

***DRAFT***

***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup>. JULY 2025***

***Present :*** Cllr G Etheridge ( Mayor )

Cllr. J Griffiths ( Deputy Mayor )

Cllrs. K Williams, P Cook, A Farina-Childs, K Etheridge, D Box, K Jones, C Erasmus, A Short

***1. To Receive Apologies for Absence***

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. C Clark, D Davies, R Mills, N Dix & L Phillips

***2. Declarations Of Interest***

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point

***3. Police Report***

There were no Police present

***4. County Borough Report***

The following report from County members had been forwarded to members, and was noted

1. On-going issues with the Bin Storage Facility at the Flats by the BMI. Cllr George Etheridge is involved with this issue too.
2. On-going issues with the Pobl Development at the rear of Coronation Rd.
3. Concerns raised about the people living on the Pobl Flats by the BMI.
4. Trolleys in the river again!! 20 Trolleys removed on 3rd July.
5. I've requested all the Junctions leading off Gordon Rd be re-painted.
6. All the newly planted trees at Plas Mawr have been snapped.
7. The Blackwood Placemaking Plan was discussed at Full Council.
8. On-going issues with missed bin collections.
9. On-going issues with weeds that all of us have reported
10. The Boundary Commission are looking at Council Wards again.

## 5. *Mayoral Announcements*

Please see attached Report

## 6. *Correspondence*

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

**Caerphilly C.B.C.** Notification that the Community Review recommendations submitted by the Democracy & Boundary Commission Cymru to Welsh Ministers approved Without modification - No changes for Blackwood

Footfall figures - forwarded to members

Notification of CIL Receipt for £4,072.49 & request for information of CIL payments by Town Council for 2024/25

Provisional Revenue Budget Out-turn for 2024/25 – forwarded to members

Request for use of Town Council Offices as a Quiet Space during Beach Party

Response from Paul Hudson, C.C.B.C. Business Enterprise & Renewal Team Manager regarding Town Council response to Place Making consultation -

Thanks John, and for all the town council members input and support at our meeting, it is really appreciated by the team and we look forward to an ongoing dialogue with the town council.

Good evening Paul, unfortunately Town Council haven't been able to meet within your necessary timescales to formally discuss the Placemaking Plan. However, I believe the general consensus of members who attended the Meeting earlier this week, were broadly supportive of same..One of the major concerns was initially the possibility of the High Street becoming one way but fortunately those fears were quickly allayed, whilst accepting things could also be introduced to make the High Street more pedestrian friendly.

The more detailed scenarios shared with us at the meeting I believe certainly whetted members appetite for potential improvements in the Town, whilst not getting too carried away, given the several false dawns we've been party to in the past.

<b><i>Town &amp; Comm. Councils C'tee</i></b>	Papers for in person meeting at Blackwood Town Council Offices on Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> , June
<b><i>One Voice Wales</i></b>	Request to hold Area Committee Annual Meeting at our Offices on Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> . July together with papers for said meeting
<b><i>Mount Pleasant Baptist Church</i></b>	Letter of thanks for generous donation
<b><i>Blackwood Community History Group</i></b>	Requests for Financial Assistance – propose defer to Policy & Finance Committee
<b><i>Blackwood Cricket Club Eisteddfod Y Cymoed</i></b>	Finance Committee
<b><i>Cllr D Box</i></b>	Melo Z Cards ( forwarded to members )
<b><i>ASDA Community Champion ( via Deputy Mayor )</i></b>	<p>Lorna from Asda rang to ask if Town Council are interested in joining them for some of the events they are planning in coming months.</p> <p>31st July - Litter pick River Bank 10.30 to 12.00 (ending with Drinks and biscuits)</p> <p>Throughout summer hols - free activities for kids. ( Information will be on Asda Messenger page )</p> <p>The big one 4th October - Breast Cancer Awareness. Requested TC involvement to have legs waxed and get involved during the day. Email <a href="mailto:community_blackwoodasda.uk">community_blackwoodasda.uk</a></p>

## **7. Schedule of Payments**

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

***agreed -***

		£. p
John Hold	May Salary/ Petty Cash	870.28
HMRC	May Tax/N.I.	689.31
Kath Watkins	May Fee	20.00
Bebb, Tasker & Sucksmith	Lease Payment	960.00
British Gas	Electricity	49.63
Mount Pleasant Church	Grant	400.00
Spectrum Fibre	Broadband	46.20
British Gas	Gas	30.11
Caerphilly C.B.C.	N.N.D.R.	625.00
Welsh Water	Water Charges	77.73
British Gas	Electricity	51.69
Einfinity	Reset Passwords/ Laptops	156.00
John Hold	June Salary / petty cash/ reimbursements	910.28
Kath Watkins	June Fee	20.00
Information Commissioner	Subscription	52.00
Studio 54	Beach party Entertainment	950.00
KLA Dance Inst.	“ “	100.00
Blackwood Musical Theatre	“ “	100.00
Samba Galez	“ “	500.00
DYT Dance	“ “	150.00
Dancelicious	“ “	100.00
Elsburys	Erect/ take down bunting	480.00
A.P. Jervis	Internal Audit Fee	120.00
Blackwood Bowls Club	Grant	250.00
Bravehearts	Grant	100.00

#### ***8. To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup>. June 2025***

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

#### ***9. Matters Arising***

There were no matters arising

#### ***10. To Confirm the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held 25<sup>th</sup>. June 2025***

It was resolved the minutes be received as a true record

#### ***11. Matters Arising***

There were no matters arising

#### ***12. Update on Job Advertisement / Manning of Offices***

The Mayor reported 40+ expressions of interest/ applications had been received and having trawled through same had identified 9 that actually met the criteria.

