



DRAFT Unapproved Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 7th September 2026

Present in person: Councillors C Clark, P Cook, D Davies, N Dix, G Etheridge, K Etheridge, C Erasmus, J Griffiths, R Mills, L Perkins.

Present online: Councillors D Box, K Etheridge.

Also in attendance: Clerk M Betts

Chairperson: Councillor G Etheridge

Press and Public participation. - No enquiries

1. **To receive Apologies for Absence.** Councillors A Farina Child's, K Jones, M Gwynne, A Short.
2. **Declarations of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this agenda, if appropriate.**
There were no declarations of interest.
3. **To receive, review and approve the draft unapproved minutes** of the Full council meeting held on 6th July 2026 - The Clerk requested that the names of the Deputy Clerk and herself were removed from item 14. **Resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of business.**
To receive, review and approve the draft unapproved minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 13th July 2026. **Resolved** – Cllr D Box noted that her apologies of absence for policy & Finance held on 13th July had been omitted, this would be added. Following this addition - **Resolved to approve the minutes as a true record.**
4. **Reports** – For information Police Report County Borough Report Mayor/Deputy Mayor's Report Clerk/Deputy Clerk's Report
 - 4.1 **Police Report** - There was no report at this time. The Chair mentioned that there had been staff changes. A new Inspector and Sergeant are now in post and hopefully they would be able to attend the next meeting.
 - 4.2 **County Borough Report** -
 - Still work ongoing at Coronation Road. The lane is now open but still with a significant disruption for residents.
 - No decision had yet been made regarding the Grove Park planning application for 200 houses, despite this being in the first addressed 5 years ago.
 - Cwmgelli- reported as still ongoing with drainage issues and as a consequence related traffic problems. The planning application for Phase 2 build into the next field in addition. An application for a wall had

been rejected at this point. Further information regarding a water plant and redesign to resolve the ongoing drainage issues.

- Lidl – a planning application had been submitted for its new store located at the former Stage Coach site in Penmaen. It is reported that it is likely to be approved.
- The expansion of Home Bargains into Sports Direct is likely to take place next year. Cllr K Etheridge reported that he had contacted Sports Direct may consider vacant sites in areas such as the marketplace, the former Wilkinson's store, or the former Argos store. They thanked Cllr K Etheridge for the suggestions but there was no response to his query about the situation regarding jobs.
- Foundary Hill Wall – CCBC officers had been out to inspect. The senior engineer had given a written guarantee that there are no problems with the Foundary Hill Wall despite the noticeable cracks appearing.

4.3 Mayor / Deputy Mayor Report –

- Invitations had been received for the Gavo volunteering Awards Ceremony and the event on 28th October. Either both the Mayor and / or the Deputy Mayor would attend on 28th October and 10th November.
- The Deputy Mayor reported that she had attended the Lewis Street Allotments presentation for the best allotment plot with Cllr D Davies and the Deputy Clerk.

4.4 Clerk/ Deputy Clerk Report –

- The annual return was submitted to Audit Wales. Nothing had been returned to date so far and there had been no enquiries. the Clerk would follow up via email to ensure the documents are available to be published by the end of September. The Clerks had posted the required notice in accordance with for the Electoral Rights to view the accounts. To date had not been received.
- Liaison with Elsbury's for the bunting to be placed up for the Beach Party event and the catenary and that catenary cabling be removed.
- There had been two meetings with the Town Centre Management Team. One regarding the Town Boost proposal and the other was general information followed up by a meeting the Business Support Officer of CCBC that was useful and brought into light the various available grants for businesses depending on the criteria and eligibility.
- The Clerks had met with two companies that supply Christmas lighting and had received their quotes.
- Judged the Lewis Street Allotments based on their criterion, with the Deputy Mayor subsequently presenting the awards in attendance with Cllr D Davies and the Deputy Clerk.
- Completed the three finance model training session provided by One Voice Wales, with Cllr Clark in attendance at session one. The training was beneficial with the content being practical and extremely useful.

- Both attended two sessions with SLCC regarding CiLCA. The requirements had changed in recent years and you now have to attend 13 training sessions / assignments 6 mandatory training sessions. A bursary had been sought and secured at no cost to the council. November and December would be very busy and it had been decided to delay the registration for the qualification to February. Work on the modules would still continue. It just means that submissions of assignments should take place after February.
- Attended a training session with Scribe and the Deputy Clerk had attended the CCPC Nature Recovery Plan project launch.
- Reviewing and updating policies such as Internal Controls and Data Protection for appraisal.
- Posting on social media various topics that you would have seen.
- Clerks met with a counterpart from Bargoe Town Council to discuss administration procedures.
- Reported that some of the key things that need to be done by the end of September was the Remuneration Return and publish the Annual Return.

5. Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report to end of June – For information

The Clerk went through the documentation previously circulated to councillors and any variances against the budget which was prepared by the Previous Clerk and approved in January. The Clerk gave a detailed breakdown and figures were until the end of June as this was the end of the first quarter. The Mayor pointed out that there was a £70.00 discrepancy on the total budget for 2026/27, the total should be 232, 770. Clerk to check and amend. On figures presented it was noted that there was a spend to date of £3004.00 and a variance of -£2953.

Cllr G Etheridge queried the account being called 'reserves'. He explained that it is part of the same account and it cannot be referred to as 'Reserves'. It is a holding account that gives a higher rate of interest. There was a discussion about what the accounts should be called. It was resolved to use the names that are in online Banking – 'Charity and Community account' and the 'Business Select Account.' The Clerk outlined the CIL balances were what had been earmarked for reserves, as well as the workable balance of the high interest account. Going forward balances need to be in actual pounds and pence, and not rounded up, needs to be accurate to the penny.

An amendment had been made to the copy circulated to Members in advance of the meeting. This was in respect of the money earmarked for Christmas Lights. This was originally included in the position for March 2027 but the money would be spent by then.

Office costs would be required to be broken down and show office cost monitoring sheet . It was agreed the figures would be updated and brought to the October meeting. After some discussion it

was agreed that previous reports would be reviewed to see if VAT was to be included in the payments or not. A suggestion of a Monthly Budget Report was put forward. **Resolved – Figures for the second quarter would be brought to the October Policy and Finance meeting and the November Council meeting as the Clerk is away for the next Council meeting on 5th October. The Clerk confirmed the error with the Mayor's allowance had been rectified and that the £500 had been returned to the account.**

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5. Payments schedule – for approval

Payments 1st July to 31st August		Agenda Item 6	
Date	Amount	Supplier	Description
05.07.2026	£9.98	B and M	Picture frames for certificates
07.07.2026	£30.96	Dref Wen	Summer Beach party
07.07.2026	£42.50	Wooleys Florist	Flowers
08.07.2026	£45.60	Scribe (Scribe)	Office & other equipment
09.07.2026	£675.80	Torfaen Pension Fund-LGPS	Pension contributions
09.07.2026	£178.57	Torfaen Pension Fund-LGPS	Pension contributions
10.07.2026	£22.52	British Gas - Gas	British gas
14.07.2026	£1,478.34	Mandy Betts	Clerks salary
14.07.2026	£960.48	Rhian Davies	Deputy Clerks Salary
14.07.2026	£960.00	Office lease	Office lease
14.07.2026	£79.43	Welsh water	Welsh water
14.07.2026	£64.80	Plan.com	Phone / Broadband
14.07.2026	£615.00	CCBC NNDR	NNDR
14.07.2026	£204.60	Spectrum Fibre Ltd	Office & other equipment
14.07.2026	£40.00	Playworks	Payroll/Payslips
14.07.2026	£876.65	HMRC	PAYE/NI
15.07.2026	£17.47	Amazon Business	Summer Beach party
15.07.2026	£54.87	Amazon Business	Office & other equipment
15.07.2026	£44.00	One Voice Wales	Training Courses/ Conferences
23.07.2026	£25.27	Amazon Business	Office & other equipment
30.07.2026	£91.78	Post Office	Petty cash
03.08.2026	£960.00	Alison Bebb (Alison Bebb)	Office lease
03.08.2026	£45.60	Scribe (Scribe)	Subscriptions
05.08.2026	£876.65	HMRC	PAYE/NI
05.08.2026	£675.80	Torfaen Pension Fund-LGPS	Pension contributions
05.08.2026	£204.60	Spectrum Fibre Ltd	Office & other equipment
13.08.2026	£64.80	Plan.com	Phone / Broadband
17.08.2026	£615.00	CCBC NNDR	NNDR
17.08.2026	£79.43	Welsh water	Welsh water
25.08.2026	£960.48	Rhian Davies	Deputy Clerks Salary
25.08.2026	£1,478.34	Mandy Betts	Clerks salary
27.08.2026	£675.80	Torfaen Pension Fund-LGPS	Pension contributions
27.08.2026	£876.65	HMRC	PAYE/NI
31.08.2026	£45.60	Scribe (Scribe)	Subscriptions
TOTAL	14,077.37		
Upcoming Payments			
	£15,000	CCBC	Beach Party
	£717	One Voice Wales	Financial Training
	£250	GAVO	Annual Awards Night Contribution
TOTAL	15,967		

