



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23rd of JULY 2025 AT 6.30 PM.

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the meeting was held on a hybrid basis in the Council Chamber at 101, High Street Blaenavon and remotely.

In attendance:

Councillors: L. Lewis (In the Chair) L. Cowles, N. Matthews, M. Wheeler, A. Beavan, T. Griffin, T. Porter, S. Maslen, J. Hunt.

Youth Representatives: Boyd Paynter

Officers: Kevin Warren (Chief Officer, CO), Kerry Jones (Assistant Chief Officer, ACO), Sophie Johnson (Community Wellbeing Development Officer, CWDO).

Visitors: Robert Campbell (PCSO), PC Gemma Smith (Gwent Police).

Members of public: None.

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

1. To receive any questions from the public.

None received.

2. To receive and accept apologies.

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

- Cllr Parfitt
- Cllr Evans
- Cllr Davies
- Youth Representative: D. Morse

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Hunt that the apologies be accepted.
All members in agreement.

Resolved - Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Maslen – Personal – item 18

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4. To receive a policing update from Inspector Lee Stachow (Geographical Inspector for Torfaen).

PCSO Campbell provided members with the following update:

- **ASB Statistics:** Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) have decreased compared to the previous month and remain below the threshold. Monitoring will continue.
- **Operation Lockwood:** This government-funded initiative, providing additional night time street patrols, commenced in Blaenavon in April 2025.
- **New CAT Team:** A new Community Action Team, comprising PCs and PCSOs, has been established to address community concerns through proactive operations.
- **Off-Road Biking Team:** The team will remain operational despite the withdrawal of council funding.
- **Fire Safety Partnership:** Work continues in partnership with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in response to recent local fires. Plans are in place to educate school pupils in the upcoming academic year about leavers' parties and camping safety.

Cllr Hunt raised concerns about a local gentleman with dementia who has attracted social media attention due to safety concerns while walking in the road. He asked whether police support or road signage could be provided.

PCSO Campbell confirmed that the police are aware of the individual, that all necessary services are available to him, and officers can ensure his safe return home if needed.

Residents should contact the police if they are concerned. Signage is not a police responsibility.

Cllr Griffin raised safety concerns about a man running in the middle of Cwmavon Road, posing a risk to himself and motorists.

PCSO Campbell confirmed he is aware of the individual and explained that he is legally entitled to run on the road. Any safety issues should be reported to the police.

The Chief Officer requested details on:

- Blaenavon's ASB threshold figures.
- The number of off-road bike-related calls to Gwent Police since April 2025.
- The number of off-road bikes seized in Blaenavon.

PCSO Campbell did not have this data at the meeting but will forward it to the Chief Officer.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

5. To receive a TCBC update from Ward Councillors.

Cllr Cowles provided the following update:

- Attended a site meeting at Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary school to discuss the potential installation of a front perimeter fence to enhance safeguarding. Planning and design discussions are ongoing; further updates will follow.
- Attended a meeting with Gwent Police and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to discuss local fires. Discussions focused on educating young people about fire safety and safe campfire practices.
- Attended the Education and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Discussions took place around the work programme for the committee for the coming year. The first meeting is scheduled for October and will be a joint meeting with the Children's and Families Overview and scrutiny Committee. Update to follow in November Full Council Meeting.
- Following a request from members at the June Full Council meeting, Cllr Cowles enquired whose responsibility the building and garden maintenance responsibilities at Arthur Jenkins Care Home are. Cllr Daniels confirmed that the tenants, Spectrum are responsible for all the maintenance.
- Attended TCBC Full Council meeting 22nd July. No matters directly concerning Blaenavon were discussed. Cllrs are invited to contact Cllr Cowles with any questions regarding the meeting.

Youth Representative Boyd Paynter gave a presentation at the meeting and Cllr Cowles commended him on his presentation and that he had highlighted that Blaenavon Town Council are groundbreaking in appointing Youth Representatives.

- Cllr Cowles is currently working alongside Gwent Police on two ASB issues which are ongoing within the town.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

6. Mayor's Announcements: To receive the mayor's announcements.

Deferred to September 2025

Resolved: Members noted the update.

7. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 25th of June 2025.

Minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

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

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

8. Chief Officer's Update: To receive the Chief Officer's update.

The Chief Officer provided the following update:

Item 15 within the minutes ss per instructions from members. The Chief Officer has spoken with Cllr Davies regarding the Resource Centre. Cllr Davies offered to make communication with an update to follow.

Item 21 within the minutes ss per instructions from members, on 17th July the Chief Officer emailed Tim Monkton, TCBC regarding the development of the business plan for the Heritage Centre and the possibility of Town Council involvement. There has been no response to date.

The Chief Officer reported that Glastonbury Town Council has requested a visit to discuss Blaenavon Town Council's involvement with the World Heritage Site. A provisional date of the 11th of September has been set for the visit, with ten members expected to attend. Cllr attendance would be appreciated.

Also, since the last meeting the Chief Officer has held weekly briefing sessions with the mayor and deputy mayor discussing Council operational and financial matters, together with operational meetings with fellow officers relating to future planning and current projects.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

9. To receive Cllr updates regarding recent attendance at outside bodies committee meetings, together with any relevant community / partnership engagement.

Cllr Hunt attended the Torfaen Climate and Nature briefing, which focused on the national climate emergency. He will share initiatives with members, including the Eco Quiz for Torfaen schools.

The Chief Officer confirmed the next meeting is in December and will be attending meetings with Clerks across Torfaen to promote the grant-funded climate and environmental initiative, which is led by Cllr Sue Morgan.

CWDO reported she has meetings scheduled with Pontypool Community Council and Cwmbran Community Council to discuss the Eco Quiz. An update will follow.

Cllr Matthews provided an update on the Exploring and Enjoying the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Working Group. Blaenavon Town Council was asked to chair the group to progress the World Heritage Site management action plan.

The group is reviewing 44 projects from the 2018–2023 period. However, the group has not met for several years. Cllr Matthews has been working with Tim Monkton and Rebecca Hartley to reform the group.

Engagement has been limited, with current participation from TCBC, Blaenavon Town Council, Blaenavon Community Museum, and the Canal Trust. There is no representation from the National Coal Museum, CADW, Brecon Beacons, or Monmouthshire Council.

Attendance remains low ahead of the September steering group meeting.

Cllr Porter updated members that three new E- Vac chairs had been fitted within Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary school and that staff have been trained on how to use the equipment.

Cllr Bevan reported that she had accompanied Youth Representative Daniel Morse to the Abergavenny Town Council Civic Service held at the Angel Hotel.

Daniel delivered a well-received speech to attendees. The event offered an excellent opportunity to network with the neighbouring Town Council, with positive feedback expressed on the evening, including a view to building stronger links with Blaenavon Town Council.

Cllr Lewis attended the One Voice Wales conference that was held in Builth Wells.

As Chair of the Over Fifty Forum, Cllr Lewis met with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales at a meeting in Cwmbran. Cllr Lewis invited the Commissioner to attend a meeting in Blaenavon in September. Once a date is confirmed, members will be welcome to attend.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

10. To receive an update from Sophie Johnson - Community Development and Wellbeing Officer (July 2025).

The Community Wellbeing Development Officer's report for July 2025 was forwarded to all members prior to the meeting.

The CWD Officer provided the following update:

Befriending Film Club: Attendance remains consistently good. The film this month is Bridget Jones – Mad About the Boy.

Mums & Daughters Fitness Sessions: The six-month review is now due and will be discussed at Agenda item 15.

Community Swimming Sessions: Two community swimming sessions have been arranged for the summer, taking place on Friday 25th July and Friday 29th August.

The sessions have been advertised, and bookings are already being received with positive feedback from residents.

Halo has confirmed it will honour the previous agreement with Torfaen Leisure Trust and deliver these sessions free of charge.

Outdoor Cinema: Scheduled for 30th July at Blaenavon Heritage Railway.

Due to slow ticket sales the event format has been revised. The event will now run in the same way as last year, rather than an 'all day festival' style.

Tickets for Blaenavon residents will be offered for free. Tickets for non-residents have been reduced, anyone who has already purchased tickets will be refunded accordingly.

A new poster and website page have been launched to reflect these changes.

Six hundred tickets have now been booked for the event.

VJ Day Events 15th & 16th August: Planning is ongoing for the events to commemorate Victory in Japan Day on 15th August.

Further details will be provided under Agenda Item 13 as part of the working group update.

Civic Awards and Grant Presentation Evening – November 2025: Forgeside Community Hall has been booked for 1st November.

Enchanted Heart to supply tableware and decorations. Catering has been arranged. Entertainment is being sorted. Awards and grants criteria to be discussed under Agenda Item 16.

St Fagans Heritage & Activity Trip – Monday 11th August: A 49-seater coach and 20 Coed Lan high ropes tickets have been booked.

This was launched on 17th July and promoted widely, with priority given to new participants.

The trip is now fully booked, attracting a broad age range, including residents not previously involved in events.

Broad Street Activity Event - Monday 4th August 3-6pm: Skateboard Academy and Fusion Extreme have been booked to deliver skateboarding and BMX sessions with equipment provided.

Torfaen Sports, Health and Fitness, and the Positive Futures team will run engagement activities, while the Torfaen Inspire team will attend with a smoothie bike and bike maintenance drop-in.

A Mentroar representative will offer advice and boxing taster sessions. Gwent Police have been invited with their gaming van. Posters have been produced and distributed.

Website Phase Two – Events Section: The Media Agency have been provided with information and posters on all current events and a weekly timetable of activities in the town, these will be used to create a ‘current events’ section on the website.

Also provided are posters, photographs, and short write-ups on the past quarter’s events, to populate a ‘previous events’ section. Once the pages are live, a further twelve months of previous event information will be added.

Community Transport Pilot: Further engagement and recruitment with TVA have resulted in two community trustee volunteers and two volunteer drivers.

This is insufficient to form a steering group, so additional engagement, including a social media campaign, is planned over the coming weeks.

Christmas Lights Switch On – Friday 28th November 2025: The event will be run similarly to 2024, with participating organisations booked.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

11. To receive an update from Blaenavon Town Council’s Youth Representatives.

Boyd presented members with an overview of a social media proposal to create a Youth Town Council Instagram account, along with supporting handouts.

Members discussed various aspects of the proposal, including the account name, use of the Town Council logo, and potential content.

It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the Town Council support the Youth Representative's Instagram social media account.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Youth Representative Instagram account authorised.

12. To receive an update regarding Blaenavon Town Council’s Democratic Health Strategy 2025/27.

Cllr Matthews provided members with the following update.

The aim of the Town Council’s Democratic Health Strategy 2025/27 is to raise awareness of Blaenavon Town Council’s work and increase election candidates.

The strategy was highlighted at the One Voice Wales Innovative Practice Conference in July and may serve as a template for other Town and Community Councils.

Positive progress includes the appointment of two youth representatives, the Chief Officer starting the annual report, work has also started on the local democracy exhibition, and

development of a democratic health toolkit. The Equality and Diversity policy will be considered for adoption later at agenda item 19.

Cllr Matthews stressed the importance of maintaining momentum.

The Chief Officer added that the strategy was shared with Diane Bevan, Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales, who looks forward to working with the Blaenavon Town Council.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

13. To receive a final update from the VJ Day 80 working group.

Flag raising will take place at the Cenotaph, Friday 15th August at 12pm.

The VJ 80 Day event in partnership with the Heritage Centre takes place on Saturday 16th August 12pm – 4pm. All participants have confirmed their attendance. Posters for the event have been circulated and promoted on social media.

Help to decorate on Friday afternoon would be appreciated. Sophie will email members to formulate a rota for the day.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

14. To receive an update and make any relevant determinations relating to the recently received civic invite to Hrastnik.

The Chief Officer provided members with the following update:

The Chief Officer updated members on an invitation from the Mayor of Hrastnik, which was displayed on screen. The invite was brief and addressed to the Chief Officer.

A reply has been sent requesting clarification on the itinerary, travel, transport, accommodation, and intended recipients. A response is awaited. Update to follow.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

15. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the six month review relating to the Mums and Daughters project.

The CWDO forwarded an evaluation report to all members ahead of the meeting and gave an overview of the project which is delivered in partnership with Torfaen Sports Development (TSD) and continues to be well attended.

Grant funding has been applied for from Welsh Water to support additional trips / activities. The application deadline is the June 30th. The outcome is expected within ten weeks.

The CWDO recommended that the sessions continue on a weekly basis for the next twelve months in partnership with TSD, with a review to take place after six months.

A discussion took place amongst members.

It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Wheeler to support the continuation of the project for twelve months, with a review after six months.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Project to continue for twelve months with a review after six months.

16. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding the civic awards criteria and grant applications for 2025.

A proposed draft copy of the civic awards criteria was forwarded to all members ahead of the meeting and shown on screen.

A discussion took place amongst members with regards to the content of the form. Minor changes were noted namely.

- **Eligibility Restrictions:** Nominees must not have a close *personal* association with the *individual* who is making the nomination.
- **Blaenavon Town Council Special Awards:** Nominations may be submitted by both members of the public and Town Cllrs. Final decisions on award recipients will be made by Cllrs, based on all nominations received.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan to agree the changes to the document and adopt this for the Civic Awards 2025. This was seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Civic Awards criteria document adopted for 2025.

Blaenavon Town Council Grant Application form was forwarded to all members ahead of the meeting and shown on screen.

A further discussion took place amongst members.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Cowles to adopt the Blaenavon Town Council Grant Application form without any amendments.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Blaenavon Town Council Grant Application form adopted for 2025.

17. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to Town and Community Council clustering opportunities.

Cllr Matthews provided the following update:

At the One Voice Wales Innovative Practice Conference, the growing need for town and community councils to form clusters was highlighted.

Blaenavon Town Council has held initial discussions with Abergavenny Town Council regarding tourism, and they are keen to develop a partnership. Both councils also use The Media Agency, presenting an opportunity to share resources.

Welsh Government supports clustering, with guidance and support available from One Voice Wales.

Other potential partners could include Pontypool, due to shared schools, and nearby councils such as Goytre Fawr and Llainfoist Fawr.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

18. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to a potential Town Council Christmas Carol Service at St Peters Church Blaenavon.

Cllr Maslen gave an overview of previous carol services held at St Peters Church.

Members and officers discussed the potential role of the Town Council and what the Council could add to the already established event.

It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Hunt for the Christmas Carol Service to continue as normal and for Cllrs to deliver readings at the service.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Christmas Carol Service at St Peter's Church to continue in its usual format.

19. To receive, discuss and adopt the draft Town Council Equality and Diversity Policy 2025.

The policy was forwarded to all members ahead of the meeting and shown on screen.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Hunt to adopt the Town Council Equality and Diversity Policy 2025.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Blaenavon Town Council Equality and Diversity Policy 2025 adopted.

20. To discuss and nominate a Town Councillor to attend an extraordinary meeting to be held remotely at 4pm on the 3rd of September 2025 relating to One Voice Wales Constitution and governance Framework.

A letter from Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive of One Voice Wales (OVW), was forwarded to all members ahead of the meeting and displayed on screen.

OVW requested that a Cllr be nominated to represent the Town Council at an upcoming meeting in order to meet requirements and approve the new constitution.

Cllr Griffin volunteered to attend and represent the Council.

This was proposed by Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Porter.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Cllr Griffin to attend and represent Blaenavon Town Council at the One Voice Wales extraordinary meeting on 3rd of September 2025.

21. To discuss and make a determination regarding potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2025/26. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

None received.

Cllr Matthews provided members with an update regarding Capel Newydd planter project.

Enquiries had been made with land registry with no clear outcome to land ownership. Cllr Matthews will engage with the commoners to try and establish who owns the parcel of land near the tree on Llanover Road.

This was proposed by Cllr Wheeler and seconded by Cllr Matthews

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Cllr Matthews to engage with commoners on ownership of the land near the tree on Llanover Road.

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:** Mural to side elevation, conversion of upper floor flat to studio, replacement windows, new signage, repairs to retaining walls, replacement of rear structure.
- **LOCATION:** 71 – 72 Broad Street, Blaenavon.

Members discussed the size, style and design of the mural proposed as this was not available via the TCBC planning portal.

It was proposed by Cllr Hunt and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that the Chief Officer make inquiries with TCBC planning department in relation to the mural.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to make enquiries with TCBC planning department in relation to the mural.

- **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** Investigations/repairs to tramway and tippler.
- **LOCATION:** Big Pit, Blaenavon.

Resolved: No objections from members

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

None received.

Meeting ended at 20.14 hrs.

Signed Chairman:



Date: 24/09/25.