

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13TH JUNE 2022

Present : Cllr. G Edwards (Mayor)

Cllr. L Phillips (Deputy Mayor)

Cllrs. G James, D Davies, R Mills S Wareham K Etheridge, S Brookman, A Bradfield, K Jones,

P Cook & K Williams

Prior to the start of the Meeting a Minutes Silence was held as a mark of respect at the death of Cllr. A Bradfield's mother.

Cllr. Bradfield thanked members for the message of condolence and floral tribute received

1. Co - options – Acceptance of Office

The Clerk confirmed that all four newly co-opted members had signed the Acceptance of Office Forms in his presence as required and Cllrs. S Wareham, K Williams, R Mills & K Etheridge were welcomed to the meeting

2. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence had been received from Cllrs. D Box, C Erasmus & A Short

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

4. To Nominate Members to the following –

The Mayor requested members to indicate their interests/preferences to serve on the following Committees, and after some discussion it was ***agreed*** the Committee representation be as follows –

(a) Finance & Policy Committee

Councillors R Mills, D Davies, K Williams, S Wareham, G James, P Cook & K Etheridge

(b) Planning & Licensing Committee

Councillors S Brookman, A Bradfield, G James, K Jones & S Wareham

(c) Environment Committee

Councillors D Davies, K Etheridge, A Bradfield, S Brookman & K Williams

(d) Newsletter/Web Page Committee

Councillors G James, D Box, S Wareham & K Williams

(e) Twinning Committee

This Committee is open to all members

(f) Events Committee

This is an advisory Committee, that the Town Council has delegated the role of managing the agreed budget. It is open to all members of the Council.

(g) Appraisal Sub-Committee

It was ***agreed*** this be left until a later date

5. To Nominate Members to the following –

Again the Mayor requested members to indicate an interest in representing Town Council on the following outside bodies and after some discussion the following representation was ***agreed***

(a) Town & Community Council Joint Liaison Committee

Councillors G Edwards & S Wareham

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

Councillor G Edwards

(c) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group

Councillors S Wareham & L Phillips

(d) Retail Partnership Group

Councillors G Edwards & S Brookman

(e) After Hours/ Night time Economy Group / Bus Station Multi Agency Group

Councillors G Edwards & S Brookman

(f) One Voice Wales Area Committee & Larger Councils Committee

Councillor K Etheridge

(g) Plas Mawr Community Centre Committee

Councillor P Cook

(h) Bi-Centenary Committee

Councillor G James

Some members queried representation on Schools Governing Bodies and the Clerk stated that he had not been contacted by the Governor Support Unit, but promised to chase up and Agenda for next meeting

6. Police Report

The Clerk reported he had received apologies from Inspector A Boucher, who had only today returned to work after leave

7. County Borough Report

Cllr. K Etheridge gave a brief update on a recent meeting with Chris Evans MP, Adam Oldham (Market Place Manager), Ian Edwards (Tidal Stores) & The Mayor (also representing Caerphilly Drivers Assoc.) and that a letter had been forwarded to the Police & Crime Commissioner & Chief Constable signed by all present –

The representatives raised the following concerns and communication with increased anti social behaviour and problems in the in Market Place, High Street and Bus Station and Toilets.

1. Many Shoppers and traders find it difficult ringing 101 with major delays in reporting incidents – so many incidents are not reported any more due to waiting times
2. Problems at Bus Station with the Chair of Taxi Association waiting weeks for a link from the police in regard collection of CCTV following an incident
3. The number of anti dispersal orders put on the town in the last 6/8 months , and evidence supplied by the police that matters have improved
- 4 . A partnership approach between police, local authority, traders and elected members- meetings are all very well but we wish to see a greater police presence, and communication strategy with the CSO/ Community Safety Wardens, and I would be most grateful if you could tell me the results of the meetings and the joined up approach in operation with all agencies working together
5. Following a poor response on the store net scheme a joint approach visiting traders on the High Street will be taken forward by all partners in joint individual visits
6. I would be most grateful if you could provide me with a detailed communication, engagement strategy for the town from the polices perspective and how they up date traders and businesses
7. A number of concerns were raised about the hours of operation in regard the opening of the front desk at Blackwood Station – closes lunchtime, 5pm and not open at all on Saturday and Sunday. Can this point be addressed and outside there is a yellow phone on the wall to ring 101 and waiting times are unacceptable.

