

Minutes of BTC Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee

Friday 5th October 2018 - 10.00am at Carnegie House, Board Room

Present

Cllr. Isabel Robson (Chair)	Cllr. Paul Warren (Mayor)
Cllr. Lyn Walters	Cllr. Nicole Burnett
Cllr. Stuart Baldwin	Cllr. Carolyn Webster
John Harris – BTC Military Advisor	

In attendance: Mrs L. Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D. Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), Mrs S Lewis (Community Engagement and Event Manager)

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Stuart Charles, Cllr. Robbie Thomas and Cllr. Angela Morelli.

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

- Cllr C Webster declared an interest in matters relating to the GEM newspaper (Personal)

3. To discuss arrangements for Remembrance Day 2018 in light of recent media attention

- Chair of Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee invited the Town Clerk to provide background information to the situation prior to a full discussion by Members of the committee.
- Town Clerk explained that she had looked through the archives and provided a detailed account of the arrangements for Remembrance events in Bridgend Town Centre in previous years.
- It was noted that many years ago, the event was co-ordinated by BCBC with support from the Bridgend Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) however, since 2014 the organisation of the parade had been taken on by the RBL Bridgend Branch.
- Town Clerk reported that Bridgend Town Council's involvement has included arranging the Dias, flags, chairs and PA system along with administration and financial support for the marching bands and choir.
- Recent correspondence from RBL headquarters confirmed that the RBL Bridgend Branch has no authority to arrange the Remembrance Parade in Bridgend and clarified that this is a civic event that should be arranged by the Local Authority or Town Council. It was noted that RBL are only able to provide a Standard Bearer and organise local veterans.
- Town Clerk advised that she had liaised with BCBC to clarify their position on the matter and had been informed that BCBC cannot arrange the Remembrance Parade.
- It was noted that under the current circumstances, RBL Bridgend Branch cannot organise the parade, BCBC cannot organise the parade and therefore BTC needs to consider whether it can arrange Remembrance events for 2018.
- Town Clerk introduced Mr John Harris, Military Advisor to Bridgend Town Council. She explained that although Mr Harris had resigned as Chair of the RBL Bridgend Branch he had not stepped down from his role as BTC Military Advisor.
- Town Clerk explained that Mr Harris had attended the meeting to explain the reasoning behind his recommendation as former Chair of the Bridgend RBL regarding children in youth groups under secondary school age not participating in the Sunday Remembrance Parade.

- Town Clerk also noted that there were two reports for consideration by Members prior to a full discussion about this matter; a report from Cllr D Unwin regarding the background to Remembrance events in Bridgend and an overview of the Children's Remembrance Parade and Service on Saturday 10th November 2018. She explained that Members would need to consider all of this information and would need to make recommendations to full Council at the Extra-ordinary Town Council meeting on Tuesday 9th October 2018.

Members were asked to consider and discuss the following matters:-

- To consider whether Bridgend Town Council can take on the organisation of the Remembrance Parade and Service in Bridgend Town Centre on Sunday 11th November 2018.
- To consider whether or not to support the recommendation regarding children in youth groups under secondary school age not participating in the Sunday Remembrance Parade.
- To consider if BTC can arrange a Children's Remembrance Parade and Service on Saturday 10th November 2018.
- Town Clerk explained that a children's service had been held on a Saturday in Bridgend Town Centre in previous years but on a small scale. It had been arranged by BCBC Cllr D White as a member of RBL Bridgend Branch with support from other volunteers. She highlighted that given the RBL headquarters statement that the branch is not permitted to organise such events, this event now needs consideration by Town Council if it is to continue. She explained that the event would require the same planning and procedures as the Sunday event such as event notifications, public liability insurance, risk assessment, emergency evacuation plan and staffing.
- Military Advisor provided an overview of his professional background. He explained that he is a trained paramedic, MIMMS qualified (Major Incident Medical Management) and has experience working at large scale events. He advised that he has been involved with the arrangements for the Remembrance Parade and Service with the RBL Bridgend Branch for a number of years. He was not aware at the time of taking on this responsibility, that the RBL should not be involved in the organisation of the event.
- Military Advisor explained that the number of people at the Remembrance Parade in Bridgend Town Centre has grown dramatically in recent years; both in numbers participating in the parade and the number of spectators. He explained that the War Memorial is situated in a confined space, surrounded by buildings and it is getting increasingly difficult to accommodate such a large number of people in this area. Photographs of the area around the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday from 2014 and 2016 illustrate this growth in numbers.
- Military Advisor explained that when the parade arrives at the War Memorial, groups within the parade are moved closer to the Memorial so that they can see the service. He explained that the exit routes around the War Memorial can get blocked by members of the public and there is a potential that in the event of an emergency, people would be unable to evacuate quickly and there is a crush risk.
- He referred to the age of primary school children who participate as part of youth groups, some being as young as six and explained that they can be standing in the parade for up to two hours.
- Military Advisor highlighted that last year the particularly bad weather conditions contributed to these concerns and explained that a number of children participating in the parade in their youth groups became distressed and were taken ill. It was noted that a number of children were treated by St John's Ambulance for onset hypothermia. BTC Military Advisor explained that these children were squeezed into a heavily congested area with their youth groups and were not with family members.
- Military Advisor highlighted that this situation is unsafe and should not continue. He also added that alternative options should be considered.

