



## MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

### Meeting Details:

Date: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Time: 6.30 pm

The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting both at Carnegie House and remotely via Microsoft Teams for Business under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021.

Chairperson: The Mayor, Cllr Steven Bletsoe

Staff: Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO) & Mrs S Lewis (Community Engagement & Events Manager)

### In Attendance:

Cllr Steven Bletsoe (Mayor) – In Person

Cllr Freya Bletsoe - In Person

Cllr Alan Wathan – In Person

Cllr David Unwin – In Person

Cllr Lyn Walters – In Person

Cllr Martin Smidman – In Person

Cllr Tim Wood (Deputy Mayor) – In Person

Cllr C Woodman – Remote

Cllr Ian Williams – Remote

Cllr Steven Easterbrook – Remote

Cllr S Baldwin – Remote

Cllr Angela Morelli – Remote

Cllr R Thomas – Remote

Cllr N Burnett – Remote

Cllr Ceri Evans – Remote

Plus: Youth Representative Dafydd Rees (Remote) and members of the public (Remote)

### 1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

- Cllr C Webster, Cllr Michelle Blundell- Humphreys, Cllr M Voisey
- Youth Representative – Megan Howley

**Absent:** Cllr S Charles

### 2. To Receive Declarations of Interests (if any) of Members in respect of the business to be transacted

- Cllr S Easterbrook declared a personal interest in agenda item 18 as a town trader and a former employee of Mason Williams.
- Cllr D Unwin declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 regarding discussions about Heronsbridge School as a governor of Brynteg School.
- Cllr I Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 regarding discussions about Heronsbridge School as a governor of Brynteg School.
- Cllr A Morelli declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 regarding discussions about Heronsbridge School
- Cllr M Smidman declared a personal interest in agenda item 14.1 due to his work at the Refugee Council in Cardiff.

### **3. To receive questions or comments from Members of the Public (Standing Order 3(e) refers)**

A member of the public was invited to speak. He explained that since the publication of the agenda, he had looked at the Ombudsman for Wales website and found the following comment ‘*In response to a complaint regarding a Bridgend Town Councillor, the Ombudsman determined that the evidence was suggestive that the Member failed to show respect and consideration to the Clerk during that meeting*’. He asked the Mayor if he was able to say whether that case is related to agenda item 22 .1.

The member of the public also commented that as a former Town Mayor, his opinion was that the public should not be excluded from listening to the debate on agenda items 22.4 and 22.5 as these items are about local transparency and open government because they involve Council administration, financial and fiduciary responsibility, Nolan principles, good practice, and the Code of Conduct. He stated that these matters are of genuine interest to the public, especially the concept of governance transparency.

- The Mayor sought advice from the Town Clerk.
- The Town Clerk explained that she had spoken to One Voice Wales and the Council’s HR solicitor and the advice is that discussions on HR matters that provide personal staff details should be discussed in confidence, however discussions on matters that do not disclose sensitive personal information such as agenda items 22.4 and 22.5 is a matter for Council to decide whether the public can be present.
- The Mayor suggested that the outcomes of the discussions could be made public and noted that Council will make a decision on this before the agenda item is discussed.
- The Mayor asked the member of the public if anyone else was with him watching the meeting. The member of the public stated that his wife was beside him in his study.

### **4. To receive questions or comments from the BTC Youth Representatives**

- Youth Representative Dafydd Rees explained that he had been away with work and apologised for lack of involvement in recent weeks. The Mayor congratulated him on his new career.

*The Mayor announced a short recess to speak to the Town Clerk.*

*The meeting resumed.*

### **5. To Confirm and Sign Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21st February 2022**

- The Town Clerk explained that due to sickness absence, the minutes were not available

**RESOLVED:** To defer consideration of the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21st February 2022 to the April Town Council meeting.

### **6. To consider matters arising from the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21st February 2022**

**RESOLVED:** To defer matters arising from the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21st February 2022 to the April Town Council meeting.

