

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on
Wednesday, 6th December, 2023 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present: Councillors K. Phillips (Chair)
E. Griffin
M. Turner
A.E. Tippings
G. Badham
A.E. Evans
A. Jones
E. Jones
D. Rowberry
J. Thomas
K. Waldron
C. Walters

In attendance: Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne

By invitation: Member of Senedd, Alun Davies

234) Apologies Councillors B. Rees, H. Trollope, S. Trollope, K. Waldron and G. Walters

The Deputy Leader sadly reported the passing of former M.E.P., Glenys Kinnock; a friend of Tredegar and champion to those most in need, not only in this constituency but world-wide, serving with energy and always a welcome sight in the town.

Council observed a Minute silence as a mark of respect and sincere condolences were extended to the family.

235) Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members to make their declarations as and when necessary.

236) Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the incoming Mayor:

Chain of Office to be handed over and Consort's Chain to be exchanged

Following the resignation of the Mayor elected for 2023 / 2024, and the acceptance of Councillor Kevin Phillips to take up the role: the Mayor received the Chain and acceptance of Office, which was duly signed in the presence of Council, and the Consort's Chain presented.

237) To Elect a Deputy Mayor to serve until the Annual Meeting of Council 2024 (Chain of Office to be handed over to incoming Deputy)

A Member proposed that Councillor Ellie Griffin be nominated to the role of Deputy Mayor; this nomination was duly seconded.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Ellie Griffin was unanimously elected to the role of Deputy Mayor: Deputy Mayor to receive the Chain and acceptance of Office, to be duly signed in the presence of the Clerk.

238) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

The Mayor confirmed that on being elected, he would be pleased to continue and support the charity chosen by the former Mayor, i.e. Mind Cymru, up until May 2024. It was his wish that former Councillor Glyn Evans be invited to join Council when presenting the cheque to Mind Cymru, which was agreed accordingly.

239) Alun Davies, M.S. - to provide an update on the work he is undertaking and inviting any questions of Members

The Chair extended a welcome to the Member of Senedd, Alun Davies, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council to provide an update on work being undertaken and respond to any questions raised.

The Senedd Constituency Member was grateful to Council for allowing time to speak to Members, as he considered it was a good idea to meet with town and community councils on a regular basis to pursue what could be achieved together; unfortunately, this had not been done since the pandemic. The Member was currently mid-term of a five-year appointment and such talks provided an opportunity to discuss various issues that could be taken to the Senedd, taking into account serious difficulties in respect of funds being made available to public bodies country-wide.

The Member of Senedd thereupon spoke on the following matters and responded to questions raised:

- Capital spend across Blaenau Gwent, as one of the poorest areas, in comparison to other regions across the UK; debates would be ongoing and Government needed to consider focus on care functions, and impact on spend looking at different parts of Wales, considering the most vulnerable in our communities.
- Transport links within the South Wales valleys, particularly in accessing key areas, such as The Grange: A major investment had been provided towards the trains, increasing the number of trains to Cardiff to two per hour, but four per hour was needed. Bus services remained an issue with the number of passengers returning following the pandemic and frequency of services; he suggested there was a need to consider regulating services available. The MS believed the introduction of a new track to Abertillery town was a positive but no capital would be made to fund such a project for the next couple of years and future developments to the Ebbw Vale line, such as a third train per hour.

Another Member referred to the transport links to Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan, as the bus stop was situated too far from the hospital for visitors to walk. Also, the Metro Map still did not include Tredegar and there were swathes omitted across Blaenau Gwent.

- 20 mph Speed Limit: Members suggested the community in general were not in favour of the introduction of the speed limit and sought the observations of the MS. The Member confirmed he was in favour of the legislation, as this had formed part of the

Labour manifesto to deliver as part of the conversations at the last election for Blaenau Gwent. Those in opposition tended to be more vocal; however, he considered this had been implemented by Blaenau Gwent really well and a level of realism was needed.

- Arts Council for Wales: a Member referred to serious concerns in respect of the Arts Council for Wales reducing funding for Blaenau Gwent, which would have a considerable impact on events for Heads4Arts and the Member expressed his disappointment of this decision, as removal of this core funding would have a detrimental impact on arts in the valleys. The MS had spoken with the Chair of the Arts Council, as there was a need to consider the arts infrastructure in the County Borough and devise an appropriate strategy as to how to deliver arts.
- Accessible Broadband: the MS had discussed issues of accessibility with Offcom and there was a major differential between what Offcom stated was being delivered and access available.
- School Reform: a Member said this would prove challenging and, if progressed, discussions were needed to ensure this was done right. This was not designed for educational issues; children with a more deprived background did not have the same support as middle classes.
- NNDR / Business Rates: a Member considered there was an unfair distribution of business rates collected from residents in Blaenau Gwent, as the Ebbw Vale area did not have a town / community council.
- Illegal Off-road Vehicles: there was a serious issue in respect of illegal use of quad bikes in the Tredegar area and there was a need for all motorised vehicles to be licensed in order to tackle this in terms of crime and enable the Police to confiscate and destroy.

