



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22nd of May 2024 AT 6.30 PM.

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections Wales) Act 2021, the meeting was held on a hybrid basis in the Council Chamber at 101, High Street Blaenavon and remotely.

In attendance:

Councillors: Cllr. N. Matthews (In the Chair) L. Cowles, J. Hunt, M. Wheeler, S. Templeton, S. Keen, A. Beavan, A. Jones, L. Evans, I. Parfitt.

Officers: Kevin Warren (Chief Officer), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer)

Visitors: Lyndon Puddy, Head of Public Services Support Unit, TCBC.

Members of public: Angela Lewis

The Full Council meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Mayor Cllr Nathan Matthews who welcomed everyone and expressed thanks for attendance.

1. To receive any questions from the public.

None received.

2. To receive and accept apologies.

The Chief Officer informed the chairperson that the following apologies had been received

- Cllr Porter - Work commitment

It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Keen that the apologies be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

None received.

4.To receive an update from Mr Lyndon Puddy (Head of Public Services Support Unit Torfaen County Borough Council) regarding CCTV cameras located with Blaenavon.

Mr Puddy explained to members that he had already held a meeting with the Clerk of Pontypool Community Council and the Town Council's Chief Officer Kevin Warren to provide an overview of Torfaen County Borough Council's (TCBC) position in relation to CCTV cameras covering both areas.

It was confirmed that TCBC are not responsible for any cameras within the Cwmbran area. Mr Puddy further explained that TCBC were required to make cuts of around £35 million and moving forward there is no core funding for the maintenance of CCTV cameras located in Pontypool and Blaenavon.

The current maintenance contract expires on the 31st of October 2024 and the request is for Pontypool and Blaenavon Councils to consider funding the maintenance costs.

A discussion took place between members and Mr Puddy covering the following areas

- What is the contribution from Gwent Police, how are the cameras aligned to prosecutions and are cameras considered a deterrent?
- What is the contribution from Bronafon Housing?
- How is footage monitored?
- If a camera is faulty would TCBC replace / repair?

It was explained that there is no contribution from Gwent Police in terms of maintenance with no data regarding use or prosecutions. Bronafon are not responsible for cameras within the Town and footage is monitored via the police control room not just in Blaenavon.

If a camera breaks down this will not be repaired or replaced after the 31st of October 2024.

The request to Blaenavon Town Council would be to continue to cover the maintenance repair costs after the 31st of October 2024.

A discussion took place regarding potential costs and that these would need to go out to tender. The fiscal asset of the cameras is £66k with a replacement camera costing £2,500.

A further discussion took place relating to a partnership involving Gwent Police and Bronafon. It was pointed out that the cameras are not in Bronafon's area.

The Chief Officer explained that the Town Council last year covered the maintenance cost of the cameras namely £3,800. Mr Puddy explained that he would contact Bronafon Housing to discuss.

Members thanked Mr Puddy for providing an overview on the current position relating to CCTV. Mr Puddy then left the meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

5. Mayor's Announcements: To receive the mayor's announcements.

The mayor provided members with a summary of events and functions attended during the last month.

25/4/2024 - Participated in the Welsh Government's Democratic Health Task and Finish Group's Focus Group

26/4/2024 - Attended and gave a speech at the launch of John Rodger's book 'Building a Future on the Past'

30/4/2024 - Attended the One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee Meeting.

04/5/2024 - Attended Cllr Nick Horler and Cllr Janet Jones' surgery at the World Heritage Centre.

10/5/2024 - Met with representatives of the Blaenavon Branch of the Royal British Legion to discuss arrangements for the D-Day 80 event

11/5/2024 - Community Wellbeing Day at BWHC

13/5/2024 - Attended the D-Day 80 Working Group

17/5/2024 - Met with Julian Davenne to discuss Blaenavon Town Council's involvement in the delivery of the Torfaen Play Camp.

18/5/2024 - Attended the Artisan market.

19/5/2024 – Attended the Town Council litter pick.

Cllr Beavan enquired if the outcomes of the Welsh Government's Democratic Health Task and Finish Group will be too late to have an impact on the community review? Cllr Matthews explained to members that due to the pending summer election the community review and timescales would be pushed back.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

6. Council Meeting: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 24th of April 2024.

The minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Keen that the minutes be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Minutes approved as a true and accurate record.

