

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

Mrs T Hughes Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the hybrid Full Council Meeting held at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina at 6.00pm on Tuesday 28th February 2023.

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

Present: Councillor L Harris, Town Mayor, presiding.
Councillors G Morvan, D Hillman, C Hillman, M Williams (remote), K Jones JP & K Jenkins.

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

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk informed that no members of the public or press 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 L King.

Further Resolved to accept the apologies received.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for February 2023.

The Town Mayor informed that the Deputy Mayor, Cllr K Jenkins attended the Holocaust Memorial Service in her absence and thanked him for doing so. Cllr Jenkins informed that the event was very enjoyable and informative.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Questions from the Public:

To receive any questions from the public regarding matters on the agenda (please note this was limited to 10 minutes).

Resolved to note that no questions were received.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 24th January 2023 (pages 104 – 109)**
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 105 – in response to a query, it was clarified that any questions received from the public would be directed to the Chair of the meeting and then answered by the most appropriate Member or Officer.
Page 106 – In response to a query, it was clarified that no response had been received from Blaenau Gwent Food bank regarding Members request to visit.
Page 109 – include 'if needed'.
Resolved that the minutes be approved.
5. **Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held 24th January 2023 (pages 110 - 112)**
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:
Resolved that the minutes be approved.
6. **Notes of the Task & Finish Group Meeting (Events) Meeting held 2nd February 2023 (pages 113 - 116)**
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 115 – Members thanked the Assistant Officer for putting the Valentine's Day message facility on the website.
Page 115 – notes should read £20 per flag not £2.
Resolved that the notes be approved.
7. **Notes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 14th February 2023 (pages 113 - 115)**
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:
Cllr K Jones JP thanked Cllr D Hillman for chairing the meeting in his absence.
Resolved that the notes be approved and **Further Resolved** that all decisions be **Ratified**.

8. Notes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 14th February 2023 (pages 116 –120)

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:

Members agreed that all decisions were to be Ratified.

Resolved that the notes be approved and **Further Resolved** that all decision taken to be **Ratified**.

9. 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.

a) One Voice Wales – (for consideration):

i E-mail re: Renewal of Membership of One Voice Wales for 2023/24.

The Town Clerk informed that the annual subscription had increased slightly since last year.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that in her opinion, whilst it was acknowledged that the annual subscription was a significant amount, membership of One Voice Wales was value for money due to the relevant and good advice & information received together with practical information such as best practice guides etc.

Cllr Morvan informed that as the Town Council representative to One Voice Wales, all meetings attended evidenced that One Voice Wales provided relevant and timely advice and information that the Town Council would not otherwise have access to.

Resolved to renew the Town Council's subscription to One Voice Wales for 2023/24.

li E-mail re: People's Practice Peer to Peer Network.

Resolved to note the information received.

lii E-mail re: Cyfle Cymru – Out of Work Service.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Mr R Abbas – (for information):

Letter informing of transformation of bench in Westside.

The Town Mayor informed that along with Councillors D & C Hillman, she had attended the presentation to award the group certificates of achievement for renovating the bench. The Town Mayor additionally informed that the group had done a wonderful job in the renovation and that I was excellent that local children had been involved in this project.

Resolved to note the information received.

- c) Aneurin Bevan UHB (for information):
E-mail informing of Potential 'Pharmacy' Scan.
Resolved to note the information received.

Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chair:

- d) Orbits IT (for consideration):
E-mail informing of price increases (3%) from April 2023 in respect of all support packages and an increase of up to 9% for the Microsoft 365 licence. The e-mail further informed that the Microsoft price increase could be avoided in 2023 by moving from a monthly commitment to an annual commitment before 1st April 2023 which would save the Council £31.26 + VAT over the year. Members were informed that the Council had already purchased support blocks in December 2022, therefore avoiding the price increase in respect of the IT support.
Members were invited to consider taking out an annual subscription in respect of the Microsoft 365 licences prior to 1st April 2023.
In response to a query, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Council currently paid monthly for the licence and therefore, would be liable for the price increase.
Resolved to switch from monthly subscription for Microsoft 365 licences to annual subscription.
- e) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (for information):
An e-mail had been received inviting representatives from the Town Council to attend the Presentation of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Blaenau Gwent to the Royal British Legion to mark their 100th Anniversary. It was agreed that the Town Mayor and Consort would attend.
Councillor G Morvan informed that he would be attending in his capacity as a member of the Royal British Legion (Blaina Branch).
Resolved that the Town Mayor and her Consort would attend the presentation.

