



# Blackwood Town Council

**Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting Held at 6.30pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February at 6.30pm at Blackwood Town Council Offices**

## **Present**

Cllr K Williams (Chair) Cllr G Etheridge, Cllr C Erasmus, Cllr C Clark, Cllr D Davies, Cllr D Box

## **AGENDA**

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

Cllr R Mills, Cllr J Griffiths.

### **2. Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interest were made at this point.

### **3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes**

The Committee resolved that the minutes of the Policy & Finance meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

### **4. Review Actions from last meetings**

Members noted that further to the discussions relating to demographic information at the last meeting, there were no requests for further information at this time. Councillors were reminded to contact the Clerk should they require specific data.

### **5. Audit Office Response on Annual Return**

Members considered the findings raised by Audit Wales regarding the Annual Return for 24/25 financial year. Cllr Etheridge reported that he had emailed the Audit Office to seek clarification on several points but had received an automated response indicating a 12 week lead in time for a reply.

Cllr Etheridge confirmed he would follow up on 19<sup>th</sup> February to verify these timescales. The Chair suggested that if a 12-week delay is confirmed, the Council should request a collaborative conference call with the Audit Office to expedite the clarification of the audit findings.

### **6. Policy Review**

**The Committee reviewed several draft policies with the following recommendations**

**Sickness Absence Policy: recommended for adoption by full Council**

**Disciplinary and Grievance Policy: recommended for adoption by full Council**



**Co-Option Policy:** subject to an amendment within the skills/experience criteria to move '10 hours manning offices' from 'essential' to 'desirable', the policy is recommended for adoption by full Council.

**Resolved:** recommend the above policies to full Council for formal adoption. It was further proposed that all Council policies be reviewed annually with any necessary amendments being considered at the Annual Council meeting.

## 7. To review the schedule of payments

### Payments List 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Supplier	Description	Amount
The Works	Books for Events	£48.00
Currys	Laptop	£499.00
Big Bear Promo	Promotional Items (Bags)	£768.00
Tinted Vision	Tint to Office Windows	£80.00
Zurich	Insurance	1,661.81
HMRC	PAYE/NI	£877.18
One Voice Wales	Training: The Council as an Employer	£376.00
Adam Unwin (Carpenter)	Relocate and Refix Handrail to internal steps	£50.00
Notetop Office Solutions	White A4 Paper	£80.64
Notetop Office Solutions	Bookcase	£174.00
Notetop Office Solutions	Suspension Files	£95.95
British Gas	Gas	£421.71
Plan.com	Mobile Phones	£64.80
Ogi	Broadband	£204.60
Male Voice Choir	Mayor's Concert-Donation	£250.00

Members reviewed the schedule of payments dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, which totaled £5,651.69. The insurance renewal quote from Zurich was discussed and the Clerk was instructed to obtain comparative quotations for consideration prior to the 1 April 2026 renewal date.

## 8. To receive applications for Financial Assistance

No applications were received.

## 9. Training Requirements

The Committee discussed formalising a training framework using One Voice Wales modules. It was suggested that all councillors (existing and new) be requested to complete the following modules within the specified timeframes:

- **Within 1 month:** New Councillor Induction, Code of Conduct



- **Within 3 months:** The Council (Modules 1 and 2), The Council as an Employer, Understanding the Law
- **Within 6 months:** Local Government Finance, Chairing Skills (where applicable)

**Resolved:** That the Clerk and Deputy Clerk prepare a formal draft training schedule for consideration at the next meeting.

#### **10. Update for Photocopier**

The Deputy Clerk outlined a time sensitive offer for the purchase of a nearly new photocopier model. Due to the urgent nature of the deal, Members agreed that a formal recommendation and the full terms of the deal be circulated to all Councillors via email immediately.

**Resolved:** To recommend the purchase to full Council with the final decision to be ratified at the next available meeting or via delegated authority as per Standing Orders.

#### **11. Scribe Software**

The Committee considered the data verification service offered by Scribe, at a cost of £79.00. It was agreed that this service would be helpful in setting up the new accounting system

Resolved: To approve the expenditure of £79.00 for the Scribe verification service.

#### **Summary of Agreed Actions**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Follow up with Audit Wales regarding response times and potential meeting</b>	<b>Cllr Etheridge</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Present policies to full Council</b>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Seek comparative insurance quotations ahead of 1 April renewal</b>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Draft a Town Council training requirement document</b>	<b>Clerk/Deputy Clerk</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Circulate photocopier purchase recommendation to all Council Members</b>	<b>Clerk/Deputy Clerk</b>

Meeting closed at 19. 48pm.

Signed

Councillor K Williams (Chair)

Date: