

# TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber at Bedwellty House on  
Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 6.30pm.**

**Present:**        **Councillor**    **G. Meredith**  
   **T. Smith**  
   **R. Watkins**  
   **D. Howells**  
   **G. Bowen-Knight**  
   **M. Cross**  
   **B Willis**  
   **J. Morgan**  
   **H. Trollope**  
   **D. Rowberry**  
   **R W Thomas**  
   **S. Trollope**  
   **M. O’Sullivan**  
   **R. Watkins**

**Also Present:**        **Ms Keane – Clerk**  
   **Ms Jones – RFO**

**By Invitation:**        **Mr. Stuart Bees**

**061) Apologies:**                **Cllrs: Tippings P Prosser J. Thomas**

**062) Declarations of Interest.**

The Mayor reminded Members to declare interests as and when appropriate.

**063) To consider the exclusion of the Press and public by virtue of the matters to be discussed under the provisions of the LGA 1972 Schedule 12a**

This was agreed.

**064) To receive the report of the Internal Auditor and to confirm the Annual Accounts and Return for 2014/15 prior to External Audit.**

Members welcomed Mr. Stuart Bees the Internal Auditor.

He began by explaining that the bigger report didn’t reflect on the Council itself, but rather looked at the introduction of new items by the Welsh Government in 2015.

Cllr. J. Morgan arrived at this point.

In the course of his review only one matter relating to the refurbishment of the Mayor’s Parlour was raised which he stated was not a significant but was pressed by Cllr. Willis to inform Members. He stated that although the selection of the Project Manager was not a problem, the way that the sofa had been purchased could not be supported by evidence to back up the reason for the company being selected.

Discussing regarding the Asset register and the Bandstand followed and it was agreed that this would need to be looked at in relation to the insurance payments.

The fact that Town Council had for the Fourth year maintained a standstill budget was also noted. However the recent provision of toilet services and the possibility of future services being devolved to Town Council would impact on reserves and may require an increase in future precepts. Some Town and Community Councils had had to increase precepts substantially to continue running services. He stated that the use of reserves to fund new projects should only be considered a transitional approach.

Members pointed out that the Council had not always been in such a positive financial position which was the result of prudence by current staff.

A mention was made of non-financial risks and the need to be able to fund emergency accommodation if required. The possible changes to local Government would also mean that Council would need to be mindful that the reserves they had and the investments made would not be swallowed up by being incorporated into a larger authority. There was also a question that taxes raised for Tredegar (via the Precept) should be kept for Tredegar. However any border changes or amalgamation would be subject to a long period of public discussion.

It was agreed that an "Election Reserve" be earmarked from the reserves following the recent by-election which was very costly to Town Council.

Also that if Members were to run events without staff presence that this should be cleared with the Council's Insurers beforehand.

He was pleased to be able to certify the Annual Return and that Council would undertake an annual review of Financial Regulations.

It was noted by a Member that there is not a "policy" for a standstill budget and that it was reviewed each year.

The RFO then confirmed the following points:

The reserves already earmarked would stand with an increase of £10K on the General and devolved services budget and that a new provision be made to earmark funds for election purposes. An additional sum to be budgeted for the Toilet facilities to cover any vandalism.

The above points were agreed unanimously.

The RFO then read through the 8 questions on the Annual Audit Statement which required a response from Council. All 8 responses were positive.

Mr Bees then completed his part of the Annual Return.

Members gave a vote of thanks to Mr. Bees for his in depth report who replied in turn for thanking the RFO for her prompt and efficient responses to his queries.

He then left the Meeting (7.35pm)

#### **065) To receive the verbal report of the Staffing and Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.**

The Chair of the Staffing Committee reported that it had been a good meeting held in good spirit and made the following recommendations:

**a) Inauguration Buffet** – It was recommended that the maximum amount payable by Council annually should be £450 this would currently allow 90 people to be invited to the buffet in Bedwellty House. It was agreed that this amount should be increased should the basic buffet costs increase. It was also agreed to look at other venues in the Community for other events of Council.

**The recommendation that the maximum amount of £450 be paid by Council towards the Inauguration Buffet was agreed and accepted by Council unanimously.**

#### **b) Implementation of the 2014/16 National Salary Award.**

The recommendation was to follow past practice in line with the NALC "Green Book" and to agree the implementation of the award, to be implemented as soon as possible.

**The recommendation to agree and accept the pay award was agreed unanimously.**

#### **c) i) Appraisals.**

Apologies were given by the Chair for not holding appraisals in 2014 and a date was set and unanimously agreed for the 2015 appraisals.

#### **ii) Contracts and Overtime arrangements.**

Items as related in Minute No. 054 were discussed and agreed unanimously.

