

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber,
Bedwelty House on Wednesday, 3rd January, 2018 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present: **Councillors J. Thomas (Chair)**
 A.E. Tippings
 M. Cross
 G. James
 A. Jones
 D. Jones
 E. Jones
 P. Prosser
 D. Rowberry
 M. Turner
 P. Waldron
 B. Willis

In Attendance: **Town Clerk – Mrs. C. Price**
 RFO – Ms. A. Jones

247) Apologies. **Councillors H. Trollope, T. Smith, D.W.A. Howells,
 T. Gregory and S. Trollope**

248) Declarations of Interest.

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

249) Coalfields Regeneration Trust: to receive a presentation by the Head of Operations - Wales, Mr. Alun Taylor

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Mr. Alun Taylor, Head of Operations – Wales, Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT), who thanked Members for the opportunity to attend and provide information in respect of the following:

- The Coalfields Regenerations Trust (CRT) had been established for eighteen years by the former Blair Government in 1999
- Set up to support social and economic regeneration within former mining communities, covering ten authorities across Wales
- 'not for profit' organisation - a charity limited by guarantee, with all monies re-invested back into the community
- working throughout Wales, north of England and Scotland – Headquarters were based in Barnsley, Yorkshire

- funding provider – available for innovative priority development, offering grant funding and supported by Government (funding had diminished, with Coalfields Regeneration in England becoming non-reliant on Government)
- other funding providers, in partnership with CRT, for deprived communities in the Valleys – Lottery Funding, Comic Relief and the private sector

The needs of the community were mainly due to austerity with the loss of buildings and facilities and the cessation of public services. Coalfields Regeneration supported communities to protect community assets such as theatres and libraries, working with groups to promote community ownership, and had also worked in partnership with town councils. An initial consultation would be undertaken to ascertain what the community wanted located within a building and this could be linked to a larger project to regenerate the area and link with other developments in the vicinity to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

On writing to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, CRT had ascertained this area as least served by the Credit Union in Wales and determined a Credit Union was needed in Blaenau Gwent. CRT was bringing this service to Tredegar, based in Aneurin Bevan House, with a major project being undertaken; over the next few weeks, a small Citizen's Advice Bureau presence would operate from the building; accepted a social housing interest in the top floor, with Smart Money / Credit Union as a live presence on the high street and long-term service to the community.

The Credit Union was undertaking work on the Cefn Golau estate, acting as Fund Manager for the Community Trust, to encourage people to save and learn from the Credit Union, including inviting one of the residents to join the CU Board. In addition to Smart Money/CU, funding was available from other funding providers. Also from February, a housing account link was being developed with social housing to assist those residents deemed at risk of default or high risk, operating an account whereby monies were placed into a 'rent pot' where payment could be raised automatically and monies used electronically, encouraging shopping on the high street and building loyalty. An ATM (cash machine) would be installed at Aneurin Bevan House; there was a lot of work currently ongoing installing ATMs in other towns.

CRT was also introducing a sports programme, Game on Wales, engaging hard to reach children through sport – discussions had been undertaken with Tredegar Comprehensive School.

As a national charity, CRT had been asked to take on 10 The Circle, as the former Medical Aid building, as part of the very important history within Tredegar regarding health. An assessment had been carried out of the work needing to be done and CRT had made an offer on the building to be owned outright, which had been accepted. CRT had therefore committed to maintain the integrity and history of this building, utilising interpretation boards to depict the history of the building, outlining the history of Aneurin Bevan, and explaining the history of the building itself. Spaces would be reserved for social enterprise businesses and Cymru Creations would be relocating to the Little Theatre. The building could be utilised for open training, an educational space, as an extension to the school, or as a museum overflow, with a continuation of a medical / health based theme.

It was hoped that this building could be developed in time to form part of the 70th Anniversary

of the NHS celebrations and events throughout Wales; with the building opening on, or as near to 5th July, 2018. The representative said that counterparts across the UK had expressed interest and were very impressed with the building and CRT was committed going forward to this impression and shared vision of the health centre, as this rich heritage needed to be exploited.

The Credit Union would have a presence in Aneurin Bevan House, with two members of staff based in that building with outreach to Cefn Golau. The representative highlighted that he had strong connections with the Credit Union as Chair of the CU and was interested in bringing in other services also – ideally with three or four branch offices across the County Borough, and liaising with the Federation of Small Businesses, as part of the corporate account, CU could now also be used for business purposes also.

A Member commended this refreshing approach, thanking the representative for a most comprehensive presentation, supporting the proposed idea but stressing this had to be delivered. He would welcome this initiative being rolled out to Sirhowy and Waundeg, in addition to the Cefn Golau estate. He also commended ongoing work in respect of the heritage-side of the Project, celebrating seventy years of the NHS and welcomed this forward-thinking in encouraging visitors to the town – this was an important heritage site that he would not wish to be lost. He wished CRT well in delivering their endeavours, with a view to increasing footfall and visitors, particularly to the local shops – he thereupon wished CRT every success. Another Member offered the help and support of the Heritage Forum in respect of information and photographs, which was greatly appreciated.

