackwood NP12 1FT

Proposal: Convert garage to habitable room and replace the garage door with a window

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ( 07874 641749 : [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

#### ***Case Ref. 21/1106/FULL***

Location: Mulberry House Gordon Road Blackwood NP12 1DS

Proposal: Relocate driveway entrance and garden/groundworks

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ( 07874 641749 : [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

#### ***Case Ref. 21/0885/TPO***

Location: 9 Lon Pennant Cwmgelli Blackwood NP12 1EL

Proposal: Reduce the crown by 25-30% of beech tree (Tree Preservation Order 2/82/IBC)

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ☐ 07874 641749 ☐ [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

After some discussion, it was ***agreed*** there was nothing too contentious and no objections be raised

It was reported that notification had been received regarding the possible re-opening of the inquiry relating to the proposed Persimmon residential development near Grove Park.

After some discussion it was agreed the Clerk write re-affirming Town Council's objections to the proposed development.



## **15. Reports**

The Clerk reported that there had been problems regarding the Christmas Lighting, with the Cross Street Merry Christmas From Blackwood Town Council currently not in position and numerous strands of lights and figurines not lit.

The Mayor had identified the issues in detail and the Clerk had forwarded same to Elsbury's for their information/ attention.

Their initial response indicated that the Covid works undertaken in the High Street which entailed the widening of some pavements together with the repositioning of some lamp posts had resulted in no power supply now being available, and that the string lights from Costa to the Cross Street mentioned previously had been removed during the works and on instructions from Highways would not be replaced.

The Clerk further reported that he had outlined his disgust to Borough Officers that Town Council had not been consulted with regarding the potential consequences that the improvement works would have on our Christmas Lighting provision, and was awaiting a response.

Cllr. G James queried who had removed the lights and where they were now stored – had they been returned to Elsbury's? The Clerk stated he hoped this would be clarified in the awaited response.

Cllr. G James apologised that he would not be able to attend the Christmas Market being held next Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>. December.

Cllrs. C Erasmus and G Edwards also apologised that they had prior engagements and would not be able to attend either, albeit Cllr. Edwards would be spending all day at the Bus Station, having been requested to do so by CCBC due to staff absences.

He informed the meeting he was dissatisfied with the situation and was still awaiting a proper response from officers regarding the meeting held several weeks ago to discuss these ongoing issues.

The Clerk reminded members that Town Council had no direct input into the Christmas Market this year with no charitable stalls or static entertainment included.

The Mayor took the opportunity to wish members a Merry Christmas & a Happy & Healthy New Year