Your views on these matters would be appreciated and will there be a restructure of the 101 system.

Cllr. Etheridge also informed the meeting that following the refusal of the Inspector to meet with members and/or objectors at his recent site visit (300 Houses proposed by Persimmon) and the subsequent refusal forbidding the notes of the meeting being disclosed he has now requested an Internal Review

The Clerk asked the member if he had any further news on the Skateboard Park, having been informed that the Parks Section were now asking for the Park to be re-sited, months after the contract had been let. Cllr. Etheridge responded by saying he was of the opinion that a swift decision will be made, given that the likely completion of the scheme has been identified as December 2022 and that any changes should surely go back out to consultation

8. *Mayoral Report (including Platinum Jubilee Celebrations)*

The Mayor gave a brief report on the saga of the Jubilee Celebration Bunting in town, and thanked members for their written support for same, with the issue being raised after the AGM. He placed on record his thanks to his family members, fellow councillors and Clerk for working long into the early hours to ensure the Town was best placed to share in the Jubilee Celebrations.

He reported that he had attended a Jubilee Celebration Event on 3rd. June at Cwmgelli Lodge, a home for people living with Huntingdon's Disease, acquired brain injuries and other complex needs and had enjoyed his afternoon there, being very impressed with the accommodation and facilities on offer.

He had also attended Blackwood Cricket Club's Family Picnic on Sunday 5th. Unfortunately the weather put paid to the planned picnic outdoors but had been impressed by the effort put in by the ladies of the Club to organise a free Community Event which despite the weather had been enjoyed by all especially the children who had games and activities to participate in throughout the afternoon.

He also reported that he had received an Invitation from Blackwood Musical Theatre Society to attend their Concert at Blackwood Methodist Church on 17th. June

9. *Correspondence*

The Clerk presented his report on the items of correspondence received and all were *noted*

Councillors D Davies & K Etheridge both declared an Interest at this point, being members of Blackwood British Legion and took no part in discussion or decision making regarding the request for a meeting

British Legion Request for meeting – plan of action for improving Remembrance Service

Channel 5 Request to display advertisements on our Social Media – reboot of Cash in the Attic by Channel 5 and production team are looking for people in the Caerphilly area to take part

Caerphilly C.B.C. Football information

Request for information via Welsh Govt. – following recent elections

How many Town & Community Councils will have at least two thirds of the Council as elected representatives and one third co-opted representatives ?

How many of the Town & Community Councils are quorate ?

Caerphilly Employment Support - Following an issue raised by Cllr. D Box regarding an advertisement offering free services re. CV writing/Application support/job searches etc. at various venues across the Borough, we queried if this service might not be made available in Blackwood. This was the response

My name is Greg and I am the employability lead for the Blackwood and Caerphilly areas; I have been asked to get in touch regarding your below email. Our relevant area Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus teams are currently based in Blackwood Miner's Institute (BMI). From here they operate throughout our Mid Valleys East cluster which includes areas such as Blackwood, Cefn Fforest, Pansite, Pentllwyn, Trinant, Risca, Ynysddu to Cwmfelinfach, Markham and other villages within this area.

In addition to our face to face appointments throughout the area we're currently running a CV Writing session from the BMI weekly and have developed a hub in Risca. Our CV writing session is still very much in its early days and we will be looking to increase its scope (currently referral from JCP or Careers Wales only) in the coming weeks.

We're currently in talks with other CCBC departments and services to deliver further outreach within our cluster.