7. Chief Officer's Update: To receive the Chief Officer's update.

The Chief Officer provided members with the following update:

Item 4 within the minutes as per the instructions from members, £200 has been transacted to Blaenavon Camera Club. Notification and thanks has been received from Alan Parry.

On the **25/4/24** the Chief Officer attended a meeting in the council chamber with Tim Monkton the foundation and economy officer at TCBC. A discussion took place regarding grant funding opportunities using the shared prosperity fund.

The operational basis for the funding is that it will involve the receipt of a purchase order from TCBC, and the Town Council will invoice them for the funding required and this is subsequently drawn down from the shared prosperity fund. £ 5k has been authorised for BTC at cabinet member level.

On the **26/4/24** I attended a D-Day 80 meeting in the Council chamber with representatives of the British legion and fellow officer and Cllrs to discuss the D-Day planning as authorised at the April Full Council meeting. The RBL agreed to support the Town Council in delivering a D-Day 80 event.

On the **29/4/24** together with Cllr Jones, the Chief Officer held a team's meeting with Alex Hinshelwood from the heritage railway to discuss partnership working. An extremely positive meeting with a clear commitment that the railway want to work in partnership with the Council. Alex agreed to forward a proposal regarding what the partnership working would look like, but this has yet to be received.

On the **30/4/24** together with Cllrs Matthews and Cowles, the Chief Officer attended the One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area committee meeting. Again this was poorly attended by other councils. The Town Council provided the meeting an overview of services being delivered within Blaenavon aligned to the success at the innovative practice awards which was well received.

On the **2/5/24** the Chief Officer attended a meeting in the council chamber with Zoe Gibbs who is the age connect officer with TCBC to discuss Town Council events and in particular the proposed setting up of the Town Council's veterans club and the D-day 80 event. An extremely positive meeting with a commitment from Zoe to assist the Town council moving forward.

On the **3/5/24** the Chief Officer attended a follow up D-Day 80 meeting in the Council chamber with representatives of the British Legion, Rebecca Osmond (Shining stars Music Academy) and fellow officers and Cllrs. Progress was discussed regarding the event planning to date and agreed next steps.

On the 11/5/24 together with fellow officers and Cllrs the Chief Officer attended the Community Wellbeing Day event at the heritage centre. Another hugely successful event that provided an array of services and cost of living initiatives for our community.

Also on the 11/5/24 together with Kerry and Sophie the Chief officer attended a meeting at the Iron works with representatives from Wonder Cinema to discuss the potential of delivering outdoor cinema nights in August at the iron works. The location is perfect for the event, and we are awaiting further updates from the iron works regarding community partnership and cost.

On the 13/5/24 together with Cllr Jones, the Chief Officer attended a meeting in the council chamber with Fr Chris Walters regarding the D-Day 80 event. Chris was as always extremely helpful and has assisted with the event planning at St Peter's Church.

On the 17/5/24 the Chief Officer attended a further follow up D-Day 80 meeting in the Council chamber with representatives of the British Legion, fellow officers, and Cllrs. Progress was discussed regarding the event planning to date and agreed next steps. An overview of the event booklet and event poster was reviewed which will be discussed further at item 11 within the agenda.

On the 22/5/24 the Chief Officer held a team's meeting with Steve Parker from the Piping Hot Band regarding the D-Day 80 event. Everything is in place, and they will be bringing ten band members. They will be performing a 10-15 performance at St Peter's Church together with the piper's lament and national anthems at the cenotaph. A positive meeting.

Also on the 22/5/24 – the Chief Officer held a team's meeting with representatives from the Iron Works Cadw regarding the potential outdoor cinema event at the ironworks in August 2024. Positive discussions regarding costs. Further meeting planned for the first week in June together with representatives from Wonder cinema.

The Chief Officer explained to members on the 23rd of May 2024 he will be representing the Town Council at a National cost of living webinar being delivered by One Voice Wales and will be presenting an overview of the Council's projects aligned to cost of living initiatives. The Chief Officer will be presenting with Darren Vally Town Council.

Since the last meeting, the Chief Officer has held weekly briefing sessions with the mayor and deputy mayor discussing Council operational and financial matters and also operational meetings with his fellow officers relating to future planning and current projects.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

8. To receive Cllr updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings, together with any relevant community / partnership engagement.

