



20th September 2022

Dear Councillor.

Pursuant to the requirements of **Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**, you are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Full Council which will be held on a hybrid basis in the Council Chamber at **101, High Street, Blaenavon** and remotely on **Wednesday the 28th of September 2022 commencing at 6:30pm** for the purpose of transacting the business shown in the agenda set below.

Should you wish to attend the meeting remotely, you should contact the Chief Officer to the Council to request a remote invitation.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least three working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Chief Officer.

Agenda

1. To receive any questions from the public.
2. To receive and accept apologies.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Members are invited to declare any interests they may have in any items on the agenda.
4. To receive a TCBC update from Cllr Nick Horler.
5. **Mayor's Announcements:** To receive the Mayor's announcements.
6. **Council Meeting:** To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 27th of July 2022.
7. **Chief Officer's Update:** To receive the Chief Officer's update.
8. To receive Cllr updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings.
9. To receive an update and presentation on Blaenavon Town Council's website (**Cllr James**)

10. To discuss and make a determination concerning the cost of living crisis and how Blaenavon Town Council can support residents. **(Cllr Wheeler)**
11. To discuss and make a determination regarding options for engaging with residents to receive feedback in terms of Blaenavon Town Council's service delivery. **(Cllr Beavan)**
12. To receive an update regarding the Community Brew Project **(Participatory Budget)** from **(Cllr Harris)**
13. To receive an update from the Chief Officer regarding the Remembrance Day Parade 2022.
14. To discuss and make a determination to sign up to the civility and respect pledge.
15. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2022/23. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.
 - Christmas decorations competition for town centre businesses. **(Cllr Harris)**
16. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding planning applications.
 - **TBRA/22/P/0502/FUL**
 - **SPRI/22/P/0546/HH**
 - **TBRA/22/P/0642/HH**
17. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding donation requests.
 - Blaenavon Blues AFC.
18. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to correspondence.
19. Other Matters **(At the discretion of the Chairman)**

Yours Faithfully.



Kevin Warren
Chief Officer.
Blaenavon Town Council.



Summary (Notes) of the Full Council meeting of Blaenavon Town Council held on **Wednesday the 28th of September 2022 at 6:30 pm** on a hybrid basis in the council chamber at **101 High Street Blaenavon** and remotely in accordance with the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

The full minutes of the meeting are subject to confirmation at the Full Council meeting to be held on **Wednesday the 26th of October 2022**.

In attendance:

Councillor A. Jones (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: G. James (online), M. Wheeler, J. Hunt, L. Cowles, L. Evans, N. Goddard, A. Beavan, I. Parfitt, N. Matthews, M. Harris.

Officers: Kevin Warren (Chief Officer), Sophie Johnson (Community Wellbeing Development Officer), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer).

Visitors: Cllr N. Horler, TCBC

Members of public: Lyndsey Harris (online)

The Full Council meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Mayor Councillor Alan Jones who welcomed everyone and expressed thanks for attendance.

1.To receive any questions from the public.

None received.

2.To receive and accept apologies.

Cllr Porter – Work Commitment.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Hunt that the apology be accepted. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Apology accepted.

3.Declarations of Interest:

None received.

6. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 27th of July 2022.

The minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Harris that the minutes be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Minutes approved as a true and accurate record.

10. To discuss and make a determination concerning the cost of living crisis and how Blaenavon Town Council can support residents. (Cllr Wheeler)

Cllr Wheeler outlined to members several issues surrounding the current cost of living crisis.

Members discussed at length ideas to help the residents of Blaenavon these included food banks, warm rooms, cooking on a budget and energy saving tips.

A discussion took place in relation to working with local housing associations and it was suggested by Cllrs Beavan and Harris that they could meet with Claire Dullea, from Bron Afon housing to discuss putting together an information leaflet incorporating energy saving advice, helpline contact details along with local information such as food share and warm rooms. Cllr James suggested that Melin homes could also be contacted.

It was proposed that leaflets could be distributed via the local schools, the Hwb, medical practice, local businesses as well as the Town Council website and social media platforms.

Sophie Johnson informed members that following a meeting with Suzanne Walters from Victory Church that the food bank is due to close as a result of poor demand. It was explained that the foodbank will continue for the time being from Victory Church on days when there are other activities listed.

