

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on Wednesday, 16th March, 2022 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors **G. James (Chair)**
S. Rees
T. Smith
A.E. Tippings
D.W.A. Howells
D. Jones
E. Jones
D. Rowberry
B. Willis

In attendance: Clerk – **Ms. C. Aherne**
KS Placement – **Miss B Flowers**

By invitation: CENIN Renewables' representatives:
Education Lead and Community Liaison, **J. Goddard**
Renewables Project Assessor, **J. King**

323) Apologies. Councillors **M. Cross, K. Phillips, P. Prosser, J. Thomas, H. Trollope, S. Trollope, M. Turner and G. Walters**

324) Declarations of Interest

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

325) Cenin Renewables - to receive a presentation on the work they currently offer and an update on the technical work / how plans are proceeding

The Chair extended a welcome to the representatives of CENIN Renewables, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council at their request to update Members on progress to date since their last visit.

The Education Lead and Community Liaison representative introduced herself as a new member of the team since September; therefore, the Renewables Project Assessor, as the more experienced member, would begin in explaining the remit of CENIN Renewables.

- **CENIN:** a renewable, integrated infrastructure company based at Parc Stormy, Bridgend committed to powering a greener future.
 - An innovative approach to renewable energy provision, unlocking hidden green energy potential and utilising the earth's natural resources.
 - Respecting those working with and the places they live, helping develop quality energy systems for local communities that increase wellbeing and add value for future generations by creating a sustainable world.

- In 2021, the work in sustainable development was recognised with CENIN being awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise.

Manmoel Wind Farm

- To provide the area with clean, renewable energy, powered by a series of wind turbines.
- The Pre-Application Consultation would be later in the year, possibly late Summer / early Autumn, with a full submission lodged by the end of 2022; a decision expected late 2023, with the build commencing 2024 / 2025.
- Engaged in discussions with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council about how to use the power generated in the local area.
- Care and consideration as to the effect of projects on the areas in which they are built, engaging with local communities and ensuring voices heard, by demonstrating benefits through projects such as Parc Stormy and Home Farm, demonstrating considerable local economic benefit and job creation achieved by embracing a collaborative approach.
- Commitment to local communities was promoted through six key areas.

Commitment to Nature & Biodiversity

- Committed to preserving and enhancing the natural habitat for wildlife and flora on all projects by developing unique habitat management plans.
- Using horticultural expertise to improve the habitat; including tree planting, creating wildflower areas for pollinators / insects, building hedgehog houses, etc.
- Employing traditional countryside practices by using recycled stone from sites and using skilled craftspeople to create dry stone walling for habitat creation and wildlife corridors.

Local Economic Benefit

- Creating employment opportunities through projects, from development work to maintenance jobs, providing long-term employment and creating opportunities for local supply chains.

Improving Countryside Access

- Allowing people to experience the living landscape, aiming to increase access to sites by creating paths and cycle trails for community / leisure.
- Commitment to education, working closely with venues \ sites in the local area to promote sustainable modes of transport.

Supporting Local Clubs and Associations

- Looking to support groups and societies based near the Manmoel Wind Farm through the commitment of a Community Fund.
- This pre-operational fund could support organisations in developing their community engagement activities that bring people together to aid health and wellbeing; e.g. whether helping a local music group with transport costs or an adult learners group with some extra support.

Education for Everyone

- Education at the heart of our commitment to the community, changing from a society reliant on fossil fuels to an electric economy, thinking about how to travel, how energy was being made and how to use it. These changes needed to be understood by future generations in order to find and create innovative ways of putting Wales at the forefront of renewable green energy production.
- Funding a specialist member of staff in developing a curriculum linked programme to help educate pupils about sustainability, renewables and the climate change agenda.
- Parc Stormy had already hosted visits from a number of local schools across Swansea / South Wales and was always looking to welcome more groups keen to learn about renewable energy production.

- QR codes at strategic points at sites to inform people about the natural world, biodiversity and energy generation.

Building the Wales we want for Future Generations

- Passionate about developing not only energy generation, but connected facilities, to maximise the benefit of site creation.
- Varying from EV car share schemes, EV charging points and designing systems, local business could take advantage of abundant sustainable power.

Come and Visit Us

- Offering pre-arranged guided tours, so that schools, societies and groups learn more about renewable energy.
- Visitors and school groups experience different forms of energy generation at the Parc Stormy site.
- Visitors get the chance to: go inside a sustainable eco house designed by Cardiff University / walk through 2,940 solar panels; see the 100m+ tall operational wind turbines; look inside a state-of-the-art minerals research lab; learn how food waste turns into renewable electricity
- Whether a renewable energy enthusiast / professional, business school or society, CENIN welcomes visits to learn about the work being undertaken to power a greener future.

