



**MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 6.30pm at Carnegie House Council Chamber**

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. Stuart Baldwin (Mayor) Cllr. Steven Bletsoe Cllr. Kate Boucher Cllr. Angela Morelli Cllr. Gary Sassoon-Hales Cllr. David Unwin	Cllr. Lyn Walters Cllr. Paul Warren Cllr. Alan Wathan Cllr. Carolyn Webster Cllr. Tim Wood
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**Pre-meeting Business:**

- Presentation from Susan Cooper, Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing regarding the new Sunnyside development.
- Mayor read a letter from Cllr Eric Hughes containing his resignation as a Councillor with immediate effect. The Town Clerk was instructed to notify the Electoral Office and formally write to thank Mr Hughes for his time as a Councillor.

**1. To receive apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received from: Cllr. Freya Bletsoe, Cllr. Nicole Burnett, Cllr. Stuart Charles, Cllr. Ceri Evans, Cllr. Matthew Voisey

Absent: Cllr. Rebecca Porter, Cllr. Isabel Robson

**2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest in respect of the business to be transacted:**

- Declarations of interest were recorded in the Declarations of Interests Register.

**3. To Confirm and Sign Minutes of Town Council Meeting held on 19th February 2018 and the minutes of the continuation of this meeting held on 7th March 2018.**

- Cllr D Unwin highlighted that on Page 52. the word Langenau had been misspelt in the minutes.
- Cllr S Bletsoe questioned the accuracy of the minutes.
- Page 51; Cllr S Bletsoe referred to the advice given by BCBC to the Town Clerk and questioned why this had not been included in the minutes. The Town Clerk advised that the minutes are not verbatim.
- Page 53; Cllr S Bletsoe stated that his comment regarding a letter should have included the wording 'remedial action on all allotment plots'
- Page 54; Cllr S Bletsoe questioned the accuracy of minutes of the discussion that took place whilst he had left the chamber during the meeting and referred to a comment from a Member that he had heard from outside the door of the Council Chamber. Mayor asked Members present

during the discussion if they disputed the minutes. Deputy Mayor commented that he thought he heard the word 'blatant', however it was not agreed by Members to amend the minutes.

- Page 55; It was agreed that the wording 'The declarations were challenged' be amended to 'The declarations were observed and discussed'
- Page 56; Cllr S Bletsoe challenged the wording of the minutes in relation to the reason why he had been removed from the Allotments Committee. Members discussed the wording. It was agreed by Member that the minute should not be amended.
- Cllr G Sassoon-Hales suggested that queries regarding the accuracy of the minutes could have been provided by email in advance.

**Resolved:** To confirm and sign the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 as a true and accurate record subject to the amendments discussed.

**Resolved:** To confirm the minutes of the continuation of the February Town Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 as a true and accurate record subject to the amendments discussed. Minutes to be signed at the April Town Council meeting.

#### **4. To Consider Matters Arising from the Town Council Meeting held on 19th February 2018 and the minutes of the continuation of this meeting held on 7th March 2018.**

- Page 51. Cllr S Bletsoe explained that he was aware that the press had contacted the Town Clerk the day after the February Town Council meeting regarding discussions that had taken place about depedestrianisation. He expressed concern that BCBC had put pressure on the Town Clerk firstly regarding the information provided to the press and secondly by suggesting that the information may jeopardise the funding application.
- Members discussed whether or not Councillors should speak to the press.
- Cllr D Unwin stated that Councillors should not speak on behalf of the Council but can give a personal opinion on a particular issue. Town Clerk confirmed that Councillors should not represent the views of the Council when speaking to the press.
- Town Clerk was asked to provide an update on the situation that had arisen after the February Town Council meeting. She confirmed that she had been contacted by the press and by a BCBC Officer regarding the information that had been shared at the Town Council meeting. She confirmed that the information she had provided at the BTC meeting had not been given to her in confidence and that during the original discussions she had spoken to BCBC Officers about sharing the information with Councillors. Cllr S Bletsoe questioned whether the Town Clerk had received an apology from BCBC for the situation. Town Clerk stated that she had not.
- P54. Cllr S Bletsoe presented a Non-Cultivation letter to the Mayor regarding allotment Plot 10 at Coychurch Road allotment site. Mayor read the letter to Members.
- Cllr S Bletsoe explained that he had assumed that the letter meant that the tenancy for Plot 10 had been terminated and stated that this was the reason that he had completed a Declaration of Interest form as a former tenant.
- Mayor stated that as Vice Chair of the Allotment Committee, Cllr Bletsoe should be aware of the process that the Town Council follow in order to terminate a tenancy; the Council issue a Notice to Quit letter and, in this instance, a Notice to Quit letter had not been issued, therefore the tenancy had not been terminated.
- Page 55. Deputy Mayor refereed to a resolution to investigate a claim of bullying and advised that the Council do not have the power to investigate this matter.

