

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

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

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

In attendance: Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne
RFO – Ms. A. Edwards
KS Placement – Miss B Flowers

By invitation: Welsh Assembly Member, Alun Davies

291) Apologies. Councillors S. Rees, A. Jones, E. Jones, J. Thomas and S. Trollope
A Member informed Council of the sad loss of Paul Hopkins; with Paul there was no black and white – he was ‘red all over’ ... Red Rose / Flag / Labour Party. Paul led a life of service, firstly in the Air Force, then the postal service and, in later years, as Town / County Borough Mayor on both Tredegar Town Council and Blaenau Gwent. Paul was a fine and loyal representative of the Council, always having trust in him to do a good job in representing our town. Members were very sorry to hear the sad news and thoughts were with the family at this time.

Council observed a Minute silence as a mark of respect.

292) Declarations of Interest

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

293) Alun Davies, A.M. - to provide an update on the work he is undertaking and inviting any questions of Members

The Chair extended a welcome to Assembly Member, Alun Davies, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council to respond to concerns regarding anti-social behaviour of off-road vehicles and provide an update on work being undertaken, and thereupon respond to any questions raised.

The Assembly Member was grateful to Council for allowing time and the opportunity to speak to Members on shared ambitions for the town, and what could be done together. He thereupon provided an update:

- Chartist Walk / off-road vehicles – there were some real issues with these individuals borough-wide and a lot of work had been undertaken over recent years to deal with this problem. However, on collectively emerging from the pandemic, all parties would be better able to work together.

A Member said that Mynydd Llangynidr was deemed a SSSI area and the Police did not seem to recognise the importance of this status. NRW did not appear to be involved in activities to prevent the destruction of this SSSI site and all parties needed to work together to ascertain what was being done in this specific area. Another Member also expressed concern in respect the reinstating of land to the same / better condition on ceasing works to quarry sites, such as the Trefil, and how this was monitored by the National Park Authority.

The Assembly Member was aware that the NRW had been instructed by Welsh Government to strongly focus on flooding and SSSI's, although being a designated area, may not receive the level of protection the sites required. There was a need to invest in protecting sites of special interest and hoped that any change in destinations would be considered when developing a new Agricultural Policy.

- Working with Tai Calon Community Housing to ascertain what they considered were the challenges and undertaking a walkabout of some of the housing estates, e.g. how to target hard to reach areas, ASB, littering, ensuring people felt safe in their homes, etc.
- Dentistry – concerns were raised as to the lack of NHS provision in dental practices throughout Blaenau Gwent, other than for emergency appointments. The Assembly Member said that discussions were ongoing with the Health Board and the Health Minister with regard to a compromise relating to primary care of general practitioners and dentistry, as independent practitioners with the NHS could withdraw that contract at any time. One possible solution would be to insist that every dentist and general practitioner worked in the industry for an agreed number of years.

In respect of the Grange University Hospital, there was a need to consider how to deal with health care, i.e. the Out of Hours Service and provision of the ambulance service, and a need to liaise with both trade unions and individual paramedics. A Member referred to the travel time to attend the Grange and residents' feedback suggested that it would have been more prudent to invest in Prince Charles Hospital, as patients should be able to attend the nearest A&E in time of need.

The Assembly Member said that care at the Grange was relatively short-term, providing specialist care in respect of serious cases, and patients moved to facilities nearer to their home for recovery.

- A Member referred to support provided to community groups by Welsh Government and the Local Authority in respect of allocation of funding, as the pandemic had proven a tough period, not only for the community but also for volunteers.

The Assembly Member agreed it had been inspiring to see the support available, on

visiting a venue, to note the food / supplies in place. Tredegar Task Force was considered the flagship for community support and there was constant discussion as to how this expertise could be rolled out elsewhere throughout the County Borough. He had written to the Managing Director of BGCBC in respect of sharing knowledge / expertise and how this could be developed across the County Borough, and received a comprehensive response, which he would be pleased to share with Members.

- Inward Investment – a Member referred to the inward investment in undertaking regeneration to The Circle, Tredegar, of which the community was proud; and the Tredegar Advisory Board had consisted of a well-knitted group of representatives. Abertillery and Ebbw Vale had received substantial investment and the Member said that that next area requiring regeneration in Tredegar was the shopping precinct, as this was an eyesore. Welsh Government was looking to distribute a ‘slush’ fund across Blaenau Gwent and consideration was needed as to how to encourage people into town centres, i.e. regular transport, rather than using their own vehicle to visit supermarkets.

Councillor D. Rowberry joined the meeting at this juncture (6.36 p.m.)