Cllr Evans explained to members that he had attended a meeting of the Churches Working Together. Not all of the churches attended, and a discussion took place regarding how to encourage more participation.

Cllr Evans explained that the Anglican churches and Victory church did not attend.

Cllr Hunt explained to members that he had attended the Torfaen access forum and there were discussions taking place around opening up rights of way around Blaenavon.

Cllr Wheeler updated members that on the 15th of May 2024 he attend a meeting in the Heritage Centre relating to the proposed community hub to be located in the old post office.

This was initially set up as a charity / pop up shop. Several other representatives were present including TCBC officers, ward members and other local organisations. There is no funding available for the project apart from United Welsh who may be able to contribute some funding.

The charity shop have a committee and it is hoped that a number of partners will support the initiative. This at present is very much up in the air.

Cllr Wheeler also explained that he attended a meeting of the Mic Morris Trust on the 15th of May 2024 and provided members with a brief overview of the funding that is available via the trust.

Cllr Cowles updated members that he had attended the Gwent Valleys area committee meeting and reiterated the update provided by the Chief Officer and had nothing more to add.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

9. To receive an update from Sophie Johnson - Community Development and Wellbeing Officer (May 2024)

Sophie provided members with the following update.

Ran Befriending Film Club on 26th April. Continues to be extremely popular, with fifty attendees.

Attended various meetings with officers, councillors and those involved in the D-Day 80 commemorations. Have collected the poetry entries from the school, which will be judged by councillors, the prize will be an annual magazine subscription of the winner's choice.

Continue to support BHVC school's Little Voices group. We have recently attended the Intergenerational Group at Big Pit and the Arthur Jenkins home to create bunting with resident's and the children which will be used to decorate Broad Street for World Heritage Day.

Organised May Half Term activities for families, these include a Cook Stars session and a swimming session, both of which are fully booked.

Continue to support World Heritage Day Committee with the organisation of the parade, specifically the school workshops with Llantarnam Grange and the Torfaen Inspire project who will be creating bunting with young people, local craft groups and residents of the Arthur Jenkins care home, which will be combined and use throughout the town.

These workshops are taking place on Fridays at various locations 10am-12pm.

Attended planning meetings with Rebecca Osmond and Jen Davies regarding the creation of the dementia choir sessions at the Arthur Jenkins care home, this has now started, the first two sessions had a large number of residents taking part, as well as members of the public and families of residents.

Consulted with ABUHB regarding ways they can engage with residents to promote services and allow residents to voice their concerns.

Planning for summer projects and activities.

Family Club and Mothers and Daughter session have now been amalgamated into one 'Family Fit' session, which takes place every Friday in term time at 5-6pm. The first session had twenty participants, second ten, and third four. Will continue to monitor attendance.

Meetings with Wonder Cinema and Blaenavon Ironworks regarding future events.

Continue to support the teen gym sessions, yoga, and over sixties exercise.

Launched pop up outdoor street workouts at Bethlehem Court with CELT+. These take place every Friday at Forgeside Community Hall 10am-11.30am and then Bethlehem 12.30pm-1.30pm.

Organised this month's Befriending Film Club, which is taking place on Friday 31st May. The film is One Life.

Attended a National Lottery Awards for All drop in session regarding grant funding opportunities.

Ran the Community Well Being Day, which was a great day with five hundred people attending. We received fantastic feedback from partner organisations in attendance and members of the community.

Attended a Healthy Blaenavon Network meeting with various other organisations to discuss provision and gaps in Blaenavon, and ways to work together on these going forward.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

10. To receive and approve the Town Council's Annual Return and Financial Governance Statement for 2023/24.

The annual return document for 2023/24 had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting.

Members discussed questions 1-9 of the annual governance statement within the annual return and confirmed 'yes' to all questions. (Question 9 was not applicable to the council.)

The remainder of the document was viewed by members who were happy with the content.

The annual return 2023/24 was signed by the mayor on behalf of the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the annual return and financial governance statement for 2023/24 be approved.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Annual return and financial governance statement for 2023/24 approved for submission to Audit Wales.

11.To receive a working group update and make any relevant determinations regarding the D-Day 80 Anniversary event on the 6th of June 2024.