Sophie will also be discussing with Victory Church the possibility of them providing a warm space in partnership with other churches.

It was suggested that Cllrs Beavan, Harris, and Sophie to meet with Bron Afon and Melin Homes to discuss the suggested ideas and report back to members.

This was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Parfitt. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Cllrs Beavan, Harris, and Sophie to consult with Bron Afon and Melin Homes and report back to members.

11. To discuss and make a determination regarding options for engaging with residents to receive feedback in terms of Blaenavon Town Council's service delivery. (Cllr Beavan)

Cllr Beavan raised a question with members relating to the Council's service delivery, highlighting whether this is what residents want and how could feedback be received?

A discussion took place amongst members relating to options for engaging with residents as a whole and to make communication as accessible as possible.

Some suggestions alluded to trial drop-in surgeries within the Council chambers, dividing wards into smaller areas and selecting members of the public to act as advocates to provide feedback and Cllrs giving their time to local projects within the community.

As a result of the discussions covering several options it was proposed by Cllr Harris and seconded by Cllr Cowles to trial a series of drop-in surgeries at the Council chambers to engage with residents and receive feedback.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Council to trial a series of drop in surgeries.

14. To discuss and make a determination to sign up to the civility and respect pledge.

The Chief Officer explained to members that he had commenced work regarding the civility and respect project in February 2022 following negative press from within the town directed at the Town Council.

In April 2022, the Chief Officer wrote to Nick Thomas-Symonds MP highlighting the concerns raised within the Town and Community Council sector attributed to abuse towards Cllrs and officers from the public.

The Chief Officer explained that One Voice Wales (OVW) together with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) has been working together on the civility and respect project which has resulted in the formation of a civility and respect pledge to be signed up to by Councils nationally. The Chief Officer shared details of the pledge with members for them to consider.

The Chief Officer has also drafted a dignity at work policy to replace the harassment and bullying at work policy. This will be forwarded to members for consideration to adopt at a future Council meeting.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the information provided by the Chief Officer, and it was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Hunt to sign up to the civility and respect pledge. All members in agreement

Resolved: Chief Officer to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge on behalf of Blaenavon Town Council.

15. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2022/23. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

- **Christmas decorations competition for Town Centre Businesses. (Cllr Harris)**

Cllr Harris provided members with a brief overview of the project.

A discussion took place amongst members, and it was suggested to organise a Christmas decorated window competition for businesses in Broad Street. This would help to create a festive atmosphere within the town.

It was also suggested that three Cllrs could judge the competition with the Council awarding prizes to the winners namely first £100, second £75 and third £50. This could be announced at the Christmas light's switch on and presented by the Mayor.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles to support the competition, and this was seconded by Cllr Hunt. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Competition and prize fund approved. Cllr Harris to design and prepare a poster for social media.

16. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding planning applications.

The Chief Officer had forwarded planning applications to members ahead of the meeting and presented these as follows.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** 2 x containers
- **LOCATION:** Big Pit Trust Ltd, Blaenavon

Resolved. No objections from members.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** First floor extension of property.
- **LOCATION:** 14 Capel Newydd Ave, Blaenavon.

Resolved. No objections from members.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Replace Conservatory.
- **LOCATION:** 16 Lower Garn Terrace, Garn Yr Erw, Blaenavon.

Resolved. No objections from members.

The determination were proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Beavan. All members in agreement.

Resolved. No objections from members

17. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding donation requests.

The Chief Officer forwarded the donation requests to members prior to the meeting for their perusal. There was one request.

• **Blaenavon Blues AFC.**

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the donation request which was a request for sponsorship for the forthcoming firework display.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Beavan that the request be supported with a £250 award. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Members approved the donation request of £250. Chief Officer to facilitate the transaction and update Blaenavon Blues.

18. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to correspondence.

None received.

Resolved. Members noted the update.

20. Other Matters (At the discretion of the Chairman)

The Chief Officer requested permission from the Chairman to inform members regarding an urgent matter concerning Wi-Fi / Broadband service within the chamber.

The Chairman granted permission.

The Chief Officer explained to members that SRS were providing Wi-Fi to the Town Council offices. This had now been disestablished with no consultation. Subsequently Wi-Fi is now being provided using the free Torfaen Public network.

