

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on
Wednesday, 4th December, 2024 at 6.00 p.m.**

Present: **Councillors A.E. Tippings (Chair)**
 E. Griffin
 M. Turner
 G. Badham
 A. Jones
 E. Jones
 S. Mavar
 D. Rowberry
 J. Thomas
 G. Walters

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

By invitation: **Gwent Police**
 PS 447 D. Wise

218) Apologies. **Councillors K. Phillips, A.E. Evans, G. Jones-Griffiths,
 H. Trollope, S. Trollope and K. Waldron**

219) Declarations of Interest

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

220) Policing matters: invitation extended to Inspector R. Tovey and PS 447 D. Wise to attend to provide an update and respond to any issues of concern raised

The Chair extended a welcome to the Police representative – PS Wise, who had been invited to attend this meeting of Council, together with the Inspector, to provide an update on the work undertaken throughout the Tredegar area. The Sergeant extended the apologies of Sergeant Tovey who unfortunately would be unable to attend due to another matter that had arisen.

The Sergeant thereupon provided the following update:

- Progress in respect of ASB, off-road vehicles, group of children wearing masks frightening residents; feedback had been received which had proven helpful.
- Within Tredegar, generally ASB was predominantly from the younger generation around the Gwent Shopping Centre. The Police force attended meetings of the Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Team within outreach and other parents.
- ASB Referral Orders had been issued and a plan was in place to focus on partnership-

working to eradicate this issue. The CSO and other partners were looking directly at how to improve patrols, incorporating the shopping centre owners and all the shop owners to communicate with each other.

- Operation Grey Hawk – this had proven a tremendously successful operation in respect of arrests, issuing of ASB Orders and seizing of weapons, XL Bullies, etc.
- There had been an article reported in the South Wales Argus addressing ASB of e-bikes; however, no reports had been received that this was an issue within Tredegar.
- Off-road bikes; this problem was wide-spread and unfortunately there were no safe effective ways to react without risk to members of the public available to Neighbourhood Policing. Operation Callow was an initiative dealing with the off-road process for reporting; this issue was previously reported to Police who would send a patrol vehicle. Operation Callow was an improved reporting process, whereby the proforma could be used to fill in details, upload pictures and videos, etc. to evidence the approach in identifying bikes / owners and seize vehicles in a controlled manner. The Tredegar Branch would be rolling out such initiatives shortly.

A Member referred to the Off-road Forum and said that 'hot spots' and pinch points had been reported previously but residents never received feedback and felt reporting matters was a waste of time. The Sergeant said that in excess of 600 calls per day were received, which had to be risk-assessed and the Police Force had limited resources to call back these people each day but said that public feedback was invaluable.

Another Member welcomed the update in respect of operations and said it would be great to receive general feedback whereby Tredegar Town Council could respond to the public and advocate the work of the Police Force. Members said that off-road bikers frequently visited the 24-hour garage to wash their vehicles and suggested an unmarked car could be placed in this location. However, the Officer clarified the law allowed for off-road to be pushed to allow washing of the vehicle.

The Sergeant informed Council of a joint initiative – Operation Harley – which provided two dedicated Officers to work within the Gwent area. Those Officers were based in Torfaen but were undertaking duties force-wide and Sergeant Wise supervised the Blaenau Gwent area for the operation. This initiative used resources, such as drones and automatic number plate registration.

- Homelessness – a Member referred to the gentleman living in a tent in the shopping centre, the Local Authority had attempted to help but this was now becoming a problem affecting people who worked in the area. Based on the sheer number of complaints in respect of two people in the vicinity of the shopping centre, a ASB Order Plan was in place – numerous offers of assistance and help provided had not been taken advantage of and this was being addressed.

In respect of the gentleman playing the violin, which had been a long-standing practice pre-pandemic – the Police was aware of the individual, receiving numerous complaints from, and about, him. This was being addressed as part of a problem-solving approach on a council-by-council basis looking at a long-term solution.

- Previously confidential meetings had been held between Tredegar Town Council and

the Police and these 'get togethers' had proven really useful and it would be beneficial if these could start up again.

- Communication – the Gwent Police website had previously published a list of Officers within each Ward and their mobile phone numbers; this information was no longer available. Council highlighted the turnover of Officers covering the Tredegar area and expressed concerns in respect of a lack of consistency.

Council thereupon thanked PS Wise for attending and responding to questions raised, which had been most informative; the Officer shared the frustrations of Council but confirmed he was passionate about finding resolutions and continuing to work in Blaenau Gwent. Members looked forward to further updates in the future.

221) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

None received: apologies extended by the Mayor for absence.

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

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

- It was agreed that a meeting be held in January 2025 to debate the Christmas Lighting display, as to if / how to proceed, inviting any external parties to attend and provide guidance in respect of deliberations.
- It was agreed that a letter be sent from Tredegar Town Council, as representatives on behalf of the community, expressing disappointment that a marching band had not been in attendance for the Remembrance Sunday parade.

223) Grants:

Thanks received from Tredegar Camera Club and Friends of Bedwellty Park.