- Military Advisor stated that there are a number of possible options that could be considered in order to make the parade safe; he noted that some are more controversial than others. His suggestions included:
 - Consider moving the War Memorial - other councils have done this but this is not an immediate solution for this year's parade.
 - Consider demolishing the Post Office building – it was noted that this is not a realistic or immediate solution.
 - Exclude under 18's from parading in youth groups to limit numbers and risks
 - Exclude under secondary school age from parading in youth groups to limit numbers and risks
 - Allow children of all ages to parade in youth groups but in order to reduce risks, they must stay in their youth blocks and not be moved closer to the War Memorial. This could mean that that they would be left standing near Barclays Bank and unable to see the service.
- Military Advisor explained that the proposal to limit those under secondary school age from marching in their youth groups at the Sunday Remembrance Parade was taken to the youth group leaders at a meeting earlier in the year. He explained that they did not oppose the recommendation at the meeting and welcomed the Saturday Children's Service. He added that a Girl Guide Leader that was not present at that meeting had since contacted the press who wrote an article stating that children were 'banned' from Remembrance in Bridgend. He clarified that this was incorrect and misleading.
- Military Advisor explained that the Saturday event would include a children's Remembrance Parade and Service arranged specifically for children under secondary school age. The event will be tailored to provide an opportunity for primary school aged children to learn about the importance of Remembrance. Children will actively participate in the event by parading to the War Memorial and will receive a Remembrance service from Reverend Wheeler. The event will also provide an opportunity for children to plant crosses at the War Memorial in memory of the people from Bridgend who have lost their lives in war.
- Members of the committee discussed the recent press coverage. It was highlighted that children under 11 years of age were not 'banned' from attending the Sunday Remembrance Parade and Service and that they are very welcome to attend to watch the service with their family and that children from military families can parade with parents or guardians.
- Town Clerk explained that she had received a number of emails and telephone calls about the situation. It was also noted that there are many comments on social media.
- Military Advisor explained that youth groups participating in the parade can include up to 30 children in a block with 3-4 leaders. He highlighted that when adults are participating in the parade and feel distressed or unwell they can decide to walk away from the parade however these children cannot.
- Military Advisor stated that as former Chair of the RBL Bridgend Branch and therefore former event organiser for Remembrance Day 2018 he felt he had a duty to ensure that the event is safe. He explained that his decision was taken as the best option at the time, however he did not anticipate the press and public reaction.
- Town Clerk circulated reports to Members.
- Chair of the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee advised that a 10 minute recess would be provided to allow Members to consider all of the facts before making decisions based on the information presented.

A ten minute Recess took place to allow Members to read documents.

- Chair of Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee recalled the meeting. She highlighted that the primary concern of BTC should be safety and if the parade is not safe then it should not go ahead.
- Cllr L Walters enquired how many people are asked to parade officially and how many representatives parade in each group.
- Military Advisor advised that there are no set numbers for groups and that groups do not inform organisers of how many people they will bring prior to the parade.
- A breakdown of estimated figures for each section of the parade was provided and it was noted that the total number of people marching in the parade is approximately 500.
- Cllr L Walters suggested that a possible solution could be to limit the number of individuals that can march within each youth group.
- Town Clerk suggested that prior to discussing the detail of the parade, the Committee should consider whether or not Bridgend Town Council can take on the organisation of the Remembrance Parade and Service in Bridgend Town Centre on Sunday 11th November 2018.
- Chair of Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee asked Members to consider this matter and make a recommendation to full Council.
- Members discussed this and unanimously agreed that they supported Bridgend Town Council organising the Remembrance Parade and Service.

