

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs V Williams - Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Task & Finish Group held at 17:30pm on Friday 24th July at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina.

A meeting to which members of the public were NOT entitled to attend

(Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

Present: Councillor Des Hillman, Chair presiding.
Councillors L Harris, C Hillman, M Williams (remote), L Emanuel, L Higgins, M Evans, A Fryer, K Jones JP, D Hillman, L Higgins, D Finch, D Wright (remote), S Howlett (remote)

In attendance: V Williams, Town Clerk/RFO
K Rowland, Assistant Officer

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 declarations of interest were made.

1. Apologies for absence:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence received and to formally resolve to accept. Apologies were received from Cllr G Morvan.

Resolved to accept those apologies

2. Upgrading of Blaina Skatepark:

Members were invited to discuss the upgrade of Blaina Skatepark and to consider donating towards the cost of refurbishment.

The Town Clerk gave an update. They held a meeting with Alun Watkins to clarify some points from the previous meeting. A plan was handed out and the TC explained which land belongs to BGCBC and which areas do not, specifically the land to the other side of the basketball court which does not belong to BGCBC and is privately owned. Resurfacing of a larger area is to be done with part of

the grass area and old trees and to use the natural hill to build a ramp to be as cost effective as possible. If money from Town Council is donated, Mr Watkins said a seat on the design team would be available to a member of N&BTC and that consultations could be held at Blaina Institute for members and residents to view. They are still awaiting for an update regarding financial issues and will be in contact when more is known. Members agree that Town Council should await more information regarding the financial specifications and/or asset transfer before taking any decision to contribute money towards Blaina Skatepark.

Members debated whether it would be better to own Blaina Skatepark or not. Owning it would mean having more options to contribute financially and holding certain functions there that would be appropriate, however it does mean being responsible insurance and the people that use it. Member stated that part of the strategy by larger Councils is to connect the people with it so that they themselves will look after the area. Reserves should be kept in case of an asset transfer. If we were to lease it back to the CBC after it being transferred they may not want it. Return of investment with the 'feel good' factor being mentioned, it would be great for the youth and young adults of the area if interested in Skateboarding, but would other age groups appreciate the investment, especially if they don't have children. Another member stated that public opinion was important.

Member stated that looking after the children is important, but if something is done for the younger generation we should also look at doing something for the older generation too, even if it is by implementing a seating area for the older people to watch the youths enjoy themselves. Member stated they had done some researching on the Borough Councillors funding. They obtain £19,000 levy per year, and it can be carried over from year to year. Every six months they can donate to organisations in the local area. This money comes from a 'Play Objective Fund' which every ward gets. They all agreed to put in £8000 to help with road surfacing costs of the roads in their area. Members noted the speed at which those Borough Councillors posted about the meeting in which they had attended on social media. Another member noted that on that post residents had asked for spending to be put elsewhere.

No decision was to be made as of yet, members would want to seek advice from an expert and also hear from David Leech who would be attending a meeting the following week.

Resolved that no decision be made until we have a consultation with an expert regarding Asset Transfers and consultation with David Leech, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Adults and Communities for Torfaen County Council.

2. Proceeds of Salem Chapel:

At a previous Task and Finish group, ideas were presented by Members in regard to how best use the proceeds from the sale of Salem Chapel. Members were invited to consider plans moving

forward.

Members agree to separate the list that was previously made in regards to what members wished to do with the proceeds of the sale of Salem Chapel. Cllr Finch stated that The Shed would be happy to make benches to be placed in local spots. Member also enquired about Tablets but it was noted that Members get allowances for such things. Another member stated that if bins were obtained could they be placed lower so that all residents could reach them. One idea was to fund local self defence classes for Junior School to Secondary School ages. The Town Council must act responsibly for the Audit and prioritise which ideas are most important and achievable.

The Town Clerk/RFO highlighted that the Town Council is close to setting an unlawful budget for 2027/28 as the current expenditure would take the general earmark reserves over the upper limit of recommended guidance. The recommended limit is 3-9 months running costs but we are currently at 11.8 months. Member did state that more events were to be held but lack of manpower is an issue. Another member discussed that with some of the ideas running costs would also need to be considered as these can be an issue so contracting someone to water and maintain planters and hanging baskets would be ideal. There is importance in things that are a one-off cost compared to ongoing costs when considering these ideas.

Resolved that the list be split for consideration depending on costings in regard to what the proceeds can be spent on and **Further Resolved** to set up another Task and Finish Group when needed throughout the Summer.

Meeting declared closed at 10:26am