

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on Wednesday, 21st May, 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors A.E. Tippings (Chair)

**A. Jones
M. Turner
K. Phillips
E. Jones
D. Rowberry
P. Tolley
H. Trollope
S. Trollope
G. Walters**

In attendance: Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne

By invitation: Heddlu Gwent Police representatives:

**Chief Constable, Mark Hobrough
Inspector Richard Tovey
Sergeant Matthew Price**

Blaenau Gwent CBC representatives:

**Team Manager Estates & Strategic Asset
Management, Ms. L. Horner
Team Leader - Estates & Valuation, Ms. N. Morgan**

**026) Apologies. Councillors G. Badham, A.E. Evans, G. Jones-Griffiths,
G. Meredith J. Thomas, and K. Waldron**

027) Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members to make their declarations as and when necessary.

028) Policing matters: invitation extended to Chief Constable to attend to provide an update and respond to any issues of concern raised

The Chair extended a welcome to the Chief Constable and Police representatives, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council to provide an update on work throughout the area and respond to issues raised.

The Chief Constable had come into post, having served for the past thirty-five years, the last five years in Gwent. He had a background in community policing, which at the heart was the Community-First Officer and he totally understood the hard work undertaken in the neighbourhood - partners working in the communities and working with communities.

- Set out clear parameters within organisation, new mission to improve confidence in

Police with organised staff, clarity what was expected, understand how important to deliver on Home Office objectives and what people want. Blaenau Gwent had lowest confidence in Police - understand how to address, obtain effective feedback to build trust / confidence. Research undertaken with town and community councils, suggested the Police was not doing enough.

- Having proper effectiveness, making people see Code of Conduct, operation, effectiveness – Police were doing quite well in a number of areas. The biggest gap was in respect of engagement, going out to face the public; the Constable had come through Communities First and seen transition in those areas, heard the problems – anti-social behaviour and off-road bikes, which were a growing pandemic.

Members expressed concern having suggested really good plans to tackle such problems, which had been relayed to the Police, as the public knew what was important in the town.

- How to communicate with the public, improve engagement, e.g. Communications Champion, increase social media (Blaenau Gwent FM), speaking to the public at meetings. Regular updates provided, as people would not report, if perceiving nothing was being done. In respect of the bare statistics, perception could be worse than recorded because the public given up.
- 'Neighbourhood Matters' App - public place issues on App that matter to them for the Neighbourhood Teams, featuring alert of progress not crime report and reciprocate update alerts on the App. There were a lot of different communities / micro communities and have to build on that success / two-way feedback.
- Aware not had in Sergeant in Tredegar, advertisement was out now. Council welcomed the news that a new Sergeant would be in place but emphasised continuity was needed, as there appeared no handover in respect of operations year-on-year.
- Published in the Press, Home Office given 1% to Neighbourhood Policing. To be launched on 9th June, 2025, Gwent Police to launch Community Action Teams - hand-selected proactive, positive Officers / staff consisting of an Inspector, two Police Constables and four PCSOs, allocated to the four 'most in need' areas of Gwent on top of existing Neighbourhood Officers - on foot patrolling, four additional teams for a period of four months. A decision would be made at the end where teams would be needed next or whether there remained a need in the current location. Criteria: vehicular crime, off-road vehicles, burglaries, etc.
- Community Action Team meet with garage attendants / businesses, mould work the Action Team would undertake; when reviewing ASB for Tredegar, 44 extra calls as at January to April 2024 had been noted to the same period for 2025: a 33% increase was a significant issue. Critical work was needed to address a highest jump in ASB.
- As a whole, a quarter of calls related to off-road bikes affecting the public and environment, e.g. noise, damage to grassed areas, with the community 'screaming' this as a problem. Sergeant Price was a dedicated Off-road Officer with experience of how to deal with those issues. Off-road Officer to lead 'Operation Judy' to commence once funding was in place – the vast majority of people tended to be the younger generation; there was Legislation around purchase of fuel, funding authorised to target fuel stations. Some work being done across social media, broadcast / highlight issue selling to underage person.

Drone operation, have to have qualified pilots and there was some restriction; how to

manage expectations, as this was a really difficult problem to solve, impact on the community now taking into towns. Work in partnership with the Community Safety Officers BGCBC pushing to increase reporting.

A Member offenders wearing balaclavas rather than helmets, not being reported as nothing being done, counted ten different bikes and phoned 101. He understood Officers could not give chase but he passed details to an Officer, who did not even radio the complaint in, perhaps public feel better if seeing positive action. He had reported one place in Cefn Golau where approximately thirty bikes being stored, also informing Tai Calon Community Housing - no-one visited. He had reported to Police where quad bikes were present Friday, Saturday and Sundays in the Georgetown area, selling drugs from 1.00 a.m. in the morning. He said that statistics had fallen, not as a result of a reduction in crime but due to the lack of reporting, as a result of public perception that nothing was being done to tackle these issues.

Another Member supported the concerns as, working within the town, he had witnessed these problems increasing over the past few years. off-road vehicles had now come from riding on the mountain-side in to the towns – mounting pavements and doing ‘wheelies’. He also was fed up of reporting these incidents as he had sent a photograph to the Police and had received a response a quarter of an hour later asking if the person was still there. This behaviour was becoming very dangerous to the public. A year ago he had been informed by a Police Officer of new procedures coming into place but, visually, nothing appeared to be being done and the issues had become worse. The Chair said that Members were sick of telling the Police the same complaints with nothing being done; either this was due to an issue in respect of communication or the system was failing.

The Off-road Officer was aware of the issue with these vehicles scarring the mountainside, cutting fencing and causing a nuisance in town centres, which was a problem experienced by all residents throughout Blaenau Gwent. Whilst the safety of these youngsters would not be put at risk, measures could be undertaken to limit the physical use of these bikes. Council was informed that 297 bikes had been seized in the last year. Funding had been secured to undertake a dedicated operation, using tried and tested methods that had achieved results.

The Chair said there was an international standard BMX park based in Parc Bryn Bach and youngsters were using electric bikes in this area. Therefore, this enclosed space was self-contained and could prove an ideal target, together with partners, for the ‘blue light’ service or perhaps there was an opportunity to place CCTV in this bike park.

- Success using drones to monitor safely from a distance; seizures undertaken. target those who supplying youngsters with sale of drugs. There had been a major success in Newport with drone activity, seizing four bikes in one hit.
- Low level crime, e.g. parking, a Member said there appeared no consequence of policing. There were limited resources and this would be one of the first matters to be addressed in Tredegar, working with Town Council and promote what was being done in the area. the Chief Constable recognised this was frustrating for both the Police and public.

A Member reported an incident of urination in the shopping precinct whereby two PCSOs on patrol had witnessed but ignored the individual and there was public perception that there was no consequences for anti-social behaviour.

- Shoplifting down 46%, there was no threshold for reporting shoplifting despite general

perception. Again, Members suggested that statistics were misleading in that crimes were not reported. A Member was aware of businesses, such as Greggs, whereby a policy had been adopted to instruct staff NOT to challenge offenders nor report the crime to the Police, considering it a waste of time.

A piece of work, outlined within the PCC business crime presentation, was being undertaken with partners. The Community Safety Officer BGCBC was putting together an action plan to be carried out by the ASB Task Force to run approximately twelve months, or more. Blaenau Gwent had committed to lead and would provide a community link, together with the Business Forum, as to how the community could report business crime.

- Council had requested sight of the statistics in the past and again requested these figures, as Members needed this information.

The Chief Constable acknowledged Members' frustration and past experiences in backing up the narrative; however, the Community Action Team would be focusing on Tredegar and he would ask that Town Council work with the Police. He was aware of past issues with telephoning 101 but in the last six months this had greatly improved with the average response within one minute thirty minutes and the volume of calls had increased.

Council thereupon thanked the Chief Constable and Police representatives for attending and responding to questions raised, which had been most informative. Members looked forward to further updates in the future.

029) Invitation extended to appropriate Officers of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to further discuss the future of the Tredegar Recreation Ground, i.e:

a) Potential Running Costs

b) Tredegar Recreation Ground - Proposed Transfer Report

The Chair extended a welcome to BGCBC representatives - Team Manager Estates & Strategic Asset Management, Ms. L. Horner, and the Team Leader - Estates & Valuation, Ms. N. Morgan, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council to further discuss the future of the Tredegar Recreation Ground and respond to any questions raised.

