

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held at 1.00pm on Tuesday 22nd June 2021 via a remote meeting

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

Present: Councillor D Hillman, Town Mayor, presiding
Councillors G Morvan; C Hillman; K Jones JP; L Harris and K Jenkins

Due to time constraints it was proposed and **Resolved** that the Town Council meeting take place prior to the Events Committee Meeting.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk confirmed that no members of the press or public were in attendance. **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. Please note that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that no such declarations were received.

1. Apologies:

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

Resolved to note that apologies were received from Councillors L Emanuel; M Williams & G Watkins. **Further Resolved** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for June 2021.

The Town Mayor informed that due to Covid 19 and the ongoing restrictions there were no activities at the moment although the Mayors Blog was in the process of being updated.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 24th May 2021 (pages 181 – 183)

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

4. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held 24th May 2021 (pages 001 - 005)**

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

page 3(ii) – add ‘Councillor Ken Jones made recent history as being Town Mayor for two consecutive years’.

Page 4 – add ‘Councillor D Hillman thanked staff at Blaina Community Centre’.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

5. **Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 8th June 2021 (pages 006 - 009)**

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

Councillor K Jones JP thanked Councillor D Hillman for chairing the Committee Meeting in his absence.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

6. **Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 8th June 2021 (pages 010 - 013)**

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

page 10 (Declarations of interest) – add ‘ Councillor C Hillman’.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

7. **Correspondence:**

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

a) Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council (for information):

i Patients Voice News Bulletin – Issue 41, Spring 2021.

Resolved to note the information received.

ii. Meeting of Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council on 24th June 2021.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Public Health Wales (for information):

i Covid 19 – request for experiences of supporting your local community or volunteering during the pandemic.

Resolved to note the information received.

- ii Study into community-led support in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.
Resolved to note the information received.
- c) Bowel Cancer UK (for information):
E-mail informing of patient engagement group for people affected by bower cancer in Wales.
Resolved to note the information received.
- d) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (for information):
Information re: BioBlitz at Cwmcelyn Ponds and Parc Nan-y-Waun on 18th June 2021.
Resolved to note the information received.
- e) Dyfed-Powys Police (for information):
Information re: mobile phone upgrade scam.
Members were informed that the information had been displayed on the Town Council website.
Resolved to note the information received.
- f) Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (for information):
Vaccination update – weeks commencing 14/06/2021 & 21/06/2021.
Resolved to note the information received.
- g) Blaenau Gwent Foodbank (for information):
E-mail confirming receipt and thanks in respect of recent (June 2021) financial donation.
Resolved to note the information received.
- h) Tenovus Cancer Care (for information):
E-mail of thanks in respect of recent (June 2021) financial donation and confirmation of an engraved message for the dedication tree.
Resolved to note the information received.

Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chairman:

- i) One Voice Wales (for information):
Details of training courses and modules taking place during June and July 2021.
Resolved to note the information received.
- j) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (for information):
News release informing of Community Hubs Launch in Blaenau Gwent.
Resolved to note the information received.

k) Gwent Police (for information):

E-mail informing of Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15th June 2021 containing links to additional information and support.

Resolved to note the information received.

l) Valleys Regional Park (for information):

Information in respect of Environmental Volunteering at Bryn Bach Park, Tredegar.

Resolved to note the information received.

8. **Donations to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank:**

Members were informed of the continuing thanks by the manager of Blaenau Gwent Foodbank, Mr Wayne Evans, in respect of the Town Council's financial donations made during the financial year 2020/21. As resolved at the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting which took place on 13th April 2021, Members were requested to consider providing further financial donations to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank in light of the continuing Covid 19 situation and the financial hardship as a result.

Members considered the continuing issues and hardship within Nantyglo and Blaina due to Covid 19 and agreed that the financial donation were used appropriately.

Resolved that a £200 donation be made to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank for both June and July 2021. **Further Resolved** that the issue of additional financial donations be agended on a monthly basis for further consideration.

9. **Application to the Community Grant Fund:**

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s). Members were also reminded that applications would need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

a) *None received to date*

Resolved accordingly.

10. **Planning Applications:**

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s).

a) Plan Application No. C/2021/0178 – 16 Bryn Oyre, Upper Coed Cae, Nantyglo:

First floor balcony to the side elevation with a new opening from the first floor to the balcony.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

11. **Licensing Applications:**

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.

None received to date.

Resolved accordingly.

12. Members' Updates:

Members were invited to inform and provide updates of any recent activities and/or concerns:

a) Councillor D Hillman:

IRPW Review – Member Remuneration:

Councillor Hillman informed that the IRPW Review was very informative and provided some startling comparisons & differences between Town & Community Councils in Wales: Barry Town Council had a precept of £1.5million and a staff of 25 whilst Llanelli Town Council had a precept of £3million. It was discussed and anticipated that there would be an increase in devolved services for Town & Community Councils. Members agreed that at the present time, Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council did not have either the precept or staff to cope with any devolved services.

The £150 basic allowance available to all Town & Community Councillors in Wales was also discussed at the event with many representatives agreeing that the allowance should be mandatory whilst some agreeing that the allowance should be increased. Members compared the basic allowance of £150 per annum to the basic allowance for Members of Principal Authorities (e.g. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council) of approximately £13,000 per annum.

Councillor Hillman also informed that IT systems within Town & Community Councils were discussed at the review and a request was made for help and support to Town/Community Councils with this (supported by other Town /Community Councils) which was being considered by the IRPW.

