

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid
on Wednesday, 16th April, 2025 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present: **Councillors K. Phillips (Chair)**
 M. Turner
 A.E. Tippings
 G. Badham
 A. Jones
 G. Jones-Griffiths
 G. Meredith
 D. Rowberry
 J. Thomas
 H. Trollope
 S. Trollope
 G. Walters

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

By invitation: **Police and Crime Commissioner, J. Mudd**
 PC 1811 O. Furlong

373) Apologies. Councillor A.E. Evans

374) Declarations of Interest

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

375) Change of Order of Agenda

It was agreed that Council continue consideration of the agreed agenda while awaiting the arrival of the Police and Crime Commissioner, who had been delayed.

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

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

▪ Special Meeting of Council – 9th April, 2025

It had been agreed to continue on an informal basis and appropriate proposals presented to the next meeting of Council, with a view to appropriate Recommendations being formally agreed by Council and approved accordingly, whereupon. It was agreed that the following proposal of the informal meeting of Council be reported to the next meeting of Council for consideration:

- The preferred option of those present was the 'Freehold Transfer' but this could be subject to change on formal consideration of full Council.

Councillor H. Trollope declared an interest in respect of the proposals arising from the informal meeting of Council.

- **Performance Review Sub-Committee – 16th April, 2025**
- **Petty Cash** - It was agreed that the RFO pursue the foregoing actions and proceed as appropriate with feedback to Council accordingly, i.e.
RFO to ascertain if possible to set up an account titled 'Petty Cash' with Credit Union, in the sum of £400.00, and proceed if appropriate.
- **Budget Against Actual to 31st March, 2025** - the report was unanimously recommended for approval.
- **Revised Reserves as at 31st March, 2025** - the information was accepted and the Reserves unanimously recommended for approval.
- **Asset Register as at 31st March, 2025** - the Asset Register was unanimously recommended for approval, subject to the following:
Asset Register Valuation and Management Training: agreed RFO to liaise with BGCBC / SLCC / OVW to ascertain availability.
Contact Smith of Derby to ascertain if able to value the Town Clock.
Removal of the following:
Trolleys, due to wear and tear / damage
PA System and two microphones, condition and quality poor)
Sofa (cost), condition poor due to fading and damage)
Mayor's Parlour blinds, due to condition and fading)
New office laptops / associated hardware, as software
out-of-date and power quality
- **Update : Interim Internal Auditor Report** - accepted accordingly

377) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in April, 2025

The RFO spoke to the report and explained that the bank reconciliations, valid to date, were available for Members to view at the meeting or upon request in the office, which was noted accordingly. This was the first schedule for consideration in the new financial year

- Quadient contract – previously the invoice was received two weeks prior however Council had now moved to payment by Direct Debit and the invoice now not received until the due date. Therefore, notification on the schedule was for ratification purposes only.
- Dwr Cymru - this payment related to the annual fee paid one month in advance.

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.

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

- a) Policy Sub-Committee – 5th March, 2025**
- b) Civic Meeting of Council - 5th March, 2025**
- c) Policy Sub-Committee - 19th March, 2025**

d) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 19th March, 2025

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

379) 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.

Councillor D. Rowberry joined the meeting at this juncture (6.15 p.m.)

380) Policing matters: invitation extended to the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend to provide an update and respond to any issues of concern raised

The Chair extended a welcome to the Police representative – PC Furlong, who was in attendance to provide an update on the work undertaken throughout the Tredegar area. The Officer extended the apologies of Sergeant Tovey who unfortunately would be unable to attend due to another commitment.

The Police representative provided a brief update, as follows:

- There was a new Community Action Neighbourhood Team - in the past the public experienced a lot of issues off-road bikes, ASB – there were now sixteen local Officers responding to that position, to meet demand and deliver an impact going forward.

The Chair reported increased issues with off-road bikes; he worked in the centre of town hours and, the previous week, he had made seven reports to the Police within six hours of all different bikes. From the Member's perspective, this had become much worse and was a major concern. He had witnessed an incident of off-road bikes on The Circle, whereby an individual had travelled alongside a police car, 'beat on his chest', and continued around The Circle twice, goading Police Officers who could do nothing. When seeing that disrespect Police, he could not see a way forward - there were bikes mounting kerbs in town, running up and down outside businesses, and some businesses had mentioned closing as a result. The Member was therefore waiting for an accident to happen.

The Chair extended a welcome to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Jane Mudd, who had been invited to attend to provide an update and respond to any issues of concern raised.

The Chair reiterated his concerns 1) off-road bikes being stated as the prime reason as to why business was moved out of Tredegar; 2) Wheelchair / prams when exiting shops and the major concern there could be a serious accident with off-road bikes. Residents of Tredegar were aware the Police was doing good job but felt their 'hands were tied' to respond.. This was one of the biggest disappointments the Member had noted for number of years within Tredegar. Community Action Groups were set up, with promises made, but all the public could see was an increase in drugs without support of their safety.

- The remit of the PCC was to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of citizens and represent the people in the Blaenau Gwent. A specific off-road bikes meeting had been held at HQ, chaired by Nick Smith, M.P., to make sure progress was being

made. The Chief Inspector had been able to share the successful use of drones to catch people on bikes, in similar instances, e.g. no respect for other people / the law, transporting illegal substances, etc. The use of drone footage had proven very successful in 1) identifying who customers were, done, gathering evidence, etc. in order that Officers could pursue individuals / confiscate bikes; this helped the issue without placing people at risk. The Chief Inspector would follow up a particular operation and appropriate plans were in place

The Police asked that the public be the “eyes / ears” of the Police and, if reported to the PCC, members of the public were assured any details would be passed on anonymously. Problems could relate to access in many areas, such as rural / the valleys, as this crime was ruining the heritage / landscape. Drone technology was the way forward and the PCC gave assurances to Town Council that a lot of work was being carried out to keep people safe.

- In respect of a query as to how often drone technology was utilised, the PCC explained there were a certain number of pilots / drones used, frequently in rural areas now being used with off road bikes. This technology helped, providing Police Officers a way to capture/ gathering evidence.
- A Member referred to lack of cover in last months because of Police Officers off with sickness and expressed concern if the Tredegar Branch was under-staffed due to illness.
- Operation Harley had seconded Officers purely for use as drone pilots to react specifically within Blaenau Gwent and Operation Raptor utilised funding to look at safety aspect, e.g. how to deal with issues proportionately, in a safe manner, and seize the vehicles in question. The M.P. was lobbying for the Police to enter dwellings, which Officers could not currently do. Also. Raptor looked for these people in different areas in a covert manner in order to apprehend the offenders with drones following the individual from the air. The community was actively encouraged to give intelligence get appropriate resources in place.

A great deal of work had been carried out by Members historically, identifying pinch points and providing video evidence, licence plate numbers, etc., with a lack of progress and no communication going forward when Police representation changed.

- Members suggested a lot of people were not reporting offences. as the community perceived nothing was being done. People in the community of Southend reported some thirty bikes parked, with riders in their teens, the public complained but could see no response feeling there was a two-tier system that protected the criminals.
- Operation Harley – in response to a question raised the Officer would pursue the information in respect of the number of bikes seized, and how many offenders were being prosecuted.
- A Member highlighted the frustration of the public as to what was being done with the money levied from precepts in ensuring the Police were carrying out their role – with public noting blue lights from Station to an incident, but ASB across the valleys was not being policed in the way previously and queried 1) what was being done to

address these issues; and 2) was the PCC holding Chief Constables to account, as it was felt that the valleys becoming second class.

