

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 20th November 2024.

Present: Councillors H Llewellyn; C Andrews; J Bissex; C Bissex-Foster; R Carrol; P Collins; J Davies; S Hamer-Thomas (remotely); D IngramJones; M IngramJones; Y Price; J McCarthy; R Price.

Youth Representatives: Miss E Jones; Miss E Harding.

Also Present: Inspector L Thompson (Gwent Police); Mr R Hill (CCBC Age Friendly Communities Officer); Mrs H Williams (Town Clerk)

Meeting Chairperson: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

1.To receive a report from Gwent Police.

Mayor Llewellyn invited Inspector Thompson to review the monthly report with members.

Inspector Thompson provided team updates noting they were doing a sterling job, with October being one of their busiest engagement months of the year. Moving on to statistics, the inspector reported 15 fewer crimes in October with no real concerns despite a slight spike in supermarket thefts, and a slight increase in anti-social behaviour below Morrison's which the team now have in hand. They will be keeping a close eye on this area in the build up to Christmas.

Members were encouraged to remind their residents about opportunist theft from vehicles and to avoid leaving things in sight in their cars.

Two XL Bully warrants have recently been actioned by the team, and the dogs examined. These turned out not to be XL Bullies.

Go safe reports were received in Gilfach, which resulted in 7 day analysis that showed a 23 mph average and the speed van was deployed this week. A road traffic bump occurred in Gwerthonor Place which thankfully didn't result in anybody being hurt.

The Trunk or Treat event was hugely successful with approximately one thousand people attending, and no anti-social behaviour incidents being reported during this period.

To date November statistics look good; there has however been some damage to turf on Bargoed Golf Club which is being investigated.

A member asked who makes the decision regarding dangerous dogs? The inspector explained there are qualified dog liaison officers in place who take lots of measurements to type the dog. It is all about the size of the dog based on the measurements. The qualified officers do the examinations to provide the evidence to support a warrant being obtained.

The mayor asked if members had any other questions. Nothing was brought forward and the inspector let the meeting at 18.10pm.

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in item 2 but remained in the room.

2.To receive a presentation from the Age Friendly Communities Officer at Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Mayor Llewellyn welcomed Mr Hill to the meeting and invited him to provide members with an overview of his role and the Age Friendly Communities initiative. Mr Hill explained the aim is for a large network of such communities to exist across the country, and Caerphilly County Borough is very close to completing network registration. One of the biggest elements of the initiative is to get

older people involved in decision making, to provide them with a voice. He commended members for the work of Bargoed Town Council as he follows the social media and notes a great deal being

delivered to support the older community. Mr Hill advised that he shares Bargoed Town Council social media posts to an Age Friendly platform to further promote the information, and Bargoed is hitting several of the markers needed to become an Age Friendly Community.

He moved on to advise of recent news that the Age Friendly Hub at St Gwladys Church Hall is likely not to be continuing due to loss of funding and he is looking at Bargoed library to becoming an alternative hub. In general hubs are community centres, and part of his role is to co-ordinate these across the county borough. Age Friendly Communities also run intergenerational activities; it is an intergenerational initiative, one that businesses are also encouraged to become involved in. Councillor Bissex-Foster requested a meeting with Mr Hill to discuss Aberbargoed provision. Members were asked if they had any additional questions about the initiative.

Mr Hill once again praised Bargoed Town Council for what they are doing in the area and he left the meeting at 18.25pm

3.To receive Apologies for Absence.

Councillor D Ingram-Jones is running late due to traffic, all other members are present.

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

Councillor Andrews declared a personal interest in CCBC items 2; 13; 14; and a prejudicial interest in item 19.

Councillor Davies declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 13.

Councillor Bissex-Foster declared a personal interest in item 19.

Councillor Hamer-Thomas declared a personal interest in item 15.4(v)

5. Press and Public Participation Session.

No enquiries received by the clerk.

6. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the last Meeting of Full Council 16th October 2024.

Members unanimously approved the minutes.