### **7. To note for information Mayoral Announcements and Engagements:**

- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – Unveiling of the Tudor Plaque, Rhiw Market.
- Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Presentation of end of season trophies to Ogwr Hawks and launch of new season, Pyle Rugby Club.
- Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – Community Civic Service, Compassion Church, Nolton Street

- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Presentation of Lottery Plaque on behalf of the Linus Charity, Pink Scissors Shop, Bridgend.
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Presentation of Lottery Plaque on behalf of the Linus Charity, Litchard Primary School

#### **8. To receive Town Clerk's Report since last meeting (for information)**

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to priorities, ongoing tasks and urgent matters as follows:

- Work priorities have focused on the Town Hall tender, development of the new website, a complex Subject Access Request, a wide range of facilities work, HR and Council/Committee meetings.
- Town Clerk explained that as part of the Town Hall Tender documentation, the Council is required to have a Safeguarding and Modern slavery policy in place. It was agreed that the Council give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to produce these policies in order for the tender documents to be issued as soon as possible.

#### Welsh Language Scheme

- The Town Clerk informed Council that she had been contacted by a Standards Setting and Compliance Officer for the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the new blue plaque in the Rhiw Shopping centre and the fact that the plaque was in English only. The email highlighted that Bridgend Town Council does not have a Welsh Language Scheme and invites the Council to prepare one. It was agreed that this should be included as an agenda item for the April Town Council meeting and the next Regeneration Committee meeting.

#### Héronsbridge School Consultation

- The Town Clerk explained that she had been contacted by BCBC to arrange a consultation meeting with Bridgend Town Council about Heronsbridge School. The consultation is planned to start on 1 April 2022. Members were asked if they had a preference for a day and/or time for the meeting to take place.
- Cllr D Unwin declared a personal interest in discussions about Heronsbridge School as a governor of Brynteg School.
- Cllr I Williams declared a personal interest in discussions about Heronsbridge School as a governor of Brynteg School.
- Cllr A Morelli declared a personal interest in discussions about Heronsbridge School
- It was agreed that the Town Clerk should enquire about the closing date for the consultation and ask BCBC to propose several dates.

#### Town Twinning Request

- The Town Clerk explained she had received a request from the Town Twinning Association to use Carnegie House on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May for a reception from 8.30pm until 11pm following their concert with Coral du Lac from Villenave d'Ornon. It was noted that if the venue is made available, the Town Twinning Committee would provide finger food and drinks and have asked if the Council have a drinks licence or if they would we need to obtain one if their request is approved. Council considered this request.
- The Town Clerk explained that Carnegie House is currently closed to the public however the Facilities Team are working to undertake all the cyclical maintenance and H&S work as soon as possible.
- Cllr Unwin suggested that the building should be offered at no charge.

- Members discussed the alcohol license for the venue and the requirement for staff to work to facilitate the use of the building. It was noted that the Town Council do not currently have a Front of House member of staff and that the licence holder is the Community Engagement and Events Manager. It was noted that two members of staff would be required to work.
- Cllr S Easterbrook proposed that the Council should respectfully decline this request and that due to the time of the event and staff resource Council cannot provide the venue on this occasion. This was seconded by Cllr L Walters.  
Cllr A Wathan and Cllr D Unwin objected to this proposal. The Mayor therefore asked the Town Clerk to facilitate a vote.
- The Town Clerk clarified the names of Councillors present by roll call and asked Members to answer 'IN FAVOUR' or NOT IN FAVOUR of the proposal. The Vote was recorded as follows:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR	In Favour	Not In Favour
Cllr A Morelli	In Favour	
Cllr C Evans		Not in Favour
Cllr I Williams	In Favour	
Cllr C Woodman	In Favour	
Cllr N Burnett	In Favour	
Cllr S Easterbrook	In Favour	
Cllr S Baldwin	In Favour	
Cllr S Bletsoe (Mayor)		Not in Favour
Cllr F Bletsoe		Not in Favour
Cllr R Thomas	In Favour	
Cllr D Unwin		Not in Favour
Cllr A Wathan		Not in Favour
Cllr L Walters	In Favour	
Cllr T Wood		Not in Favour
Cllr M Smidman		Not in Favour

The Town Clerk recorded the result as:

- 8 Members In Favour of the motion
- 7 Members Not In Favour of the motion.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk contact the Town Twinning Association to explain that unfortunately due to the time of the event and staff resource, Council cannot provide the venue for this occasion.

#### Pre-Election Period

- The Town Clerk highlighted that the pre-election period began on 21st March and the relevant notice has been published on the Town Council website and in the notice board outside Carnegie House. The primary restriction during the pre-election period is on proactive publicity by the council which particularly relates to candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. The council can still issue media releases on factual matters provided that these do not identify individual councillors or groups of councillors. Council meetings and decisions can still proceed as normal during this time.
- The Town Clerk provided an overview of upcoming meetings and asked if there were any questions.
- Cllr F Bletsoe requested that the Regeneration Committee meeting is deferred until after the elections. This was agreed by Council.

