

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on
Wednesday, 4th January, 2023 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present: Councillors **G. Evans (Chair)**
A.E. Tippings
M. Turner
P. Cornlouer
D. Rowberry
K. Waldron
C. Walters
G. Walters

In attendance: Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne
RFO – Ms. A. Edwards

224) Apologies. Councillors **K. Phillips, G. Badham, A. Jones, E. Jones, P. Prosser, B. Rees, J. Thomas, H. Trollope and S. Trollope**

225) Declarations of Interest

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

226) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

The Mayor said, over the Christmas period, a lot of Members had not attended events and should make an effort, other than for work commitments. For example, to sing carols at the residential / care homes – only the Leader, Alun Davies A.M. and himself, as Mayor, had participated, visiting with chocolates and a box of biscuits. He considered there had been a disappointing show of Councillors since being appointed and he would urge everyone to place such commitments in their diary.

Councillor Rowberry highlighted that she had a personal reason for being unable to attend the event and assured Council of her continued commitment.

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

In respect of Sub-Committee meetings held prior to Council:

- **Performance Review Sub-Committee - Wednesday, 4th January, 2023**
 - The meeting was inquorate and therefore no formal business had been transacted.

228) Grants:

a) To receive and consider grants to Sporting and Cultural organisations (under the provision of the Local Govt. Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 s.19 and Local

Government Act 1972 s.137)

- None received.

b) To receive and consider grants to Churches & Chapels (s.137) - Grants as of 01.04.2017 now max £300.00 (before awarding a grant Council must be satisfied the grant is being given for non-religious purposes with the building being for community use)

- None received.

229) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
- a) K. Williams Re: Christmas Event. Thanks for the donation, really wonderful news and so good of Council.
- Noted.

Councillor D. Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.

- b) List of applications received, week ending 09.12.2022.
- c) i) List of applications received, week ending 16.12.2022.
1. New permanent street trading consent – Leanne Colwell
 2. Transfer of premise licence – Railway Tavern
- ii) List of applications received, week ending 23.12.2022.
1. Temporary event notice 31.12.2022 to extend hours – Dukestown Club
- Noted.

- 2) Sparkle Cleaning
- Price increase letter, rising from £11.50/hour to £15.00/hour on 1st January, 2023.
- Noted. Following a brief discussion, Members requested the following: breakdown on costs, look at other providers, compare employee / agency costs, as there was a need to review and undertake an appraisal.

Councillor P. Cornlouer joined the meeting at this juncture (6.49 p.m.)

- 3) Cllr M. Turner
- Re: Christmas Lights. Questions the validity of spending the amount Council does on Christmas Lighting with suggestions of scaling down the display, plus requesting financial support towards the display from local businesses.
- A Member voiced real misgivings on the value of the Christmas lights display, questioning the validity of an annual event that did not bring anything into the town except for that

one night, and only benefitted a few businesses; also, the placing of lights on the front of the shopping centre, who contributed nothing. At a time when people were struggling, the display cost more than some people earned in a year; the Member was not against provision, but suggesting the display should be downscaled. He suggested there were better ways that such monies could be spent, particularly as Council had just been presented with the budget, and needed to question all spend.

Another Member pointed out that Council had just entered into a three-year contract, suggesting there was nothing that could be done for the next two years, but supported raising the matter now, giving Council the opportunity to investigate expenditure and whether there were other ways to undertake this, e.g. goodwill of volunteers. However, she wholeheartedly supported provision of the Christmas lights display, bringing people into the town, also enhancing our reputation as a Town Council; the Member was aware of people who tried to be rid of town councils, and would not like to see a substantial reduction on such provision.

A Member said these were both valid points, however he had scrutinised the expenditure per night, which did reflect value for money. In the current financial climate, Council would certainly have to 'tighten their belts', and felt that money in / out did not match.

Another Member said, on considering other towns, the lighting was not provided by town councils and had been funded through sponsorship projects, e.g. 'buy a bulb', business forums, etc.

It was therefore agreed that a Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee be convened to investigate.

4) YesCymru

Asking for a donation towards their efforts to explore the possibilities and potential for an independent Wales (YesCymru is a non-party-political campaign for an independent Wales).

