



18th May 2020

Dear Councillor.

You are hereby summoned to attend a **FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL** to be held at **6:30 pm on WEDNESDAY 27th MAY 2020**

The meeting will be held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Any members of the public who also wish to attend on this basis, please contact the Clerk so that arrangements may be made for them.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk.

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. **Chairman's Announcements:** To receive Chairman's announcements.
5. **Council Meeting:** To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 26th February 2020.
6. **Clerk's Update:** To receive Clerk's update.
7. To receive Cllr updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings.
8. To receive an update from Rebecca Smith – Healthy Blaenavon Officer and to consider for adoption, a Draft Policy regarding the criteria for the distribution of Emergency Fund Provisions.

9. To receive and consider an update from Audit Wales regarding the submission of the Annual Return documentation for 2019/20.
10. To receive and approve the Town Council's Annual Return 2019/20
11. To consider and discuss a response by Ms Julie James MS to Mr Rob Smith CEO of the Society of Local Council Clerks, regarding a request for financial support for Local Councils during the current pandemic.
12. To consider and make a determination regarding an option for the updating of the Town Council's Website and future hosting costs. (Lyndsey Harris)
13. To discuss and make a determination involving the spend criteria for the recent Local Business' donations to the Town Council Emergency Fund.
14. To confirm the 1st June 2020 as the payment date for Councillor's allowances as per the IRPW Report 2020.
15. To consider and make a determination regarding the award of a Senior Responsibility payment to a serving Councillor as per the recommendations within the IRPW Report 2020.
16. To discuss and note the Councillor Casual Vacancy for Blaenavon Town Council.
17. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.
18. Correspondence.
19. Planning Applications.
20. Donation requests

Yours Faithfully



Kevin Warren. MInstLM. FCMI.

Clerk to the Council.



**BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27th MAY 2020 AT 6.30 PM.**

The meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020.

In attendance:

Councillor: A. Jones (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: L. Cowles, J. Denley-Jones, E. Harvey, J. Huybs, N. Horler, A. Parry, G. McCann.

Officers: Mr K. Warren (Clerk to the Council), Rebecca Smith (Healthy Blaenavon Officer), Lyndsey Harris (Administrator)

Visitors: None

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

1. To receive any questions from the public.

None

2. Apologies:

Cllrs. G. Davies, S. Bright & L. Evans.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Chairman's Announcements

- Attended Wreath Laying Service on behalf of Blaenavon Town Council on 9th May to Commemorate 75th Anniversary of VE Day at the Cenotaph in Blaenavon along with Deputy Chairman Liam Cowles.

5. To sign as a correct record the Full Council minutes held on the 26th February 2020.

The minutes from the last Full Council meeting held on the 26th February 2020 were read for accuracy.

Cllr Liam Cowles proposes the minutes be approved; Cllr Alan Parry seconded the proposal.

The minutes were approved by members.

Resolved: Minutes accepted as a true record.

6. Clerk's Update.

Mr Warren explained that it had been 3 months since the previous Full Council Meeting and provided the following updates for members:

- Item 7 within the previous minutes, Mr Warren had renewed the Town Councils membership to One Voice Wales.
- Item 11 within the previous minutes the Healthy Blaenavon Project was submitted for the One Voice Wales Innovative Practice Awards 2020 and won the Best Council Service Award, and Highly Commended in the Best Community Engagement Award, he noted that Blaenavon Town Council is officially the Best Town Council in Wales. Due to the pandemic there would be no awards ceremony taking place and awards and certificates would be sent out once the One Voice Wales staff were back in the office.
- Item 12 within the previous minutes referring to Grant Aid Applications. The Clerk informed members that letters have been sent out to all the successful applicants to notify them of the funding that had been awarded to them and again to notify them that the Civic Awards Ceremony had been postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, which detailed that they would be notified of a new date.
- Item 16 within the previous minutes a cheque was presented at the Finance meeting on Wednesday 4th March by the Mayor Cllr Denley-Jones to Rachel Wakefield from Dawns ar y Mynydd.