It was explained that the network is unstable and not fit for purpose. This is causing constant problems within the office resulting it not being able to access email accounts and online meetings.

As a matter of urgency, the Town Council need to install a new broadband feed and hardware to be able to operate. Enquiries have been made with Openreach and Orbit IT, who have conducted upgrades for other local Town Councils.

The Chief Officer shared with members a quotation received from Orbit IT. covering the cost of broadband installation.

A discussion took place amongst members. It was agreed that broadband and wi-fi are essential for the running of Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Cowles to approve the installation of broadband and Wi-fi by Orbit IT. All members in agreement.

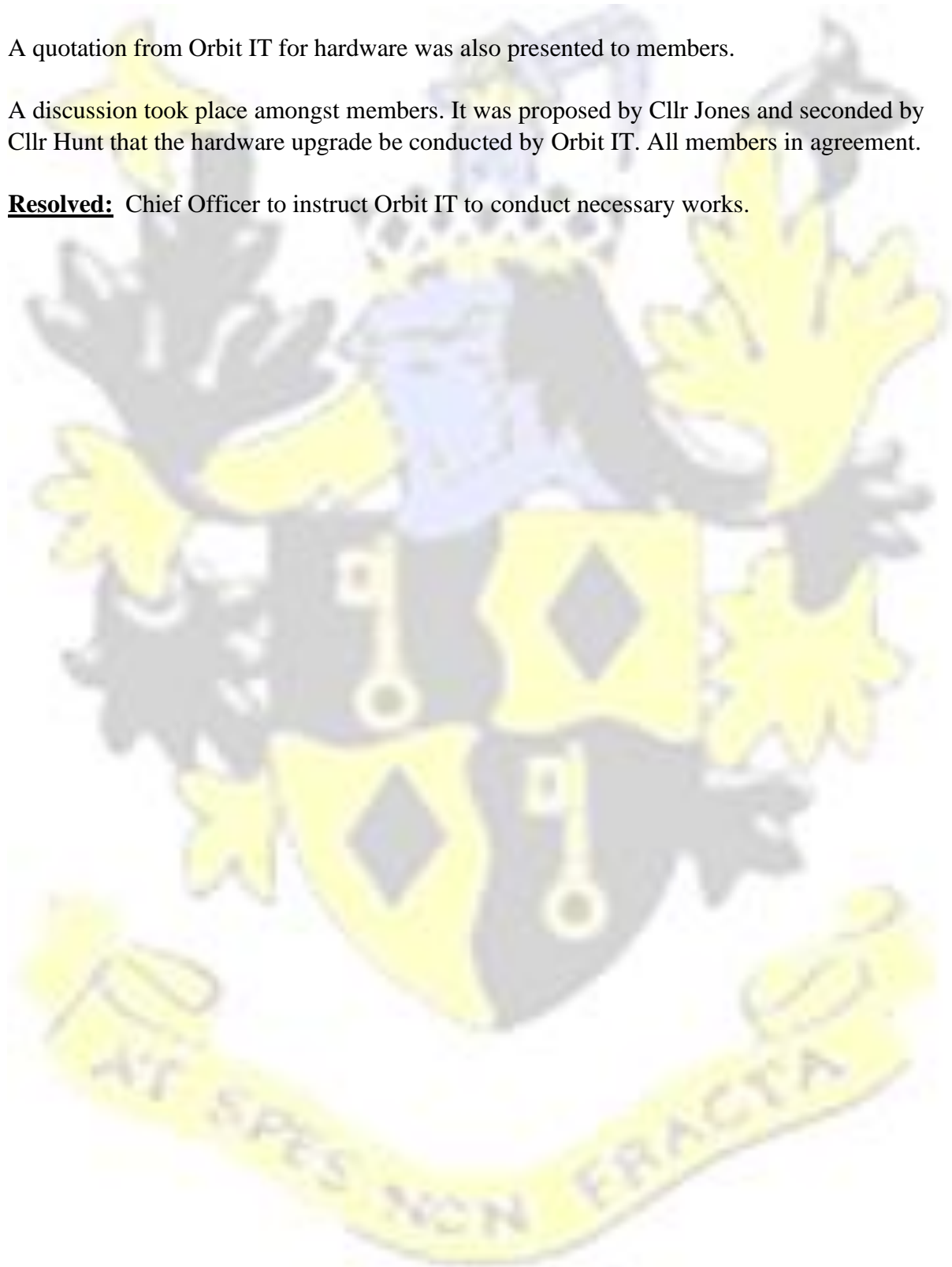
Resolved: Chief Officer to instruct Orbit IT to conduct necessary works.