**9. To consider draft minutes of the Regeneration Committee meeting held on 28th February 2022**

- The Chair of Regeneration Committee referred to the minutes and highlighted a change to the red telephone boxes project to have floral displays installed and provided an overview of other Regeneration projects referred to in the minutes.
- The Town Clerk noted that the minute regarding advice she had given about personal and prejudicial interests was not accurate and needed to be amended. This was noted by Council.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the minutes of the Regeneration Committee meeting held on 28th February 2022

**10. Facilities**

**1. To consider draft minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on 27th January 2022**

- Chair of Facilities Committee commended the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to Council as a true record.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on 27th January 2022.

**2. To receive an update from the Chair of Facilities Committee regarding the meeting held on 24th March 2022**

- The Chair of Facilities Committee informed Members that minutes had not yet been collated for the meeting held on the 24th March 2022 however he provided an overview of the resolutions as follows:
  - Committee considered quotes and approved a company to undertake the Fire Risk Assessment at Carnegie House.
  - Committee approved a one-year contract for Fire Alarm and extinguisher maintenance at Carnegie House.
  - Committee considered quotes and approved a company to undertake the legionella risk assessment at Carnegie House.
  - Committee considered quotes and approved a company to undertake the emergency lighting test at Carnegie House.
  - Committee considered quotes and approved a company to undertake PAT testing and for the future to investigate three members of staff undertaking training.
  - Committee considered quotes and approved a company to service the lift at Carnegie House.
  - Committee agreed to retain the current Evacuation chair at Carnegie House.
  - Committee received a Facilities Team Report on Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Documentation and considered the appointment of a Health and Safety Working Group. Although the need for a working group was agreed, it was suggested that this would need to be looked at after the election when a new Council is appointed.
  - Committee approved the provision of skips to allotments and agreed for the Facilities Team to provide as and when appropriate.
  - Committee approved entering into the Highways licence agreement as a requirement from Bridgend County Borough Council before any further dog bins are erected.
  - Committee approved the relocation of the dog bin at Minerva Street.
  - Committee approved the Facilities Team to make the necessary decision on the location of a new bin in the Newcastle Hill area whilst considering the sensible height of the dog bins.
  - Committee approved the Facilities Team to make the decision following a request for a new dog bin at Castle View in the Morfa Ward.

- Committee approved the renaming of site representatives and a request for tenants to volunteer to become site contacts for meeting new tenants.
- Committee approved a company to provide the bowser trolley service.
- Committee approved for the company that had undertaken the emergency repair to the roof at the Town Hall be contacted to make a permanent repair.
- Committee approved the Facilities Team to obtain quotes for a replacement intruder alarm along with quotes for rodent control.
- Committee requested Cllr. D Unwin seek approval for water supply by the Randall Hall Memorial for watering the summer planters.
- Committee approved the replacement of the van signage to include Bridgend Town Council with the heraldic crest and made of vinyl stickers.
- Committee approved the gifted notice boards as Bridgend Town Council assets which would be stored in the Town Hall for future use and requested the Acting Facilities Manager to arrange the collection from Cllr S Bletsoe.
- The Chair of Facilities Committee advised that a report on the extent of fence damage at Waunscil Avenue and security at the Great Western Allotment Site will be discussed at a future meeting.

## 11. Finance

### 1. To receive a balance of accounts and payments since last meeting

**RESOLVED:** Accounts paid, read, and approved by Members

### 2. To consider draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

- Chair of Finance Committee commended the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to Council as a true record.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### 3. To receive and approve reviewed Internal Control document

**RESOLVED:** To approve and sign the Statement of Internal Control document for 2021/22

## 12. Planning

### 1. To consider draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022

It was noted that these minutes had been received and noted at the February Town Council meeting.

### 2. To consider draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022

- Chair of Planning Committee noted that a decision regarding application P/22/85/RLX - Coed Parc Development off Park Street could not be determined at the meeting as further information was required. He explained that the information had now been obtained and proposed the following to Council:

#### **Application P/22/85/RLX - Coed Parc Development off Park Street**

The Town Council has now had full opportunity to review the various detailed submissions made by the Walters Road Residents Committee in respect of the aforementioned application for relaxation of previous planning conditions. The planning history of this site is a matter of extreme vexation for the long established residents of Walters Road who have had this development imposed upon them over recent years. Having considered the detailed submission made available to us, we see no reason to deviate from their submissions which extend to

several pages of well-reasoned observations. We conclude therefore that the application for relaxation of conditions should be rejected in full and the Town Council formally OBJECTS to application P/22/85/RLX.

