

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on Wednesday, 24th January, 2024 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors **K. Phillips (Chair)**
M. Turner
A.E. Tippings
G. Badham
E. Jones
B. Rees
D. Rowberry
J. Thomas
H. Trollope
S. Trollope
K. Waldron
C. Walters
G. Walters

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

284) Apologies. Councillors E. Griffin, A. Evans and A. Jones

At the approval of the Mayor, the Leader provided an update prior to the consideration of the formal agenda.

Notification had been received of redundancies in respect of the steelworks based in Port Talbot. Personally, the Leader felt this was a loss to people across South Wales; this was where the industry had started, and places all around South Wales were linked to the steel industry. He highlighted the destruction of this once great industry with great sadness, where plants had been shut and people transferred to Llanwern / Port Talbot, and now seeing exactly the same situation, with planning three-year timeline with the industry completely disappearing. People did not realise the number from the valleys who actually worked in Port Talbot, indirect or directly employed. This was a devastating blow as the UK would be the only G20 country in the world producing from amalgamated steel, and considered this a very sad decision. Personally, he considered this an end of an era dating back to the 1950s.

As a Council, it was agreed to write to Welsh / UK government as to what had happened to this industry, not just the impact on Tredegar but the whole of South Wales, as Government was allowing a great industry to wither away and also a letter to Trade Unions in support.

285) Declarations of Interest

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

286) To receive any verbal recommendations of all Sub-Committee / Working Party meetings held prior to Council

It was agreed the following recommendations of the Performance Review Sub-Committee held prior to Council be approved accordingly:

- Budget against Actual: the report was approved and the recommended Virements unanimously agreed for consideration of full Council, i.e.
 - **Stationery & Equipment** – vire £6,000.00 from *Comm. Prov: Special Projects / Events*
 - **Fees to Associations** – vire £96.00 from *Conference Fees*
 - **Town Clock: Maintenance Fee** – vire £145.00 from *Town Clock: Energy*
 - **Grants: s137** – vire £100.00 from *Grants: Sporting / Cultural*
- Draft estimates and Reserves to reflect the afore-mentioned budget proposals presented by Members;
- A Precept of 7.5% be agreed for 2024 / 2025.

287) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in January 2024

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.

- Amazon: the payment related to supplies for the public conveniences, i.e. new toilet roll holders, security light, cordless drill.
The RFO said that the cleaning operative had reported his hi viz bomber was shabby and enquired if Council wished the Officer to order a replacement – the cleaning operative had also referred to the bespoke polo shirts worn by office staff, whereupon it was agreed that the RFO order a replacement bomber jacket in orange, and two navy polo shirts, featuring the TTC logo.

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

288) Two Vacancies - Central & West Ward: nominations for consideration

The Clerk referred to the two vacancies in the Central and West Ward to be filled via the co-option process. On progressing, in accordance with the approved practice, only two expressions of interest had been received and, therefore, unless Members had a justifiable reason to decline, the applicants should be accepted accordingly.

Council welcomed anyone from the community that wished to come on board Town Council, and take on the role and the challenges that came with it.

Consideration was given to the two applications and, due to the vacancies being 'uncontested', were thereupon approved accordingly in respect of:

- Sunny Mavar
- Mandy (Amanda) Moore

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

- a) Events Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2023
- b) Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee - 6th December, 2023
- c) Civic Meeting of Council - 6th December, 2023
- d) Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee - 19th December, 2023
- e) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 20th December, 2023

It was agreed that all Minutes presented be moved en bloc as a true record.

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

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

291) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC
 - a) Re: Proposed town centre parking review, Commercial / Castle Street. Consultation starts today and on for 21 days – ***forwarded to all Members***
 - Noted; a Member said the plan was challenging to read; it appeared the whole of Castle Street was 'Blue' and it was difficult to ascertain the changes. There appeared to be only one bus stop at The Circle and the double yellow lines were to remain; also, there was a loss of disabled parking spaces in Commercial Street. When undertaking the consultation, Members said the Authority should have spoken with the community.

A Member said that it would have been welcome if Councillors had been invited on a walkaround, as this would have proven useful, which was agreed accordingly.
 - b) S. Cresswell Re: Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and include Access Strategy. Intention to review its Rights of Way Improvement plan.
 - Noted.
 - c) R. Hayden Re: Consultation with Town / Community Councils - Revenue Budget 2024 / 2025. Response to Cllr Turner's email above "This meeting has been scheduled for a final opportunity to consult on the developed budget report (if required). As you have requested, we do intend to undertake earlier consultation on

specific proposals and are currently looking for a convenient date / time. An invite will be forwarded shortly.”

- Noted. The Leader said that a concern had been raised that, when setting the precept, was that Town / Community Councils were unaware of the intentions of Blaenau Gwent. The four Town / Community Councils were working together for the benefit of the area and a meeting had therefore been requested prior to the budget-setting of Town / Community Councils being undertaken: to date, the Leader had written to the Authority but no date had been agreed.

A meeting of the Quarterly Liaison Committee had been arranged for 5th February and the Town / Community Councils would make their voices heard, as the Local Authority did not appear to be working with Town / Community Councils.