In addition, to comply with current legislation it is essential that the IT system be updated to accommodate virtual meetings within chamber.

A quotation from Orbit IT for hardware was also presented to members.

A discussion took place amongst members. It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Hunt that the hardware upgrade be conducted by Orbit IT. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to instruct Orbit IT to conduct necessary works.





**BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 6.30 PM.**

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the meeting was held on a hybrid basis in the Council Chamber at 101, High Street Blaenavon and remotely.

In attendance:

Councillor A. Jones (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: G. James (online), M. Wheeler, J. Hunt, L. Cowles, L. Evans, N. Goddard, A. Beavan, I. Parfitt, N. Matthews, M. Harris.

Officers: Kevin Warren (Chief Officer), Sophie Johnson (Community Wellbeing Development Officer), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer).

Visitor: Cllr N. Horler, TCBC

Member of public: Lyndsey Harris (online)

The Full Council meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Mayor Councillor Alan Jones who welcomed everyone and expressed thanks for attendance.

1. To receive any questions from the public.

None received.

2. To receive and accept apologies.

Cllr Porter – Work Commitment.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Hunt that the apology be accepted. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Apology accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest:

None received.

4. To receive a TCBC update from Cllr Nick Horler.

Cllr Horler provided members with an update regarding his role as a County Borough Councillor and explained that he was part of the Torfaen Independent Group consisting of 11 Councillors.

- Cllr Horler regularly works in partnership with TCBC, Gwent Police, Enforcement Officers, and Neighbourhood Services with matters such as ASB, housing, rubbish, and parking within Blaenavon.
- Saturday 1st October 2022 along with Cllr J Jones, TCBC they will be holding a drop-in surgery at Forgeside. This will provide residents with the opportunity to discuss any issues they may have.
- All three Borough Councillors, Liam Cowles, Janet Jones, and Nick Horler regularly engage with Stephen Vickers, Dave Leech and Rebecca Hartley (TCBC) with issues relevant to Blaenavon.
- Cllr Horler informed members that Blaenavon Medical Centre will be taken over by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUH) in early 2023.
- Cllr Horler has attended two police surgeries along with two members of Blaenavon Town Council.
- TCBC are working to improve the tennis courts within the flower park as well as disabled access to the park, footpaths, and gates.
- Two seven-day notices have been issued relating to carpark spaces permanently used by a boat and trailer.
- Attended a meeting with Sian Watkins, Street Scene Team to discuss fly tipping and litter within the town. Signs 'Take Your Rubbish Home' are to be erected.
- Cllr Horler engages with the community when required.

A series of questions were raised by members to Cllr Horler concerning the following.

Cllr Evans enquired what plans are in place for tourism within the World Heritage Site?

Cllr Horler explained that he is currently having discussions with Stephen Vickers and Dave Leech (TCBC) regarding the completion of an action plan to identify solutions to improve tourism within the Town.

Cllr Evans asked if this was a South East Wales project? Cllr Horler was not able to provide an answer.

Cllr Hunt enquired about disability issues at Blaenavon park and have efforts been made with the disabled community to establish what was required?

Cllrs Horler explained that he had attended a recent meeting and there was funding available from the Welsh Government. There are requests being made for disabled ramps for entry into the park.

The Chief Officer made an offer to Cllr Horler to attend the Council Chambers to discuss forthcoming Council plans for working together.

This was supported by the Mayor Cllr Jones who suggested that all three borough Councillors attend the chambers to discuss forthcoming plans.

The Chief Officer explained to Cllr Horler that he had read his election manifesto regarding what his plans were if elected and enquired if Cllr Horler had a strategic plan or a portfolio of tactical options to deliver on his manifesto in particular footfall within the Town.