RECOMMENDATION: That Bridgend Town Council take on the organisation of the Remembrance Parade and Service in Bridgend Town Centre on Sunday 11th November 2018.

- BTC Mayor thanked Military Advisor for remaining as a BTC Military Advisor and noted that he had carried himself with dignity throughout the current situation. He acknowledged that BTC do not have the experience to arrange the Remembrance Parade and Service and advised that the committee should support the advice of the Military Advisor.
- Town Clerk explained that she had received four pieces of correspondence for consideration by the committee in relation to this situation.
 1. Town Clerk reminded Members that earlier in the year Bridgend Town Council had sent invitations to the Mayors of Twin Town's Villenave d'Ornon (France), Langenau (Germany) and Hechtel-Eksel (Belgium) to attend the Bridgend Remembrance Service. She advised that the Mayor of Villenave d'Ornon was unable to attend, The Mayor of Langenau had accepted the invitation and she had not received a response from the Mayor of Hechtel-Eksel.
 2. Town Clerk explained that she had received a letter from MP Madeline Moon to enquire if school representatives could lay a wreath on her behalf in light of the recent media coverage and requested clarification on this.
 3. Town Clerk advised that Reverend Wheeler would not conduct the Remembrance Service as RBL Chaplin but could take the service as Mayor's Chaplin. She explained that Reverend Wheeler had been approached by the GEM to write an article on Remembrance and enquired if she could write about the Children's Service.

Cllr C Webster declared an interest in this agenda item in relation to the GEM newspaper

4. Town Clerk advised that The Quakers have contacted Reverend Wheeler to enquire whether they can lay a red and white poppy wreath during the Remembrance Service 2018.

- Members noted this correspondence for consideration and discussed how to proceed with recommendations to full Council. It was noted that potentially the Town Council need to consider taking on two events; one on Saturday 10th November 2018 and one on Sunday 11th November 2018.
- Chair asked the committee if they were in favour of limiting the number of youth groups who participate in the Sunday Remembrance Parade.
- Cllr C Webster stated that she would be in support of limiting numbers by asking the youth groups to select representatives. She added that adult to child ratios should also be correct for all ages. It was noted that definitive numbers would help for the parade risk assessment.
- Military Advisor asked whether this included the suggestion regarding children under secondary school age.
- Mayor stated that with just 5 weeks before Remembrance, the committee should consider adopting the plans that have already been set out and look at new ideas for next year. He felt that it is too late to change the plans and that the Council should stand by the advice of its Military Advisor.
- It was noted that youth groups have been formally advised of the changes and that they are already planning for the new format.
- Cllr N Burnett asked if BTC had the resource and capacity to manage two events.
- Town Clerk explained that no members of BTC staff have military experience and that they would require the support of the Military Advisor. It was noted that the events would require the submission of event notifications to the local authority and emergency services, road closures, public liability insurance, risk assessments, emergency evacuation plans and event stewards as well as co-ordination of invitations and public information.
- Town Clerk highlighted that the staff can organise the events however Members would need to be aware that due to the time scales, this would take priority over other Council work and other projects will be delayed.
- Members enquired what other projects the team are working on. Town Clerk explained that in addition to the provision of day-to-day services, resolutions of Council and BTC Committee's and on-going Council projects, the following events are planned:
 - The Mayor's Civic Service is arranged for 21st October
 - The Mayor of Langenau and a delegation of 22 people are visiting on 27th October
 - The annual Light Festival is scheduled for 2nd November
 - A week long Remembrance Exhibition from 6th – 11th November
 - Remembrance Café at Carnegie House on 10th and 11th November
 - Hosting of Mayor of Langenau for Remembrance weekend
 - Christmas Parade, Grotto and Lights Switch on 24th November
 - Victorian Christmas event 1st December
- Members expressed concern about the resource capacity with the Town Council to undertake this work. It was agreed that resource implications should be discussed at the Extra-Ordinary meeting of full Council on 9th October 2018.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council consider the existing work load and prioritise current projects in light of the additional resource required to co-ordinate the two Remembrance events.