The representatives thereupon responded to Members' observations / questions raised.

- Community Fund – Tredegar Town Council already worked closely with a community fund, considering the application process uncomplicated, and enquired of the percentage of monies invested. The Project Assessor said that any decisions were made at Director level, however she would be pleased to liaise that Town Council would wish more involvement in the process, in order that a system could be developed accordingly in prioritising groups and communication, as such input would be invaluable.
- Biodiversity Campaign – any activities in respect of local green spaces would be dependent on appropriate Rules and Regulations in respect of what could be undertaken.
- Planning Application process – pre-planning consultation (six weeks) through statutory consultees; a notice had to be displayed in a public location, e.g. library, in the local area at the 'Full' planning stage and would also arrange a public exhibition, e.g. town hall. During Covid, this stage had been undertaken online; however, all the information was available on this forum and a 'live chat' function provided to answer any questions. The representative confirmed there was strict guidance in respect of noise levels and a specialised noise technician was responsible for that aspect.

Councillor D. Rowberry joined the meeting at this juncture (6.33 p.m.)

- Energy redistribution – the power generated was returned into the National Grid, it would prove difficult to determine where the power was used as energy was directed into every home and, therefore, it would not be possible to introduce a scheme to benefit a particular cluster, for instance, senior citizens. However, the Community Fund could support the local community in other ways, e.g. a community minibus to transport the elderly, for example, to doctor's appointments.
A Member suggested that CENIN may wish to energise / sponsor the Christmas lighting display, as this would prove a major project for CENIN to be involved in.

The Chair extended the thanks of Council to both ladies for the comprehensive update, which had been very knowledgeable and greatly appreciated, and was sure Council would remain in contact in the future.

The CENIN Renewables' representatives thereupon left the meeting.

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

It was agreed that the recommendations of the Events Sub-Committee held on 16th March, 2022, be approved.

- It was proposed that the bands, who had been agreed for 2020 but unable to perform due to Covid restrictions, be invited and offered the correlating dates for 2022.
- Armed Forces Day - a one-hour performance slot be offered with a payment of £150.00.
- Queen's Jubilee – agreed: Clerk to undertake stock-check of flags / bunting and expenditure approved accordingly if stocks needing replenishing.

327) To receive further information on the Gas Utility Renewal

The RFO spoke to the report outlining that Council had requested a one-year comparison between the current supplier and an alternative provider. Council had expressed concern in regard to the longevity of energy providers, as various suppliers had collapsed recently, and the Officer provided a brief background.

Following a brief discussion it was agreed that, in light of the savings per annum, the RFO pursue arrangements to negotiate a three-year contract with Valda Energy.

328) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in March 2022

The RFO spoke to the report and explained that the bank reconciliations, valid to date, were available for Members to view upon request, which was noted accordingly.

- **Revised Accounts for Payment in February 2022**

N-Power – a cheque had not been issued due to no correlating invoice being received: the matter had now been resolved, the RFO being informed no invoice had been issued due to a changeover in their system.

Blackwood Garden Centre – the cheque had been presented following the six-month period, but had been honoured by the bank and, therefore, would not require re-issuing.

- **Accounts for payment in March 2022**

Essential Site Skills – requested as an urgent payment to enable the trainee to undertake the course before the placement ended; it was agreed that the Clerk be authorised to sign as second signatory, together with the Mayor.

N-Power – the estimated figures for January / February had now been rolled in the 'Actual'.

The RFO thereupon proposed the following virements to be made, prior to the year-end, for consideration of Council:

- Town Clock: £50.00 from Town Clock 'Celebration' to 'Energy'; and
- Training budget: £410.00 vired from 'Stationery and Equipment'.

The proposed virements were approved accordingly. Members congratulated the RFO in respect of the accuracy of the budget forecast, particularly as detail in respect of the Kickstart placement would have been unknown at that time; also, well done to Council for not only finishing the financial year 'on budget' but actually underspent.

There being no further queries regarding the Schedule of Accounts, presented items were approved for payment. Transfer of funds, as approved by Council, would be undertaken in the presence of the appropriate Member and Town Clerk, which was noted accordingly.

329) To receive and adopt the following Minutes of Council:

- a) Events Sub-Committee - 2nd February, 2022**
- b) Civic Meeting of Council - 2nd February, 2022**
- c) Policy Sub-Committee - 16th February, 2022**
- d) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 16th February, 2022**

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

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

Minutes approved were duly signed by the Mayor in the presence of Council.

331) National Salary Award 2021 / 2022

(N.B. Agreed rates of pay applicable from 1st April, 2021)

Consideration was given to the National Association of Local Councils' new pay scales for 2021 / 2022; the Clerk referred to the proposed pay scales, to be implemented and backdated from 1st April, 2021, reporting on the information received from the NALC.