Having taken advice from One Voice Wales, he proposed all 9 should be invited for initial

interview before short listing further, and inviting the successful candidates to make a presentation at the final interview stage, topic to be decided.

After some discussion this proposal was ***unanimously agreed***.

Recognising the Interim Clerk was eager to finish, he proposed the interviews take place over the coming few weeks and that we needed to select an Interview Panel.

The Clerk reminded members that at the AGM, it was proposed that the Policy & Finance Committee be tasked to select/ appoint a Staffing Sub Committee to deal with these such matters.

Again given the perceived urgency it was proposed by Cllr K Etheridge seconded by Cllr. A Farina-Childs & ***unanimously agreed*** that the Sub-Committee be decided this evening.

After further discussion and checking of availability it was ***unanimously agreed*** Cllrs. J Griffiths , K Williams, C Erasmus & D Box together with the Mayor be appointed as the Staffing Sub Committee ( all members of the Policy & Finance Committee )

Having checked availability it was ***agreed*** the initial interviews take place throughout the day/early evening of Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>. July, with the final interviews/ presentations on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>. August

The Mayor briefly re-emphasised the need for other members to devote some time to manning the offices when able – either two and half hour period 10.00am – 12.30pm or 12.30pm – 3.00pm Tuesday to Friday

### ***13. Budget Monitoring Report - Period 3 - to 30<sup>th</sup>. June 2025***

The Clerk presented his Report, which identified a spend of £24,638 against a budget of £114,700, with Income of £51,274 against a budget of £94,590.

He also reported an anticipated out-turn for the year which would likely require a contribution from balances of £20,320, very much in line with the original estimate.

The Report was ***agreed*** by members

### ***14. Verbal Update on Beach Party held Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>. June / Blackwood In Bloom Competition***

The Clerk gave a brief update on the Beach Party, informing members that footfall had been recorded at approx 5,500 on the day, an increase of 2,000 on the previous Saturday, and was the 2<sup>nd</sup>. busiest day of the year so far ( just 250 less than the Spring fair )

Initial reports were very favourable from the majority of stall holders on the day, and perhaps more importantly from local businesses in the High Street, whilst the visitors certainly seemed to be enjoying the varied attractions on site.

The busking pods had proved popular and the Town Council Community Entertainment area had crowds enjoying the local dance groups, Musical Theatre Group, Samba Band and vocalists throughout the day, and the lack of a stage had not detracted from the performances.

The Mayor reported that until now, disappointingly, there had been no response in respect of the Blackwood In Bloom Competition

### ***15. Proposal / Request for Funding Studio 54***

The Clerk reported briefly on the proposal from Jenna @ Studio 54 and the fact he had forwarded an application form for completion.

Whilst several members were supportive in principle, there were reservations regarding how the children were to be selected for placement on the schemes, ensuring they were from our area, but also as highlighted in the report, from families who couldn't afford extra curricular classes.

After some discussion it was agreed we await the completed application form, and then possibly arrange for Jenna to attend a meeting to firm up her proposal.

## **16. Planning Applications**

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

### ***Case Ref. 25/0339/HH***

Location: 64 Bloomfield Road Blackwood NP12 1LX

Proposal: Create 2 No. parking spaces with the curtilage of the dwelling

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

### ***Case Ref. 25/0373/RET***

Location: Gorseland Cliff Road Blackwood

Proposal: Retain the Change of use from garage to individual teaching rooms and toilet facility

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

### ***Case Ref. 25/0388/CLPU***

Location: 13 Raglan Close Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1GA

Proposal: Obtain a Lawful Development Certificate to construct rear dormer window and internal alterations

Case Officer: Elizabeth Rowley ( 01443 864776 : rowlee@caerphilly.gov.uk

### ***Case Ref. 25/0399/RET***

Location: 79 High Street Blackwood NP12 1BA

Proposal: Retain and complete the change of use from commercial to A1(Shops)

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

### ***Case Ref. 25/0415/RET***

Location: Pencoed Fach Farm Heol Y Cefn Bedwellty Blackwood NP12 0BQ

Proposal: Retain the widening of the existing 9 metre farm entrance to 20 metres

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

### ***APPLICATION NO. 25/0159/COU***

Location :Blackwood Business Centre , 85 High Street, Blackwood

Proposal : Change the use of the building from a mixed use to 10no. residential units, to include the construction of rear roof dormers, rear extension and external staircase

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

After some discussion it was agreed no objections be raised, however, in respect of the proposal for the former Barclays Bank building, members did have major concerns regarding sufficient parking for vehicles, bin storage facilities ( bearing in mind the ongoing issues at the new development adjacent to the BMI ) and clothes drying facilities

## **19. Reports**

Cllr. A Farina - Childs asked if any other quotes had been received in respect of Remembrance Garden renovation works. The Mayor stated he had made contact with other providers/ contractors but had not had any response as yet.

Cllr Farina-Childs also raised the issue of additional lamp post poppies, and the Mayor stated this item would be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting, scheduled for September.

The Mayor also took the opportunity to update members on the Security shutters. A recent visit by

the firm contracted had highlighted some issues that we would need to rectify prior to fitting. The Mayor had responded by pointing out at the initial site survey, we had been assured that the only compromise necessary would be the door would only open inwards as opposed to both ways at present. The works now outlined would mean potential additional costs to Town Council and he had threatened request for repayment of all monies paid and cancellation of said agreement. We are awaiting their response as to how they can rectify their apparent mismanagement of the promised works