

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF BLACKWOOD TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD 25<sup>TH</sup>. JUNE 2025**

**Present :** Cllr G Etheridge ( Mayor )  
Cllr. J Griffiths ( Deputy Mayor )  
Cllrs. K Williams, C Clark, C Erasmus, K Etheridge, L Phillips & A Farina-Childs  
Cllr. D Box attended remotely

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. P Cook, N Dix, D Davies & K Jones  
Late apologies from Cllr M Gwynne

**2. Declarations of Interest**

A Declaration of Interest was made by Cllr C Clark in respect of Agenda Item 4(a) Applications for Financial Assistance being a member of Blackwood Bowls Club

**3. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held 18<sup>th</sup>. June 2025**

It was *unanimously agreed* the Minutes be received

**4. Recommendations from Policy & Finance –**

Cllr. C Clark having declared an interest in this item took no part in the discussion or decision making

**(a) Applications For Financial Assistance**

The Clerk reported that after due consideration of the applications Policy & Finance Committee *agreed* to recommend to Town Council that –

A grant of £250 be awarded to Blackwood Bowls Club to assist in the purchase of new Jacks & Mats ( totalling £432 )  
& a grant of £100 be awarded to Bravehearts to assist in the purchase of new Dumbbells (totalling £187 )

After a short discussion, members *unanimously agreed* to the recommendations from Policy & Finance Committee and that the grants be awarded

***(b) To Adopt O.V.W. Model Standing Orders***

The Clerk reported that he had finalised the proposed Model Standing Orders in close liaison with the Mayor and had forwarded copies to members of the Policy & Finance Committee for their deliberation, who at the meeting agreed to recommend approval of same. He explained briefly that model standing orders in bold print were legal and statutory requirements, and could not therefore be amended. The remainder were designed to help councils operate effectively and could, therefore, be amended to suit a council's needs. Copies had then been forwarded to all members requesting they read over same and get back to him with any queries. No queries had been received, and after a short discussion it was ***unanimously agreed*** the Model Standing Orders as presented be adopted.

***(c) To Adopt O.V.W. Model Financial Regulations***

The Clerk reported that he had finalised the proposed Model Financial Regulations in close liaison with the Mayor, and had initially forwarded copies to members of the Policy & Finance Committee for their deliberation prior to forwarding to all members requesting they read over same and get back to him with any queries. He again explained that bold print indicated legal requirements which councils cannot change or suspend, for the rest, it was a matter of each council adapting the model to suit its size and structure.

In the setting of financial limits it was acknowledged by O.V.W. this was challenging, and that each council needs to determine its own limits, that help, rather than hinder, its own operations.

Bearing this in mind the Clerk reported that very similar limits to those included in our current Financial Regulations had been proposed.

No queries had been received, and after a short discussion it was ***unanimously agreed*** the Model Financial Regulations as presented be adopted.

***5. Financial Accounts 2024/2025 together with Internal Audit Report & Annual Return for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup>. March 2025***

The Clerk reminded members that he had presented the Annual Accounts, together with the Bank Reconciliation and a provisional Accounting Statement for Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup>. March to the Annual General Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup>. May.

He explained that the figures shown in the Accounting Statements were based on the figures contained in the Annual Accounts, and having had the opportunity to compare both members satisfied themselves all was in order, and it was ***resolved the Accounting Statement be approved and accepted.***

Members then turned their attention to the Annual Governance Statements and considered each in turn.

With regards Statement 1

In consultation with the community we have developed a vision and purpose for the Council and used this vision to inform the Council's plans, budget and activities.

***Members were not confident in answering this positively and agreed to answering No, with the following explanation***

Whilst our Strategic Plan is identified within our Annual Reports, we did not during Covid actually consult the community on same.

The majority of the Plan is still relevant, and with a few minor amendments could be posted for consultation with the community on the website/ facebook page and open days at the Council Offices in town. However, with the Borough Council currently consulting on their Placemaking Plans for Blackwood, members believe it prudent to perhaps wait for the outcome of that exercise before amending/ finalising our document and consult on same.

This does, however, form one of our priorities within the 2025/26 Annual Plan

After some further discussion, members ***agreed they were confident that Statements 2- 10 could be answered positively whilst Statement 11 regarding Trust Funds was not applicable.***

It was, therefore, resolved The Annual Governance Statement be ***approved and accepted.***

Members then received the Annual Internal Audit Report and after a brief discussion ***resolved it be approved and accepted***

The Annual Return will now be signed by the Mayor on behalf of Town Council and submitted to the external auditors together with any supplementary information requested.

The necessary Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors Rights will be posted on our Web Page and Notice board as directed by Audit Wales

Cllr. K Williams queried if we now needed to seek a new Internal Auditor. The Clerk stated we would need to appoint a new Auditor and that he would make an approach to a former colleague and Community Clerk who had recently retired and was already acting for other Community Councils.

Cllr. Williams also highlighted the need for planning towards a file management system physical & electronic, so we can file and access any documents we need easily when the new Clerk is in post. A few options were highlighted and after some discussion it was ***agreed*** a simple filing system should suffice for the size of organisation we are and the range of documents we deal with. Furthermore we should consider the options available and arrange for something to be in place to assist the new Clerk.

## **6. Publication of Members Remuneration 2024/2025**

The Clerk presented Return which highlighted [that Section 151](#) of the [Local Government Measure 2011](#) requires Community and Town Councils to publish, within their authority area, the remuneration received by their members by 30 September following the end of the previous financial year.

This information must also be sent to the Democracy & Boundary Commission Cymru by the same date. A copy of the statement must also be shared with Wales Audit Office to ensure compliance.

Nil returns are also required.

The payments made by community and town councils to named members as:

- mandatory payments towards the additional household expenses of working from home on council business. These figures should be reported globally on the statement of payments.
- mandatory payments towards office consumables resulting from working from home. These figures should be reported globally on the statement of payments.
- responsibility payments
- allowances made to a mayor or chair and deputy mayor or deputy chair
- compensation for Financial Loss
- costs incurred in respect of travel and subsistence. These figures should be reported globally on the statement of payments
- any payments made for attendance on official business or approved duty

In respect of the publication of the contribution towards costs of care and personal assistance, relevant authorities are only required to publish the total amount reimbursed during the year. It is a matter for each authority to determine its response to any Freedom of Information requests it receives. However, it is not intended that details of individual claims should be disclosed.

| <b>Payment</b>                                                                                                                               | <b>Description</b>                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of Community & Town Council                                                                                                             | BLACKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL                                                                     |
| Local Authority area (County)                                                                                                                | CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH                                                                  |
| Date return submitted to IRPW                                                                                                                |                                                                                            |
| NIL Return                                                                                                                                   | N/A                                                                                        |
| Group - 1 to 5 (state the Group number your Council belongs to)                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group 3 (Electorate over 5,000 to 9,999)</li> </ul> |
| Total cost of allowances paid to councillors each in receipt of £156 payment - to recognise councillors incur costs to do their role.        | £1,914                                                                                     |
| Total cost of allowances paid to councillors in receipt of £52 payment - payments for costs incurred in respect of telephone, broadband etc. | £ 638                                                                                      |
| Responsibility Payment (up to £500 to a maximum of 5 members)                                                                                | NIL                                                                                        |
| Chair / Mayor of the Council allowance<br>Chair or Mayor's Personal Payment                                                                  | £ 500                                                                                      |
| Vice Chair / Deputy Mayor of the Council allowance. This excludes any Civic Budget for their extra work.                                     | NIL                                                                                        |
| Financial Loss Allowance                                                                                                                     | NIL                                                                                        |
| Travel & Subsistence expenses                                                                                                                | £1,299.54                                                                                  |
| Total Attendance Allowance paid to all members (£30 per member, per Council meeting)                                                         | NIL                                                                                        |
| Contribution to Costs of Care and Personal Assistance (CPA)                                                                                  | NIL.                                                                                       |
| Other                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                            |
| Total                                                                                                                                        | £4,351.54                                                                                  |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS declined £156 allowance - for costs incurred in respect of working from home                                     | 3                                                                                          |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS declined £52 allowance - for costs incurred in respect of telephone,                                             | 3                                                                                          |

Members ***accepted*** the Report

Prior to the closure of the meeting the Mayor gave a brief update on the applications received for the Clerk's post, with the closing date being 30<sup>th</sup> June.

He also highlighted the continued problems in getting sufficient members to man the Offices throughout the week, with almost total reliance on some six or so members. After another specific request to members it was just about possible to hold the training event during the first week in July, but it was likely with holiday commitments coming up for some of the regular attending members, the Offices might have to shut for the month of August, and felt that unless other non working members were able to commit more regularly consideration might have to be given to shutting permanently.

Some members were dismayed by this prospect and urged any decision on the longer term future be reconsidered once the new Clerk is in post. After some further discussion it was ***agreed*** this item be discussed again at our next meeting in July

Finally the Mayor took the opportunity to mention that he had at last received a quotation in the sum of £7536.40 plus VAT for the repositioning/ renovation of the Poppy at the Remembrance Garden, which would result in improving the sightline by raising the mound and reforming, preparing a new base for the new poppy ( in glass & resin ), whilst also installing a new flag post base together with new memorial sign, and preparing and re-seeding the area with amenity grass mix.

After some discussion, and bearing in mind the financial regulations just adopted it was ***agreed*** Town Council should strive for two further quotations for said works from possibly CCBC recreation section, Groundwork Trust, Morris's of Usk and/or Blackwood Garden Centre