Mutual Gain:

Councillor Hillman informed that a fund of £265,000 was available to organisations within Blaenau Gwent to assist with well-being after Covid. Representatives of organisations can apply to join the Mutual Gain panel and it was requested that applications in respect of funding for projects were invited. One such project was from Victoria Street allotments, Blaina regarding the provision of ladies toilets. Councillor Hillman informed that a three minute film with information and the amount requested was required as an application was funding. Councillor Hillman also informed that he had enquired as to the Town Council being able to apply and had also informed many other local organisations of the fund. The panel were to establish terms and conditions very soon and then to invite the video applications in respect of the funding. Members agreed that the panel and funding available was an excellent idea and it was hoped that it would bring communities together within Nantyglo and Blaina.

Members thanked Councillor D Hillman for his detailed and informative updates.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Councillor G Morvan:

Larger Councils Committee – One Voice Wales:

Councillor Morvan informed that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

would affect Town & Community Councils in a number of ways:

- In April 2022, all Town / Community Councils must prepare and publish an annual report which sets out its priorities, activities and achievements (OVW to provide guidance).
- In May 2022, Councils must consider training for all members and staff and publish a training plan from November 2022. OVW modules can be considered as a starting point for the plan but would require updating and amending, especially after elections when new members would need to be considered.
- Any member of the public in attendance at a Council meeting must be given the opportunity to speak about agenda items. NBTC standing orders and practice currently provide a ten minute slot at the start of a meeting for public participation (in line with existing legislation and best practice) although this would need to be considered more formally.
- In Wales, Council meetings can take place in person, remotely or as a hybrid. It was acknowledged that there were cost implications for Councils and OVW was appointing a digital manager to advise Councils with this.

Members thanked Councillor Morvan for his detailed and informative update.

Resolved to note the information received.

13. 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). **Resolved** that the motion be agreed.

a) Salem Chapel – Public Consultation:

The Town Clerk to provide a verbal update.

The Town Clerk informed that a total of nine responses had been received in respect of the public consultation although there were no expressions of interest received in respect of Salem Chapel.

Resolved that a Task and Finish Group meeting would be required to consider the responses and **Further Resolved** that a date be arranged.

b) Report of the Internal Auditor for 2020/21:

Members were invited to consider the report submitted by Mr Stuart Bees, Internal Auditor to the Council following the internal audit of Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council for the year end 31st March 2021.

Members considered the report and the following comments/queries were made:

- Recurring contracts and Salem Chapel (pages 2 & 4):
The Clerk informed that the Council reviews all contracts as appropriate and required. As per the previous agenda item (13a), a public consultation had been carried out and a Task and Finish Group meeting would be arranged to discuss.
- Stationary order (page 3):
The Clerk informed that the Council had approved one official waiver in respect of the stationary order which was required due to the omission of large second class stamps

having been omitted from the initial order. Council had been informed of this matter and had resolved the official waver.

- Residual risk s.137 payments (page 5):
Members considered the Internal Auditors comments regarding the s.137 payments to be fair but cautious and agreed that the Covid 19 pandemic warranted such action to assist the local community.
- Reserves (page 5):
The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Council officially considered and reviewed the Council's reserves three times per year.

Members agreed that the Council's Internal Auditor provided a thorough and professional service to the Council.

Unanimously Resolved that the report of the Internal Auditor for 2020/21 be accepted.

c) Statutory Review of Internal Audit:

Members were invited to consider the report regarding the statutory review of the Internal Audit System of the Town Council. Members should also consider the overall performance of the Internal Auditor prior to 'signing off' the Annual Return (item 14d below).

Members considered the Internal Audit for 2020/21 and in conjunction with the report of the Internal Auditor for 2020/21, considered the Internal Audit Service to be thorough, professional and fit for purpose.

Unanimously Resolved that the statutory review of the Internal Audit system for 2020/21 be accepted. **Further Resolved** that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Stuart Bees, Internal Auditor to the Council.

d) Audit Wales (External Auditors) Annual Return for 2020/21:

Members were supplied with copies of other financial reports which were required by the external auditors for the purpose of the Annual Return and External Audit, to consider and if appropriate, to approve each report:

i. Cash Book Analysis 2020/21:

Queries were invited although none were received. Members commented that the report Actual against Budget Expenditure (13d[iv]) below provided the necessary details and explanations.

Unanimously Resolved that the Cash Book Analysis for 2020/21 be approved.

ii. Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021:

No queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved that the balance sheet as at 31st March 2021 be approved.

iii. Bank Reconciliation 2020/21:

No queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved that the Bank Reconciliation for 2020/21 be approved.

iv. Actual against Budget Expenditure 2020/21:

No queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved the Actual against Budget Expenditure 2020/21 be approved.

v. Members were invited to consider the Annual Return, and if appropriate, complete parts 1 & 2 and approve the signature of the Town Mayor (Chairman of the council) in section 2 (page 4).

The following comments were made:

Page 2 – it was encouraging to see that the balance carried forward had increased during the year.

Page 3 – The Annual Governance Statements number 1-9 were agreed yes by the Council in turn.

Unanimously Resolved that pages 2, 3 & 4 of the Annual Return & Annual Governance Statement were correct and to be completed. **Further Resolved** that the Town Mayor (Chairman of the Council) sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Council.

Meeting declared closed at 2pm.

21 (21/22)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. B.', written in a cursive style.