Cllr Horler explained that prosperity in the Town was rock bottom and as a trader he has been asked lots of questions concerning this matter but not able to provide a solution.

Cllr Horler explained that he has been in contact with Dave Leech (TCBC) who was trying to engage with the town / residents and TVA.

The Chief Officer asked Cllr Horler his views on the current cost of living crisis and pointed out that when he was a Town Cllr, he didn't support the rise in the precept of £1.61 / month for a Band A property.

Cllr Horler explained that he didn't support the precept for the reasons given at the time.

The Chief Officer pointed out to Cllr Horler that as a borough Cllr he receives a salary of £17k per year and together with the two other Cllrs this equates to around £55k per year.

Cllr Horler was asked if he thought that this would have an impact on residents as this was paid from tax payers money?

Cllr Horler stated that his salary was not £17k but just over £14k plus expenses but would not claim expenses.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Horler for his attendance. Cllr Horler then left the meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

5. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor Cllr Jones provided members with a summary of events and functions attended during the last month.

- 30th August 2022 – Attended a meeting with Dave Leech to discuss the Ken Jones statue.
- 31st August 2022 – Attended meetings with Father Chris Walters to discuss Vocal Eyes.

- 3rd September 2022 – Attended Blaenavon Horticultural Show.
- 5th & 15th September 2022 – Attended council chamber to partake in shortlisting and interviewing for the recruitment of the Community Wellbeing Development Officer.
- 7th September 2022 – Attended the school head teachers leaving service at St Peter's Church.
- 11th September 2022 – Attended a service for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II at Civic Centre Pontypool.
- 18th September 2022 – Attended along with Cllrs and Officers the unveiling of the 3 Unity Benches at Flower Park, Garn Yr Erw and Forgeside.
- 19th September 2022 – Attended along with Cllrs and Officers a wreath laying ceremony at the cenotaph for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 23rd September 2022 – Attended a book launch and exhibition of the celebration of the townscape at the Heritage Centre with Sophie Johnson, Books are located in the Council chamber for all to view.
- Cllr Jones explained that he has had regular meetings with the Chief Officer, Assistant Chief Officer, Community Wellbeing Development Officer, and Cllrs during the month.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

6. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 27th of July 2022.

The minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments raised.

This was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Harris. Minutes be accepted.

Resolved: Minutes approved as a true and accurate record.

7. Chief Officer's Update.

Mr Warren provided the following update for members:

Item 10 within the minutes. The Chief Officer has written to Torfaen Community Safety Department regarding the Town Council's decision to support the public space protection order, and this has been confirmed by Karen Mayo.

Gwent Police have been contacted to attend the October 2022 Full Council meeting together with the Police and Crime commissioner. Cllr Jones has now received confirmation regarding his attendance.

The Chief Officer has written to SRS and requested that a representative could attend a Council meeting in October 2022. A response has been received and awaiting confirmation from a Mr Mark Dixon.

Item 15 within the minutes. The Chief Officer has written to Cllrs Horler and Jones TCBC ward members and invited them to attend Council meetings in September and October 2022. Cllr Horler has attended tonight.

Item 18 within the minutes, The Chief Officer has written to Torfaen Male choir explaining the Council's decision not to award the requested donation.

The Chief Officer has written to Louise Harnett from Blaenavon Blues confirming the Council's decision to award a donation of £250. The transaction has been completed.

The Chief Officer has recently been informed by Louise Harnett that Blaenavon Blues were unable to raise a team for their u14s, so it has been requested that the donation be returned. This has now been transacted on the 26/9/22.

Regarding the request from Audrey Woodrow. The Assistant Chief Officer explained to members that following the July 2022 full council meeting Mrs Woodrow was contacted for further information as requested by members and advised to submit the information in an email. There has been no response to date.

Item 20 within the minutes. The Chief Officer has written to Paul Miles from Blaenavon Town Band confirming the Council's decision to award an interim payment of £2k. This was transacted in July 2022. A response has been received from Mr Miles thanking the Town Council for their consideration and support.

The Chief Officer explained that on the 29/7/22 and 26/8/22 he held meetings in the Council chamber with Denise Gronnow from Torfaen Community Connectors to review the Film Club that takes place in the Workmen's Hall on the last Friday of each month.

The project is doing really well and growing in numbers month on month. The last attendance figures in August 2022 was 34 attendees watching the film.

On the 2 and 4 / 8 /22 the Chief officer held face to face meetings with potential candidates for the Community Wellbeing Development Officer's (CWDO) role and overall, 13 applications were received by the Council which was extremely positive.

On the 5/8/22 together with the Assistant Chief Officer, Cllrs Jones and Wheeler the Chief Officer conducted the shortlisting process for the CWDO role. Five candidates were selected for interview.

On the 15/8/22 the Chief Officer explained that he chaired the interview panel together with the Assistant Chief Officer, Cllr Jones, and James for the appointment of the CWDO position. The quality of candidates was excellent, and the panel's preferred candidate was Sophie Johnson who took up her role on the 17/9/22

On the 24/8/22 the Chief officer attended a meeting with the Street games management team and provided them with an in-depth update regarding the projects completed to date together with the planned delivery of projects up to and including April 2023 using the allotted Street games funding.

Street games are hugely impressed with the projects being delivered and the Town Council are being put forward as an exemplar case study for project delivery whilst meeting the funding criteria. Sophie has a meeting with the Street games team on the 29/9/22.

During September 2022, the Chief Officer held several meetings with officers from Torfaen Sports Development Team to discuss the family club and mother and daughter sessions which are being delivered after the summer break.

These will cover the next six months and delivery will be up to and including April 2023 at the active living centre. Sophie will now be picking up both projects.

On the 19/9/22 together with Council colleagues the Chief Officer attended a wreath laying ceremony whereby the Mayor delivered a short commemorative speech on behalf of the Council to commemorate the sad passing of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

On the 20/9/22 together with council colleagues the Chief Officer attended the official unveiling of the three unity benches at the Flower park , Forgeside park and Garn-yr -erw park. This has been posted on the Town Council's FB page and has received an excellent response.

Throughout August and September 2022, the Chief Officer explained to members that he's held weekly briefing meetings with the Mayor discussing Council operational and financial matters.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

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

Cllr Evans attended the World Heritage Steering Group meeting and provided an update to members.

- The periodic review should be completed with partners and presumes Rebecca Hartley will be in contact to discuss further.

- Off road biking. It was reported that a police officer had been assaulted trying to prevent off road bikers in the area. Requested that Sgt Davies be invited to a meeting to provide an update.
- Questions were raised regarding the funding of World Heritage Day. Lots of committee members have resigned / leaving.

Cllrs Beavan and Wheeler attended the police drop-in surgery on August 13th 2022 and provided members with an update.

- It was felt that it was a poorly organised event with inappropriate personal disputes from a select area being discussed in an open forum, which raised concerns in relation to GDPR.
- With only one report of ASB within Blaenavon received in the past month it wasn't felt that this is a true reflection of the problems in the area.

Members raised concerns as to whether Police Officers or Community Support Officers were present at the meeting whilst personal information was being discussed.

This was clarified as one Police Officer and one Police Community Support Officer were in attendance.

Cllr Jones added that the Police and Crime Commissioner and a Sgt from Gwent Police have been invited to attend the next full council meeting. Concerns can be raised directly with them at the meeting.

Cllr Goddard attended the exhibition of the celebration of the Townscape at the Heritage Centre.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

9. To receive an update and presentation on Blaenavon Town Council's website (Cllr James.

Cllr James forwarded the link for the draft website to members prior to the meeting for their perusal.

Cllr James explained that the next stage is to merge the new and existing websites together, with the uploading of content and images to give the website a new modern feel whilst maintaining all the legal requirements.

Cllr James requested that any amendments needed should be forwarded to her via email.

Cllrs Harris and Goddard offered their help and suggested meeting in person to address any issues.

The Chief Officer added that the Officers and Cllr James will meet to go through the draft website initially followed by a meeting with Lyndsey Harris to discuss how to merge the content of both websites.

Resolved: Members noted the update. Cllr James to arrange a meeting with Officers.

10. To discuss and make a determination concerning the cost of living crisis and how Blaenavon Town Council can support residents. (Cllr Wheeler),

Cllr Wheeler outlined to members several issues surrounding the current cost of living crisis.