- The Clerk informed members that he had sent an email to the Congress Theatre regarding their donating request.
- The Clerk informed members that he had notified Mr Steve White that the Council has awarded him £250 and the payment has been made. The presentation was going to be done at the end of his Charity run that he was organising which has been postponed. The Clerk will find out and update members of the new date for the presentation to be made.
- Item 18 within the previous minutes referring to the letter requested by members to be sent to the monitoring officer Delyth Harris at TCBC, regarding the behaviour of Councillor Stuart Evans to Rebecca Smith at the Over 50's Forum meeting in January 2020 and another regarding the behaviour of Cllr Janet Jones. The letters have been drafted but have not yet been sent due to the current Covid 19 situation and the local authority offices being closed. The Clerk instructed members that he would send out the letters and update members on the responses that he receives.
- Item 19 within the previous minutes, a letter has been sent to Barbara Lewis, Secretary of Blaenavon Seniors, who had requested the attendance of Rebecca Smith, the Healthy Blaenavon Officer to one of their meetings. The Clerk informed members that he has received no response.
- The Clerk gave members an overview of how his role has changed over the past few months in response to the virus, explaining that he visits the council chambers 3 times a week amounting to roughly 6 hours a week to complete filing, printing and collecting mail.
- The Clerk informed members of the work that is continuing during the pandemic with key areas being Food Banks, the Internal Audit and VAT return submitted to HMRC, noting that the VAT return of £4,241.64 had been received from HMRC.
- The Clerk informed members of the work that he had done over the past couple of months in preparing and setting up virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams in terms of application and function and the wording and legislation that needed to be applied in order to conduct the meetings virtually.
- The Clerk informed members of the work he had done in submitting registrations for himself and officers of the council to the Pensions Regulator which he noted was a substantial amount of work.
- The Clerk informed members that he had been in touch with Nantyderry Nursery in Abergavenny regarding supplying hanging baskets as per previous years. They are able to supply 30 baskets this year which will be ready by the middle of June. The Clerk hoped that they would be on display by the end of June.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

7. To receive Councillor updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings.

Cllr. Jac Denley-Jones informed members that she will be attending a virtual meeting on Monday 8th June in her capacity as a School Governor at Ysgol Bryn Onnen, to discuss Schools reopening.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

8. To receive an update from Rebecca Smith the Healthy Blaenavon Officer and to consider for adoption a Draft Policy regarding the criteria for the distribution of Emergency Fund Provisions.

Rebecca Smith informed members that during March and April she had been sending members a weekly report of the work she had been doing in place of her monthly report.

She went on to explain to members that her role had changed over the past couple of months in organising emergency food parcels, prescription deliveries, the Street Ambassadors Initiative and Community Calls Facility which had been set up.

- May – 14 food boxes had been delivered with 36 individuals being fed.
- April – 14 food boxes had been delivered.
- 7 referrals to Eastern Valley Food Bank over the last 2 months
- Up until 22nd May, 26 prescriptions had been picked up and delivered – Rebecca thanked Councillors Emma Harvey, Liam Cowles and Lyndsey Harris for helping to deliver these over the past couple of months.
- The Street Ambassador Scheme has 11 people signed up to support the town, Cllrs Huybs and Gareth McCann included. Rebecca highlighted that streets that weren't covered by people were done by herself, Lyndsey and Cllr Harvey.
- Community Calls – 5 people have signed up for this service over the last couple of months. Cllrs Jac Denley-Jones and Jackie Huybs have been involved with this scheme.

Rebecca explained how she has been continuing with some of the projects that were set up prior to Covid 19, using different means. Arts activities have been done with doorstep crafts; the family activity club members have had deliveries of sports equipment as well as families through Flying Start referrals from the Health Visitors. Second-hand books have also been handed out to families.

Rebecca went on to explain to members how over the next couple of months she plans to continue the music project online and also the Food Poverty Project. The Food project

was awarded £8,400 back last year and she hopes to set up a cookery project based around learning to budget which would involve delivering the ingredients to families, who would then do the recipes and share their experiences through social media platforms.

She also hoped that the Summer Picnics event would still be able to go ahead, where food would be delivered to families to have picnics in their gardens.

Rebecca invited members to ask questions regarding her update.

Cllr Alan Jones asked Rebecca if he could meet with her to go through the details of the local Business' that had contributed to the Emergency fund? Rebecca answered by saying that she could not supply any further detail than she had already outlined.

Cllr Gareth McCann asked Rebecca to register him to the Community Calls Project as it was something he would like to help out with. Rebecca accepted and noted Cllr McCann's interest.

Cllr Huybs suggested that the Town Council publicise the good work that is being done by the Town Council within the community. Rebecca replied by saying that a lot of the help being offered was on a referral basis and that she would prefer to keep it at that at the moment.

Cllr Jac Denley-Jones referenced the Community Calls scheme she has been helping with and added that she had been talking to Mrs Pask who is now in hospital as she had recently been taken ill.

Mr Warren added that to clarify the question raised by Cllr Alan Jones that the Emergency Fund spend on food so far was £644. Rebecca added that this had helped to feed 70 individuals to date.

The second part of Rebecca's update was to present a draft policy detailing the criteria for Emergency Food Parcels for the Town Council to approve and adopt. The Policy had been sent to members prior to the meeting.

The key criteria of the policy were outlined as follows:

- Debt
- Job loss
- The inability to afford food within the town causing an increase in living costs
- Sudden isolation due to symptoms of Covid 19.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the policy and it was agreed that this policy be adopted.

Cllr Liam Cowles proposed that members adopt the policy, Cllr Alan Parry seconded the proposal.

Resolved: Members all in agreement - Emergency Fund Provisions Policy adopted.

9. To receive and consider an update from Audit Wales regarding the submission of the Annual Return documentation for 2019/20.

The Clerk displayed to members via the share screen the amended notice of audit 2019-20 letter received on the 14th May from Audit Wales. The letter outlined the changes to the audit timescales together with the new dates for the Notice of Elector's rights.

Members were updated that the Annual Return for 2019/20 if approved will be submitted on time, and the Town Council's accounts for 2019/20 will be made available to the public to view from 1st until 28th September 2020 as per the updated advice.

The Clerk asked members if they have any questions regarding the letter. No questions were asked.

Resolved: Members all noted the update.

10. To receive and approve the Town Councils Annual Return 2019/20.

The Clerk displayed the document to members via the share screen.

The Chairman Cllr Alan Jones presented to members the annual governance statement parts 1 and 2 for 2019/20. Each of the questions were discussed within the statement and an agreed response was made by members.

All members were in agreement that the Annual Return for 2019/20 is approved.

Cllr Jac Denley-Jones proposed that the annual return be approved, Cllr Nick Horler seconded the proposal.

Resolved: Annual Return for 2019/20 approved by members.

11. To discuss consider and discuss a response by Ms Julie James to Mr Rob Smith CEO of the Society of Local Council Clerks, regarding a request for financial support for Local Councils during the pandemic.

The Clerk previously sent members a copy of a letter sent by Mr Rob Smith to Robert Jenrick MP, Communities Minister and Ms Julie James AM, Communities Minister Welsh Government, in relation financial support for local Town and Community Councils in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Clerk had sent members the response to this letter from Julie James and it was shown to members via the share screen.

Cllr Denley Jones noted that the original letter sent by Robert Jenrick suggested that funds were being made available to Councils, but this response totally dismissed this.

A discussion took place amongst members who instructed the Clerk to write to Julie James AM, highlighting the Council's view and also copy in the following:

Alison Ward, CEO TCBC, Nigel Aurelius, Assistant Chief Executive (Resources) TCBC, Anthony Hunt TCBC (Leader) and Lynn Neagle AM expressing the Councils concerns.

Resolved: Clerk to prepare and send a letter to Julie James AM and others.

12. To consider and make a determination regarding an option for the updating of the Town Council's website and future hosting costs. (Lyndsey Harris).

