



Draft Minutes Blackwood Town Council Meeting

Monday 1st June at Blackwood Town Council Offices

In attendance: Cllr K Etheridge, G Etheridge, J Griffiths, L Perkins, D Davies, M Gwynne, A Short, C Clarke, K Jones, C Erasmus, D Box, A Farina Child's, R Mills. Also in attendance Mandy Betts (Clerk/RFO) Rhian Davies (Deputy Clerk/ Deputy RFO)

1. Apologies for Absence. Cllr N Dix, P Cook.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Box declared an interest in the request for financial assistance, agenda item 9.

All members were requested to return their declaration forms to the clerk as soon as possible.

3. Police Report – Neighbourhood Sgt Brown and PCSO Edwards from the Gwent Police attended and updated members on the many initiatives that are being undertaken within the area. The operations are having a positive impact on areas such as anti-social behaviour, illegal parking, and the use of e-bikes and scooters. Operations are ongoing and officers stressed how essential it is that members of the community are encouraged to report any incidents or offer information via their social media presence and 101.

4. County Borough Report

Cracks in wall by Foundry Hill have been reported by a resident. There has been a request made that a structural inspection is undertaken as the increased use of HGV's travelling across the bridge to service construction of the housing development could be having this negative impact.

Coronation Road – residents contacting councillors regarding the drainage and road which they report appears to be collapsing. The Councillors have explained that planning permission has been granted therefore the Town Council is unable to do anything at this late stage. The same is true for the Taylor Wimpey at Cwm Gelli as residents within the surrounding area are reporting many issues occurring with their properties.

There has been no further update on the possible development of 200 houses by Persimmon at Grove Park. It has been noted that many streets have been left out of the consultation and as a result residents have been unable to express their views and objections. A formal complaint has been submitted but has not been acknowledged, this has now been taken to the local Senedd Member, and they have been asked to take it forward to the housing minister.



There is an increase of abandoned trolleys in the river – currently 15. The collection company has been changed, and details will be provided to the clerks by Cllr Andrew Farina-Childs as he is working closely with Asda.

5. Confirm Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11th May 2026 –

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th May are a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

6.To receive the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee Meeting of 18TH May - RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May are a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

7. Correspondence –

Correspondence has been received as follows:-

CCBC

Information from Festive Lights Workshop

Cabinet Agenda Pack

Business Team Support Clinics in Blackwood

Confirmation from Governor Support of our nominations following Annual Council

CCBC Footfall Figures

Correspondence re Wallich Project in Plaza Cafe Space

Correspondence re Lower Plas Court Development

Information from the Events Team

Town Centre Manager re Meeting attendance

One Voice Wales

Training Dates Reminder

E-Bulletins

Draft Minutes of the RCT, Merthyr and Caerphilly Area Meeting

Information on Annual Conference and Awards Day 1st July

Other

TUS Group Brochure re cheaper, greener energy

2 quotes for spotlights £900 and £676

Blackwood Cricket Club thank you for the grant money



Torfaen Pension Fund re digital uploads of information

Cardiff Capital Region: Strategic Development Plan, call for candidate sites.

Melo :suicide awareness training.

GAVO re sponsorship of Awards

OVW Conference/Awards Day, some members have expressed an interest in attending.

Resolved that the Clerk contact the Town Centre Manager regarding attendance at Town Council meeting and Councillors' queries over support for existing businesses and attraction of new businesses.

After discussion around the Town Council's awards evening and the value of networking with other organisations at previous GAVO evenings, resolved to help sponsor Gavo volunteer evening in October with a £250 contribution.

8. Request for Financial assistance

The Jacob Abraham Foundation has applied for a £250 contribution towards the cost of artwork around the parklet, featuring the Poem of Hope. It was suggested that as this was a project which would be seen by many using the High Street, the Council consider using CIL money to fund the total cost.

RESOLVED – to fund the full amount of £700 for the project.

