



Bargoed Town Council

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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 24th January 2024.

Present: Councillors H Llewellyn; R Carroll; P Collins; J Davies; Y Price; T Williams; J Bissex (remotely); C Andrews; M Ingram-Jones; S Hamer-Thomas (remotely); D Ingram-Jones.

Also in Attendance: PC D Evans (Gwent Police); Ms E Janes (Caerphilly Observer).

Also Present: Mr C Jones (Youth Representative); Town Clerk: Mrs H Williams, Deputy Clerk: Mr T Oliver.

Meeting Chairman: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

The mayor welcomed PC Evans, ward manager for the area, and Ms Janes from the Caerphilly Observer who joined the meeting remotely.

1. To receive a report from Gwent Police.

PC Evans reviewed December 2023 statistics with Members noting that crime was slightly increased. A member asked how the figures compare to the same period the previous year. PC Evans will look into this and come back to the clerk with details.

Op Tinsel was a successful activity in December, this centred around local businesses warding against shoplifting and other such seasonal crimes. PC Evans also spoke about the new initiative around dog issues which was developed as a result of the XL Bullies and the new legislation about to come into effect. A Member asked what were the consequences for repeat offenders regarding dog issues? PC Evans explained this would depend on the nature of the offences, for example if they related to banned dogs under the Dangerous Dogs Act 2018 or if the dogs were dangerously out of control, and whether the dog was present at the time of officers attending, in which case officers can seize the dog. Dog liaison officers deal with enforcement and see offences through court. It is the decision of the court system to issue fines and impose conditions such as muzzles, euthanasia. If the issue relates to noise complaints these are dealt with by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

PC Evans returned to the monthly report and spoke about the joint liaison work with the Fire Service explaining there are enforcement operations currently being planned. Also that the team's work on the night-time economy proved successful with good engagement and positive feedback from local businesses. Two Bargoed warrants were issued for class A substances, theft and drink driving offences.

Additional questions from Members included a request for officers to patrol the rear of an Aberbargoed residence where youths are gathering at night, and a request for an explanation of how keyless vehicles are accessed.

Members expressed concern about youths potentially gathering at the car park near the traffic lights adjacent to the supermarket in Bargoed, and the recent fireworks at 3am in Bargoed.

The Mayor thanked PC Evans for his report and he left the meeting at 6.15pm.

The meeting instructed the clerk to request comparison statistics to be added to the monthly report in future, if possible.

2. To receive Apologies for Absence
Cllr R Price (sick).

3. To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate.

Cllr C Andrews declared an interest in items 7.3 regarding Bargoed YMCA and 8 in respect of Caerphilly County Borough Council (cabinet meeting). Cllr D Ingram-Jones declared an interest in Caerphilly County Borough Council (full council)

4. Press and Public Participation Session.

One member of the press was present at the meeting.

5. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the Special Full Council Meeting 10th January 2024.

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes as a true record of proceedings. Cllr M IngramJones moved, Cllr D IngramJones seconded.

6. To receive draft unapproved minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting 20th December 2023 – Members noted the content.

7. To consider requests for funding of:

7.1 Bargoed Library - 6 weeks of guitar workshops.

RESOLVED to approve £575 expenditure for the provision of guitar workshops and the availability of practise guitars at Bargoed library, to be delivered by RecRoc social enterprise.

Councillor Andrews left the room.

The mayor requested Members re-order the following two agenda items. RESOLVED.

7.3 Gilfach YMCA

RESOLVED to make a grant of £500 to support with the increased costs of fuel bills throughout the winter months in line with the cost of living initiative implemented by Members at the end of 2023.

Councillor Andrews returned to the room.

7.2 Competition prizes and chocolates for the Easter Egg hunt in Bargoed town centre facilitated by the CCBC Town Centre Support Officer.

Members spoke about the importance of small scale family initiatives aimed at both providing low cost leisure activities throughout school holidays and also boosting footfall in the town centre. The meeting RESOLVED to provide financial support of £200 to purchase chocolate easter eggs for the Easter Egg hunt which will be facilitated by the CCBC Town Centre Support Officer on behalf of Bargoed Town Council. This activity was successful in 2023 and will be delivered again in the Easter school holidays.

8. To receive and note the content of Caerphilly County Borough Council reports to cabinet in respect of:
Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25; Draft Waste Strategy

The mayor requested Members feedback on the draft waste strategy first. No specific comments were made by the meeting. The document was noted.

In respect of the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 the mayor drew Members attention to the consultation currently underway noting the event in Bargoed library for Tuesday 30th January 2024, and the two online sessions. Members were encouraged to each personally complete the budget consultation and to encourage members of the public to also do so.

Members spoke about items listed: EE24 the increases proposed on outdoor pitch fees for rugby, cricket and football; EE20 voicing concern about the vacant community safety warden posts and the need in the local community; MF8 regarding the withdrawal of the match funding community scheme for events and their concern about future viability of large events in the town if match funding is withdrawn. Members spoke at length about the importance of drawing visitors to the town, their work on projects such as the floral display initiatives, the collaborative work with Caerphilly County Borough Council on the new food and craft markets, the place plan and small family oriented activities such as the Easter Egg hunt and table top games club, but it is acknowledged that the large events such as the hugely successful May Fair and previous Winter Food and Craft fairs have far greater impact on footfall and the local economy. Members expressed concern that the withdrawal of match funding may put some of these community events at risk.

The mayor requested town council representation at the Bargoed library consultation event. Councillors Carroll, Bissex will accompany him and the town council youth representative will also be present.

Members instructed the clerk to complete the consultation on behalf of the town council noting concern with the three items highlighted during the meeting. Any additional questions from Members for the consultation event to be received by the clerk by 10am Tuesday 30th January 2024.

9. To receive correspondence:

9.1 Bargoed branch of the Royal British Legion - thank you letter. - noted

9.2 St David's Hospice Care – request for the incoming mayor to nominate them as a chosen charity for 2024/25 – content noted.

9.3 Resident email about Bargoed Town Centre

The mayor read communication from a local resident who expressed concern about shops closing and the changing shape of the town centre.

Members spoke about misconception about the remit of Bargoed Town Council, how every town is being criticised over lack of shops and banks with nobody happy about it.

The clerk was instructed to write to the resident explaining the footfall initiatives, the events and joint working on family activities, the town centre management team place planning, the new 'Meanwhile Space' for pop up shops, and the work being done to encourage people to shop locally. Members explained that this work is important because any large business looks at demographics and footfall before choosing where to set up their new stores.

10. To provide a town council response to the Welsh Government Consultation on future spending purposes for dormant assets funding in Wales.

The mayor asked for an indication from Members of how many had provided comments to the clerk for consideration by the meeting to formulate a response to the consultation, then moved on to remind Members that these funds are accumulated largely through dormant bank accounts, insurance products and financial products after people pass away, and that the funds are distributed by the National Lottery Community Fund under priorities and schemes identified by Welsh Government. The consultation exercise is trying to determine which themes should be included in schemes to be funded by these assets. Welsh Government do not believe they will be able to fund all themes, therefore are asking for feedback on what stakeholders feel are their priorities.

Members discussed the four proposed themes of Children and Young People; Community Action; financial Inclusion; Climate Change and the Nature Emergency. While Members felt the theme of climate change to be important, they also noted that funding is being diverted from many avenues to support a move towards reduced carbon emissions and this therefore raised the priority of other themes on the list.

Comments included:

Full support for this money supporting children and young people.

Children and young people should be given as much support as they need.

Specific attention to inclusion and play outside of school for young people with additional learning needs and mental health being a priority.

Climate change is an issue which affects all of us in our daily lives, following the increase in storms and flooding incidents we support this money being used towards tackling climate change.

Financial inclusion is important but due partly to the excellent work of the citizens advice bureau this is less of a priority.

Considering the current financial climate, I would support prioritising financial inclusion. Many people are unable to even draw up a manageable budget, the added pressures of the rising cost of living has resulted in many people struggling to cover the costs of essentials like rent/mortgage, energy and healthy food. A greater emphasis should be put on enabling people to make a difference in their own lives – providing the information and tools to do so. Many people need support to help them cope with everyday finances.

Community action would be a great thing to champion if volunteering was a popular thing for people to do, however this is difficult to encourage people to join in.

Members instructed the deputy clerk to respond to the consultation noting Bargoed Town Council believe the four themes should be ranked as follows:

1. Children and Young People
2. Financial Inclusion
3. Community Action
4. Climate Change and the Nature Emergency.

This concluded the business of this meeting.

The mayor closed the meeting at 7.20pm