The submission from the Walters Road Residents Committee is attached by way of endorsement and the Town Council gives notice of its wish to attend any site meeting called; and to attend and speak at any Development Control meeting at which this application may be further discussed.

**RESOLVED:** To agree to the above statement regarding Application P/22/85/RLX - Coed Parc Development off Park Street and that the Town Clerk should send this response to the BCBC Planning Department by Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th March 2022

### **13. New Town Council Website Project**

#### **1. To consider an updated heraldic crest logo for Town Council use**

- Town Clerk presented two versions of the new logo to Council.
- The logo depicts the heraldic crest with the wording 'Bridgend Town Council' and 'Cyngor Tref Pen-Y-Bont Ar Ogwr' with one version featuring green lettering and the other version, black lettering.
- Members indicated a preference for the green wording.

**RESOLVED:** To adopt a new logo for Bridgend Town Council featuring the heraldic crest with the wording 'Bridgend Town Council' and 'Cyngor Tref Pen-Y-Bont Ar Ogwr' in green lettering

#### **2. To receive an update on the website project and review screen shots of the design**

- Screen shots of the new website were presented to Council for approval of the design.
- Members were impressed with the design and welcomed the new website.
- Cllr F Bletsoe enquired if the translation feature could be clearer for those who wish to view the website in Welsh. It was agreed that this could be checked with the design company.
- A discussion took place regarding the launch date for the website. The Town Clerk and Community Engagement Manager explained that staff are currently working through the website and making slight amends to the structure and content. Following this there will be a period of staff training for the staff to upload the archive of Council and committee agendas and minutes and final testing before the website can be launched.
- Cllr Unwin suggested that the website should be launched at the end of May 2022.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the design of the new Bridgend Town Council website and agree a launch date for the end of May 2022

### **14. Community Engagement & Events**

#### **1. To consider the impact of the current war in Ukraine in relation to the Wartime Bridgend event scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and discuss if the event should continue as planned, be rebranded/replaced with a slightly different theme or cancelled.**

- The Mayor acknowledged that this is a very emotive subject and highlighted that although Members may have different views on the matter, it is important that Members are mindful of the opinions of others and deal with the agenda item in a sensitive manner.
- Members were referred to a report prepared by the Community Engagement & Events Manager that provided an overview of the situation, current bookings, options to adapt the event and considerations for cancelling the event.

- Chair of the Community Engagement & Wellbeing Committee highlighted the amount of work that had already been invested in planning the Wartime Bridgend event and thanked the Community Engagement & Events Manager for the report.
- The Mayor explained that he had listened to a long phone in about the matter on Radio 5. He acknowledged that it is not a decision that can be taken lightly, however noted that refugees will be shortly arriving in the local community.
- The Community Engagement & Events Manager was invited to speak. She explained that she had initially explored options to remove war elements of the event and rebrand it to a vintage/1940's theme, however it was difficult to remove all war related activity due to the era. She also explained that over the years, strong relationships had been built with organisations, exhibitors and re-enactors that participate in the event and it may damage relationships if they had to be excluded.
- Chair of Finance Committee noted that although the attractions and entertainment had been booked, deposits had not yet been paid.
- The Mayor referred to an email from Cllr M Smidman, expressing a view that urged the Council to consider the impact of the current war in Ukraine in relation to the Wartime Bridgend event and to discuss if the event should continue as planned, be rebranded/replaced with a slightly different theme or cancelled.
- Cllr M Smidman declared a personal interest in the discussion and explained that he works for the Refugee Council in Cardiff.
- The Mayor expressed a personal view that he felt uncomfortable bringing a tank into Bridgend Town Centre in the current climate.
- Members discussed concerns about proceeding with a wartime themed event and discussed ways in which Bridgend Town Council could show solidarity with the people of Ukraine.
- Members discussed the possibility of changing the theme of the event to something completely different, however it was acknowledged that there would not be enough time to plan a new event from scratch.
- After a lengthy debate and consideration of the timescales involved, Council deemed it inappropriate to showcase tanks and planes in the town centre when they are causing such devastation in Ukraine.
- Cllr Unwin proposed that due to world events, the Wartime Bridgend event should be cancelled for this year and that staff resource should be refocussed on re-opening Carnegie House Arts centre and developing a new 12 month programme for the benefit of the local community.
- The Council unanimously agreed this proposal.