It was unanimously agreed that Council support the implementation of the new NALC pay scales, to be backdated to 1st April, 2021. A Member proposed that, if possible, the salary increase and backdated pay award be implemented in the March payroll: Clerk to liaise with RFO accordingly.

332) Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report February 2022

To receive report to take effect during the financial year 2022 / 2023

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

Council noted all options in relation to allowances / payment for Members, approving only one Senior payment to the Leader at this time, emphasising that Senior roles and

allowances were agendaed on an annual basis for ratification at the Annual Meeting of Council.

Council noted and agreed the Determinations (No. 44-52 inclusive), subject to ratification at the Annual Meeting for approval of requirements pertinent to Tredegar Town Council as an individual community / town council.

333) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
- a) S. Cargill: Requesting permission to deliver a play session at Deighton Playing Fields on 19.04.2022, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.
 - Agreed; Clerk to respond and provide the criteria for appropriate use of the facility.
 - b) M. Howland: Consultation on potential Sirhowy Woodlands Base at Thomas Ellis Way; comments to be submitted by 18.03.2022 – **forwarded to relevant Members**
 - As a supporter of the Woodlands Group in a voluntary capacity, a Member provided some background information; whereupon, although Members acknowledged this matter was open to further discussion, Council wished to support the request.

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

- c) 1) Weekly lists of Licensing Applications, week ending 25.02.2022
- 2) Weekly lists of Licensing Applications, week ending 04.03.2022.
- i) Dukestown Workingmen's Club - Temporary Events Notice 21.02.2022.
 - Noted.

- 2) One Voice Wales
- a) Call for Case Studies (taking action on the climate emergency) as part of the Welsh Government's on-going climate-led stakeholder and public engagement programme, email Freshwater to express your interest. **(Forward to DH)**
 - b) National Forest for Wales News Programme update: launched online interactive map for tree planting locations. **(Forward to AET)**
 - c) Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: looking for plots of land or residential buildings that could accommodate Ukrainian refugees, deadline to complete form is 16.03.2022 – **forwarded to all Members**
 - Noted; suggest Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, as vacated by Local Authority - to be placed on TTC website.
 - d) Co-ordinating Volunteers to respond to emergency situations in Wales on 29.03.2022 at 1:00 - 2:30 p.m., book online via EventBrite – **forwarded to OVW representatives**
 - Noted.

3) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 11.03.2022; IWN Wellbeing Courses & Surveys: Deaf people affected by Dementia online support, Golden Melodies free session at Tredegar Library 09.03.2022 at 10:30 a.m. - 12.00 noon and Digital Inclusion Survey; Communicorp Clerks & Councils Direct March 2022, issue 140; BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 18.03.2022; OVW We want to help your community: My Tree, Our Forest scheme – **distributed to Members**: Received.

4) 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.

334) Planning:

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

- ii) a) List of planning applications received in week 9
- b) List of planning applications received in week 10

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

c) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2022/0050	Mr. O. Hallett 3 Stalybridge Terrace Factory Road Brynmawr	Resubmitted for further <u>clarification</u> : Change of use of a D1 Gospel Hall to a C3 residential property, Gospel Hall, Poplar Road.

Observations:

Council expressed concern and would like more clarity on the 'type of single dwelling' in respect of this development, as Members were aware "C3(b) covers up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care, e.g. supported housing schemes, such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. C3(c) allows for groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household." Therefore, Members were concerned on the type of client residing in such a facility and requested clarification.

C/2022/0053	Mr. G. Adams Horse Shoes Barn Llangattock Lingoed Abergavenny	Proposed side extension and associated alterations, 9 Maesglas.
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No objections

d) To consider other planning matters

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

- Councillor Bernard Willis said that the time had come for him, personally, to step down from Council – he said 'I wish you well in your direction and I know I have left Council in a good place – strong for the future' and offered his continued support if he could help in any way; he also thanked members of staff for their kindness. He was very, very proud of this Council having not increased the precept for the people of Tredegar. 'Thank you all, you have all been good friends. Thanks very much for your friendship.'
- Heads of the Valley Stationers – unfortunately, the store was due to close and the owners to retire after very many years, who would be greatly missed. Agreed: letter to be sent on behalf of Council and presentation of the 'Town Clock' clock.
- Lighting of Town Clock, support of Ukraine – a Member referred to the senseless loss of life ongoing in the Ukraine during what was a terrible, difficult time for the people. As a show of support in recognising this plight, it was agreed that the Clock be lit 'Yellow and Blue' each Wednesday, to show unanimous support across all parties and the community.

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

Chair