

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7TH. NOVEMBER 2022

Present : Cllr. G Edwards (Mayor)

Cllrs. A Bradfield, D Box, R Mills, C Erasmus, P Cook, K Jones, K Etheridge

Cllrs. C Clark, J Pearce & A Farina Childs

Cllr. K Williams attended remotely by telephone

1. To Receive the Minutes of the Co- option to Town Council Meeting held 31st. October 2022 – Signing of Acceptance of Office

The minutes were received and agreed and the Mayor welcomed the new Co-opted members Cathrine Clark, Jacob Pearce & Andrew Farina-Childs to the meeting. They signed the Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk and introduced themselves to members

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr D Davies

3. Declarations of Interest

There were No Declarations of Interest made at this point

4. Mayoral Statement

Councillors are reminded that we must stick to the items on the agenda and all discussions in regards to the item must be after it has been read out, Councillors are asked to stay focused on the agenda item and not to deviate from this. The Chairs ruling will be final.

5. Jo Raikes – Hillier - Principle Officer Town Centre and Business Support - Caerphilly C.B

The Clerk reported that Jo Raikes – Hillier had tendered her apologies as she was on Jury duty in Cardiff but had provisionally arranged for her to attend the next meeting

6. Mayoral Report.

The Mayor reported he was trying to organise a trial run/ rehearsal for the Remembrance Service at 4.00pm.on Wednesday 9th. November at War Memorial.

He also reported the Order of Service was finalised and being picked up from the printers of Friday. Invitations had been received from Blackwood Musical Theatre Society to attend their fund raising Concert at the Miners Institute on Friday 11th. November ‘ West End to Broadway ‘ and an open invitation to all members to attend a Remembrance Service at St. Margaret’s Church at 7.00pm on Saturday 12th. November

7. County Borough Report

Cllr. K Etheridge reported that County Borough members had been contacted again regarding flooding of Berllangron Cottages, Cwmgelli due to the lack of adequate drainage on the nearby new Taylor Woodrow Housing Development. A further meeting has been requested with the developers and Caerphilly CBC officers to try and allay residents ongoing fear of further flooding and discuss mitigating measures that should be taken.

He also reported that he had been approached by St. Margaret's Church regarding the initial refusal of the Job Centre adjacent to the Church to allow their car park to be used on the evening of Saturday 12th November for the Remembrance Service and on Sunday 13th. where refreshments were to be served following the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial. Having urged Chris Evans M.P. to support the request, notification has been received the car park will now be available

Cllr. A Farina- Childs reported that Caerphilly CBC will now be undertaking an assessment regarding school crossing patrols at Apollo Way School.

He also reported an increase in fly tipping in and around the area, whilst also informing members that the Borough were looking to introduce Warm Hubs throughout the Borough from the Government funded Hardship Fund.

Cllr. P Cook reported on complaints received regarding HGV signage on the road to Mynyddislwyn and the apparent increase in the use of off road bikes on the highway

8. Correspondence

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

- One Voice Wales**
- Notification remote meetings will now be via Zoom and not Starleaf
 - No return to face to face training courses for the foreseeable future
 - Likewise Committee meetings will continue to be held remotely for Autumn/Winter and Area Committee will make a decision later regarding Spring/Summer
 - Notification of Training Courses for Nov/Dec. – forwarded to members
 - Notification of unsolicited spam emails regarding Defibrillator Grants and offer of replacement parts. If replacement pads are required advised to contact Phil Hill at OVW
 - Templates for Training Plan

- Caerphilly C.B.C.** Various correspondence relating to perceived responsibility for payment of replacement cross street lights
- News On Line
- Boverton Nurseries** Quotation for filling of 14 UTP – 2p half baskets/ 28 cup and saucer baskets and 3 wire baskets in the sum of 1,385.70 + VAT (£1,262.70 current year - + 9.7%)
Would propose seeking 2 further quotes – Blackwood Garden Centre & J.S. Lee
- Elsburys** Various Correspondence relating to Xmas Lighting
Replacement parts for Merry Xmas from Blackwood Town Council £175.08 + VAT
Purchase of tree lights(Market Place) £790.38 + VAT includes install, remove & store (£200)
Replacement of 133 metres of lights + catenary wire + erection £ 2,078.66 + VAT
Given urgency of the situation Payments have been made and would request support of Clerks actions (Budget provision and Agreement from CCBC to pay for replacement lights)

In respect of the Quotation from Boverton Nurseries, it was **agreed** the Clerk seek two other quotations, and in respect of Elsbury's the actions of the Clerk were **fully supported** due to the urgency of the situation.

