

Minutes of the Engagement and Wellbeing Committee 30th October 2025

Present: Councillors D Ingram-Jones; C Andrews; S HamerThomas; J Bissex; M Ingram-Jones: J McCarthy.

Chairperson: Councillor M Ingram-Jones

Also Present: Mr J Raffell (Aberbargoed Fire Station); Councillor C Bissex-Foster; Mrs. H Williams (Clerk)

To receive a verbal report from the team at Aberbargoed Fire Station.

Mr Raffell was welcomed to the meeting and invited to report on team activity. Statistics were reviewed on the number of incidents, major call outs, road traffic calls since 2022 and the trends being seen by the station with Members noting an increase in road traffic related issues in 2024-25. In response, the team will be increasing engagement work with road users.

Engagement work involving home safety visits, hard of hearing service, key stage 1 and 2 school visits, road safety events all continue on an ongoing basis, as does regular property assessment and monitoring of abandoned buildings.

- Key objectives for the team include:
 - on-call recruitment, which is challenging due to low numbers of people working in the area who could be called on at short notice to fulfill such roles;
- road safety and driver awareness;
- festive sleigh drive (which is viewed as an essential engagement opportunity for the distribution of fire safety advice to families who engage with the sleigh drive).

Questions from Members:

Has there been any recent incidence of young people setting furniture alight on the tip site in Aberbargoed?

Not recently – however the team are monitoring a large waste pile on the embankment opposite the demolished garage site.

Can you tell the committee about any specific preparations done for bonfire night?

A large scale social media campaign was launched; the arson reduction team have increased patrols, particularly in those high risk areas that are known to arrange bonfires. The team are preparing themselves for the night as traditionally there have been a 100% increase in attacks on crews attending bonfire night incidents.

Have there been any recent incidents in the old Kwik Save building at the North end of Bargoed town?

No incidents; this property is monitored every three to six months. No arson or safety risk recorded at the moment, the building is currently secure.

A Member thanked the team for their good work being done with older people specifically. Mr Raffell advised there is a waiting list for hard of hearing and older people home visits, but Members should email him if they have specific concerns. Clerk to share email address with Members.

The chair advised of the town council having secured 500 selection boxes in readiness for the festive sleigh drive. Collection arrangements to be made with Mr Raffell.

Mr Raffell apologised for not attending full council and left the meeting at this point.

To receive Apologies for Absence.

Councillor H Llewellyn (family).

Committee instructed the clerk to liaise with Councillor R Price regarding committee membership.

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

No declarations made.

Press and public participation.

No enquiries received by the clerk.

1.To receive, review and approve draft unapproved minutes of the Engagement and Wellbeing Committee 8th September 2025.

RESOLVED to approve as a true record – Councillor McCarthy moved, Councillor D IngramJones seconded.

2.To hear a short report from Councillor Bissex-Foster on the research she has carried out identifying demographics in relation to social media platforms.

Councillor Bissex-Foster circulated a statistical report on ward demographics and social media platform use by age group. Members spoke about the merits of targeting promotional notices according to the type of community activity being delivered by the town council.

It was noted that in terms of electronic promotion, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are currently the key platforms for reaching the highest range of audiences.

The committee discussed paid for advertising services, to which the clerk advised caution; Members were reminded by the chair that town council currently uses both Facebook and Instagram, and that Members needed to engage with Instagram to increase visibility through wider networks.

A Member asked if the current recruitment of the Deputy Clerk was an opportunity to appoint someone who can become responsible for town council engagement. The clerk reminded the committee that the role of the clerk/deputy clerk as proper officer carries statutory responsibilities and as such it would be inappropriate to restructure the job description in such a way; however there is nothing other than financial constraints that prevents a council from employing additional staff such as events and engagement officers. The current job description includes a proportion of engagement support and administration, but community engagement is a Member function rather than officers. Considerable discussion took place on the best ways of utilising social media platforms, of producing appropriate content and 'doing it well'. The clerk was instructed to research 'shorts' and how to use them on YouTube and also the restrictions on spending money on marketing and advertising.

The chair thanked Councillor Bissex-Foster for her report and she left the meeting 1.55pm.

Councillor HamerThomas left the meeting at 2pm.

3.To hear from Cllr Andrews about St Davids Day funding and discuss community activities to be arranged by the town council in collaboration with local stakeholders (Members are required to provide instruction to the clerk).

Councillor Andrews advised the meeting of the availability of a St David's Day 2026 Pilot Support Fund which is currently taking applications (deadline 14th November 2025). Caerphilly County Borough Council Equalities Team will be putting in a bid to the medium category which enables regional/multi-community projects to be delivered, and it is requested that town and community councils supports this.

The clerk advised that town council would be eligible to apply themselves, (to the small category – local projects up to £5,000) but in this instance, given the time constraints, her recommendation is to work collaboratively and support the CCBC Equalities team bid.

Members spoke about last year's event in Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre and the problems relating to a lack of volunteers.

Councillor Andrews advised of the 30th anniversary of the memorial garden in Gilfach and her intention to work with St Margarets Church and the two primary schools to deliver a memorial service and celebration.

Members RESOLVED to reach out to community groups in each of the four wards to make a grant available for them to deliver St David's Day 2026 celebration events which would enable more residents to participate in celebrations. Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre; St Gwladys Church Hall; Aberbargoed Community Action Team; A&A Club Gilfach to be contacted by the clerk.

4. Discuss the difficulties being experienced by some Members, look at schedules and secure dates/times for future committee meetings.

Members reviewed diaries and spoke about schedule difficulties. The next meeting was rearranged for Tuesday 4th December 2025 at 4pm. Future arrangements to be discussed at this meeting.

5. To make arrangements for the delivery of the Flossy & Boo performance Sunday 14th December (including refreshments, raffle, volunteers etc).

The clerk drew attention to the issue of a lack of volunteers at the centre, and she is prepared to volunteer her time on this occasion, however several other volunteers are required. One volunteer has been secured by the clerk. Councillors JMc/DIJ/MIJ are volunteering. Clerk to seek support from remaining Members of town council. Councillor Andrews will not be able to make 2pm on this date.

Members RESOLVED to purchase 4 x £25 supermarket vouchers for the raffle along with £50 of smaller festive related prizes; the clerk advised of £12.50 in 'More' points secured when purchasing the selection boxes which she will use for the purchase of event items.

Clerk instructed to liaise with the community centre regarding Christmas decorations.

Event notices will go out next week.

Next meeting to decide on small gifts for the children who attend and also refreshments.

The chair and the clerk to research options for reusable drink cups/bottles and/or festive gifts.

6. To discuss town centre initiatives leading to the end of December 2025.

Members spoke about the need to delegate a stakeholder representative who can report back to the full council meeting after attendance at stakeholder meetings to ensure community activities are not missed by the town council. The clerk was instructed to approach the Deputy Mayor who usually attends all stakeholder meetings.

Members RESOLVED to source a pre-packed festive hamper suitable for adults to the value of up to £100 for the winning traders festive window display – as a reward to the staff who participate.

Members RESOLVED to source a pre-packed festive hamper suitable for families to the value of up to £50 for the winning artwork.

7. To receive feedback from the chair on: Noticeboards; Morrison's Artwork proposal; CTG/STEM.

The chair fed back on a recent meeting with the town centre lead officer to discuss noticeboards and that two wayfinding noticeboards will be installed in the town centre at Lowri Plaza and at St Gwladys car park in the North end of town. Also an electronic notice board is going on Lowri Plaza. This renders an additional town council noticeboard obsolete, therefore the committee instructed the clerk to liaise with CCBC Highways to enquire about a suitable location at either the circle (near the bus stop) or the Hangar, in Aberbargoed.

Morrison's Artwork project was discussed – the resolution was to instruct the clerk to respond to the manager, advise of liaison with:

- CCBC, Cartref Community Hall, Youth Service and Gwent Police

Councillor D Ingram Jones leading on making an application to the police and crime commissioner grant fund for potential workshops and engagement with young people; the hope being that artwork

can be commissioned with designs and participation of local young people.

The manager to be asked to secure measurements and possible financial contribution from the supermarket also.

Clerk instructed to provide Councillor IngramJones with funding information, artists contact details and to liaise with store manager/Gwent police/CCBC Youth Service.

The chair moved on to advise of issues regarding school engagement with CTG due to change of town council governor representatives. Councillor Andrews agreed to attend Ysgol Gymraeg Gilfach Fargoed with the CTG representative. Chair to liaise with him. The clerk advised Members of consideration required about next year's budget and that the CTG have been reminded that any proposal from them must be received by no later than 30th November for consideration by Members.

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 2:55 PM.