

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber,
Bedwellty House on Wednesday, 6th March, 2019 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present: Councillors H. Trollope (Chair)

**E. Jones
T. Smith
A.E. Tippings
M. Cross
D.W.A. Howells
G. James
A. Jones
D. Jones
K. Phillips
P. Prosser
S. Rees
D. Rowberry
S. Trollope
M. Turner
B. Willis**

In Attendance: Town Clerk – Ms. C. Price

362) Apologies: Councillor J. Thomas

363) Declarations of Interest

364) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

It had given the Mayor great pleasure on Saturday evening to attend The Moose event, recognising an outstanding achievement by The Moose, having raised monies of over £9,000.00 for local charities. He had seen old friends and the event had been really enjoyable. The Moose had also presented £200.00 to the Mayoral Appeal, which had been gratefully received.

365) To receive any verbal recommendations of the Events Sub-Committee held immediately prior to this meeting

The following were recommendations of the March cycle Sub-Committees to be presented to Council for ratification and subsequent approval:

- Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee – 4th March, 2019

- Comparison exercise: agreed that Elite Cleaning (South Wales) Limited had proven good value / value for money
 - Cleaning Operative: the Sub-Committee would not be making a recommendation on the issue of the contracted operative, with a view to presenting to all Members for views, as a formal item to Council; also requesting that the Leader take this to a political meeting.
 - Christmas Lighting – review of infrastructure agreed, prior to inviting tenders to undertake contract
 - Grounds maintenance (BGCBC) - if quote within 2% increase, waive financial regulations and accept SLA.
- Heritage Sub-Committee – 6th March, 2019
 - Memorial for coal miners: appropriate to look in principle; to seek relevant advice from history groups before progressing with this project
 - Planting of flowerbeds, Town Clock: sponsored by Ron Skinners & Son, for planting this year (£1,800 full cost recovery). Agreed: signage that RFO had drafted, amend slightly to more narrow and longer.
 - RFO to pursue quotation for repainting of Town Clock, repair of roof and replacing of cockerel, to include provision of scaffolding.
 - War Memorial – three quotes received from Roman Builders, direct to Working Party (consisting of Councillors M. Cross, A. Jones, T. Smith and B. Willis) for consideration.
 - Bomber crash memorial – following a brief discussion, it was agreed the memorial to consist of a low-standing stone with a bronze plaque, Deputy Leader to agree wording. RAF to airlift stone into place; stone required, four-foot depth by 3 ft x 2ft.
 - Events Sub-Committee – 6th March, 2019
 - Armed Forces Poster Competition judges – Councillors E. Jones, A.E. Tippings and J. Thomas
 - Festival brochure; RFO to pursue quotes
 - Radios – hire for one-week 30th June to 7th July, 2019 inclusive
 - St. John Ambulance – ‘Top 4’ plus Chair of Events to meet
 - Road signs – further signs may be required, MT/DJ to liaise re: inserts, with approval delegated to ‘Top 4’ in respect of any expenditure incurred.

366) Grants:

a) To receive and consider grants to Sporting and Cultural organisations

Councillor G. James declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

Friends of Bedwellty Park – Request for the purchase of Summer bedding plants for the circular bed and quarter beds (main gates).

2016/17 March’17 CQ No. 564 £200.00: *Approved*; request that TTC logo could be displayed indicating sponsorship.

Hospice of the Valleys – Request for £250.00 Bronze Level Sponsorship for their forthcoming 6-Mile Race at Parc Bryn Bach.

2017/18 March’18 CQ No. 824 £250.00: *Approved accordingly*

Urdd Gobaith Cymru – Request for funding towards the Urdd National Eisteddfod which is being held in Cardiff and The Vale of Glamorgan this year. Urdd Members from each area win their way to competing at the National event in May.

2014/15 Aug'14 CQ No. 051 £200.00 – given to local fundraising committee for the event held 2015 at Llancaiach Fawr, Nelson.

