



## MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

### Meeting Details:

Date: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

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 Tim Wood)

Staff: Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO), Ms J Brown (Democratic Services Officer), Mrs D Elliott (Community Engagement and Events Manager) – Remote, Ms Karen Davies (Facilities Officer), Remote.

### In Attendance:

Cllr Ann Lloyd – In Person

Cllr David Unwin – In Person

Cllr I Williams – In Person

Cllr Tim Wood (Mayor) – In Person

Cllr M Blundell-Humphreys – In Person

Cllr S Bletsoe – In Person

Cllr A Wathan – In Person

Cllr A Felton – In person

Cllr D Brown – In Person

Cllr C Webster – In person

Cllr F Bletsoe – In Person

Cllr S Easterbrook – In Person

Cllr D Evans – In Person

Cllr F Sullivan – Remote

Cllr N Deere - In person

There were two Members of the Public present during the formal meeting.

The Mayor welcomed his Chaplain, Mavis Martin to the meeting and she provided opening prayers prior to the commencement of the meeting.

### 1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

- Cllr B Johnston and Cllr I Spiller

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

- Cllr T Wood made a declaration of personal interest as a Bridgend Town Trader in matters pertaining to Town Centre business and in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor
- Cllr S Bletsoe made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor
- Cllr F Bletsoe made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor

- Cllr I Williams made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor and in matters relating to Oldcastle School and Brynteg School as well as Item 11 on the agenda.
- Cllr D Unwin made a declaration of personal interest in matters relating to Merthyr Mawr Community Council, The National Milestone Society and Brynteg School
- Cllr S Easterbrook made a declaration of personal interest as a Bridgend Town Trader in matters pertaining to Town Centre business, in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor and item 9 on the agenda
- Cllr A Wathan made a declaration of personal interest in any discussions relating to BCBC as a BCBC Councillor

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

- There were no questions or comments from Members of the Public.

**4. To confirm and sign minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true and correct record.

**5. To consider matters arising from minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

- Page 405 – Item 10

Cllr D Unwin enquired if any progress had been made on the location of the Caroline Williams Blue Plaque. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was still being investigated.

- Page 407 – Planning Appeal Reference P/20/923/FUL (Burger King)

Cllr D Unwin reported to Council that the appeal had been successful and that planning permission had been granted and costs were awarded against BCBC.

- Page 407 - Bridgend College – Move to Cheapside

Cllr D Unwin advised that the Development Control meeting to consider the Bridgend College application had not yet taken place.

- Page 408 – Update on Damp Issue Works- Carnegie House

Cllr D Unwin queried if the work had been completed. The Town Clerk confirmed that the work was progressing according to plan. The Deputy Clerk/RFO also clarified that there had been a deadline extension to the grant.

- Page 409 – Float Based Christmas Carnival

Cllr A Felton advised that she had contacted Sustainable Wales to make enquiries

- Page 409 – Distribution of seeds to celebrate the Kings Coronation

Cllr S Bletsoe advised Members that he had liaised with Valleys 2 Coast regarding a seed planting event in the Morfa ward and although this could not be completed on the day of the Coronation, Valleys 2 Coast had dedicated a piece of land for seed distribution. Cllr I Williams added that an area had also been dedicated in Newbridge Fields for the Oldcastle Ward.

- Page 410 – Quote from Quantity Surveyor

- Cllr D Unwin queried if the additional costs for the Architect can be recorded in the minutes. The Clerk confirmed that the minutes will be updated to include the cost.

**6. To note for information Mayoral Announcements and Engagements**

- Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April. Mayor, Mayors Chaplain, Deputy Mayor and Consort – Vine Christian Centre Good Friday Service

- Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April. Mayor, Mayors Chaplain - Easter Sunday Service – Life Church, Morfa Street
- The Mayor read a letter received from Villenave d’Ornon announcing the retirement of Mayor Patrick Pujol
- The Town Clerk advised that an invitation had been extended to the BCBC Town Centre Manager to attend the April Town Council meeting however a request had been received for questions to be submitted in advance by Members. It was proposed that Members send questions to the Town Clerk to forward to the BCBC Town Centre Manager and that he attends the June full council meeting. It was noted that the Town Centre Manager will be accompanied by another BCBC Officer. This was accepted by Members.