## 5. To note for information Mayoral Announcements and Engagements:

Mayor's Engagements:

- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March – Town Twinning French exchange visit
- Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March - Presentation to Mr D Dobbs, Bridgend resident

Deputy Mayor's Engagements:

- None

## 6. To Receive Town Clerks Report for February

Town Clerk presented a report detailing the projects and services delivered by Bridgend Town Council from 19th February – 19th March 2018.

- Town Clerk highlighted that a programme of gum removal had started in the town centre. She explained that the work has started in Adare Street and will follow a schedule of streets throughout the year.
- Members were informed that a water pump in the basement of Carnegie House is not working. An emergency callout was undertaken and a quote for replacing a part for the pump will be sought as soon as possible.
- It was reported that plans for the relocation of the staff office and meeting room on the first floor of the building had been prepared by an architect and reviewed by the Personnel Committee. Three quotes for the work will now be obtained from building contractors and it is anticipated that the work will start in May 2018.
- Town Clerk explained that the new positions of Facilities Manager and Democratic Services Officer were advertised this month. Shortlisting and interviews for these posts will be undertaken in the coming weeks. The additional post of Community Engagement & Events Manager will be advertised in April. She also highlighted that from 1st April 2018 the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk/RFO will increase their working hours to 30 hours per week. Mr Brent Davies will take up the position of Caretaker/Responsible Key holder and Mrs Helen Jenkins will be appointed to the role of Finance and Facilities Officer.
- Members were informed about arrangements for a service to mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force scheduled to take place at the War Memorial in Bridgend town centre on Saturday 7th April, followed by a service at the United Church and the lighting of the beacon brazier on Newcastle Hill.
- An update was provided regarding the Great Western Railway Project. Town Clerk explained that she and the Chair of Finance had met with an architect for Bridgend railway station to discuss the location of new information panels funded by a grant awarded to BTC by Great Western Railways. Initial feedback was very positive and therefore the Clerk will liaise with the architect, Station Manager and BCBC Conservation team to pursue this revised location for the project.
- Town Clerk explained that further to the Military Advisory Committee meeting, she had approached the Town Twinning Association regarding a suggestion to invite the Mayors of the Twin Towns of Villenave d'Ornon and Langenau and the Mayor of Hechtel Eksel to the annual Remembrance Service taking place in 2018. The purpose of the invitation is to mark the centenary anniversary of the end of the first World War. The Town Twinning Association support the idea and would be happy to arrange hosts for the exchange if Bridgend Town Council decide to proceed with official Civic invitations.

**RESOLVED:** To proceed with official Civic invitations to Remembrance Day 2018 to the Mayors of Villenave d'Ornon and Langenau and the Mayor of Hechtel Eksel.