**RESOLVED:** Due to world events, the Wartime Bridgend event will be cancelled for 2022 and the Town Council will focus resource on re-opening Carnegie House and developing a new Arts, Culture and Heritage programme to be launched in Autumn/Winter 2022 and that the programme should include activities to support refugees coming into the area.

- The Town Clerk was asked to prepare a press release to inform the public of this decision.
- Members discussed the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Exhibition scheduled to be held in Carnegie House on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and open for a period of one week.
- It was noted that plans had already been made for the Air Commodore Wales to attend and launch the exhibition and the RAF St Athan Voluntary Band have been booked to play outside in Wyndham Street.
- It was noted that the exhibition is intended to mark an historic event, will be presented in a formal way with a focus on the Welsh element of the campaign.
- Members discussed concerns about the playing of military music and uniforms in Wyndham Street.

- Members discussed the advertising of the event and the possibility of it being invite only.
- The Mayor proposed that the event could go ahead but be scaled back and at the discretion of the Community Engagement and Events Manager depending on the world situation at the time.

**RESOLVED:** That the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Exhibition planned at Carnegie House on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022 can go ahead, however this event should be scaled back and delegated authority is given to the Community Engagement & Events Manager to make a judgement call depending on the world situation at the time.

- Cllr L Walters enquired what would happen to the budget allocated for the Wartime Bridgend event.
- Chair of Finance Committee noted that unspent budget usually goes back into reserves.
- Members discussed the possibility of using the budget to support the people of Ukraine.
- The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council is not able to donate money to help people outside the UK.
- It was suggested that the Council could allocate funds to support refugees coming into the local area but noted that this matter need further consideration. Cllr M Smidman and Cllr L Walters offered to research options for Council consideration.

**RESOLVED:** To include an agenda item for the April Town Council meeting to discuss activities to support Ukrainian people coming to the local area.

## **2. To consider quote received for maintenance of HMS URGE Mural – Bridgend Riverbank**

- A quote from the original artists for maintenance of the HMS Urge mural on the river wall was presented to Council. It was noted that due to the copyright of the artwork, alternative quotes could not be sought for this work.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the quote from the original artist for maintenance of the HMS Urge mural on the river wall and to request that this work is carried out before the HMS anniversary in April if possible.

## **15. Town Hall**

### **To receive an update from the Town Clerk regarding the Expressions of Interest for the Town Hall Refurbishment Project, Tender Process and timescales for appointing a contractor**

- The Town Clerk explained that further to the Expression of Interest notice and documentation published on the Sell2Wales website last month, 18 companies had expressed an interest in responding to the official tender.
- In order to make the project more manageable, the number of companies invited to submit a full tender response should be reduced and therefore credit checks, HSE checks and CCJ checks were carried out for each of these companies.
- As a pre-requisite of the full tender the Town Clerk determined if the contractors would be able to take on the whole contract and would be able to start work within 3 months of the tender submission (estimated start date from 4th July). Further to this, the list of contractors was shortlisted to 7.
- As part of Health & Safety requirements, the Council must appoint a Principle Designer for the project. As the Council does not have a suitably experienced person in-house to fulfil this role this will need to be outsourced.
- The Town Clerk advised that the main requirements to adhere to Council procedures to appoint a contractor are:
  - To set a detailed matrix of the criteria for success to score the tender responses

- Set a deadline and a date and time for formally opening the tenders
- Open the tenders at the set time in front of at least one witness/member
- Accept the tender that gives the best value and meets the criteria according to the previously set matrix
- It was noted that the tender package should be ready to issue by 1st April and that the Council should allow a 5 week period for the submission of tender responses. This means that the tender responses should be received by 6th May 2022.
- It was proposed that the tender responses are opened by the Town Clerk and an elected member on 9th May and that the responses are collated and sent to the architect and quantity surveyor so that they can carry out a through review of the responses against the tender specification to ensure all work and costs are covered in each response. The review by the architect and QS will take up to two weeks.
- The Town Hall Working Group will need to be reformed after the election and a meeting of the Working Group, the architect and quantity surveyor will need to be called to discuss a recommendation for full Council consideration. The Council will then need to consider the recommendation and make a decision on the appointment of the contractor.
- It was noted that the successful contractor will be expected to start work on site by mid-July.
- The Town Clerk also noted that the Quantity Surveyor had asked her to make Council aware that due to the current economic climate, the cost and availability of materials is a major issue that could impact the tender process and budget for this project.
- Members were asked if they had any questions on the information provided. There were no questions but Members thanked the staff for all the work on this project.