#### **7. Election of Mayor Elect for 2023/24**

**To receive nominations and select a Town Mayor for Mayoral year 2023/2024. The selected Councillor will be become Mayor Elect prior to their formal appointment at the Annual Meeting of Bridgend Town Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

- Cllr D Unwin nominated Cllr F Bletsoe to be Town Mayor for the Mayoral Year 2023/2024. This was seconded by Cllr A Wathan. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr F Bletsoe become Mayor Elect prior to formal appointment at the Annual Meeting of Bridgend Town Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

#### **8. Election of Deputy Mayor Elect for 2023/24**

**To receive nominations and select a Deputy Town Mayor for Mayoral year 2023/2024. The selected Councillor will be become Deputy Mayor Elect prior to their formal appointment at the Annual Meeting of Bridgend Town Council in May 2023**

- Cllr D Unwin nominated Cllr I Williams to be Deputy Mayor for the Mayoral Year 2023/2024. This was seconded by Cllr A Wathan. There were no other nominations.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr I Williams become Deputy Mayor Elect prior to formal appointment at the Annual Meeting of Bridgend Town Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

- Councillors offered congratulations to both Cllr F Bletsoe and Cllr I Williams.

#### **9. Planning**

*Noted: Cllr S Easterbrook left the meeting for this agenda item*

##### **1. To receive minutes of Planning Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

- The Chair presented the previously circulated minutes to the meeting
- The Chair drew attention to page 4 - Decoration/Displays in Empty Town Centre Properties. He advised that letters had been circulated to all 8 estate agents in the town centre and that there had been no reply to date.
- The Chair asked that the date of the 2-6 Queen Street progress meeting be corrected to the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and note the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.

*Noted: Cllr S Easterbrook returned to the meeting*

## 10. Finance

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

- The Deputy Clerk/RFO clarified that 'income due' referred to allotment rent of £5,458. She explained that the allotment letters had been issued on 1<sup>st</sup> April and the payments will be received during the month.

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

## 11. Facilities

### To consider a report from the Facilities Team to develop a Climate Action Plan for Bridgend Town Council

- The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO referred to two reports previously circulated; a Carbon Footprint Report for Bridgend and a report from the BTC Facilities Officer requesting that the Council:
  - *Consider Declaring A Climate Emergency for Bridgend*
  - *Consider seeking to put in place a Climate Action/Climate Action and Biodiversity Action Plan*
  - *Seek Nominations for appointment to the Climate Action Working Group to develop the plan.*
- The Deputy Clerk/RFO added that some grant funding applications ask if applicants have an action plan in place.
- Members discussed the terminology 'climate emergency' used in the Welsh Government Report and the impact of the terminology used.
- Members discussed the Welsh Government deadline of 2030 for Net Zero.
- Members recognised the need to reduce the carbon footprint, however they did not want to appear panic stricken.
- Cllr A Felton referred to a course she had attended and felt that Council should use the word emergency.
- Cllr I Williams noted that there is no indication of cost or structure of how to achieve net zero.
- Cllr S Easterbrook explained that he had looked online and that by declaring a climate emergency it means that Council is prepared to act to bring about a change and that it is terminology being used by local government.
- Cllr I Williams referred to a motion proposed by Cllr F Bletsoe and agreed by Council, that Bridgend Town Council be environmentally aware. The Deputy Clerk/RFO explained that this proposal would build on the motion, to create an action plan for the Council.
- The Facilities Officer was invited to speak to Council and presented further details as follows:
  1. The steps the Council needed to take to comply with the Council's duty under Section 6 of the Environment Wales Act 2016 part 1.
  2. Creating an action plan will help provide direction and inform the statutory Biodiversity report which the Council must prepare every 3 years.
  3. The plan can also be used to highlight Council progress to the public.
  4. The documents will help with applications for projects such as joining the proposed Bridgend Heat Scheme and grants for projects such as electric vehicle charging points.
- Cllr A Wathan accepted that the terminology is emotive but highlighted that it could be important for obtaining grant funding.