I hope this gives a greater impression of the work being undertaken in Blackwood and the surrounding areas. If you would to discuss this further or have a chat in regards to any partnership working we could engage in, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Many thanks
Greg Roach
Senior Employment Mentor
Caerphilly County Borough Council

One Voice Wales Query from Phil Hill (Community CPR and Defibrillator Manager)
Regards any contingency plans to try and prevent a recurrence of damage to defib. at the Market Place ie. re-direct any local CCTV onto the Cabinet/ put up a CCTV sign over defib./ put up a fake camera.

Karaoke Kids
Blackwood Musical Theatre
Blackwood Stars RFC
Ty Hafan
Blackwood Moose Lodge

Messages of thanks for Town Council support

In respect of the request for a meeting with British Legion, it was ***agreed*** Cllrs. G Edwards, R Mills & P Cook represent Town Council

In respect of the Defibrillator after some discussion Cllr. G James proposed we put up a sign identifying the machine is covered by cctv cameras

10. Schedule of Payments

The Clerk presented his report on payments made / due for payment and all were *agreed*

		£. P
Blackwood Musical Theatre	Grant	250.00
Blackwood Stars RFC	Grant	250.00
Ty Hafan (Mayors Charity)	Grant	250.00
Blackwood Moose Lodge	Grant	250.00
Healthmatic	Grant (Toilets) (Incl. £270.50 VAT)	1,623.00
Libanus Lifestyle Centre	Room Hire	40.00
Gibbon Hire	Machine Hire (Incl. £30.00 VAT)	180.00
John Hold	Salary + Reimbursements June	1,029.83
Playworks	Fees June	20.00
HMRC	Tax/N.I. June	300.20
John Hold	Reimbursement– Defib part £107.94	
	Bunting(Party Delights) £359.82	467.76
Libanus Lifestyle	Room Hire	50.00

11. To Confirm the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Town Council held on 13th. May 2022

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

12. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that he had received a quotation from Healthmatic in respect of the likely required works for the Disabled toilets at the bus station in the sum of £3,557 plus an additional £725 for an option for it to be contactless.

After some discussion, which the Mayor took no part in, having declared an Interest as Chair of the Taxi Association, it was *agreed* this be deferred to the Policy & Finance Committee for further discussion and consideration

13. To Confirm the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Town Council held on 6th. June 2022

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

14. Matters Arising

The Clerk reported that having been in discussion with the Events team the 28th. August was unfortunately considered a non starter but that the date of Saturday 10th. September has now been set for the Blackwood Beach Party.

The Events team will now start advertising for prospective stall holders and produce a site plan taking on board where possible our suggestions that free pitches granted to local charities/organisations be interspersed with the other stalls throughout the High Street and the possible re-siting of the Beach area.

Some discussion took place regarding the possibility of the toilets at the bus station being made available free of charge on the day, and a written motion to that effect requesting the Taxi Association to open the bus station toilets from 9.30am to 6.00pm., with a payment of £150 to £200 to cover potential costs be considered by the Events Committee, was passed to the Clerk during said discussion.

It was **agreed** this, together with other possible alternatives be considered by the Events Committee

15. Proposal to engage Professional Photographer for Headshots of all Town Council for Web-Page and future Newsletters

The Mayor proposed that to give a more consistent and professional look to any photographs used of Town Councillors on identity badges, web page and future newsletters that we engage the services of a professional photographer in town. He had contacted Fulton Studios and received a quotation for headshots of all members plus Clerk of £200. The photographer was willing to identify dates and times when members could call at the studio which best suited their commitments.

After some discussion it was **agreed** this was a good idea and that we proceed as soon as possible

16. Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales – Annual Report 2022/2023 - Decisions required

The Clerk presented this report, which identified that BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL falls into Category C per the Annual Report and as such the following decisions are needed –

Determination Number / Is a decision required by Council ?

44. Community and town councils must make available a payment to each of their members of £150 per year as a contribution to costs and expenses

No - the payment of £150 is mandated for every member unless they advise the appropriate officer that they do not want to take it in writing.

45. The payment for members undertaking a senior role is an annual amount of £500

Yes – the payment of £500 senior role payments for up to 3 members is optional

After some discussion members **agreed this optional payment is not implemented**

46. Community and town councils can make payments to each of their members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties.

Yes – the payment of travel costs is optional

After some discussion members **agreed in principle that such payments be implemented**

47. If a community or town council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it can authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its members.

Yes – the payment of overnight subsistence expenses is optional.

After some discussion members ***agreed in principle that such payments be implemented***

48. Community and town councils can pay financial loss compensation to each of their members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties.

Yes – the payment of financial loss compensation is optional if claimed

After some discussion members ***agreed in principle that such payments be implemented***

49. Each council can decide to introduce an attendance allowance for members. The amount of each payment must not exceed £30.

A member in receipt of financial loss will not be entitled to claim attendance allowance for the same event.

Yes – the payment of attendance allowance is optional.

After some discussion members ***agreed this optional payment is not implemented***

50. Community and town councils can provide a payment to the mayor or chair of the council up to a maximum of £1,500.

Yes – the payment to a civic head is optional.

After some discussion it was ***agreed that the current allowance of £400 be increased to £500***

51. Community and town councils can provide a payment to the deputy mayor or deputy chair of the council up to a maximum of £500

Yes – the payment to a deputy civic head is optional.

After some discussion it was ***agreed this optional payment is not implemented***

17. Financial Accounts 2021/2022, together with Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st. March 2022

The Clerk presented the Annual Accounts, previously agreed by Council in early April for the new members information, together with an Explanation of Variances between 2021/22 & 2020/21 and Copy of Bank Reconciliation.

He explained that the figures shown in the Accounting Statements were based on the figures contained in the Annual Accounts, and having had the opportunity to compare both members satisfied themselves all was in order, and it was **resolved** the Accounting Statement be approved and accepted. Members then turned their attention to the Annual Governance Statements and considered each in turn.

The Clerk accepted this was difficult for new members having had no input whatsoever during the term of the Accounts period and trusted previous members would agree same.

After some discussion, members were confident that Statements 1-8 could be answered positively whilst Statement 9 was not applicable. The Annual Governance Statement was therefore **approved and accepted**.

Members then received the Annual Internal Audit Report and after a brief discussion **resolved it be approved and accepted**

The Annual Return will now be signed by the Mayor on behalf of Town Council and submitted to the external auditors together with any supplementary information requested.

The necessary Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors Rights will be posted on our Web Page and Noticeboard from 20th. June as directed by Audit Wales

18. Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported he had received applications for financial assistance from the following -
Blackwood Cricket Club
Cefn Fforest Jazz Band
Libanus Lifestyle Centre

After some discussion it was **agreed** these be considered by the newly constituted Policy & Finance Committee over the next few weeks

19. Planning Applications

The Clerk presented his report on Planning Applications received since the last meeting together with an additional one received over the last day or so –

Case Ref. 22/0438/FULL

Location: Beech Tree House 26 Sunnybank Road Blackwood NP12 1HT

Proposal: Erect single storey side and rear extension and convert existing storage room to a habitable room

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

Case Ref. 22/0444/FULL

Location: 19 Clos Coed Duon Blackwood NP12 1FP

Proposal: Demolish rear conservatory and side extension, and erect two storey side extension and single storey rear extension

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

Case Ref. 22/0491/FULL

Location: 15 Pembroke Close Blackwood NP12 1JL

Proposal : Convert existing garage into shower & utility room

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

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** no objections be raised

20. Reports

Members were informed that Blackwood Branch of Royal British Legion were organising wreath laying ceremony and short service to commemorate the 40th. Anniversary of the Falklands War at the War Memorial on Penllwyn Avenue at 4.30pm tomorrow, 15th. June