It was also agreed that Committee Members look at their commitments and remember to advise when not available for meeting to prevent them being inquorate.

#### **iii) Letter to the Clerk.**

It was agreed unanimously to rescind the letter to the Clerk and continue Council's ongoing support. She again expressed her thanks to Council.

#### **iv) Any other matters**

**Christmas Lights** – the quote received for repair of the sign in Castle Street was considered unreasonable and it was agreed to seek a quote from the company who had replaced the sign in Commercial Street.

**AFD Charity** – The Clerk explained the goals of the Charity Wales Homes for Veterans. The Deputy Mayor informed Members that she was travelling to London to ‘sleep out’ for a night to raise awareness of former personnel who were living on the streets, and it was recommended that we support this Charity. It was duly agreed unanimously that the Wales Homes for Veterans be the recipient of the funds from this year’s Armed Forces Day event.

**Bandstand** – problems still arising with the cover for the power supply. A recent agreement between Town Council and the House Manager to fit an external source had been rejected this day. Members re-iterated problems at the Concert the previous week when youngsters had unplugged the sound system.

**The Leader of Council expressed his thanks to Cllr. R. Thomas for stepping in as Chair of the Staffing Committee and ultimately resolving a number of issues, to which everyone agreed.**

#### **066) To re-open the Meeting to the Public**

This was agreed.

#### **067) Grants: Cultural and Sporting Grants (under the provision of the Local Govt. Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 s.19 and S.137)**

Bedwellty Park Bowls Club – A grant of £200 was agreed unanimously.

Re-Liance Bus Preservation Group – A grant of £200 was agreed unanimously.

Tredeggar Gardeners Club – A grant of £200 was agreed unanimously.

**Grants to Churches and Chapels** - None received.

#### **068) Accounts: To Consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in June 2015.**

The cheques and invoices having been reconciled and inspected by Members were approved.

Payments to Miss Noons for the Quintet Coch and £300 to Tredeggar Comprehensive were unanimously agreed by Council and the Leader was commended on his prompt action which resolved a problem with the Concert, cancelled due to the Newport Velodrome.

#### **069) To receive and adopt the following Minutes of Council:**

- a) Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- b) Minutes of the Civic Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015.

Th

e above Minutes were received and noted as a true record.

#### **070) Matters arising from the Minutes**

##### **a) Ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

i) Minute No 036) 9 & 11 – details of grants for War Memorials were being sought and the Clerk had sent details of Space Saviours to Caerphilly CBC who were still resolving issues regarding ownership and maintenance of the proposed site. The Clerk had asked Cllr. Cuss to keep us updated.

ii) Minute No. 037 The Cwtch – Members asked if the refurbishment of the Cwtch needed to go out to tender. Clerk to check with RFO.

##### **b) Civic Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015**

i) Minute No 045 1) Tredeggar Business Forum – a meeting with the Forum and Events Committee had been arranged.

ii) Minute No 045) 5) Commemorative Benches – It was agreed – unanimously – that the purchase of three commemorative benches go ahead immediately. Any funding received to be used to purchase more.

iii) Minute No 045) 6) Apologies were offered and accepted on all sides, but Cllr. Howells confirmed that he had stood down from the Planning Committee. A replacement to be agreed.

iv) Minute No 048) b) Tredeggar Twinning – it was noted that in 4 years it would be the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and a gift would be required.

v) Minute No 049)c) Valleys Life After Stroke Group – Members were asked to note that they had an important guest speaker on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015 commencing 10.45am when A Shakeshaft of ABUHB would be attending to give a presentation on the Redesigned Stroke Service available in Blaenau Gwent. All Members were urged to attend.

**071) Chair signed the Minutes**

**072) To receive a verbal Report of the Performance Review Meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

A verbal report of the Performance Review Meeting held prior to the start of this was given and it was agreed unanimously to accept all recommendations made.

**073) Correspondence**

- 1) BGCBC a) Consultation with Town/Community Councils Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at 2.30pm  
Council Chamber Ebbw Vale – Items for inclusion by Noon Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

Received – It was agreed to agenda this for the next Meeting of Council.

***Cllr. M. Cross declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.***

- b) M. Howland Re: Community Asset Transfer Application in respect of Tredegar Recreation Ground – Received an initial expression of interest from Tredegar Sports & Social Club. Tredegar Sports & Social Club consists of Tredegar RFC, Trefil RFC & Tredegar Cricket Club working with GAVO.

Received. NB Councillor H. Trollope had declared an interest at the meeting in the Borough Council and was able to speak to the Town Council Meeting on this matter.

The letter was read by the Clerk.