*Youth Representative D Rees left the meeting*

## **16. Town Twinning**

- 1. To consider a request from the Bridgend Town Twinning Association to host a formal meeting between the Mayor of Villenave d’Ornon and the Mayor of Bridgend Town Council at Carnegie House on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022**
  - Members agreed to host a formal meeting between the Mayor of Villenave d’Ornon and the Mayor of Bridgend at Carnegie House during the day on Friday 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - It was noted that after an in-depth discussion and vote regarding the use of Carnegie House on the evening of Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May, Council had agreed that due to the time of the event and staff resource, on this occasion, Council cannot provide Carnegie House in the evening as requested.

**RESOLVED:** To host a formal meeting between the Mayor of Villenave d’Ornon and the Mayor of Bridgend Town Council at Carnegie House on Friday 27th May 2022

- 2. To consider a request from the Bridgend Town Twinning Association to reschedule the official Civic Dinner to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the relationship between Bridgend and Villenave d’Ornon on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022**
  - Town Clerk explained that in October 2021 the Town Council agreed to reschedule and host an official 25th Anniversary Dinner to mark the official twinning with Villenave d’Ornon. It was agreed that the Council will pay for the visiting party, The Mayor and Consort of BTC and The Deputy Mayor and Consort of BTC from the Civic Budget, and that other Councillors that want to attend and the hosting families will pay for themselves.
  - Members discussed a venue for the event. The Town Clerk explained that enquiries can be made with the venue that was previously booked, however due to the event taking place on a Saturday availability may be an issue.

- Members suggested that local restaurants such as Il Vechio, Zia Nina and Poco Poco could also be considered.

**RESOLVED:** That the Civic Dinner to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the relationship between Bridgend and Villenave d’Ornon is rescheduled for Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and staff find and book a venue as soon as possible.

### 17. Bridgend Parks Strategic Review

**To receive a Stakeholder Update from Just Solutions Consulting and discuss feedback if required**

**RESOLVED:** To defer feedback on the Bridgend Parks Stakeholder Update and due to the election, request an extension to the end of June or July or for individual Members to submit an independent view.

### 18. To receive Periodic Survey of Town Centre Empty Shops/Business Premises and Allied Matters

- Cllr D Unwin presented his report to Council and highlighted that the situation is no worse now than it was 9 months ago which is good news for the town. On allied matters he reported that:
  - There had been a couple of Saturday markets held in the town and that they were of high calibre compared to previous markets.
  - The Zia Nina restaurant is closed for refurbishment for a period of 12 weeks. Cllr Unwin expressed concern about the Mason Williams clock and noted that it is a Listed Structure and part of the town’s heritage. He explained that the workings of the clock are inside the building and urged Council to ensure that these are not removed as part of the renovation work.
  - The bus station has removed its illuminated timing boards so that once the bus station has closed for the day there is no information outside the building to notify people of bus times. He highlighted that Bridgend bus station is one of the top 10 bus stations in Wales and that this situation is not good for the town.
- Cllr S Easterbrook declared a personal interest in this agenda item as a town trader and a former employee of Mason Williams.
- The report from Cllr Unwin was noted by Council.

### 19. Consultations:

1. **Rydym yn ceisio barn ar Raglen Waith yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol / We’re seeking views on the Auditor General’s Work Programme.**

Full details of the consultation can be viewed here: <https://www.audit.wales/about-us/consultations> A response to the consultation can be made via online survey.