9. Schedule of Payments –

Payments 1st to

28th May 2026

1/5/2026 SLCC	Clerk's webinar	72.00
1/5/2026 Bebb TS	Rent	960.00
5/1/2026 Scribe	Software	45.60
5/5/2026 Spectrum fibre	Ogi	204.60
5/6/2026 Post Office	Council papers	28.80
13/05/26 OVW	Councillor training	44.00
13/05/26 British Gas	Gas	121.43
14/05/26 Plan.Com	Mobile phones	64.80
14/05/26 SLCC	Clerks webinar for year	216.00
5/14/2026 Blackwood Cricket Club	New Helmets	240.00
5/15/2026 CCBC	NNDR	615.00
5/15/2026 Dwyr Cymru	Water	79.43
5/15/2026 G Etheridge	Mayor's Allowance	1,500



5/15/2026 J Griffiths	D Mayor's Allowance	500
5/18/2026	A Jervis Donation	150
5/20/2026 Notetop	Office Supplies	£83.02
5/20/2026 K Watkins	Payroll x 2	40.00
5/25/2026 M Betts/R Davies	Salaries	2438.82
5/25/2026 Torfaen Pension Fund	Pension Contributions	675.80
5/25/2026 OVW	Councillor Training	44.00
		8123.30

The payment list was approved.

Annual Return Considerations

The Annual return should be approved by 30th June. We aim to get to P&F 15th June

Internal Controls – Current Practices

Schedule of Payments presented to each meeting highlighting the Payee/ Reason for Payment/ Amount

Payments are currently made via Bank Transfer, albeit cheques require the signature of the Clerk/ Deputy Clerk together with 2 other signatures (currently Councillors G Etheridge, A Short & R Mills)

To further strengthen controls it is also a requirement that any payment in excess of £1,000 must receive written confirmation by 2 of the 3 signatories referred to earlier or agreement by Policy & Finance Committee.

Meetings of Policy & Finance Committee

Policy & Finance Committee meet regularly between Town Council meetings

Budget Monitoring Reports to be presented to Committee and Town Council at least 3 times a year - comparing spend to budget, balance sheet & supporting bank reconciliation.

To further strengthen controls monitoring reports should be accompanied by bank statements for members perusal.

Internal Audit audits Accounts during April/ May / early June in readiness for Annual Return to be completed and forwarded to Audit Wales by 30th June

After some discussion it was agreed the Internal Controls in place are considered adequate & proportionate

Risk Management

The misappropriation of funds by Clerk / Deputy Clerk is an obvious risk, but the Internal Controls highlighted above would greatly negate that risk.

Little of the rest of the work of Town Council, other than the Organisation of Events is considered to carry much of a risk.

Meetings of the Events Committee would highlight any potential risk areas.



We are currently required to submit Risk Assessments in respect of any parades/ site activities to Caerphilly CBC and if necessary attend the ESAG Events Organisers Forum to discuss same with members of CCBC & Emergency Services prior to Event as and when requested
After some discussion it was agreed the Risk Management Controls in place are considered adequate and proportionate.

Insurance Provision

Currently Mandatory Cover in respect of Public Liability stands at £15million & Employers Liability stands at £10 million, whilst Fidelity Guarantee , Officials Indemnity & Libel & Slander are £250,000 each.

Christmas Lighting, Civic Regalia, Defibrillators, Office Furniture/ Equipment are also insured at reported costs whilst any equipment hired for a specific event is insured separately if required.

After some discussion it was agreed the Insurance Provision in place is considered adequate and proportionate.

10. Annual Report - Discussion of the draft annual report took place among members.

11. Planning Applications – none received

12. Christmas Lights – Members attended the workshop to discuss the new requirements. The fixings need to be tested for strength and load bearing and wind resistance. Cost of inspection is approx £350 to £750 to test the fixings.

Members agreed to the inspection.

Members were informed that a representative of Blachere had met with members the last week and given initial information on what the company could provide. Clerk requested members to consider themes/colours to be able to prepare a brief and to obtain quotes.

13. Diary Advert approached by Horizon about putting in an A5 advert in their diaries. £300 for the year. Diaries sold in shops and will be provided for the TC offices. RESOLVED that £300 will be paid.

14. Civic awards categories – members were reminded of the categories from last year. Discussion took place and amendments to the categories were agreed. New categories will be introduced to encompass wider inclusivity.

Suggestions included but were not limited to a new Education category (names suggested included; Excellence in Learning and Achievement/ Excellence Across Learning Award/ Bright Futures Award/ Outstanding Achievement and Contribution Award/ Excellence in Learning, Growth and Achievement) and an Arts and Culture Award.

Signed



Cllr G Etheridge, Mayor