

**MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 31ST. MAY 2023**

Present : Cllr. G Edwards (Mayor)

Cllrs. K Etheridge, K Williams, D Box, D Davies, R Mills, K Jones, A Short, C Clark
together with newly co-opted Cllrs. N Dix, M Gwynne & N Nyle

It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to move items 4 to the first item and item 5 to the third item on the Agenda

1. To Receive a verbal Report of the Co-option Interview Committee held prior to this meeting

The Mayor reported that Interviews had been held prior to commencement of this meeting and that the Committee were recommending Nigel Dix Mark Gwynne & Noah Nyle be co-opted to Town Council. This was ***unanimously agreed***

2. Minutes Silence - Cllr. Arthur Bradfield

Members observed a Minutes Silence in memory of our dear friend and colleague Arthur.

Cllr. K Etheridge passed on a message from Deborah thanking Town Councillors who had offered messages of condolence and had attended the funeral.

3. To Elect a Mayor & Receive Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was proposed by Cllr. K Etheridge and seconded by Cllr. K Williams, that in recognition of all his hard work over the past year that Cllr. G Edwards be re-elected Mayor. This was ***unanimously agreed.***

Cllr. Edwards, having then signed the necessary Declaration of Acceptance of Office, thanked members for the honour bestowed upon him and vowed to continue to work hard for the town and its residents.

4. To Elect a Deputy Mayor

It was proposed by Cllr. D Davies & seconded by Cllr. A Short that Cllr. R Mills be elected Deputy Mayor and this was ***unanimously agreed***

5. Acceptance of Office - New Co-opted Members

The Clerk confirmed that all three newly co-opted members had signed the Acceptance of Office Forms in his presence as required and Cllrs. N Dix M Gwynne & N Nyle were welcomed to the meeting

6. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors C Erasmus & A Farina-Childs

7. *Declarations of Interest*

There were no Declarations made at this point

8. *Outgoing Mayoral Report*

The Mayor reported that he had had a busy year attending various functions organised by local charities, organisations and schools and hoped to build on various contacts made to ensure he continues to best represent the town.

He informed members plans were in hand for this years Remembrance Service and that he was also organising a Concert at the Blackwood Miners Institute on November 22nd.

9. *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, K Etheridge C Erasmus, D Box & N Nyle

(b) Planning & Licensing Committee

Councillors K Jones, C Clark, A Short, K Williams & D Box

(c) Environment Committee

Councillors D Davies, A Farina-Childs, K Williams M Gwynne & N Dix

(d) Newsletter/Web Page Committee

Councillors D Box, K Williams, C Clark

(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) Co-option Interview Committee

Councillors C Erasmus, R Mills, K Williams, K Etheridge & C Clark

(h) Appraisal Sub-Committee

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

10. To Review & Approve Committee Terms of Reference

The Mayor proposed these be delegated to Policy & Finance Committee for Review and amendment if necessary and bring back to Town Council for approval.

This was **agreed** by members

11. 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 & K Etheridge

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

Councillor G Edwards with K Etheridge as Deputy

(c) Blackwood Town Centre Management Group

Councillors G Edwards & A Short

(d) Retail Partnership Group

Councillors G Edwards & A Short

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

Councillors G Edwards & A Short

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

Councillor K Williams with C Clark as Deputy

(g) Plas Mawr Community Centre Committee

Agreed to leave vacant

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

The Clerk presented his report and after some discussion the following provisional dates were **agreed** –

12th. June 2023

3rd. July 2023

4th. September 2023

16th. October 2023 (to accommodate Clerk’s planned holiday arrangements)

6th. November 2023

4th. December 2023

8th. January 2024

5th. February 2024

4th. March 2024

1st. April 2024

13th. May 2024 (Annual General Meeting & Ordinary Meeting)

It was also **agreed** that the meetings be held at the Blackwood Methodist Church (with hopefully remote access via Microsoft Teams)

Furthermore, that meetings start at 6.30 p.m. and notification of meetings, Agendas, Minutes and Reports continue to be forwarded via e mail.