- Cllr L Walters stated that public and participants safety should be the number one priority. She suggested that with the additional press attention there would be increased public scrutiny and therefore it is likely that there will be an increase in numbers attending the event this year.
- Cllr L Walters suggested that youth groups could restrict numbers to a maximum of 10 children, plus 3 leaders to limit numbers in the parade and that the Children's Parade on the Saturday would provide that opportunity for others to participate.
- Members considered the viability of Bridgend Town Council arranging two parades and services and recommend that both events should go ahead.

RECOMMENDATION: That in addition to the Remembrance Parade and Service in Bridgend Town Centre on Sunday 11th November 2018, Bridgend Town Council take on the organisation of the Children's Remembrance Parade and Service on Saturday 10th November 2018.

- Chair asked Members to consider the introduction of an age limit or restricting numbers or both, for participants marching in youth groups for the Sunday Remembrance Parade.
- Members asked Military Advisor for his advice and he reiterated that the safety and welfare of children is paramount. The committee agreed that with the estimated numbers of participants and spectators, the event cannot safely continue in its current format due to the limitations of the location of the War Memorial. Military Advisor stated that if the parade includes all the children that have marched in previous years, the safest option is to ask the groups to remain in their blocks in the parade, however they would not be able to see the service.
- Chair asked Members to vote on the following proposals:

Proposal 1. To limit those who march in youth groups in the Sunday Remembrance Parade to children of secondary school age and above.

- 5 in favour
- 1 not in favour

RECOMMENDATION: That BTC limit those parading in the Sunday Remembrance service to children of secondary school age and above.

Proposal 2. To limit the number of participants within each youth group to 12 plus 2 reserves plus a minimum of 3 leaders.

- 5 in favour
- 1 abstention

RECOMMENDATION: That BTC limit the number of participants within each youth group to 12 plus 2 reserves plus a minimum of 3 leaders.

- Members reviewed the outline plan and discussed the proposed arrangements for the Children's Saturday Service.
- Mayor stated that he fully supported the Children's event.
- Cllr S Baldwin stated that Cllr D White is a very willing volunteer with the Saturday service and noted that he had already undertaken some of the organisation. It was noted that crosses had been ordered for the children to plant at the War Memorial and that Cllr White had purchased the planters himself.

- Military Advisor noted that the RBL Bridgend Branch had also established a sub-committee to arrange the Children's event however the RBL had since confirmed that the Bridgend Branch is not permitted to arrange events.

Proposal 3. To recommend that BTC go ahead with the Children's Parade and Service as detailed in the event overview provided.

- 6 in favour
- 0 not in favour

RECOMMENDATION: That BTC arrange the Children's Parade and Service as detailed in the event overview provided.

- Members considered suggestions from Cllr D White regarding invitations and a speaker for the Children's event. Although Members agreed that Cllr David White could continue as a volunteer in support of the Children's Saturday Service, it was agreed that as BCBC are not contributing to the organisation of the event, the BCBC Armed Forces Champion would not be invited to speak.
- Members agreed that the only formal invitations for the Children's event should be to the leaders of the youth groups, schools and the Youth Mayor; there should be no formal invitations for dignitaries and the event should be advertised to the general public.
- It was proposed that the Youth Mayor or Mayor of BTC should be asked to speak.
- Chair stated that a press release would need to be issued to clarify that due to safety and the length of the event that all ages can attend with a responsible adult on Sunday and we would welcome participation and attendance at Saturday Service.

RECOMMENDATION: That the only formal invitations for the Children's Remembrance Parade and Service should go to the leaders of youth groups, schools and the Youth Mayor and that the event should be advertised to the general public.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Youth Mayor or Mayor of BTC should be asked to speak at the Children's Remembrance Service.

- Military Advisor explained that he had planned for the names of the 129 people listed on the War Memorial to be read out during the service between the end of the last post and before the placing of wreaths and asked the committee if it would still support this proposal. He added that the names would be read out whilst '*Hymn to the Fallen*' is played which is 4 minutes and 12 seconds long.
- This proposal was welcomed by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: That the BTC Military Advisor proceeds with arrangements for the names of the 129 people listed on the War Memorial are read out during the Remembrance Service between the end of the last post and before the placing of wreaths whilst '*Hymn to the Fallen*' is played.

