



Blackwood Town Council

Minutes of the Policy and Finance Meeting Held on Monday 19th January at 6.30pm at Blackwood Town Council Offices

Present in person: Cllr G Etheridge, Cllr C Erasmus, Cllr J Griffiths, Cllr C Clark, Cllr D Davies, Cllr K Williams

Present via hybrid: Cllr D Box

Also in attendance: M Betts (Town Clerk /RFO) R Davies (Deputy Town Clerk)

Meeting Chairperson: Cllr K Williams.

AGENDA

1. To receive Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs N Dix & R Mills.

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

No declarations made

3. To receive, approve and sign Minutes of the last meeting 8th December 2025.

The Committee noted the minutes of 8 December 2025. However, a motion to approve was postponed. It was agreed that formal signing would take place only after a private session is held to review confidential "Pink Paper" items that impact the accuracy of the record.

4. Events

The events team have made a request that the Town Council contribute £3000 towards the Big Welsh Festival (Spring Event) and they will add that amount to the Beach party budget later in the year. They had been expecting funding to come through which hasn't; to provide a good level of entertainment they have made this request as they do not have the funds in the budget this financial year. Cllrs raised that they would like the guarantee of addition to our 2026/27 Beach Party budget in writing and were advised that this request has already been made via email. This request and subsequent addition to the Beach Party budget



would not have been made without a senior manager's approval. The clerk advised that we are able to accommodate it this year. The committee has made the recommendation that this request is put to full council.

5. To review the payment list to date.

Supplier	Description	Amount
SLCC	Filica course x2	£236.00
SLCC	Clerk's Membership	£89.00
ISW	Office security door	£3685.06
AMS Heating	Hive thermostat	£313.74
British Gas	Gas	227.39
GRC Plumbing	Radiator Checks	£144.00

Cllrs have not received the list so it will be circulated later. The clerk went through each payment and advised all prices included VAT so this will be claimed back.

Cllrs were advised that following the recent visit to have the radiators checked, the plumber recommended that the thermostatic valve is replaced on each radiator to make the heating system more efficient. Cllrs felt that this was the responsibility of the property owner and not us as leasing tenants so the quote and request for replacement will be discussed with her.

6. Approval of Policies: Sickness Absence Procedure and Grievance Procedure

Background papers had not been received by members, so this item was deferred to the next P&F meeting in February (16th).

7. Actions from 8th December 2025 Meeting

Demographic Information



The clerk highlighted “Disability” and how it compares to other areas and the rest of Wales. Cllrs wanted to know if this area can be broken down more so it may inform accessibility issues.

“Highest level of qualifications” category showed that Blackwood’s figure is below the national average.

“Economic inactivity” was questioned to see if it included pensioners. Cllr Box advised that it did not, it was people aged 16-64 not actively seeking employment.

“Tenure of household” Cllrs were surprised that 40% own their own home outright – higher than the average. They would like to investigate other neighbouring wards and compare to Blackwood. They would also like to look at houses with children.

The clerk advised that all the data can be accessed via the Office for National Statistics website. The Cllrs agreed they would all look at this site and feedback any categories they felt would be of interest and worthy of further investigation.

Photocopier

The deputy clerk advised of the costs per quarter and how this translates into cost per copy. In order to make the most of the copier and minimise costs Cllrs agreed that we would have to be realistic about the quality of the booklets it would be able to provide. It was felt that as the copies are likely to be recycled or thrown away by households, the cost of external printing was not justified. Questions that arose and need to be clarified were: does the monthly lease price given include vat, whether we could get other quotes, can we visit another customer to see it in action and assess the quality of copies, are there other options than a 5 year contract. Cllrs were advised that we have already had more than three quotes and this company was the cheapest and the most local. We will contact the company to clarify the other questions.

8. Blackwood Rugby Club: Feedback on Flood Defences

Cllr Griffiths and the Clerk visited the Club on January 13th to ensure the £12,000 the council will be contributing has been well spent. The Clerk shared photos. The work that has been completed looks to be of a high standard and everyone is optimistic that it will greatly help with the flooding problem. They have cleared debris and proactively done a lot of work to try and ensure any future flood issues would not impact on the main pitch, artificial pitch and clubhouse. (See photos)

The club wants to ensure the flood defences work before they renew the artificial pitch. The work appears to be robust and resilient, and the club was grateful that it has had good support from the community.



The club has made a link to the flooding in the past coinciding with a reservoir being emptied, and Welsh Water had given information on the timing of water release from the reservoir.

The Club Officers expressed their gratitude to the town council for the funds and support provided. The club has offered that BTC could use the rugby club free of charge in the future for events.

Cllrs suggested that we would like to arrange publicity with the Deputy Mayor and Officers of the Rugby Club to show how the funds the town council has provided (£12,000 this time £6000 previously) have been used. Also to show how the club has such a positive impact and offers so much to its locality.

Standing items for each agenda

Applications for financial assistance to be added to every agenda even if there are not any.

Town Council needs to ensure the money given has been spent on what was stated on the application and should be used within 3 months. This requirement has now been added to the application form. Evidence must be provided with photos and possibly a site visit by a member of the town council could be arranged . If money given has not been spent within three months and there is no acceptable reason the funds will need to be returned. This is in line with other town councils. Clerks were requested to look at other town councils and bring our application criteria in line with those.

Policy review will also need to be added to each agenda

Cllrs were advised that the digital calendar will be changed as currently there are six running. There will now only be one for all Cllrs and staff to ensure nothing is missed.

Cllrs requested a calendar of events so everyone is aware of what needs to be done and when. The deputy clerk will forward this to members.

The next Policy & Finance meeting will take place 16 February 2026.

Meeting closed at 19. 34

Signed

Date

Cllr K Williams, Chair