



MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 25th January 2021 at 6.30 pm conducted remotely via Skype for Business under the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Present:	Cllr Alan Wathan (Retiring Mayor) Cllr Steven Bletsoe (Mayor) Cllr T Wood Cllr Freya Bletsoe Cllr N Burnett Cllr S Easterbrook Cllr Ceri Evans	Cllr R Thomas Cllr D Unwin Cllr L Walters Cllr C Webster Cllr I Williams Cllr C Woodman
-----------------	--	--

In Attendance: Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO) Miss J Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Mr B Burns (Town Hall Project Manager) and members of the public

1. To receive apologies for absence:

Cllr M Voisey, Cllr Stuart Baldwin, Cllr Angela Morelli
Absent: Cllr S Charles

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

- Cllr F Bletsoe – Declaration of interest in 19 as a former plot holder at Coychurch allotment site
- Cllr S Bletsoe – Declaration of interest in 19 regarding Coychurch allotment site
- Cllr C Webster – Declaration of interest item 15 – BCBC Planning Matters

3. Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2020-21

1. To consider the appointment of the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2020-21

- Mayor explained that in June 2020 Council agreed to elect Cllr Steven Bletsoe as Mayor Elect and Cllr T Wood as Deputy Mayor Elect, however due to the pandemic situation, appointment to these roles was deferred until 2021. He asked Council if it was now appropriate for the change over to take place.

RESOLVED: Cllr Alan Wathan retire as Mayor and Cllr Steven Bletsoe be appointed to the role with Cllr Tim Wood as Deputy Mayor.

2. To receive the remarks of the retiring Mayor

- Cllr Alan Wathan thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to be Mayor and thanked the staff, his Deputy Mayor Cllr Steven Bletsoe and all councillors for their help and support during his time in the role.
- Cllr Unwin commented that he was grateful for all the efforts of Cllr Wathan during his time as Mayor.

- Cllr R Thomas thanked Cllr Wathan and noted that he had carried out the role with great dignity.

3. To receive the new Town Mayor's Acceptance of Office

- Cllr S Bletsoe thanked the Council for appointing him as Chair and Mayor of Bridgend Town and gave the following statement:
"To the residents of Bridgend, I promise to undertake all of my civic responsibilities to the best of my abilities at all times, representing you when required to do so. To my fellow Councillors, I promise to undertake my role as Chair to the best of my abilities at all times. When in meetings I will encourage and ensure good, healthy, respectful debate to lead us to making lawful decisions on behalf of the residents we serve."
- Cllr S Bletsoe read and signed the Town Mayors' Acceptance of Office.
- The Mayor appointed Cllr F Bletsoe as Mayoress for his Mayoral term.
- It was noted that due to the remote meeting, the signed copy would be posted to the Town Clerk.

4. To receive the new Deputy Mayor's Acceptance of Office

- Cllr T Wood thanked Members for the opportunity to be Deputy Mayor.
- Cllr T Wood, read and signed the Deputy Mayors' Acceptance of Office.
- It was noted that due to the remote meeting, the signed copy would be posted to the Town Clerk.

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

- Due to the presence of a member of the public in relation to agenda item 19, the Mayor proposed that agenda item 19 be brought forward for discussion at this point. This was agreed by Members.

Agenda item 19:

Allotments - To consider a report on allotment matters and take decisions on the queries raised by tenants and a member of the public.

- The Town Clerk referred Members to a report regarding this agenda item that had been circulated to Members and made available to the public on the Town Council website prior to the meeting.
- Cllr D Unwin confirmed that Bridgend Town Council had always given priority to those on the allotment waiting list living within the Town Council wards. He confirmed that those living outside the wards of Bridgend Town Council were only offered an allotment plot if there were no residents within the wards waiting. He noted the close proximity of the address and ward boundary to the allotment site however raised a concern regarding setting a precedent if an exception was made in this case.
- The Town Clerk reported that in previous years, demand for allotment plots had fluctuated however, over the past year; demand had increased significantly during the pandemic.
- Town Clerk confirmed that in 2015 public information on the website did state that priority is given to residents living within the Bridgend Town Council wards.
- Members noted that the precept collected from residents living within the wards is used as a subsidy towards the allotments.
- Members were in agreement that priority should be given to those living within the Bridgend Town Council wards and it was moved and seconded not to offer an allotment plot to a resident living outside the wards at his time.
- The Mayor expressed his regret to the member of public that an offer of an allotment could not be made at this time and it was proposed that a letter is sent to Brackla Community Council to explain the situation and ask if an allotment plot could be offered to this Brackla resident as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: To not offer an allotment plot to a member of the public living outside of the Bridgend Town Council wards at this time and to write to Brackla Community Council to ask if the offer of an allotment plot could be considered as soon as available.