The Clerk outlined to members the key points for considering an update of the Council's website and hosting costs/

- The current website is provided and hosted by Hywel Lewis. Cllr Jackie Huybs populated the pages.
- There have been complaints regarding the navigation when residents are looking for forms and documents.
- The administration and updates of the current website has proven to be difficult resulting in a website which is very hard to navigate.

Lyndsey Harris (LAF Designs) presented to members her options and solutions for updating the site along with timescales. A proposal and cost for the work had previously been sent out to members for their consideration.

The Mayor Cllr Alan Jones then asked Lyndsey to leave the meeting so that members were able to discuss and consider the proposal.

A discussion took place amongst members.

Cllr Alan Parry proposed that Lyndsey (LAF Designs) be appointed to change the website, Cllr Liam Cowles seconded the proposal.

Resolved: Members all in agreement LAF Designs be appointed to change the website. Clerk to notify Hywel Lewis and thank him for his service.

13. To discuss and make a determination involving the spend criteria for the recent Local Business' donations to the Town Council Emergency Fund.

The Clerk informed members that in response to donations levered in with the help of Cllr Alan Jones by local business' - Forged Solutions, GOS Engineering and P&P Builders that amounted to £2450 he has created a Blaenavon Town Council Emergency Fund Project on the finance system. There have also been donations made by local residents.

He explained how the criteria fitted in well with the Food Bank policy and went on to highlight to members that if there is a requirement to buy other household items to support residents, the criteria would need to be considered for such purchases.

Rebecca Smith the Healthy Blaenavon Officer will compile a monthly report detailing spends during the month. Members will be informed of spends and the reasons behind purchases in accordance with the council's Financial Regulations.

The Clerk went on to express his thanks for these donations and noted that he thought we were the only Town Council in Wales offering support to residents in this way. He went on to thank Lyndsey Harris and Cllr Emma Harvey for completing shopping trips to keep the food bank stocked up and noted that to date the Council had spent over £1000 on food.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

14. To confirm 1st June 2020 as the payment date for Councillors allowances as per the IRPW Report 2020.

The Clerk informed members that he had previously presented the IPRW 2020 report to members in February with no changes and detailed the following allowances to be awarded.

- £150 to Councillors
- £1650 to the Mayor
- £650 to the Deputy Mayor.

The Clerk asked members to send him their Bank account details in order for the payments to be completed via Bacs.

Members were in agreement that the 1st June 2020 is the payment date for Cllrs allowances.

Resolved: Clerk to complete member allowance payments on the 1st June 2020.

15. To consider and make a determination regarding the award of a Senior Responsibility payment to a serving Councillor as per the recommendations within the IRPW Report 2020.

The Clerk explained to members that as a category B Council, members can be awarded an additional allowance of £500 for up to 5 members for additional responsibilities in addition to their £150 allowance.

Last year Cllr Huybs was awarded an additional £500 in recognition for her work as the Press and Social Media Officer. The Clerk asked members consider making the same monetary allowance for Cllr Huybs for 2020/21

Cllr Alan Jones proposed the additional allowance be made to Cllr Huybs; this was seconded by Cllr Jac Denley-Jones.

Resolved: Members all in agreement. Clerk to organise the additional £500 payment to Cllr Jackie Huybs.

16. To discuss and note the Councillor Casual Vacancy for Blaenavon Town Council.

The Clerk explained that as a result of Cllr Phyllis Roberts's resignation in April 2020, he had contacted the Elections Officer, Caroline Genever-Jones at TCBC to notify her of the resignation.

The Clerk went on to say that he had received a response from Ms Genever - Jones stating that the vacancy could not be advertised at this time due to the current Coronavirus pandemic. It was explained that as a Town Council nothing could be progressed until TCBC publish the Election Notices for the vacancy.

Cllr Alan Jones suggested that the Clerk write a letter to Alison Ward CEO TCBC regarding the vacancy to clarify and confirm this.

