Draft Unapproved Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 5th October 2026

Present in Person: Councillors C. Clark, P. Cook, D. Davies, G. Etheridge, A. Farina Childs, K. Jones, R. Mills,

L. Perkins, A. Short

Present Online: Councillor K. Etheridge

Also in Attendance: Deputy Clerk Rhian Davies.

Chair: Councillor G. Etheridge

Press and Public Participation: - There were no enquiries.

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence: Councillors C.Erasmus, N. Dix, D.Box, K.Williams and the Town Clerk M. Betts.

Absent – M. Gwynne.

2. Declarations of Interest or Dispensations of any Item(s) on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. To Receive, Review and Approve the Draft Unapproved Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7th September 2026. **Resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of business.**

3.2 To Receive, Review and Approve the Draft Unapproved Minutes of the Policy & Finance meeting held on 21st September 2026. **Resolved to approve the minutes as a true record of business.**

4. Reports

4.1 Police Report

The Town Council welcomed Inspector R Ball, who had been in post since mid-August. With over 27years of experience Inspector Ball expressed his commitment to maintaining the positive relationship that had been established with the Town Council and advised that he would endeavour to ensure police representation at future meetings.

He explained crime figures remain broadly comparable to those recorded during the previous year and did not indicate any significant increase in rates of crime.

Members were informed that Inspector Ball intended to build upon the initiatives introduced by his predecessor, recognising the importance of consistency and the positive impact those measures had already achieved. He also expressed a desire to strengthen engagement with the surrounding rural communities.

Inspector Ball acknowledged the challenges facing Blackwood and confirmed his commitment to maintaining a visible police presence in identified hotspot areas.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Ball for attending and expressed the Town Council's appreciation for the continued positive working relationship between the Council and Gwent Police.

4.2 County Borough Report

Weeds in and around Blackwood remained a major concern and had continued to be dealt with since the previous meeting.

There were ongoing issues relating to the CODI Development at the rear of Coronation Road, with residents continuing to raise concerns by email.

A petition had been submitted to CCBC regarding anti-social behaviour.

Concerns had been raised regarding homelessness and drug taking on the steps outside Aldi.

Issues relating to the closed pavement on the High Street continued to be dealt with.

A new School Crossing Patrol attendant had started on the High Street for Libanus Primary School.

Concerns remained regarding the ongoing issues at Cwmgelli and proposals for a further 174 houses as part of Phase 2.

Issues had been raised regarding the implementation of additional parking bays on William Street.

A joint motion had been submitted to CCBC regarding the dumping of waste.

An update was provided on the Blackwood Placemaking Plan, which set out a long-term vision for Blackwood and identified potential opportunities for the continued regeneration and improvement of the town centre and surrounding areas. The Plan was a framework of potential projects rather than confirmed schemes, with further feasibility work, funding and approvals required before individual projects could progress.

The Local Development Plan was due to go out for consultation on 28 October 2026 until early December. Proposals included 374 houses in North Blackwood, covering Grove Park and Cwmgelli, and 500 houses on the Bryn Meadows Golf Course site.

An update was provided regarding the Blackwood Miners' Institute Advisory Board. The Board reported to the Cabinet as Trustees and was not required to report to the Town Council or Blackwood Councillors. A request had been made for representatives to attend the Town Council in November to provide a summary of their work and how further developments would be considered.

Concerns were raised regarding slow broadband speeds affecting a local dental practice and its ability to operate the new NHS dentistry system effectively. It was suggested that the practice contact its local Senedd Member for assistance.

4.3 Mayor / Deputy Mayor Report

4.3.1Mayors Report

The Mayor had attended Blackwood Miners Institute for a Black Rat Productions event and whilst there checked arrangements all in place for the Civic Awards and the Mayor's Concert.

4.3.2 Deputy Mayor Report gave details of the issues she had been dealing with over the last few weeks whilst being present in the office: –

Contacted CCBC regarding the issue with weeds behind Tudor View and High Street steps to Aldi's.

4.4 Clerk / Deputy Clerk Report

Reported a meeting with the events team to organise the Christmas Fair had taken place.
CILCA session had been undertaken.
Had attended the Town Boost session.
Had attended a few sessions from Scribe Fest.

5. Correspondence the following items had been circulated: -

Draft Participation, Engagement and Consultation Framework - How the council involves residents, communities and other stake holders.
Events Team, dates for 2027 - this was to confirm the dates for 2027 for the main events.
One Voice Wales - Invite to join the Data Group – asking Town Councils to submit data each month which would take approximately 30 minutes with an occasional catch-up with OVW team. It would give more accurate consistent information. A discussion took place about more scrutiny of One Voice Wales.
Area Committee papers for 7th October - A list of toolkits and guides and more information can be provided.
Blachere Illuminations - confirmation of the order for new lights being placed was reported.
Updated information on Creative Kids project
Cwmpas re free Media Literacy training – had been extended until the end of 2026.
River Truth Data company offering information on the Sirhowy River it was rejected as NRW offer this information for free.
National Grid information requested on Christmas Lights – Clerk to sign post this back to G Flemming.
Poppy Appeal – The Mayor has responded to the email which he read to members, we are unable to have a stand outside the offices this year but our ongoing support for the cause continues .

Further to the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st September, a proposal was presented to Town Council with a draft amendment to the current arrangements relating to the corporate card. Following discussion, it was **Resolved** that, subject to minor amendments in wording and review by the Internal auditor, the revised arrangements would be adopted. Members agreed that the proposed changes would strengthen the Council's internal controls in relation to the corporate card, providing a robust and secure framework for its use while safeguarding the Council against exceptional circumstances that might prevent the Clerk or Deputy Clerk from making essential payments on behalf of the Council.

Following councils request Cllr G Etheridge had assessed the quality of the flags at the cenotaph and their viability for washing. It was felt that as all are frayed this would not be an option. It was **Resolved** that new flags would be purchased at a cost of £581.95

6. Schedule of Payments as agreed by members.

Blackwood Town Council

Transactions (From 1/09/2026 to 30/09/2026)

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
01/09/2026	Training Courses/ Conferences	One Voice Wales	-717.00
01/09/2026	Office lease	Office lease	-960.00
02/09/2026	Office & other equipment	Scribe	-45.60
03/09/2026	Postage	Post Office	-7.28
03/09/2026	Postage	Post Office	-5.40
04/09/2026	Phone / Broadband	Spectrum Fibre Ltd	-204.60
09/09/2026	InPost	InPost	135.62
09/09/2026	Christmas lights Elsbury's	Elsburys Christmas lights	-480.00
11/09/2026	Audit Fee	John Hold	-500.00
11/09/2026	Phone / Broadband	Plan.com	-64.80
11/09/2026	Summer Beach party	CCBC	-15,000.00
11/09/2026	Christmas lights Elsbury's	Elsburys Christmas lights	-480.00
11/09/2026	Office & other equipment	e infinity	-2,185.92
11/09/2026	Gavo Sponsorship	GAVO	-250.00
11/09/2026	Grants to local organisations	Blackwood Bowls Club	-240.00
11/09/2026	Grants to local organisations	Lewis Street Allotments	-250.00
11/09/2026	Grants to local organisations	Markham Brass Band	-250.00
15/09/2026	kitchen	Iceland Blackwood	-8.45
16/09/2026	Postage	Post Office	-14.40
22/09/2026	Grants to local organisations	BraveHearts	-250.00
24/09/2026	Window cleaner	AME window cleaning	-40.00
25/09/2026	Clerks salary		-1,478.34
25/09/2026	Deputy Clerks Salary		-960.48
25/09/2026	British gas	British Gas - Gas	-92.34
25/09/2026	Pension contributions	Greater Gwent Local Government F	-675.80
25/09/2026	PAYE/NI	HMRC VTR	-876.65
30/09/2026	Welsh water	Welsh water	-79.43
30/09/2026	NNDR	CCBC NNDR	-615.00

7. Monthly Budget Report – **Resolved** to defer this to the Policy & Finance Committee to be held on 19th October 2026.

8. Financial Assistance Applications – only Esiteddfod y Cymoedd was discussed as it was time sensitive. **Resolved to** award £250 as requested. The other two applications Cerebal Palsy Annual Appeal & Urdd Eisteddfod would be deferred to the Policy and Finance on 19th October.

9. Events Funding and Dates for 2027

Following the Beach Party event, Members had requested a detailed breakdown of the associated costs and had expressed concern regarding expenditure for individual costs e.g.: cost per person in several areas. Members considered that, given the Town Council's limited financial resources, greater value for money could be achieved in certain aspects of

event delivery. Resolved that the Town Council take responsibility for the arrangement of entertainment stage for future events.

Members commented that the Council had allocated a significant proportion of its budget to facilitating the three major annual events and suggested that these funds could potentially have a greater long-term benefit had they been directed towards addressing issues regularly raised by residents. A motion was proposed that the Town Council remove one event from its annual programme and reallocate funds towards ongoing community concerns, including litter management, weed control, and improvements to the cleanliness of public areas within the ward area.

Members agreed that both the Beach Party and the Christmas Fair would continue as key community events in the calendar year. Following discussion, it was **Resolved** that the Big Welsh Festival, due to take place in the Spring, would be removed from the 2028 annual events programme.

It was further agreed that the Policy & Finance Committee would consider how the funds be utilised cost effectively to improve the attractiveness of the Town Centre and address those frequently raised by residents, including litter, weeds, and the general cleanliness of public areas.

Members noted that there were a number of existing planters within the Town Centre ward that would benefit being replanted to enhance the appearance of the High Street. Town Council branding to be introduced as plaques with acknowledgement that this would provide a relatively quick and cost-effective means of improving the appearance of the High Street and creating a more attractive environment for residents and visitors.

Members were advised that the potential use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for this purpose had been explored and that a response from the relevant authority was awaited.

It was further noted that releasing funds from the events budget would provide the Town Council with greater flexibility to commission services and seek best value through external contractors where appropriate. Members expressed the view that this would enable the Town Council to respond to concerns regularly raised by residents regarding issues such as litter, weeds, cleanliness and the general appearance of the High Street.

Members were asked to consider and put forward innovative ideas for how the funds released from the events budget could be used to deliver the greatest possible benefit to the town and its residents. It was agreed that Members consider and bring their suggestions forward for consideration by the Policy & Finance Committee, which will assess the feasibility, impact and value for money of proposed projects before making recommendations to the next full council meeting in November.

10. CCBC Town Boost Proposal

Members discussed the proposal that had been put forward by the Local Authority and Town Centre Management Team. Having attended several meetings relating to the initiative and reviewed the supporting documentation, Members considered the implications for the Town Council and its future priorities.

A motion was put forward that the Town Council reject the proposal.

Following discussion, it was **Resolved** that the Town Council would not participate in the scheme and would retain full discretion over how its financial resources are allocated and invested within the town. Members expressed their views that local priorities are best determined by the Town Council.

11. Public toilet proposal - Resolved to defer this item to Policy & Finance committee 19th October 2026.

12. Extension of Dispensation – Cllr K Williams will now resume normal duties.

13. Motions for One Voice Wales Annual General Meeting 2027 - Council Members were advised that they would be able to submit a maximum of two motions and that the deadline was Friday 4th December 2026.

14. Planning Applications - Resolved - The application was noted and no objections put forward.

15. Upcoming Dates

19th October Policy & Finance Committee 6.30pm Town Council Offices

2nd November Full Council 6.30pm Town Council Offices

The chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.24pm.