7. To receive an update from the Mayor on his recent Civic activities, and consider his request to authorise the use of the £1,000 Mayor's allowance along with a personal donation for the cost of a new, larger meeting table at the Town Council.

Mayor Llewellyn spoke about his recent attendance at remembrance activities in Bargoed and Gilfach noting the festival concert at Heolddu, the Gilfach primary schools attendance at the memorial garden and the Royal British Legion service at St Gwladys Church.

He moved on to speak about the work he has been doing with the clerk and the deputy mayor on finding a solution to the town council meeting table. He sought members support in his use of the mayors allowance of £1,000 towards the cost of a new, larger, meeting table. The mayor advised he will personally donate the additional funds to support the purchase of the new table. Members sincerely thanked the mayor for his generosity and resolved to accept the use of the 2024-25 mayor's allowance for this purpose.

Councillor D Ingram-Jones joined the meeting at this point.

8. To receive and note the content of the draft unapproved minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting 24th October 2024. Members are requested to ratify the committee decisions on implementation of the recommendations from Audit Wales.

Draft Unapproved Minutes were noted and members resolved to ratify the following actions from the minutes: Members ... instructed the clerk to immediately contact the insurer; to amend the date of the annual meeting to allow for additional time to receive the internal audit report; and to ensure the website contains supplementary information with full council meeting agendas. It was noted by committee that three quotations/estimates are routinely obtained for goods and services but in the instance of the floral displays a development project was being explored following poor

results. Members noted the recommendation and instructed the clerk to ensure floral display service quotations are sought.

9. To receive the 2023-24 audit completion notice, note comments and recommendations from Audit Wales.

The clerk reviewed the audit completion notice with members and advised of having made an enquiry with Audit Wales for clarification. Members asked if the opinion could be challenged. The clerk explained that the enquiry has been sent and feedback obtained by the deputy clerk at the recent conference attendance suggests opinions are rarely overturned. Members resolved to accept the audit completion report instructing the clerk to publish immediately and implement the recommendations. Members approved a change in date of Annual Meeting to 28th May 2025 instructing the clerk to update the website as quickly as possible.

10. To receive a verbal report from the Youth Representatives.

Youth Representatives reported having received the survey questions and commenced collecting responses. To date there appears to be two clear messages from young people who have completed the survey; 1) they want a hub, somewhere to go; and 2) they want more information, they feel they don't know what's going on or what's available for them. The Youth Representatives will provide the deputy clerk with responses as soon as possible.

Members asked how they feel more information can be shared with young people?

Both representatives advised that in the first instance maybe the class charts could be used to disseminate information. These are electronic and get shared with all students. Members instructed the clerk to contact the head teacher at Heolddu in the first instance to explore this idea further.

11. To review DRAFT Financial Regulations compiled using the new model template document as supplied by One Voice Wales and approve their adoption with effect from 1st December 2024.

The clerk explained the impending new procurement legislation and the new template financial regulations provided by One Voice Wales. Members reviewed the document with the clerk, and approved spending and authorisation arrangements. The clerk advised of the need for at least one of the existing signatories to become delegated with online approval status for payments to support any situations that may arise in the future where both officers are not available to pay bills. Councillor Davies agreed to take up this delegated task. The mayor sought a show of hands from members to approve and adopt the new financial regulations and to delegated Councillor Davies to this role. RESOLVED to implement the new financial regulations with effect from 1st December 2024 and update the online banking provision to support Councillor Davies.

Youth Representatives left the meeting at this point.

12. To receive draft unapproved minutes of the Events & Environment Committee meeting 6th November 2024.

Members noted the content of the Events & Environment Committee meeting.

Councillor Davies left the meeting room prior to this item on the agenda.

13. To receive follow-up information on the two local foodbanks and consider financial support.

The clerk provided additional information from St Gwladys Church Hall on the arrangements still in place for the Fareshare Foodbank, confirming funding for the officer is in place until 31st March 2025 and the foodbank is giving out between 50 and 70 bags of food each week. Members RESOLVED to make a donation of £750 to support the purchase of food by the foodbank.

The clerk moved on to provide details of a written response from Rhymney Valley Foodbank including details of mobile telephone schemes, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme provision, referral processes and a recent mini hardship conference which was attended by both the deputy clerk and one member of town council. The meeting discussed the position, the upsurge in number of people using the foodbank and the apparent lack of activity in attempts to overcome hardship situations. Several members expressed concern. Members RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £500 to support the purchase of food to be donated to the foodbank. The clerk was

instructed to liaise with Morrison's store manager to obtain either food supplies or a food voucher that the foodbank may use to secure food.

Councillor R Price left the room at 19.18pm

14. To receive follow up information and discuss financial support for the project at Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre.

The clerk provided members with a verbal report of additional information from Plattform about the application made by the community centre for financial support to set up a food co-operative.

Councillor R Price rejoined the meeting 19.20pm

The clerk advised members that the organisations have been strongly advised by Caerphilly Cares that the food co-operative model is not successful and that a community pantry would be a more positive way forward.

Members spoke about this initiative at length and RESOLVED to support the recommendation of Caerphilly Cares, advising Plattform that Members would be happy to speak to them in the future should they choose to work on establishing a community pantry which has proven successful in other areas of the upper Rhymney Valley.

15. To receive a report from the Clerk, note content and provide instruction/resolutions on:

The clerk reported two freedom of information requests having been dealt with, both enquiring about festive lighting, costs and budget availability and one request for information pertaining to committee structure, how membership of committees are determined, whether the town council observes strict political appointments; and having provided a response to One Voice Wales Digital Maturity consultation.

Staff Training includes the Deputy Clerk attendance at One Voice Wales Annual Conference in Builth Wells; and commencing CiLCA training; the Clerk and Deputy Clerk online training with Scribe and online cyber security training.

The Website has been updated to ensure compliance with the new accessibility legislation.

Deputy Clerk facilitated a new Scarecrow Trail in Bargoed Town Centre which will be evaluated by the Events committee at the next meeting.

Festive shopping evening Thursday November 21st cancelled due to low number of traders available.

The Winter Fair will feature a small stage area on Hanbury Square featuring primary school performances, a 12 days of Christmas singalong, Russel Jones in the morning; and artists such as Wrenna, Secret Postal Society, Recrock in the afternoon. The event will include ice-free curling, photo boards, Ghostbusters, Funfair, Wish tree and santa letters, mascots, historical promotions, street theatre, craft and food stalls. The parade and light switch on will feature marching bands, samba, pipes and drums, floats, fire show. Christmas tree switch on 5.30pm with Salvation Army band and carol singing.

Members noted the content of the following documents which were circulated electronically with the meeting agenda:

One Voice Wales National Conference 2024 Report

Gwent Employer News October 2024

Caerphilly North Neighbourhood Policing Team Newsletter November 2024

CCBC Town Centre Management Team - Update on Bargoed Town Centre Audit

15.1 Date for an introductory meeting with the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner.

RESOLVED 21st January 2025 at 11am to be requested by the clerk.

15.2 Member request for a newsletter/bulletin to schools. RESOLVED a trial quarterly MS Sway to be explored by the officers for circulation to schools in the first instance commencing in the new year.

15.3 A request from a national insurance organisation to add their guide on how to limit flood risk and protect your property. RESOLVED town council website to include the following guide on preparing for a flood and protecting your property. <https://www.gocompare.com/household-tips/limiting-flood-risk-and-damage/>

15.4 requests for financial support from:

- (i) Operation Santa RESOLVED £500 donation
- (ii) Wales Air Ambulance RESOLVED £500 donation
- (iii) Urdd National Eisteddfod Dur A Mor, Parc Margam a'r Fro 2025 – members debated this item and voted by show of hands 4 for / 8 against / 1 abstention. No donation made.
- (iv) Hengoed Happiness and Wellbeing CIC for Christmas lunch at Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre. RESOLVED £500 donation
- (v) Llamau Park Villas and Cardiff Road Christmas dinner and present appeal. RESOLVED £250 donation

15.5 Preferred option for the beds surrounding the Miners Heads on Hanbury Square.

RESOLVED to instruct the clerk to liaise with the town centre management team and advise Bargoed Town Council preferred option for the beds surrounding the miners heads is decorative resin.