He also reported that notification had been received earlier today from NALC (National Association of Local Councils) regarding the 2022/2023 National Pay Award for Clerks (payable from 1st April 2022) and that he would report further at the next meeting

9. Schedule of Payments

The Clerk presented his report on payments made /are due for payment, but asked that certain amendments be made in respect of Blackwood Methodist Church (increasing payment to £150.00 to take account of recent meetings held) and John Hold (increasing payment by £30 for additional reimbursements)

The result being all the following were **agreed-**

		£. P
Peter Jones	Beach Party Costs	180.00
One Voice Wales	Training Courses	35.00
Blackwood Town Cricket Club	Financial assistance	500.00
Blackwood Methodist Church	Room Hire	150.00
Katherine Watkins	Fee Oct. Sals	20.00
HMRC	Oct. Tax/ N.I.	300.20
John Hold	Oct. Salary	1,060.72
George Edwards	Travel Costs	120.00
Don Elsbury	Fixings required for Cross Street	222.10
George Edwards	Travel Costs	96.40
Don Elsbury	Lights for Xmas Tree in Market Place (incl. £158.08VAT)	946.46
Caerphilly C.B.C.	GAVO Awards Sponsorship	250.00
Don Elsbury	Christmas Lighting (to be refunded by CCBC)	2,494.40
J P Fulton	Photographs for Notice Board	100,00
Town & Comm. Councils	Annual Subscription	100.00

10. To Confirm the Minutes of Town Council Meeting held on 17th. October 2022

Cllr A Farina – Childs pointed out that it was in fact Cllr. Etheridge who had reported on the overhanging trees and only Libanus School had suffered a break in. Taking into account these amendments, it was ***resolved*** the minutes be approved as a true record

11. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

12. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 3rd. November 2022

The Clerk presented the report of the meeting, and highlighted certain recommendations to Town Council that needed endorsement.

In respect of a New Chain of Office, ***it was unanimously agreed by the Committee*** that bearing in mind current available resources that they ***recommend*** to Town Council that Standing Orders be suspended (specialist item & a matter of some urgency) and an order placed with Thomas Fattorini (up to £5,200) once a formal quotation is received.

Members agreed the recommendation

With regard Coed Duon, this provision had been in existence for in excess of 10 years, and the Committee doubted the land owners would ever allow the area to be used for what had been planned, latterly by the Heritage Association, and that local people would likely oppose same due to it possibly becoming a magnet for more anti social behaviour.

After some discussion, ***members agreed to recommend to Town Council*** that the £10,000 be transferred back into the surpluses to support other work of the Council.

Members agreed the recommendation

With regard the earmarked sum of £25k+, which had been budgeted for over several years to fund what was planned to be a comprehensive events programme to celebrate the Bi-Centenary of the town . The Committee were aware COVID necessitated cancellation, but the funds were still in place. Unfortunate as it was, the majority of members were of a view that it was far too late to look to hold any Events under a Bi-Centenary Banner in 2023, some 3 years after the event, and after some discussion it was ***agreed to recommend to Town Council*** that this amount also be transferred back into surpluses to support other work/planned events of the Council.

Members agreed the recommendation

In respect of the Bus Station Toilets, after much discussion, highlighting the massive benefit this facility is to the Town, and that we should try to ensure its future, Cllr. R Mills reminded members that Town Council had previously agreed that whilst we had provided finance to purchase equipment (and more recently to repair) to ensure the toilets were able to open, the running of the facility was in the hands of the Taxi Association. However, Cllr. Mills proposed that the Committee recommend to Town Council that we actively consider the possible appointment of a Toilet Attendant on a fixed term contract given the level of currently available resources. This was seconded by Cllr. K Etheridge and ***agreed by members to recommend to Town Council***

Members agreed the recommendation

With regard the Training Plan, after some discussion it was agreed the Clerk forward a copy the proposed Plan to members of the Committee later this evening, and a decision regarding recommending same to Town Council on Monday evening dependant on their responses.

