

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

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held via a remote meeting at 1.00pm on Tuesday 27th July 2021

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

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

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Mayor informed of the sudden passing of Councillor Robert Pagett. A two minute silence was held in respect of Councillor Robert Pagett.
Resolved to note the information received.

The Town Clerk informed that no members of the press or public were in attendance.
Resolved to note the information received.

To receive: Ms Veronika Brannovic, Local Nature Partnership Co-ordinator, Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen.

Members were reminded to note the Standing Orders relating to guest speakers:

1. Members to receive presentation.
2. Questions were to be invited at the end of the presentation.
3. Members were requested to ask only one question each – if time allows AND with permission of the Chairman, a second question may be asked.
4. Members were reminded that all dialogue is to be directed through the Chairman.

The Town Mayor welcomed Veronika Brannovic to the meeting.

Ms Brannovic informed that she had been appointed as the Local Nature Partnership Co-ordinator for Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen in 2020 and that the initiative had been established in Torfaen 20 years ago and had merged with Blaenau Gwent in 2017. To date there were approximately 100 organisations and individuals on the local distribution list and that meetings of the partnership were currently being held online.

Ms Brannovic presented the information with the assistance of slides which was titled 'LNP Cymru and Local Places for Nature' which she confirmed would be e-mailed for information. The project was hosted by Torfaen CBC but took place throughout both the Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent areas. The project provided help and advice with nature based projects but could also access other funding together with advice regarding well-being projects. The partnership also has access to local wildlife records and wildlife maps.

The partnership has implemented the Nature Recovery Action Plan (Wales & Local) in which it has engaged and supported participation to embed biodiversity in decision making at all levels; safeguard species and habitats; increase resilience of the natural environment; tackle key pressures on species and habitats; improve evidence, understanding and monitoring and to put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery. Ms Brannovic also informed that the Welsh Government has declared a Nature Emergency and that the First Minister's manifesto included the aims of Stop; Grow and Change.

The LNP local projects within Blaenau Gwent included pond restoration at Cwmcelyn, Beaufort Hill and Tredegar Park; hedging and walling. Other project ideas such as installing bird, bat and habitat boxes; green roofs on bus stops; green walls and changing grass cutting.

Ms Brannovic suggested possible projects for Nantyglo and Blaina such as urban & street trees; hedgerows; wildflower verges/meadows; fruit trees and community orchards and habitat boxes.

The Town Mayor thanked Ms Brannovic for her presentation and informed that the Town Councils contributes to wards the local environment and biodiversity with its In Bloom competition; creation of Butterfly Gardens in both Nantyglo and Blaina and the installation and maintenance of planters throughout the area.

The Town Mayor invited questions:

Q: What can be done to help hedgehogs in the garden survive the oncoming winter?

A: The LNP could provide a habitat box to assist with this.

Q: Is there any information regarding action in respect of local mountain fires and the recovery of the land especially the damage caused to wildlife?

A: The Wildlife Trust in Ebbw Vale deals with such issues (Ms Brannovic used to work at the Trust) and they work closely with the Fire authorities and fire breaks were used to help control the fires. Such fires are known and accepted to be an ongoing issue.

Q: A wildlife report was included in the windfarm containing 8 turbines had been proposed for the nearby mountain, had the Partnership had any involvement with this?

A: Ms Brannovic's own opinion was that she was nervous of windfarms and that they were damaging to birds of prey although painting the turbines reduced the damage to wildlife. However it was agreed that there was a need for cleaner energy.

Q: Were there any recommendations or advice regarding an appropriate species of tree to be used as a Christmas Tree for the Town? Blaenau Gwent CBC had stated that only a Cedar tree would be acceptable.

A: A Cedar tree or Scots Pine were native to the UK and a Cedar Tree could possibly be pruned in the shape of a Christmas Tree but there were doubts as to the stability of a single Cedar tree or Scots Pine.

The Town Mayor thanked Ms Brannovic for attending the meeting as a guest speaker and for his interesting and informative presentation.

