

# TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 at 6.30 p.m.**

**Present:**                    **Councillors E. Jones (Chair)**  
                                     **D. Jones**  
                                     **T. Smith**  
                                     **A.E. Tippings**  
                                     **M. Cross**  
                                     **D.W.A. Howells**  
                                     **G. James**  
                                     **K. Phillips**  
                                     **S. Rees**  
                                     **D. Rowberry**  
                                     **H. Trollope**  
                                     **S. Trollope**  
                                     **J. Thomas**  
                                     **M. Turner**  
                                     **G. Walters**  
                                     **B. Willis**

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

**223) Apologies. Councillors A. Jones and P. Prosser**

**224) Declarations of Interest**

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

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

It was agreed that the following recommendation be approved:

- **Events Sub-Committee - 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:** that the Armed Forces Day and The Bevan Festival activities do not proceed in order to support and adhere to ongoing restrictions in respect of Covid-19. However, Council would continue to investigate various means in respect of providing 'virtual' events for community engagement, e.g. online Band performances on social media; also, Clerk to book the Royal Welsh Regimental Band for 2022.

**226) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in March 2021**

The RFO spoke to the report and explained that the bank reconciliations, valid to date, were available for Members to view on request. The Officer raised three points for Members' attention:

- **Quadient** – two ink cartridges had been received: the franking machine automatically re-ordered the cartridge when the ink was low; unfortunately, the internet connection had dropped out during this process and a second cartridge ordered. The Officer had spoken to Quadient and the ink had a three-year shelf life and the issue flagged on their system. The RFO confirmed Council had entered into a service level agreement and each ink cartridge lasted twelve(+) months.
- **Quadient** – a cheque had gone astray and had been cancelled, resulting in an anticipated charge of £12.00; the Officer would monitor the bank account to verify the cheque remained uncashed before posting the replacement cheque and the missing cheque being written back.
- **M247 E-Hosting** – the invoice was normally received after 23<sup>rd</sup> March; previously the company had struggled to locate the payment, when paid by cheque, resulting in website 'downtime'. The RFO had offered to pay by debit card, which was the preferred method of payment by this company. A Member suggested that, if the Officer was happy to do so, the payment be made by card to prevent any issues with the website being down: *Agreed accordingly.*
- **Public Toilets** – in response to a query, the Clerk confirmed, at a meeting of the Public Facilities Sub-Committee, expenditure in respect of refurbishment had been approved accordingly. Members referred to the cleanliness of the toilets; although it was noted the cleaning operative only worked between the hours of 12.00 noon and 5.00 p.m., the toilets were opened in the morning by the shopping centre manager.

A Member said the repainting of the toilets had been agreed the previous year, but had been delayed, and was the next project to be undertaken following the repainting of the Town Clock. He believed the cleaning operative maintained and cleaned the toilets to a good standard; however it would be the decision of Council if his hours of employment required amending and would need to be considered accordingly at the appropriate time.

It was therefore agreed that a 'deep clean' be undertaken to help address Members' concerns. It was also agreed that Councillor Gaynor James be added as a member of the Public Facilities Sub-Committee.

There being no further queries regarding the Schedule of Accounts, presented items were approved for payment. The RFO asked that the four signatories liaise in respect of signing of the cheques for payment and 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.

The RFO highlighted this was the final schedule for payment prior to the end of the financial year and the Officer would be presenting the final Budget against Actual to Council in April, together with the 2021 / 2022 Asset Register.

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

- a) **Civic Meeting of Council - 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021**
- b) **Policy Sub-Committee - 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021**
- c) **Ordinary Meeting of Council - 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021**

It was agreed, for points of accuracy only, that all Minutes presented be moved en bloc as a true record.

Councillor Haydn Trollope thanked individual Members / Council for the well wishes and cards received.

## **228) Chair to sign Minutes - at earliest opportunity in accordance with WG Legislation and Guidance**

To be duly signed by the Chair, adhering to safety regulations and relevant restrictions, at the earliest opportunity – Chair to liaise accordingly.

## **229) Correspondence**

- 1) BGCBC
- a) M. Hopkins Re: Traffic Management concerns. Funding bid was successful, will be liaising with contractor to implement traffic signal upgrade works and will pass on “filter lane” provision suggestion to Street Works.
- Noted.

*Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.*

- b) List of Licensing Applications received, week ending 05.03.2021.
    - a) Mark Williams Snooker Club – vary the DPS
    - b) Personal Licence – Jenna Andrews
- Noted.

- 2) One Voice Wales
- a) Annual membership renewal £2,514.00 (3.2% increase on last year); various information on One Voice Wales.
- Members considered a 3.2% for the year a steep increase; however, it was acknowledged that pandemic restrictions may have impacted on OVW being able to generate income, for example exhibition stalls at their annual conference. Therefore, it was suggested that Council could approve the renewal of the annual membership, but also write raising Council’s dismay at the increase, to outline that any rise should be in line with current inflation.

A Member queried if Council periodically undertook an audit of use, to ascertain value for money. Members said that Council frequently sought legal advice; for instance,

needing their expertise on staffing issues in the past, and the Clerk confirmed their services had been utilised recently on reviewing contracts of employment in line with audit requirements.

The Leader confirmed that he also contacted the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive whenever advice was needed on behalf of Council.

Also, he said that OVW continued to provide regular training opportunities online within the membership. A Member pointed out, however, there was a charge levied in respect of Members undertaking this training and also for attending the annual conference.

Upon a vote being taken five Members abstained from approving the membership and ten Members approved the membership renewal, which was agreed accordingly.

b) SLCC & OVW Joint Conference virtual event 13.05.2021 £45.00 + VAT

- Clerk to book two places; agreed that a motion be presented for discussion in respect of the aforementioned increase in the membership renewal.

3) G. Adams  
Construction

Confirmation of costings for the Clock lights following the recent inspection.

- A Member considered the costings were reasonable, it had been a long time since the electrics had been upgraded and she proposed Council proceed, which was agreed accordingly and the expenditure unanimously approved.

- 4) Aneurin Leisure Trust
- a) Developments at Bedwellty House and Park.
  - b) Developments at Parc Bryn Bach.
    - Noted; Council offered thanks to the Manager for such a comprehensive update.
- Unfortunately, Members were aware of the theft of some of the trees already; also, Council shared the concerns of both Aneurin Leisure and the Police, regarding ASB and vandalism across both sites. A Member suggested security required serious improvements at both venues to protect such inward investment.
- 5) Cllr S. Trollope
- a) Letter of thanks from The Grange for the toiletries, Council donation £250.00
  - b) Letter of thanks from The Grange for the toiletries, Member's donations of £225.00
    - Noted; place on TTC website. The Member expressed thanks extended by the Hospital for the donations, which had been greatly appreciated.
- 6) Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Management Plan Review: Consultation on Policy documents, closes 26.05.2021.
- Noted.

## 7) PUBLICATIONS

GAVO Link to Annual Impact Report for 2019-2020; Communicorp Local Councils Update Issue 248 March 2021 and Clerks & Councils Direct March 2021 Issue 134; Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Vaccination newsletter issue 8 – website & Twitter; Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Vaccination Update, issue 9 – added to website & Twitter; IWN Active Travel Programme 2021-22: Can you help shape the future of active travel in Blaenau Gwent? – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

## 8) AGENDA

– None received.

*Councillors T. Smith and B. Willis declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.*

### 230) Planning:

**a) i) To consider an Officer's Report (if received):** None received.

**ii) a)** List of planning applications received in week 08

**b) Verbal report of the Planning Committee, if any:** None received.

**c) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations:** None received.

**d) To consider other planning matters:** Re. Notice of Public Path Order, Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 257 and Paragraph 1 of Schedule 14, Wauntysswg Farm Restricted Byway 339/24 Diversion Order 2021. Any representation about or objection to the Order is to be submitted no later than 08.04.2021.

### 231) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report - February 2021 To receive Final Report to take effect during the financial year 2021 / 2022

The Clerk spoke to the Final Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, outlining each individual Determination in order to highlight any changes and salient points for consideration, to be agreed by town and community councils.