- Home sprinkler systems / fire precautions – a Member referred to the development of new homes in Wales whereby the developer would have to invest some £3-5,000.00 per house to install a sprinkler system and had previously sought an answer as to the evidence-base for this. The Assembly Member said that the evidence arose from a Campaign by the Fire Brigade Union, whereby a lot of work had been undertaken by fire staff in delivering the Campaign; initial legislation had been put in place some fifteen years previously to allow the building industry time to adapt and undertake research.

There were different issues in terms of affordable / social housing in the Valleys and there was a need to consider how this would be delivered, as there remained a demand for social housing that was not being met. There was an epidemic of homelessness and individuals were being moved into areas such as Blaenau Gwent from Cardiff / Torfaen / Newport, away from their support network and consideration was needed in respect developing housing specific to these needs.

The Chair extended the thanks of Council to the Alun for the comprehensive update and sharing this information, which was greatly appreciated. The Assembly Member thereupon left the meeting.

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

The meeting of the Policy Sub-Committee held prior to this meeting of Council had been inquorate, and had continued on an informal basis, with proposals agreed for presentation to Council to formulate appropriate recommendations accordingly.

It was therefore agreed that the following recommendations, based on the proposals of the Policy Sub-Committee, be approved:

- **Policy Sub-Committee - 16th February, 2022**

The following Policies, as reported by Officers and subject to the amendments outlined, were unanimously approved:

- Tredegar Town Council - Risk Management Policy
- Standing Orders
- Internal Financial Controls
- Financial Regulations
- Pension Policy

295) To receive a report on the War Memorial annual maintenance contract

Consideration was given to the report of the RFO, which provided feedback in respect of the decision of Council to seek comparative quotations in respect of the War Memorial annual maintenance contract. The report outlined the responses of the five companies invited to tender; none of which had replied by the deadline specified. The RFO therefore sought observations of Members as to how Council wished to move forward.

The RFO responded to questions raised in respect of the details of the contract, i.e. DOFF cleaning three per year, repointing and goldleaf, repair of damage, with feedback to the office. Council approved the continuation of the annual maintenance contract with the current provider, suggesting future consideration could be given to whether three visits were essential – perhaps two may suffice, one prior to the Armistice events and one in the Spring.

It was unanimously agreed that the quote submitted by the Council's current contractor, War Memorial Restoration Company, be approved as follows:

- Maintenance excluding soldier
- Annual DOFF
- Three visits per year to clean / maintain gilded lettering and to check pointing

296) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in January 2022; and receive an update on Internal Auditor recommendations

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.

Schedule of Payments

- LITE Ltd. – a replacement cheque had been issued as a message had been received that the signatures had not met the bank mandate; all other cheques issued that month had cleared, therefore, a reminder that all signatories needed to sign as accurately as possible.
- British Gas – contract due for renewal from 31st March, 2022; the RFO had undertaken research via utility brokers, however availability was very limited, as Council currently paid by cheque. Valda Energy was offering a three-year contract that was cheaper than British Gas, with a saving of £395.00 each year. Therefore, the Officer sought observations whether Council wished to remain with British Gas or pursue a contract with Valda Energy, as the new supplier.

Following a brief discussion of the information provided, it was agreed that the RFO undertake further analysis with feedback reported to the next Ordinary meeting of Council for consideration.

There being no further queries regarding the Schedule of Accounts, presented items were approved for payment and transfer of funds. 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 (remotely) and Town Clerk, which was noted accordingly.

Internal Auditor Recommendations

- The RFO drew Members attention to the spreadsheet, which outlined progress to date and intended course of action for each Recommendation, which was accepted accordingly.
- Auditor's Report 2020 / 2021 – Recommendations 1-5
The RFO highlighted an amendment to Recommendation No. 2 under 'Completion', to read: "Will review at end of financial year 31.3.2022.", which was accepted accordingly.

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

- a) Performance Review Sub-Committee - 5th January, 2022
- b) Civic Meeting of Council - 5th January, 2022
- c) Performance Review Sub-Committee - 19th January, 2022
- d) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 19th January, 2022

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

298) 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.

299) Correspondence

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

- 1) BGCBC
 - a) Pre-Application Consultation period for the proposal: To establish a New 210-place Welsh Medium Primary School and 28-place Childcare Facility, commences 07.02.2022 and concludes 06.03.2022 – **forwarded to all Members**
 - Members confirmed that their views had not changed since this proposal had been presented to Council previously. It was agreed that the concerns forwarded to BGCBC at that time be re-issued, and that the Clerk liaise with Councillor D. Jones on

appropriate wording, and that both supporting and opposing views be relayed accordingly.

