



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th of SEPTEMBER 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. Evans (In the Chair) L. Cowles, N. Matthews, M. Wheeler, A. Beavan, T. Porter, S. Maslen, J. Davies, A. Lewis.

Absent: J. Hunt.

Youth Representatives: Boyd Paynter & Daniel Morse

Chaplain: Dr Fr Chris Walters

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

Visitors: Bethan McPherson (Head of Communities and Renewal TCBC), Simon Read (Torfaen HDRC), Amy Evans TCBC, Jordan Everett (TCBC), Louis Phillips (Prolix Productions).

Members of public: None present.

The Full Council meeting was opened at 6:30pm by Mayor Cllr Evans 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 Griffin
- Cllr Parfitt

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

Resolved: Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Wheeler - Personal - item 23
- Cllr Davies - Personal - item 23
- Cllr Cowles - Personal - item 23
- Cllr Evans - Personal - item 23

4. To receive an update from Bethan McPherson (Head of Communities and Renewal TCBC) and Simon Read (Torfaen HDRC)

Bethan McPherson (Head of Communities and Renewal TCBC) and Simon Read (Torfaen HDRC) addressed members on their intention to build relationships with Blaenavon Town Council and to work collaboratively in recognising the needs of residents, establishing priorities, and formulating next steps.

They acknowledged the considerable and ongoing efforts already made by Blaenavon Town Council and expressed their wish to support the Council by filling any gaps and offering additional assistance.

Simon outlined research already conducted across Torfaen, which highlighted three priority areas:

1. Giving children in Torfaen the best start in life.
2. Domestic violence.
3. Economic challenges, including supporting residents back into employment.

Simon requested further information on Blaenavon Town Council's engagement strategies and the priorities / issues already identified.

Members were advised this could be shared with him via the Chief Officer.

Boyd Paynter asked what was currently in place to benefit young people in Torfaen, particularly Blaenavon.

Simon responded that a research group for "Best Start in Life" had been set up, involving the Children's and Families Service, Education, and Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

Its main priority is reducing the number of looked-after children in Torfaen, alongside improving school readiness, supporting child development milestones, strengthening family resilience, and working with the Torfaen Youth Forum.

Boyd enquired further if young people were represented on the research group. Simon confirmed that they were not at present.

Cllr Beavan enquired whether their research initiatives were funded by Welsh Government.

Simon confirmed the funding came from the National Institute of Health and Care Research.

Cllr Evans thanked Bethan and Simon for attending and suggested that any further information or concerns be forwarded via the Chief Officer, who would liaise directly with Simon.

Resolved: Members noted the update

5. To receive a TCBC update from Ward Councillors.

Cllr Cowles provided the following update:

Attended TCBC Full Council meeting on the 16th of September 2025.

Annual Scrutiny Report: TCBC's Overview & Scrutiny Committee (available online). Committees includes Economy & Environment, Children & Families, Education, Adult & Communities, and Cross-Cutting Resources & Business.

Question to Cllr Daniels (Executive Member for Adult Services): Concerns raised regarding Arthur Jenkins Care Home following CIW inspections. Assurance sought on support for residents who have chosen to remain.

Play Area Refurbishment - Martin Terrace, Forgeside: TCBC funding available. A drop-in session is arranged for residents at Forgeside Community Centre on Tuesday 30th September, 15:00–18:00 to show design, layout and equipment proposals.

Cross-Cutting Resources & Business O&S Committee (23rd September):

Presentation of Torfaen Council's new Communication & Engagement Strategy.

Council declared a 'Marmot Council' to tackle health inequalities and improve life chances.

A new "Deal" has been developed between Council and communities, underpinned by five missions:

- Early Years - building bright futures.
- Inspiring life-long learning and resilience.
- Wellbeing through community leadership.
- Thriving economy and vibrant places.
- Empowered communities and shared success.

Phase one will involve workshops with Town and Community Councils.

Arthur Jenkins Care Home Update (from Cllr Daniels):

- Priority remains the safeguarding of residents.
- CIW report issued with eight priority action notices. The deadline for improvements is 25th September 2025.
- The Council continues with assurance visits and chairs the Multi-Agency Support Group.
- There is no update relating to any ongoing police investigation.
- The home is not being closed by TCBC.
- Responsibility lies with Spectrum as the Responsible Individual and provider of service.
- Future is dependent on meeting the CIW requirements.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

It was confirmed that invites had been forwarded to Cllrs Horler and Jones.

- No response was received from Cllr Horler.
- Cllr Jones confirmed that she would not be in attendance as she had nothing to report.

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

The Mayor, Cllr Evans provided the following update.

Cllr Evans was unable to accept any of the invitations received owing to prior commitments and annual leave and therefore had no announcements.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

7. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 23rd of July 2025.

Minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles 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:

As per July 2025 Full Council Meeting, the Chief Officer reported that Glastonbury Town Council had requested a visit. A provisional date of the 11th of September had been set, which

unfortunately had to be postponed. The week commencing 20th of October has now been suggested. The Chief Officer will progress with arrangements and set a date.

On the 16th of August 2025 the Chief Officer attended the VJ Day 80 event at the Heritage Centre.

The Chief Officer explained that his recent focus has been developing policies, finance and governance duties, some of which will be addressed under agenda item 17.

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 Matthews attended the first Exploring and Enjoying Blaenavon Industrial Landscape Group meeting on 29th August 2025 following several years of inactivity.

Governance arrangements were discussed, and Cllr Matthews was elected Chair. New Terms of Reference were agreed and forwarded to the World Heritage Site Steering Group.

