



Summary (Decisions) of the Full Council meeting of Blaenavon Town Council held on **Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 at 6:30 pm** on a hybrid basis in the council chamber at **101 High Street Blaenavon** and remotely in accordance with the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

The full minutes of the meeting are subject to confirmation at the Full Council meeting to be held on **Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2025**.

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:** Cllr. N. Matthews (In the Chair) L. Cowles, M. Wheeler, A. Beavan, J. Davies, L. Evans, A. Lewis, J. Hunt.

**Officers:** Kevin Warren (Chief Officer), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer), Sophie Johnson (CWD Officer).

**Visitors:** Inspector Lee Stachow (Gwent Police)

**Members of public:** Daniel Morse, Andy Parfitt- Jones.

The Full Council meeting was opened at 6:30pm by Mayor Cllr Nathan Matthews who welcomed everyone and expressed thanks for attendance.

**1. To receive any questions from the public.**

Daniel Morse asked what steps are the Town Council taking to provide young people a role in local Government?

Cllr Matthews informed Daniel that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 allows Town and Community Councils to appoint up to two community youth representatives, aged between 15 and 26.

In 2023, Blaenavon Town Council adopted this provision. To progress with the appointment, the Council must issue a public notice of its intention to appoint a community youth representative.

This notice must also be sent to all schools and any further or higher education institutions within the community.

Engaging young people is essential, providing them with a voice in decision-making and ensuring their views are heard.

Daniel thanked Cllr Matthews for the Council's response.

**Resolved:** Members noted the question and response.

**2. To receive and accept apologies.**

The Chief Officer informed the chairperson that the following apologies had been received.

- Cllr Parfitt
- Cllr Porter

It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that the apologies be accepted.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved** - Apologies accepted.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- Cllr Davies – Personal – item 23
- Cllr Hunt – Personal – item 11
- Cllr Evans – Personal – item 123

**7. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.**

Minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the minutes be accepted.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

**11. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to the chairing of the exploring and enjoying the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Working Group.**

The terms of reference had been sent to all members ahead of the meeting.

Cllr Matthews informed members that whilst attending the Blaenavon World Heritage Site Board meeting it was identified that there was no chair for the Exploring and Enjoying the Blaenavon Industrial Heritage Landscape working group, which focuses on tourism and visitor opportunities.

With TCBC no longer attending, and given the Town Council's active role in tourism, Cllr Matthews suggested that the Council could consider chairing the group and he would take this back to members for a determination at the March Full Council meeting.

The board expressed support for the Town Council should they take on the role.

Members had a brief discussion.

Cllr Matthews proposed that Blaenavon Town Council accept the offer to chair the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Group. This was seconded by Cllr Cowles.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Blaenavon Town Council to accept the offer to chair the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Group.

**12. To appoint a Councillor representative to sit as a minor authority school governor at Ysgol Bryn Onnen Primary School (Four-year term)**

Cllr Matthews explained to members that former Cllr Keen was the appointed Cllr representative at Ysgol Bryn Onnen.

Cllr Matthews asked if any member was interested in becoming the Town Council representative.

Cllr Davies offered to be the appointed representative for the Town Council.

This was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Cllr Davies appointed as minor authority school governor to Ysgol Bryn Onnen.

**13. To appoint a Councillor as a signatory to Blaenavon Town Council's bank account and online banking authorisations.**

Cllr Matthews explained to members that former Cllr Templeton was an appointed signatory for the Town Council bank account.

Cllr Lewis volunteered to be the appointed fourth signatory.

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews and seconded by Cllr Beavan that Cllr Lewis be the fourth signatory.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Cllr Lewis appointed as fourth signatory for the Town Council Bank Account.

**15. To discuss and make a determination relating to the publication of costs incurred by Blaenavon Councillors ( Cllr Evans).**

Cllr Evans informed members that residents were confused about the difference between TCBC Cllrs for Blaenavon salaries and Blaenavon Town Cllrs allowances.

While this information is available online, it is not easily accessible.

It was suggested that a letter be sent to TCBC Cllrs for Blaenavon requesting details of their salaries for this election cycle. This information, along with Blaenavon Town Cllrs allowances, could then be published on the Blaenavon Town Council website to improve transparency.

The IRPW report for 2025/26 outlines the allowances for Town and Community Cllrs and the salaries for Borough Cllrs.

TCBC Cllrs for Blaenavon salaries have increased by 6% to £19,771, with an 18% total increase since May 2022. Additional payments for committee roles can raise salaries to £30,000.

In contrast, the total annual allowances for **twelve** Blaenavon Town Cllrs amount to **£4,496**, while the combined salaries of **three** TCBC Blaenavon Cllrs are close to **£100,000**.

Members agreed that misconceptions about Town Cllr allowances should be addressed to ensure residents have a clear understanding.

Cllr Evans proposed requesting the three TCBC Cllrs salaries and publishing them on Blaenavon Town Council website along with the Town Cllr allowances. This was seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** TCBC Blaenavon Cllr salaries and Blaenavon Town Cllr allowances to be published on Blaenavon Town Council website.

A further discussion took place amongst members.

Cllr Evans proposed that all three TCBC Cllrs for Blaenavon be formally requested to provide details of their salaries. This was seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Chief Officer to write to all three TCBC Cllrs for Blaenavon and request their salary information.

**17. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the nomination of a local charity to receive the monies generated from raffle ticket sales at the Town Councils fashion show event on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2025.**

Members considered local charities to receive proceeds from the fashion show raffle ticket sales. Cllr Matthews suggested Hwb Torfaen.

Cllr Hunt proposed Hwb Torfaen as the beneficiary charity. This was seconded by Cllr Evans.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Hwb Torfaen is the chosen beneficiary charity.

**19. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding membership of One Voice Wales for 2025/26.**

The Chief Officer presented to members the One Voice Wales membership fees of £1286 for 2025/26.

A brief discussion took place amongst members.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Matthews to renew the membership with One Voice Wales for 2025/26.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Chief Officer to renew membership with One Voice Wales for 2025/26.

**20. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to the impact of fires located on Blaenavon mountain and the potential risk to the community in general. (Cllr Hunt)**

Cllr Hunt suggested deferring the update to a future meeting due to time constraints but provided a brief overview of key concerns, including risks to residents, insufficient evacuation accommodation, and the lack of a register for vulnerable residents.

Members discussed the feasibility of maintaining such a register, landscape barriers, and the potential role of Blaenavon Town Council in emergency situations.

Cllr Matthews proposed inviting the Civil Contingency Officer to a future meeting to explore possible solutions. This was seconded by Cllr Beavan.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Civil Contingency Officer to be invited to a future Town Council meeting.

**21. To discuss and make a determination regarding potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2024/25. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.**

None received.

**22. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding planning applications.**

The planning applications were forwarded to members ahead of the meeting, which presented as follows.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Installation of 2 x heat source pumps
- **LOCATION:** Big Pit, Blaenavon

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Variation to planning application. Amendment to tank works
- **LOCATION:** Big Pit, Blaenavon
- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Single storey extension
- **LOCATION:** 4 Clapham Terrace, Forgeside, Blaenavon

**Resolved:** No objections from members.

**23. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding grant application requests.**

The Chief Officer forwarded two donation requests to members prior to the meeting for their perusal.

Members discussed the donation requests, namely:

- **Ioan James – Sound Therapy Equipment**

A discussion took place amongst members regarding the availability of sound therapy via the NHS for free and currently, Ioan James does not have an existing business to offer services to the community.

It was proposed by Cllr Wheeler not to support the request. This was seconded by Cllr Cowles.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved** – Application rejected.

- **Blaenavon Blues AFC** - providing 420 children with a medal for their participation in the Blaenavon Blues Second Annual Football Festival.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan to support the request with a £250 donation. This was seconded by Cllr Evans.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved** - Application authorised

**24. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to correspondence**

The Chief Officer forwarded the email to all members prior to the meeting.

- **Email from Brian Lewis site manager at Big Pit**

The Town Council previously sponsored two apprenticeships at Big Pit, totalling £6,000 over three years.

Brian Lewis has now requested that the Council consider continuing sponsorship for the next three years at a cost of £2,500 per year.

Members discussed the sponsorship criteria, whether apprentices remain at Big Pit after completing their apprenticeships, and the reasoning behind the 25% increase in the funding request.

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews to invite Brian Lewis to a future meeting to discuss further. This was seconded by Cllr Beavan.

All members in agreement.

**Resolved:** Brian Lewis to be invited to a future Town Council meeting.

The Chief Officer forwarded three letters, two from the Blaenavon Branch of the Royal British Legion and one response from the Town Council to all members prior to the meeting.

- **Letter from Blaenavon Branch RBL**

Members reviewed the letters received and the concerns raised by the RBL. A lengthy discussion took place amongst members

Cllr Matthews proposed that Blaenavon Town Council does not follow the national RBL guidance on order of precedence and yield to march behind the Blaenavon Branch of the RBL at the 2025 Remembrance Day Parade.

This was seconded by Cllr Hunt.

Cllr Wheeler abstained from voting.

All members in agreement

**Resolved:** Blaenavon Town Council does not follow the national RBL guidance on order of precedence and yield to march behind the Blaenavon Branch of the RBL at the 2025 Remembrance Day Parade.

Meeting ended at 20.15 hrs