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)

Aneurin Leisure Trust, Bedwellty House - Any financial assistance received would be used towards purchasing lights to create a "Searching for Santa" lights trails through the Devils Arch to Santa's grotto making it a magical walk through for visitors.

In respect of a question raised regarding the amount, the Clerk confirmed that it had previously been agreed by Council that £1,000.00 be allocated to Aneurin Leisure, awarded on a 'first come, first served' basis to any service within the Trust, e.g. Bedwellty House, Parc Bryn Bach, etc. Councillor Diane Rowberry thereupon abstained from the voting process, querying whether Council should be allocating this amount.

2023/24 Feb'24 CQ No. 706616 £1,000.00: - *Approved accordingly; Members noted the spend would relate to 'retrospective' expenditure*

Oak Football Club - Any financial assistance received would be used towards the increased costs of hiring the pitch and paying referee's costs.

2023/24 Feb'24 CQ No. 706617 £200.00: - *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) – None received.

224) Correspondence

- 1) BGCBC a) Business & Innovation Team Re: Blaenau Gwent Children's Services Christmas Gift Appeal 2024. Asking if Council would consider purchasing a gift for a child or making a donation for a gift to be bought.

- Noted; a donation of £100.00 was unanimously approved.

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

- b) List of applications received, week ending 22.11.2024.

- Noted.

- 2) Central Security & Fire

Re: CCTV service report. Recommends changing both cameras: 1 poor quality especially at night & the other is constantly red due to lens damage.

RFO is currently seeking quotes and will report this back to Council

- Noted.

3) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks report, week ending 29.11.2024; Torfaen County Borough Council, New response model from the South Wales Fire Model which will be active from 06.01.2025 – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

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

225) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 47
ii) List of planning applications received in week 48

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

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2024/0259	Mr. D. Hughes Overlook House Georgetown Tredegar	Application for Listed Building Consent for additional remedial works including internal window surrounds, external pointing and filling of gaps, to that approved under LBC approvals C/2017/0060 and C/2018/0287. Former NCB Club, The Circle.
No objections		

c) To consider other planning matters – Trefil Quarry, Trefil Road, Trefil - mineral working comprising limestone extraction and future restoration.

Members referred to the works being undertaken, complaints had been received from residents in respect of the size of the vehicles, which were causing damage and actually taking rendering off property walls.

A Member said that Ward Members on Planning had met with a Senior Officer on the site who had said that only one letter of complaint had been received from the village. Also, the vehicles travelling these highways were no heavier than previously regarding tonnage and the hours of operation remained the same.

Another Member said that Legislation was based on axle weight and, if meeting Guidance, permission would be granted.

Members were aware that the planning permission had gone ahead in respect of the quarry and Council requested a copy of the planning approval conditions, as concerns were raised that 10% of SSSI area would be wiped out.

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

- None received.

227) 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 – Agenda lamp-posts asked that Local Authority visit Council as a Council, Andrew Parker setting up, for those Councillors interested in sessions on planning, need to understand Do / Don't Planning Regulations changed, have to have definitive reason for refusal, planning training.

b) Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales – No meeting.

c) One Voice Wales Larger Councils and AGM – No meeting.

d) Tredegar Twinning – meeting cancelled, visit France next year and hoped the Mayor would be able to confirm attendance, host. Christmas stall in the town on Saturday, disappointed not awarded Pen Bryn Oer Fund, need to raise a lot of money to keep going. Encourage people to join.

e) Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund – next round of funding now open.

f) School Governing Bodies – Bro Helyg: met on Friday, new Headteacher, new School Chartist Way, still waiting on contractors to be signed off, interior to be finished and car park to be done, still on target for September opening. Bryn Bach: met last nights, concerts beginning next week, really good Headteacher report, number of new staff in

September, really week. Dip in year one, still impacting from Covid years, impacting on children in KS1, not have engagement, struggling. No Town Council representative, , vacancy, suggest herself as Governor representing Tredegar Town Council to free up a governor space. Georgetown Primary: kick of Christmas concerts, lovely one from the Reception class.

g) Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum – Christmas dinner on Monday, day School at Bedwellty House success over fifty attendees , really pleased. Monthly talks on third Thursday regularly attracting thirty / forty attendees.

h) Tredegar Business Forum – Meeting cancelled.

i) VVP / Tredegar Heritage Initiative (Placemaking) – No update.

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

- Town Clock planting - some of the bulbs had been saved from the previous year as an experiment were small. A Members recommended the purchase of extra bulbs (e.g. 150) to edge the display and ensure some colour for next year - Tulip Double Red Riding Hood, single if double not available. The Member had undertaken research and these cost £28.00 per 100. It was agreed that the Clerk seek availability and purchase accordingly.
Also, Abletouch had made some riddles and the Cleaning Operative had been using these to carry out work to the Town Clock garden. Thanks were offered to the operative, who had done a really good job.
- KWT Local Places for Nature 'Orchard Pack' – a Member said that Council had been awarded two Orchard Packs for Deighton and Sirhowy and Sirhowy Woodlands had offered to assist with planting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.

Chair