Following a brief discussion: **Approved £100.00**

Teenage Cancer Trust – Request for funding for them to continue to offer support and medical services at their 9-bed unit at University Hospital Wales.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 825 £100.00: Approved accordingly

Wales Air Ambulance – Request for funding to help them extend their service hours. In 2018 there were 39 missions in Blaenau Gwent.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 828 £200.00

As this was also a charitable organisation, a Member queried whether it would be prudent to allocation £100.00 in the interest of consistency. However, Council noted this was an emergency service that incurred substantial ongoing cost in respect of specialised equipment in order to continue to provide this service; it was therefore **Approved £200.00**

b) To receive and consider grants to Churches & Chapels (s.137)

Before awarding a grant, Council must be satisfied the grant is being given for non-religious purposes with the building being for community use.

Church of the Immaculate Conception – Request for funding towards the cost of repainting the exterior.

2017/18 Sept'17 CQ No. 829 £300.00: Approved accordingly

Central Baptist – Request for funding to replace the TV and repairs resulting from the two breakings they have recently experienced.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 829 £500.00: Approved £300.00

Councillor A.E. Tippings declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

Horeb Chapel – Request for funding to replace the carpet in the Vestry area which is used for a public library and other events i.e. Fair Trade Breakfast.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 831 £300.00: Approved accordingly

Councillor A.E. Tippings declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

Sardis Chapel – Request for funding for new and repairs to rain water goods.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 832 £300.00: Approved accordingly

Councillor B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

Saron Congregational Church – Request for funding towards the cost of the external rendering work.

2017/18 March'18 CQ No. 833 £300.00: Approved accordingly

The Clerk advised that, this being the final meeting of Civic Council to discuss grants before

the end of the financial year; Members may wish to approve that any additional application forms received be considered at the Civic Sub-Committee scheduled before the next Ordinary Meeting of Council in March; which was agreed accordingly.

367) Correspondence

1) BGCBC

a) M. Howland:

i) Re: Tredegar Recreation Ground. Would Council consider the potential CAT of this ground?

- A lengthy discussion ensued regarding ownership of the Recreation Ground, which had been gifted to the people of Tredegar by Lord Tredegar. This responsibility had been taken over by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as Trustees some years previously.

A number of Members felt, if this sports ground could be lost for the benefit of the community, they would be in favour of considering a transfer to Town Council: therefore, if there was a possibility that the Local Authority could request this under Land Registration law due to disuse, Town Council could not allow that to happen.

A brief discussion ensued regarding who were the specific Trustees and associated duties and responsibilities. It was noted that Blaenau Gwent CBC was the responsible body as appointed Custodian, rather than as a charitable trust or named trustees.

Further discussion ensued regarding: condition of facilities, breakdown of costs incurred (e.g. maintenance, utilities, etc.), dissemination of any monies for those taking over Local Authority assets and how the discharge of these assets would impact on BG staffing.

It was emphasised that the current position at this time was that BGCBC was undertaking negotiations with sporting clubs and the correspondence sought clarity only on whether Town Council would **consider** such an option, should the sports club collective not move forward.

ii) Re: Managing Miners Welfare Halls & Community Buildings Workshop at Neath on 20.03.2019 from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

- Councillors T. Smith and A.E. Tippings to attend.

b) Andrea Jones Re: Members Training. Holding refresher Code of Conduct in May but not sufficient for any new Members. Suggest contacting OVW.

- Noted; the Leader provided a brief update in respect of discussion at a recent workshop of joint Town and Community Councils, whereupon it was agreed to await the outcome of the next meeting before pursuing training requirements.

c) A. Parker Re: PSB Blaenau Gwent Well-Being Roadshows 19th to 22nd March, 2019 – **added to website**

- Noted.

Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.

d) List of General Licences Applications week ending 22.02.2019.

- Noted.

2) Welsh Government Information on funding available to support the initial setting up of Joint Arrangements.

- Noted.

3) LITE Limited Infrastructure removal report.

- Noted.

4) Members' Correspondence:

a) Cllr T. Smith
Re: Memorial for Miners, suggestion from Mr. Sullivan to use the old NCB works gates to create a Memorial.

- Noted, having been presented to meeting of the Heritage Sub-Committee, for consideration.

b) Cllr H. Trollope
i) Blaenau Gwent Youth Service operating a Youth Club in Kidz'R'Us between 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m.

- **To be placed on TTC website**

ii) Suggestion for Civic Nomination.

- **Approved: Cllr Trollope to complete nomination form in accordance with Council policy**

iii) G. Hurley: Purchase kits to assist victims of acid attack, £60.00 per kit.

- Noted; Council greatly supported this initiative, expressing possible interest in purchasing two kits. Clerk to write to ascertain further information.

5) Roman Builders

Quote for additional works.

- Noted; as previously agreed by Council – options to be considered by a Working Party (consisting of Councillors M. Cross, A. Jones, T. Smith and B. Willis).

6) Brecon Beacons
National Park
Authority

Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan, consultation period ends 17.03.2019 –
forwarded to Cllrs Turner & Tippings

- Noted.

7) Abertillery &
Llanhilleth
Community Council

Welsh Government Consultation: Third party sales of puppies and kittens, closes 17.05.2019.

- Noted.

8) GAVO

a) Blaenau Gwent Period Equity questionnaire –
added to website

- Noted. Clerk to write to BG to ascertain how monies already allocated have been spent.

b) Voluntary Voice Autumn/Winter 2018.

- Noted.

9) Ron Skinners
& Son

Confirming Summer & Spring planting sponsorship of the Town Clock.

- Noted; agreed, signage that RFO had drafted, amend slightly to 'more narrow and longer'.

10) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report week ending 01.03.2019 & 08.03.2019; Ville D'Orvault, Orvault & Co. March/April 2019; Communicorp Clerks & Councils Direct March 2019 Issue 122; Communicorp Local Councils Update Issue 226 March 2019 - **distributed to Members**: Received.

11) AGENDA

None received.

Councillor B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

368) Planning:

a) To consider

- i) an Officer's Report (if received) - None received
- ii) a) List of planning applications received in week 07.
- b) List of planning applications received in week 08.

b) Verbal report of the Planning Committee if any

c) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations - None Received

d) To consider other planning matters – Clerk to request update on development on the former Green Acres site.

369) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report - February 2019

To receive report to take effect during the financial year 2019 / 2020

The Clerk spoke to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, highlighting any significant changes and salient points for consideration / requiring approval:

Section 13. Payments to Members of Community and Town Councils

- Tredegar Town Council remained in Group B - Income of Expenditure in 2018 / 2019 of: £30,000 - £199,999
- 13.5 confirmed role was more than voluntary, i.e. 'It is important to note that a person who follows this path is in a different position to those in other forms of activity, for example such as volunteering or charitable work, ...'
- 13.9 Council was reminded that 'An individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and is an individual matter. A community or town council member wishing to decline payments must themselves write to their proper officer to do so.' The Clerk said that the RFO had devised a proforma, which was circulated to all elected Members, which merely required a signature if anyone wished to waive payment.
- 13.11 'It is inappropriate for councils or councillors to create a climate, or otherwise pressurise others, in order to prevent persons accessing any monies to which they are entitled...'

Determination 40: All Community and Town Councils must make available a payment to each of their Members of £150.00 per year as a contribution to costs and expenses.

- 13.14 'The Panel is mandating a payment of £150... Receipts are not required for these payments.' The RFO had still received no indication of taxation regarding this mandatory.

Determination 42: Community and Town Councils in Groups B or C can make an annual payment of up to £500.00 each to up to five Members in recognition of specific

responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses – Council noted the option to agree up to five Members but approved payment to the Leader only within Tredegar Town Council at this time. However, it was emphasised that senior roles and allowances were agendaed on an annual basis for consideration at the Annual General Meeting of Council.

- 13.16 ‘Councils in Groups B and C can pay up to five responsibility payments (of up to £500) for specified roles’.
- 13.17 ‘In all cases, a Councillor can only have one payment of £500 regardless of how many senior roles they hold within their Council.’
- 13.18 ‘Where a person is a member of more than one Town or Community Council, they are eligible to receive the £150 and, if appropriate, £500 from each Council of which they are a Member.’

Determination 43: Community and Town Councils can make payments to each of their Members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties. Such payments must be the actual costs of travel by public transport or the HMRC mileage allowances.

Determination 44: If a Community or Town Council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it may authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its Members at the maximum rates set out on the basis of receipted claims.

Determination 45: Community and Town Councils can pay financial loss compensation to each of their Members, where such loss has actually occurred, for attending approved duties.

Determination 46: All Community and Town Councils must provide for the reimbursement of necessary costs for the care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or formal carers) and for personal assistance needs up to a maximum of £403.00 per month. Reimbursement must be for the additional costs incurred by Members in order for them to carry out their approved duties. Reimbursement shall only be made on production of receipts from the carer.

- Cost of Care only – 13.22 ‘The Panel recognises the issues relating to the publication of this legitimate expense. This is reflected in the options for publication as set out in Annex 4.’, i.e.
Option 1: Name Member and amount
Option 2: List total amount reimbursed without attributing to individual Member; whereupon Option 2 was unanimously agreed.

Determination 47: Community and Town Councils can provide a Civic Head payment to the Mayor/Chair of the Council up to a maximum of £1,500.00. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses and the £500.00 senior salary if these are claimed.

- 13.23 ‘The Panel requires that Members should not have to pay for the cost of the support that is needed to carry out these duties.’
- 13.24 could be important to Council and future Mayors, as this related to the wide range of provision made for Civic Heads.

- 13.25 – 13.29 outlined the support of such costs for the avoidance of doubt; however, the RFO had received no indication as to whether receipts would be required or how to treat these costs in accounts or on the Members' Annual Return.

Determination 48: Community and Town Councils can provide a Deputy Civic Head payment to the Deputy Mayor / Chair of the Council up to a maximum of £500.00. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses and the £500.00 senior salary if these are claimed.

Town Council noted and agreed the Determinations (No. 40, 42, 43-48 inclusive), to be considered at the Annual General Meeting for approval of requirements pertinent to Tredegar Town Council as an individual community / town council.

The Clerk highlighted the following points, which explained why the IRPW wished a decision to be made whilst the report was under consideration:

- 13.32 'Where a decision is required by the Council, this should be done at the first meeting following receipt of the Annual Report.'
- 13.33 'A Council can adopt any, or all, of the non-mandated determinations but if it does make such a decision, it must apply to all its' Members.'

To be made May onwards, following the Annual General Meeting of Council:

- 13.36 'All Members are eligible to be paid the £150.00 as set out in Determination 40 from the start of the financial year...'
- 13.37 'Other amounts payable to Members in recognition of specific responsibilities ... as set out in Determinations 41, 42, 47 and 48 are payable from the date when the Member takes up the role...'

The Clerk explained that the RFO had previously presented a report in respect of the following (highlighted by IRPW in point 13.38):

- When the payment is actually made to the Member;
- How many payments the total amount payable is broken into;
- Whether and how to recover any payments made to a Member who leaves their role during the financial year.

The RFO had suggested that Members may wish to review this, excluding the treatment of taxation in respect of the £150.00 until advice was received but confirming the other points within the report.

Determination 49: Members in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 senior salary from a principal council (that is Leader, Deputy Leader or Executive Member) cannot receive any payment from any Community or Town Council, other than travel and subsistence expenses and reimbursement of costs of care.

The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales was thereupon noted and the appropriate Determinations agreed accordingly.

370) Updates regarding Bedwellty House and Park - any issues to have been previously reported direct to the House Management personally

- Concerns were again raised in respect of security in the Park, whereby a Member enquired if this was proving value for money. Concerns were also raised in respect of issues relating to the cattle grid, which was allowing an influx of sheep. It was noted this was the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- On the checking of the ponds at the end of 2018, it had been deemed these were in a worse condition than previously. In respect of the Pumps, two were not drawing water from the ponds; these was proving very frustrating, particularly bearing in mind the amount of monies invested in the House and Park. A Member added that the fountains never appeared to be working.
- Long Shelter – planning permission could be required in respect of replacing seating.
- Bedwellty House was not ensuring the gate by the former Hospital was being secured.
- A substantial budget was available for CCTV to the House, but not Park, due to issues relating to installation of wires, as this was a Listed Building; therefore, there was provision inside the building, but not to the exterior infrastructure.

