

MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6TH. JANUARY 2025

Present : Cllr. R Mills (Mayor)
Cllr. G Etheridge (Deputy Mayor)
Cllrs. A Short, K Jones, A Farina- Childs, K Etheridge, C Clark, L Phillips, K Williams,
D Davies, C Erasmus & J Griffiths
Cllr. D Box attended remotely

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. P Cook M Gwynne & N Dix

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point

3. Police Report

No Police present

4. County Borough Report

Cllr. A Farina- Childs gave an update on the following issues –

Bin collections – total shambles with poor communication regarding delayed or missed collections

Show field - had personally collected some 30+ cans/cartons from the car park
Dog litter bins full to overflowing, being a potential health hazard and when reported to
Parks Department over the Christmas break, told they wouldn't be collected/ emptied
until 2nd. January

Proposed Skate Park - putting to one side the apparent lack of security/ lighting, plans seem to
indicate this may not be as all inclusive a park as originally anticipated

Bowls Clubs - original proposals amended, now anticipating 25% of maintenance fees from April'26

Cwmgelli Development – continuing issues with culverts and drainage likely to result in the site not
being fully habitable until 2027

Pobl Development – Highway issues mean this development at Coronation Road is currently on hold

Old Somerfield Car park Site - Site problems have delayed proposed start of the development

Homeless persons - There are currently 6 homeless persons in town, with no night shelter currently
up and running

Bus Station - Reports of continued problems with youths in and around Bus Station each evening

School Crossing Patrol – Thanks to Cllr Kevin Etheridge for his efforts in ensuring position at Libanus School remains in place

New Nursery on Bridge Street – Reminder of invitation to all members to opening 18th January

5. *Mayoral Announcements*

The Mayor reported he and other members had received numerous phone calls regarding the Bins issue highlighted by Cllr.A Farina-Childs.

He also reported he had assisted in judging the Best Christmas Window Dressing Competition that had been won by Kismet

6. *Letter of Resignation – Claire Cook, Assistant Town Clerk*

The Clerk presented the letter of resignation received from the Assistant Clerk, and reported that it did seem she had been offered employment back in the Education Sector by a former colleague and felt it was an opportunity she couldn't refuse, but thanked members for the welcome she had received and wished all well for the future. The Mayor echoed the Clerks comments having been in touch himself.

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** if possible an Exit Interview be undertaken, and that the Policy & Finance Selection Panel meet on Monday 24th. January to discuss Job Advert etc

7. *Correspondence*

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

HSBC

It has been a pleasure to collaborate with you over the last 6 months.

Thank you so much for giving HSBC UK Bank the opportunity to use the excellent Facilities you have at the Community Hub; you have been most welcoming and accommodating and we are genuinely sorry that our 'residency' cannot be extended at this point in time.

It is encouraging to see that your vision for the facility is starting to come together, and we wish the best of luck for the future of the initiative.

Please retain our contact details, as we will yours – who knows what opportunities may arise for us to work together again in 2025!

Kindest regards

Andy, Jo, Gareth & Allison

C.C.B.C.

Unfortunately, the proposed enhancement scheme to Blackwood High Street Car Park is unable to go ahead in its entirety, due to the fact that although the side lane next to Card Centre is an adopted highway, there is no public right of way through the private car park behind these shops. Improvements will still be going ahead (new bin storage, landscaping and tree planting, removal of side fencing, and bench seating), however we will not be proceeding with the footpath. We will instead be extending the new wall along the perimeter of the private car park above the banking to improve the appearance of this area.

Confirmation that CIL monies can be used to improve security at the Offices

Footfall figures

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On 24 October 2024 my predecessor Jacqui Morgan wrote to you regarding the proposal to reduce the number of cameras throughout the Borough.

The e mail outlined the reasons for the reduction and highlighted the camera at the Health Centre in Cefn Fforest that would be affected, asking for your comments.

Comments received from all consultees have been given careful consideration.

The representations received provided no significant new information that leads us to believe that the decision to remove the camera should be reversed.

I would remind you that should circumstances change significantly, then the Authority has re-deployable cameras which can be moved to areas of greater need. Furthermore, the sites where the current cameras are located, will be preserved in such a way that should re-deployable cameras be required, they can be installed.

Notification of Special Community Council Liaison Sub Committee to be held on 27th. January – Budget Consultation

Notification of Council Tax Base Notification for 2025/26 as £3,086.45 at Band D equivalent (compared with £2,936.94 for 2024/25) and request details of Town Council precept by 31st. January

Notification from Natalie Kenny (Snr. Community Safety Officer) that as of 22nd. November' 24 the lights at the Bus Station were timed to come on at 5.00 and off at 8.00 and back on at 16.30 and back off at 00.00

Also the area has been identified as Partnership Tasking Priority, and also that the Wi-Fi is turned off between 6.00pm – 10.00pm to see if that makes any difference to the situation

In response to revised proposals suggested by the Deputy Mayor regarding the potential installation of shutters at the bus bays to try and mitigate the anti social behaviour, a response from Kelly Adams (Integrated Transport Unit) stating the new proposals were impractical and non viable

Notification of consultation dates for design of Proposed Skate Park

Meeting 1:

Monday 16th December, 6PM-8PM, Blackwood Showfield Bowls Club

Meeting 2:

Monday 6th January, 6PM-8PM, online via Zoom. Meeting link will be posted here.