The Team Manager Estates & Strategic Asset Management, introduced the Team Leader - Estates & Valuation, who had a better understanding in respect of charitable grounds owned as Trustees, the Local Authority would also take external advice provided by Geldards Solicitors. The Officer was happy to go through the options and procure that advice for Town Council.

The Leader said that Members had undertaken discussions in respect of the three options provided by the Local Authority and there were a number of questions to be addressed:

- Option 1 - Leasehold Transfer
- Option 2 - Freehold Transfer
- Option 3 - Council retains ownership and management of the site

- Trusteeship

As a Charitable organisation, what would actually be involved in the role for Town Council, e.g. full-time staff, accounts, paperwork involved, understand extra work. A Member suggested this could be an opportunity to look to employ a third person in the office and consider ways of financing that. If take on Trusteeship and sub-lease to another body, how that would work as a Trusteeship / obligations.

Trustees had to practice in interest of charity as well as Council practising user perception on the site. Site usage should be very broad, encouraging as many different types of community use as possible. Tredegar had lots of different activities that could be held on the site. Concerns raised in the past if only one football / rugby club involved, could come under criticism from Charity Board have to look at user-restriction, maximum of sport users, broad use. The Team Leader confirmed that fitted Town Council's criteria, emphasising use could not be sport-specific but wider community use, for example as previously indicated by Council, the horse show, funfair, etc. to meet the objectives of the Charity Board to ensure they continue.

In terms of reporting as Trustees – Town Council would compile a report every year, complete very basic accounts, subsidise, etc. If Town Council became Trustees, they would submit those accounts every year, e.g. what Council spent on the land, income received. In respect of groundworks, Town Council was potentially looking to cover this expense and certain costs initially, on behalf of the people of Tredegar.

On a hire basis, Town Council would look to continue set up a warranty, Town Council would have input in the Board, as an arbitrary body: Board members to consist of football / rugby / netball / cricket sitting on it, and, at certain times, independent people, e.g. Horse Show, having a broad selection of people than previously. That route, certain people have more influence, need all sporting groups on the Board, set up Terms of reference. clear reference of who sits on there, e.g. Town Councillors would be independent, with decision-making taken by the Board, getting groups to work together. Terms of Reference, a democratic board would make decisions as to how the ground would be used, both standards and decisions would be taken by the Board.

- No examples of multi-use, similar issues in respect of a facility in Ebbw Vale that could not be sport-specific, encouraging Board members from other supporters. A local Rugby Club was the lead driving operations but recognised that other Clubs had to sit on the Board. Worked on the basis setting up the Board with different organisations, all-encompassing and meet criteria.
- Need to talk to GAVO for advice, e.g. hurdles where charitable grounds, 'Tenancy of Will' when first granted four Directors start to build relationships, can be terminated. Discussions should be working towards a lease / transfer but Tenancy of Will would allow Town Council to walk away. In the background, continue to work towards Council approval, getting structure in place to pass on responsibility to other organisations – the Authority was aware of previous issues that parties involved would not wish to repeat.
- Assets, e.g. Stand / Lights, itinerary of what Town Council taking on, e.g. from lockable gates / lights, which may not be up to standard. Before handover, there would need to be a full check of Stand / changing rooms / new boilers, etc. A Member enquired if there was an up-to-date Condition, the Team Leader confirmed that a full Condition Survey, with all appropriate testing done, e.g. boiler, asbestos, etc. to fully understand commitment. Should Town Council take on the Lease, further down the line would have

to invest money and all conversations needed to be had as to what would be available from Blaenau Gwent.

A Member said that Town Council supporting the Recreation Ground was the best plan for the people of Tredegar, consisting of people of Tredegar, as if an external party came in, and the ground was not used, this could be lost as an amenity Council had to safeguard this asset.

The Local Authority Officers were committed to help all we could, and would go back to the Solicitors undertaking a piece of work what it would mean to be Trustee, a condition survey needed e.g. lifespan / condition of boilers. Options 1 2 and 3 - what had to be done, those issues needed to be addressed / be clear. The Local Authority would want to pass stock over 'fit for purpose', as a competent landlord and the Team Leader would speak to the Team Manager – Street Scene to start that process, see what was being taken on, e.g. what was happening to building, work needed in next five years, items needing replacing in year three, e.g. fencing, Stand, etc. key issues that both parties needed to understand / address.