- Cllr S Bletsoe expressed concern regarding staff resources and suggested that this is passed to the Facilities Committee and Personnel Committee as opposed to a working group for further consideration. He noted that he was in favour of the principle but needs to understand what it will cost.

**RESOLVED:** That the report from the Facilities Team to develop a Climate Action Plan for Bridgend Town Council be deferred to the Facilities Committee in liaison with the Personnel Committee for further consideration.

## 12. Town Hall

1. **To receive minutes from a meeting of the Town Hall Working Group and the Contractor on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 regarding the cost and timing for repairs and completion of the Refurbishment Project**
2. **To consider quotes and a recommendation from the architect for a company to prepare the technical specifications and documents required for the tender process for the new heating system**
3. **To consider a further response from BCBC re Town and Community Council Fund options**
  - The Town Clerk made Members aware that some of the documentation referred to in this agenda item was commercially sensitive and that members may want to defer discussion to the end of the meeting.
  - Members agreed to defer this agenda item to the end of the meeting so that the matters could be discussed in confidence.

## 13. Casual Vacancies

**To receive applications for co-option for a vacancy in the Oldcastle Ward**

- The Town Clerk advised Councillors that one application had been received for consideration and asked Council for their instruction in whether to accept the application for consideration at the meeting or to extend the deadline.
- Cllr D Unwin proposed the application be accepted and that he was satisfied that due process had been followed.

**RESOLVED:** That Phillipa Settle be co-opted as a Member of Bridgend Town Council representing the Oldcastle Ward.

## 14. Town Twinning

*Cllr F Bletsoe and Cllr S Bletsoe left the meeting for this agenda item*

1. **To consider a Civic invitation to the Associations Forum in Villenave d'Ornon on 6th – 10th September 2023 (deferred from March Town Council meeting)**
  - Cllr A Wathan referred to separate invitations Seeheim Jugenheim and Langenau and expressed concern regarding accepting several town twinning invitations within a short space of time.
  - Members discussed the public perception of town twinning visits.
  - Cllr A Felton highlighted that it would be difficult to accept one invitation but not another and expressed a view that Council should support them all.
  - After a short discussion Cllr D Unwin reminded members that the Town Council had signed the twinning charters, therefore it should either accept the invitations and support the twinned towns or cancel twinning.

- Cllr T Wood highlighted that Bridgend is not twinned with Seeheim Jugenheim.
- Cllr M Blundell-Humphreys proposed that the Council send the Mayor and Deputy without consorts.
- Cllr I Williams noted for clarity that it is the Council that sends representatives and not individuals that choose to go.
- Cllr F Sullivan agreed with Cllr Unwin that it may be disrespectful to decline the invitations.
- The Town Clerk read out the wording of the invitation for clarification.
- The Democratic Services Officer added that it would not be advisable for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be out of the country at the same time. She also clarified that the Deputy Mayor has no legal status and is only entitled to represent the Council in the absence of the Mayor; therefore it would be appropriate for The Mayor and Consort only, to represent Council on this occasion.
- Cllr D Unwin proposed that The Mayor and Consort represent the Council at the civic events in Villenave d’Ornon and Langenau.
- The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO highlighted that the Council has no legal power to incur expenditure for this visit and therefore asked Members to consider the use of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 which allows the council to spend a limited amount of money on purposes not covered by other statutory powers.

**RESOLVED:** That a Civic invitation to the Associations Forum in Villenave d’Ornon on 6th – 10th September 2023 is accepted and that The Mayor and Consort are nominated to represent the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council formally agrees to use Section 137 of LGA 1972 for the expenditure for Town Twinning visits in 2023.

