TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Civic Committee in the Council Chamber at Bedwellty House on Wednesday 4th June 2014 at 6.30pm

Present:	**Councillor**	**R. Watkins** **G. Meredith** **T. Smith** **G. Bowen-Knight** **M. Cross** **R. Thomas** **B. Willis** **H. Trollope** **S. Trollope**
In attendance:		**R.F.O.**
040) Apologies:		**Cllrs. A. Tippings, T. Gregory, D. Howells, J. Morgan, M. O'Sullivan, P. Prosser, D. Rowberry, A. Cotton and O. Price.**

041) To receive the report of the Internal Auditor and to confirm the Annual Accounts and Return for 2013/14 prior to External Audit.

Mr Bees began presenting his report with an explanation regarding the greater length of the report when compared to previous years, this he explained was not a reflection on the quality of the work and controls Council have in place but purely due to current and future changes – legislation and transferring of service – which will have a direct impact on Council.

Mr Bees went on through his report highlighting key factors such as Wales Audit, under pressure from councils, deferred the proposed changes to Audit; his delight that Council decided to retain the two signature rule; recommended that as there is still no clear information on the forthcoming thematic assurance requirements it is wise that we continue our good practice and maintain to Minute all details of debates and decisions regarding budgets, precepts and future plans; and how Council, in light of the previous years' concerns over finance issues and uncertainty about the delegation of local services, have behaved responsibly and prudently by maintaining reserves with a proportion of them being earmarked in preparation for the possible future changes.

It was recommended that Council revisit their Risk Assessment Policy to make sure it addresses any future potential risks which should include any resulting from the forthcoming changes previously discussed. Mr Bees also reminded Council that due diligence is critical when faced with making decisions regarding taking on additional services as there are not only financial implications but also workload issues which will need to be considered. He went on to remind Council that all the changes discussed, some already in action, will have a workload impact on the staff – new policies and additional reporting requirements due to changes in pension legislation, the reporting of thematic assurance – and he strongly recommended that this is monitored and responded to before there is any detrimental effect on Council's current operation.

Mr Bees thanked the staff for their full co-operation and commended Council for the excellent quality financial systems and controls that are in place.

Council thank Mr Bees for his work and agreed to review the recommendations with the intention of them being delegated to the relevant staff member or committee to be addressed.

In the presence of Mr Bees, the RFO proceeded to read out Section 2 of the Annual Return for year ended 31st March 2014 and noted Council's response to each question on the Return. The accounts and the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2014 were thereon approved and signed by the Mayor and RFO.
Mr Bees left the meeting.

042) To receive applications for Cultural/Sporting Grants (under the provision of the Local Govt. Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 s.19 and Local Government Act 1972 s.137)
Completed End of Grant form received from Tredegar Town AFC (Seniors). - Received.

Tredegar Twinning Association – A grant of £500.00 was recommended and the RFO was to enquiry about the selection process.

043) To receive and consider applications for Grants to Churches & Chapels (S.137).
None Received.

044) Planning:-
Cllrs Willis and Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

a) To consider an Officer's Report
Received.

b) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations

App No	Applicant	Proposal
2014/0128	Mr & Mrs T Gillespie Glynedw Bungalow St Lukes Road, Tredegar.	Proposed rear garage, walls, fences and gates - Glynedw Bungalow, St Lukes Road.
No Objections.		
2014/0135	Mrs M Edwards 45 Cripps Avenue Tredegar.	Replacement front steps, path & walls to front of property – 45 Cripps Avenue.
No Objections.		
2014/0137	Mr J Morris 18 Garn-y-Tyla Abertwssyg, Rhymney.	Change of use from retail to residential dwelling including alterations to front elevation Replacement of two storey rear extension – 56 Church Street.
No Objections.		
2014/0138	Mr J Morris 18 Garn-y-Tyla Abertwssyg, Rhymney.	Change of use from retail to residential dwelling including alterations to front elevation and two storey rear extension – 55 Church St.
No Objections.		

c) To consider other planning matters.
Noted none received.

045) Correspondence.

