

## ***MINUTES OF THE BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup>. MARCH 2024***

***Present*** : Cllr. G Edwards Etheridge ( Mayor )

Cllrs. K Williams, D Box C Erasmus, C Clark, M Gwynne, A Short, K Etheridge & P Cook

Also present PCSO Adrian Popa

### ***1. Apologies for Absence***

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. K Jones, R Mills , A Farina-Childs, N Dix & D Davies

### ***2. Co-option P Cook - Acceptance of Office***

The Mayor welcomed Cllr. P Cook to the meeting, and she duly signed the Acceptance Of Office , witnessed by the Clerk

### ***3. Declarations of Interest***

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point

### ***4. Police Report***

The Mayor welcomed PCSO Adrian Popa to the meeting which would be his last before starting his training to become a P.C.

The Officer reported that there were signs that ASB was reducing generally in the area, and that there were less instances at the bus station in particular of late, with thankfully no re-occurrence of graffiti in the area.

There had been, however, a spate of thefts from properties in the Cefn Fforest area, and also theft from a vehicle.

Parking on the High Street was still an issue, albeit with the positioning of the bollards, there were obviously improvements in some locations. He stated that when PCSO's are retrained in September, they will then be able to attend and issue traffic related fines for obstruction.

The Mayor & Cllr. K Etheridge formally thanked Adrian on behalf of Town Council for his dedication, co-operation and hard work over the past few years, with his proactive approach to tackling ASB he had had a very positive impact in the area, and would be sadly missed. He was wished well for his future in the force. These sentiments were echoed by all members present.

Adrian in turn thanked members for their support over the years, and hoped things would continue to improve and would maybe re-assigned to the town in the future.

## **5. County Borough Report**

Cllr. K Etheridge gave a brief update on some of the current issues affecting the town, namely –

Apollo Way School, where a petition is circulating that asks Caerphilly C.B.C. to reconsider their traffic management criteria to ensure school crossing patrol returns to the site, fearing for the safety of the pupils.

Blackwood Town Cricket club have made application for a variation of their Club Premises Certificate that will allow an increase to the area where alcohol can be consumed on the premises to the extents of the boundary of the club grounds ( to include an outside area )

Meetings with residents regarding proposed closure of Mayhill Bungalows Access Lane to enable drainage and carriageway improvements leading to Pobl development

Tenders for the Skateboard Park at the Showfield have now been issued by C.C.B.C. together with a provisional timetable with work on site planned to start early September with completion late October

Ongoing issues at Cwmgelli with liability acknowledged by C.C.B.C., it is now up to the residents as to whether they push for a private prosecution

Still nothing further to report on the planned Persimmon Development at Grove Park

The formal planning application in respect of the planned development on the Somerfield Car Park Site is now anticipated by the end of March, with several of the points raised during meetings with the developers likely to be taken on board.

## **6. Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor reported he had attended the Sight Cymru first anniversary celebrations recently where their Chief Executive, the Rt. Hon The Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr. Bablin Molik was also in attendance .

He also reminded members of the Blackwood Stakeholders Meeting scheduled for 6.00pm.Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>. March at Blackwood Miners Institute and urged attendance if at all possible.

The Mayor also urged members to complete their DSB checks, and reminded them the Spring Fair was scheduled for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. April, albeit Town Council had no input on the day.

## **7. Correspondence**

The Clerk presented his report on Items of Correspondence received since the last meeting, and all were noted –

Caerphilly CBC

Footfall figures – forwarded to members

Blackwood Town Centre Stakeholders Meeting to be held Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>. March at Institute together with planned Agenda - Forwarded to members

Temporary Closure Order – Rhosnewydd Terrace Lane between 9.00 on 13<sup>th</sup> March to 17.00 on 15<sup>th</sup> March to repair water leak

New Environmental – Crime Facebook page – details forwarded to Members

Waste & Recycling Survey via Newline requesting responses by closing date of 29<sup>th</sup>. April

D Day Landings Celebrations – Invitation to Mayor from Cllr. Teresa Heron to attend planning meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup>. February at Central Club Cefn Fforest

Zurich Insurance

Notification of Renewal Premium for 2024/25 - £1494.78 ( £1,349.50 for current year )

HMK Portrait Scheme

Invitation to apply for Free Framed Portrait of King Charles III – applications close 28<sup>th</sup>. March 2024

Jason Madeth

Request for information via FOI Act 2000 on contracts/providers of secure emails

One Voice Wales

Notification of availability of D Day Flag of Peace £28.80 ( incl. VAT )

British Legion  
Blackwood Little Theatre

Application for Financial Assistance – awaiting financial info.  
“ “ “

Hope  
Blackwood Action On Litter  
Kids Cancer Charity

Letters of Thanks

Blackwood Cricket Club

Walking in the Valleys for Young Cricketers ( Fund raising )  
The first day of the walk is from Ebbw Vale to Blackwood on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April, hoping to arrive at our club between 3 and 4.  
Next day they will leave the Club about 10 for Machen  
Request Mayor to meet them on arrival and/or departure, and if Town Council could assist in funding towards provision of refreshments on both days

Additional items, received after preparation of his report were also reported and *noted* namely –

Caerphilly C.B.C.