It was felt that the Town Council could not support the application since one of the main parties had a long history of financial problems. It was also noted that a number of sporting groups had not declared an interest in supporting the Transfer Application. It was noted by all Members that the information had come to Town Council as a direct result of the Charter agreement between the Borough Council and the Town and Community Councils which was welcomed. Members were also concerned about the future use of the site and the fact that it was a valuable asset to the town and all the clubs and associations who used it. Members noted that the ongoing running expenses for the site (lighting, maintenance etc) would be very high. There was also some concern about the long term future of the site and rumours that were already circulating about the Pond field being turned into a car park and the original car park being turned into a building site.

***Cllrs Rowberry and Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon:***

- c) (i) Licensing applications week ending 5.6.15.  
(ii) Licensing applications week ending 12.6.15.

Received.

- d) L. Healy Re: Blaenau Gwent Draft Flood Risk Management Plan – 6 week consultation exercise starting 15.6.15. Plans available & views can be left at <https://goo.gl/fwgdFZ> - forwarded to Climate Change committee members

Received.

- e) A Tippings Re: Highest Point charity walk, A465 Sunday 19.7.15 – press releases, poster & sponsor form. (press release on TTC website).

Received. All Members urged to promote this event.

**2) One Voice Wales**

- a) Larger Councils Conference 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 Hafod a Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground, £40 per delegate.

Received – it was agreed that the Leader and Cllr Cross attend.

- b) Diary Marker: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July – invitation to a workshop to develop an Adaptation Plan for the Communities sector.

Received. Interested Members to attend

- c) Survey: Your Council and the use of IT and the internet 2015 – Complete by 19.6.15.

Cllr. Smith agreed to complete.

- d) Resource Efficient Wales information leaflet.

Received.

- e) Wales Audit News – June 2015.

Received.

- f) Support your High Street Campaign 19<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Received. It was agreed to forward this information to the Business Forum via Cllr Smith our delegate ready for their next meeting.

- g) Wales Green Energy Awards, closing date 3.7.15.

Received.

### 3) Welsh Government

- a) Community & Town Councils in Wales.

Received – results of a survey commissioned by Welsh Government into how the public perceive Town and Community Councils.

- b) Public Health (Wales) Bill – provision of toilets available for use by the public.  
(i) Includes a duty placed on every local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy on the provision of toilets available for use by the public in its area. The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy will not in itself require local authorities to directly provide and maintain public toilets, but will require them to take a strategic view across their area about how these facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population.

Received – it was noted that the Town Council were already providing and maintaining facilities for the Town.

- (ii) <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=12763>

Received – link to the Public Health Wales Bill.

***Cllr. M. Cross declared an interest in the following matter and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.***

### 4) Aneurin Leisure Trust

- a) C. Hares Re: Town Council noticeboard – update on bins provision by the noticeboard.

Received.

- b) C. Hares Re: Bandstand electric – response to query raised.

Received.

### 5) Aneurin Bevan Health Board

Re: Tredegar General Hospital – will pass on Council's request to be kept informed in the event of any future exercise taking place.

Received. It was noted that there had been some vandalism to the Hospital.

- 6) Gavo a) S. Evans Re: BG Voluntary Sector Achievement Awards – List of categories.

Received. It was agreed to sponsor the Inspirational Volunteer as in the past.



<b>App No</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
2015/0192	Mr N Edwards 21 Bryn Pica, Tredegar.	Retention of single vehicle garage and existing Vehicle parking area to side of main dwelling.
No Objections		
2015/0200	Mr J Walker 95 Glyn Terrace, Tredegar.	first floor rear extension.
No Objections		

**d) Other Planning Matters**

BGCBC Re: Planning Application 2015/0181 – response to query raised by Council.

Received.

A question was posed by a Member regarding charges for a bat survey and clarification given.

**075) Matters of Local Interest or Concern.**

a) Cllr. R. Thomas had presented to Council a letter from Mrs. Gaynor James former Councillor and Mayor of Tredegar, expressing her thanks to all those involved in the 20 year history of the Youth Café which was to close on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015. He expressed his sadness and described Gaynor and the project as phenomenal, taking young people all over the country and even abroad. Cllr. Trollope also stated that it had been a privilege to be Mayor on their 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

These sentiments were echoed by all Members of Council.

b) Members noted that Luke Garrett had been selected for the Wales Under 20's rugby squad.

c) A Member noted that a young lady from Tredegar – Saskia Lewis – had not missed a single day's education in both primary and Comprehensive schools.

d) Albert Skeates – Members were delighted to note that Mr. Skeates had been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community in Blaenau Gwent. It was noted that this would be presented by the Lord Lieutenant in the Civic Centre Ebbw Vale and it was suggested that the Moose should hold a celebration with costs being supported by Town Council. Thanks were given to Cllrs Smith and Willis for the information they had found to support his nomination.

e) It was noted that Gareth Hughes had won the Welsh Heavyweight title.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9pm.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair

