

TREDEGAR TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Civic Meeting of Council held via Microsoft Teams / hybrid on
Wednesday, 5th February, 2025 at 6.30 p.m.**

Present: **Councillors K. Phillips (Chair)**
 E. Griffin
 M. Turner
 A.E. Tippings
 A. Jones
 E. Jones
 G. Jones-Griffiths
 G. Meredith
 D. Rowberry
 J. Thomas
 G. Walters

In attendance: **Clerk – Ms. C. Aherne**
 RFO – Ms. A. Edwards

286) Apologies. Councillors G. Badham, A.E. Evans, S. Mavar, H. Trollope,
S. Trollope and K. Waldron

287) Declarations of Interest

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

288) To receive Mayor's report, as appropriate

The Mayor asked that any update be deferred until the next meeting. He said however, sadly, he had to inform Council of the passing of Mr. Ralph Rockman, a well-known figure and proactive gentleman within the town.

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

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

- The Calendar of Events was approved [as amended] with ongoing actions to be progressed accordingly, including:
 - St. David's Day – agreed: Town Clock to be illuminated 'Red and White' on Saturday, 1st March, 2025;
 - COVID-19 Day of Reflection 2025 – agreed: Town Clock to be illuminated 'Yellow' on Sunday, 9th March, 2025;
 - Commonwealth Day 10th March, 2025 – expenditure approved in respect of refreshments, i.e. tea / coffee, squash, Welsh cakes;

- It was agreed to re-establish a Kidney Wales Charity event for the incoming Mayor: to be held in April;
- It was agreed that commemorative events be held in respect of the VE and VJ Days to celebrate the 80th anniversary (May and August respectively).
- Hexagonal Gazebo (x2) – agreed this item be deferred for further consideration.
- Presentation Awards Ceremony – it was agreed that an event be held immediately following Council on Wednesday, 19th March, 2025.
- Christmas Lights – discussion was needed in conjunction with appropriate lighting providers; firstly Blachere Illuminations, and then a second company, and - if differing advice - a meeting with a third company could be required.

290) Grants:

Thanks from Wales Air Ambulance.

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)

St. John Ambulance Cymru - Any financial assistance received would be used purchasing new training equipment and outside security lights.

2023/24 Feb'24 CQ No. 618 £500.00

A discussion ensued whereby Council was informed that the St. John Ambulance now had to charge for every event, as the system had changed on a regional basis, and all bookings were applied via an online system. Therefore, following discussion, Members suggested the following options could be considered:

- £500.00 less any payments made for services provided throughout the financial year
- A reduction in the amount allocated to £300.00
- Approve the amount of £500.00, as allocated within the designated budget heading, whereupon:

Upon a vote being undertaken, it was agreed that **£500.00 be Approved accordingly**

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

Stocktonville Senior Citizens Welfare Association - Any financial assistance received would be used towards replacing the hall boiler.

2023/24 Sept'23 CQ No. 536 £200.00 - Approved accordingly

Following a brief discussion, Members considered: 1) review the previous decision of Council to suspend the awarding of Special Grants, and / or 2) establishing a grant in respect of circumstances relating to Exceptional Emergency. It was agreed that the Clerk liaise with the RFO to ascertain the appropriate procedure to progress in line with Council's own Financial Regulations.

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.

291) To set and agree the 2025 / 2026 Precept following deferment arising from discussions at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 22nd January, 2025

The Leader said that, following due consideration, it had been agreed the Precept be increased and set at 4.5%, due to ongoing issues with cost of living and bills continuing to rise, and exceptional circumstance arising, such as discussions relating to the Recreation Ground whereby Council could form part of a conglomerate managing the ground or act as lead in such a project, may be resulting in a cost to Council.

Members highlighted this had been a difficult decision, recognising the current crisis to Blaenau Gwent households, however the increase would only impact upon the lowest households by £0.02 per week and £0.04 for the highest in the area and therefore such an increase would be minimal. It was therefore considered prudent that the Precept rise in accordance with inflation.

It was unanimously approved that Council agree a Precept of 4.5% for 2025 / 2026; the Clerk confirmed the RFO would notify Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council by the deadline stipulated.

The Leader extended the thanks of Council to the RFO for all the hard work undertaken in preparing the required information.

292) Charter of Common Agreement between the Community and Town Councils of Abertillery and Llanhilleth, Brynmawr, Nantyglo and Blaina, and Tredegar with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

The Clerk spoke to the Charter of Common Agreement, which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting, explaining this was a final opportunity for town / community councils to submit observations before the document was finalised.

The Leader said that although he would very much wish for Tredegar Town Council to support the Charter, personally he felt that Blaenau Gwent needed to accept this as more than a 'piece of paper' and undertake meaningful consultation between the Local Authority and the four other Councils. For example, it would be welcomed to be informed with knowledge of the Local Authority's intentions when setting the budget, rather than playing 'catch-up', as the town / community councils were still unsure of the Blaenau Gwent CBC budget or what services could be lost, e.g. CCTV. Therefore, the Charter of Common Agreement had to be enacted in good faith.

A Member supported the concerns raised as this had to be a two-way process between the Local Authority and Town Council. Another Member highlighted there were some benefits under consultation taken, such as the placemaking plans, and suggested that town / community councils could go back to the Local Authority, asking for a seat at the table.

On a positive note, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Local Authority appeared to be taking a different approach and conversations were ongoing with the Leader and Executive to consider what improvements could be made.

Councillor K. Phillips left the meeting at this juncture (7.00 p.m.)

293) Correspondence

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

1) BGCBC List of applications received, week ending 17.01.2025.

1) Temporary event notice 02.02.2025 – Kidz R Us

- Noted.

2) One Voice Wales a) Re: Annual Meeting, Online Tuesday, 11th March 2025 at 4.00 p.m. Council are invited to nominate one councillor (plus a substitute) to attend. Making proposals at this meeting to amend their constitution.

- Noted; Leader and Deputy Leader.

b) Re: Joint event One Voice Wales and Planning Aid Wales, Thursday 27th March from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., remote via Zoom “Understanding the Planning System – your questions answered”. £50.00 per delegate.

- Noted.

3) PUBLICATIONS

BGCBC Roadworks reports, week ending 31.01.2025; 20's Plenty for Us Re: Keeping your community streets safe in Tredegar. Information on how to challenge the local authority changing a road from 20 to 30; R. Taylor-Davies Re: The Valleys That Changed the World, Diary Marker, next networking meeting 27.02.2025 at The General Offices, Ebbw Vale at 11.00 a.m. – ***distributed to Members***: Received.

- A Member referred to the 20's Plenty publication, highlighting longstanding issues on Sirhowy Hill. Pedestrians already experienced difficulty in crossing and any suggestion in respect of increasing the speed limit to 30 mph should be challenged. There were no street calming measures on this stretch of highway, despite numerous requests to both the Local Authority and the Police. A Member assured Council that the three Sirhowy Ward Members continued to debate the issues with appropriate parties.

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

294) Planning:

- a) i) List of planning applications received in week 4
- ii) List of planning applications received in week 5

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

App. No.	Applicant	Proposal
C/2024/0287	Mr. K. Barrett 2 Greenwood Bungalows Greenwood Avenue Tredegar	Proposed standalone garage at front of property, 2 Greenwood Bungalows, Greenwood Avenue
No objections		
C/2025/0033	Ms. C. Wilson 87 Ystrad Deri Tredegar	Proposed change of use of ground floor to A3 (food and drink), 19 Castle Street.
No objections		

c) To consider other planning matters – None received.

295) 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.

296) 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 – Meeting the previous week, whereupon the suggested budget and Precept were discussed, a Member of Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council expressed concerns in respect of how town / community councils and the Local Authority should work together to ensure symmetry across both council bodies. The new Chief Executive Officer had indicated a positive approach in moving forward.

b) Gwent Valleys One Voice Wales – No meeting.

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

d) Tredegar Twinning – A visit was scheduled in May; however, due to a sad decline in numbers, the cost of providing a coach was not feasible and therefore members would be travelling by car / flying. Members were urged to sign up to the Twinning Association in order to support the continuation of this group.

e) Pen Bryn Oer Community Fund – Applications would close on 11th March, 2025, and representatives would meet in April to reach a decision in respect of applications received.

f) School Governing Bodies – Bryn Bach Primary: presentation received from the new Deputy Head was really interesting and she had been asked to present to all Schools in Blaenau Gwent, which Georgetown Primary School had piloted. There still remained a vacancy for a Town Council representative on the Governing Body, therefore parents / Governors had been asked to vote on Councillor Alyson Tippings to step down as a 'Community Governor and become the 'Town Council' representative, thereby allowing a parent to fill the Community Governor role, which had been agreed accordingly. Deighton and Georgetown Primary Schools to meet next week.

g) Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum – The Forum was doing well and the talks were attracting visitors from far afield, such as Merthyr, Crickhowell and Cardiff.

h) Tredegar Business Forum – A meeting had been held Tuesday: no update available.

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

- Summer planting – Town Clock – it was agreed that the display feature red and white Begonias and blue Ageratums.
- Resident of Trefil: pupil of Tredegar Comprehensive School – a Member had been approached by a constituent who had expressed serious concern of bullying of her grandchild, a pupil of Tredegar Comprehensive School. Although this was not under the remit of Town Council, the Member wished to make Council aware, as she understood this was not an isolated issue.

It was agreed that Council write to the School in respect of the concern with residents approaching Town Council on this issue, being led to believe this was not being addressed as to the behaviour of some pupils. Council had also been informed that 'items' were being taken into School that were deemed unsuitable.

- Vision ICT 'website' – the Clerk said the Working Party had met to discuss establishing the new website. This had been drafted by the provider [Visiion ICT] and a link sent to Members. Observations of Members were needed in order to progress.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

_____ Chair