- The PCC said that 53% of funding was from the Home Office, and raised from Council Tax for policing an area, £183m was allocated for the Police Force with an additional £7m for the PCC to invest, targeting different activities and for victims, e.g. what type of support, criminal prospect activities, drug / alcohol, in serve to address issues. Investments to meet statutory requirements, also divisional activities across the whole of Gwent, liaising with the Local Authority on activities they would like to see. It was of great importance to the PCC this process was as transparent as possible, i.e. 1) the challenge of increasing the number of formal Scrutiny sessions and make those publicly available, make all recordings available on line, approach to the PCC to query what happens in those meetings. From those Minutes, there would be a good flavour of discussion, evidencing different types of ways of holding the Chief Constable to account. Focus on our citizens by going in to a local area, going out with the Chief Constable / our Team in every area prior to scrutinisation in that particular area, to ensure the Chief Constables and PCC were doing their job.

Council thereupon thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner, and PC Furlong, for attending and responding to questions raised, which had been most informative; the representatives shared the frustrations of Council but he was determined to find appropriate resolutions.

381) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC E. Bennett Re: Town Clock light up, Foster Care Fortnight. Asking if the Clock could be lit up purple, dates 12th to 25th May, 2025.
- Noted and agreed accordingly.

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

- b) List of applications received, week ending 04.04.2025.
 - c) K Watkins-Hughes Re: Blaenau Gwent Pride 24.05.2025. Information on forthcoming event – ***forwarded to all Members***
 - Noted.
- 2) One Voice Wales
- a) Re: Motions for 2025 Annual General Meeting. Member councils are invited to propose a maximum of two Motions for debate at the AGM on Wednesday, 1st October,, 2025, which must arrive at this office no later than noon on Friday, 20th June 2025 for consideration by the AGM Motions Committee which will meet on Thursday, 26th June, 2025.
 - Noted.

- b) Re: Welsh Government Democratic Engagement Grant. The Welsh Government is pleased to launch its Democratic Engagement Grant for a further three years with £400,000 being available to support projects in the 2025 - 2026 financial year, through to the end of 2027 - 2028. The grant aims to support local authorities, third sector, and not-for-profit organisations working in Wales to pursue an innovative approach to engaging those typically under-represented in our democracy.

- Noted: forward to Councillor K. Phillips.

- c) Re: Independent Audit Committee Member sought. Vacancy on their Audit Committee, closing date for nominations is 30.05.2025. Any Councillor nominated should not currently sit on the National Executive Committee.

- Noted.

3) Cllr Gerraint
Jones-Griffiths

Re: PC Paul Jones. Asking if TTC could offer any grant funding for PC Jones to deliver a Motivating Youth Project at Bryn Bach Park. Children from Tredegar Comprehensive will be participating. PC Jones has cost available to pay for the activities but not for the food.

- Noted: unfortunately Council had to decline support, the reason being restricted funding of town / community councils and the fact the

PCC had indicated funding of £1m arising from the precept to work with young people. Therefore, an application could be made for grant funding from that budget, which had been allocated specifically for Police projects.

4) Llangollen
International
Eisteddfod

Asking for a donation towards this year's Eisteddfod. ***Previous: 2024/25 June 2024 CQ No. 706678 £100.00***

- Noted; a donation of £100.00 was unanimously approved.

5) P. Beegan

Resident complaint: Children on scooters / bikes riding no helmets through town, has reported to the police and no action. Contacting Council as curious to know if anyone is tackling this epidemic.

- Noted: send letter direct to Police and Crime Commissioner and respond to resident to confirm that Council continued taking steps to meet regularly with the Police force.

6) Charlotte Price

Re: Availability of plants. £267.83 for items requested and also asking if compost is required.

- Expenditure approved unanimously in respect of plant provision and compost (3 x 80 litres).

7) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 11.04.2025 and 18.04.2025; J Karn Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum meeting 14.04.2025 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; OVW Booking now open for Compassionate Communities in Wales event, Thursday, 8th May, 2025. Free event in Cardiff – ***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.

382) Planning:

- 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

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2024/0294	Mr & Mrs C Jones Springfield Cottage Queen Victoria Street Tredegar	Retention of existing new detached dwelling and provision new access road improvement works, including landscaping, ecological enhancement and services, Springfield Cottage, Queen Victoria Street.
<i>No objections</i>		

c) To consider other planning matters – None received.

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

- None received.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.33 p.m.

Chair