

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes - Town Clerk/RFO

Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina NP13 3BN
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Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held via a remote meeting on Tuesday 8th September 2020

A meeting to which members of the public were entitled to attend.

Present: Councillor D Hillman, Chair of Planning & Highways Committee
Councillors K Jones; C Hillman; K Jenkins; R Pagett & G Morvan.

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer

Prior to the commencement of the meeting it was proposed that there was a five minute recess at the end of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting and for those present to re-dial back into the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting. **Resolved Unanimously.**

The Town Clerk informed that there were no members of the public present. **Resolved** to note the information received.

Declaration of Interest

Members were invited to declare matters of interest either at the beginning or at any time during the proceedings. Members were reminded that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that no such declarations were received.

1. Apologies for absence:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence and to formally resolve to accept.

Resolved to note that apologies were received from Councillor L Harris; G Watkins; R Abbas; C Bridgeman; T James & L Emanuel.

Further Resolved to accept the apologies received.

2. Correspondence:

Members were invited to consider the listed correspondence, plus with the Chairman's permission, any urgent information that might be received prior to the date of the meeting.

a) Welsh Government:

Newsletter – August 2020.

The Town Clerk informed Members that Councillor G Watkins had commented (via e-mail) that it was pleasing to note that the Welsh Government were committed to the Decarbonisation Programme and that it was hoped that environmentally friendly changes working practices could be maintained to some extent such as working from home to reduce traffic congestion, staggered start times on public traffic to reduce overcrowding on public transport etc.

The Chair stated this thanks for Councillor Watkins' comments.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

E-mail informing of 'Responding to Planning Applications' – Online Training.

It was noted that this training was at a cost of £30 per delegate and the Town Clerk confirmed that there was provision made within the budget for training.

The Chair informed that such training would be valuable for Members in assisting to consider planning applications more effectively.

Resolved that Councillors G Morvan; K Jenkins; D Hillman and C Hillman attend the training.

3. Decisions taken under delegated powers during August 2020:

a) **Planning Applications:**

i Plan Application No. C/2020/0174 – Land East of Blaina Road, Brynmawr:

Signs associated with drive thru- coffee, including fascia signs to building, roof mounted signs, free standing poster stands.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

ii Plan Application No. C/2020/0172– 4 Henwaen Street, Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent, NP13 3DU

Erect a first-floor extension.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

Additional application with permission of the Chair:

iii Plan Application No. C/2020/0168 – 1-7 Rhes Yr Ysgol, Cwmcelyn Road, Blaina

Retention of one detached and six semi-detached 2 storey houses (not constructed in accordance with planning approval C/2014/0257).

Members were informed that there were a number of queries in respect of this application which had recently been clarified by the Planning Officer, of which Members present were informed of.

Resolved that the following representations be made:

- **Drainage:** The apparent contract between Blaenau Gwent CBC and Dwr Cymru; conflicting statements as to the use of the mains sewer or existing drainage system.
- **Car Parking:** Reduction in the car parking spaces due to a sustainability calculation.

- **Retaining Wall:** Concerns as to the specification and build of the retaining wall and subsequent safety regime.
- **Retention application:** Queries as to the response of the Planning Authority and initial involvement of Building Control as the properties had not been built in accordance with the original planning approval (C/2014/0257).

Resolved to support the decisions taken

4 Planning Applications:

- i Plan Application No: C/2020/0188 – Llys Nanty Y Mynydd, Hospital Road, Nantyglo, Gwent, NP23 4LY

Three storey extension to existing building to provide a new lift and amendments to parking.

It was commented that the additional lift would be of great benefit to residents and that the extension was in keeping with the main building.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

5. Licence Applications:

Members were invited to consider the application(s):

No applications received to date.

Resolved accordingly.

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Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held via a remote meeting on Tuesday 8th September 2020

A meeting to which members of the public were entitled to attend.

Present: Councillor G Morvan, Chair of Finance & General Purpose Committee
Councillors K Jones; K Jenkins; D Hillman & C Hillman.

