

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4TH. JULY 2022

Present : Cllr. G Edwards (Mayor)

Cllrs. D Box, A Bradfield, S Brookman , K Etheridge, S Wareham, K Williams, D Davies,
P Cook, R Mills, C Erasmus, A Short & K Jones

Also Present County Cllr. A Farina-Childs & W.E Baber

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. G James & L Phillips (Deputy Mayor)

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from Cllr D Davies with regard Item 10 being a member of the Blackwood Branch British Legion

3. Police Report

There was no Police presence or Report despite the Clerk forwarding e mails.

The Mayor confirmed that Inspector Andrew Boucher had moved on and that a new Inspector Oliver Petty had taken over from today

4. County Borough Report

Cllr. K Etheridge reported that he was still awaiting a response to his request for an Internal Review regarding the proposed Persimmon Development.

He also reported that following a meeting with officers regarding road safety concerns at the junction of Greenwood Road with Beaumaris Way & Addison Street, whilst it was considered inappropriate to consider any measures to reduce speed at this location at the current time, these streets are likely to be included as part of the proposed Welsh Government Plans to introduce a default 20mph speed limit in residential areas. Furthermore it was not felt appropriate or warranted to install a mirror opposite the entrance to Beaumaris Way.

However officers did agree that improvement to visibility could be achieved by the extension of double yellow lines northwards along Greenwood Road and that the Highways Operation team would be asked to reinstate the worn lines such as the give-way markings extend to the centre of the carriageway.

He informed members that all traffic surveys are likely to be suspended until a decision on the default 20mph limits in residential areas is made.

There was an issue at Albion Terrace where a business operating there is continually blocking the lane and he has requested Planning Enforcement officers attend and deal with the matter

He also reported on a recent meeting with Blackwood Cricket Club and residents of St. Tudors View regarding cricket balls regularly being hit into their gardens. The Club have now agreed to make arrangements for retrieval of the balls on the match day and to listen to any further complaints from the residents.

Cllr. A. Farina-Childs reported to members that there was a continuing problem with supermarket trolleys being dumped in the Sirhowy river and stated that he hoped residents would continue to report incidents of dumping.

He also took the opportunity to congratulate his fellow member Kevin Etheridge on his recent Hidden Hero Champion Award for Bowel Cancer Wales for his work in raising awareness of the disease and this was supported by all present.

The County members were asked whether they could update the meeting on the planned improvements on the Tennis Courts on the Showfield and Cllr. Etheridge responded by saying he had been informed the work on the courts would start in approx 6 weeks time

Cllr. P Cook informed members that Chris Evans M.P., had as a result of the ongoing issues with anti social behaviour requested details of Youth Services in the area.

She also raised her concerns regarding 101, that yet again there was no police presence/ report at the meeting and what had become of the Multi Agency After Dark meetings.

The Mayor responded by stating that we all shared these concerns and that these issues are being continually raised with the police and partner agencies at the very highest level

5. *Mayoral Report*

The Mayor reported that he had thoroughly enjoyed the Concert by Blackwood Musical Theatre at the Methodist Chapel on Friday 17th June

He also reported that he had met with the Community Champion at ASDA to see how we might work together in the future

6. *Correspondence*

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

Caerphilly CBC

Caerphilly On Line – forwarded to members via email

Footfall figures – forwarded to members via email

Proposed Application for Stopping Up Order – Cherry Orchard, Gordon Close

Notification & Receipt of Community Infrastructure Levy Payment of £69,195.24 in respect of Development at Cwmgelli

Notification from Employability Team that Outreach Sessions delivered in partnership with Careers Wales start Wednesday 6th. July at BMI to assist in CV writing/Application Support/ Job Searches/ Free Training/Well Being

Support/ One to One Mentoring/Access to local employment opportunities

One Voice Wales Notification of next OVW Area Committee Meeting to be held Wednesday 20th. July at 7.00pm. on a remote basis using Starleaf remote conferencing software

Finance & Governance Toolkit for Community & Town Councils
O.V.W. encourage Councils to use this practical tool jointly developed by One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks and Welsh Government, supported by commentary from Audit Wales, the toolkit has been designed to support all councils to meet their statutory responsibilities, have strong financial management and governance, and to deliver the best outcomes for our communities.

The toolkit will support your council to:

review the financial management, governance and accountability arrangements you have in place; and consider how effective these arrangements are, and how they might be improved.

It will highlight what you are doing well and give you peace of mind. It will also help you to identify where improvements need to be made and guide you with information on what needs to be done, so you can best focus your time and resources.

