

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on Wednesday, 17th April, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors K. Phillips (Chair)

**E. Griffin
M. Turner
A.E. Tippings
G. Badham
A.E. Evans
S. Mavar
M. Moore
D. Rowberry
J. Thomas
G. Walters**

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

**By invitation: Definitive Map Officer, H. Clatworthy
Team Manager – Natural Environment, G. Teague**

396) Apologies. Councillors A. Jones, E. Jones, B. Rees, K. Waldron and C. Walters

397) Declarations of Interest

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

398) Diversion of Public Footpaths Nos. 151 & 152, stopping up of Public Footpaths Nos. 149 & 150 (part) in the community of Tredegar

To receive an update: BGCBC Officers, Community Services Division

The Chair extended a welcome to the Definitive Map Officer and Team Manager – Natural Environment, BGCBC, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council on request to provide an update on the diversion of the above-named public footpaths.

Following a brief introduction, the Officers expressed gratitude to Tredegar Town Council for allowing time, following the consultation, to speak to Members in order to respond to queries and clarify how Diversion Orders worked.

- These types of Diversion Orders were sought in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; these Orders had arisen on the back of an existing planning application.
- Planning permission had been awarded in respect of the proposal and therefore the diversion of the footpaths was allowed to undertake the build.

- It was an offence to obstruct a public footpath and the second stage of the process was to assess how to amend such routes; therefore, unless there were valid reasons to deny, the Local Authority had to facilitate the diversion in some way, as a substantial reason was required to oppose.
- Look at all elements to identify how to adapt the public footpath network.
- Town Council had previously been consulted and the Local Authority had a responsibility to respond to that objection, i.e. “that the owner had deliberately left the area to become so overgrown as to prevent the public using the footpath and should therefore be instructed to ensure this was made open and accessible. Council therefore opposed any deletion or diversion and would support the retention of both public footpaths.” It was the responsibility of the Local Authority to cut back the overgrowth to ensure footpaths remained passable, this had now been done and the footpath was open.

A Member had visited the area and explained how strongly the community felt in respect of retaining the footpaths - St. Luke's Road to Farmers Hill and Feederbank at the rear of Scwrfa Road. The footpath was impassable at present. The proposed diversion affected the embankment and retaining wall close to the boundary wall, moving from the centre of an open area to the boundary. The community expressed concern that there would be less access and enquired what would be the conditions of the new footpaths and subsequent maintenance. The Local Authority was constantly facing cutbacks and the maintenance of the brambles was a concern for the future. Also, the diversion was intended to be on a steep banking; therefore, would the footpath be upgraded to include steps and handrails. Finally, the condition of this open land was boggy and the area would need resurfacing.

The Officers said the whole plot would be subject to upgrading and any diversion would be undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act. The Local Authority would not wish to install steps and intended a gradual grading of the footpath of the path section to the road. The whole would be upgraded with wooden fencing agreed, rather than tree planting, and extra width to allow a full two metres. It was suggested that Town Council needed to look at the plans in more detail. A Member was concerned that this was a solution for 'now' rather than the future.

The Team Manager – Natural Environment said that, as the highway authority, BGCBC needed to come forward with a proposal how to implement the diversion of these public footpaths, reiterating that planning permission had already been granted. By law, the Local Authority was under an obligation to advance an Order to allow the applicants to implement the planning permission.

Council thanked the Definitive Map Officer and Team Manager – Natural Environment for attending to clarify the requirements in respect of Diversion Orders, as Council welcomed attendance by Officers of the Local Authority. The Officers thereupon left the meeting at this juncture.

The Chair sought the observations of Members in respect of an analysis of the information presented.

Councillors D. Rowberry and J. Thomas declared an interest in the following discussion and took no part in any voting thereon.

- In principle, Council supported retention of rights of way and public access wherever possible.

- The diversion of the proposed footpath would directly pass No. 100, the home of an elderly resident, which had previously been a quiet area. Concern was therefore expressed how this proposal would impact on the health and wellbeing of the resident with pedestrian traffic passing this bungalow.
- This piece of land was severely overgrown and the landowner had intentionally discarded items across the footpath to obstruct access.
- Concern was expressed in respect of the planning process, whereby planning permission was granted irrespective of public access, whereupon a Diversion Order then had to be implemented to accommodate planning proposals.
- Should the matter be considered at a Public Inquiry, Council felt it would be important to defend the need to retain these public footpaths.
- Council represented the community of Tredegar and perhaps there was a need to consider the entire footpath network to ascertain the condition and maintenance of these rights of way to ensure access.
- A Member suggested that, regardless of the views of Town Council, ultimately the footpaths would be diverted and a decision was needed to address concerns regarding surface / width / gradient, etc.

Following careful consideration, it was agreed that the initial objection presented at the planning stage be sustained, i.e. that the proposed development was, in effect, extinguishing a right of way and reiterated the need that the footpath remain open and accessible unless an alternative proposal could be identified to address all concerns (surface, maintenance, gradient, etc).

399) To receive any verbal recommendations of all Sub-Committee / Working Party meetings held prior to this meeting of Council

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

- **Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee – 9th April, 2024**
It was unanimously agreed that the contract be awarded to Company B and the services be secured with subsequent formal ratification of Council.
- **Performance Review Sub-Committee – 17th April, 2024**
Budget Against Actual - the report was unanimously recommended for approval;
Revised Reserves as at 31st March, 2024 - the information was accepted and the Reserves unanimously recommended for approval;
Asset Register - the Asset Register was unanimously recommended for approval, subject to the following:
 - Removal of the traffic management road signs (£1,244.00)
 - Convening of the Budget Working Party to review the Asset Register

400) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in April 2024

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

- Smith of Darby – this payment reflected the call-out fee to replace the circuit board; an earlier visit had also been undertaken, forming part of the annual service, incurring no additional cost.

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.

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

- a) **Events Sub-Committee - 6th March, 2024**
- b) **Civic Meeting of Council - 6th March, 2024**
- c) **Civic Sub-Committee - 20th March, 2024**
- d) **Policy Sub-Committee - 20th March, 2024**
- e) **Ordinary Meeting of Council - 20th March, 2024**

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

402) 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.

403) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
 - a) S. Cresswell Re: Access Strategy & Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Workshops. New Date Online Teams 07.05.2024, 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. – **Twitter**
 - Noted.
 - b) i) A.E. Tippings Re: Illustration by Olwen Hughes. Trying to locate a home for the illustration.
ii) Aneurin Leisure, Cath Hares. Will look to see if they can find a home for it.
 - Noted; the Clerk confirmed that an inventory of the stored pictures of TTC had been compiled.

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

- c) List of applications received, week ending 22.03.2024.
 - 1. Temporary Event Notice 14.04.2024 – Georgetown Community Centre
 - 2. Temporary Event Notice 06.04.2024, 11.04.2024 and 19.04.2024 – Dukestown Workingmen's Club

3. Transfer of Premise Licence – Oh Yes Pizza, 97 Attlee Way.

List of applications received, week ending 29.03.2024.

- Noted.

2) One Voice Wales

Save the Date: Innovative Practice Conference 03.07.2024 at Hafod A Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground.

- Noted.

3) Councillors

a) Cllr Bethan Rees Resignation as a Town Councillor.

- Council considered the letter of resignation, noting the Member's reasons outlined therein; the resignation was accepted accordingly.

Letter of thanks to be sent to Beth wishing her all the best.

b) Casual Vacancy Application Form.

- Approved.

4) Malcolm Moon Electrical Ltd.

Town Clock: Quotation for the supply and fitting of a new fuse board with individual RCBO's and surge protection device, £853.11.

- A Member sought clarity whether Council needed to seek three quotations; the Clerk confirmed, in accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, that for supply of services between £1,500 and £500, the RFO needed to strive to obtain three estimates only.

Council stressed the importance of resolving the outstanding electrical issues and referred to the Clock running three minutes slow; the Clerk confirmed the return visit to reset the time would form part of the warranty, at no cost to Council.

It was suggested that Council could enter into an SLA Agreement for the electrical

maintenance of the Town Clock, stipulating the company attend as soon as possible to avoid any delay for urgent works.

It was unanimously agreed, therefore, to approve the quotation in the sum of £853.11.

- 5) ABUHB
- a) Letter from N. Prygodzicz (Chief Executive) regarding the changes to Minor Injury Unit Services within Aneurin Bevan University Board – **forwarded to all Members, added to Twitter / website**
 - Noted.
 - b) Re: Minor Injury Unit Changes. Feedback from public consultation and poster of new opening times.
 - Noted; a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the ability of The Grange to effectively meet the needs of patients following changes to the service, e.g. reduced hours of A&E at Nevill Hall Hospital and The Gwent. Serious concern was expressed that Nevill Hall Hospital could be closed following this downgrading of services; however, a Member said that the Chief Executive of ABUHB had been adamant at a recent public meeting that the Hospital would be operating for the coming decade. It was noted that, in accordance with the Patients Charter, patients were allowed to opt to be treated at Prince Charles Hospital, rather than The Grange.

6) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 12.04.2024; Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum Agenda for meeting 15.04.2024 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library – **distributed to Members**: Received.

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

404) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 14
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 15

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

c) To consider other planning matters – None received.

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

- Deighton playing field – a Member provided an update in respect of ongoing issues in relation to dog fouling on the Deighton playing field; suggestions to address these issues included placing a wildlife camera in the vicinity which would activate when detecting motion. Appropriate signage would need to be displayed. It was agreed this course of action could have an impact on the problem.
- Framed Portrait, HRH Charles III – the Clerk confirmed the portrait had arrived and suggested that Council consider a location for display.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.18 p.m.

_____ Chair