

# 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 Meeting held via a remote on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 1.00pm.**

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

Present: Councillor K Jones JP, Chair of Planning & Highways Committee, presiding  
Councillors G Morvan, M Williams, D Hillman, K. Jenkins, C. Hillman & L Harris

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes – Town Clerk / RFO.  
Mrs K Williams – Town Centre Manager, Blaenau Gwent CBC

The Town Clerk informed that no members of the public were in attendance.  
**Resolved** accordingly.

The Chair welcomed and introduced Mrs Karen Williams to the meeting and reminded Members of the Council's Standing Orders in relation to guest speakers i.e. that guest speakers inform of their presentation and that any questions were to be asked at the end of the presentation. Members were to ask one questions each with additional questions by the discretion of the Chair.

Karen Williams informed that she was appointed to the role of Town Centre Manager in November 2020 and that during the first eight months she dealt mainly with Covid grants for businesses. Prior to her appointment as Town Centre Manager, she had worked in Business Rates for Blaenau Gwent CBC and in the Council's Housing Benefits department for many years prior to that.

Recently Mrs Williams had been working on a 'shop local' campaign to encourage people back into our local towns. Approximately 80 local businesses and market stalls were involved with this and positive feedback had been received. Mrs Williams was also helping with a rolling programme regarding digital feedback and seasonal campaigns such as 'love local for Valentine's Day'.

Digital classes were taking place with approximately 20 businesses having attended and received free digital and marketing training. Karen Williams informed that she would welcome any businesses referred to her for assistance. Additionally, a 'click and collect' service was being considered for town centres.

The Welsh Government was implementing a 'Meanwhile' scheme which was to help home/start up businesses to use empty town centre shops for a short period (up to 6 months) to allow businesses to establish and it was hoped that this would encourage businesses into high streets and town centres.

Karen Williams also informed that as Town Centre Manager she also helped organise events throughout Blaenau Gwent such as Santa's Sleigh in December which hoped to attract footfall into towns. Karen added that it was hoped that events would take place for Easter and the Platinum Jubilee too and that they were also looking to work with Town Councils throughout Blaenau Gwent. When the issue of banners throughout the high streets was discussed, Karen informed that she thought they gave towns a sense of identity and helped to promote but that she hadn't been able to obtain permission to erect banners within Blaina due to the age and condition of the existing lamp posts. Karen also informed that a digital screen was due to be installed in Blaina library within the next few weeks which was to promote Blaenau Gwent CBC services and other events taking place within town centres. As Town Centre Manager, Karen had also been working with local Police and the Leisure Trust in respect of engagement events with a current campaign about dog-fouling. Previous campaigns have included fly tipping and litter picks. Karen stated that her main role was to develop all town centres within Blaenau Gwent and that town centre loans were available over a five-year period.

The Chair invited questions:

Q: Was there currently a lower demand for town centres or were owners applying to convert retail premises to residential premises?

A: Generally, within Town Centres there were commercial premises on the ground floors and residential premises on upper floors, anything different was a planning issue. The Welsh Government accept that town centres were changing and there was an increased number of premises used for services and leisure. There was a need for a variety of amenities in town centres but and requests etc for changing the use of a building was a planning issue.

Q: Did the Town Centre manager have any powers to enforce shop owners/tenants to improve their shop frontages?

A: There were some grants available, but the applicants would also need to pay a contribution. Blaenau Gwent CBC were also looking at ways to improve the basic image of retail properties, but this would need to be carried out with owners and it was accepted that many shop/retail owners had little finance to do this. The involvement of schools could be investigated.

Q: The Santa Sleigh event was well attended and very successful – were there plans for additional events?

A: There was funding available until June 2022 and they were currently looking into Easter events. The Town Centre Manager could help facilitate events but not actually put on the event, e.g. in Brynmawr, the Town Centre Partnership organise events and the Town Centre Manager helps with funding and organisation.

Q: Was any help available regarding erecting banners throughout Nantyglo and Blaina? The Town Council had already agreed on the design for 12 but Blaenau Gwent CBC had denied permission for them to be installed?

A: The Town Centre Manager was fully aware of this issue and this had already been investigated and similarly, Blaenau Gwent CBC had denied permission, as they did for Ebbw Vale and Tredegar Town centres. The Town Centre Manager informed that she could assist with this if permission to install the banners was received from Blaenau Gwent CBC. The Town Clerk informed all present of the updated information that had been received from the Lighting Inspector at Blaenau Gwent CBC.

