



Bargoed Town Council

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 13th December 2023.

Present: Councillors H Llewellyn; R Carroll; P Collins; J Davies; D Ingram-Jones; J Bissex; S Hamer-Thomas; DT Williams; C Andrews

Also present: PCD Evans (Gwent Police); Mr C Jones (Youth Representative)

Also in Attendance: Mrs H Williams, Town Clerk; Mr T Oliver, Deputy Clerk

Meeting Chairman: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

The mayor welcomed everyone to the Full Council Meeting.

1. To receive a report from Gwent Police

Gwent Police were unable to attend at this time. Members discussed the report noting that on page 2 there appeared to be a typing error in the statistics provided. Members were also interested in hearing updates on Morrisons Car Park.

2. To receive apologies of absence.

Apologies of absence were tendered from Councillors R Price (family commitments) and M Ingram-Jones (work commitments).

Prior to agenda item three the Deputy Clerk advised members that item seven contained information from the following voluntary organisations: Inside Out Cymru, Platform, Cartref Community Hall, Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre, Bargoed Rugby Club, Aberbargoed Residents Association, Gilfach YMCA, Thriving Communities CIC.

3. To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on the Agenda.

Councillor R Carroll declared an interest in respect of Cartref Community Hall

Councillor C Andrews declared an interest in respect of Gilfach Bargoed YMCA

Councillor S Hamer-Thomas declared an interest in respect of Bargoed Community Centre

4. Press and Public Participation Session.

There were no members of the press or public present.

5. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 22nd November 2023.

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 22nd November 2023 was received, approved and signed.

6. Mayor's Report

The Mayor gave a brief verbal report on the events of the past month, making mention of:

- The Christmas Lights Switch-On: it was reported that this event was well attended by the community but due to the electrical contractor arriving late the lights were not switched-on in a timely manner.
- ACAT Christmas Party in Aberbargoed: it was reported that this event was well attended and had a good team of volunteers.

- Beauty and the Beast Pantomime: it was reported that this event was excellent, well received, and fairly well attended.

7. To consider requests for funding from local voluntary organisations under the cost-of-living project as instructed to the Clerk and authorise expenditure as required.

Following instruction from Town Council to liaise with voluntary organisations who are planning on delivering activities in support of families struggling with increased cost of living throughout the winter months, the Clerk provided a verbal report to the meeting advising that several organisations are experiencing difficulties with the increasing costs of energy bills, some of which have been considering closing in the winter months due to difficulties with costs.

Councillor Carroll and Councillor Andrews both left the meeting.

- Members RESOLVED to give £500 to Cartref Community Centre
- Members RESOLVED to set aside £500 for Gilfach Bargoed YMCA

Councillors Carroll and Andrews returned to the meeting.

Councillor Hamer-Thomas left the meeting.

- Members RESOLVED to give £500 to Bargoed Community Centre
- Member RESOLVED to make a restricted grant of £500 to Platform to deliver a coffee and craft morning at Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre.

Councillor Hamer-Thomas returned to the meeting.

The Clerk advised the meeting of communication from Inside Out Cymru who are able to deliver arts for wellbeing sessions, two hours with a professional artist at a cost of £100 per session. The sessions can be delivered during welcoming spaces and encourages footfall. Members considered this offer and instructed the Deputy Clerk to liaise with Cartref Community Hall, Inside Out Cymru and Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre to arrange one session per week at alternating venues.

- Members RESOLVED to set aside £1200 for Inside Out Cymru for the provision of art services.

Members moved on to consider Thriving Communities CIC who are planning a community Christmas lunch at Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre. The clerk advised this has largely been developed following a briefing at the recent integrated wellbeing network meeting that reported significant health inequalities in the Greater Bargoed area, with the Park Estate being noted as having high levels of multiple deprivations. Members spoke about the positive track record of supporting and delivering quality community activities by Thriving Communities CIC.

- The Council RESOLVED to donate £500 to Thriving Communities CIC along with table decorations from previous events and selection boxes will be considered by the Events & Environment Committee 14th December 2023.

PC D Evans entered the room at this point. The Chair brings item 1 back to the table.

1. To receive a report from Gwent Police

The Police Officer gave a brief verbal report on local crime levels to the Town Council. It was reported that crime levels are down and that there have been several successful arrests in recent months. The public engagement activities the police have organised with the local fire service have been well received.

A member asked if the streetlights being off is seen as a positive or negative issue, does it hinder police in their role?

Answer – not really, dark areas provide opportunities for criminals, but other than that the streetlights don't really hinder.

A member asked how the 20mph enforcement is going?

Answer – the Go Safe team deal with most of this.

A member asked is there less anti-social behaviour during the winter months, particularly with regard to quad bikes?

Answer – potentially yes.

A member spoke of increasing issues with off-road bikes in Gilfach, but the CCBC Parks department are now closing the barrier to prevent access to the playing field.

A member requested the police do a sweep through of the car park on a Saturday night to prevent cars speeding through.

PC Evans noted the ANPR initiative has been an excellent deterrent.

He moved on to ask if there are any other issues to report. A member advised of quad bikes at the bottom of the Park View Hill with tracks cut through the grass verge.

PC Evans reminded members they are able to email information to the whole team.

The Mayor thanked the PC Evans and he left the meeting.

8. To receive recommendations from the Clerk and carry out a review of the Town Council training plan.

The Clerk presented the training plan to the Council which included training for Councillors and Clerk on topics such as:

- The planning system
- The role of the councillor
- Code of conduct
- Devolution of services/community asset transfer
- Understanding local government finance advanced

The plan also included professional membership and continued training for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Members reviewed the training plan and RESOLVED a budget of £4500 - £3000 for member training and £1500 for staff.

9. To note the appropriate sum under section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 Expenditure Limit for 2024-2025 as notified by Welsh Government.

The Deputy Clerk presented the appropriate sum for the purposes of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for Community and Town Councils in Wales for the Financial year 2024-2025 is £10.81 per local elector (a rise from £9.93). With the registered electorate in Bargoed, Aberbargoed, Gilfach numbering 8740, this means the appropriate sum equates to £94,479.40. However, the Deputy Clerk noted that in our current state Bargoed Town Council operates from the General Power of Competence.

10. To receive information from the Clerk and discuss the inclusion of an Environmental budget in the 2024-2025 draft budget calculations.

Members received information from the Clerk and RESOLVED to include an Environmental budget in the 2024-2025 draft budget calculations. Members expressed the importance of the Town Council making environmental provision for the community.

11. To consider requests for donations in respect of:

11.1 CCBC Operation Santa Appeal

Members decided not to donate to this project because the official deadline was closed.

11.2 Hope Rescue

Members RESOLVED to donate £100 to Hope Rescue and requested that the Deputy Clerk asked for more information regarding the organisation's involvement in Bargoed, Aberbargoed and Gilfach.

11.3 Urdd National Eisteddfod Maldwyn 2024

Members decided not to donate to Urdd because the Town Council had donated £250 to Urdd in August 2023.

11.4 Urdd Cymru Fund For All

Members decided not to donate to Urdd Cymru Fund For All because the Town Council had donated £250 to Urdd in August 2023.

12. To co-opt a member of the local electorate to fill the casual vacancy in the Aberbargoed ward. A member requested that the standing order would be suspended and that a secret ballot would be conducted.

There were three names received by Bargoed Town Council for consideration of co-option. A member requested that standing orders would be suspended to allow for a secret ballot. In section 3Q of Bargoed Town Council's Constitution it declares that:

“Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.”

Members voted in favour of a secret ballot. The outcome of the vote was 4 votes, 4 votes, and 1 vote. Therefore, the Mayor had the casting vote in accordance with section 1:9 which states:

“Every item of business included on a meeting agenda requiring a decision must be decided by a majority of those members present and voting thereon. In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman has a casting vote, as well as an original vote.”

The Mayor stated that it was in the interest of the Aberbargoed ward to have a representative from within the village and cast vote for Mrs Y Price to be co-opted to council.

Standing order 3(q) was restored from this point forward in the meeting.

13. To note the content of the draft unapproved minutes of:

13.1 Community Engagement Committee 27th November 2023

13.2 Policy and Resources Committee 29th November 2023

13.3 Events and Environment Committee 30th November 2023

13.4 Confidential minutes of the HR and Staffing Committee 4th December 2023.

Members noted the content all the above draft unapproved minutes.

The Mayor thanked everyone and close the meeting at 19:31.