



MINUTES OF BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 16th December 2019 at 6.30 pm Council Chamber, Carnegie House

Present:	Cllr Alan Wathan (Mayor) Cllr Stuart Baldwin Cllr Freya Bletsoe Cllr Steven Bletsoe Cllr Ceri Evans Cllr Angela Morelli	Cllr Robbie Thomas Cllr Steven Easterbrook Cllr David Unwin Cllr Lyn Walters Cllr Carolyn Webster
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In Attendance: Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Mrs D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO) & Miss J Brown (Democratic Services Officer).

1. To receive apologies for absence:

Cllr Nicole Burnett, Cllr Tim Wood & Cllr Mathew Voisey
 Absent: Cllr S Charles, Cllr R Porter & Cllr Roger Marsh

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

- Cllr Carolyn Webster – Prejudicial interest in Item 10, Planning Matters
- Cllr Carolyn Webster – Prejudicial interest in Item 13, Additional Premises Project

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

- There were no questions raised from members of the public present.

4. To confirm and sign minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 25th November 2019

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 25th November 2019 were confirmed as a true record and duly signed.

5. To consider matters arising from the Town Council Meeting held on 25th November 2019.

- There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. To note for information Mayoral Announcements and Engagements:

Mayor's Engagements:

- Friday 6th December – Heronsbridge School Choir at Hartshorn House Coffee Morning
- Friday 6th December – Bridgend Tabernacl Choir Christmas Concert
- Saturday 7th December – The Veteran Zone Public event
- Saturday 15th December – Christingle Service at Hope Chapel

Deputy Mayor's Engagements:

- Sunday 1st December – Cefn Glas Christmas Light Switch on at Westward Community Centre Christmas Lights

7. To receive Town Clerk's Report for November/December (for information)

Town Clerk provided a verbal update on work and matters for Bridgend Town Council between November/December (for information only).

Town Clerk reported that during the month she had spent a considerable amount of time working with the Project Manager to prepare a Business Case for the Additional Premises Project and had worked with the Deputy Clerk/RFO to prepare reports for precept planning.

Cllr C Webster declared an interest in the Additional Premises Project. Town Clerk advised that she would ask Cllr C Webster to leave when this agenda item was discussed if required.

There were no further matters to report.

8. To consider draft minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting of 13th November 2019

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.

- Members of the Public left the public gallery.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk left the meeting.

Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED: The public and representatives of the press were permitted to re-join the meeting.

9. To fill vacancies on the Council Committees listed below:

Planning Committee (1)

- There were no nominations for this vacancy.

10. To consider draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 11th December 2019

Cllr C Webster declared a prejudicial interest in Item 10, BCBC Planning Matters and left the Chamber for this item.

- Chair of Planning Committee presented the minutes to Council.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11th December 2019.

11. Christmas Events in Bridgend Town Centre

11.1 To Consider a letter from BCBC Town Centre Manager regarding the Christmas Lights Switch On Event 2019 and a request that Bridgend Town Council consider a budget for financial support for the Christmas events programme 2020 in addition the budget for the Christmas Grotto and publicity.

- Cllr D Unwin advised Members that he was concerned with the content of the letter and the referral to BCBC supporting BTC. He highlighted BTC provide the Christmas illuminations throughout the Town Centre and therefore pay 90% of the cost of the Christmas festivities not the other way around. He also commented that he took exception to not being invited to the Christmas meetings despite his longstanding experience.
- Cllr S Bletsoe added that a video had been circulated by BCBC on social media to promote Christmas in Bridgend and noted that BTC had not been referenced in any way.
- Town Clerk clarified that although the Christmas Lights ‘Switch On’ event was organised by BCBC, BTC pay for the installation of the lights, purchase of new lights and plan and pay for the Christmas marketing literature.
- Members discussed at length who should represent BTC at future meetings in order to ensure that the public were correctly advised regarding funding.
- It was suggested that the Chair of Community Engagement & Wellbeing Committee could attend the meetings.
- Cllr F Bletsoe proposed that Cllr D Unwin attend the meetings with the Chair of Community Engagement & Wellbeing Committee.
- Mayor asked Members to vote on this matter.

Vote:

That Cllr D Unwin and the Chair of Community Engagement & Wellbeing Committee represent BTC at future Christmas meetings.

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| ○ Those in favour | 6 |
| ○ Those against | 3 |
| ○ Abstention | 1 |

Cllr R Thomas was absent from the Council Chamber whilst the vote took place.

RESOLVED: To request that the BCBC Town Centre Manager invite Cllr D Unwin and the Chair of Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committees to future Christmas meetings.

11.2 To receive a report from the BTC Community Engagement & Events Manager from a meeting with key stakeholders regarding Christmas 2020.

- The Mayor referred Members back to the letter from the BCBC Town Centre Manager (11.1) for a decision on whether BTC should provide funding and manage both the switch-on event and the installation of Christmas lights.
- Cllr C Webster suggested that due to cuts from Welsh Government, BTC should consider including the provision of Christmas Lights and Switch-on Event within the BTC budget.
- Cllr S Bletsoe formally proposed that BTC take on the Christmas Lights Switch-on event. Cllr D Unwin seconded this proposal.
- Cllr C Webster suggested that Members should be conscious of the workload of the Community Engagement & Events Manager and the resource available to take on this event.
- Town Clerk advised that the Community Engagement & Events Manager does not have the capacity to take on the Christmas Light Switch-on event in-house and commented that the work would need to be outsourced.
- Members discussed holding a meeting with BCBC to discuss this proposal in further detail.
- Cllr L Walters advised Members that BTC should continue to meet with the BCBC Town centre manager as a courtesy and for communication purposes.
- It was proposed that a vote be taken to decide if Bridgend Town Council should formally take on the organisation of the Town Centre Christmas Light Switch-on event.

Vote:

That Bridgend Town Council formally take on the organisation of the Town Centre Christmas Light Switch-on event for 2020.

- Those in favour 8
- Abstentions 3

RESOLVED: That Bridgend Town Council formally take on the organisation of the Town Centre Christmas Light Switch-on event for 2020.

11.3 To Consider dates of Christmas events for December 2020 (Cllr D Unwin)

- Cllr D Unwin circulated a report 'Christmas Festivity Dates – Bridgend 2020' for consideration by Members. He explained that Christmas day will fall on a Friday in 2020 and therefore proposed that the Christmas Lights Switch on Event and opening of Christmas Grotto at Carnegie House is held on Saturday 28th November and continue for 4 weeks up until Saturday 19th December.
- Cllr S Easterbrook commented on the differences for Christmas events between each of the towns within the borough. It was noted that these events are co-ordinated by 3rd party organisations and not a Town Council. Members discussed the Bridgend Town Traders Forum.
- Cllr S Bletsoe suggested that planning for Christmas 2020 should commence as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That Bridgend Town Council arrange the Christmas Light Switch On event and opening of the Christmas Grotto at Carnegie House on Saturday 28th November and continue the Christmas Grotto for 4 weeks up until Saturday 19th December.

12. To receive an updated CAT Policy Document from Bridgend County Borough Council and consider a letter regarding Playing Fields & Sports Pavilions, Community Asset Transfers.

- Cllr D Unwin highlighted that the letter appeared to be a circular to all Town and Community Councils and reminded Members that BCBC have advised that the situation for Newbridge Fields will be different. He suggested the document be noted. Members agreed.

**13. Confidential and commercially sensitive agenda item
To discuss Additional Premises Project**

Additional Premises Project

Cllr C Webster declared a prejudicial interest in Item 13, Additional Premises Project and left the Chamber for this item.

13.1 To receive an update from the Town Clerk and BTC Task & Finish Working Group regarding the Additional Premises Project.

