

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on
Wednesday, 4th June, 2025 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present: **Councillors A. Jones (Chair)**
 M. Turner
 A.E. Evans
 E. Jones
 G. Jones-Griffiths
 S. Mavar
 D. Rowberry
 P. Tolley
 H. Trollope
 S. Trollope
 G. Walters

In attendance: **Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne**

044) Apologies **Councillors A.E. Tippings, K. Phillips, G. Badham,
 G. Meredith, J. Thomas and K. Waldron**

045) Declarations of Interest

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

046) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

None received.

**047) To receive the verbal recommendations of all Sub-Committees / Working Party
held prior to this meeting of Council**

It was agreed the following recommendations of the Events Sub-Committee held prior to Council be approved accordingly.

- **Armed Forces Day**
Royal Welsh Regimental Band: Agreed, to approve expenditure for refreshments.
Agreed: Blaenau Gwent Rhythm and Ukes to perform, expenditure approved for a one-hour performance in the sum of £150.00; and
Ongoing actions to be progressed accordingly.
- **Aneurin Bevan Day**
Kidz R Us, invite to be extended and expenditure approved for a one-hour performance in the sum of £150.00.
- **Approved: overtime for Clerk to work both Armed Forces Day and Aneurin Bevan Day**
- **'Feather' Banners:** agreed that Clerk investigate and obtain a proof for the design, with subsequent expenditure delegated to the Senior Members.
- **Blachere Illuminations:** it was agreed that the Shopping Precinct owners be given the opportunity to contribute in respect of Option A, otherwise Option B would be agreed as the preferred choice.

048) To consider the exclusion of the Press and public by virtue of the matters to be discussed under the provisions of the LGA 1972, Schedule 12A

Moved, the meeting was closed to the public.

Councillor S. Mavar joined the meeting at this juncture (6.35 p.m.)

049)a) To receive final report of the Internal Auditor for year-end 31st March, 2025;

The RFO referred to the report of the Internal Auditor, a copy of which had been circulated prior to the meeting for Members' perusal; all points contained therein had been, or would be, actioned and reported throughout the year accordingly. The RFO confirmed that the format of reporting was the same as previous years, being split into two reports for each year – Interim and Final, with updates in respect of 2023 / 2024 and 2022 / 2023.

- Final Report 2024 / 2025 – No additional items.
- Interim Report 2024 / 2025 – Points 1 and 2 remained outstanding, i.e. contingency for RFO absence and Formal Medium-Term Corporate Plan. Both Points were ongoing.
- 2023 / 2024 – Final and Interim Reports had both been completed.
- 2022 / 2023 – Final Report completed; and, Interim Report – Point 10 remained outstanding, 'Cleaning Contract': previously agreed to be discussed by the Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee following feedback received from the RFO.

The report of the Internal Auditor for year-end 31st March, 2025 was unanimously approved and accepted accordingly.

049)b) To confirm the Annual Accounts for year-end 31st March, 2025 and approve Mayor to sign;

The RFO asked that Members formally agree the accounts to 31st March, 2025; the Officer thereupon highlighted salient points in respect of confirming the accounts.

- The Annual Accounts to 31st March, 2025 and associated bank reconciliations had been completed. At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 16th April, 2025, Council had approved both the Reserves and Asset Register. There had been no amendments to the documents or accounts since that meeting and all financial documents relating to that year were available in the office for Members to view, upon request.
- Overall income for the year was £187,949.00*, and overall expenditure £176,967.00*; expenditure was below predicted spend by approximately £17,780.00*, mainly due to some projects / activities not being completed in that financial year and rolled into the current year 2025 / 2026. [* All figures were rounded.]
- The combination of higher income than anticipated and reduced expenditure had resulted in there being no draw on Reserves.

The Annual Accounts were approved for year-end 31st March, 2025 and signed by the Chair of the meeting in the presence of Council.

049)c) Internal Audit 2024 / 2025: to undertake a review of the Internal Audit Process for the year ended 31st March, 2025;

The RFO referred Members' attention to the report and supplemental documents, circulated prior to the meeting for Members' perusal: the report outlined the purpose of Internal Audit and how Council approached the process.

Council thereupon agreed to the following points, summarised below, as contained within the report of the RFO:

- Page 2 of the report gave Statements along with Appendix 1 Governance and Accountability: provided statements for consideration as to whether Council Agreed or Disagreed. The RFO sought Members' observations and asked Council to agree to the points on these pages of the document.
- Officer enquired if there were there any specific areas for future development, or Council would wish that Internal Audit to look at: none were received at this time.
- Internal Auditor's Report 2023 / 2024 – Members were satisfied with the report.

In respect of the performance of the Internal Auditor, the RFO had engaged satisfactorily with the Internal Auditor and was happy to continue. The format adopted by Council worked well for Tredegar and the portal used for submission was easy to use.

Following due consideration of the statements outlined within the report and subsequent review being formally accepted and approved accordingly, it was unanimously agreed to continue with the current Internal Auditor; and on receipt of the Internal Audit letter for 2025 / 2026, would review for any specific areas Council would want them to look at.

049)d) Agree the Annual Governance Statements on the Return for 2024 / 2025, prior to External Audit; and

The RFO spoke to the Annual Return, including the Annual Governance Statements, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with a copy of the OVW Toolkit, for Members' perusal. This toolkit was included as External Audit had now linked this to the Annual Governance Statements and therefore Members needed to understand whether Council met the Statements. Any "No" Answers would require an explanation for External Audit.

- The Toolkit had been formalised by SLCC / OVW in November 2022 and was split into two parts:
Part 1: The Health Check – assessing fundamental governance and financial management arrangements / policies were in place. The statements indicated with a 'darker blue' background reflected a statutory obligation.
Part 2: The Self-Assessment – this was a full Council review of Part 1 to reflect in depth how Council was operating, managing finances and governing itself, and as to how Council was working for the local community to achieve the greatest impact on well-being within the area.
In respect of the Self-Assessment, the RFO said that although Tredegar Town Council had provision within internal documents for training for Members and a Code of Conduct, there was no Code of Conduct for staff.

The RFO spoke to Parts 1 – 10 of the Annual Governance Statement; Part 1 was 'No', the Clerk and RFO had met with the Leader to go through the toolkit. In response to a question raised, the RFO said that Tredegar Town Council currently undertook no formal consultation with feedback sought from the community. Parts 2 – 9, Members thereupon agreed as 'Yes', and Statement No. 10 was 'No', Trust Funds was 'Not Applicable'. Members of the Council therefore agreed, to approve by resolution, to submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor.

049)e) Council approval and certification of Annual Return 2025 to be signed by Mayor

The Annual Return was approved and certified, and signed by the Chair of the meeting in the presence of Council, in accordance with the statutory deadline of 30th June, 2025.

The RFO would add all the supplementary documents in support of the Annual Return; and forward all paperwork to the External Auditor: the Officer said that the Chair, or Mayor, would attend the office to sign additional documents, if needed.

The Electors' Rights notice would be displayed on the Council's website and noticeboard by 16th June, 2025, giving the public a period from 1st July to 28th July, 2025, to request to inspect all financial documents for that year. This financial year would be a basic audit and therefore Council should be aware that 2025 / 2026 would be subject to a full audit.

The Chair extended his thanks to the RFO for her continued diligence in preparing the reports and for the hard work undertaken.

050) To re-open the Meeting to the Public

Moved, the meeting was re-opened to the public.

051) Grants:

a) To receive and consider grants to Sporting and Cultural organisations (under the provision of the Local Govt. Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 s.19 and Local Government Act 1972 s.137; and

Councillor M. Turner declared an interest in the following application and took no part in discussion.

Moose International Tredegar No. 1 Lodge – Request towards the purchase of stationary and a laptop to enable them to design / print their own literature.

Council has not met this group in many years; therefore. Council to decide how to move forward i.e. Civic Sub-Committee or approve grant on basis of their knowledge and longevity of the group – Constitution and bank information has been viewed.

The Clerk clarified that the Civic Sub-Committee usually met new groups to respond to points of clarity, ascertain if a constitution and bank account were in place, and consider sustainability before awarding grant funding.

Taking into consideration the afore-mentioned information and Members knowledge of this long-running group, Council agreed that a grant of **£200.00** be **Approved accordingly**.

b) To receive and consider grants to Churches & Chapels (s.137) - Grants as of 01.04.2017 now max £300.00 (before awarding a grant Council must be satisfied the grant is being given for non-religious purposes with the building being for community use)

Councillor G. Jones-Griffiths declared an interest in the following application and took no part in discussion.

Tredegar Methodist Church - Any financial assistance received would be used towards overall running costs and general improvements throughout the building.

2024/25 July'24 CQ No. 700 £300.00 - Approved accordingly.

Councillor H. Trollope declared an interest in the following item and took no part in discussion.

052) Updated Town / Community Councils Charter of Common Agreement

To consider adopting and signing of revised document

The Leader said that, as Council's representative on the Body, he felt let down by the Charter, believing a lot of good work could be done across the County Borough if Town / Community Councils and the Local Authority started working together, as the Charter could do a lot of good. It was frustrating, for example, when events organised by the Blaenau Gwent Team were not rolled out across the County Borough with help sought from Town Council; the Business Forum had also raised a similar concern of not being involved / included.

The Charter, in written form, was very good but was not working in practice. For instance, issues in respect of budget-setting, with communication opened a lot sooner than previously. This would allow the Councils and Local Authority to co-operate to help save services, which had been cut in the past.

Therefore, the Leader said that, personally, he would be unhappy to sign the Charter unless real guarantees were in place between Blaenau Gwent and the Town / Community Councils, as he currently believed that the 'inclusion' was not there.

Members totally supported the comments of the Leader and it was therefore agreed that Council not sign the Charter at this time and these observations be fed back to the Clerk's Forum accordingly.

