



# Blackwood Town Council

## ***Draft Unapproved Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025***

***Present in person:*** Councillors G Etheridge, J Griffiths, K Williams, D Davies, C Erasmus.

***Present via MS Teams:*** Councillors C Clark, D Box, R Mills

**Also in attendance:** Councillor K Etheridge (Observer) M Betts (Town Clerk / RFO) R Davies (Deputy Town Clerk/ Deputy RFO)

**Meeting chairperson:** Councillor K Williams

### **To receive Apologies for Absence.**

Councillor N Dix

**To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate.** [Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Clerk.]

None declared

**Press and Public Participation Session. (Members of the public who wish to speak on any item on the agenda should contact the Clerk prior to the meeting).**

### **1. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the last meeting 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025.**

The minutes were approved and signed by the chair in the presence of the meeting.

### **2. Budget for 2026/27 including precept and request for additional events funding**

J Hold the interim clerk was acknowledged and thanked for his work in preparing the figures. A small amendment has been made to the **estimated expenditure** to account for pension contributions and provision has been made for a photocopier if the council decides following cost comparison that this will be agreed.

### **Precept requirements 2026/2027**

Currently our precept is £30.00. There will be a shortfall for 2025/26, our current financial year, of £28,880 which will be met from general reserves £26,000 and a small amount from CIL funding. The shortfall will increase each year if there is no increase in the precept funding. So just to balance the budget there will need to be an increase.

CCBC have made clear that event funding will be withdrawn in 2027 (although the team will still facilitate events) as SPF funding is coming to an end; additional funding from the town council, will be required if Council wishes to retain the current events in future. The Beach Party is currently in the estimates, the Spring Fair is secure for 2026 only. To continue with the beach Party and Christmas event and cover any future shortfall, would need an increase of at least £17.50 to balance the budget

In order to make an informed decision councillors were presented with options of raising the precept between £10 - £17.50 and how this increase will impact on the households that pay the full precept.

There were also comparisons made with other local councils. It was noted that although others have a smaller precept they have a larger tax base, so due to this, their income is similar or higher than Blackwood.

The possibility of not providing a Spring fair was considered but looking at foot fall figures, this has proved to be very popular. What would be of most benefit to local businesses was discussed and perhaps changing the spring fayre to a different format to maximise the positive impact for those businesses. It was suggested that the format may be changed by the Borough Events Team anyway.

In order to continue to provide all the current events including the Spring Fair, the precept will need to increase beyond £17.50 to maintain a balanced budget, based on current estimates. Even this would not allow for development of any other activities. A higher figure would provide some contingency and future development funding.

Councillors were advised that if increasing to allow development funding, they will need to outline future plans for the money and what it is to be used for. The timing for any increases was also discussed, and it was agreed that a higher increase for the next financial year would be the most beneficial.

It was agreed that there would be more cost comparisons undertaken to gauge the potential impact of increasing the precept between £25 - £35. Also, a breakdown of the costs of facilitating the various events to be requested from the Events Team. Information on the comparisons of different precept rates will be brought to the next policy and finance committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

### **3. To review the payment list to date**

The recent payments list was reviewed by the Committee. The additional cost of £9043 for the installation of resin poppy opposite the library was noted. The positive feedback received from a number of residents since its installation was highlighted

### **4. Projector and Screen**

With a view to offering hire of the council chambers in the future and generating income, a number of requests have been made for the provision of a projector and screen. Some initial investigation had found projectors suitable for business use can be purchased from £650 - £900. This is for a free-standing model, not ceiling mounted.

Costs for a portable screen were between £60-£100.

Councillors felt they could be sourced more cheaply and so requested further research and investigation into the costing. This will be presented in the following policy and finance meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Office security**

Three quotes have been sought to improve the security of the front office area.

Three quotes given ranging between £4000 - £11,000.

The latest quote being the cheapest has some areas that require clarification as the document was unclear. Councillors felt that there should be a maximum of £5000 without vat set. Clarification of the quote will be sought, and this recommendation can be presented to the full council on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

#### **Actions arising**

- **Approximate costings for the spring, summer and winter town events.**
- **Comparison figures for increasing the precept between £25 - £35.**
- **Further costing for a projector and screen – three quotes**
- **Clarification of the quote for security in the reception area.**

It was agreed the next meeting will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm

Meeting closed 19.14pm

Signed.....Date.....

Cllr K Williams, Chair