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

d) Weekly lists of Licensing Applications, week ending 28.01.2022.

- Noted.

2) One Voice Wales

a) Welsh Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 Pre-Consultation – **forwarded to all Members**

b) Report on Section 47 Multi Location Meetings – **forwarded to all Members**

c) Information on Swifts * *place on TTC website / Twitter*

d) Welsh Government's 'Consultation on how to measure the inclusion of migrants in Wales', deadline for responses 25.03.2022.

- Noted.

3) Cllr A.E. Tippings

Black History Wales Race Council Cymru request to support the program.

- Noted; Members were asked to support the program and sign up as individual Councillors, and that Tredegar Town Council show support as an organisation; agreed to also circulate to all Schools.

4) Cllr J. Thomas

Requesting if we can turn the Town Clock pink one night and blue the next to tribute the two children who passed away.

- Council wholly supported the request, which was considered a lovely idea, and to light the Clock column.

5) S. Arnold

Decision Notice C/2022/0012, approval for Southend Allotment Tree Cutting: requesting if Council will give consideration for completing and paying for these works.

- It was unanimously agreed that the expenditure be approved for the works to three trees within the allotment subject to a Tree Preservation Order: Clerk to liaise with the Allotments Association to obtain a quotation for the works for subsequent approval.

6) Integrated Well-being Network Collaborative Evaluation re: request to complete a survey regarding people's experiences of the Well-being Networks:
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/well-beingcollaborative/>

- Noted; forward to all Members.

7) Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean commences 25.03.2022 until 10.04.2022.

- Noted; to undertake a litterpick of the Aneurin Bevan Stones: Clerk to liaise.

8) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 11.02.2022; Play Wales Play for Wales issue 58, Winter 2021; GAVO Levelling Up White Paper fund published summary – **forwarded to all Members**; IWN Wellbeing information, Tai-Calon righter Futures Funding opportunity & MS Society social – **added to website & Twitter / forwarded to all Members**; BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 18.02.2022; OVW Nature and Us, the national conversation about Wales' natural environment campaign, commences 17.02.2022 – **added to Twitter & website / forwarded to all Members**; OVW Opportunities and Events: Recruitment of new Board members, closes 28.02.2022 at 4.00 p.m. – **forwarded to all Members - distributed to Members**: Received.

9) 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.

300) Planning:

a) i) To consider an Officer's Report (if received)

- ii) a) List of planning applications received in week 5
b) List of planning applications received in week 6

b) Verbal report of the Planning Committee, if any

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

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2022/0021	Mr. J. Brown Min Y Coed Merthyr Road Princetown	Variation of condition 1 to include 3 No. velux type rooflights to two storey extension, Min Y Coed.
No objections	Tredegar	

C/2022/0023 Mr. N. Philpotts 4 Meadow Crescent Tredegar Single storey rear extension and demolition of existing garage & construction of new garage, 4 Meadow Crescent.

No objections

C/2022/0028 Mr. D. Richards Ty-Gwyn Rhyd Terrace Tredegar Proposed steelwork stairs and balcony at rear of property, Ty-Gwyn, Rhyd Terrace.

No objections

C/2022/0035 Mr. P. Woodward 13 Western Crescent Tredegar Replacement detached bungalow, 13 Western Crescent.

No objections

C/2021/0365 Nantyrhyd The Rhyd Tredegar Reconsultation: Proposed two storey front extension, side extension, basement extension and balconies to front and side, Nantyrhyd, The Rhyd.

No objections

d) To consider other planning matters

Cllr. J. Hill – Full planning application for the extension of Trefil Quarry: ‘meeting was held on 15.02.2022, but it is still unclear if a Section 73 planning application to vary a condition on the road that runs into the Park’s land will be presented to the Park.’ *Noted: Clerk to forward to Members, on request.*

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

- Former Job Centre – various parties were working hard to raise the profile of the town and this building was in a state of disrepair, with windows broken and rubbish everywhere. Youngsters were using the place to congregate and there were concerns this could be a fire hazard. A Member suggested there was a need to approach the owner to resolve these issues. It was considered this was a matter for the Local Authority to make the building safe, who could seek reimbursement from the owner accordingly.
It was noted, however, there was possibly a change in ownership in the near future with a view to the building being demolished.
- Public Toilets – Members suggested that visitors were unaware of the location of the toilets and said that the matter of the signage needed to be resolved, and that Tredegar Town Council operated and maintained the toilets be promoted.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

Chair