Meeting 3:

Monday 20th January, 6PM-8PM, online via Zoom. Meeting link will be posted here.

Meeting 4:

Monday 27th January, 6PM-8PM, TBC – possibly Bowls club again

Blackwood Active Travel - Copy of Presentation made at meeting held 9th. Dec. '24

One Voice Wales

Community Resilience Research Project with Aberystwyth University – request
For members to respond by 12th. January

Training dates January – March '25

Review of Senedd Constituencies - Revised proposals – Comments by 13th. Jan

Consultation on the Reform of Compulsory Purchase process & Compensation
Rates - closing date 13th. February - Question 1 relevant to Comm. Councils

Cllr Teresa Parry

Good Morning Clerk,

Could you please get the attached motion considered – and hopefully passed –
by your council. Gelligaer and Llanbradach Community Councils have passed
the motion unanimously and the motion to CCBC will take place in January.

YesCymru, Plaid Cymru and Labour at the Senedd are at the forefront of asking
for this.

Getting control of the Crown Estate is worth tens of £millions to Wales / Cymru.

Please let me know when you will be presenting and if it goes through.

Dros Gymru,

Teresa

Cllr Teresa Parry

In respect of the request seeking Control of the Crown Estate, after some discussion it was ***agreed to support same***, with 6 members voting for, 1 member voting against and 5 members abstaining

8. *Schedule of Payments*

The Clerk presented his report on the payments made/ are due or payment a -

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E Infinity	Microsoft Licences	1,900.80
Fusion Electrics	External point – Christmas Tree	840.00
British Gas	Electricity charges	109.17
Elsbury's	Xmas Lighting erection/ storage 50%	2,043.24
Greg Churcher	Boiler Call out charge	60.00
Aneurin Bevan UHB	Turn the Town Pink (Breast Cancer Unit)	250.00
C. Clark	Reimbursement –Gifts	27.50
John Hold	December Salary & Reimbursements	915.91
Claire Cook	December Salary	1,074.82
H.M.R.C.	December Tax/ N.I.	1,017.88
Playworks	December Fee	20.00
Bebb Tasker & Sucksmith	Lease Payment	960.00
Audit Wales	Audit Fee 2023/24	200.00
Libanus Primary School	Financial Assistance	357.00
Blackwood Rugby Club	Financial Assistance – Flooding (CIL)	5,000.00
Bowel Cancer	Donation in lieu of flowers	50.00
Spectrum Fibres	Broadband Charges	46.20

All payments were *unanimously agreed* by members

9. *To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 2nd. December 2024*

It was *resolved* the Minutes be Received and *agreed*

10. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2nd. December 2024*

With the amendment that C Clark was present and not C Cook, it was *resolved* the Minutes be agreed as a true record

11. *Matters Arising*

The Clerk queried progress on the Warm hub initiative. Members stated they were aware that Hubs existed in town throughout the week, namely –

Libanus Lifestyle - Monday & Thursday

The Moose – Tuesday

HTC - Wednesday & Friday

and that perhaps our proposed involvement in same should be put on hold at present

12. Meeting with Police & Crime Commissioner on Wednesday 15th. January 2025

The Clerk confirmed the date and time of the meeting - 6.00pm 15th. January at Council Offices. After some discussion it was agreed the meeting should concentrate on strategic issues as opposed to individual members personal problem areas.

Some of the potential areas were highlighted as Resources/ Gwent Police Precept Issues/ Has she identified potential problems and what initiatives has she in mind/ Gwent Face Recognition App

It was agreed the Questions be pre-written with nominated members to ask same, and members were asked to inform the Clerk of any specific questions they wanted to raise.

13. Planning Applications

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

Case Ref. 24/0878/FULL

Location: Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust Cwmgelli Ambulance Station Lon Pennant Cwmgelli Blackwood NP12 1YR

Proposal: Demolish 2 No. redundant water towers of plastic coated profiled construction located on top of the flat roof of a single storey building

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows (01443 864427 : burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Case Ref. 24/0837/HH

Location: The Chimneys Heol-Y-Bedw-Hirion Bedwellty Blackwood NP12 0BE

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension

Case Officer: Luke Buffery (01443 864709 : buffel@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Case Ref. 24/0890/COU

Location: 28 Wheatley Place Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1EU

Proposal: Extend and change the use of existing garage to family room

Case Officer: Ed Chappell (01443 866768 : chappel1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Case Ref. 24/0892/FULL

Location: ALDI Unit 1 Blackwood Gate Retail Park Blackwood NP12 2FS

Proposal: Erect replacement plant, enclosure and associated works

Case Officer: Emile Braithwaite (01443 864433 : braite@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Case Ref. 24/0907/COU

Location: 187 - 189 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AA

Proposal: Change the use of commercial ground floor space and lower ground floor commercial storage to part commercial and part residential for two new dwellings

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows (01443 864427 : burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

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

14. Reports

Cllr. D Box reported briefly on a recent meeting of the Task & Finish Group (Location of Concern) commissioned by Caerphilly C.B.C.she attended which discussed the Chartist Bridge distress, and the ongoing ARUP Feasibility Study and the Planned Poem of Hope, in conjunction with Patrick Jones , which it is hoped will help change the narrative around the Bridge.