



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2018 AT 6.30 PM AT THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, 101 HIGH ST, BLAENAVON.

In attendance:

Councillor: Gareth Davies (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: S. Bright, S. Evans, L. Evans, N. Horler, J. Huybs, A. Jones, J. Jones, B. Lewis, G. McCann.

Officer: Mr K. Warren (Clerk to the Council)

Visitors: Mr Rick Beachey, Mr Wayne Lewis, Mr Huw Sweeney.

The meeting of the full council was opened at 6:30pm by the Chairman Councillor Gareth Davies who welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed thanks for attendance.

1. To receive any questions from the public.

There were no questions.

2. Apologies:

Cllrs: P. Roberts, J. Denley-Jones

3. Declarations of interest

Cllr Janet Jones item 13 on the agenda.

4. Chairman's Announcements

The Mayor Cllr Davies outlined his attendance at the following:

- Attended the Remembrance Day Parade on the 11/11/18. The event was well organised and attended and thanks should be given to the Royal British Legion. It was discussed by members that a letter is sent to the RBL expressing the Council's thanks.

It was pointed out that some members received telephone calls requesting why there was no church service. The Clerk explained that it was the RBL's decision and not the Town Council that the church service would not be held this year due to the poor attendance last year. This was discussed at the Remembrance Day Parade planning meeting and decided that the church service would not be held.

Resolved: Clerk to send a letter of thanks to the RBL and request explanation why there was no church service.

- Attended the Xmas Carol service and blessing of the crib on the 26/11/18 which was again well attended. Thanks to the Royal British Legion for the loan of the sound equipment and also to Chris Langford for his work regarding the setting up of the event. There were some concerns raised by members of the public regarding the potential for earlier notification of the event in terms of paper copies and perhaps these could be published earlier next year but there were complicating factors for the delay at this year's event.

It was pointed out that this year there was a huge improvement in terms of the sound quality at the event. An appreciation was also given to Cllr Lewis Evans who played the role of Father Christmas at this year's event.

- Attend the unveiling of the information board at the Lion Hotel on the 23/11/18 together with the enactment of the historical riot. Again, this was an event that was well attended, and positive comments were received from the public.
- Attended Busy Bees nursery on the 23/11/18 and presented a cheque for £3,000 from the Town Council to match fund the monies from the RDP. It was pointed out that this is another example of the Town Council assisting to lever in funds from other organisations. It was explained that the Council's recent input into match funding has improved massively to support projects within the Town.

5. To receive an update from Julianne Davenne (Torfaen Play Service) regarding the Town Council Swimming Project.

Mr Davenne was unable to attend, and it was explained that this was due to a work commitment. It was also explained to members that Mr Davenne would be happy to attend in the future to provide an update to members.

A brief discussion took place by members regarding the service provided by the Torfaen Play Service and future funding from the Council. It was mentioned that further financial support was due to be paid but a further request from Mr Davenne would need to be made to the Council.

The Clerk explained to members that this had not been budgeted for. There was a view that this had been agreed previously and for a check of the minutes to be made to clarify this point.

Resolved: Members noted the update. Minutes to be examined regarding the payment of further monies and update at next Council Meeting.

6. To sign as a correct record the Full Council minutes held on the 24th October 2018

The minutes from the last Full Council meeting held on the 24th October 2018 were read.

Resolved: Minutes accepted as a true record.

7. Clerk's Update.

Mr Warren provided the following update:

As per the council's request at the last meeting regarding item 5 on the October 2018 minutes. An overview regarding the number of Blaenavon and Torfaen residents who have attended the Community Intergenerational Workshops was provided these being:

- Project Launch in May 2018 – 98 attendees 45 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.
- Workshop 1 in July 2018 – 33 attendees 20 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.
- Workshop 2 in August 2018 – 42 attendees 19 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.
- Workshop 3 in September 2018 – 85 attendees 50 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.
- Workshop 4 in October 2018 – 47 attendees 23 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.
- Workshop 5 in November 2018 – 49 attendees 37 from Blaenavon and Torfaen.

