



Bargoed Town Council

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 14th December 2022.

Present: Councillors J Bissex; R Price; R Carroll; T Williams; D Ingram-Jones; P Collins, H Llewellyn; J Davies; C Andrews; M Ingram-Jones; D Price.

Also in Attendance: Mrs H Williams, Town Clerk.

Meeting Chair: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

1. Police Report.

Unfortunately, due sickness there was no police presence at the meeting. Members reviewed the police report drawing attention to the reduction in crime statistics but noting this was only reflective of a two-week period, and with cost-of-living concerns ramping up Members are receiving reports of increased incidence of shoplifting activity in the local area. There has been an increase in anti-social behaviour in the community with example in Aberbargoed the Christmas tree has been vandalised twice already. A Member asked if the police could be asked to provide a comparison of statistics for November/December last year with this year which the meeting felt would be interesting to note.

2. To receive Apologies for Absence Councillor S Hamer-Thomas (hospital)

The mayor welcomed the newly co-opted member for Aberbargoed ward, Councillor Megan Ingram-Jones to the meeting. (Megan signed her declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the proper officer 1st December 2022)

3. To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate. No declarations received at this point in the meeting.

4. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 23rd November 2022. Councillor Carroll proposed, Councillor Collins seconded the minutes as a true record of the meeting. Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes and the mayor signed them in the presence of the council.

5. Press and Public Participation Session. No enquiries received by the clerk prior to the meeting.

6. Mayor's report. The mayor reported no anniversary presentations made this month. He confirmed attendance at the recent Active Travel webinar and looks forward to the next update. This is the very beginning of work, which is unlikely to be completed for several years, but he will continue to monitor any developments.

7. To receive a report of the day workshop 11th November 2022 and schedule a working party date to complete the strategic planning work. Feedback from Members was very positive, they really enjoyed the training day and found it very worthwhile. It was agreed that a working session should be arranged for the new year on a Monday

afternoon, if possible, to consolidate the content of the report and make decisions on moving forward with the strategic planning work. The clerk was instructed to plan a date as soon as practicable.

8. To receive draft unapproved minutes from the Events & Environment Committee
Councillor Davies was meeting chair. She asked if members had any questions. A member requested clarification on the acronym STEM, which is science, technology, engineering, and maths. No further questions received.

9. To receive draft unapproved minutes from the Policy & Resources Committee
Councillor Carroll requested any questions from members. A member sought clarification on the item relating to the small grants programme and we advised of the item being revisited when the draft 2023-24 budget is looked at in the new year. Members noted the content of the minutes.

10. To receive feedback from Member attendance of One Voice Wales Innovative Practise Conference and smarter towns webinar.
Councillor Ingram-Jones reported a few of the headlines of the conference and advised she will produce written notes for members information. The member explained she found it interesting to note the variation in numbers of staff employed by some town councils in Wales and the projects that are being delivered as a result of greater capacity. Environmental projects and the Section 6 reporting duty were a key feature of the conference with projects ranging from green walls, rainwater harvesting, litter picking and community gardening initiatives all featuring prominently. Members spoke about the need to look at the draft budget carefully to ensure capacity is built in for additional project activities to be considered.
Councillor Andrews reported on the smarter towns' webinar noting one of the key elements discussed was the investment in Wi-Fi and 4g technology for local businesses to use to engage with the public. Some of the content of the session echoed the information brought to a recent business development network meeting by the visitor from Treorchy who talked about the town centre app for promoting and engagement activities. Members spoke about the positives of developing a local based app rather than relying on global software tools such as Facebook. The meeting instructed the clerk to liaise with CCBC to find out who is the appropriate person to speak to for further information on smarter towns opportunities.

11. To provide feedback to the biodiversity working group and authorise the publication of the biodiversity report and action plan in accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 S6 reporting duty. Members reviewed the draft report and RESOLVED to publish the document without delay. The meeting thanked the assistant clerk for his work with the biodiversity working group in producing the report.

The next item on the agenda relates to a location on Hanbury Road in Bargoed where several years ago a garden was developed to replace a shop premises that burned down. However, this garden area is located adjacent to the police station on the road joining Cross street. Therefore, as local area residents Councillors Davies, M Ingram-Jones, D Ingram-Jones, and the Clerk declared an interest in the item.

12. To receive information and consider a member proposal for a memorial garden in Bargoed town centre.
Councillor Carroll verbally briefed members on the information received from the regeneration team at CCBC and moved on to make a proposal to the meeting that town council considers carrying out a consultation with local residents on seeking funding to convert the garden into a covid memorial garden. Councillor Carroll explained he felt residents currently have nowhere to use as a reflection area and the community has yet to put any kind of memorial in place to mark the huge loss suffered by residents as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. There is an opportunity for town council to have a no cost lease of the garden from Caerphilly County Borough Council and if residents are supportive of this proposal, funding could be sought to make the area accessible, put a memorial stone in place and develop the garden with environmental projects in mind.
Members considered the proposal and spoke at length about various opportunities to maintain the area over the longer term. The meeting RESOLVED to conduct a consultation exercise with the public early in 2023.

13. To consider correspondence from:

13.1 A Bargoed resident regarding a petition in 2021.

Councillor Andrews reported securing the original response from Caerphilly County Borough Council which she will hand deliver to the local resident without delay. Officers at CCBC have extended an invitation for the resident to meeting with them to discuss the proposals. The meeting thanked Councillor Andrews for her support with this issue.

13.2 CCBC regarding LA governor vacancies.

The mayor advised members of existing vacancies at several schools in the town council area of operation. Councillor M Ingram-Jones expressed an interest in Aberbargoed primary school. The clerk made members aware that as a minor authority there is no right to a presence on the governing body of a secondary school however it is understood that a request can be made should a member wish to be considered. No further member interest was expressed during the meeting.

13.3 Request for funding from Wales Air Ambulance.

RESOLVED to make a £500 grant to the Wales Air Ambulance without delay.

14. To receive a report from the clerk and provide instruction for moving forward with:

14.1 Pro-rata payment of member annual allowance in December 2022 payroll.

RESOLVED to approve the payment in December 2022.

14.2 Premises

The clerk provided members with information on property recently vacated by Aneurin Bevan Health board which the meeting felt was out of town council reach at the moment. The agent advised if the landlord did not secure a tenant for the whole building it is likely serviced office space will be developed instead. Some members expressed an interest in monitoring this situation. The clerk also provided an update from Gwent police about the costs of utilities and service charges at the courthouse in Bargoed. The commissioner will be briefed by the finance team with a recommendation to reduce the variable costs of utilities to 25% of the 9% floorspace occupied by town council, and to look at the contracted cleaning time of one hour per week. Feedback from the facilities team regarding disabled access to the police station is that this is not possible at the building, and that a combination of MS Teams software and the offer of relocating to a suitable meeting space are considered reasonable adjustments. It would be difficult in these times of austerity and high costs of living to justify spending tens of thousands of pounds to make headway in terms of disabled access at the rear of the building and as a grade II listed building the front of the premises would not be possible.

14.3 Voucher scheme

RESOLVED not to take a voucher scheme forward at this time as there is a tremendous administrative burden for little, short-term gain.

14.4 Banners

A member suggestion has been received that pvc banners may be a good idea for those locations that are delivering warm spaces provision throughout the winter months. Banners would let the public know where to go and would add further visibility to the social media/noticeboards/website marketing for these spaces. The clerk advised the meeting that the banners are very low cost but due to council recess there is insufficient time for town council to get them produced. Members spoke about the option of banners unanimously supporting the proposal. The clerk was instructed to liaise with CCBC and provide officers with information.

15. To provide feedback to the Welsh Government consultation on Welsh-speaking communities.

RESOLVED to approve the draft responses to the Welsh language consultation for submission without delay.

The mayor advised this concluded business, thanked everyone for their attendance, and the meeting was closed at 19.35pm