- Members were informed about two forthcoming Town Twinning events at Carnegie House. Invitations were extended to all Members to attend the events.
- Cllr P Warren gave his apologies for an event on 17<sup>th</sup> April.
- It was reported that the Deputy Clerk/RFO has spent time reviewing budgets and beginning preparations for year-end requirements for the internal and external audit. An additional Finance meeting has been called on Thursday 22nd March 2018 to review end of year budgets, financial risk and regulations. Town Clerk explained that an Extraordinary meeting of Town Council will be required to approve this business at 7pm on Monday 26th March 2018.
- It was proposed that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday 10th April 2018 is rescheduled to Tuesday 24th April 2018. This was agreed by Members.
- Cllr L Walters gave her apologies for Finance meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March

**7. To Consider the draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 14th March 2018**

- Cllr C Webster declared an interest in the agenda item and left the room.
- Chair of the Planning Committee referred to an objection to Planning Application P/18/60/FUL and updated Members that a BCBC Highways Officer had since also responded to the consultation and expressed similar concerns regarding site access.
- Chair of Planning Committee expressed concern that a premature advertisement for a taxi office at the location had since appeared in the press. Members stated that they hope that BCBC Planning Department note this.
- Chair of Planning Committee circulated photographs of damage caused to woodland area by developers at Coed Parc. He explained that the area had been devastated and it was his opinion that this had been done without permission in order to facilitate future development at the site. He explained that the Planning Committee will be making representations to BCBC and to the developer and will seek financial compensation for the local residents.

**RESOLVED:** To accept the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**8. To Consider the draft minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting of 15th March 2018**

**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 8 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**RESOLVED:** That the public and representatives of the press be permitted to join the meeting.

## 9. Finance:

### a) To receive a balance of accounts as at 19th March 2018 and approve Payments of Expenditure

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

### b) To consider a letter from BCBC Head of Neighbourhood Services Re: Request for funding for continuation of free parking trial at the Rhiw Car Park, Bridgend

- Chair referred to a letter from Zak Shell, Head of Neighbourhood Services, BCBC, requesting a contribution of £13,500 towards a parking trial of 1 hour free parking at the Rhiw Car Park from 1st April to 31st December 2018. He highlighted that the precept for Bridgend Town Council for 2018-19 was prepared in November 2017 and that a budget has not been allocated for the provision of free car parking.
- Members highlighted that any request for funding should be accompanied by a detailed breakdown of costs for the project.
- Chair of Finance highlighted that further details would be required for audit purposes in order to provide funding of this level.
- Members questioned whether other local community councils had been approached for funding towards this project.
- Members discussed whether the previous 2 hour free parking trial had provided significant benefit to Bridgend Town Centre. It was highlighted that there appears to be no definitive evidence.
- Cllr S Bletsoe questioned how a figure of £67,000 had been calculated to provide one-hour free parking at the Rhiw Car park for a period of 9 months. He stated that over a period of 39 weeks, if the car park was open 6 days a week at a cost of 70p per hour, this would be the equivalent of 409 cars parking for 1 hour every day.
- Members highlighted the short time frame for this request and stated that they require a much longer notice period in order to provide funding. Funding requests should be submitted prior to the precept meeting in November each year.
- Members considered whether they could provide financial support for this type of scheme. It was noted that the BTC precept is collected from the residents of the three town council wards of Oldcastle, Newcastle and Morfa and that most of the residents living in these area are within walking distance of the town and therefore would not directly benefit from the free parking trial.
- Member noted that in austere times, BTC must carefully consider the way it spends the precept collected within its three wards.

**RESOLVED:** That considering that the BTC budget for financial year 2018-19 has already been set, BTC do not have the capacity to contribute £13,500 towards the continuation of a free parking scheme at the Rhiw Car Park.

## 10. To receive and consider the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report - February 2018

- Chair of the Finance Committee suggested that this item could be referred to the Finance Committee for further consideration and a full report to Council.
- Town Clerk advised that an amount had been included in the precept budget to cover the cost of the payments. She also advised that the payments are mandatory for the Council and therefore Council as a whole cannot take a vote on whether or not to accept them. She did not that if Councillors do not wish to accept the payments they can write to her individually to refuse them.
- Members discussed how details of remuneration would be reported to the public and whether there would be anonymity. Town Clerk advised that she would seek further guidance on this matter.