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

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Recess 7.20 pm – 7.40pm

13.2 To consider and approve the Business Case for the Additional Premises.

RESOLVED: The public and representatives of the press were permitted to re-join the meeting.

14. Finance:

14.1 To receive a balance of accounts as at 16th December 2019 and payments since last meeting

RESOLVED: Accounts paid, read and approved by Members

14.2 To consider draft minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 12th December 2019

- Chair of Finance reported that the minutes of the meeting were being finalised. He provided a verbal overview of the meeting on the 12th December 2019 and advised that the minutes would be presented to Council at the next meeting.
- Chair of Finance explained that the draft budget had been prepared meticulously by the RFO. He advised that the Finance Committee had discussed the draft precept budget in great detail and had considered the Council's general reserves when finalising the draft budget to present to Council.
- Chair of Finance noted that he was confident that an accurate position for taking on the Ty'r Ardd asset had been presented.

14.3 To consider draft budget, general reserves forecast and precept recommendation for 2020-21

- Chair of Finance presented draft precept budget 2020/21 as proposed by the Finance Committee.
- Deputy Clerk/RFO reported that she had updated the general reserve figure further to decisions made at the Finance Committee meeting of 12th December.
- Members reviewed the 2019/20 spend to date for each budget heading and discussed the proposed budgets for 2020/21.
- Members commented on and debated the following items:
 - Cllr L Walters explained that she had recommended that the specific St Johns House budget heading is moved into the Grant Aid donations budget heading moving forward.
 - Cllr S Baldwin queried the increase in general reserves and noted that BTC wards include economically deprived areas. RFO explained that the increase in reserves was based on spend to date and that budget allocated for some projects had not come to fruition.
 - Cllr F Bletsoe asked if an audit of utilities had been conducted; it was noted that the contracts for utilities are part of a SLA with BCBC and that BTC benefit from rates negotiated by the Local Authority. It was recommended that the BTC Facilities Manager conduct a review of utilities contracts.
 - Members enquired if budget headings could be renamed or amalgamated. RFO explained that during audit, budgets are compared year on year and any significant changes would affect comparisons and explanation of variances. She reported that she had spoken to the ledger provider who advised such a project would require a year's notice to process.
 - RFO reported that the income for allotment rent was considered and the allotment budget reduced for 2020/21.
 - Members queried the contingency fund budget. Town Clerk referred to the recent by-election cost of £7,500 and highlighted the need to have contingency for such costs. Members were reminded that there are two casual vacancies at the present time and if by-elections were called in both wards, this could cost up to £15,000.
 - Cllr S Baldwin enquired about the use of the 'special cleansing' budget for gum removal in the wards. The Town Clerk advised that there had been difficulty in sourcing a replacement gum removal machine. It was noted that there may be an opportunity for Members of the BTC Outdoor Maintenance Team to use BCBC street cleaning machinery in future.
 - Cllr F Bletsoe asked who oversees Tree Planting. RFO explained that there are a number of budgets that are not allocated to a specific Committee and suggested that this could be assigned to the proposed Facilities Committee or discussed at full Council.
 - It was noted that if the precept does not include budget for additional premises, the project could not go ahead.
 - Members discussed the total budget, precept and general reserves.
 - Members agreed to allocate £60,000 of General Reserves to the budget to reduce the precept requirement for 2020/21.

- The Mayor proposed that a vote be taken to agree the draft budget and precept recommendation for 2020/21.

Vote:

To accept the draft budget and precept recommendation for financial year 2020/21.

- Those in favour 7
- Those against 4

RESOLVED: That the Bridgend Town Council total budget for 2020/21 is £781,979.63 and that the precept requirement for 2020/21 is £637,979.63.

15. Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2020/2021

To approve the wording for an amendment to Standing Orders to accommodate the resolution made at the November 2019 Town Council meeting regarding the Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

From: Standing Order 5e

The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.