The toolkit is made up of two parts:-

Part 1 – The health check – practical and easy to use. This would be completed by the clerk, working with the chair or a small group of members as appropriate, to assess whether fundamental governance and financial management arrangements are in place.

Part 2 – The self-assessment – enabling councillors to reflect more deeply on how the council is operating, managing its finances and governing itself. The questions will help the council think through how it is working for, and with, the local community to achieve the greatest impact for their area.

Gwent Police Notification of ASB Awareness Week 25th/29th July based at Springfield Skatepark Tram Road, Pontllanfraith

Francesca Newman Ford Query if any consideration had been given to provide a safe place to store bicycles – secure bike racks – to assist any cyclists wishing to visit town

277 Squadron Air Cadets Thank you letter for recent financial assistance which enabled purchase of electronic equipment

J S Lee Notice of price increase for watering of hanging baskets – due to Increased cost of fuel for vehicle and bowser/ out of hours labour / plant feed from £47.25 per visit to £71.66 per visit from 22nd June 2022. Prices have previously remained unchanged since Town Council taking over responsibility back in 2018/2019
This will result in an approximate increase in costs of £ 1,250 per annum
With little other alternatives open to us in the short term could I suggest we agree but notify J S Lee that we will be seeking other quotations for future years

In respect of the Stopping Up Order at Cherry Orchard, Gordon Close, the County Borough Council wished to know if Town Council had any objections to this. The Clerk reported that he was of the impression this was a private driveway to 2 properties and was in fact a dead end. However some members queried whether it led to a right of way. After a short discussion some members indicated they would visit the site to check things out prior to a decision being taken.

It was agreed the O.V.W. Finance & Governance Toolkit be deferred to a future meeting of Finance & Policy Committee for consideration

With regard the query relating to a safe and secure place to store bicycles for people visiting town, members had some support for the request, and after some discussion it was agreed the Clerk contact Sustrans for advice and to enquire about possible funding streams.

It was also agreed that we accept the increase in costs of watering hanging baskets for the remainder of this year recognising that we have little other alternatives in the short term, but as suggested by the Clerk we look seek other quotations in respect of future years

7. Schedule of Payments

The Clerk presented his report on the following due for payment, and all were *agreed* -

		<i>£. p</i>
Andrew Jervis	Internal Audit Fee	120.00
Libanus Lifestyle Centre	Room Hire	40.00
George Edwards	Mayors Allowance	500.00

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

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

9. Matters Arising

Cllr. K Williams queried when the Policy & Finance Committee would be meeting, and the Clerk responded either on 11th. or 18th. of this month

10. Verbal update on meeting with British Legion representatives held earlier this evening

Both Councillors D Davies & K Etheridge declared their Interests as members of the British Legion and took no part in this item.

The Mayor gave a brief summary of the meeting held with British Legion to ensure the Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial was improved and that agreed action points would provide a basis for future meetings of this working party

11. Notice of Vacancy – Blackwood – Cefn Fforest East Ward

The Clerk reported at the AGM that he had received a letter from Cllr. Roy Williams informing him he would not be attending the AGM and would not be taking up his position as Councillor for Cefn Fforest East Ward on a matter of principle, not being mandated by the residents as having been returned unopposed.

The Clerk stated he had checked with Caerphilly Deputy Returning Officer who had confirmed his views that this must now be treated as a Casual Vacancy and as such a Notice of Vacancy must be posted, and if notice in writing is given to the Returning Officer by ten Local Govt. Electors from the Ward an Election will be held to fill said vacancy. If no such notice is received within 14 days of the posting then this can then be filled by Co-option.

The required Notice will now be posted on our Web Page and Notice Board, and we now wait until Friday 22nd July 2022 to see if an Election to fill the final vacancy on Town Council is called or whether we can fill by Co-option

12. Representation on Schools Governing Bodies

The Clerk reported that having made contact with the Governor Support Unit, this appears to be the current situation –

Libanus Primary – C A Erasmus end date 4/7/2024

Blackwood Primary, Cefn Fforest Primary, Fleur De Lys Primary and Pengam Fed & Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen all having 1 vacancy

After some discussion the following nominations were *agreed* –

Blackwood Primary – Kirsty Willams

Cefn Fforest Primary – Delwyn Davies

Fleur-de-Lys Primary & Pengam Fed – Arthur Bradfield

Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen – George Edwards

Members queried whether representation was possible at Ysgol Gymraeg Trelyn and the Clerk was asked to follow this up

During discussion on this item the issue of Enhanced DBS checks for members was raised and again the Clerk was asked to follow this up

13. Verbal update on Beach Party

The Clerk gave a brief update on progress to date.