Cllr Alan Jones pointed out that the project as a whole has been a huge success and thanks was given to the Clerk and Sharon Ford at Big Pit for the volume of work that has been put into the project to date. Cllr Jones gave an overview of the most recent workshop he attended and described the atmosphere within the workshop which was excellent.

Cllr Stuart Evans requested if the numbers could be broken down further to reflect Blaenavon residents. The Clerk explained that the vast majority of the attendees were from Blaenavon and this could be confirmed by the Councillors who had attended the workshops. The Clerk suggested that Councillors who had not previously attended should attend and they could observe this first hand.

Cllr Evans requested the figures for Blaenavon residents this was seconded by Cllr Janet Jones.

A counter proposal was put forward by Cllr Nick Horler that these figures are not provided, this was seconded by Cllr Alan Jones.

A vote was taken on the counter proposal. This was carried by 7 votes to 3.

Resolved: Counter proposal carried.

Mr Warren explained to members that since the last meeting he had attended two website working party meetings with Cllrs Jackie Huybs, Nick Horler and Barbara Lewis which has resulted in the completion of the new Council website. A further update would be provided on this evening's agenda.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren explained to members that since the last meeting he has conducted a considerable amount of work in relation to the Town Council Carol Service which included:

- Planning the installation of the Xmas lights with Festive Lighting Company and SSE.
- Preparation of the order of service booklets.
- Road Closure and traffic management orders.
- Organising and assisting with the installation of the crib, gazebo and podium.
- Liaising with partners namely Churches Working Together and Blaenavon Town Band.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren explained to members that on the 11/11/18 he attended the Remembrance Day Parade but prior to the event he had completed a lot of partnership working with the Royal British Legion in terms of organising wreaths together with the order of service.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren updated members that on the 15/11/18 he attended the third training course for the CiLCA qualification at Llanelli. Mr Warren reiterated to members that the time involved to complete the course is 240 hours but in reality, this will be more. Mr Warren explained to members that from January 2019 there will be a lot of demand placed on him to complete the qualification.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren updated members that on the 21/11/18 he attended the fifth intergenerational workshop at the Workmen's Hall. Again, this was extremely well attended which included on this occasion a group of children from Crownbridge School in Cwmbran.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren updated members that on the 29/10/18 on behalf of the Council he sent a letter to the area manager of the Hospice of the Valleys regarding the proposed closure of the charity shop situated in Broad Street, Blaenavon. The letter was displayed on the projector screen for members to view.

It was also mentioned to members that a press release was provided to the South Wales Argus covering the proposed closure and a comment from the Mayor Cllr Gareth Davies.

Cllr Stuart Evans updated members that he had been contacted by residents about their concerns regarding the closure. As a result, together with Cllr Janet Jones, they had met with the Directors of the Hospice of the Valleys and a decision has now been made to locate the charity shop to a new premise in Broad Street.

Resolved: Members noted the update and agreed this was a positive outcome.

Mr Warren updated members that as per the Council's instructions at the last meeting he had raised a cheque for £150 and presented it to Matthew Cox regarding the sponsorship banner for Blaenavon Blues firework display.

A cheque for £250 had also been raised regarding the donation to Castle Street allotments. Mr Terry Bennet had been informed and was grateful to the Council. A request was made for the cheque to be formally presented by the Mayor and this will be arranged in the near future.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren updated members that on the 23/11/18 he attended Busy Bees nursery regarding the presentation of the match funding cheque for £3,000

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Mr Warren updated members that he had sent a letter to GOS Engineering thanking them on behalf of the Mayor and the Town Council for their support in offloading and storing the Xmas lights in readiness for collection by SSE.

The letter was displayed on the projector screen for members to view.

Resolved: Members noted the update

Mr Warren updated members that on the 27/11/18 he held a meeting with the internal auditor Andy Smith regarding next year's budget setting together with this year's interim report.

It was outlined to members that they would be presented with a proposed budget and budget report with recommendations at the January 2019 finance meeting. A determination would then be required at the January 2019 Full Council meeting for the setting of the precept and budget sign off.

Resolved: Members noted the update

8. To receive Cllr updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings.

It was confirmed by the Clerk that the request made at the previous meeting for a list of Cllr attendees at outside bodies has been completed.

Cllr Davies gave a brief update regarding his recent attendance at the Blaenavon World Heritage group. A file containing organisation information had been passed to the group from Kate Fitzgerald who was no longer able to offer support. This information would be sent out electronically to all members in readiness for the next group meeting.

Cllr McCann outlined to members that the next meeting of Torfaen Community Transport will be held in January 2019.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

9. To consider a request from Gill McAllister Aneurin Bevan UHB – Flying Start for the use of room facilities at the Council offices.

Cllr Davies explained to members that the request was for the use of a room for an hour per month to support and discuss the impact of the Flying Start programme and in particular in terms of mid wives within the Blaenavon area.

An approach had been made to Cllr Davies for the use of the room. A room had been considered at the health centre, but none was available. Cllr Davies stated that he would put the request before the Council for a decision to be made.

A discussion took place amongst members and it was raised that a facility at the health centre could be available as this was on offer for TCBC Cllrs and it was surprising that they have approached the Town Council.

Cllr Davies explained that the Torfaen element for the use was not available. A further discussion took place amongst members and it was identified that the service provided by Flying Start should be supported. Members also pointed out that Flying Start had previously used the Blaenavon Seniors Hall and would this facility still be required?

A further point raised was if the offices were used then a charge should be made. It was clarified that the Council are not permitted to sub-let the building. Another option put forward was to wait for a decision to be made for the use of the health centre to become available also that if the council offices are used then it could be setting a precedent. It was pointed out that the council had previously agreed to listen to any request based on its own merits.

It was explained that the wait for a decision for the use of the health centre would be April 2019

It was proposed by Cllr Alan Jones and seconded by Cllr Lewis Evans that the use of the Council offices should be authorised.

An amendment was also put forward by Cllr Stuart Evans and seconded by Cllr Janet Jones that the decision be deferred regarding the use until 1/4/19

A vote was taken on the amendment. This was rejected by 9 votes to 3.

Resolved: The use of the Council offices is authorised for Flying Star for a period of three months.

10. To discuss the new Town Council's Website for implementation and go live date.

Cllr Horler and Cllr Alan Jones outlined to members that they have now viewed the website and it was outstanding and thanks should be given to everyone for all the hard work that has gone into the development of the new website.

Cllr Stuart Evans concurred with the comments made and asked Cllrs their view on the structure of the Councillors gallery stating that the Mayor should be positioned at the top of the page, then the Clerk and then the remainder of other Cllrs. A further query was raised in that the website had already gone live.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the layout of the gallery. An update on the go live date was explained by the Clerk in that the switchover from the host provider SRS who supported the old website was prematurely completed and out of the Council's control which in effect made the new website accessible for a month.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding this and Cllr Davies explained that it was his call not to publicise this fact and the council hadn't publicised that it had gone live.

This was a technical issue and if members feel that they should have been made aware then he apologises.

A further discussion took place amongst members and it was explained that the likelihood of people seeing the website was minimal because the council had not publicised the launch via social media and other means.

It was agreed for Councillors to have their email addresses and telephone numbers made available and to contact Cllr Huybs with their requests.

A brief conversation took place amongst members regarding the content of the Cllrs profile and it was generally agreed that if Cllrs wanted to change their profile then it was their decision.

Cllrs Davies thanked the website working group for all their hard work in assisting to develop the finished product.

A further brief discussion took place regarding information relating to the Town. It was agreed that it would be made available. It was also agreed to keep the website working group on an open membership basis and this could meet quarterly to monitor and develop the website moving forward.

Cllr Stuart Evans then referred back to an earlier point regarding the structure of the Cllr's gallery and proposed that the position of the Chairman and Clerk be located at the top of the gallery with the remaining Cllrs below.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding this request and the practicalities of this.

A seconder was requested to support the proposal made by Cllr Evans. The proposal was rejected due to no seconder being identified.

Resolved: Minor amendments to be completed by Cllr Huybs and the website working party to meet quarterly

11. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2018/19. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

The Clerk outlined to members that he had previously sent out images for this year's Town Council Xmas card. The images were displayed on the projector screen for members to make a selection.

A discussion took place amongst members and the most popular image was the scene at Gladstone Terrace.

Resolved: Gladstone Terrace scene to be used for the 2018 Xmas Card

12. Correspondence

The Clerk updated the council on the following correspondence received:

- A letter received by the Council dated the 29/10/18 from Alan Davies AM the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services declining the Council's invite to attend this evening's meeting due to other diary commitments.

It was noted within the letter regarding the Council's recent work and it was suggested that Blaenavon Town Council be invited to a forthcoming conference to showcase their recent successes.

Resolved: Members noted the contents of the letter.

13. Planning.

The following planning applications were received from TCBC planning department since the last full council meeting in September 2018. The Clerk has distributed all applications to members for their observations prior to the November 2018 full council meeting. The applications were presented via the projector for observations.

- The proposal is to demolish the existing garage, utility room, rear porch and outside shed. Construct a mixture of two storey and single storey extensions. The extensions will provide the following accommodation: ground floor "granny annexe", comprising, lounge, bedroom with on-suite, conservatory. Extension to kitchen. On the first floor, master bedroom with en suite and family bathroom. The front garden driveway will be extended to encompass the whole of the front garden area to provide parking for up to 6 cars.

Location: Little Acre, Middle Coedcae Road, Blaenavon - **AFOO/18/P/0780/HH**

This application was discussed by members and there were concerns regarding potential parking issues. The Chairman advised members that they could voice their concerns via the planning portal at TCBC.

Clerk to send a letter to TCBC planning highlighting members concerns

Resolved: Clerk to send a letter to TCBC planning.

- Replacement of existing composite slate main roof with natural Canadian slate alternative, replacement of roof to porch and the installation of new sound system, projector, screen, boiler and burglar alarm.

Location: Bethlehem Congregational Church, Broad Street, Blaenavon

CHAL/18/P/0744/LBC

Resolved: No objections.

At this point the visitors were requested to leave the chamber

14. Donation Requests

- The Clerk presented to members a donation request from The Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway Company requesting possible financial support from the Town Council regarding their recent burglary.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the nature of the request and a point made was does this fit in with the Council's criteria? A point also raised was in relation the recent request to the Council from Blaenavon Blues regarding their request for financial support.

It was proposed by Cllr Bright and seconded by Cllr Lewis Evans that a donation of £250 be authorised.

The Clerk was requested to offer advice to members. The Clerk provided an overview in relation to the request which was in essence financial support to upgrade the railway's security system.

Members needed to be aware that this request related to a burglary and care should be taken in relation to setting a precedent for example, if other residents came to the council for financial support for similar matters. It would be a decision for the Council to make any financial award based on its own merits.

A further discussion took place amongst members regarding the risk of setting a precedent. The proposal by Cllr Bright was withdrawn.

Resolved: Clerk to write a letter to the Railway explaining Councillor's concerns regarding the setting of a precedent

- The Clerk presented to members a donation request dated the 12/11/18 from TRAC2 Charity outreach office in Trevechin Pontypool outlining the services they provide to families and individuals within Torfaen an in particular Blaenavon.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the level of service provided and this was supported further with an overview from Cllr Alan Jones who had visited the charity and saw first hand the support that they offer vulnerable families and individuals. This was also supported by Cllr Stuart Evans who also knew about the services being provided and had previously contributed items to the charity.

Cllr Gareth Davies declared an interest based on his role within TCBC.

A further discussion took place amongst members regarding current finances and this was reiterated by the Clerk.

A proposal by Cllr Alan Jones to award £500 was seconded by Cllr McCann

An amendment by Cllr Janet Jones to award £250 was seconded by Cllr Bright

A vote was taken by members and the amendment of £250 was authorised by 5 votes to 4.

Resolved: Authorised £250. Clerk to raise a cheque and inform TRAC2.

At 7:40pm the meeting ended.

Chairman Signed:

Date: 23/1/19

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