- d) A. Tippings Re: Visit by Bryn Bach Primary pupils
 - i) Asking if ok for visit to take place on 30.01.2024 and she will forward a draft programme for the day in due course.
 - ii) Itinerary for the day.
- Agreed, in principle; Deputy Leader had prepared a resumé to be used for the event, which would need to be laminated and asked that the Cleaning Operative clear the Clock base prior to the event.

2) Cllr Turner

Re: Holocaust Memorial Day 2024. Unavailable on 27th January so asking can someone else do the Clock lights at 5.00 p.m.

- Noted; Councillor J. Thomas agreed to undertake.

3) Coach & Horses

Re: Defibrillator request. Asking for an update.

- The RFO had submitted an application to the British Heart Foundation for funding, which unfortunately had been unsuccessful. A discussion ensued as to the location of the defibrillators throughout the Tredegar area and the Clerk said that all locations known to Town Council were published on the TTC website. Members suggested a visual aid

could be more helpful and a Member said locations were listed on the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust website.

It was suggested a programme could be compiled outlining a three-five year plan for Council to consider placing defibrillators in areas where there was currently a gap to ensure there was balanced access throughout Tredegar.

4) Marie Curie Hospice

Re: Great Daffodil Appeal. Asking if Council would consider a donation to the appeal to help fund local services.

- Noted; further information requested.

5) PUBLICATIONS

Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum Agenda for meeting Monday 15.01.2024 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 19.01.2024 and 26.01.2024; OVW Re: Governance and Policy Practice Development Officer. Introducing David Collins – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

Councillors E. Jones, D. Rowberry and J. Thomas declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.

292) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 02
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 03

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

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2024/0011	Mr. A. White 31 Alexandra Place Tredegar	Proposed garage extension, 31 Alexandra Place
<i>No objections</i>		
C/2024/0014	Mr. A. Waldron Waldron Commercials Ltd. 29 Tafarnaubach Ind. Estate Tredegar	Proposed demolition works of garage, Glyn Garage, Glyn Terrace.

No objections:

Previously, residents had been anxious over a number of years as to what development would be placed there and this good news was welcomed.

C/2024/0016	Mr. R. Dunning Linga Longa Twyn Star Tredegar	Installation of photovoltaic panels to roof of clubhouse, Bedwellty Park Bowls Club, 1-2 Lower Salisbury Street.
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No objections

C/2024/0019	Mr. Garland M & J (Europe) Ltd. Unit 28 Tafarnaubach Ind. Estate access road Units 22 Training Centre Tredegar	Proposed two storey office extension to the side elevation, Unit 28 Tafarnaubach Ind. Estate access road Units 22 Training Centre.
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No objections

C/2024/0020	Mr. R. Field FTAA Limited 6 High Street Crickhowell	Detached dwelling, land adjacent to Meadow View, Rhoslan.
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No objections

c) To consider other planning matters – a Member referred to ongoing works at the Trefil quarry; the first phase of the application had outlined the re-seeding of areas overburdened. The development was now at Stage 4, but no work had been done in respect of Stage one. Therefore, Council would ask if planning conditions were being delivered; if not, that Planning instruct the developer to undertake remediation in order to allay residents' concerns.

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

- Barclays Bank in Tredegar was planning to close the Branch in January 2025, leaving the nearest banking facilities in Newport and Cardiff – Members expressed concern of this closure, as this was the last bank in the town and was a very busy Branch. It was recognised this was a problem in Wales, Council could ask for Link report to be undertaken, reporting on facilities in the local area, access to banking services; however a Member said the issue being the Post Office. Residents could request a banking hub, i.e. a building to be used certain days of the week for a specific bank. Members were very disappointed as, when closing the Ebbw Vale Branch, it had been understood this would give the Tredegar Branch more time.

A Member expressed concerned that customers, who needed to go into the Branch, would now need to travel to Newport; she could not understand their judgement / thinking. Businesses could be facing a situation whereby they would have to stop accepting cheques on a customer base. The Member did not particularly wish to use the Post Office, as she did not have confidence in the service, bearing in mind the recent negative publicity and would therefore need to consider moving her account to another local branch.

It was suggested that banks were forcing customers to use online banking, and within the financial services sector, banks were becoming a thing of the past.

A Member totally agreed: just for information, Blaenau Gwent CBC was writing to Barclays, asking for a meeting with Executive / Officers. He said if community groups paid in at Post Office, the groups could not withdraw money, and a group in Cefn Golau had transferred to the Credit Union. Another Member said that many organisations now used BACs rather than cheque. A number of Members expressed concern that the automated teller machines were not reliable, a Member had even experienced missing payments / money when using the auto-teller.

Members expressed dissatisfaction at the closure and it was suggested Council campaign to overturn this decision. It was therefore proposed that Council write to Barclays Bank to make a stand, as there was a generation of people not having internet banking and personal assistance was very important for customers, e.g. people withdrawing monies under duress.

- Update re. Bedwellty House & Park - grant funding – positive news, funding of £75,000 awarded to Parc Bryn Bach; £58,000 for the tennis courts and £75,000 for the play areas in Bedwellty House and Park.
- Proposed felling at Dyffryn Cwannon – a Member referred to rumours of tree-felling and commoners had been informed the trees would be transported through the village. Residents had not been told of the clearance; the Member asked, as the nominated TTC representative for Brecon Beacons, to raise this matter, which was agreed accordingly.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.51 p.m.

_____ Chair