**RESOLVED:** To refer to Finance Committee for consideration and report to Council

#### **11. To receive and consider a GDPR Toolkit for local councils provided by One Voice Wales**

- Town Clerk explained that guidance for Clerks had only been issued in February 2018 and that the SLCC are still seeking legal advice on whether Clerks can be named as the Data Protection Officer for the Council.
- Town Clerk advised that due to current resource issues she had not had the opportunity to read the document in detail. She explained that she and other Members of staff had been working a significant number of additional hours to manage the day-to-day business of Council and expressed concern in meeting the deadline of the 25th May to be compliant with GDPR regulations.
- Deputy Mayor highlighted that the Council will need to evidence the systems that it has in place and the mechanisms it uses to comply with GDPR. He explained that the new regulations involve specific rules about how long documents are kept and conducting data audits and offered to look at the report and liaise with the Town Clerk regarding this matter.
- Members expressed concern about the limited resources within the Town Council and discussed several options to support the Clerk in order to meet the deadline for the introduction of GDPR; including seeking expert advice from an external consultant and providing cover for the Town Clerk to release her from her duties to work on GDPR compliance.

**RESOLVED:** To approve that the former Town Clerk is asked to work additional hours to release the Town Clerk to work with the Deputy Mayor to ensure that Bridgend Town Council are compliant with GDPR regulations to meet the deadline of 25th May 2018.

#### **12. Consultations**

##### **1. Consultation on the draft Autism (Wales) Bill. Further information is available at:**

**<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=293>**

- Cllr C Webster declared a personal interest in this agenda item however urged Members to speak with family, friends and assembly members about this bill and provide feedback as appropriate.
- Mayor advised that there is a formal mechanism to provide feedback online.
- Cllr Unwin referred to Cllr Webster's knowledge in this area and endorsed Cllr Webster's suggestion.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr C Webster provide a response to the consultation which is endorsed by Bridgend Town Council.

##### **2. Consultation on Edition 10 of Planning Policy Wales. Further information is available at:**

**<https://beta.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales-edition-10>. NOTED**

##### **3. Consultation on removal of traffic order Re: New Cycle Footway, Angel Street Bridgend. The consultation will be open until 12th April 2018.**

- Cllr Unwin stated that he could not read the very small print of the document.
- Deputy Mayor highlighted that the date stamp on the document was 23/09/2016

**RESOLVED:** To request a larger copy of the document and defer this matter to the next Council meeting.

**13. To Consider the following items of Correspondence:**

1. Email from One Voice Wales Re: Innovative Practice Annual Awards Ceremony 2018. **NOTED**
2. Email from BCBC Re: Advance Notification of Temporary Road Closure - Cowbridge Road, Bridgend. **NOTED**
3. Email from Keep Wales Tidy Re: Town and Community Councils working with Keep Wales Tidy
  - Cllr Unwin stated that this item was of interest and suggested that the Town Council could explore the ways it can assist in the future and suggested that this could be referred to the Finance Committee for further consideration.

**RESOLVED:** Town Clerk to contact Keep Wales Tidy to enquire whether they have the facility to clean riverbanks and watercourses.

- Cllr S Bletsoe stated that the Compassion Church on Nolton Street are doing a good deed once a week and suggested liaising with the church.

**RESOLVED:** To refer this matter to the Finance Committee for further consideration

4. One Voice Wales News Bulletin February 2018. **NOTED**
5. Email from Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales Re: Guidance for Principal Councils on the Review of Communities
  - Cllr Unwin suggested that a working group is put in place to look at this over the next few months or it could be deferred to the April meeting.
  - It was suggested that there are anomalies within and outside Council boundaries. Mayor and Deputy Mayor highlighted that a presentation was made at the last BCBC Town & Community Forum.
  - Cllr Unwin offered to put a paper together for the next Town Council meeting.