Members welcomed the excellent work being undertaken. The Chair extended the thanks of Council to the Member of Senedd for attending and sharing this information, which was greatly appreciated.

The Member of Senedd thereupon left the meeting (6.57 p.m.)

240) To receive the verbal recommendations of all Sub-Committees / Working Party held prior to this meeting of Council

It was agreed the recommendations of the following Sub-Committees held prior to Council be approved accordingly:

- **Events Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2023**

Ongoing actions to be progressed accordingly; and

It was agreed that a gift be purchased for each Residential / Care Home and the Clerk seek expressions of interest to tender for the transport opportunity.

- **Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2023**

Council to purchase bulbs / heathers to undertake planting of the baskets and three-tier planters throughout the town centre at a cost of under £400.00.

241) Grants:

**a) To receive and consider grants to Sporting and Cultural organisations
(under the provision of the Local Govt. Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 s.19 and
Local Government Act 1972 s.137)**

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

Sirhowy Hill Woodlands - Any financial assistance received would go towards their fundraising for a road going tractor and Aviva will match fund up to £250.00 per donor.

2022/23 March'23 CQ No. 454 £200.00 - Approved accordingly

Tredegar History & Archive Society & Museum - Any financial assistance received would be used to purchase printing paper and inks for project printing.

2021/22 March'22 CQ No. 283 £200.00 - Approved accordingly

Tredegar Moose Ladies Circle - Any financial assistance received would be used to replace kitchen items.

2022/23 Dec'22 CQ No. 421 £200.00 - Approved accordingly

b) To receive and consider grants to Churches & Chapels (s.137) - Grants as of 01.04.2017 now max £300.00 *(before awarding a grant Council must be satisfied the grant is being given for non-religious purposes with the building being for community use)* – None received.

242) Vacancy - one in Central & West Ward and one in Georgetown Ward: Nominations for consideration

One nomination had been received from an existing Councillor for the Central & West Ward, Councillor Bethan Rees, to transfer to the Georgetown Ward, which was unanimously agreed.

It was therefore agreed that the resignation of Councillor Rees from the Central & West Ward be duly accepted.

No nominations had been received in respect of the Central & West Ward; it was agreed that the Notice to Co-opt be amended and the deadline extended accordingly, to include the second vacancy due to the transfer.

243) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
- a) A. Tippings Re: Light up orange for Prader-Willi Syndrome Awareness Month, May 2024. Request to turn the Clock orange on 31st May, 2024.
 - Noted and agreed accordingly.
 - b) I. Cole Re: Parking Enforcement. Proposed plan for town centre.
 - Noted; forward to all Members.

Councillor D. Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion.

- c) a) List of applications received, week ending 10.11.2023.
 - 1) Application for Personal Licence – Katie Louise Hayward.

2) Application for Personal Licence – Rhiannon Evans.

ii) List of applications received, week ending 17.11.2023.

1) Temporary Event Notices, 02 & 09.12.2023 – Dukestown Workingmen’s Club.

2) Temporary Event Notice 18-23.12.23 – Lidl.

iii) List of applications received, week ending 01.12.2023.

1) Temporary Event Notice 09.12.23 – Dukestown Workingmen’s Club.

2) Temporary Event Notice 23.12.23 – Dukestown Workingmen’s Club.

3) Temporary Event Notice 29.12.23 – Dukestown Workingmen’s Club.

- Noted.

2) One Voice Wales a) National Awards Conference 2024, Wednesday 27.03.2024 at the Royal Welsh Ground. Awards nominations to be received by 16.02.2024.

- Noted; forward to all Members prior to due consideration.

b) Consultation: Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill – **forwarded to all Members asking for their feedback to be emailed in to our office**

- Noted.

3) Cllr J. Thomas Re: Governor role at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Copy of email sent resigning from the role due to work commitments and hopes TTC Members will consider taking on the role.

- Noted.

4) Donation requests: a) Noah’s Ark Re: Here for You Appeal. Request for a donation which will help them to fund more counselling support for families and additional therapies that help children / young people cope with their experiences.

- Noted; a donation of £50.00 was unanimously approved.

b) Hope Dog Rescue Asking for a donation to help with the festive running costs of their rescue centre. The huge rise in dog ownership during lockdown followed by the

cost of living crisis has impacted exceptionally hard on every area of their charity.