1) BGCBC (a) D. Ware Re: Blaenau Gwent Rural Development Plan
(i) Update.
(ii) Blaenau Gwent LAG Partners Meeting 5th June 2014 at 9.30am to 12pm Parc Bryn Bach.

Both received. Cllr Watkins will be sending his apologies direct.

(b) V. Nash, Bedwellty House & Park – Glass Cabinet. Request to use our glass cabinet in the main hallway on 17.8.14 to display medal as part of the WW1 event.

Agreed provided we can store the cabinet contents in the Registrar's safe the day prior to the event. RFO to discuss this option with the Registrar.

2) Queens Baton Relay:

(a) S. Summers, BGCBC – thanks to all who participated.

Received.

(b) A. Tippings BGCBC – forwarded email from Chris Jenkins of the Commonwealth Games Council for Wales congratulating everyone on the great set of events held.

Received.

(c) V. Nash BGCBC - Email sent to all participants of their part of the event giving details of our Armed Forces Day event and included our contact details if they wish to participate.

Received and moved.

(d) Ms P Evans – congratulations for the event and included within email are photos from the day.

Moved.

(e) S. Woodward – Thoroughly enjoyed being a baton bearer and wants to thank Council for a wonderful day and for all the hard work they put in to the event.

Received. It was raised as to whether the A.M. and M.P. had been invited to the event and whether they had responded. It was agreed to send a letter expressing Council's disappointment at the non attendance in Tredegar and that their absence was noted by the public.

3) One Voice Wales

(a) Appointment of Chair of Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee, closing date for application 27.6.14, www.wales.gov.uk/publicappointments

Received.

(b) Invitation to participate in the National Conversation on "The Wales We Want".

Received.

(c) Opportunity to represent the third sector at Hywel Dda Community Health Council, closing date for applications 9.6.14 and further information available at http://www.thirdsectorcarms.org.uk/chcrep

Received.

(d) Training: Chairing Skills, Bridgend YMCA on Wednesday 25.6.14 from 6.30pm to 9pm.

Received.

(e) Brecon Beacons National Park: Visitor Management Plan Consultation – Consultation extended to 8.7.14, views on the plan to be submitted by post or email: nicola.williams@beacons-npa.gov.uk, consultation available for viewing at http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/working-in-partnership/tourism-new/visitor-manangement-plan-draft

Received and agreed to forward to Cllr Price.

4) Welsh Government

(a) Public Health White Paper – Toilets for public use.

Received.

(b) Leader 2014-2020 Local Development Strategy Guidance Part 1 May 2014: Draft –in development.

Received.

5) Town Councils:

(a) Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council - Town Mayor is Cllr Clive Bridgeman and Deputy Mayor is Cllr John Watkins.

(b) Community Council of Abertillery & Llanhilleth – Chairman is Cllr G. Smith and Vice Chairman is Cllr W. Bard.

(c) Brynmawr Town Council: - Town Mayor is Cllr Nigel Boyd and Deputy Mayor is Cllr Terry Hughes.

It was agreed to send letters of congratulations to all.

6) Welsh Water Southend Allotments invoice.

It was agreed that Council pay the invoice and we invoice the Allotments for reimbursement. A meeting between the heads of Council and the allotment representatives is to be held as soon as possible.

7) L. Price Twinning Association meeting scheduled for 2.6.14 has been cancelled, next meeting is on 7.7.14.- informed Reception of cancellation.

Received.

8) Invitations to All Members:

(a) APT Wales Branch – Summer meeting open to non-members on Friday 4th July 2014 at Rock Park Spa Centre, Llandrindod Well at 10.30am – attendance to be confirmed.

Received.

(b) Tredegar Angling Club – event has been moved to Saturday 5th July 2014 at 2pm – Cllr Tippings, Price, Watkins & Smith have confirmed attendance.

Received.

9) Lucas Meagor Gold Post Box Challenge – From 31st May 2014 Chris Britton & Lucas Meagor will be cycling 3000 miles to visit all 111 Gold Post Boxes in aid of Sport Relief. Will pass Tredegar's and head through Sirhowy to Beaufort on Thursday 5th June 2014 (no definite time available). Asking for this to be promoted **(added to our website & forwarded to Tredegar.co.uk**). Further information and details on how to donate available at www.lucaskeepsrunning.co.uk

Received.