The Mayor and Cllr F Bletsoe left the meeting for the duration of discussion of the next item.

- The Town Clerk informed Members of the ongoing Mares Tail issue affecting three plots on the Coychurch Road allotment site and advised that new tenants had been working to rectify the issue.
- Cllr D Unwin proposed that the rent-free period for the three affected plots is extended for the next financial year, 2021/2022.
- Members spoke of the issue and ways in which the issue can be resolved moving forward.
- The Town Clerk confirmed that the plots, although rent-free would still be subject to inspection.
- Following discussion the Deputy Mayor proposed three years free rental be offered; this was seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED: To offer a three-year rent-free period for the three affected plots on Coychurch Road allotment site. The three-year rental period being 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

- Members discussed the delayed allotment rental collection for the financial year 2020/21 due to the pandemic. In light of this, Cllr D Unwin proposed that the rental collection for the financial year 2021/22 be deferred to October 2021 instead of April 2021. This was seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED: To defer the allotment rental collection for the financial year 2021/22 to October 2021.

5. To discuss the appointment of members to existing committees for 2020/2021

1. Finance Committee

[6 Town Councillors plus Ex-officio]

- Cllrs. A Wathan, T Wood, D Unwin, L Walters, M Voisey, I Williams and the Mayor (Ex-Officio) were elected to sit on the Finance Committee for 2020/21.

2. Planning Committee

[6 Town Councillors plus Ex-officio]

- Cllrs. A Wathan, T Wood, S Easterbrook, I Williams, D Unwin and the Mayor (Ex-Officio) were elected to sit on the Planning Committee for 2020/21.
- One vacancy remains on this committee.

3. Personnel Committee

[6 Town Councillors plus Ex-officio]

- Cllrs. A Wathan, F Bletsoe, D Unwin, L Walters, M Voisey and the Mayor (Ex-Officio) were elected to sit on the Personnel Committee for 2020/21.
- One vacancy remains on this committee.

4. Regeneration Committee

[6 Town Councillors plus Ex-officio]

- Cllrs. A Wathan, T Wood, S Easterbrook, F Bletsoe, C Evans, D Unwin and the Mayor (Ex-Officio) were elected to sit on the Regeneration Committee for 2020/21.

5. Community Engagement & Well-being Committee

[9 Town Councillors plus Ex-officio and up to 7 co-optees; up to four co-optees for Carnegie House Art Centre, up to two youth co-optees for well-being and one co-optee for military matters (Military Advisor)]

- Ten Councillors were proposed to be appointed to the Community Engagement and Well-being Committee.

- Members discussed the process for this situation. The Town Clerk suggested that Members could either discuss the matter to reach an amicable conclusion or a vote could be held. She also noted that further advice could be obtained from One Voice Wales.
- In light of the oversubscription to the Committee, Cllr F Bletsoe withdrew.
- Cllrs. A Wathan, T Wood, S Easterbrook, I Williams, C Webster, R Thomas, N Burnett, A Morelli, S Baldwin and the Mayor (Ex-Officio) were elected to sit on the Community Engagement and Well-being Committee for 2020/21.
- The Town Clerk was requested to seek legal advice in relation to due process in the event of the oversubscription of Members to Committees.
- It was noted that the Military Advisor would continue as Mr John Harris.

6. To authorise the signatories for the Council's banking arrangements for 2020/2021

- Chair of Finance proposed that the current signatories remain until restrictions allow for the changing of signatories in relation to the Mayor and Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: To retain existing signatories for the Council's banking arrangements for 2020/21 until such time changes can be made.

7. Representation on Outside Bodies

a) To appoint one Councillor to sit on the BCBC Town & Community Council Forum for 2020/2021

- Cllr D Unwin was appointed to sit on the BCBC Town & Community Council Forum for 2020/2021.
- It was noted that the meetings would be held remotely for the foreseeable future.
- The Mayor offered to facilitate remote access for Cllr D Unwin using his computer and Cllr Unwin's landline, subject to approval from BCBC; the Town Clerk advised she would make enquiries with BCBC.

b) To appoint two representatives to sit on the BCBC Town Members Meeting for Major Projects and Collaboration for 2020/2021

- The Mayor and Cllr A Wathan were appointed to sit on the BCBC Town Members Meeting for Major Projects and Collaboration for 2020/2021.

c) To appoint one Councillor and one deputy as representatives for One Voice Wales for 2020/2021

- This appointment remains vacant.

d) To appoint one Councillor & one deputy to sit on Conservation Advisory Committee for 2020/2021 (if required)

- It was noted that the Conservation Advisory Committee had not met in recent years.
- It was agreed to appoint a representative to sit on the Conservation Advisory Committee if arrangements are made for the Committee to meet.