Correspondence

1. Members were availed of a letter from the Mayor of Langenau (Germany) confirming acceptance of an invitation to attend the Bridgend Remembrance Service.

- It was noted that the Mayor of Villenave d’Ornon and the Mayor of Hechtel-Eksel had not accepted the invitation.
- Members highlighted that welcoming the Mayor of Langenau to the Remembrance service should send out a message of reconciliation.
- Cllr C Webster suggested that a tree planting ceremony could be arranged as a symbol of peace however members were concerned at the additional resource required to arrange this.
- It was suggested that BTC arrange for the Mayor of Langenau to lay a wreath at the War Memorial.

RECOMMENDATION: That Bridgend Town Council order a wreath for the Mayor of Langenau to lay at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

2. Members were availed of a letter from Madeleine Moon MP advising that she had asked Pen-Y-Bont Primary school to select two children to lay a wreath on her behalf on Remembrance Sunday and expressed concern that after the recent media coverage that the pupils will not be able to attend the ceremony. She sought clarification on this matter.
 - It was noted that as the children are not part of a youth group and would be standing with the dignitaries this would not be an issue.
 - Member suggested that the children should be from school year 5 or 6 and should be accompanied by a responsible adult.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Town Clerk responds to the letter to explain the situation regarding youth groups and confirm that the two children from Pen-Y-Bont school will be able to lay a wreath on behalf of Madeleine Moon MP and suggest that the children should be from school year 5 or 6 and should be accompanied by a responsible adult.

3. Members considered a request from Reverend Wheeler regarding her writing an article about Remembrance for the GEM newspaper. The article is 600 words and Reverend Wheeler has said that this could either be about the Children’s Remembrance Service or about Chaplin’s in Military. Members were asked to consider whether Reverend Wheeler should write an article about the Children’s Remembrance Service.

Cllr CW declared an interest in this agenda item in relation to the GEM newspaper

- Members had no objections to Reverend Wheeler writing an article about the Children’s Remembrance Service.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Town Clerk responds to Reverend Wheeler to inform her that BTC do not have any objection to her writing an article about the Children’s Remembrance Service.

4. Members considered a request from Bridgend Quakers via Reverend Wheeler to enquire whether they can lay a red and white poppy wreath during the Remembrance Service.
 - Town Clerk advised that the Quakers have laid a red and white poppy wreath after the Remembrance Service in previous years.
 - A discussion was held about the symbolism of white poppies and their association with conscientious objectors.
 - Members discussed the way in which the proceeds of the white poppy sales are distributed.

- Chair requested that Members vote on whether the Bridgend Quakers can be permitted to lay a Red and White Poppy Wreath during this years' Remembrance Service.
 - 3 in favour
 - 2 not in favour
 - 1 abstention

RECOMMENDATION: That this matter should be referred to the Extra-Ordinary meeting of Bridgend Town Council on 9th October 2018 for further discussion and a decision.

- Cllr L Walters asked for clarification on the status of arrangements for the Children's parade and Service and Sunday Remembrance Parade and Service pending the decisions of full Council at the Extra-Ordinary meeting.
- Town Clerk explained that event notification forms have been completed due to the timescales involved and enquiries have been made regarding road closures, however the Risk Assessment and Emergency evacuation plan is yet to be completed for this year.
- Military Advisor noted that invitations for the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service have not been issued.
- It was noted that all other arrangements are on hold subject to formal decisions of Bridgend Town Council.
- Military Advisor explained that letters to military organisations such as HMS Cambria will need to be sent out once a decision is made.
- Members discussed the resource and financial implications of taking on the organisation of two Remembrance events and felt that full Council should be made aware of the work required over the next 5 weeks.
- Members discussed the Order of Service for Remembrance Sunday. It was acknowledged that it is produced with the support of Reverend Wheeler and printed in-house. Members suggested that in addition to copies available on the day, a PDF of the Order of Service could be available online prior to the event so that the public can view it online or print out and bring along on the day.

RECOMMENDATION: That a further meeting of the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee is arranged after the Extra-Ordinary Town Council Meeting on Tuesday 9th October to discuss the decisions made by Council and to oversee the arrangements for Remembrance.

Meeting Closed 12.10pm

Signed
 Chair of Community Engagement and
 Wellbeing Committee

Date