371) Delegates: to receive and consider reports from Delegates to Outside Bodies and the recommendations of Sub-Committees/Working Parties:

a) Joint Committee of Local Councils – the Leader provided a brief update: there was a proposal for a new Charter; Bernadette Elias and Andrew Parker (BGCBC) had met with delegates from each town and community council to discuss why the Charter was not working, how it could be improved, build on relationships, etc. Ms. Elias was supportive, as Head of Governance & Partnerships, and Andrew as Consultation / Engagement Officer, in order to draw up a new Charter, to liaise with OVW in respect of training and networking support; Clerks, collaboration of work between town community councils and Local Authority to share information and good working practices; convene regular scheduling of meetings to ascertain what worked well or could be done better.

Members expressed concern that explanations were not clear when items proposed were bounced back to each town and community and needed criteria on what could be included as agenda items opposed to Operational services – BG Officers to review a proforma, when information was forwarded to a relevant Department for response. In respect of consultation, discussion ensued regarding planning, education and policy, e.g. strategic policies such as the Local Development Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

It was suggested a seat was needed on PSBs for a town and community representative, and the Officers suggested that town and community councils could speak to OVW on this issue, perhaps to lobby Welsh Government.

The Officers supported networking meetings to support Clerks – it was agreed that bi-monthly meetings could suffice; Joint training courses could be undertaken; town and community consultation meetings to be convened every six weeks. A Member hoped that this would progress, rather than merely meeting a 'tick box' for the Local Authority.

b) Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales – no meeting

c) One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM – no meeting

d) Tredegar Twinning – no meeting

e) Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund – no meeting

f) School Governing Bodies *Deighton Primary*: write letter of congratulations to

Headteacher, M. Gough.

g) Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum awaiting grant to archive library

h) Blaenau Gwent CAB – no meeting

i) Tredegar / Ebbw Vale Crime Prevention Panel – no meeting

j) Tredegar Business Forum – concerns were raised that Members were not being invited to meetings; many of the shops were unaware of the Forum; Town Council would support anything that could be done to rejuvenate the Forum, and it was important for the shops in the town centre to be involved.

k) VVP / Tredegar Heritage Initiative – contact was ongoing with Blaenau Gwent regarding the STAR Centre, in respect of snagging issues, and an official opening was needed, as people of Tredegar needed to be made aware of such investment and the hard-working individuals at this community base. Tredegar Arms – work to the cellars had uncovered a spiral staircase, and cells. The building end-use would be as a hotel, function space, etc.

372) Matters of Local Interest or Concern (by prior notice)

- **North Europe Film Awards 2019** – North Europe Fusion International Film Festival in London, award for best screenplay for a small feature horror film. Also, Blaenau Gwent Film Academy undertaking a horror adaptation ‘Knight of the Bloodmoon’, filmed entirely in Tredegar, based on a Stephen King short story.
- **New Health Centre, Tredegar** – a Member requested an update on the new health centre in Tredegar. Council was informed the Assembly Member had confirmed, at a Ward meeting, that the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board was looking to secure the shortfall in funding and design works were ongoing.

Councillor B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon

- **Noise of off-road vehicles (Woofles Dog Kennels)** – County Borough Member, Councillor J. Morgan, had met with the Head of Planning, to discuss machinery to make a track to allow up to 200 vehicles at a time, which would be based in the area of the kennels.
The Local Authority had pursued enforcement notice on the groundworks, which had been served. Town Council supported the concerns of Colleagues, e.g. one of the issues Troed y Gwair Houses causing instability of mountain: agreed, Clerk to write.
- **Dragon weather vane** – the Clerk provided photographs of a few ideas for the design; it was agreed that the RFO liaise with ‘Top 4’ for a decision to be made in order to progress.
- **Civic Awards Presentation evening - Wednesday, 3rd April, 2019:** Agreed.
- **Grounds maintenance contract 1.5 / 2% increase:** Agreed.
- **Policy Review - Risk Management and Standing Orders:** Council approved the policy documents, as circulated, subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting of the Policy Sub-Committee held 20th February, 2019 and reported to Ordinary Meeting of Council.
- **Aneurin Leisure - intergenerational activities workshop:** As requested by Council, the RFO had checked to ascertain if grant allocation had been made in the current

financial year – the Clerk confirmed the previous award had been for the same workshop held in 2017/18. It was therefore agreed that a grant in the sum of £200.00 be awarded and would only ask that the Town Council pop-up banner be displayed at the event.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

_____ Chair