A Member considered this an exciting project and looked forward to see progress made locally and Tredegar Town Council would be pleased to help in every way possible. She thereupon asked the representative is chequing accounts would be available in the future and facilities to provide loans to prevent residents needing to use 'loan sharks'.

The CRT representative said that since the launch of the Credit Union, progress had been made where the CU was now at a point of being open three days a week, hopefully with a view to becoming a full time service. Welsh Government had made a commitment, not funding but provision of premises – once up and running, local authorities would be provided with long term leases; funding had also been made to generate and made a staffing commitment. CRT had been asked to be the key holder of £10m over a ten year period to help communities spend this money and assist with project management.

People were now starting to join the Credit Union, with individuals being encouraged to save before taking out a loan, as this had to be about affordability for the resident. The CU was building on this premise – although early days he was pleased to say numbers were in the high 100s in terms of saving. People were volunteering in the shop and one part-time worker was being funded through Comic Relief to undertake training on the Estate.

The CRT representative would be only too happy to return and provide a more detailed report in the future, as it was hoped that the Credit Union would develop and be able to provide a lot of different services in the future as currently, although not able to provide a chequing account, a pre-paid visa card was available and reiterated the forthcoming ATM provision. For example, should a group be awarded grant funding from Tredegar Town Council, these monies would be managed the community grants fund with the funding being uploaded on a

card for a specified group / person, or would remain in account until monies had been spent or transferred to a fore-mentioned pre-paid card.

Local schools could participate in this initiative - a meeting was due to take place with Tredegar Comprehensive School, but nothing to report to date; however, approximately fourteen schools were already involved in the County Borough of Caerphilly.

Town Council thereupon thanked the Head of Operations – Wales Manager for a most informative presentation and extended an invitation for the representative to return in the future, which was agreed accordingly, advising the representative to liaise with the office. The Trust representative thereupon left the meeting.

250) Grants:

- a) To receive and consider grants to Sporting and Cultural organisations**
- b) To receive and consider grants to Churches & Chapels (s.137)**
 - None received

251) To receive and adopt the following Minutes of Council (*deferred from the Ordinary Meeting held 20th December, 2017*):

- a) Events Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2017**
- b) Civic Meeting of Council - 6th December, 2017**

It was agreed that the Minutes presented be moved en bloc as a true record, with any matters arising to follow.

252) Matters arising from the Minutes

Events Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2017

- Christmas Lights switch-on – there had been broken glass on a Member’s stall, which she had attempted to clear up, eventually borrowing a sweeping brush from the Library; the Member said that the shredded paper from the tombola had been strewn by children. She had previously attempted to borrow a dustpan and brush from The Harley, who were selling hotdogs and coffee on the highway. A discussion thereupon ensued regarding sale of goods on the highway at this Town Council event, which the Clerk explained should be subject to a request to Tredegar Town Council for permission, under the Temporary Street Trading Consent granted for this event. It was agreed that the Clerk write to clarify this process, should any businesses wish to trade on the highway at the Christmas Lights switch-on event in future years.

In respect of a concern raised regarding a Stagecoach bus accessing the road closure area, the appropriate Member confirmed that the bus companies had been made aware of the timing of the road closures, but unfortunately one bus driver had taken it upon himself to ignore the signage.

Civic Meeting of Council - 6th December, 2017

- Memorial plaque – refer to Heritage Sub-Committee

- Clerk confirmed a letter had been sent to Father John Davis thanking him for his service to St. George's Church, as he had now undertaken his service and would be leaving in Easter following a short sabbatical.
- Removal of Christmas lights by BGCBC – Clerk would continue to pursue.
- Family Fun Day, Deighton playing field – Clerk to liaise with Mr. N. Jones and feedback reported to the Events Sub-Committee.
- Page 202 – typographical error within School Governing Bodies, amend to 'Bryn Bach Primary School' remove Park.

Councillor B Willis declared an interest in the following items and took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

253) Planning:

a) Officers Report – Information Only

List of Delegated Items determined between 16th November 2017 and 8th December 2017:

C/2017/0301 Entrance porch to front utilising an existing tiled canopy, 28 Copper Beech Drive, Tredegar - *Approved.*

b) Verbal Report of the Planning Committee

c) Applications

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2018/0001	Mr. C. Evans Upper Horgan Fach Farm Crown Avenue Tredegar	Partial demolition and rebuild of existing dwelling, raising of the main roof and two storey rear extension, Upper Horgan Fach Farm, Crown Avenue.

No objections, fully support – would be welcomed if stonework could be retained, wherever possible.

d) Other Planning Matters - None received.

254) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
 - a) Precept requirements to be submitted by 31.01.2018 (***email copy received too – with RFO***)
 - Noted.
 - b) P. Amos Re: Standards Committee, Community Member vacancy. Process of selection will be to draw a successful candidate from a lot, draw conducted by the Monitoring Officer and invigilated

by a separate officer. If there are no responses received by 19.01.2018 it will be assumed there are no objections to this process and will proceed with the arrangement.

- Noted. The Mayor would like further clarification in respect of this process, as the nominated representative put forward.

Members expressed support, as Council did not agree with this selection process, considering drawing the candidate from 'a lot' inappropriate. A Member said that since the formation of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, he was unaware of a Tredegar Town Member being nominated to any of the various Committees and felt there should be a fair rotation throughout the town and community councils.

c) List of Licensing Applications week ending 22.12.2017.

i) The Willows, Temporary Event Notice.

- Noted.

2) Aneurin Leisure

Response to query regarding Sports Centre Closures.

- Noted; forward to Councillor S. Trollope.

Clerk to respond that Town Council would not wish the Sports Centre to be closed for such a long period in the future in order that Tredegar residents could access sports facilities, such as 'free swimming'. Members would argue that residents living at Trefil or Bedwellty Pits would face the same transport difficulties as outlined by Abertillery residents and, therefore, the Sports Centre openings should rotate throughout the whole of Blaenau Gwent.

It was agreed that the Commercial Director – Aneurin Leisure, Phill Sykes, be invited to attend a meeting of Council as soon as possible.

3) One Voice Wales

a) Gwent Valleys Area Committee meeting Tuesday, 9th January, 2018 at 7.00 p.m. at Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council – ***previously emailed to representatives***

- Noted.

- b) Christmas letter from Councillor Mike Cuddy, Chair of One Voice Wales.
- Noted.
- 4) Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales
Review of the Electoral Arrangements for the County Borough of Blaenau Gwent: Copy of letter sent to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 12 week consultation period begins 03.01.2018 and closes 27.03.2018.
- Noted; forward via email and re-submit to February Ordinary meeting of Council.
- 5) M. Higgs
Tredegar Quiz Wizards dates – **added to website**
- It was noted that the quiz on Wednesday, 7th February, 2018 was on the same evening as Civic Council; it was agreed, therefore, that Council commence at 6.00 p.m. that evening to accommodate those Members wishing to attend.
- 6) Glandovey Consulting Ltd.
IT review will take two-three days at a daily rate of £450.00.
- Noted; Members did not feel this was the level of consultation Council needed and instructed the Clerk to respond, thanking the gentleman but to decline and retain the information on file.

It was agreed that advice be sought from One Voice Wales; alternatively, further consideration could be given to utilising Peter Toppings or Business Wales for I.T.

7) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report week ending 29.12.2017

– ***distributed to Members***: received.

8) AGENDA

Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 4th January, 2018 at 9.30 a.m. Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale; Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Monday, 8th January, 2018 at 10.00 a.m. Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale.

Available for Members – received.

255) Updates regarding Bedwellty House and Park—any issues to have been previously reported direct to the House Management personally

A Member commended the House and staff on their hard work throughout November and December, which had been really good in attracting visitors, from far and wide, over the Christmas period; Clerk to email.

256) Delegates: to receive and consider reports from Delegates to Outside Bodies and the recommendations of Sub-Committees/Working Parties:

- a) **Joint Committee of Local Councils**
- b) **Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales**
- c) **One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM**
- d) **Tredegar Twinning** – Clerk to liaise to ascertain details of their social evening at Bedwellty House in January and inform Members accordingly.
- e) **School Governing Bodies**
- f) **Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum**
- g) **Tredegar/Ebbw Vale Crime Prevention Panel**
- h) **Tredegar Business Forum**
- i) **VVP / Tredegar Heritage Initiative** – correspondence had been received in respect of convening the next meeting, outlining the intention to add two Independent Elected Members from Tredegar to the group. The Executive Member, Dai Davies, would undertake the election of the Chair of that Group at that first meeting and the appropriate Member would provide a further update to Town Council following that meeting.

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

- Friends of Bedwellty Park – Town Council was commended on how many people had visited Tredegar, from far and wide, to see the Christmas lights, who had commented on the standard of lighting and thanked Tredegar Town Council for the display.
- Wind Turbines Bryn Bach – one turbine had commenced a flicker effect when operational; apparently the software should have caused the turbine to cease operation – this had not been the case. It was agreed that the turbines be decommissioned until the issue had been resolved – this also had not been implemented. Councillors within the Sirhowy ward were dealing with residents on this issue and, hopefully, could be resolved as soon as possible, as this was having a significant impact on residents. It was noted that the erection of these turbines had been opposed by both Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly County Borough Councils, being approved by the Planning Inspectorate for Wales.

There being no other business the Meeting closed at 7.28 p.m.

_____ Chair