DRAFT Minutes of the Policy & Finance Meeting held on Monday 19th October 2026

Present in Person: Councillors C. Clark, P. Cook, D. Davies, G. Etheridge, C. Erasmus, J. Griffiths.

Present Online: Councillor R. Mills

Also in attendance: Clerk M Betts & Deputy Clerk R Davies

Chair: Councillor C. Clark

Press and Public participation – There were no enquiries.

The Town Council observed a one-minute silence prior to the meeting to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Aberfan Disaster.

1. Apologies for Absence. Councillors D. Box, K. Etheridge, K. Williams. **Absent –** Cllr N. Dix.

2. Declaration of Interests or Dispensations for any item(s) on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

3. Minutes of the Policy & Finance committee held on 21st September 2026 were agreed to be a true and accurate record apart from a discrepancy of £45.68 was brought to the members' attention. **The Clerk agreed to check figures and amend as necessary.**

4. Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk presented the Budget Monitoring Report updated to the end of September. She highlighted the under and overspend and explained that in the coming months, anticipated expenditure would be incurred. These were highlighted and included in the budget forecast. It was noted that the budget for the Cenotaph anniversary was slightly les,s as it had shown as £7,000, but it was now forecast at £5,000. It was noted that as agreed at the last meeting, a breakdown of office running costs were now included. A discussion took place about the inclusion of accumulated debtors and creditors and that the Policy & Finance meeting was a proper forum for members to scrutinise the finances and to ask questions or seek clarification**. For future monitoring reports, the predicted income for the year will also be highlighted to illustrate any surplus or deficits and creditors and debtors.**

5.Bank Reconciliations to the end of September 2026.

Bank reconciliation papers for September 2026 were circulated to members.

The Clerk drew Councillors' attention to a £12 overpayment to Elsbury's; this had now been credited to the account. Members queried the name of the bank account as it still showed the previous Clerk. **It was explained that a request to the bank to rectify this has been made but would be followed up.**

6. Financial Applications

Cerebral Palsy Cymru had requested a donation to assist in funding therapists across Wales. As it was their first application, a donation would be made, but a letter would be sent to explain that all future requests from them and other charities would need to give more explanation for requests for financial assistance. **It was resolved to recommend to Full Council on 2nd November to approve a donation of £250 on this occasion.**

Urdd Cymru had submitted a requested £250 towards the National Urdd Eisteddfod in 2027. Primary and Youth Productions will directly benefit from any financial aid. **It was resolved to recommend to Full Council on 2nd November that a donation of £250 be approved.**

The Town Council had budgeted £250 to be donated to the Breast Cancer unit at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr and its Turn the Town Pink fund raiser. This year the event would be held in Blackwood Bowls Club on 29th October 2026 and it would be in the form of an afternoon tea. Invites (2-4pm) had been extended to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who would present the cheque.

7. Financial Regulations

Councillors further discussed updates to Blackwood Town Council Financial Regulations. The Clerk drew attention to the following points in the current Financial Regulations with comparison to the Model Financial Regulations which had been issued by One Voice Wales. It was resolved that there would be further discussions regarding some points before the entire document is recommended to be accepted by Full Council.

2.6 Bank Reconciliation,

To be verified every quarter. Reconciliation and original bank statements to be signed and dated. A Report to go to Council. It was agreed that Cllr C. Clark would be this person with a nominated deputy, K Williams, to be asked in November meeting.

4.2 - Timing of discussion on salary and wages; agreed to bring forward a month to go to Policy and Finance Committee October and can then be included in following budget discussions at Full Council.

5.10 – new wording for this clause was agreed as follows: -

For smaller purchases, the clerk and/or deputy clerk, in consultation with the mayor and/or deputy mayor, shall have the authority to make small purchases but shall seek to achieve value for money.

5.15 delegated authority amounts for the clerk to be reduced to items below £500, excluding VAT with the exception of rents and utilities. Other clauses as stated in the model regulations.

5.16 Agreed to use the model regulation clause s follows: -

No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order unless instructed to do so in advance by a resolution of the council or make any contract on behalf of the council

5.20 -An official letter or purchase order will be issued for all work, goods, services above £500, excluding VAT For smaller amounts a letter or purchase order will only be issued if a company/supplier requests one.

5.21 ordering systems – Reword to *access shall be controlled by the relevant officers and Chair of Policy and Finance Committee.*

Authorisation for Payments/Electronic Payments

Authorisation could be on Scribe, if approved in future by Council, so that the order is agreed before the payment is made. Clerks to prepare some examples of how the process would work and bring back to the next meeting, ideally three people should be involved with electronic payments.

Model regular payments clauses 6.7 and 6.8

It was agreed to include the new additional clauses regarding signatures and reporting arrangements.

7.8 Reporting of Payments: it was agreed that the payment report would go to Council only in future.

8. Draft Press and Media Policy.

The Clerk reported and presented the current policy and model one. The replacement policy was presented to members, and their attention was drawn to various sections by the Clerk. Members felt that whilst the majority of the policy was agreeable, they would like some sections to be reworded. **It was resolved that members would look at this in detail and email their comments to the Clerk for amendments to be addressed**.

9. Toilets Proposal.

The Town Council had set aside a budget for new projects. Councillors noted how too often the lack of public toilets was frustrating for residents and visitors alike and was a contributing factor as to why people don't use the town centre. A proposal was put forward that, in principle, there would be a three-way approach to reopening the toilets between the Town Council, the Local Authority and the Taxi Association. The aim was to be able to open the toilets from 9am – 5pm.

It was proposed that an attendant cleaner be employed. A discussion took place with regards to the management of the project with potential costing including hours, wages, times and job role, maintenance and everyday operational duties. **It was resolved that a recommendation would be made to full council on 2nd November 2026 to support the project, a breakdown of all the costs with a full cost benefit analysis, would also be provided so that Council can consider the budget for the project.**

10. Office Lease.

The Clerk drew members attention to a break in the clause for the lease of the building that could take place in May 2027. Figures for rent had been requested, and the landlord had stated they would be provided in time for November 2nd Full Council meeting.

11. Date of Next Meetings

- **Council, Monday 2nd November 6.30pm, Town Council Offices**
- **Policy and Finance Committee, Monday 16th November 6.30pm, Town Council Offices**

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.32 pm.

Signed **Dated**