053) Correspondence

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

- 1) BGCBC
 - a) 1) List of applications received, week ending 16.05.2025.
Temporary Street Trading Consent 24.05.2025 – Bedwellty House & Park
 - 2) List of applications received, week ending 23.05.2025.
New Personal Licence – Ben R. Rees
Transfer of Premises Licence – 2 The Circle
Vary Designated Premises Supervisor – Tredegar Arms.
 - Noted.
- 2) One Voice Wales
 - a) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Post-legislative scrutiny. Responses to OVW by 03.06.2025 to enable Dr. C. Jones to collate a response.
 - Noted: Council considered that insufficient time had been given to consider a response.
 - b) Re: Lack of attendance, One Voice Wales Gwent Valleys Area Meeting 20.05.2025. Would appreciate if a Council's nominated representative/s is unable to attend then the Council arranges for a substitute. If it is the case that Council has no

representatives available, please let OVW know in advance to avert having to cancel the meeting on the night.

- Noted.

3) Malcolm Moon
Electrical

Quotation for photocell £1,040.81.

- Council considered this work was need, as the lights were on when unnecessary at present and the lights were not coming on immediately when it was dark in the winter.

It was therefore agreed unanimously that the expenditure be approved.

4) Hope Dog Rescue

Request for consideration of a donation.

- The Chair was aware of the good work undertaken by this organisation and proposed that a donation of £200.00 be awarded.

This proposal was seconded and the expenditure approved unanimously.

5) Torfaen County
Borough Council

Re: LGPS Access and Fairness Consultation launched. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched an Access and Fairness Consultation on changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales. The Ministry is encouraging responses from administering authorities, employers, payroll providers and pension software providers.

- Noted: forward to Councillors J. Thomas and M. Turner.

6) **PUBLICATIONS**

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 30.05.2025; OVW Conference Report 2025 – ***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.

054) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 21
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 22

b) To consider Planning Applications submitted for Council's observations

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2024/0273	Mr. S. Thambiach 90 Glyn Terrace Tredegar	Change of use for ground floor only, from A1 to A3 hot food takeaway. Addition of a cooking ventilation pipe to rear of property, 90 Glyn Terrace.
Observations: No objections: based on residents' acceptance of the change of use, as the premises was based in the centre of a residential terrace and there would be odours relating to the sale of hot food.		
C/2025/0137	Mr. James c/o George & Co. Studio 01 Crownford House Merthyr Tydfil	Proposed industrial units (B2 use), development site adjacent to Unit 2, Heads of the Valleys Hub, Crown Avenue, Tredegar.
No objections		
C/2025/0166	Mrs. A. Kuzdzal El-jena Farmers Hill Estate Dukestown Tredegar	Raising of roof to accommodate bedrooms, El-jena, Farmers Hill Estate, Dukestown.
No objections		

c) To consider other planning matters – None received.

055) Updates regarding Bedwellty House and Park / Parc Bryn Bach - any issues to have been previously reported direct to the House Management / Aneurin Leisure personally

- Council extended thanks to all those who had participated in the Pride event, which had been a huge success – particularly Councillor H. Trollope and his brother, Councillors G. Badham and D. Rowberry, and Aneurin Leisure staff.

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

- a) Joint Committee of Local Councils** – Unfortunately, the Leader had needed to submit apologies.
- b) Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales** – No meeting.
- c) One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM** – No meeting.
- d) Tredegar Twinning** – Orvault
- e) Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund** – No meeting.
- f) School Governing Bodies** – No meetings.
- g) Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum** – Next meeting to be held 12th June. Lecture – Rioting in Tredegar and the surrounding areas: the lecture talks were becoming very popular since the location had moved to Bedwellty House.
- h) Tredegar Business Forum** – The meeting had been held on Monday. There were currently no projects in the pipeline but concerns had been raised in respect of the public conveniences, it was considered some painting and remedial works were required and a deep clean, e.g. steam-cleaning in and around the toilets.
A Member proposed that a power-wash be purchased for the Cleaning Operative. It was therefore agreed that appropriate costings be sought in order to proceed.

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

- Town Clock garden surround – the Chair said that he had approached workmen digging up the highway from the NCB to the Clock to query costings / what would be entailed to install a new water-pipe, as the Cleaning Operative had raised issues in respect of watering the flowers.

The Member had been advised to telephone Welsh Water as, although it was visible, the workmen would not be allowed to touch the water-pipe until it was inspected. He had been informed this could take up to twenty-eight days, with another twenty-eight days before being able to proceed with putting a stand-pipe in place; at an estimated cost of £8,000.00.

The Chair said that the Operative had said he experienced issues with filling the jacks to water the garden surround, having to use a saucepan to fill the jacks for watering. He therefore suggested purchasing a water-lance and trolley for this purpose, further suggesting this could be stored in the Medical Aid Centre, The Circle, which should be sufficient for watering the flowers, and sought the observations of Members.

The Leader said there was a water supply below the Clock tower that could be accessed via a submersible pump, the water supply was constant accumulating from the condensation within the Clock. A Member supported the comments as a power-lance could also be used in various ways, e.g. to clean the toilets and exterior, and there was a need to invest inwardly.

It was agreed therefore that a best value exercise be undertaken to compare the cost of comparable equipment.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.52 p.m.

_____ Chair