#### ***Section 13. Payments to Members of Community and Town Councils***

- Tredegar Town Council remained in Group B - Income or Expenditure of £30,000 - £199,999
- 13.8 Council was reminded that 'An individual may decline to receive part, or all, of the payments if they so wish. This must be done in writing and was an individual matter.
- ***Determination 42: All Community and Town Councils must make available a payment to each of their Members of £150.00 per year as a contribution to costs and expenses; and  
Determination 44: Community and Town Councils in Groups B or C can make an annual payment of up to £500.00 each to up to five Members in recognition of specific responsibilities. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses.***

- ***Determination 45: Community and Town Councils can make payments to each of their Members in respect of travel costs for attending approved duties. Such payments must be the actual costs of travel by public transport or the HMRC mileage allowances.***
- ***Determination 46: If a Community or Town Council resolves that a particular duty requires an overnight stay, it can authorise reimbursement of subsistence expenses to its Members at the maximum rates set out on the basis of receipted claims.***
- ***Determination 47: Community and Town Councils can pay financial loss compensation to each of their Members, where such loss has occurred, for attending approved duties.***
- ***Determination 48: Community and Town Councils can provide a payment to the Mayor or Chair of the Council up to a maximum of £1,500.00. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses and the £500.00 senior salary if these are claimed.***
- ***Determination 49: Community and Town Councils can provide a payment to the Deputy Mayor or Deputy Chair of the Council up to a maximum of £500.00. This is in addition to the £150.00 payment for costs and expenses and the £500.00 senior salary if these are claimed.***

The Clerk confirmed it was the individual decision of each council to agree up to five Members, but Tredegar Town Council only approved payment to the Leader at this time. Senior roles and allowances were agendaed, on an annual basis, for consideration at the Annual General Meeting of Council.

- ***Determination 50: Members in receipt of a Band 1 or Band 2 senior salary from a principal council (that is Leader, Deputy Leader or Executive Member) cannot receive any payment from any Community or Town Council, other than travel and subsistence expenses and reimbursement of costs of care.***

The Clerk confirmed 'a principal council' related to both Local and Unitary Authorities but was not relevant for Tredegar Town Council, having no Members undertaking a dual role of Town / County Borough Councillor, holding senior positions within Band 1 or Band 2 of the Local Authority.

Taxable element was subject to ongoing consideration and Members hoped this would be brought back to the next meeting.

Council noted and agreed the Determinations (No. 42, 44-50 inclusive), subject to ratification at the Annual General Meeting for approval of requirements pertinent to Tredegar Town Council as an individual community / town council.

## **232) Matters of Local Interest or Concern (by prior notice)**

- Gwent Shopping Centre precinct – a Member had also been knocked down on exiting a shop by an individual on a bike, and subjected to verbal abuse; she had visited the Police station to report the incident and was told this would be investigated. The Member had also requested sight of the camera footage from the Shopping Precinct Manager, who said he would look and respond; she was still awaiting a telephone call.

- Accident & Emergency provision – serious concerns were raised by Members in respect of the distance to travel to The Grange University Hospital, Llanfrechfa, to access medical treatment in the case of an emergency. It was pointed out that Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr was far more accessible for Tredegar residents and would prove more prudent if urgent medical attention were required. Also, Members highlighted issues in respect of accessing public transport to The Grange, which was considered a barrier for both patients and visitors alike. Concerns had also been raised by residents in relation to ongoing issues with I.T. at this facility - for example, one gentleman from Tredegar had been unable to contact his wife for five days following an operation, due to no connectivity.

Clerk to write to the ABUHB Chief Executive, with copies sent to both the Member of Parliament and Assembly Member for Blaenau Gwent.

- Grounds Maintenance: Deighton playing field and Sirhowy Community Garden – the Clerk asked Council if Members wished to seek tenders for grass cutting for 2021; following a brief discussion regarding the level of maintenance needed:

It was agreed that a quote be sought from the Head of Grounds Maintenance BGCBC and Council waive Financial Regulations subject to the following reasons: value for money, quality of cut / standard of maintenance, flexibility within service, e.g. a discount was automatically applied if fewer cuts were required, which had been the case in 2020 due to the facilities being closed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- In memory of Covid-19 victims – floodlighting of Aneurin Bevan memorial stones 'yellow' on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021, in memory of those who had been lost to the Coronavirus over the past year. Also, 10 The Circle to be floodlit 'yellow'.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair