

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes – Town Clerk / RFO

Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina NP13 3BN
Swyddfa'r Cyngor, Sefydliad Blaenau, Y Stryd Fawr, Blaenau NP13 3BN

Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk

Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held on Monday 10th February 2020 at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina

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

Present: Councillor D Hillman, Chair
Councillors g. Morvan, C Hillman, R Abbas & K Jenkins

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer
Ms Laura Brosnan – James – Smart Money Cymru

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chair informed that there was no fire drill planned and explained the fire procedure in the event of an emergency.

To receive: Ms Laura Brosnan-James – Smart Money Cymru.

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 allows 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.

The Chair welcomed and introduced Ms Laura Brosnan-James to the meeting.

Laura explained that Smart Money Cymru (SMC) was fairly new to Blaenau Gwent and her role was to help advertise the company's service and to provide all information. SMC was a not for profit company and information leaflets were provided. Ms Brosnan-James conveyed that the leaflets were paid by a customer to get help inform people of other financial options available in the hope to help prevent loan sharks targeting local people.

SMC have two products: a Saving Account for adults and children which pays dividend to their savers and each account can hold up to £10,0000. The other product offered was a loan facility, which provides responsible lending up to £7500 and was available to everyone who lived in Wales. Ms Brosnan-James informed that an affordable option was always given and the better the

credit score of customers, the lower the interest rate they would pay back. With regards to interest, interest that SMC received paid for business premises, staff wages and dividend to customers as a bonus for saving, which was added to their account yearly.

A discussion ensued regarding door step lenders such as Provident and loan sharks and the high interest rate they charge (Provident rates of 299%). Ms Brosnan-James explained that SMC was a far better viable option, plus when a loan was taken out the customer would automatically pay into a saving account which the customer would be able to withdraw at the end of the loan term. SMC also have a current account, however, there was a monthly fee for this account, but if customers were a Tai Calon resident, they were eligible for the first-year fee free.

Questions were invited at this juncture:

Q: Were there any plans to have more offices in Blaenau Gwent?

A: SMC currently have offices at Caerphilly and Tredegar with 3 service points in Blaenau Gwent, Learning Action Centre, Ebbw Vale, Community Centre, Blaina and Star Centre, Sirhowy, Tredegar. The more customers SMC receive the more likelihood that another office could be opened.

Q: A Member informed that online feedback in respect of SMC was positive and queried if staff had received such feedback?

A: Ms Brosnan-James confirmed that customer feedback was very good and more so now with the online services provided by SMC.

Q: Do savers receive investments?

A: It was explained that Board met annually and considered the interest gained and what dividend would then be paid to customers, last year's dividend was ¼%.

Q: Recently a lot of vulnerable customers had put their trust into banking and many businesses had gone into liquidation, what procedures did SMC have in place to safeguard customers?

A: SMC were registered with Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) therefore all members were safe guarded under the assurance this provided. £10,000 maximum was allowed per customer (savings) and in case of death the saving would be passed to the nominated person by the saver. SMC have ethical loaning principles, which would only loan customers that were financially able to repay. Additionally if a customer (with a loan agreement) passed away, the debt would not be passed to another member of the family, the debt goes with customer. A large number of loan applications were usually received to consolidate debts i.e. catalogue and credit cards. In one instance, SMC saved one customer £300 per month by consolidating her debts that she obtained from catalogues and doorstep lenders.

Q: What was the procedure to open a children's savings account?

A: Grandparents are able to open an account for their grandchildren with the signature of parent and the child would be able to access the savings at the age of 16 years.

Chair thanked Ms Brosnan-James for attending the meeting and providing such an informative presentation.

Ms Laura Brosnan-James left the Council Chamber.

The Chair welcomed the newly appointed Assistant Officer, Mrs Nicola Horner to the meeting and presented her with the Town Council scarf.

Resolved accordingly.

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 Councillor K Jones, R Pagett; C Bridgeman, L Emanuel, G Watkins, K Treharne and L Harris.

Further Resolved to accept the apologies received.

In response to a query, the procedure in respect of apologies for a meeting of the Council was explained. **Resolved** to note the information 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 – (For information):

- i Plan Application No. C/2019/0350 – Land adjacent The Clovers. This application has now been withdrawn.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Welsh Government – (For information):

- i Sustainable Drainage System – Proposed amendment to the Sustainable Drainage (Enforcement) Order 2018.

Resolved to note the information received.

- ii. Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 – Section 6 – The Biodiversity & Resilience of Ecosystems Duty – Overview (*a hard copy of the guide was placed in the Chamber for Members information*).

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Planning Applications:

a) Plan Application No. C/2020/0022 – Cae Orchid, Quarry Row, Blaina:

Single storey side extension.

Resolved that no representations or objections be received.

b) Plan Application no. C/2020/0025 – Cae Orchid, Quarry Row, Blaina:

Detached garage.

Resolved that no representation or objections to be made.

4. Licence Applications:

Members were invited to consider the application(s) –

None received to date.

Additional application received with permission of Chair

Application received from:

DAB Clubs Limited, Ty Dan–Y–Coed Farm, Crook Hill, Tillery Road, Abertillery.

Application details:

Application to vary the designated premises supervisor (DPS) to Surinder Kumar (Licensing Act 2003).

Premises name and address:

J & K Convenience Store, 2a Henwaen Street, Blaina.

Resolved that no representations or objections be made.

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

Mrs T Hughes – Town Clerk/RFO

Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina NP13 3BN
Swyddfa'r Cyngor, Sefydliad Blaenau, Y Stryd Fawr, Blaenau NP13 3BN

Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk

Minutes of the Finance & General purposes Committee held on Monday 10th February 2020 at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina

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

Present: Councillor G Morvan, Chair
Councillors D Hillman, Carole Hillman, K Jenkins & R Abbas

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mrs N Horner, 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 must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that that councillors D Hillman and C Hillman declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 2b. **Further Resolved** that councillor's D Hillman and C Hillman remain in meeting for item.

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 C Bridgeman Councillor, K Jones, R Paget, C Bridgeman, L Emanuel, G Watkins, K Treharne and L Harris.

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) One Voice Wales – (for information)

Minutes of the National Executive Committee Meeting held on 13th December 2019.

In response to a member's query in respect of the cost of the Town Councils membership of OVW, it was advised that renewal of the councils OLVW membership would be considered at the next meeting of the Town Council.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council – (for information):

Blaenau Gwent Integrated Wellbeing Network – write up from network meeting held on 17th December 2019.

Councillors R Abbas, D Hillman and C Hillman attended the meeting. Councillor D Hillman informed that the Wellbeing Network were looking to expand to Nantyglo and Blaina, but, as of yet it the concentration would be that of Brynmawr and Tredegar. Councillor R Abbas informed that the projects of “Men’s Den” and “Building Musical Bridges” for Blaina were advertised at the meeting.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Application to the Community Grant Fund:

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. Members were also reminded of that applications will need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

a) Choir in the Park / Family Fun Day.

Members agreed that the event would be of great benefit to the area of Nantyglo and Blaina.

Resolved that a donation of £100.00 be made. **Further Resolved** to invite Mr Jeff Cutis to a meeting of the Council to provide an update of the event.

4. Social Media:

Members were invited to consider the creation of a Town Council Facebook page for the purposes of advertising and informing of all appropriate Town Council and local events.

Members were informed that this issue had been discussed and considered by the Council previously and that the Council had not proceeded due to informal guidance received in respect of the impact of social media upon possible Freedom of Information requests which might be received by the Council. Increasing and effective use of social media together with the ability of effective control by an appointed administrator meant that it was now an opportune time to reconsider this issue. Possible advantages to the Council in using social media would be in time, cost and efficiency. The Assistant Officer informed that she was experienced in administering social media for business use in a controlled way.

Resolved that the issue of social media use by the Town Council be considered by a Task and Finish Group.

5. Review of Council Policies:

Members were invited to review the policies listed below and if appropriate resolve to adopt for the year 2020/21:

a) Financial grants policy and application form:

Members were informed that the policy and application form were revised 12 months ago, and no amendments were suggested.

Cllr D Hillman thanked the Task and Finish Group for the work undertaken on the policies in 2019.

Resolved that the Financial Grant Policy and application form continue to be used for 2020/21.

b) Risk Management Policy:

The Chair informed that the Town Clerk had included an amendment for consideration on page 11 – paragraph 2: the inclusion of the Town Council's policy in respect of General Data Protection Regulations. Members agreed this inclusion within the policy.

Members considered the policy and recommended the following amendments:

- Page 11 – Customer / Citizen risk: this should be amended from medium to high risk due to public perception.
- Page 12 – Training query: Members were informed that any training offered from external agencies or other providers would be made available to Members.
- Page 12 – This highlighted the importance of the distinction between the remit of staff and Members of the Council.
- Page 13 – Include 'to Council's satisfaction'.
- Page 14 – Members concluded that all information contained on this page was vitally important.

Resolved that the Risk Management Policy be approved for 2020/21 with the amendments as stated above.

c) Standing Orders:

The Chair informed that the Town Clerk had included 2 amendments for consideration: the inclusion of paragraph 36 on page 19 and the terms of reference in respect of Committees (appendix 1). The Town Clerk informed that the terms of references were compiled as a result of the Town Council's customs and practices.

- Page 2 – paragraph 1: include 'quorum of sub-group and/or task and finish group shall not be less than 3'.
- Page 2 – paragraph 1: include 'list is not exhaustive' (re: apologies).
- Page 2 – paragraph 1: check the statement regarding electioneering purposes.
- Page 4 (v): reword.
- Page 11 – paragraph 11: Amend from two to three Councillors.
- Throughout document: alter 'Chairman' to Town Mayor.
- Page 14 – paragraph 24: the importance of confidential business was highlighted.
- Page 19 – paragraph 33a: to include 'by formal recommendation for agenda inclusion 10 days prior to the meeting date.'
- Page 19 – Paragraph 36: inclusion of new paragraph.

- Appendix 1 - 4.5: to include 'and any other events/functions which would benefit Nantyglo and Blaina residents'.
- Appendix 1 – 5.1: alter to 'minority' group.

Resolved that the Standing Orders be approved for 2020/21 with the amendments stated as above.

d) Financial Regulations:

The Chair informed that no amendments had been included in the regulations.

- 5.10: add 'with appropriate training'.
- 6.7; 6.8; 6.9; 6.10: amend to 'as resolved'.
- 6.22: Petty Cash – delete paragraph but sentence 'Town Council does not operate a petty cash system' to remain.
- 9.11: include 'may investigate the possibility of grant funding in respect of projects the Town Council consider necessary for the residents of Nantyglo and Blaina'.

Resolved that the Financial Regulations be approved for 2020/21 with amendments as stated above.

6. Salem Chapel:

Members were invited to consider the attached inspection report:

- January 2020:
Members were informed that the issues with fire alarm had been queried with Dragon Fire and Security (alarm company) and upon their recommendation and instructions, the Town Clerk had reset the alarm, which rectified the issue.
The Town Clerk informed that a phone query had been received from an individual in respect of the future of Salem Chapel and had made a number of possible proposals.

Resolved that the report be approved. **Further Resolved** that any possible proposals be considered by a Task and Finish Group.

7. 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)