## **2. To consider a response from Villenave d’Ornon regarding a meeting regarding the Youth Exchange**

- The Town Clerk explained that this situation was discussed at a Bridgend Town Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and that Cllr D Unwin had explained that Brynteg School is unable to proceed with a youth exchange without the authority of BCBC, and that BCBC have insisted that DBS Checks are carried out in France. Further to this, France do not have the same procedures of safeguarding as those in the UK, and unless appropriate checks are conducted, unfortunately the youth exchange cannot go ahead. It was noted that this situation is outside the remit of Bridgend Town Council and the decisions lay with other authorities. Representatives in Villenave d’Ornon proposed that this matter could be discussed at a remote meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk should facilitate a remote meeting with Villenave d’Ornon to discuss the future of Town Twinning Youth Exchange visits with the following invitees:

- *BTC Mayor*
- *BTC Deputy Mayor*
- *Cllr A Felton*
- *Cllr I Williams*
- *Cllr D Unwin*
- *Head Teacher of Brynteg School – Mr Ryan Davies*
- *Head of French Department at Brynteg School – To be confirmed by Brynteg School*
- *BCBC Cabinet Member for Education - Councillor Jon-Paul Blundell*

- *BCBC Director of Education – Mr Lindsay Harvey*

**3. To consider a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary invitation from Seeheim Jugenheim - June 2023**

- After discussion Council proposed to respectfully decline the invitation from Seeheim- Jugenheim.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk write to Seenheim- Jugenheim to respectfully decline the invitation on this occasion.

*Cllr F Bletsoe and Cllr S Bletsoe returned to the meeting*

**15. To receive a 6 monthly survey of empty shops/business units and associated matters relating to Bridgend Town Centre (Cllr D Unwin) Deferred from March meeting**

- Cllr D Unwin referred Members to the previously circulated report and advised that there had been an improvement of 23% which was slightly above the national average. He noted that The Rhiw is 25% unlet and the toilets in the Indoor Market are still not advertised on the electronic notice board. Cllr D Unwin proposed that the Rhiw Manager be invited to join the Town Centre Manager to attend the Council Meeting in June. This was supported by Members.

**RESOLVED:** To invite the Rhiw Manager to attend the June Town Council meeting.

- The Mayor advised that footfall was not back to pre-covid levels.
- Cllr N Deere noted that Bridgend is the only town centre not back to original footfall.
- Cllr D Unwin suggested that Bridgend is not a user friendly town and proposed that BTC put pressure on BCBC to do more in the town centre. It was noted that there have been recent news articles about new initiatives in Porthcawl and Maesteg and concern that Bridgend is slipping behind the other two towns.
- Cllr S Bletsoe thanked Cllr D Unwin for his thorough report and agreed. Cllr S Bletsoe confirmed that a number of BCBC Councillors are voicing their opinions and observations which were being echoed in BCBC Chamber.
- Cllr D Unwin queried if previous reports had been sent to BCBC – The Town Clerk confirmed that they had.
- Members discussed the lack of toilet facilities in the town centre, homelessness and de-pedestrianisation.
- Cllr F Bletsoe commented that as a Scrutiny Chair for BCBC she would recommend that The Mayor write to the BCBC Cabinet Member for Regeneration, The Managing Director and the Conservation and Team Leader (Planning), to highlight the issues.
- Members agreed and added that Bridgend residents feel neglected.
- Councillors agreed and after a short discussion, Cllr F Bletsoe proposed that BTC Regeneration Committee move forward to investigate the cost and feasibility of a Changing Places Toilet (A Changing Places Toilet is a public place with a toilet, special equipment and space for changing, ensuring that everyone has equal access to facilities that meet their needs.)

**RESOLVED:** That an item is include on the agenda for the next Regeneration Committee meeting to investigate the cost and feasibility of a Changing Places Toilet in Bridgend.