15.6 Additional members to the Finance & Governance Toolkit working group.

RESOLVED Councillors Andrews and Llewellyn joining the Finance and Governance Toolkit Working Group with Councillor D Ingram-Jones stepping down

15.7 Larger Councils Committee Representative.

RESOLVED Councillor McCarthy attending the next meeting of the One Voice Wales Larger Councils Committee as Bargoed Town Council representative.

15.8 Confirmation of the dates for 2025 events including Annual Meeting.

Members were advised of:

Online discussion with Planning Aid Wales about the South East Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP) Delivery Agreement Monday 25th November 2024 6-7.30pm (link to be provided to members upon request)

Aberbargoed Fire Station Annual Santa's Sleigh – 2nd December 2024 at the Hanger Aberbargoed 6pm; 3rd December 2024 at Iceland, Lowri Plaza in Bargoed 7.45pm.

Provisional dates for the CCBC Community Council Liaison Sub Committee meetings 2025 – Monday 28th April, 28th July and 17th November 6pm

Pension Credit webinar 05.12.2024 - 10:00-11:30 (details circulated to members electronically prior to the meeting)

Online consultation with the Independent Remuneration Panel November 19th at 2.30pm (details circulated to members electronically prior to the meeting)

RESOLVED to approve the event dates for 2025, amend the Policy and Resources January 2025 meeting to 23rd January 2025 at 10.45am and the Annual Meeting of Bargoed Town Council to 28th May 2025 at 6pm.

16. To receive details of a memorial tractor run in the community Sunday 1st December 2024 raising funds for local cancer care, approve its promotion on the town council social media outlets and consider a donation to the fundraising efforts.

The clerk provided details of a memorial tractor run being delivered to raise funds for St Davids Hospice and two other hospices in the valleys. Members have been approached to approve the promotion of the event via social media. Members RESOLVED to approve the promotion of the event and to give a donation of £200 to the fundraising initiative.

17. To discuss Members recommendations for suitable locations of new defibrillators fund-raised by St Gwladys (Bargoed) Primary School as previously considered by the Engagement Committee.

Deputy Clerk to communicate with the primary school advising Members have identified the following three options, with their recommendation being someone contacts Bargoed Rugby Club to seek their adoption and maintenance of the defibrillator and its installation at option 3.

1) Park Estate on Western Drive somewhere towards the top of the hill; 2) At the lamp post in front of the MUGA at Heolddu Leisure Centre; 3) In Bargoed Park as there have been recent incidence of heart attacks amongst walkers.

18. To receive a reminder from the clerk about the code of conduct, social media, requesting information and personal safety.

The clerk provided a gentle reminder to members of their obligations under the code of conduct that they all agreed to observing upon signing their declaration of acceptance of office, and that the code applies at all times whether they are on official town council business or not.

Members were reminded of ensuring a polite, respectful manner when communicating or requesting information, of keeping social media interactions positive and not inciteful, and to also be mindful of personal safety and the guide recently circulated to all members.

Councillor Andrews left the meeting at this point.

The mayor sought members permission at 20.00hrs to suspend standing orders to allow for completion of item 19 on the agenda.

Members RESOLVED to temporarily suspend standing orders and complete the business of the agenda.

19. To compile a response to the CCBC Draft Library Service Strategic Vision Consultation on behalf of Bargoed Town Council.

The clerk reviewed the responses provided by members prior to the meeting, and the responses were collated for a Bargoed Town Council response to be sent in by the clerk.

Members were thanked for their contributions.

This concluded the business of the meeting. The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and for carrying out such comprehensive work. He closed the meeting at 20.15pm