The Mayor reported that we were currently likely to be in breach of General Data Protection Regulations by using personal email addresses and personal devices for Town Council business and would agenda this issue or our next meeting

13. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 5th. April 2023

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

14. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising

15. To Consider New Model Standing Orders

The Mayor reported that the Model Standing Orders had been emailed to members but proposed these be delegated to Policy & Finance Committee to customise where necessary and then recommend back to Town Council for adoption.

This was **agreed** by members

16. To Consider New Model Financial Regulations

The Mayor reported that the Model Financial Regulations had been emailed to members but proposed these be delegated to Policy & Finance Committee to customise where necessary and then recommend back to Town Council for adoption.

This was *agreed* by members

17. To consider Draft Annual Report for 2022/23

The Clerk reported that he had completed as best he could the Annual Report for 2022/23 (other than Town Council priorities for the coming year) and that they had been emailed to members. He similarly proposed these be delegated to Policy & Finance Committee to amend where necessary, identify priorities and then recommend back to Town Council for adoption.

This was *agreed* by members

18. Bank Mandate for Change of Signatories & Debit Cards

After some discussion it was *agreed* that the current signatories be replaced and that the Signatories on the Bank Accounts of the Town Council from this A.G.M. be John Hold , George Edwards, Rhys Mills & Andrew Short with Debit Cards in the name of John Hold & George Edwards (as emergency)

19. To Appoint Internal Auditor for 2023/24 (currently Mr. Andrew Jervis)

It was *agreed* that Mr. Andrew Jervis be re-appointed as Internal Auditor

20. To formalise Trip to Belgium with Royal British Legion as an Approved Duty for Mayor

Cllrs. D Davies (Member of British Legion) & G Edwards (Mayor) declared an Interest in this matter and took no part in the discussion or decision making.

The Clerk explained this was a relatively last minute invitation to the Mayor, in recognition of his hard work in ensuring the last Remembrance Service was a far better tribute to those who had given the ultimate sacrifice.

He had emailed members seeking their views and no one had indicated disagreement to his attendance, but felt it was necessary to formalise same as an Approved Duty.

It was proposed by Cllr K Etheridge, seconded by Cllr K Williams and agreed by members this be acknowledged as an Approved Duty and the appropriate expenses payable.

Cllr R Mills, whilst fully supporting the decision, requested that wherever possible such requests give members more time to consider same and ideally with an indication of costs.

21. To Consider request for additional funding towards Beach Party to allow for Street Entertainers

The Clerk reported that he (and the Mayor) had been contacted by the Caerphilly C.B.C. Events team regarding the increase in costs they are having to deal with in organising the Beach Party, and were concerned it might not match the publics expectations following the very successful Spring Fair, since insufficient funding would be available for Street Entertainers.

The Clerk explained that they were given a budget of £15k to organise the event on our behalf, whilst the remaining £5k was retained by Town Council for staging and on stage entertainment. He had subsequently renegotiated the charge for staging, which had helped the situation but it was still likely an additional £2k might be required for Street Entertainers.

After much discussion when members identified this as the first Summer Event in town since 2019, and were eager this should be an event to remember, it was ***agreed*** an additional £5k be earmarked from balances but with the proviso this is definitely a one off, and future funding of events will have to be carefully considered at budget setting.

Cllr. N Nyle asked, given that Town Council were eager to take every opportunity to increase footfall in the town, whether Town Council might be interested in hosting next years Pride Caerffili. The inaugural event is being held in Caerphilly on Saturday 24th.June and is aware options for next year are already being considered.

Members agreed this would be an opportunity not to be missed and asked Cllr Nyle to put Blackwood forward for the 2024 venue.

The Mayor then reported that he had been contacted regarding a possible large scale event being held on the Showfield in 2025, likely to include a Balloon Fair plus Vintage Car Rally. He stated he would seek further information and report back to a future meeting.