**RESOLVED:** To defer this item to the April Town Council meeting.

6. Email from Older People's Commissioner for Wales Re: Ageing Well in Wales - Strategic partner survey. **NOTED**
7. Report on financial management and governance in local councils from the Wales Audit Office
  - Cllr Unwin offered to compile a response. This was approved by Members.
8. Letter, guidance note and application form for Welsh Government support for funding around three core themes in 2018-19. **NOTED**
9. Wales Audit Office - Survey of Town and Community Councils. **NOTED**
10. Email from One Voice Wales Re: Community Asset Transfer Conferences. **NO ACTION**
11. Email from One Voice Wales Re: Welsh Hearts Working with your Community.
  - Members supported this.
12. Email from Cllr P Warren Re: Disabled Parking Bays

- Deputy Mayor presented a report to Council which included photographs of disabled parking bays around Bridgend Town Centre and referred to the number of disabled parking bays that had been blocked off. He stated that on the morning the photographs were taken, it appeared that Bridgend Town Centre was closed to disabled people. He questioned why so many parking bays were unavailable at the same time and stated that he was disgusted by the situation.
- It was suggested that Civil Enforcement Officers and the Town Centre Manager should investigate this matter.
- Cllr Webster highlighted that Assembly Member Suzy Davies has an interest in this matter.
- Cllr L Walters thanked the Deputy Mayor for his report and evidence of the situation and suggested that the report should be sent to BCBC, the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People and the Assembly Member that has an interest in disabled matters.

**RESOLVED:** To send the report to BCBC Director of Communities, Mr Mark Shephard.

13. Email from Cllr P Warren Re: Bridgend Town Members meeting

- Deputy Mayor explained that the Town Members meeting scheduled for 19th April had been cancelled by a BCBC Officer and explained he was unable to attend the rescheduled meeting.
- He explained that in May 2017 the Town Council had been advised that two named Councillors could attend the meeting, however in situations where the named Members are not available, he suggested that the Council should request to send a deputy.
- Members discussed the need to improve communications between BTC and BCBC.
- Cllr S Bletsoe highlighted that the Councillors chosen to represent BTC at this meeting can only represent the views of the Council, not their own individual views, therefore it shouldn't matter who attends on behalf of BTC.

**RESOLVED:** To write to BCBC to request that BTC can send an alternative Councillor to the Town Member meetings if the named Councillors are unable to attend.

- Cllr Sassoon-Hales offered his apologies and left the meeting at 9.20pm

#### 14. Reports

**a) Six monthly review of empty town centre retail and business premises and allied issues relating to Bridgend Town Centre (Cllr D Unwin)**

- Cllr Unwin presented his report to Council. He explained that there had been a modest improvement in the number of empty shops however advised that the situation for retail was extremely fragile up and down the country.
- Cllr Unwin drew attention to several aspects of his report, including the amount of scaffolding in the town, the length of time taken to carry out repairs by Great Western Power in Wyndham Street, the introduction of a commercial firm to manage Market Stalls and the situation regarding de-pedestrianisation.
- Cllr Webster stated that although she appreciates the time and effort Cllr Unwin had put into the report, she felt that the tone of the report was disrespectful and although she understood his frustration, name calling was not helpful.
- Cllr L Waters suggested that Councillors should be careful about the language they use in public reports and should present reports in a constructive way.
- It was moved and seconded to suspend Standing Order 3w in order to continue the meeting past 9.30pm.

- Cllr S Bletsoe highlighted that the empty shop numbers included in the report differed from the figures issued by BCBC. He added that the BCBC target for 2016/17 was 55.
- Mayor explained that the BCBC figures had been questioned.
- Members highlighted that an incentive had been offered to attract new market stall holders which meant that new tenants pay 1/3 less than existing tenants. Members agreed that more should be done to retain existing tenants.
- Deputy Mayor suggested that the new BCBC Town Centre Manager should be invited to attend a BTC meeting when they have taken up the post.
- Mayor advised that a BCBC Scrutiny meeting would be taking place on Wednesday 9.30am and would be discussing empty shops. He suggested that Members could attend to observe the discussions.
- Cllr C Webster suggested that Members could email questions through to BCBC Councillors prior to the meeting.
- Mayor clarified that existing market stall tenants had received a rebate and stated that a fund of £25,000 had been allocated to support the indoor market.

**Meeting closed: 9.40pm**

Signed .....  
Mayor

Date .....