10) J. Karn Next meeting of World War 1 Commemoration committee Thursday 5.6.14 at 10am Bedwellty House.

Received.

11) Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Consultation on Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, available for public consultation between 22.5.14 to 3.7.14 at various locations or via
http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/planning/strategy-and-policy/Affordable%20Housing/affordable-housing-supplementary-planning-guidance-consultation-l/

Received and agreed to forward to Cllr Price.

12) Nick Smith MP Poster for next surgery at Morrisons' Ebbw Vale on Friday 6th June 2014 between 12noon & 1pm – **in noticeboard & added to website**.

Received.

13) Miss Smith Asking if Council could upgrade Southend Park with an additional set of swings.

Agreed to send letter to Miss Smith to advise unable to assist and that her letter will be forwarded to Leisure Services, BGCBC. Also write to Leisure Services to ascertain the plans for the site and request future contact direct to Miss Smith.

14) Tredegar.co.uk Band Concert poster added to their website and in the website calendar too. **NB.** Cllrs Smith & Willis also leafleted the town centre.

Received and it was noted that Cllr Trollope had distributed concert posters.

15) G. Davidge Milefield Allotments – information regarding number/size of plots.

Deferred to the meeting to be arranged as per correspondence item No. 6.

16) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Road works report week ending 30.5.14 & Road works report Heads of Valleys week ending 30.5.14.; BGCBC Connect magazine; BGCBC Road works report week ending 6.6.14.; One Voice Wales The Voice Spring Newsletter 2014 Issue 25.

Available to Members.

17) AGENDA

Executive Wednesday 4th June 2014 at 11am Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale; Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Monday 2nd June 2014 at 2pm Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale; General Licensing Committee Tuesday 3rd June 2014 at 10am Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale; Special Social Services & Active Living Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 4th June 2014 at 9am Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale; Executive 4th June 2014 – report for item no. 14; Education & Skills Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 10th June 2014 at 2pm Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale. - **Available to Members.**

046) To confirm Wednesday 18th June 2014 as a presentation evening date.
Members were updated with the details of the discussion that took place during the Events Committee and it was agreed to have the Presentation Evening, out of sync, on Wednesday 25th June 2014 at 7pm. It was also agreed to purchase badges for the Tredegar stewards of the Queen's Baton Relay and invite them to the presentation evening. The RFO is to find out the total number of stewards to be invited and order the required quantity of badges.

047) Matters concerning Bedwellty House and Park.

- Water from ponds and algae in fountains – A discussion had taken place with Mr Watkins regarding how BGCBC intend to address these issues. It was noted that work has been taking place to address the water egress from the ponds but it appears to still be unresolved. A Member highlighted that there are fish which will eat algae and that this could be an option to resolve the fountain issues with the installation of a meshing over the water to prevent harm/removal of the fish.
- Damage to lump of coal and fence around ponds – Concerns were raised regarding the recent damage which has since been repaired but the standard of repair is poor. It was noted that the gate, also damaged, to the lump of coal was not being locked at night and Members queried who is responsible for the locking up and regular inspections on the Park ground are untaken. It was agreed that daily walk around by a member of House staff should be done to identify damage or other issues. A Member confirmed that they had already reported the damage to Mr Watkins but to date there was no official response.
- Security – Concerns were raised about the security firm driving around the park grounds particularly whilst members of the public were still in attendance. There were also concerns about the appeared "friendliness" they exhibit with the younger park users and it was suggested that they were more interested in chatting with the youngsters rather than exercising their duties. A Member queried whether the security firm were appropriately registered. It was agreed to ask BGCBC this question as Members were concerned that vulnerable adults are park users besides youngsters.
- Queen's Baton Relay – It was noted that a plaque, made by Tredegar Comprehensive, had been erected in the park but Ebbw Vale not Tredegar had been inscribed on it. A Member has contacted BGCBC but no response received as of yet. It was agreed to request the plaque is amended as it bears no relevance to Tredegar's participation in the event.
  It was agreed to write to Mr Watkins, Mr Phillips and Cllr Hobbs, copied to the BGCBC CEO and Leader, listing all the concerns raised and asking the following matters:-
  a) Who inspects the Park grounds and how regularly?
  b) Can it be confirmed that all security representatives are duly qualified and ISO registered?
  c) Request the listing of Ebbw Vale on the QBR plaque be addressed and appropriately amended to Tredegar as in its current format it as no relevance to Tredegar and its part in the Relay events.
- It was noted that the Trust has been deferred until the end of July.

048) Delegates: To receive and consider reports from Delegates to Outside Bodies and the recommendations of Sub-Committees/working Parties.

i. Bedwellty Park Management Board
As Above.
ii. Joint Committee of Local Councils
No meeting.
iii. Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales
No meeting.

iv. Tredegar Twinning
No meeting.
v. School Governing Bodies
A Member highlighted that attendance at Tredegar Schools is above the expected average and in some cases actually beating it, with Bryn Bach School being the highest at 96%.
vi. Parc Bryn Bach Management Committee
No meeting. Cllr Cross requested to be added to this Committee and it was agreed to replace Cllr O'Sullivan with Cllr Cross as he would probably be more available for the timings of the meeting. A question was raised about the status of this Committee when this becomes part of the Trust. It is the belief that this Committee will still exist.
vii. Tredegar Youth Café
The next meeting is in two weeks.
viii. Blaenau Gwent CAB
No meeting.
ix. Communities First Advisory Panel
No meeting. It was agreed to generate questions to be raised with Communities First representatives at a future meeting and the RFO is to send a Freedom of Information request for their financial statements.
x. Tredegar Crime Prevention Panel
AGM is on 23rd July 2014. Information that can be placed on our website will be forwarded to Cllr Tippings.
xi. Tredegar Business Forum
The planting of the Town centre as began. It is work in progress, there are still baskets to be completed.
They have a classic vehicle event planned for 30th August 2014 and so far they have 57 entries. A shuttle service to town will be run from the Railway Tavern and the Vitec Centre on the day.
The Forum also expressed their concerns about the closure of the public toilets but appreciated that there are difficulties resolving the problem due to the change of Centre ownership.
It was agreed to send a letter congratulating them on lifting the profile of the town.
xii. Blaenau Gwent Regeneration Forum
The representative asked the RFO to find out when the next meeting is being held.
xiii. Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum
Meeting is tomorrow.
xv. Tredegar Heritage
No meeting.
xvi. One Voice Wales.
No meeting.

049) Matters of Local Interest and concern (by prior notice).

- Events – a verbal report of the Events Committee was given:-
  (a) AFD – It was agreed to purchase Commonwealth Games badges for the Tredegar stewards. Cllr Thomas was requested to try to source the availability of a professional rugby player who could be available to sign autographs and have photographs done on the day. Council requested an invitation was extended to the Mayor of all the Blaenau Gwent Town Councils and the Borough. A Member suggested a dog display could be held within the tennis courts by a local security company but it was agreed in light of the limited timescale to organize this event it would be advisable to leave this till next year.
  (b) Band Concerts – It was agreed to create a list of volunteers who would be prepared to assist Council with the stewarding of events such as these and suggested that contact is made with Mr G Woolf, Mr & Mrs Latham and Mr K Price for the future. A Member also raised that it had previously been discussed about diversifying the participants to bring variety. It

was agreed to defer this to an Events Committee after the Band Concert season where further consideration can be given and also review the stewarding requirements that may be necessary for other participants.

- Toilets – A meeting was held with the new owner and the estate agent Cooke & Arkwright. Their aims are to promote and improve the centre. It was suggested to assist these aims that the first step to be given consideration should be the reopening of the toilets. The owners have agreed to this in principle with the intention to draw up a contract regarding their re-opening and Cllr Smith is to email them to arrange a further meeting.
- Legislation has been changed giving more powers to BGCBC regarding the upkeep of private land and properties. BGCBC now have access and enforcements powers permitting them to make owners of any land/private properties deemed as not being kept to acceptable standards make improvements. BGCBC are committed to use the full force of the new powers to improve the borough.
- Red Kite – It was reported that the red kite recently seen over Tredegar has been found dead but it is uncertain at present whether it has been shot or poisoned.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

_____ Chair