

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held via a remote meeting at 1.05pm on Tuesday 28th September 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 & M Williams

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

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 Councillor M Williams who stated that he might be late in attending the meeting due to work commitments.

Further Resolved to accept the apologies.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for August & September 2021.

The Town Mayor informed that due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic there was no events etc although both he and the Mayoress had set up a stall at Brynmawr market for two weekends to raise funds for his Mayoral Appeal which proved quite successful. The Town Mayor additionally informed that he had recently taken part as a panel member for Mutual Gain for the past 8 weeks which included two weekends of voting.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 27th July 2021 (pages 36 – 42)

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 38 (3a) – should read ‘part of the action plan already implemented’.

Page 39 (6a) – amend ‘manner’ to ‘level’.

Page 39 (7a) – counter proposal ‘in the form of a long lease so that the building could be used as a place of worship and a community facility – Counter proposal failed.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

4. Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held 27th July 2021 (pages 43 - 46)

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 45 (7) should read ‘members’.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

5. Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 14th September 2021 (pages 47 - 50)

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:

Pages 47, 48 & 49 – The Town Clerk informed that a copy of the presentation would be included on the agenda of the Planning Committee Meeting for October 2021.

Page 50 – add ‘Councillor Harris commented on the use of the summer house as living accommodation for guests’ and ‘that Councillor Harris would continue to monitor the situation’.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

6. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 14th September 2021 (pages 51 - 55)

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 53 (3) – IT provisions. Members agreed to ratify this decision.

Page 54 (8) – Salem Chapel. Members agreed to ratify the report.

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 University Health Board (for information):

i Vaccination Update(s).

Resolved to note the information received.

- ii Information re: Spotlight on Diabetes.
Resolved to note the information received.
- iii E-mail request on behalf of British Red Cross.
Resolved to note the information received.
- iv E-mail informing of Valleys Regional Park Guardians scheme.
Resolved to note the information received.
- b) Bowel Cancers UK (for information):
E-mail re: Nowel Cancer Community Voices Cymru.
Resolved to note the information received.
- c) Older People's Commissioner for Wales (for information):
Commissioner's Newsletter – September 2021.
Resolved to note the information received.
- d) Boundary Commission for Wales (for information):
Information in respect of 2023 Parliamentary Review – Initial Proposals.
It was clarified that the proposed changes to the boundaries was that the constituency would comprise of Blaenau Gwent and part of the Rhymney Valley.
Resolved to note the information received.
- e) Councillor Thomas James (for information):
Members were informed of the resignation of Councillor Thomas James for the Nantyglo Ward.
The Town Clerk read out the e-mail received from Councillor James. Members were also informed that the declaration of vacancy had been advertised and Blaenau Gwent CBC notified.
Members commented that Councillor James was a very capable councillor and that his resignation was accepted with regret.
Resolved to note the information received.

Councillor M Williams joined the meeting at this juncture.

8. Meetings of the Town Council:

Members were invited to consider the attached report in respect of meetings of the Town Council. Also included for information was a response from One Voice Wales in respect of the current legislation regarding meetings of Town / Community Councils.

Members were informed that at present there was no effective wi-fi in the Council Chamber to facilitate a remote meeting. This was being looked in to with Orbits IT to identify a workable system.

A lengthy discussion ensued which was summarised as:

- There had not been any response or attendance from the public to daytime meetings despite many people being out and about in the daytime. Daytime meetings had not resulted in additional members.
- Many people were busy during the daytimes.
- Many people do not have online facilities to join a remote meeting and others may not afford the phone charges to dial in to a remote meeting.
- Reduced efficiency in respect of officers as a result of evening meetings was understandable.
- Meetings of Blaenau Gwent CBC were held during the day for many reasons including mandatory attendance for directors etc.
- Only some evening meetings would 'clash'.
- In respect of recruitment of Members it was commented that the Council could advertise, possibly on BRfM. Members were informed that all vacancies were advertised on the Town Council's website as required.

Proposed and Resolved that the recommendation include 'to explore all other options'.