To: Standing Order 5e

1. *In an Election Year, the first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.*
2. *In an ordinary year, the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the forthcoming year will take place at the April Town Council Meeting and the selected Councillors will be become Mayor and Deputy Mayor elect prior to their formal appointment at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May.*

And to amend other reference to the 'election' of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to the 'appointment' of Mayor and Deputy Mayor as necessary.

- Cllr L Walters enquired if the reference to 'Chairman and Mayor' were the same. The Town Clerk explained that the wording is from the One Voice Wales model Standing Orders and that in a Town Council the title is Mayor whilst in a Community Council the title is Chairman.
- Cllr S Baldwin requested that the term 'Chairman' be removed.
- Cllr F Bletsoe highlighted that the Mayor and Chair are different roles and asked if the roles could be separated. The Town Clerk was asked to seek clarity from One Voice Wales.

RESOLVED: To approve the proposed amendment to Standing Order 5e as tabled without the reference to 'Chairman'.

16. To consider the following motion from Cllr S Bletsoe:

'For BTC to write a letter to Cllr Huw David to express deep displeasure of the fact that he wrote an email to members of the public at 21:25 on Tuesday 3rd December 2019 regarding free car parking in Bridgend (attached) when Elected members of Bridgend Town Council were later informed on Wednesday Morning 4th December 2019.

That we are also very disappointed that this was announced on 4th December 2019, 3 days before starting, that no Town Traders were informed, and no timely promotion could be undertaken.'

- Cllr D Unwin suggested that any information regarding Christmas should be issued by BCBC in October.
- Members discussed the matter and concluded that a letter could be issued to convey the Town Councils dissatisfaction about the way in which information was released and about the lateness of the communication.

- Cllr L Walters suggested that that although the letter should reflect disappointment, a constructive way forward should be sought. She suggested that BTC could offer to help promote such initiatives in the future.
- It was agreed that the Council should write a letter to the Leader of BCBC expressing the concerns of Members, but that such a letter was not an immediate priority.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk writes a letter to the Leader of BCBC expressing the concerns of the Council and offering to work with BCBC to help promote any free parking initiatives in the future.

17. Consultations:

1. Welsh Government consultation: A More Equal Wales - Commencing the Socio-economic Duty Links to the consultation documents and a Written Statement, delivered today by Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, are available at: <https://gov.wales/equality-act-2010-commencing-socio-economic-duty> The consultation closes on the 17 January 2020. **NOTED**
2. BCBC Consultation on proposed changes to the council’s home-to-school/college transport provision. Details of the proposals, the consultation papers and details of the consultation events can be found on the council’s website: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/equalities-and-engagement/consultations/current-consultations/> Written responses to the consultation proposals must be submitted no later than 5 January 2020. **NOTED**

18. Correspondence:

1. Email from BAVO re: Applications now open for Transformation ‘Connected Communities’ Grant April 2020 - March 2021. **NOTED**
2. Email from BCBC re: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. **NOTED**
3. Email from One Voice Wales re: November 2019 News Bulletin. **NOTED**
4. Email from Cinnamon Trust re: Help to promote The Cinnamon Trust Bridgend Charity. **NOTED**
5. Email from One Voice Wales re: Bus Pass Renewal Programme. **NOTED**
6. Email from BAVO re: BAVO’s Annual Impact Report 2018 – 19. **NOTED**
7. Email from the Information Commissioner re: Latest news from the ICO. **NOTED**
8. Email from One Voice Wales re: The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019. **NOTED**

19. Town and Community Forum.

- **To consider items for inclusion on the Town and Community Council Forum agenda**
It was noted that the next meeting is 31st March 2020 and that agenda items would need to be submitted by mid-February 2020.
- **To consider feedback from meetings of the Town and Community Council Forum**
Cllr D Unwin advised that the last meeting had focussed primarily on Street Cleaning and allied issues.
- **To identify proposals for inclusion on the TCC Charter Action Plan which would aid the development of the Charter**
This item was not discussed by Members.

Meeting closed 9:25pm

Signed
Mayor

Date