- **NOTED**

### 20. Correspondence:

1. Email from Bridgend County Borough Council: Small Grants Wales - **NOTED**
2. Email from Bridgend County Borough Council: BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (COLLEGE CLOSE, BRIDGEND) (TEMPORARY CLOSURE) ORDER 2022 - **NOTED**
3. Email from One Voice Wales: Newyddion Coedwig Genedlaethol i Gymru / National Forest for Wales News - **NOTED**
4. Email from One Voice Wales: REMINDER - TRAINING - FEBRUARY & MARCH 2022 / ATGOFFA - HYFFORDDIANT - CHWEFROR & MAWRTH 2022 - **NOTED**
5. Email from One Voice Wales: Welcome to your Vote Campaign - Thursday 10 March / Adnoddau Croeso i Dy Bleidlais’ - **NOTED**
6. Email from One Voice Wales: We want to help your community / Rydyn ni eisiau helpu eich cymuned, My Tree, Our Forest scheme - **NOTED**

7. Email from Anne Robson Trust: Advertising the New Anne Robson Trust Pre-bereavement Helpline - **NOTED**
8. Email from One Voice Wales: Call for case studies (taking action on the climate emergency) – **NOTED**

## 21. Town and Community Forum

- a) To consider items for inclusion on the Town and Community Council Forum agenda - **NOTED**
- b) To consider feedback from meetings of the Town and Community Council Forum - **NOTED**
- c) To identify proposals for inclusion on the TCC Charter Action Plan which would aid the development of the Charter - **NOTED**

The Mayor requested a short recess to speak to the Town Clerk. This was agreed by Council. The meeting resumed at 8.51pm.

*Cllr C Evans left the meeting at 8.51pm*

Mayor confirmed the Councillors remaining in the meeting as: Cllr S Bletsoe, Cllr R Thomas, Cllr A Morelli, Cllr N Burnett, Cllr I Williams, Cllr S Baldwin, Cllr L Walters, Cllr T Wood, Cllr F Bletsoe, Cllr D Unwin, Cllr A Wathan & Cllr M Smidman.

- The Mayor referred to a request from a member of the public regarding agenda item 22.4 and 22.5. He highlighted that Bridgend Town Council treat all discussions and minutes that relate to staff, in confidence. He noted that other Councils may chose to do this differently but that is a matter for them. He highlighted that Bridgend Town Council does not provide confidential minutes on its website and therefore suggested that agenda items 22.1-22.3 should be discussed in confidence.
- The Mayor noted that with regard to discussions on agenda item 22.4 and 22.5, he cannot prejudge the debate and it is a matter for Council to decide how to proceed with the request from the member of the public.
- Cllr L Walters proposed that agenda items 22.4 and 22.5 are discussed in the public domain providing that all Councillors agree that they will not disclose any personal information about members of staff. This was seconded by Cllr S Baldwin. There were no other comments.

**RESOLVED:** To discuss Personnel agenda items 22.4 and 22.5 in the public domain and that Councillors should not disclose any personal information about members of staff.

**RESOLVED:** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of agenda item 22.1, 22.2 and 22.3 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

*The Mayor asked that Members of the public and staff apart from the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk leave the meeting and explained that they can be readmitted after discussion on agenda items 22.1, 22.2 & 22.3.*

The Mayor asked all Members accessing the meeting remotely to turn on their cameras and confirm that they were on their own to ensure confidentially.

## **22. Personnel (In Confidence)**

- 1. To receive a letter from the Town Clerk regarding formal HR concerns (protected disclosure)**
  - A discussion took place in confidence.
  
  - The Mayor announced that the Standing Order for the end time of the meeting would need to be suspended as the time was 9.30pm and there were still items on the agenda to discuss. This was agreed by Council.
  
- 2. To consider draft minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022**
  - A discussion took place in confidence.
  
- 3. To receive an update from the Chair of Personnel Committee regarding the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022**
  - A discussion took place in confidence.

**RESOLVED:** To readmit the public back into the meeting.

**4. To receive Personnel Committee resolution to acknowledge that the Council had been unreasonable due to the pandemic and its desire to continue to increase services to residents of Bridgend resulting in undue pressure on its staff.**