Ms Brannovic left the meeting at this juncture.

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 Councillors D Hillman & C Hillman declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8a.

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 Councillor M Williams.

Further Resolved to accept the apology received.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for July 2021.

The Town Mayor informed that the Town Council arranged a service in respect of National NHS Day on 5th July 2021. The service was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Gwent, Brigadier Robert Aitken; High Sheriff of Gwent, Phillip Alderman and his wife Fiona; Reverend Roy Watson; pupils (who were a credit to their school) and teacher from Blaen y Cwm School and Members and Officers from Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council. The NHS 'Thank you' flag was displayed and a service was held at both Blaina and Nantyglo with refreshments at Blaina Community Centre. The Town Mayor thanked all who attended including Councillor M Williams for taking the photos of the day. A letter of thanks had been sent to the pupils who represented Blaen y Cwm School.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 22nd June 2021 (pages 14 – 21)

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 18 (IRPW) – should read 'a basic allowance of £14,218 plus expenses and IT equipment whilst Committee Chairs received an allowance of £23,000 for providing a similar job and commitment to Town & Community Councillors'. Also add 'Councillor D Hillman made the request'.

Page 19 (Annual Report) – add 'the Town were in the process of compiling an annual report and the action plan was already implemented'.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

4. Minutes of the Events Committee held 22nd June 2021 (pages 22 - 24)

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 23 (item 4) – it was emphasised that the available funding from Mutual Gain and the application process could help fund a number of projects including a craft fair and large scale planters within Nantyglo and Blaina.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

5. **Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 13th July 2021 (pages 25 - 28)**
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.
6. **Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 13th July 2021 (pages 29 - 32)**
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 30 (item2e) – add ‘non-pecuniary interest’. Councillor D Hillman informed Members that Town & Community Councils can apply for funding.
Page 31 – add ‘ and for Town & Community Councils to perform at a professional manner within local government.’
Resolved that the minutes be approved.
7. **Minutes of the Task and Finish Group Meeting held 20th July 2021 (pages 33 – 35)**
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 35: add ‘ counter proposal failed’.
Page 35: It was clarified that the recommended proposal required ratification by Full Council.
Unanimously Resolved that the recommended proposal be ratified.
8. **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.
*Councillors D Hillman & C Hillman declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8a. **Resolved** to remain in the meeting and **Further Resolved** for Councillor D Hillman to continue as Chair due to the item being for information only.*
- a) Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council (for information):
Meeting of Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council on 29th July 2021.
Resolved to note the information received.
- b) One Voice Wales (for information):
i E-mail regarding good practice/initiatives in relation to litter and dog fouling.
Resolved to note the information received.

- ii Innovative Practice Conference – 22nd September 2021.

It was noted that the Town Council were innovative and that Councillor D Hillman would be interested in attending but thought that the cost was too high.

Resolved to note the information received.

- c) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (for information):

- i Letter confirming that the recent vacancy (Blaina Ward) can be filled by co-option. The Town Clerk informed that this related to the resignation of Councillor Katy Treharne.

The Town Clerk informed that the co-option notice had been displayed on the Town Council's website and locally within Blaina.

Resolved to note the information received.

- ii Planning Queries:

Discharge of Conditions - Members were informed that following a telephone conversation with the Planning Officer at Blaenau Gwent CBC it was confirmed that consultation was only undertaken with the relevant statutory consultees as the issues relate to technical matters rather than planning principles. Town Councils would only be consulted regarding Discharge of Conditions if the application warranted this.

Resolved to note the information received.

Tyr Gelli House, Blaina – The Town Clerk to provide an update of the response received from the Planning Officer (Blaenau Gwent CBC).

The Town Clerk informed that following a telephone call to the Planning Officer, it was confirmed that the applicant had consulted with the Planning Officer on a number of issues and a number of visits had been made to the site. The planning application was submitted to remedy the issues with existing damp issues within the property and the applicant had been very accommodating to all solutions & remedies suggested. A structural engineer had recommended that the side of the property/wall be built into the banking to help remedy the damp and water issues. The planning application details that the property would be visually sympathetic within the surrounding landscape with a green (grass) roof.

Resolved to note the information received.

Chartist Riots Plaque – Following a telephone conversation with the Planning Officer (Blaenau Gwent CBC), it was confirmed that the Planning Officer would query the plaque with the applicant (of the planning application) and would update in due course but it was stressed that this is not a planning issue.

Resolved to note the information received.

- d) Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (for information):

- i Vaccination updates – weeks commencing 05/07/2021 & 12/07/2021.

Resolved to note the information received.

ii E-mail invitation to the virtual AGM on Wednesday 28th July 2021 at 3pm.

Resolved to note the information received.

e) Retired Police Dogs of Gwent (for information – copy attached):

E-mail of thanks and confirmation of receipt in respect of recent (July 2021) financial donation.

Resolved to note the information received.

Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chair:

f) Blaenau Gwent Foodbank (for information):

E-mail confirmation of safe receipt and thanks in respect of recent financial donation (£200) made by the Town Council to Blaenau Gwent Food Bank.

Resolved to note the information received.

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) **Crafty Knitters:**

Members discussed the application and considered that the criteria for the highest donation had been satisfied. The Town Mayor informed that he had seen the items produced within local hospitals.

Resolved that a donation of £100 be made.

10. **Planning Applications:**

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

a) *None received to date.*

Resolved accordingly.

11. **Licensing Applications:**

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s), plus with the Chairman's permission, any additional applications that may be received prior to the date of the meeting.

a) **Amritpal Amritpal, 15 River Row, Blaina (applicant)**

Application for a new Personal Licence (Licensing Act 2003)

Resolved that no objections or representations be made.

12. Members' Updates:

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

a) Councillor L Harris:

Councillor Harris informed that she had contacted the Estates Department at Blaenau Gwent CBC in relation to a piece of unused ground at Cwmcelyn, Blaina. Councillor Harris informed that it was hoped to acquire the small piece of land to develop into a community allotment and for children to use. It was hoped that local interest would help to establish this proposed use. Councillor Harris clarified that the land was not for personal use or gain but for community use. Councillor Harris would provide updates at a future meeting.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Councillor K Jenkins:

Councillor Jenkins informed that he had successfully proposed Councillor Glyn Morvan as the Vice Chair of the One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Committee.

Resolved to note the information received.

c) The sudden passing of Councillor Robert Pagett:

Further to the two minute silence undertaken at the start of the meeting in respect of the sudden passing of Councillor Robert (Bob) Pagett:

The Town Mayor informed that Councillor Pagett had previously worked as the Warden at Cwmcraehen Traveller Site in Nantyglo for a number of years prior to his retirement. Whilst this was a very difficult job in many respects, Councillor Pagett did an excellent job and was well respected by all the resident. The Town Mayor also stated that Councillor Pagett was a proper gentlemen and very respectful and he would be a very sad loss as he was a big support to both the Town Council and Town Clerk.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Glyn Morvan) echoed the Town Mayor's comments and added that he had known Councillor Pagett for many years. Councillor Pagett was a very kind and helpful individual who had been a stalwart for the community for many years. Councillor Morvan also stated that Councillor Pagett was a real character and he would be remembered with fondness

The Town Clerk expressed her shock and sadness at Councillor Pagett's sudden passing and informed that he had been a member of the interview panel when she had been appointed as Assistant Town Clerk in 2011. Councillor Pagett's passion for his community was evident in his practical approach and that he had also been a tremendous support and friend over the years. The Town Clerk informed that he would be very sadly missed. The Town Clerk confirmed that a card had been sent to Councillor Pagett's wife and family on behalf of the Town Council.

The Town Mayor informed that both himself and the Leader of the Council will visit his wife Maureen at an appropriate time.

The meeting was declared closed at 2pm.