Members discussed at length ideas to help the residents of Blaenavon, these included food banks, warm rooms, cooking on a budget and energy saving tips.

A discussion took place in relation to working with local housing associations and it was suggested by Cllrs Beavan and Harris that they could meet with Claire Dullea, from Bron Afon housing to discuss putting together an information leaflet incorporating energy saving advice, helpline contact details along with local information such as food share and warm rooms. Cllr James suggested that Melin homes could also be contacted.

It was proposed that leaflets could be distributed via the local schools, the Hwb, medical practice, local businesses as well as the Town Council website and social media platforms.

Sophie Johnson informed members that following a meeting with Suzanne Walters from Victory Church, the food bank is due to close as a result of poor demand. It was explained that the foodbank will continue for the time being from Victory Church on days when there are other activities listed.

Sophie will also be discussing with Victory Church the possibility of them providing a warm space in partnership with other churches.

It was suggested that Cllrs Beavan, Harris, and Sophie meet with Bron Afon and Melin Homes to discuss the suggested ideas and report back to members.

This was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Parfitt. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Cllrs Beavan, Harris, and Sophie to consult with Bron Afon and Melin Homes and report back to members.

11. To discuss and make a determination regarding options for engaging with residents to receive feedback in terms of Blaenavon Town Council's service delivery. (Cllr Beavan)

Cllr Beavan raised a question with members relating to the Council's service delivery, highlighting whether this is what residents want and how could feedback be received?

A discussion took place amongst members relating to options for engaging with residents as a whole and to make communication as accessible as possible.

Some suggestions alluded to trial drop-in surgeries within the Council chambers, dividing wards into smaller areas and selecting members of the public to act as advocates to provide feedback and Cllrs giving their time to local projects within the community.

As a result of the discussions covering several options it was proposed by Cllr Harris and seconded by Cllr Cowles to trial a series of drop-in surgeries at the Council chambers to engage with residents and receive feedback.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Town Council to trial a series of drop-in surgeries

12. To receive an update regarding the Community Brew Project (Participatory Budget) from (Cllr Harris)

Cllr Harris provided members with an update and explained that the Chief Officer had to make several enquiries to get the second tranche of funding from TCBC after submitting an in-depth evaluation report as requested by Lyndon Puddy, TCBC.

All projects that were authorised in the second round by the steering group have now been awarded the funds in full, namely, Heritage Theatre Productions, Blaenavon Town Band (Youth), Blaenavon Bowls Club, Forgeside Rugby Football Club Community Garden, Castle Street Allotments, Blaenavon Branch RBL and Blaenavon Scout Group.

A total of £27,186.00. To date £47,186 has been awarded to local groups.

Currently there are four projects submitted to the Vocal Eyes platform. Project ideas will all sit in 'pending' initially. Projects will be made 'active' for voting on the same date. Therefore, all projects will have the same timescale for people to vote.

The Chief Officer added that potentially there are issues with two organisations that have been awarded funding: The Hwb and Blaenavon Rugby Football Club (BRFC). There have been no updates since March 2022.

Blaenavon Rugby Club have been requested to give an update. The Chief Officer is to contact Hannah at The Hwb and request an update.

Cllr Harris informed members that Mr Redman from BRFC had verbally informed him that fencing supplies have now been delivered and that they had been let down by contractors.

Cllr Harris was requested to obtain a written update from Mr Redman to explain the current situation in full.

The Chief Officer and Cllr Harris are to discuss a set of terms and conditions for organisations applying for funding via the Community Brew Project.

Resolved: Chief Officer and Cllr Harris to chase updates from the Hwb and Blaenavon Rugby Club.

13. To receive an update from the Chief Officer regarding the Remembrance Day Parade 2022

The Chief Officer updated members that the Remembrance Day Parade is organised and run by Blaenavon Town Council with the support of the Blaenavon branch of the Royal British Legion.

Planning has already started, and meetings have taken place to discuss road closures and road traffic management with TCBC.

The Chief Officer confirmed that TCBC have agreed in principle to pay for traffic management plans and is awaiting written confirmation. Further updates to follow.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

14. To discuss and make a determination to sign up to the civility and respect pledge.

The Chief Officer explained to members that he had commenced work regarding the civility and respect project in February 2022 following negative press from within the town directed at the Town Council.