- Chair of Personnel Committee presented the recommended resolution to Council.
- The Mayor commented that he did not recognise Council as being an unreasonable employer but recognises the undue pressure due to the pandemic. He noted that it had been a difficult situation for Council and its staff however he does not agree with the word unreasonable being used.
- Cllr S Baldwin explained that if undue pressure is put on staff it can be viewed as unreasonable.
- Cllr L Walters commented that she believed the resolution to be fair and accurate because there have been many meetings where she and other Councillors had raised concerns but Council had continued to allocate too much work for the staff hours available.
- The Mayor objected to the resolution and requested a vote.
- The Town Clerk clarified the names of Councillors present by roll call and asked Members to answer 'IN FAVOUR' or NOT IN FAVOUR of the resolution. The Vote was recorded as follows:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR	In Favour	Not In Favour	Abstained
Cllr A Morelli	In Favour		
Cllr N Burnett	In Favour		
Cllr S Easterbrook	In Favour		
Cllr I Williams	In Favour		
Cllr S Bletsoe (Mayor)		Not in Favour	
Cllr F Bletsoe			Abstained
Cllr R Thomas	In Favour		
Cllr D Unwin	In Favour		
Cllr A Wathan		Not in Favour	
Cllr L Walters	In Favour		
Cllr T Wood	In Favour		
Cllr M Smidman	In Favour		
Cllr S Baldwin	In Favour		

The Town Clerk recorded the result as:

- 10 Members In Favour of the motion
- 2 Members Not In Favour of the motion
- 1 Members Abstained

**RESOLVED:** That the Council acknowledge it had been unreasonable due to the pandemic and its desire to continue to increase services to residents of Bridgend resulting in undue pressure on its staff.

**5. To consider recommendations from the Personnel Committee:**

**a) For a moratorium of routine meetings and that the schedule of meetings will remain in place with meetings being convened by staff when decisions are required**

- Cllr Unwin suggested that the Council accept this recommendation, delegate to staff and that it would be a matter for the new Council to consider after the election in May.
- The Council did not agree a resolution for this agenda item.

- b) To consider the appointment of a Locum Clerk for a six-month period subject to advice from One Voice Wales/SLCC.**
- Cllr Unwin suggested that the Town Clerk seek further advice and costs and call and Extraordinary Personnel Committee to agree this is needed.
  - The Council did not agree a resolution for this agenda item.
- c) To seek Council approval to arrange a staff survey, ensure Council and Committees do not over commit on projects without the available resource, improve the chairing skills of Council and Committees, implement a referral ticket system for Council work, arrange Code of conduct training for all Councillors and seek advice from the Monitoring Officer and HR solicitor in relation to concerns about staff welfare.**
- Cllr A Wathan suggested that this agenda item should be deferred to the new Council in May.
  - The Mayor highlighted that training is available to Councillors however the Council cannot dictate.
  - Cllr L Walters commented that she understood the suggestion to defer the matters to the new Council but highlighted that there are some matters that could start now such as a staff survey to understand the issues and how they can be resolved and a ticketing systems for resolutions to create efficiency.
  - The Mayor suggested that these could be time consuming and with only 6 weeks remaining of the current Council and the capacity of staff, he supported that this should be deferred.
  - A member of the public was permitted to speak. He thanked the Council for allowing his participation and commented that it was an appalling attitude to put off what the Council can do now.
  - The Chair of the Personnel Committee asked the Town Clerk if she was happy with the outcome.
  - The Town Clerk responded that she was not happy and in relation to staff capacity, she reminded Council that they determine which priorities staff should work on.
  - Cllr F Bletsoe suggested that up to the election, staff work on the projects of Council and then focus on the HR work as a priority. She also noted that staff needed to have appraisals.
  - The Mayor proposed that staff focus on the backlog of resolutions as a priority. This was seconded by Cllr Unwin.
  - Cllr L Walters objected.
  - Cllr A Morelli highlighted that staff surveys are available on the TUC website if the Council wanted to consider carrying out a quick survey.
  - Cllr N Burnett agreed with Cllr L Walters and suggested that Council should give permission for these recommendations to be carried out.
  - The Mayor suggested that the recommendations should be left to the staff to carry out when they can.
  - The Deputy Clerk highlighted that Council set the work priorities; therefore, staff will continue to work on resolutions, projects and Council meetings unless the Council specifically directs resource to this. She explained that this work cannot be undertaken unless something else is taken off.
  - The Mayor asked Council to decide if approval is granted for agenda item 22.5c
  - Cllr R Thomas proposed that the HR work should be prioritised. Cllr L Walters seconded this.

**RESOLVED:** That Council provides approvals to arrange a staff survey, ensure Council and Committees do not over commit on projects without the available resource, improve the chairing skills of Council and Committees, implement a referral ticket system for Council work, arrange Code of conduct training for all Councillors and seek advice from the Monitoring Officer and HR solicitor in relation to concerns about staff welfare.

**Meeting closed: 10.12pm**

Signed .....

Date .....

Mayor