The Clerk reported a positive response from Committee members and it is, therefore, ***recommended that the Training Plan be adopted***

Members agreed the recommendation

13. Notice of Motion - Cllr. K Etheridge – Amendment to Standing Orders (Once proposed and seconded the motion stands adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council

I hereby request the Town Council amend / remove the Standing Order which only allows an election of the Mayor for a 12 months period, and allows election for further periods of time should it be deemed necessary by the Town Council

Mayor and Deputy Mayor Selection Procedure

The following standing orders apply to this proposed procedure:

Mayor

Standing Order 1 (a) The Mayor shall be elected by Councillors from amongst the Councillors of the Town

Standing Order 1 (b) Any Councillor who has served on the Council and has not been appointed Mayor shall be appointed Mayor in preference to any other member who has been Mayor

Standing Order 1 (c) A person elected to fill a casual vacancy causing a lesser term than one full year in the Office of Mayor shall not be prejudiced in any way as to his rightful term to be appointed Mayor

Deputy Mayor

Standing Order 2 (a) The Council shall appoint a Councillor to be Deputy Mayor

Standing Order 2 (b) The Deputy Mayor may, if for any reason the Mayor is unable to act, or the Office of the Mayor is vacant, discharge all functions which the Mayor as such might discharge except that he/she shall not take the Chair at a meeting of the Council unless specifically appointed to do so

Order of Business

Standing Order 10 At each Annual Meeting the first business shall be

- (a) To Elect a Mayor
- (d) To Elect a Deputy Mayor

The proposed procedure:

1. All Members are eligible to be elected to the office of Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor and serve for a period of twelve months.
2. The Chair presiding at Annual meeting will ask for a show of hands for all Members who wish to be considered for election to the office of Mayor.
3. The Proper Officer will record the names of all Members who indicated their wish to be included in the ballot.
4. Each Member will be invited to cast their ballot outside the meeting room. Members to be invited in alphabetical order of surname. [in the event of Members joining the meeting remotely, they will be invited to email the Clerk with their vote(s)]
5. The Member with the most votes will be elected to the office of Mayor for that year and will be invited to sign their declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Proper Officer.
6. In the event of a tie in votes, the lowest candidate will be eliminated from the pool and the ballot will take place once again.
7. On the completion of the election of the Mayor, the procedure will once again resume to elect a Member to the office of Deputy Mayor.
8. A Member holding the office of Deputy Mayor for a period of twelve months does not automatically have the right to presume election to the office of Mayor the following year. All Members are eligible to be elected to the office of Mayor at Annual meeting each year.

The Proposed Amendment to Standing Orders was presented by the Clerk, formally proposed by Cllr. K Etheridge and seconded by Cllr. D Box.

The Motion will now be discussed at the next meeting of Town Council

14. Remembrance Services Arrangements

The Mayor confirmed the following arrangements

Friday 11th. November at the Market Place in Blackwood

Sunday 13th. November at the War Memorial, Pentwyn Road

15. Christmas Events Update

The Clerk confirmed the following arrangements

Saturday 26th.November Christmas Market & Craft Fair – Town Council have responsibility for the Entertainment Stage throughout the day and organising of small parade of Santa's Sleigh led by Henllys Pipe & Drum Band up the High Street for the Switch On of the Christmas Lights at 4.30pm

Thursday 1st. December the Lantern Parade/ Carol Concert - Schools and others asked to congregate on the Market Square from about 6.15/6.30pm.to sing a couple of Carols around the new Tree in the Market Square, then parade through the Precinct down to the High Street and up to the Methodist Church for Carol Concert to start by 7.10/7.15pm followed by seasonal refreshments downstairs

The Clerk stated he would be emailing members to seek their assistance for both events

He also reported that a Christingle Service was planned for Tuesday 6th. December at Blackwood Methodist Church and a Community Carol Service on Friday 16th December at St. Margaret's Church

16. To Consider 2nd Replacement Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan up to 2035 (Deadline for Comments 30th. November 2022)

The Clerk presented his paper which identified the Candidate Sites Register for Mid Valleys (Greater Blackwood) Whilst most of the sites were deemed unsuitable for development, the following were specifically identified as Suitable for further consideration -