There was a discussion regarding Micro soft licenses and the cost involved. The Clerk enquired if it was possible to reduce the number of licenses required. Cllr G Etheridge explained that this would be difficult as all Councillors require an email and that is part of the license. Currently the licenses are £64 14 basic and 4 with an enhanced, with a cost of £129. Plus a cost of £50 per annum to Powys Local Authority. **Resolved - to renew the licenses.**

The Chair of Policy & Finance expressed her concerns regarding the cost of the Financial Training sessions for the Clerks that had been provided by One Voice Wales. Whilst she felt it was very good training she highlighted we were promised one and half days. Training was broken down into 3 two hour sessions. The Clerk explained that the trainer had acknowledged that there was still some time owed as some sessions had been shorter than the two hours scheduled to take place. The trainer had indicated that she was happy to use this time in the future to address queries that come up following the training and putting into practice what was learnt throughout the sessions. **Resolved – The Clerk & Deputy Clerk would use this additional time when it is deemed most advantageous.**

7. Financial Assistance Applications

There were a number of applications. The Clerk provided a summary for each.

There was discussion around each submission. Cllr Clark declared an interest in the application from the Bowls club. Cllr Davies & Cllr Erasmus declared an interest in the Bravehearts application.

Resolved – The meeting did not approve the application for Walk n Talk. £240 approved to the Bowls Club, £250 approved Bravehearts, £250 approved Markham District Band , £250 approved Lewis Street allotments.

A reminder is to be given that all grant beneficiaries that the money needs to be spent within 3 months and receipts provided.

Date	Organisation	Amount requested	Reason for request	Budget
				£4810
10/07/2026	Blackwood Bowls Club	£240	Place front protection heater in ladies and disabled toilets to allow for all season use.	
23/07/2026	Walk n Talk	£250	Towards the £500 cost of printing and delivering leaflets in the Blackwood area to develop resident awareness of group .	
28/07/2026	Bravehearts	£500	Updating of 20-year-old equipment the estimated cost of this is £500	
29/07/2026	Markham & District band	£250	The band has got through to the national finals to take place in York the cost of attendance is £5500.	
12/08/2026	Lewis Street Allotments	£250	Towards the £1790 cost of developing a new website to publicise the allotments	
	TOTAL	£1,490		£3,320
Already awarded : Blackwood Cricket Club £240 Blackwood Squadron Air Cadets £200 Jacob Abraham Foundation £700 - (CIL funding, not budget)				

8. Narrative for Variances in Audit Wales Return

The Clerk reported that any significant variance needed to be explained to the audit office and provided members with the explanations as well as confirming that the report had been submitted to Audit Wales.

9. Councillor Allowances

The Clerk went through the new allowances,

- Senior member payment - **Resolved – no senior member payment approved.**
- Mileage to be increased from 0.45p to 0.55p. Can only be claimed for duties outside the Borough - **Resolved – to approve the increased rate .**
- Subsistence expenses & overnight stays – it was agreed that the figure be checked , **Resolved – figure checked to be brought to the next meeting.**
- Financial loss for attending a meeting – **Resolved – approve the same as last year.**
- Payment for attending meetings at a cost of £30 per meeting – **Resolved – unanimously voted to reject this payment.**

10. Cenotaph Centenary Costs

Cllr L Perkins, Cllr K Etheridge & CllrD Davies declared an interest. The Mayor provided some costs £900 catering, £295 for the band, coach transport £350. Some costs are still outstanding. The flags were dirty and required to be taken down and washed and if then not up to the required standard because of wear and tear may need to be replaced. It was agreed to purchase a flag to represent the Town Council. Cleaning of the cenotaph would be the responsibility of the County Borough and so would not be included in the costs. **Resolved – Purchase a Town Council flag, wash others which may potentially need to be replaced.**

11. Christmas Lights Quotations-

Three quotations were presented to members for consideration. The budget had already been set for them. It was felt that it was too late this year to get the schools involved in any design but these can be we can added next year and money would be set aside for this. The Clerk highlighted the various differences between the quotes. Including a feature on the other side of town was mentioned but would need to be discussed at a future date for subsequent years. **Resolved – unanimously approved option two, that the lights are purchased from Blanche which have a warranty of two years. This would leave a contingency amount in the budget due to a lessor spend amount.**

12. Staffing Sub Committee

The Clerk offered the information that she believed there was an existing staffing committee which hadn't been dissolved. She put forward that the Council need to decide whether to dissolve that one

and resolve to set up a new one or to keep the current committee. She explained that in either case there are no terms of reference and this would need to be rectified moving forward. It was clarified that when the members met in August it wasn't a formal meeting as such. No decisions had been made. It was an informal discussion to start paving the way for things needed to be done in the future. The discussion at that meeting was based upon what the council now needed to do to change its approach as it now had more staff to manage and there needs to be systems in place to be able to do this. The meeting was not official but a general conversation about how the council goes about establishing those parameters in terms of strategy and good practice. Its aim was to look at how the existing staffing committee would operate within the Policy & Finance committee have delegated powers from the council to enable it to make decisions. It was reported that following at the meeting members would come back to a future meeting with ideas as to how the committee would work and what delegated powers it would have, this would then be out forward and voted upon appropriately.

The meeting was about strategy. No staffing issues were discussed and no decisions were made. Perhaps it should not have been called a staffing subcommittee meeting as it was a general discussion about the future. It was appreciated that currently the management of staffing issues currently lies with the Policy and Finance committee. A member questioned if we are able to access advice from One Voice Wales to establish terms of reference for the committee. The Clerk would contact them to find out. A member reiterated that whilst the meeting held was ad hoc but there were far too many people present for it to be a subcommittee. It was a general discussion and any staffing committee needs to be much smaller. As there is a need it was agreed the August meeting was for more discussion and there would not be any decision made tonight. At an unspecified point in the future one Councillor would propose the motion, terms of reference would be discussed and agreed and the staffing subcommittee would meet and work in accordance with. Until it is established any staffing issues would continue to be addressed by the Policy and Finance committee.

13. Correspondence

13.1 The Clerk drew members attention to a complaint made regarding the positioning of stalls in the Beach Party. The complaint had been acknowledged by the Clerk and brought for the council's attention. Discussion around the complaint and the event took place. It was acknowledged that as Council we should make sure our local businesses are signposted during events to ensure they don't miss out on potential trade. It was agreed that as the Town council are now paying for the events out of our budget we should have more control on how the events run.

Resolved – Cllr Mills would visit the complainant and explain the councils position, how the Town Council fairs operate and how they would be able to rent a stall if so required in the future.

13.2 A request for financial support for Cerebral Palsy & Valleys was delayed until the next full council meeting.

13.3 The shredder in the office had been replaced free of charge due to a fault but as it is not really a office shredder and deemed not suitable quotes had been received from a company that collects confidential waste and shreds it. 5 sacks would cost £55 for disposal on an ad hoc basis.

Resolved – Use this ad hoc method for disposal.

13.4 Received quotes to place a Town Council banner at the back of the stall for future events to make the stall is more prominent and to purchase two pull up banners for the stage area so that residents are aware the town council is funding the event. The cost of all would be approximately £500.

Resolved – one banner would be purchased to be placed on the stage. One of the flags used at the stall could be moved to the stage area.

14. Requests for Town Council Representation

14.1 Request for representation at Multi agency Meeting regarding Chartist Bridge incidents 14th September -

Resolved - Cllr Box is already attending, Cllr K Etheridge & Cllr N Dix would also attend.

14.2 Standards committee nomination -

Resolved - a nominee had already been put forward and that nomination still stands, Clerks to notify CCBC.

15. Proposal for Joint Training with Bargoed Town Council

They proposed training for Sexual Harassment and the forthcoming and Third Party Harassment Legislation which takes effect on 1st October 2026 to be jointly carried out and share training costs.

Resolved - the Clerk would gather more information such as is the training mandatory, and bring back to the next meeting.

16. Town Boost Proposal

Resolved – to wait until after the meeting to be held on September 10th to make a decision when members would have more information.

17. Civic Awards

Resolved to defer to Policy & Finance meeting to be held on 21st September.

18. Planning

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 Demolish existing attached side garage, erect two-storey side extension, enlarge existing single storey rear extension, provide integrated single garage, provide one additional parking space within the front garden 19 Cae Collen Blackwood NP12 1FF GRID REFERENCE - 316909(E) 196801(N)

Resolved – no objections with planning submission.

19. Upcoming Dates

21st September Policy and Finance Committee 6.30pm Town Council Offices
5th October Full Council
6.30pm Town Council Offices

This concludes the business of the meeting.

The chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.