- It was re-iterated that the Council must ensure that its meetings remained lawful.
- There was a need for the Council to consider the needs of and to look after staff. Additionally, there was also a need to consider the impact of the times of meetings held on staff
- The legislation was clear in that all Town / Community Councils must hold meetings remotely until a hybrid meeting could be facilitated. When the IT & other technology etc was in place to hold hybrid meetings, meetings could take place face to face and remotely which would ensure that the Council continued to act lawfully.
- A number of different times were considered i.e. 1pm, 5pm, 5.30pm, 7pm and it was commented that no one particular time would suit everyone.
- In response to a query if there was anything specified in staff contracts the Town Clerk informed that she could not think of any times for meetings specified.
- In response to a query, the Assistant Officer stated that there was wi-fi available at the Community Centre and that room hire was £10 per hour but the room was unavailable on Tuesday evenings.

Two proposals were received: for meetings to take place at 11am or for meetings to take place at 6pm. **Resolved** that meetings to take place at 6pm. **Further Resolved** to note that It was clarified that meetings in person to take place at 6pm with remote meetings to take place at 1pm.

Councillor Williams left the meeting at this juncture.

9. Review of the Remuneration Framework for Community & Town Councils:

- a) Members were invited to consider the review of the current arrangements for the remuneration of Town / Community Councils by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

Members were informed that due to the current number of voters within Nantyglo and Blaina, the Town Council would be placed in group 3 under the proposals.

Resolved to note the information received.

- b) Members were also informed of the responses provided by One Voice was and Councillor D Hillman in respect of the review.

Councillor D Hillman read out his response to the review and drew Members' attention to the differences in applications applicable to group three compared to applications in group four and that the Councils placed within would be comparable.

Members were also notified of the response received from the IRPW in relation to Councillor D Hillman's comments of which Councillors Jones and Jenkins stated that they fully agreed with the comments made by Councillor D Hillman.

Resolved to note the information received.

10. Re-appointment of the Internal Auditor:

Following the review of the Internal Audit service (June 2021), Members were invited to consider the re-appointment of the Town Council's Internal Auditor Mr Stuart Bees CPFA.

The Town Clerk informed that she would welcome the re-appoint of Mr Bees as the Town Council's Internal Auditor for his knowledge, expertise and appropriate advice. Councillor Morvan agreed with the statement and added that it was a testament to his good work that the Town Council had received clear external audits for a number of years. The Town Mayor also agreed with the comments made.

Resolved that Mr Stuart Bees CPFA be re-appointed as the Town Council's Internal Auditor.

11. Donations to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank:

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, for September 2021.

Members discussed the ongoing issues faced by local residents in light of Covid 19 and the ending of the weekly £20 Universal Credit and opined that the financial donation to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank was necessary.

Resolved that a financial donation of £200 be made to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank for September 2021 and **Further Resolved** that this issue continue to be considered by the Finance & general Purposes Committee on a monthly basis.

12. 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) Mr Michael Paul Knapp.

Members discussed the application and stated that Mr Knapp works hard at providing this facility for local residents together with funding it himself. The issue of a payment made to an individual was discussed and it was agreed that to comply with all audit requirements that any payments should be made upon production of receipts for expenses incurred.

Resolved that a financial donation of up to £100 be made to Mr Knapp upon production of receipts for relevant purchases.

13. Salem Chapel:

Members were invited to consider the attached inspection reports (*please note that this item was deferred from then Finance & General Purposes agenda September 2021:*

- July 2021:

Questions & comments were invited:

None received.

Resolved that the report be approved.

- August 2021:

Questions & comments were invited:

None received

Resolved that the report be approved.

14. Planning Applications:

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

- a) Planning Application No: C/2021/0263 – 50 Brynawlon, Nantyglo:

Lean to storm porch to the front of the dwelling. Frames in white UPVC. Roof in double glazed units. Set on a rendered plinth at house floor level.

The Town Clerk informed that the application was presented to Full Council due to statutory time limits.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

15. Confidential Information:

The following item(s) may 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 approved.

Meeting declared closed at 2.30pm