A discussion took place amongst members who were all in agreement that the Clerk write to Alison Ward to ask her to update when the Town Council would expect to be notified of the Casual Vacancy for election.

Resolved: Clerk to write to Alison Ward regarding the vacancy.

17. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

No new projects were received.

Cllr Denley-Jones noted that she would continue to do the Dog Walks Project when it was safe to do so.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

18. Correspondence.

The Clerk informed members that he had received 2 letters of correspondence.

SJS Legal

The Clerk showed an email sent from SJS Legal dated 24th March regarding a resident's property via the share screen.

The Clerk replied to the email on the 3rd April and signposted them to Bron Afon, he explained that he subsequently had 3 further emails and had replied again and phoned the company informing them that it was not a Town Council property. The last email was sent on the 20th May and the Clerk has had no further correspondence.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

Dawns ar y Mynydd

The Clerk displays a letter of thanks sent from the Dawns ar y Mynydd Dance Group dated 5th March 2020 via the share screen.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

19. Planning.

The planning applications for March, April and May 2020 had been sent out to members via email by the Clerk when they were received.

The Clerk explained that the deadlines for March and April applications had already expired. The Clerk had distributed all applications to members for their observations prior to the May 2020 full council meeting.

The Clerk displayed the planning applications received from TCBC planning department in May 2020 via the share screen.

Cllr Alan Jones declared an interest as a TCBC Councillor.

- PROPOSAL: Single storey side extension and creation of driveway

LOCATION: 3 Griffin Avenue, Blaenavon, Pontypool

AFOO/20/P/0256/HH

- PROPOSAL: Extension of existing premises

LOCATION: GOS Tools & Engineering Ltd, Heritage Court,
Gilchrist Thomas Industrial Estate

CHAL/20/P/0258/FUL

Resolved: No objections members.

20. Donation Requests – the following donation requests were received since the last Full Council Meeting.

Pontypool Dragons.

The Clerk displays via the share screen a letter which was received on 4th March 2020, from Kelly Hayes of Pontypool Dragons Netball Team which had also been sent out to members prior to the meeting. The Netball team are asking for a donation to their club.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the donation. It was decided that more information would be required regarding how many members of the team were from Blaenavon.

Resolved: Clerk to write to the Club to find out more information about the Blaenavon members.

Matthew James, Lockdown Scarecrow Competition.

The Clerk informed members that he had received an email from a Mr Matthew James regarding supporting a local Lockdown Scarecrow Competition. Money raised from entries would be donated to the Arthur Jenkins Nursing Home. Mr James asked if the Council would be willing to donate the prize money for the winning entries which would amount to £225 in total.

A discussion took place amongst members.

Cllr Alan Parry commented that he liked the idea but suggested it be left until next year.

Cllr Alan Parry proposed the Scarecrow Competition be left until next year.

Cllr Gareth McCann seconded the proposal.

An amendment to the initial proposal was made by Cllr Jackie Huybs who proposed the Town Council make the donation as per the request.

Cllr Emma Harvey seconded the proposal.

A vote took place to determine the outcome:

Cllr Alan Parry - 2 votes

Cllr Jackie Huybs – 6 votes

Resolved: Donation to be made for prize money for the Scarecrow Competition. Clerk to inform Matthew James.

Blaenavon RFC Mini's & Juniors.

Cllr Alan Jones declared an interest, as a trustee member.

The Clerk informed members that he had received an email from Miss Loran Tanner asking for a donation towards the cost of building a tea and coffee area in the rugby club stand. The money generated by selling drinks at games would be reinvested into the Minis and Juniors Rugby Teams.

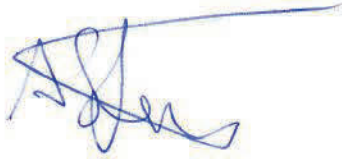
A discussion took place among members.

Cllr Jac Denley-Jones proposed that £250 be awarded, Cllr Nick Horler seconded the proposal.

Resolved: £250 awarded. Clerk to inform Miss Tanner and arrange payment.

At 8.04pm the meeting ended.

Chairman Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date: 25/6/20