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer

The Town Clerk informed that there were no members of the public in attendance.

Declaration of Interest

Members were invited to declare matters of interest either at the beginning or at any time during the proceedings. Members were reminded that all declarations must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that Mrs T Hughes and Mrs N Horner declared an interest in item no. 7b.

1. Apologies for absence:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence and to formally resolve to accept.

Resolved to note that apologies were received from Councillor L Harris; G Watkins; R Abbas; C Bridgeman; L Emanuel; R Pagett & T James.

Further Resolved to note the apologies received.

2. Correspondence:

Members were invited to consider the listed correspondence, plus with the Chairman's permission, any urgent information that might be received prior to the date of the meeting.

a) Police & Crime Commissioner:

E-mail informing of available funding to support children & young people:

It was suggested to forward details of the e-mail to all other youth groups throughout Nantyglo and Blaina and also to investigate if the funding would be suitable for the Town Council to apply for.

Resolved to forward the details to all youth groups within Nantyglo and Blaina and **Further Resolved** to investigate if the funding would be suitable for the Town Council to apply for.

b) Friends Cwrt Mytton Care Homes:

Letter of thanks in respect of donation.

Resolved to note the information received.

c) One Voice Wales:

i Training:

Members were informed of additional information in respect of training modules offered by One Voice Wales and these details would be circulated to all Members.

The cost of the training was £30 per person as the Town Council was a member of One Voice Wales and there was a possibility of the Chair (Town Mayor) and the Chair of Finance accessing free training places.

Resolved to circulate details of the training modules available to all Members.

li E-mails informing of 'gift card' scam and 'Microsoft' scam calls:

The Chair informed that Gwent Police had also publicised the same advice.

Councillor Gill Watkins had commented (via e-mail) that 'fake websites' were also to be aware of. Such sites appeared to be genuine sites such as Microsoft but were 'fake screens' which were used to gain access to personal data.

Resolved to note the information received.

d) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

E-mail response from Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Members thanked Councillor Daniels for his informative response and the information contained within. It was noted by all in attendance that increased home and remote working could possibly lead to a loss of jobs in the future.

Resolved to note the information received.

e) Aneurin Bevan University Health Board:

E- mail informing of the Grange University Hospital.

Members welcomed the additional facilities the hospital would bring to the wider Gwent area but commented that it would not prove to impact negatively on the areas served by Nevill Hall and the Royal Gwent Hospitals. The current roadworks could prove to be an issue in accessing the hospital the short term.

As Members of the Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council, Councillors D & C Hillman would be attending a remote meeting of the Community Health Council on 9th September 2020 and would provide an update at the next meeting of the Council.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that Councillors D & C Hillman provide an update at the next meeting of the Council in respect of the Community Health Council meeting.

Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chair:

f) Blaenau Gwent Foodbanks:

E-mail of thanks received in respect of recent donation.

The Town Clerk informed Members of the e-mail received which also detailed the number of families and children within Nantyglo and Blaina that had benefitted from the foodbank since March 2020. Members were additionally informed that this information had been uploaded onto the Town Council website.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** to agenda possible further donations to the Foodbank at the next meeting of the Town Council.

g) Wales Air Ambulance Charity:

Letter of thanks and confirmation of receipt of recent financial donation received from the Town Council.

Resolved to note the information received.

h) Lloyds Bank:

Letter of apology and offer of financial compensation in respect of Town Council's complaint regarding online banking.

The Town Clerk informed Members of the contents of the letter including the offer of £500 compensation in respect of Lloyds Bank agreeing with and upholding the Town Council's complaint in respect of the issues and difficulties with Internet Banking.

Resolved that the Town Council accepts the offer of £500 compensation, **Further Resolved** to request the letter from Lloyds Bank in respect of Torfaen County Borough Council and **Additionally Resolved** not to contact the Financial Services Ombudsman in respect of the complaint.