<i>GB004 - Land west of Seda, Hawtin Park</i>	Preferred Use: Education
<i>GB008 - Land at Ty Mawr, Croespenmaen</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB010 - Land at Nant Gau, Oakdale</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB012 - Land at Heol y Cefn, Blackwood</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB017 - Pen Rhiw Fields, North of Central Avenue, Oakdale</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB021 - Former Gellideg Industrial Estate, Maesycwmmmer</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB022 - Land at Parc Gwernau, Maesycwmmmer</i>	Preferred Use: Strategic site
<i>GB023 - Pantysgawen Farm, Croespenmaen</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB028 - Former Pontllanfraith School, Pontllanfraith</i>	Preferred Use: Housing
<i>GB030 - Land at Cwmgelli Farm, Blackwood</i>	Preferred Use: Housing

After some discussion, it was ***agreed*** that objections be raised in respect of the 2 areas within the Town Council area, namely GB012 Land at Heol y Cefn & GB030 Land at Cwmgelli Farm citing the ongoing issues as raised previously by Cllr. K Etheridge

17. To Consider 2023 Parliamentary Review – Revised Proposals – NEWPORT WEST & ISLWYN – Abercarn, Argoed, Blackwood, Crosskeys, Crumlin, Newbridge, Penmaen, Risca East, Risca West & Ynysddu together with Newport Wards of Allt yr Yn, Gaer, Craig, Marshfield, Rogerstone & Tredegar Park

The Clerk highlighted the new proposals for the Review of Parliamentary Boundaries as it affects Islwyn and stressed this does not effect the Town Council or Caerphilly County Borough Councils boundaries.

Members agreed

18. Planning Applications

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting, verbally reporting he had an application included regarding tree works at his home. After some discussion it was *agreed* there seemed nothing contentious and that no objections be raised -

Case Ref. 22/0394/FULL

Location: Mayberry Pharmacy 175 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AA

Proposal: Install Medpoint prescription collection machine to the existing shop front window

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

Case Ref. 22/0828/FULL

Location: 9 Llwyn Coed Blackwood NP12 1FT

Proposal: Erect side garage

Case Officer: Joe Simmons 07874641751 Simmoj1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Case Ref. 22/0851/FULL

Location: Blackwood Rugby Club Hall Street Blackwood NP12 1NY

Proposal: Resurface and raise existing pitch level, extend existing pitch to form storage area and erect new fencing and gates

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

Case Ref. 22/0876/FULL

Location: McDonalds Cliff Road Blackwood NP12 0NT

Proposal: Carry out Minor alterations to elevations to include enlarging the existing back of house corral to incorporate extensions totalling 16.7 sqm, new folded roof to be installed inclusive of aluminium cladding and timber effect louvres with a new access door formed. Existing glazed panel to be overlaid with new cladding to drive thru booths and associated works to the site

Case Officer: Chantalle Lamnea 07874 641747 lamnec@caerphilly.gov.uk

Case Ref. 22/0877/ADV

Location: McDonalds Cliff Road Blackwood NP12 0NT

Proposal: Erect 2 No. internally illuminated letter fascia signs and 3 No. Internally illuminated alfresco roof arches

Case Officer: Chantalle Lamnea 07874 641747 lamnec@caerphilly.gov.uk

19. Reports

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from the Deputy Mayor requesting that Town Council please discuss disabled friendly premises to hold their monthly meetings. Having undergone surgery on her foot/ankle and lower leg, it will be some months before she can fully weight bear and cannot, therefore, access stairs. She doesn't want this to prevent her from returning to her duties and attending meetings.

After some discussion, members *agreed* that the current location was disabled friendly, and access via the rear door meant there were no stairs to negotiate. It was pointed out that meetings were also accessible remotely.

The Mayor reported on an application for financial assistance that he had received only a short time before the meeting. It was from Islwyn Ministry Area requesting assistance in the replacement of outdoor Christmas lighting bulbs for the Christmas tree in Church grounds in the sum of £584 (total costs £840)

After some discussion, members considered this worthwhile of support, in the hope it will bring some joy in these bleak times, and *agreed* a grant be made in the sum of £584

The Mayor and other members briefly reported on an incident at the Bus Station recently where there were a number of underage drinkers. Police were in attendance as part of Operation Bang, but members expressed their disappointment at not being informed directly beforehand.

