

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

Mrs T Hughes – Town Clerk / RFO

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Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held on Monday 13th January 2020 at the Town Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, Blaina

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

Present: Councillor D Hillman, Chair
Councillors G Morvan; K Jenkins; D Hillman; C Hillman; L Harris; R Abbas;
T James; C Bridgeman; G Watkins & K Jones

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mr K Warren, Town Clerk (Blaenavon Town Council)
Ms R Smith, Healthy Blaenavon Officer (Blaenavon Town Council)

To receive: Mr Kevin Warren (Town Clerk) and Ms Rebecca Smith (Healthy Blaenavon Officer) – Blaenavon Town Council.

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

1. Members to receive the presentation.
2. Questions to be invited at the end of the presentation.
3. Members were requested to ask only one question each – if time allowed AND with permission of the Chairman, a second question might be asked.
4. Members were reminded that there was to be no discussion or exchange of points of view between Members and that all dialogue was to be directed through the Chairman.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair informed all present that no fire drill was planned and of the fire procedures should an emergency occur.

The Chair welcomed and introduced Mr Kevin Warren (Town Clerk) and Ms Rebecca Smith (Healthy Blaenavon Officer) to the Council.

Members of the Council were provided with a handout which summarised the Healthy Blaenavon Project.

Mr Warren explained that he had been appointed as Town Clerk to Blaenavon Town Council two years ago and had previously worked as a Police Officer and as an engineer with British Steel.

The Healthy Blaenavon Project developed as a result of data collated by Torfaen Public Service Board which evidenced much deprivation in Blaenavon, particularly regarding

education and health. The data also showed that there was lots of duplicate work being carried out. A business case was then developed by Blaenavon Town Council which helped close some gaps identified but not to duplicate any work.

In January 2019 a project plan identified and created the role of a project officer (Healthy Blaenavon Officer) which was jointly funded by both Blaenavon Town Council and Torfaen County Borough Council for a two year fixed term contract and a service level agreement was agreed by both Councils with a strategic work plan jointly produced to deliver the project. The project was managed by Blaenavon Town Council and feeds into the Public Service Board steering group.

Mr Warren advised other Town Councils who may consider such a project to consult with the public to find out what was wanted and needed in the area; to identify and work with the local Public Service Board and then to devise a plan to work in partnership to help identify and solve local issues.

Ms Smith informed Members that her background was in education and youth work and that she had been in the post since July 2019. Since being in post, Ms Smith had discovered that most people did not want to be 'engaged' or 'consulted' with formally but that they just wanted to be listened to. Feedback from informal engagement identified a number of issues and barriers such as inadequate and costly public transport and generational divides. The project had begun work to close the gaps identified by befriending; trips out of town; music for mental health and self-esteem; family street games and mental health art projects and community get-togethers to help break down barriers etc.

The project had applied for and received grant funding from a number of sources (£38,042.50 to date) and more projects and events had been planned for 2020. The project also complied with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and hoped to raise the aspirations of local people and support local people to work together to help themselves. The project illustrated how Town Councils can be effective within their area.

Questions were invited at this juncture:

Q: How were the public 'engagement' and 'consultations' carried out?

A: We discovered that most people did not want to complete forms, write anything or engage formally but they just wanted to be listened to. We would then note the comments later. We discovered that many young people in particular had very low educational expectations so the project encourages and provided information in respect of training and education. A teaching assistant 12 week course which results in a qualification takes place in Blaenavon Town Council offices.

Q: Who manages the budget and funding for the project?

A: Blaenavon Town Council manages all the finance relating to the project. The project has a separate budget and accounts from the rest of the Council's finances.

Q: The older generation have a lot of knowledge which could and should be passed to the younger generation rather than being lost. Ideas such as younger people to utilise unused allotments and then sell the produce with any money being re-invested as an example.

A: Any such project would need a project officer who has considerable experience of fundraising and grant applications. Money should be available to help with the staffing costs of such a project officer. Blaenavon Town Council contributes £10,000 towards the cost of the project officer and Torfaen CBC contributes £20,000. This amount was paid from the Council's precept which was a justified and planned increase.

Q: Does the project use Social Media?

A: Yes, the Town Council has its own Facebook page in addition to a website. The Healthy Blaenavon project has its own Facebook page and Twitter account. Social Media has proved very popular in engaging and informing the target audience of the project.

Q: Does the project have any volunteers?

A: People were now slowly starting to volunteer due to the project's success and other positive outcomes had been achieved such as the acquisition of a furnished room within the 'doctors' which was used for people to attend, chat and engage. There have been recent enquiries from people hoping to set up support groups to benefit local people.

Q: Does Blaenavon Town Council have any representation on the Public Safeguarding Board group?

A: There was a charter in place with Torfaen CBC and the Town Council has one Member and the Town Clerk on the Public Safeguarding Board group.

Q: What happens when the project's funding expires?

A: The aim of the project is to assist local people to take the project forward and provide information and choice. The project as it currently is, sets up local people to then develop and continue those projects themselves. The project aims to keep everything under the Healthy Blaenavon banner and recognises that the project needs to be sustainable and plan for the future. It was hoped to achieve this by working together with other organisations with commitment and trust. The project understands and acknowledges that local people were not interested in other towns, only their own. The project has been successful to date as a result of openness and honesty by all parties involved. It appeared that there was a substantial amount of funding available from local health boards.

Q: Was commitment and work required from Blaenavon Town Councillors?

A: Yes, each project required a Town Councillor to act as a lead officer who reported back to a number of committees on a monthly basis. It was not for the Town Clerk and Project Officer to do everything. It was necessary to match each Town Councillor's skill set to an appropriate project and then have the ability to help deliver the project. The project won One Voice Wales Inspirational Project in 2019.

Members congratulated both Mr Warren and Ms Smith on the success of the project to date and wished Blaenavon Town Council continuing success.

The Chair thanked Mr Warren and Ms Smith for attending the meeting and providing the presentation.

Mr Kevin Warren and Ms Rebecca Smith left the Council Chamber.

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 Councillors R Pagett and 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 may be received prior to the date of the meeting.

a) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

i Proposed removal of telephone boxes.

Resolved to note the information received.

ii E-mail acknowledgement in respect of street lights issue in Blaina.

The Town Clerk informed that the e-mail was received in response to the Town Council requesting that the issue be discussed as an agenda item at the forthcoming Liaison Meeting with Blaenau Gwent CBC. Members stated that a number of issues relating to the faulty street lights had been commented on but no official explanation or response had been received from Blaenau Gwent CBC.

Resolved that the Highways / Street Lighting Department be contacted again regarding this issue.

b) Welsh Government:

i Consultation Document – Changes to planning and related application fees.

Resolved to note the information received.

c) Brecon Beacons National Park Authority:

i Consultation in respect of replacement Local Development Plan.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Decisions taken under delegated powers during December 2019 & January 2020:

a) Planning Applications:

i) Plan Application No. C/2019/0339 – Former Nantyglo Comprehensive, Pond Road, Nantyglo :

Temporary compound for the storage of concrete protection slabs.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.