In April 2022, the Chief Officer wrote to Nick Thomas-Symonds MP highlighting the concerns raised within the Town and Community Council sector attributed to abuse towards Cllrs and officers from the public.

The Chief Officer explained that One Voice Wales (OVW) together with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) has been working together on the civility and respect project which has resulted in the formation of a civility and respect pledge to be signed up to by Councils nationally.

The Chief Officer shared details of the pledge with members for them to consider.

The Chief Officer has also drafted a dignity at work policy to replace the harassment and bullying at work policy. This will be forwarded to members for consideration to adopt at a future Council meeting.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the information provided by the Chief Officer, and it was proposed by Cllr Evans and seconded by Cllr Hunt to sign up to the civility and respect pledge. All members in agreement

Resolved: Chief Officer to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge on behalf of Blaenavon Town Council.

15. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2022/23. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

• **Christmas Decorations Competition for Town Centre Businesses. (Cllr Harris)**

Cllr Harris provided members with a brief overview of the project.

A discussion took place amongst members, and it was suggested to organise a Christmas decorated window competition for businesses in Broad Street. This would help to create a festive atmosphere within the town.

It was also suggested that three Cllrs could judge the competition with the Council awarding prizes to the winners namely first £100, second £75 and third £50. This could be announced at the Christmas lights switch on and presented by the Mayor.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles to support the competition, and this was seconded by Cllr Hunt. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Competition and prize fund approved. Cllr Harris to design and prepare a poster for social media.

16. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding planning applications.

The Chief Officer had forwarded planning applications to members ahead of the meeting and presented these as follows.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** 2 x containers
- **LOCATION:** Big Pit Trust Ltd, Blaenavon

Resolved. No objections from members.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** First floor extension of property.
- **LOCATION:** 14 Capel Newydd Ave, Blaenavon.

Resolved. No objections from members.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Replace Conservatory.
- **LOCATION:** 16 Lower Garn Terrace, Garn Yr Erw, Blaenavon.

Resolved. No objections from members.

The determinations were proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Beavan. All members in agreement.

Resolved. No objections from members.

17. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding donation requests.

The Chief Officer forwarded the donation requests to members prior to the meeting for their perusal. There was one request.

- **Blaenavon Blues AFC.**

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the donation request which was a request for sponsorship for the forthcoming firework display.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Beavan that the request be supported with a £250 award. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Members approved the donation request of £250. Chief Officer to facilitate the transaction and update Blaenavon Blues.

18. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to correspondence.

None received.

Resolved. Members noted the update.

19. Other Matters (At the discretion of the Chairman)

The Chief Officer requested permission from the Chairman to inform members regarding an urgent matter concerning Wi-Fi / Broadband service within the chamber.

The Chairman granted permission.

The Chief Officer explained to members that SRS were providing Wi-Fi to the Town Council offices. This had now been disestablished with no consultation. Subsequently Wi-Fi is now being provided using the free Torfaen Public network.

It was explained that the network is unstable and not fit for purpose. This is causing constant problems within the office resulting in not being able to access email accounts and online meetings.

As a matter of urgency, the Town Council need to install a new broadband feed and hardware to be able to operate. Enquiries have been made with Openreach and Orbit IT, who have conducted upgrades for other local Town Councils.

The Chief Officer shared with members a quotation received from Orbit IT covering the cost of broadband installation.

A discussion took place amongst members. It was agreed that broadband and wi-fi are essential for the running of Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Cowles to approve the installation of broadband and Wi-fi by Orbit IT. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to instruct Orbit IT to conduct necessary works.

In addition, to comply with current legislation it is essential that the IT system be updated to accommodate virtual meetings within chamber.

A quotation from Orbit IT for hardware was also presented to members.

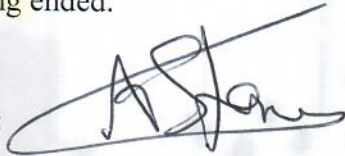
A discussion took place amongst members. It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Hunt that the hardware upgrade be conducted by Orbit IT. All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to instruct Orbit IT to conduct necessary works.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

At 20.15 the meeting ended.

Chairman Signed:



Date: 26/10/22.