8. To consider co-opting up to two Youth Members drawn from the local community within the boundary of the Bridgend Town Council wards

- The Mayor advised Members that although there were originally two applications, one applicant had withdrawn his application and there was now only one application to consider.
- He reminded Members that the appointment of Youth Members would normally be considered at the Annual Meeting of Council in May with engagement with local schools.
- The Town Clerk reported that in previous years, public notice was given and letters sent to schools with no response or expression of interest received.
- She reported that Council must legally give public notice for the co-opting of up to two Youth Members and proposed, due to the time lapse, that new notices and letters be sent to schools.

RESOLVED: To retain the existing application for consideration, to give public notice and write to local schools and youth groups to advertise the co-option of up to two Youth Members drawn from the local community within the boundary of the Bridgend Town Council wards for review at the February Town Council meeting.

9. To discuss the review of governance and policy documents for 2020/21

- The Town Clerk reminded Members that the review of governance and policy documents was deferred due to the pandemic.
- She advised Members that the documents should be reviewed prior to the end of the current financial year.
- It was agreed that the documents are reviewed at the March meeting of Council to allow the distribution of hard copies to Members.

RESOLVED: To review governance and policy documents for 2020/21 at the March 2021 meeting of Council.

10. To Confirm and Sign Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16th November 2020

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16th November 2020 were confirmed as a true record and approved.

11. To Consider Matters Arising from the Town Council Meeting on 16th November 2020

- There were no matters arising from the Town Council Meeting on 16th November 2020.

12. To Confirm and Sign Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14th December 2020

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14th December 2020 were confirmed as a true record and approved.

13. To Consider Matters Arising from the Town Council Meeting on 14th December 2020

- There were no matters arising from the Town Council Meeting on 14th December 2020.

14. To receive Town Clerk's Report and Facilities Management Report since last meeting (for information)

- The Town Clerk referred Members to the Town Clerk's report and invited questions.
- It was noted that due to the current Tier 4 Covid-19 restrictions office staff would continue to work from home. Members were advised of staff work priorities for January/February 2021.
- The Town Clerk explained that she had been liaising with Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) regarding a new ICT SLA for the Town Council.
- The Town Clerk advised Members of two Casual Vacancies that had occurred since the last meeting; one in the Oldcastle ward and one in the Morfa ward.
- The Town Clerk explained that at the beginning of the pandemic there was a relaxing of the 'six month' rule for Councillors attendance at meetings, however the new legislation Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 issued on 22nd April 2020 explained that this ended on the first day after the 22nd April 2020 on which a meeting is held. As Bridgend Town Council held a remote annual meeting on 22nd June and has continued to hold remote meetings since, Councillors that have not attended any meetings for a period of 6 months from 22 June to date and have not requested formal approval from the Council for their absence, automatically lose their seat.
- It was reported that Rebecca Porter (Oldcastle ward) and Roger Marsh (Morfa ward) have not attended a Council meeting for six months and therefore under Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 they cease to be a member of the authority. This was noted by Members.

- The Town Clerk advised that she had informed the Electoral Office of the situation and had requested advice on the procedures for casual vacancies during the pandemic
- The Town Clerk highlighted that the draft Bridgend Town Council Newsletter had been circulated to all Members for feedback and asked if responses could be provided as soon as possible to enable publication and circulation of the newsletter in March.
- It was agreed to accept the offer of meeting with Just Solutions Consultants regarding the way forward for Newbridge Fields at the February Meeting of Council.
- The Town Clerk advised that due to recent lockdown restrictions, a meeting of the Community Engagement and Well-being Committee to discuss the reopening of Carnegie House scheduled for January 2021, will be deferred until reopening is foreseeable as no decision can be made as of yet.
- The Town Clerk referred members to the Facilities Management report and invited questions. There were no questions; Members thanked the team for all their efforts.

15. Planning:

Cllr C Webster declared an interest in planning matters and left the meeting for the duration of discussion of agenda item 15. Planning.

1. To consider draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 16th November 2020

- Cllr D Unwin, as Chair of Planning at the time of the meeting referred Members to the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 16th November 2020.
- The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 16th November 2020 were confirmed as a true record and approved.

2. To consider draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 9th December 2020

- Cllr D Unwin referred Members to the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 9th December 2020.
- Cllr D Unwin referenced three lines for removal within the draft minutes.
- Subject to the changes identified, the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting on 9th December 2020 were confirmed as a true record and approved.

3. To note observations on planning applications from 10th December 2020 – 10th January 2021

- Cllr D Unwin referred Members to the observations on planning applications from 10th December 2020 to 10th January 2021.
- Members noted the observations on planning applications from 10th December 2020 to 10th January 2021.

16. Finance:

1. To note the Conclusion of Audit and to approve and accept the Annual Return for 2019/20

- Cllr D Unwin thanked the RFO and Staff for the completion of the 2019/20 audit.
- The Town Clerk referred Members to the letter received from BDO, Bridgend Town Councils External Auditor stating that there were no issues arising for the financial year 2019/20. She also extended her thanks to the RFO and highlighted the work carried out during the pandemic.
- The Deputy Clerk/RFO thanked Members and advised that Notice had been displayed and the Annual Return published as required.

Resolved: To note the Conclusion of Audit and to approve and accept the Annual Return for 2019/20.

17. Town Hall - To receive an update from the Town Clerk and Town Council Working Group meetings regarding:

1. Responses to the architect/contractor brief for the refurbishment of the Town Hall premises

- The Town Clerk advised Members that quotes received to date were confidential.
- Cllr D Unwin proposed that quotes were not discussed at this point, this was seconded and agreed.
- It was noted that members of the public could therefore remain.
- The Town Clerk advised that she had received some response to the brief but did not discuss individual replies at this point.
- Members agreed to extend the deadline to allow receipt of further responses to the brief.

2. To consider and agree next steps for the Town Hall project

- The Town Clerk advised Members that the change of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and reappointment of Members to Committees will impact the Members appointed to the Town Hall Working Group.
- The Mayor queried whether Council could be permitted to change the make-up of the working group. The Town Clerk responded that Council could take a decision to change the make-up of the Working Group, as it is not a Standing Committee of Council.
- The Mayor proposed the continuation of the Members of the Town Hall Working Group to avoid delay and to maintain continuity.
- Members discussed the proposal and spoke of the appointment of Chairs to Committees. Members debated if newly appointed Chairs, not already members of the Working Group should also be invited to attend.
- The Mayor proposed that the Working Group remain as is until the next Annual meeting of Council due to be held in May 2021. Members agreed.

RESOLVED: That previously appointed Members of the Town Hall Working Group continue to be part of the group to ensure continuity and that this should be reviewed at the next Annual Meeting of Council.

- B Burns, Project Manager referred Members to a proposed list of contracts and advised it be reviewed by Council.
- The Town Clerk highlighted that she had received some replies from local contractors advising they were unable to quote at this time due to their volume of work, some of which has increased due to the pandemic. She explained that the list of proposed contractors now included those from a wider area to enable responses.
- Further to discussion, Cllr D Unwin proposed that the deadline be extended to 26th February 2021.
- The Town Clerk referred Members to the Town Hall Project Managers Reports.
- Mr B Burns, Town Hall Project Manager referenced the Chamber Furniture and advised that prior to the review and appointment of a contractor the Council investigate the size and fit of the furniture in order to ascertain the exact works required, dependent on the outcome of the fit.
- Mr B Burns stated that the project is time critical and urged Council not to delay.
- The Town Clerk advised that the contractor costs are likely to exceed the threshold for the seeking of quotes and that a tender process would be required.
- Members discussed the advice received from the Project manager and Town Clerk and the Mayor asked Members to consider:
 1. The moving of the Chamber Furniture to the New Town Hall as a priority.
 2. To agree an extended deadline for the receipt of contractor responses.

RESOLVED: To dismantle and move the Chamber Furniture to the New Town Hall as a priority to ascertain if the furniture will fit without the need for building works.

RESOLVED: To accept the updated list of contractors to approach and to extend the deadline for responses to the architect/contractor brief for the refurbishment of the Town Hall premises to 19th February 2021.

- The Town Clerk sought guidance on the removal of the Chamber Furniture and the possible request for site visits during the current lockdown restrictions.
- Cllr C Webster stated that site visits could be permitted providing suitable precautions are made and PPE worn.
- The Town Clerk explained that she could facilitate site visit requests however due to schools being closed childcare would limit her availability.
- Cllr L Walters referred to the need for additional PPE and its availability.
- Cllr C Webster proposed that evening site visits could be offered providing the Clerk and staff were not alone. Members agreed and there were offers from Cllrs to attend during the evening also.
- The Town Clerk informed members that visors had been purchased and received.
- Cllr L Walters expressed concern regarding the permitting of evening site visits referring to health and safety.
- Members discussed and agreed the appointment of a removal company to move the Chamber Furniture. The Town Clerk advised that a carpenter would also be required and recommended she approach companies previously appointed by Council. Members agreed.
- The Project Manager referred to previous discussions regarding the planning application for a new Northern Pedestrian Access; he proposed that he liaise with the Local Planning Authority to find out if Bridgend Town Council could carry out works to the Southern Access under 'permitted development' if the Northern Access is not approved. Members agreed however reiterated that the Northern Access is their preferred option.
- Cllr D Unwin enquired if a Working Group meeting should be convened. The Project manager agreed that a meeting should be called in order to appoint an architect.

RESOLVED: To call a meeting of the Town Hall Working Group the following week.

The Mayor thanked the Town Hall Project Manager; the Project manager left the meeting at this point.

18. To consider a motion from Cllr D Unwin, Cllr Steven Bletsoe & Cllr A Wathan:

"For Bridgend Town Council to consider making the Carnegie House and/or Tyr Ardd buildings available to BCBC and the Health Board for use in administering the community vaccinations against Covid-19"

- The Town Clerk advised that she had contacted Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) regarding the motion put forward; BCBC advised that they had liaised with the Health Board who will respond if there is a need to occupy either building.
- The Mayor asked Members for their view; Members expressed concern regarding lack of provision of ground floor disabled facilities and access to Carnegie House and spoke of possible delays to works to Tyr Ardd if occupied by the Health Board.
- Members referred to the one point of entry and exit at Carnegie House and questioned if the ground floor offered enough space. Members further debated the motion.
- The Town Clerk referred Members to the motion and enquired if Council wished to make a decision in principle or call an extra-ordinary meeting for decision making when a response is received.
- It was highlighted that use of the buildings to administer vaccinations could be for up to a year and Members discussed the impact of this on the recent loan and planned works.
- Following debate The Mayor, Cllr D Unwin and Cllr A Wathan withdrew the motion.
- It was noted that Bridgend Town Council would help the community with regard to COVID-19 where it could moving forward.

19. Allotments

To consider a report on allotment matters and take decisions on the queries raised a tenant and a member of the public

- This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting, under agenda item 4.

9.30pm: It was moved that Standing Orders be suspended at this point

20. Time table of Council meetings: To consider and discuss a draft time table for Council meetings for 2021 and the impact of the on-going Coronavirus situation

- Members moved to accept the draft timetable and noted the need to remain flexible due to the on-going Coronavirus situation.
- Cllr T Wood asked if Planning Committee meetings could take place on Mondays. Members Agreed.

21. Consultations:

1. Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan – The document can be viewed online at:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/9844/bridgend-town-centre-masterplan-executive-summary.pdf> Deadline for responses 1st March 2021.

- The Mayor asked Members to engage with and respond to the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan.

2. Welsh Government Consultation - Strategy for an ageing society: age friendly Wales. The documents can be viewed online at: <https://gov.wales/strategy-ageing-society-age-friendly-wales>. Deadline for responses 15th March 2021. NOTED

Cllrs. C Evans and C Webster left the meeting at this point.

22. Correspondence:

1. Email from Laleston Community Council re: Craig Y Parcau Woodland, Newbridge Fields

- Cllr D Unwin proposed that he prepare a paper in response. Members Agreed.

2. Email from Audit Wales re: Audit Cycle 2020-21 Onwards – Community and Town Councils in Wales. NOTED

3. Email from Wales NHS re: Save a Life Cymru. NOTED

4. Email from Pageantmaster Bruno Peek re: NHS, SOCIAL CARE & FRONTLINE WORKERS DAY 5TH JULY 2021

- Members proposed and agreed to defer this item to the Community Engagement and Well-being Committee.

5. Email from One Voice Wales re: Postponement of local government by-elections. NOTED

6. Email from BCBC re: Town & Community Council Fund application

- Cllr D Unwin proposed that this item be deferred to the February meeting of Council. Members Agreed.

23. 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

Meeting closed 9.36 pm.

Signed
Mayor

Date