Notification of Temporary Prohibition of Driving Order for Mayhill Bungalows Access Lane between 11<sup>th</sup>. March with

anticipated completion of works by 5<sup>th</sup>. August to allow drainage & carriageway impts.- forwarded to members

Notification on tender arrangements for Skateboard Park –  
Issued 1/3/24 - Date for receipt 29/3/24 – Work on site 2/9/24  
Completion 24/10/24

In respect of the Insurance Quotation it was **agreed** we renew on terms identified, but also include furniture and fittings and other contents relating to new Office.  
Furthermore, it was **agreed** we apply for the Portrait of King Charles III , and also purchase a D Day flag of Peace.

Members also **agreed** we contribute £100 towards the cost of refreshments in respect of Blackwood Cricket Club hosting the Walking in the Valleys for Young Cricketers

## 8. *Schedule of Payments*

The Clerk presented his report on payments been made / due for payment and all were **unanimously agreed** -

		£. P
Einfinity	Set up of Microsoft Licences	1,986.24
William Parkman	Lease Payment	800.00
Hope Blackwood	Financial Assistance	250.00
Blackwood Action on Litter	“ “	164.81
J Prosser ( Bravehearts )	“ “	100.00
Kids Cancer Charity	“ “	250.00
Playworks	Feb Sals – Fees	20.00
HMRC	Feb Sals – Tax/N.I.	341.85
John Hold	Feb Sals/ reimbursements	1,087.09
Bebb, Tasker & Sucksmith	Lease Payment ( incl £160 VAT )	960.00

## 9. *To Confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> .February 2024*

It was **resolved** the minutes be approved as a true record

## 10. *Matters Arising*

Cllr. K Williams asked if we had received any response regarding the Governor position at Blackwood Junior School. The Clerk responded that he had expressed Town Councils disappointment at not being consulted on the reduction in the number of Governors at the School and had insisted the nomination of Cllr. Donna Box still stands.

He promised to make contact again over the coming days.

## 11. *To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup>. February 2024*

It was **resolved** the minutes be received

## **12. Matters Arising**

- (a) ***Recommendation that Standing Orders Standing Orders/ Financial Regulations be suspended and that the quote from Howden's for Kitchen be accepted and an order placed.***

After some explanation and discussion, the Recommendation to suspend Standing orders and accept the quotation from Howden's in the sum of £2,705 ( excluding fitting + VAT ) was ***unanimously agreed***

- (b) ***Recommendation that we accept the quotation from Notetop Office Solutions for Furniture up to value of £11,000 + VAT, in line with revised Standing Orders/ Financial Regulations***

After some explanation, update and discussion the Recommendation to accept the revised Quotation in the sum of £10,268 + VAT was ***unanimously agreed***

## **12. Verbal Update on Office Accommodation**

The Clerk reported that he had received notification that the Council's offer of our Office on Gravel Lane as the Barclays Bank Local hub was unlikely to be accepted, albeit no formal statement could yet be made.

Several members commented on a recent cryptic message on the Libanus Lifestyle Centre Facebook page relating to some exciting news they had just received and thanking County Cllrs Andrew Farina-Childs and Nigel Dix together with the Cabinet Member Cllr. Jamie Pritchard for their support and help.

The Mayor reported he had approached both members regarding this post, and neither denied they had assisted Libanus in making an approach to Barclays Bank.

All members present voiced their disappointment that neither member had the courtesy to inform Town Council they were backing, what was in effect, a rival bid for Barclays Bank to occupy our Offices on Gravel Lane, knowing the time and effort by the Clerk & Mayor in trying to secure same.

After some further discussion, it was agreed we continue to reach out to other organisations who have expressed an interest in utilising our Offices, whilst also approaching H.S.B.C. to see if they might be interested in relocating.

## **13. Planning Applications**

The Clerk presented his report on planning applications received since the last meeting -

***Case Ref. 24/0113/COU***

Location: 193 High Street Blackwood NP12 1AA

Proposal: Change the use from commercial storage to 2 No. residential flats

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ☐ 01443 864427 ☐ [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

***Case Ref. 24/0125/HH***

Location: 4 Manorbier Close Cefn Fforest Blackwood NP12 1GQ

Proposal: Erect single storey rear extension

Case Officer: Joe Simmons ☐ 01443 864428 ☐ [simmoj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:simmoj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

And reported verbally on the following received since reports were prepared, namely –

***Case Ref. 24/0144/HH***

Location: 6 The Paddocks, Cwmgelli, Blackwood NP12 1HF

Proposal: Erect a side storey extension & convert loft

Case Officer: Joshua Burrows ☐ 01443 864427 ☐ [burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:burroj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** no objections be raised -

#### ***14. Reports***

Cllr. P Cook relayed to members a leaflet she had received from South Wales Fire & Rescue regarding Home Safety Checks, and after some discussion it was ***agreed*** this could be posted on our Face book page for residents information