3. **Decisions taken under delegated powers during August 2020:**

a) Payment to Local Government Pension Scheme:

Members were informed that due to ongoing issues with online banking, the outstanding LGPS payments have now been paid to Torfaen CBC via Lloyds Bank CHAPS secure system (free of charge).

Resolved that the outstanding LGPS payments be paid via Lloyds Bank CHAPS system free of charge.

Resolved to support the action taken.

4. **Meetings of the Town Council:**

Members received a verbal update in respect of governing legislation.

The Town Clerk informed that information regarding civic meetings had been received from Andrew Parker (Liaison Officer at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council), Welsh Government, Health & Safety Executive, One Voice Wales and the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action. The current legislation which governed Wales in respect of civic meetings and the position at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council was summarised as:

- Staff at Blaenau Gwent CBC were still working remotely, and all Council meetings were also taking place via remote methods. Currently there was no planned date for a return to

office working or holding meetings within the Council Chamber although this was likely to be reviewed in the New Year

- There was a need for a clear and demonstrable business reason as to why meetings should take place in person
- The Welsh Government holds virtual / remote meetings and advises other public bodies to hold remote meetings
- The Town Clerk also informed that the Council Chamber dimensions had been measured and did not facilitate for the prescribed social distancing required. Neither did the Council Chamber have a separate entrance & exit as required
- Community Centres were currently allowed to open/host for certain prescribed activities such as: health & well-being; business activities; for use by the voluntary sector for essential activities such as blood donation & foodbanks.

A discussion ensued whereby Members expressed surprise at the restrictive nature of the prescribed activities that Community Centres were allowed to facilitate but accepted that the current situation with the virus appeared to be escalating once again. Members agreed that the Council needed to continue to adopt caution and that the business of the Council (meetings) could still take place remotely until circumstances allowed otherwise.

Resolved to note the information received. **Further Resolved** that meetings of the Council continue to be held via remote methods until circumstances allowed otherwise and **Additionally Resolved** that updated information be provided to Council in a timely manner.

5 Application to the Community Grant Fund:

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s), plus with the Chairman's permission any additional applications that might be received prior to the date of the meeting. Members were also reminded of that applications would need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

- a) None received to date.

Resolved accordingly.

6. Salem Chapel:

Members were invited to consider the attached inspection reports:

- July 2020:
Queries were invited – none received.

Resolved that the report be approved.

- August 2020:

Queries were invited:

- The report stated there was a considerable amount of new damp formed inside the Chapel which was very concerning?

It was explained that as the building was empty and unused due to the dry rot, further deterioration was to be expected within the building. This issue would not improve without substantial remedial works.

Resolved that the report be approved.

7. Confidential Information:

The following item(s) might contain information that was of a confidential or personal nature and was therefore exclusive to Members of the Town Council only. (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

a) Precept, Income and Expenditure Report:

Members were invited to consider the Precept, Income and Expenditure Report for:

- July 2020:
Queries were invited – none received.

Resolved that the report be approved.

- August 2020:
Queries were invited – none received.

Resolved that the report be approved.

*The Town Clerk and Assistant Officer declared an interest in the next item and offered to leave the meeting. **Proposed and Resolved** that both the Town Clerk and the Assistant Officer remain in the meeting but not take part in the discussion.*

b) Annual Pay Award 2020/21 – National Agreement (copy attached):

Members were invited to consider the attached information from SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) regarding the national pay agreement.

Members were informed that:

- The Town Council had adopted the National Agreement regarding wages and employment terms
- The pay agreement was 2.75% (the Town Council included an amount of 3% for any such wage agreement in its budget and precept report for 2020/21)
- The agreement also increased annual leave to 22 days (pro rata for part time employees) for employees with less than five years' service
- The agreement was to be implemented as from 1st April 2020

Members discussed the information detailed above and agreed that as the Town Council had adopted the National Agreement the Annual Pay Award and annual leave provision be approved as detailed above.

Resolved that the Annual Pay Award and annual leave provisions as specified in the Annual Pay Award for 2020/21 (as detailed above) be approved from 1st April 2020.