A copy of the proposed layout had been forwarded for members information and also a copy of the flyer which was now going to print. Application forms had been forwarded to interested parties and to date some 30 stall holders (including food & Town Council charity) had expressed an interest.

He also reported that an Events Committee will be scheduled during the Meetings break to discuss the entertainment programme

14. *Publication of Members Remuneration 2021/2022*

Section 151 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 authorises the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) to set the requirements for the publication of remuneration of community and town council members.

In the interests of transparency, the Panel, in its Annual Reports, has made it clear that community and town councils must publish their statement of payments by the 30 September following the previous financial year. This includes nil returns. It must do so in a form that is easily accessible to members of the public. A copy of the statement of payments and or a link to its publication must also be sent to the Panel by the same date. Failure to do this is non-compliant with the regulation.

STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS MADE TO MEMBERS OF BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST. MARCH 2022

Councillor Name	Payments for Costs incurred In respect of Telephones etc. Max. £150 per Member	Responsibility Payment (up to £500 to a maximum of 5 members)	Mayor/Deputy Mayor Allowance	Financial Loss Allowance	Travel/ Subsistence Allowance	Care Allowance (up to a max of £403 per member per month)	Other	TOTAL
Cllr. Rhys Mills	-	-	£400	-	-	-	-	£400

It was *agreed* the Notice be posted over the coming weeks

15. *Blackwood in Bloom*

The Clerk reported that this competition relies on members identifying 6 front gardens (visible from the public highway) within their respective wards, to be judged soon afterwards by members of the Events Committee.

For this to be successful, it is necessary for members to play their part in the process, which means some time & effort is given touring their wards and identifying the best front gardens on view.

Members in each ward should confer and agree on the nominations.

If members wish to proceed with the competition, each of the 4 wards should identify their nominations and forward to the Clerk by 31st. July and he will then arrange judging to take place early the following week.

It was *agreed* members liaise and forward nominations by the noted date

16. *Draft Annual Report for Year Ended 31st. March 2022*

The Clerk reported that The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (section 52) introduced a new statutory requirement for town and community councils to prepare and publish an annual report about the council's priorities, activities and achievements over the previous year. The report has to be published as soon as practicable after 1st April 2022.

He had circulated his initial draft and reported that he felt given the elections, it might have been more beneficial to have delayed this statutory requirement as new members had no ownership of same.

However after some discussion the Report was accepted and *agreed* by members

17. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 22/0448/FULL

Location: 208 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AJ

Proposal: Change the use from office to tattoo studio

Case Officer: Elizabeth Rowley (07850 916862 : rowlee@caerphilly.gov.uk

Case Ref. 22/0519/ADV

Location: Stanford Williams Ltd Unit C 271-273 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AW

Proposal: Replace existing sign

Case Officer: Kate Pearce (07874 641733 : pearck@caerphilly.gov.uk

He also reported verbally on additional applications received since the report was forwarded, namely

Case Ref. 22/0424/FULL

Location: Green Acres 11 Lon Pennant Cwmgelli Blackwood NP12 1EL

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension

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

Case Ref. 22/0522/CLPU

Location: 64 Apollo Way Blackwood NP12 1WB

Proposal: Obtain a Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed single storey rear extension, loft conversion and two rear dormer windows

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

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

18. Reports

Cllr. D Box reported on yet another incident on the Chartist Bridge involving a young girl threatening to take her own life. Thankfully, on this occasion she was talked out of doing so by a young lady until the police and her mother arrived and stopped her doing anything she would later regret.

She also highlighted that latest figures show 15 such reported incidents to the Police up to May, but emphasised many go unreported.

She asked that Town Council together with County members make a joint approach to put pressure on C.C.B.C. to revisit raising the height of the barriers on both sides of the bridge as the parapets are too easily accessible.

This was **unanimously agreed** by members and the Clerk was asked to draft a letter to forward to the Borough Council

Cllr. K Etheridge raised the issue of the recently introduced Town Council WhatsApp Group and queried whether or not it should continue, reminding members that issues/ decisions should all go through the Clerk and cannot be made via this Group.

After some discussion it was **agreed** the WhatsApp Group remains but that it should act more as medium for sharing information

Cllr. K Etheridge also asked that we consider an amendment to the current Standing Orders regarding Election of Mayor at the September meeting and this was **agreed**

Cllr. A Short stated he had received some ideas regarding the Memorial Garden and passed same to the Mayor