The Chief Officer provided members with an overview of the event planning to date. This included the following.

- The attendance of dignitaries and partners who will be supporting the event.
- Content of the event programme booklet and promotion via poster and social media.

Cllr Matthews explained that this was a positive community event. The Chief Officer requested if members could let him know which local groups, they wanted him to invite.

The Chief Officer also updated members in relation to the school poetry competition indicating that forty seven poems had been received. It was agreed that members of the working group make a decision regarding the winner.

Cllr Matthews explained that an invite had been sent to the Workmen's Hall for them to participate in the event by showing a 1940's film. It is hoped that a response from the Workmen's Hall will be received in due course.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

12. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to Blaenavon Town Council's Draft Annual Report 2023/24.

A draft copy of the annual report 2023/24 had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting.

Cllr Matthews gave an overview of the report and its content which is a statutory requirement to produce and publish each year.

Members discussed how the report will be published and distributed and the availability of the report to members of the public.

Cllr Parfitt proposed to accept the annual report 2023/24. This was seconded by Cllr Hunt.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Annual Report 2023/24 accepted.

13. To receive, note and discuss the Notice of Election for Blaenavon Town Council East Ward dated the 14th of May 2024.

The Chief Officer provided members with an overview explaining that ten letters had been received from the electorate. If contested the election would take place on the 1st of August 2024. Nominations need to be received by the 5th of July 2024.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

14. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the purchase of planters for siting at locations within Blaenavon.

Cllr Matthews discussed the possibilities of purchasing several planters for key locations to enhance, brighten and make gateways to the town more appealing to the community and visitors to Blaenavon.

A full discussion took place amongst members including locations, planter design, community involvement, vandalism, costs, funding opportunities and ongoing maintenance.

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews to consult with the Chief Officer with regards to funding opportunities and to submit a plan with estimated costs, planter quantities and suggested locations at a future council meeting.

This was seconded by Cllr Hunt.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Cllr Matthews to draft a costed plan for planters.

15. To discuss and make a determination regarding potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2024/25. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

None received.

16. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding planning applications.

The Chief Officer had forwarded the planning application to members ahead of the meeting, there was two which presented as follows.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Garage with balcony.
- **LOCATION:** Glen Rosa Llanover Road Blaenavon

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Two storey extension with balcony.
- **LOCATION:** 7 Ellik Street Blaenavon

Resolved: No objections from members.

17. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding donation requests.

The Chief Officer forwarded one donation request to members prior to the meeting for their perusal.

Members discussed the donation requests, namely:

- **Matthew Cox - Blaenavon Blues AFC**

Matthew requested financial assistance of £250 towards the purchase of medals for the Blaenavon Blues mini football festival.

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the request which was for part funding for medals for the mini's football festival.

It was proposed by Cllr Templeton and seconded by Cllr Evans that the donation request be supported with a £250 award.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Members approved a donation request of £250. Chief Officer to facilitate the transaction and update Mr Cox.

18. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to correspondence.

A letter was received from Heather Morgan; Treasurer of Garn Y Erw Welfare Hall dated the 13th of May 2024 was forwarded to all members.

A cheque for £536 had been received, which was the remaining balance from a £1k grant which had been allocated to the Welfare Hall in 2018.

This will be deposited into the Town Council bank account.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

An invitation has been received from Paul Egan; One Voice Wales inviting the Chief Officer to deliver a presentation at their annual conference in Builth Wells on the 3rd of July 2024.

The Chief Officer explained that he would like to accept the invitation to attend and present at the conference.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

A letter was received from Lyn Cadwalader; Chief Executive Officer, One Voice Wales inviting the Chief Officer to present at the Welsh Local Government Association National Conference in Swansea on the 27th of June 2024.

Only two Town and Community Councils have been invited to deliver presentations at the conference which will be attended by all Welsh Local Government Leaders.

The Chief Officer explained that he would like to accept the invitation to attend and present at the conference.

Further details are to follow, the Chief Officer will keep members updated.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

19. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding an update from the appointed working group relating to the Assistant Chief Officer role and salary review-May 2024.

Item withdrawn ahead of the meeting and will be listed at a future council meeting.

Resolved: Motion will be listed at a future council meeting.

Meeting ended at 19.54 hrs.

Signed Chairman:



Date: 26/6/24.