- Noted; Clerk to respond that Council felt unable to support the request and therefore declined to contribute.

5) R. Taylor-Davies TVTCTW meeting 13.01.2023 is postponed.

- Noted.

6) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 16.12.2022; Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum Agenda meeting Monday, 19th December, 2022 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; OVW Single Use Plastics Bill Infographic Material, Bill passed by the Senedd on 6th December, 2022; OVW Winter newsletter: Social Farms & Gardens; OVW Celebrate progress and innovation towards net zero at the Green Energy Awards, closing date for nominations 20.02.2023; OVW Older People's Commissioner for Wales December 2022 Newsletter; OVW Understanding the power of payroll savings scheme for employers and employees; Manchester City Council, Nuclear Free Wales at 40, Joint Cymru CND / Nuclear Free Local Authorities meeting at the Pierhead Building 06.12.2022. Copy of the Cardiff Declaration and media release; BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 30.12.2022; Communicorp Clerks & Councils Direct January 2023 Issue 145; OVW Make a positive start to 2023 with Regen's Green Energy Awards: looking for entries from innovative people, projects and organisations transforming our energy system towards net zero; Pen Bryn Oer Wind Farm community benefit fund 2023 flyer – **Twitter / website** – **distributed to Members:** Received.

7) AGENDA

None received.

230) Planning:

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

- ii) a) List of planning applications received in week 49
- b) List of planning applications received in week 50
- c) List of planning applications received in week 51

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 – *BGCBC Re: Planning Application C/2022/0327 - Proposal is for 5 flats rather than an HMO and enclosed copy of internal layout.*

Council was concerned with the proliferation of HMO premises that have a negative impact on the wellbeing of residents and businesses and would have preferred provision of larger family-orientated accommodation, e.g. two flats rather than five flats.

231) Updates regarding Bedwellty House and Park / Parc Bryn Bach - any issues to have been previously reported direct to the House Management / Aneurin Leisure personally

- A Member commended the level of creativity in arranging the display for the Christmas poster competition entries and Aneurin Leisure staff on arrangements for the family-orientated Christmas 'do' held; Council / the community were very fortunate to have such an excellent venue in our town.

232) 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** – No meeting
- b) **Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales** – No meeting
- c) **One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM** – No meeting
- d) **Tredegar Twinning** – No meeting
- e) **Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund** – No deadline: closes 8th March, 2023, TTC should consider an application, e.g. repainting of Park memorial gates.
- f) **School Governing Bodies** – Bryn Bach Primary: vacancy – Councillor Cornlouer had expressed an interest (Clerk to forward details accordingly); Georgetown Primary: the School had closed early due to the psychological effect of a member of staff tragically passing away.
- g) **Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum** – Meeting held but unfortunately no Members had been able to attend, therefore: no update.
- h) **Blaenau Gwent CAB** – No meeting.
- i) **Tredegar Business Forum** – met prior to Christmas to discuss points for 2023, e.g. problems with parking in the town, Alun Davies, A.M.; had attended, being extremely frank as to what could / could not be done in respect of expectations of businesses throughout the town - one issue raised was store personnel parking all day and not being 'ticketed'. The Business Forum was not currently in a very healthy position, struggling to get other businesses involved and bringing businesses together. A Member agreed there should be no favoritism, with everyone treated equally in relation to parking in town, as some shop owners parked all day in disability bays.
- j) **VVP / Tredegar Heritage Initiative** – a bid was being put together in respect of the project by Ken Davies and the THI was liaising with the family to make that happen. A Member said that Martin Jenkins had many photographs and would also like to form part of the exhibition. Councillor Chris Walters advised that anyone wishing to display an exhibition should contact him direct, as a staff member for Aneurin Leisure.

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

- 360° All Around Webcam – following the demonstration of the webcam provided by a Member, it was agreed that Council purchase the item at a cost of £109.99.

The Leader wished to bring to Members' attention the passing, earlier in the year, of a former Town Councillor - Jocelyn Jones – and wished to record this loss as a mark of respect to the former Member.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

_____ Chair