- Noted; a donation of £50.00 was unanimously approved.

- c) Urdd Gobaith Cymru Re: Fund for All Appeal.
To offer 250 children and young people living in poverty in Wales an unforgettable summer holiday in 2024. A donation of £180.00 would cover transport, accommodation, all activities and full board for up to five days for at one of their Residential Centres. Council is welcome to request sponsoring a place / places for children in our area by noting the area with any donation.

- Noted; a donation of £180.00 was unanimously approved.

- 5) R. Taylor-Davies Invite to Heritage Networking Event 11.01.2024 at 10.00 a.m. Cyfartha Castle.

- Noted; two places (Mayor and Leader)

- 6) Paul Webb Re: Tredegar Forum website. Asking if Council could investigate a way to recover the historical information held on the now defunct website or alternatively commission / sponsor a local historical group to undertake this task.

- Noted.

7) PUBLICATIONS

Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum meeting 20.11.2023 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 24.11.2023 & 01.12.2023; One Voice Wales, Public Services Ombudsman for Wales press release: Equality & Human Rights Casebook published; Welsh Government New law for businesses to separate waste for recycling; J. Karn Re: Online event, "Duw, It's Hard: Heritage provision, collective identity and cultural memory after coal" at 10.00 a.m. on 09.12.2023; Communicorp Local Councils Direct Issue 279 December 2023; ABUHB Blaenau Gwent Neighbourhood Care Network newsletter Issue 2 – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

Councillor J. Thomas left the meeting at this juncture (7.21 p.m.)

Councillors E. Jones and D. Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.

244) Planning:

- i) List of planning applications received in week 46
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 47
- iii) List of planning applications received in week 48

b) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations: None received

c) To consider other planning matters – PEDW, Re: DNS/3239181 Manmoel Wind. Examination notice setting out the period for consultation on Further Information: Noted.

245) Updates regarding Bedwellty House and Park / Parc Bryn Bach - any issues to have been previously reported direct to the House Management / Aneurin Leisure personally

- Council had noted that signs had been affixed to the gates of Bedwellty Park with cable ties; however, the security firm had been informed that this practice was inappropriate and the signs removed.

246) 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 – Meeting 12th December.

b) Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales – No meeting.

c) One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM – No meeting.

d) Tredegar Twinning – Attempting to compile a football team for a tournament at easter, information sent to appropriate contacts, but no response received to date; the Association were doing their best to expand engagement in France.

e) Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund – New deadline in March: Tredegar Town Council had been successful in their funding application for the Christmas Lights switch-on event.

f) School Governing Bodies – As a result of Welsh Government providing school meals to all junior school pupils, schools had seen a decline in the number of meals claimed, resulting in a loss of income; this had been raised as an area of concern by the Governors' Association, suggesting a new measure needed to be found for deprivation. Bryn Bach Primary: highest attendance in the Tredegar area, and second highest in Blaenau Gwent primary schools.

g) Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum – The next 'meet' was the Christmas dinner; the Forum was continuing research for the churches / chapels booklet.

h) Tredegar Business Forum – the Christmas event held in the town the previous Saturday had gone really well; this Blaenau Gwent event had been enjoyed by everyone involved. Some businesses had expressed concern that the trail only related to the Shopping Centre and had not included Commercial Street.

i) VVP / Tredegar Heritage Initiative – Meeting shortly; the Chair would provide feedback accordingly.

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

- Tredegar Health and Wellbeing Centre – to hold Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Keir Construction to account. In respect of issues reported to BGCBC Highways Division, Officers stated it was not their responsibility for highways around that area. The Member felt irate by this response and spoken to local Councillors in respect of issues at Park Row, who considered this response not acceptable.

- TTC Social Media – the Leader wished to remind Members that any posts to the website should be apolitical not relating to any party persuasion.
- Nomination – a Member referred to a letter of support for a member of the community, providing a brief background to the circumstances, whereupon it was agreed that Council would be pleased to support the nomination for an award.
- The 2024 / 2025 budget information needed to be collated ready for Council's consideration in January. The RFO asked please could Members give consideration to what projects, events and non-operational purchases you would like to have discussed / included for the next financial year. Also, consider long term / future projects for which Council could set timescales and Earmarked Reserves. To be sent into the office by 12.00 noon on Monday, 11th December, 2024.
- Council meetings January 2024. Following the holiday closure the office would re-open on 2nd January, 2024; therefore, would Council consider moving the meeting from 3rd to 10th to accommodate the issuing of budget information and agendas: agreed accordingly.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.42 p.m.

_____ Chair