

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on Wednesday, 20th December, 2023 at 6.30 p.m. (6.55 p.m. start)

Present: Councillors K. Phillips (Chair)
M. Turner
A.E. Tippings
G. Badham
J. Thomas
G. Walters

In attendance: Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne
RFO – Ms. A. Edwards

253) Apologies. E. Griffin, A. Evans, A. Jones, E. Jones, B. Rees, D. Rowberry, H. Trollope, S. Trollope, K. Waldron and C. Walters

254) Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

- **Finance and Staffing – 19th December, 2023**

It was agreed that the recommendations of the Finance and Staffing be progressed and updated position to be reported to the next meeting of Council.

256) 2023 / 2024 Internal Audit Interim Report

The RFO spoke to the Interim Report of the Internal Audit 2023 / 2024 and drew Members attention to the table of recommendations therein, which outlined progress to date and intended course of action for each Recommendation, which was accepted accordingly.

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Formal budget timetable - the Internal Auditor had requested the formal budget timetable be placed in written format; RFO would progress.

Budgetary Control report – Budget against Actual reports were presented to Council each quarter, with in-depth reporting of underspends following the third quarter. OVW Financial Regulations suggested that a percentage figure be included throughout the year for any excess of £100.00 / 15%; Council would therefore need to agree a set amount.

Point 1 would be reviewed at year-end and rolled on to the next year and Point 2

implemented accordingly; Points 3 and 4 to be implemented at 2023 / 2024 year-end; Point 5 – implemented; Point 6 to be reviewed and brought back to Council; Point 7 – Clerk to implement adopting Terms of Reference; Point 8 – CCTV policy had been considered and implemented accordingly; Point 9 – implemented (for information, policies would no longer be ‘moved’ en bloc but recorded separately); Point 10 – Council to meet with cleaning company.

Council extended thanks to the RFO for the work undertaken; the Officer confirmed she would continue to work through the recommendations contained within the report in order to meet all targets.

257) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in December 2023

The RFO spoke to the report and explained that the bank reconciliations, valid to date, were available for Members to view upon request, which was noted accordingly.

- Utility bill – Christmas Lights display: the RFO was continuing to pursue a query in respect of the invoice for the wattage / usage of the display. A response had been received via email but recalled, which had indicated a significant reduction in the amount. The Office would keep Members updated accordingly.

There being no further queries regarding the Schedule of Accounts, presented items were approved for payment. The RFO asked that the designated signatories liaise in respect of the transfer of funds, as approved by Council, to be undertaken in the presence of the appropriate Member and Town Clerk, which was noted accordingly.

258) To receive and adopt the following Minutes of Council:

- a) Events Sub-Committee - 1st November, 2023**
- b) Civic Meeting of Council - 1st November, 2023**
- c) Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee - 9th November, 2023**
- d) Events Sub-Committee - 15th November, 2023**
- e) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 15th November, 2023**

It was agreed that all Minutes presented be moved en bloc as a true record.

259) Chair to sign Minutes - at earliest opportunity in accordance with WG Legislation and Guidance

Minutes approved were duly signed by the Chair in the presence of Council.

260) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
R. Daly Re: Precept 2024 / 2025 requirement. To be submitted by 31.01.2024.
 - Noted. Welsh Government had indicated an increase of 2.6%, which was not as good as other areas; Council needed to look at what was being done for the people of Tredegar

and work with BGCBC accordingly. If there was a need to raise the precept, Members wanted this to be as minimal an increase as possible.

- b) List of applications received, week ending 08.12.2023.
 - Noted.
- 2) One Voice Wales
 - a) Cost of Living: Community & Town Council activity in Wales. Asking if Councils are setting aside funding for projects as part of their precept.
 - Noted.
 - b) Re: Free Webinar, interactive self-guided tours for villages, towns and communities 25.01.2024.
 - Noted.
- 3) Grantscape
 - c) Merry Christmas from all at One Voice Wales M. Haskins Re: Pen Bryn Oer grant. Processed payment claim to their finance department, will receive remittance advice in due course.
 - Noted.
- 4) Cllr Tippings
 - Email, and article, from Yvon Patte about the planting of the two oaks trees from Town Council.
 - Noted. The ceremony had been shared on Facebook.
- 5) Grant / Donation Thanks:
 - a) Trefil RFC Mini & Junior Section
 - b) Wales Air Ambulance
 - Noted.

6) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 15.12.2023; Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum meeting 18.12.2023 at 11.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; OVW Countryside Code update December 2023; OVW Examples of Biodiversity actions needed – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

261) Planning:

Councillor J. Thomas declared an interest in the item and therefore Planning was DEFERRED as the meeting would be inquorate.

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

- Office arrangements over the Christmas period
- Office closure: Christmas period – to be closed from 21st December, 2023 and to re-

open on Tuesday, 2nd January, 2024.

- A Member was sad to relay the passing of former Councillor Tony Evans. Member to obtain contact details in order that a letter of condolence could be sent.
- Road Closure A465 – the road had been closed for ten hours following a road traffic accident, from Rassau Industrial Estate through to Tredegar roundabout, with a number of diversions. The road could have been closed at the Ebbw Vale junction and traffic diverted to the old Heads of the Valleys road with minimal disruption, as Sirhowy Hill had become very congested.

The Member considered the road closure had been handled poorly by Sutra / Police, assuming this was because the road closure had been put in place by agencies not familiar to the Blaenau Gwent area but was surprised that these had not liaised with the Local Authority.

Council asked that an invitation, once again, be extended to the Police, inviting the new Inspector to a formal meeting of Council.

- Tredegar Health and Wellbeing Centre – a Member referred to serious safety concerns in respect of the area at the top of Park Row and Market Street, with vehicles travelling halfway down Market Street, waiting for larger vehicles, and lorries mounting the pavement. The Member had spoken with the site manager who said that no complaints had been received, which was not the case. Unfortunately neither Keir Construction and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board were communicating with residents, such as holding regular meetings physically or on MS Teams.

Council noted that, prior to the pandemic, meetings had been held with the residents of Park Row and Market Street, but this communication had not been reinstated. A Member was surprised that a serious accident had not occurred. Concerns had been reported to the Executive and Highways Division of BGCBC but had denied responsibility.

It was agreed that an invitation be extended to Keir Construction and the Chief Executive of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to attend a meeting of Council.

- The Clerk referred to a query regarding a request for absence from Councillor Allan Jones due to reasons of ill-health. Members said Allan was really helpful with events such as the band concerts and was one of Council's most active volunteers. It was agreed that the Clerk advise the Member to place the request in writing for consideration of Council.

Thanks were extended to the Clerk and RFO for everything they had done on behalf of Council for 2023, as 2023 had been a hard year and 2024 could be just as hard – so all should rest over Christmas! 'Wishing everyone a happy Christmas and thanks for everything you do'.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.46 p.m.

Chair