Q: Was there a marketing person available to assist the Town Council with the establishment of its Facebook page?

A: Possibly and the Town Centre Manager would investigate this possibility. The Town Centre Manager also informed that they were looking to develop a town centre website and town centre app.

Q: The Town Council were intending to hold suitable events etc for Nantyglo and Blaina but did want to duplicate what was planned for Blaenau Gwent in general.

A: Blaenau Gwent CBC were in the early stages of planning for the Jubilee but was looking into the 'beacons' and there was a need to engage with stakeholders. Bunting was being purchased for use throughout Blaenau Gwent. The Town Centre Manager stated that she was happy to attend future Town Council meetings regarding this issue.

Q: Many great ideas had been discussed today and it was essential that Nantyglo and Blaina needed assistance to ensure its voice was heard. As a journalist and editor of a local magazine, it was possible to help promote events etc.

A: It was accepted that engagement had been lacking and that it was essential to get the 'shop local' message out and then develop events such as selfie scenes, mini golf, climbing frames within town centres

The Chair thanked Mrs Karen Williams for attending the meeting and that Members of the Town Council looked forward to meeting her in person at a future meeting.

*Mrs K Williams, Town Centre Manager left the meeting at this juncture.*

**Prior to the start of the meeting, Members were informed of the recent loss of the mother of the Assistant Officer, Mrs N Horner. A minute silence was held as a mark of respect.**

**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 in respect of the Assistant Officer Mrs N Horner.

**Further Resolved** to accept the apology received.

**2. Correspondence:**

Members were invited to consider the listed correspondence, plus with the Chairman's permission, any urgent information that might be received prior to the date of the meeting.

**Resolved** to note the information received

a) Amy Hoidge-Hughes – Farm Garden Org UK:

E-mail - Building a National Allotment Development Team: Expressions of Interest (Communities) (*For information*).

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that the Assistant Officer had provided local allotment groups with this information.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

*Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chair:*

b) Peter Barnes Chartered Architects (*for information*):

Notification of planning application submitted to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in respect of Blaina Institute re: change of use of part of the building to a café.

The Town Clerk informed that the correspondence received was advance notification only and no other details were provided. It was anticipated that the Town Council would receive the plans as part of the statutory planning consultation.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

c) Cheryl O'Dowd:

Members were informed of an e-mail received from Mrs Cheryl O'Dowd regarding the issues of car parking and traffic within Queen Street and the Garn in Nantyglo.

The Town Clerk informed that with permission from Mrs O'Dowd, the Blaenau Gwent Ward Councillors for Nantyglo had been informed of these issues.

Members discussed the information, and the following comments were made:

- The Town Clerk had advised Mrs O'Dowd appropriately. The Town Council could support and advise local residents, but Blaenau Gwent Ward Members also needed to perform their duties.
- It was extremely difficult to drive through Nantyglo due to the number of cars parked.
- Blaenau Gwent CBC had been issuing fines within Nantyglo recently to people who had been parking on pavements.

- New legislation in respect of parking was now in force but it required effective enforcement.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

### 3. **Planning Applications:**

Members were invited to consider any further applications that may be received prior to the date of the meeting:

- a) Planning Application No. C/2021/0346- ADV. Units 1 - 4 McDonalds, Blaina Road, Lakeside Retail Park, Brynmawr:  
Installation of 6 no. Fascia Signs (including roof letters and the 'M' logo letter).

Members commented that the sign was already installed.

**Resolved** that no representations or objections be made.

- b) Planning Application No C/2022/0015 - 68 Queen Street, Nantyglo, Gwent. NP23 4LW  
To construct a domestic garage in the rear garden and access gates to rear road.

**Resolved** that no representations or objections be made.

- c) Planning Application No C/2022/0019 - 5 Bethel Place, Nantyglo, Blaenau Gwent, NP23 4UB:

Single storey rear extension and balcony.

The following comments were made:

- S.7 – applicant should have answered ‘yes’ to enlarging the roof
- The site plan provided was very small and difficult to see in detail

**Resolved** that no objections be made but to make the representations stated above.

### 4. **Licence Applications:**

Members were invited to consider the application(s):

None received to date.

**Resolved** accordingly.

**Meeting declared closed at 1.55pm**