10. **Audit Wales:**

Members were informed that the External Auditor's report and certificate in respect of the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2022 had been received. Members were invited to note, and if agreed, to approve and accept the Annual Return and Audit Opinion.

Members were also informed that the Annual Return and Audit Opinion had been displayed on the Town Council's website and notice board as required by legislation.

The Town Clerk informed that the External Auditor's (Audit Wales) opinion was that no issues or irregularities had been identified within the Council's finances and that systems and governance were fit for purpose. The Town Clerk also informed that the comments were as positive as the External Auditor would state.

Members congratulated the Town Clerk, Assistant Officer and the Internal Auditor on the

very positive audit opinion but queried if the report should have been presented to Council prior to the Annual Return and Audit Opinion being displayed. The Town Clerk informed that this was in accordance with legislation.

Resolved to approve and accept the Annual Return and Audit Opinion.

11. Annual Review of Policies of the Council 2023/24:

Members were invited to consider, and if agree, to approve the updated policies for 2023/24:

a) Standing Orders 2023/24:

Members considered the Standing Orders and the following comments were made:

- Page 7 (point 17) – add ‘subject to financial regulations’.
- Page 18 – note the sentence in bold type which refers to the public ombudsman.
- Page 22 (point 4.6) – it was commented that this appeared to be draconian.

Resolved that the Standing Orders for 2023/24 be approved with the amendments stated above.

b) Financial Regulations 2023/24:

The Town Clerk informed that the updated policy contained some minor alterations to account for most payments made by the Council were now made online.

Resolved that the Financial Regulations for 2023/24 be approved.

c) Risk management Policy 2023/24:

The Town Clerk informed that the updated policy contained some minor alterations to account for updated information such as UK terrorism alerts and UK covid levels and alerts.

Resolved that the Risk Management Policy for 2023/24 be approved.

d) Financial Grant Policy and application form 2023/24:

The Town Clerk informed that the updated application form included a section for applicants bank details (to be anonymised for agenda) so that any successful application could have the funding paid directly to them online. To include ‘measures’.

Resolved that the Financial Grants Police and Grants Application form for 2023/24 be approved with the amendments stated above.

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.

None received to date.

Resolved accordingly.

13. **Members Updates:**

Members were invited to inform and provide updates of any recent activities and / or concerns:

Cllr D Hillman – Liaison Meeting with Blaenau Gwent CBC – Budget 2023/24:

Councillor D Hillman informed that the Liaison meeting with Blaenau Gwent CBC was very amicable and that he attended the meeting remotely from Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council Chamber although except for the Deputy Clerk, no Members from ALCC were in attendance. Councillor C Hillman (NBTC) and Councillor G Evans (Tredegar Town Council) were the only other Members in attendance, in addition to Town Clerks and Assistant Officers.

Many questions were put to Cllr Steve Thomas – Leader of Blaenau Gwent CBC and his officers which included the possible increase of 4% in council tax, possible removal of the school crossing patrols etc. Cllr S Thomas informed that he was unable to provide many details and answer those questions as Blaenau Gwent CBC was due to meet within a few days to discuss further and that no decisions had been taken to date.

It was hoped that the liaison meeting managed to evidence to Blaenau Gwent CBC that the local Town/Community Councils were keeping a check on Blaenau Gwent CBC and that any Council Tax increase might be limited as in 2022/23.

The Town Clerk reiterated Councillor Hillman's update and added that Councillor S Thomas had apologised for the delay in the distribution of the budget information.

Resolved to note the information received.

14. **Confidential Information:**

The following item(s) might 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** to support the motion.

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Meeting declared closed at 7.15pm.