A Member asked if the last group / person would have any respect as to how the asset was being run / financial implications. The Team Leader confirmed this was not the case, having entered into a Tenancy of Will and never got to the point of a Lease, the tenancy remained the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent, and Blaenau Gwent was responsible to the Charity Commission. The Local Authority was running the asset at the moment, but looking at the potential of Town Council as lead, as probably had the best contact to relating to a committee.

Blaenau Gwent CBC was currently set up as Trustees to the Charity Board, and could not sell without consent, and would need to convince the Charity Commission this would be in the best interest of the community. Therefore, the Local Authority realised the need to work together.

Council thanked the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Team Manager - Street Scene for attending to provide the update and responding to questions raised; and asked could the Local Authority please keep Council informed on the work being undertaken.

030) To receive any verbal recommendations of all Sub-Committee / Working Party meetings held prior to this meeting of Council

No Sub-Committee meetings had been held prior to Council.

031) To consider a Schedule of Accounts for payment in May 2025

The Clerk spoke to the report and explained that bank reconciliations, valid to date, would be available for Members to view upon request, which was noted accordingly. The Officer thereupon highlighted the following:

- Quadient: April 2025 – Council to ratify amendment of Direct payment to £382.81, which was approved accordingly.
- British Gas: May 2025 – a cheque was being raised for this payment but the RFO would be attempting a trial run of this one item as an online transaction to assist in the establishment of an appropriate Internal Control for Online Payments. If the online payment was successful, the cheque would be cancelled and the payment method changed to “online” accordingly.
- Section 137 payments in Schedule of Payments – Resolution of Council: In pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as

amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, expenditure up to £121,947.61 was approved in relation to the above £0.00.

There being no further queries regarding the Schedule of Accounts, presented items were approved for payment. The Clerk asked that the designated signatories liaise in respect of the transfer of funds, as approved by Council, to be undertaken in the presence of the appropriate Member and RFO, which was noted accordingly.

032) To receive and adopt the following Minutes of Council:

a) Events Sub-Committee - 2nd April, 2025

b) Civic Meeting of Council - 2nd April, 2025

The following amendment was highlighted and accepted accordingly:

357) Delegates: to receive and consider reports from Delegates to Outside Bodies and the recommendations of Sub-Committees / Working Parties:

f) School Governing Bodies – Georgetown Primary: awaiting update in respect of an inspection review undertaken on Monday and the new Deputy Head had been appointed.

The Clerk confirmed that she would reprint the amended page for the Chair to sign and ratify accordingly.

c) Special Meeting of Council - 9th April, 2025

d) Performance Review Sub-Committee - 16th April, 2025

e) Ordinary Meeting of Council - 16th April, 2025

It was agreed that all Minutes presented, subject to the foregoing amendment, be moved as a true record.

033) Chair to sign Minutes - at earliest opportunity in accordance with WG Legislation and Guidance

Minutes approved were duly signed by the Chair in the presence of Council.

034) Correspondence

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1) BGCBC | a) D. Leech Re: Introduction to the Clerks at Town & Community Councils in Blaenau Gwent. Wishes to meet each council to talk through the Communities Approach and what can be done to build this approach together.

- Noted. |
| | b) K. Rees Re: Consultation on 20 to 30 mph speed limit. Thank you for your feedback, the Town Council comments are appreciated, and can confirm the roads listed will remain 20 mph.

- Welcome. |
| | c) S. Gapper Re: Play Team, Deighton Playing Field. Request to use the field for their open access summer play session programme, five dates supplied for July and August. Anticipate being |

onsite at 1.00 p.m. to setup and will leave between 4.30 p.m. and 5.00 p.m.

- Members approved this request and were happy to support the play sessions, which were considered an excellent activity for young people: Clerk to confirm and outline the criteria for use, i.e:
 - Vehicular access for setting up etc is through the main gates using BGCBC key.
 - No vehicles are to be driven or parked on any grass areas.
 - Once the group's vehicles are in, please lock the gates to prevent further vehicles accessing the area.
 - Please remove any equipment / banners / promotional materials and collect all litter at the end of the event.
 - Securely lock the gates once you have vacated the fields.

Highlighting that conditions were in place to keep the area in a good safe condition for the use of community groups.

Councillor D. Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion.

- d) i) List of applications received, week ending 02.05.2025.
 - ii) List of applications received, week ending 09.05.2025.
 - 1. New Personal Licence – Natalie J Bancroft.
- Noted.

2) One Voice
Wales

- a) Innovative Practice Conference Wednesday, 2nd July, 2025 at Royal Welsh Showground. £67.00 per delegate.
 - Two places.
- b) Social Farms & Gardens Community Management Awards 2026. Seeking nominations for the 2026 awards, closing date 30.07.2025.
 - Sirhowy Hill Woodlands.
- c) Re: Improving the administration and enforcement of Council Tax in Wales. Consultation open until 23.07.2025.
 - Noted.

- 3) Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
Re: Charter. His council have agreed to accept the Charter and are requesting a copy for signing.
- Re- agenda.
- 4) Tredegar Twinning Association
Asking if Council will be paying for the Mayor's visit to Orvault this year.
- Mayor only.
- 5) C. Keane
Re: Dukestown Road. Requesting her complaint regarding vehicles driving the wrong way along the one way system at the Railway Tavern is raised with the Police and Sirhowy BG Members to see whether this dangerous issue can be resolved.
- Pass to Police / BGCBC.
- 6) Cllr K. Waldron
Request for a leave of absence from Council.
- Noted. The Clerk outlined the reason for the Member's request, which Council fully acknowledged and was happy to support. It was recognised, this was a decision subject to approval of Council and, if the time period needed to be extended, this should be brought back for consideration at the appropriate time.

It was therefore agreed to allow a 'dispensation for absence' of six months; the Member would be encouraged to attend when next in a position to do so in the future.

7) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 16.05.2025 and 23.05.2025; J. Karn Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum meeting 19.05.2025 at 10.00 a.m. Tredegar Library; OVW Press release National Awards Conference 2025; Planning Aid Wales Annual Training Programme – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

Councillors E. Jones and D. Rowberry declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion or voting thereon.

035) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 18
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 19
- iii) List of planning applications received in week 20
- b) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2025/0128	Mr. B. Witcomb Metro Rod (Newport & Hereford) Ltd. Unit H Crown	Proposed change of use to a vehicle repair garage with alterations to the external elevations of Unit H and
No objections		

	Business Park Road Tredegar	construction of a detached three-storey office building, Unit H Crown Business Park Road, Dukestown.
C/2025/0129 No objections	Mr. A. Denison 17 Market Street Tredegar	Demolition of existing rear extension and conservatory. Construction of single-storey rear extension together with associated external alterations, 17 Market Street.
C/2025/0136 No objections	Mr. S. Engelhardt PCI Pharma Services Ltd. 23 / 24 Tafarnaubach Ind. Estate Tredegar	Reception extension to CMF1 building 57m.sq. reception area, security office, toilet and DDA compliant ramped access, 23 / 24 Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate.
C/2025/0141 No objections	Mr. C. Loveridge Rookstone House Queen Victoria Street Tredegar	Proposed single-storey rear and side extension, Rookstone House, Queen Victoria Street.
C/2025/0142 No objections	Mrs. G. Kirsk St Julians, Harford Street Tredegar	Proposed detached annex, St. Julians, Harford Street, Tredegar.
C/2025/0143 No objections	Mr. S. Engelhardt PCI Pharma Services Ltd. 23 / 24 Tafarnaubach Ind. Estate Tredegar	Over cladding 4 number external walls and 3 existing roof areas, 23 / 24 Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate.
C/2025/0160 No objections	Mr. S. Thambyiah 58 Glyn Terrace Tredegar	Ground floor and first floor rear extension, enlarging existing shop premises and residential premises above, 58 Glyn Terrace.

c) To consider other planning matters – None received.

036) Matters of Local Interest or Concern (by prior notice)

- Harcourt Terrace school roof fallen in, Listed Building – Tredegar museum, roof of the schoolroom collapsed one of the buildings concern under investigation and ask BG permit inspection and safeguard that Grade II Listed Structure.
- At the VE Day event at the cenotaph a resident asked to add her father's medals to his name on the cenotaph – consideration of how many people could come forward for particular request. If done for one / ability to research / cost, not have resources. A Member tried to research own parent, hit a 'brick wall', no-one able to provide

information / able to verify that authentic, not have resources to undertake such a high level of research e.g. VC highest award, unique, WWII award Coin de Gare.

- Council extended a Welcome to the new Member, on attending his first meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.57 p.m.

_____ Chair