**16. To consider marking the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone Bridge with a Blue Plaque or Event (Cllr F Bletsoe)**

- Cllr F Bletsoe expanded on her motion, thanking Local Historian Louvain Rees for her assistance and adding that the old stone bridge was of significant historical importance and dated from 1425. She explained that although there is a slate plaque on the bridge, it does not have a blue plaque.
- Cllr D Unwin supported the motion. He referred to a successful Tudor themed event organised by Bridgend Town Council in 2016 and proposed an event or pageant for the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the old stone bridge based around The War of The Roses.
- Cllr F Bletsoe welcomed the suggestion and amended her motion to consider marking the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone Bridge with a Blue Plaque and a Tudor Style Event.
- Cllr D Unwin suggested he could present a full report for Members consideration for the June meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That BTC mark the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Old Stone Bridge with a Blue Plaque and a Tudor Style Event and that an item is included on the agenda for the June Meeting to consider a full report for this event.

**17. To consider awarding a Town Council plaque to the Hotel Manager at The Wyndham Arms Hotel to mark 20 years of service (Cllr D Unwin)**

- Cllr D Unwin noted that Town Council plaques are available for the people of the town as a gift from The Mayor.
- Cllr D Unwin advised Members that the Hotel Manager of the Wyndham Arms had been extremely supportive of BTC events in the town, had recently been recognised for 20 years' service and proposed she is a worthy recipient of a BTC plaque.

**RESOLVED:** That The Mayor award a Town Council plaque to the Hotel Manager at The Wyndham Arms Hotel to mark 20 years of service.

**18. To discuss BTC Representatives to BCBC Town Members Meetings (Cllr D Unwin)**

- Cllr D Unwin advised Councillors that BCBC Town Members meetings were set up in 2008, were Chaired by the Leader of BCBC and that two BTC Members could be appointed to attend. He queried if any meetings had taken place during the past 11months. The Town Clerk reported that she had been advised that these meetings no longer take place.

**19. To discuss Bridgend Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan 2020/30 progress-to-date (Cllr D Unwin)**

- Cllr D Unwin referred Members to the Action Plan document which had been previously circulated. Cllr D Unwin drew Members attention to the right hand column 'Delivery mechanism/Partners and Process' in which Bridgend Town Council is mentioned on 9 occasions and to which there has been no progress in the last 3 years.
- Councillors held a discussion about the plan and voiced their frustration at the lack of progress.
- Cllr D Unwin enquired if there was a possibility of a BCBC Scrutiny Committee looking at this situation.
- Cllr F Bletsoe suggested that either BCBC Councillors could call it in or it could go to Scrutiny Committee 3 to take the matter forward.
- Cllr S Bletsoe suggested that he could ask BCBC Cllr P Davies, Chair of BCBC Subject Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3 to take the matter of the Town Centre Regeneration Master Plan forward.



## 20. Correspondence:

### Deferred from march Town Council meeting:

#### a) Arcadis Consulting - Bridgend Heritage Trail proposed route and supporting information

- Councillors discussed the report thoroughly and noted that there was no mention in the document of Bridgend Town Council initiatives such as the Heritage Walkway and Blue Plaques.
- It was suggested that the comments supplied by Cllr D Unwin are sent as feedback, along with any other views provided by Members.

**RESOLVED:** That The Town Clerk gather Members views to reply to Arcadis Consulting.

#### b) Membership of One Voice Wales - Renewal of Membership for 2023-2024

**RESOLVED:** That Membership of One Voice Wales be renewed at a cost of £2,825.

#### c) Email from local resident re: Bridgend Town Centre

Cllr D Unwin highlighted that there had been no response to the letters to the eight estate agents in the town centre and therefore there was no more that could be offered in response.

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

*Members of the public accessing the meeting remotely left the meeting at 8.45 pm*

*Cllr F Sullivan apologised to The Mayor and left the meeting (work commitments) at 8.45 pm*

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK**

**PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK**

**RESOLVED:** To permit Members of the public to re-join the meeting.

Resolutions made during the exclusion of the public are:

**RESOLVED:** To agree a contribution of £2,626.20 towards work to complete the Town Hall repairs.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk engage Hydrock to prepare the technical specifications and documents required for the tender process for the new heating system.

**RESOLVED:** That the Deputy Clerk/RFO responds to BCBC to confirm that the Town Council wishes to with a view to completion of both projects before the end of the financial year.

Meeting closed at 9.14 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Mayor