The 2018 - 2023 Action Plan was reviewed; it was noted that most of the 44 actions had not been delivered. Work will now begin on a new Action Plan for 2025 - 2030.

Attendance from Blaenavon World Heritage partners was low, with no representation from the National Museum, Cadw, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, or Monmouthshire County Council. This was reported to the Steering Group.

The National Museum has confirmed attendance at the next meeting; no responses have been received from the other partners to date.

Partners have been asked, via the Steering Group, to contribute to the new Action Plan by 30th September. No submissions have been received so far.

Cllr Matthews also attended the Blaenavon World Heritage Steering Group meeting where the main item was the proposed Abertillery wind farm development.

The World Heritage Centre in Paris has raised concerns with the UK Government, and ICOMOS has issued a detailed report recommending the proposal be suspended, alternative sites considered, protection of the World Heritage property and setting, and the introduction of a buffer zone.

PEDW has confirmed the process will now be by written representation only. RWE has until 30th October to respond before determination by the inspector.

Cllr Wheeler, along with other trustee members of the Mic Morris Foundation attended the Tour of Britain stage in Pontypool where awards were made to young athletes.

Attended the Steam Gala and opening of a new platform at the Blaenavon Heritage Railway.

Cllr Evans updated members that he had attempted to join remotely the World Heritage Steering Group meeting without success.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

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

The Community Wellbeing Development Officer's reports for August and September 2025 together with the Summer Activities 2025 report was forwarded to all members prior to the meeting.

There were no questions from members.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

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

Daniel provided an overview of his recent visit to Blaenavon Pensioners Club. Members highlighted difficulties with digital skills such as mobile phones and social media.

Following this, Daniel and Boyd have discussed informally the possibility of trial sessions at the club, potentially in partnership with the digital club at Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School and local youth groups.

Members agreed this was an excellent idea to be explored further.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

12. To receive an update from Fr Dr Chris Walters (Chaplain to Blaenavon Town Council)

Fr Chris presented to members a potential project proposal for a Town Council Christmas Carol Service to be held at St Peter's Church on 19th December 2025 at 4pm, with participation from Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School, Cllrs, and Youth Representatives.

Any Cllrs wishing to do a reading are asked to let the Assistant Chief Officer know.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

13. To receive any updates and make relevant determinations regarding the implementation of Blaenavon Town Council's Democratic Health Strategy 2025/27.

Cllr Matthews provided members with the following update:

Blaenavon Town Council has been developing their democratic health strategy to identify residents' needs and priorities. Cllr Matthews presented a draft feedback form, which had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting.

Members discussed its use, agreeing it can be used in various situations, shared via social media and published on the Town Council website.

Incentives, GDPR and privacy policy were also discussed. It was agreed that there are various groups, outlets and Town Council projects and events that the form can be circulated through.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

14. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to Tourism Projects for inclusion into the World Heritage Site Action Plan 2025/30

Cllr Matthews suggested that the action plan should be reviewed prior to making any recommendations to the World Heritage Site steering group and suggested deferring to the October Finance meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

15. To receive an update and make any relevant determinations relating to the use of a Time Capsule to mark the 25th Anniversary of World Heritage Status.

Cllr Matthews presented an overview of a proposed 25th Anniversary project in partnership with Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School, involving the time capsule originally sourced from GOS Engineering by the late Cllr Alan Jones.

A brief discussion took place amongst members.

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews and seconded by Cllr Beavan to support the project.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Time capsule project supported.

16. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding potential clustering arrangements with neighbouring Town and Community Councils.

Engagement between Blaenavon and Abergavenny Town Councils has continued with Abergavenny proposing a mayor swap exercise, details are yet to be finalised.

Sophie updated members in relation to ongoing partnership work with Cwmbran Community Council and Pontypool Town Council, including discussions on a Torfaen-wide primary school environmental quiz and potential Blaenavon School participation in the Torfaen

Schools Eisteddfod, with BTC possibly funding the transport costs. Responses from Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School are awaited, and Sophie will provide updates as plans develop.

Sophie asked Cllr Porter to raise these opportunities at the School Governors meeting on 25th September 2025 and note that a response from the school is awaited.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

17. To receive, discuss and adopt draft Town Council policies relating to.

- Social Media
- Communication
- Complaints

The policies were forwarded to all members ahead of the meeting and shown on screen.

It was proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Cowles to adopt the Town Council social media, communication, and complaints policies 2025.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Blaenavon Town Council social media, Communication and Complaints policies 2025 adopted.

18. To discuss and propose a Town Councillor representative to sit on the Ethics and Standards Committee at TCBC.

Cllr Davies proposed herself to be the nominated representative.

This was seconded by Cllr Wheeler that Cllr Davies be the nominated representative for Blaenavon Town Council.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to inform TCBC regarding the Town Council's nomination for the Ethics and Standards Committee at TCBC.

19. 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.

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

The planning applications were forwarded to members ahead of the meeting.

A discussion took place amongst members. There were no objections.

Resolved: No objections from members

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

None received.

Cllr Evans proposed to adhere to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

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

All members in agreement.

Resolved: The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 was adhered to.

By virtue of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Recording confirmed as stopped by the Chief Officer at 19:44 hrs

Both Youth Representatives, Chaplain and Louis Phillips left the meeting.

22. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding Torfaen Community Partnership.

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23. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding nominations for Civic Awards and Grant Applications 2025

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24. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding TCBC Community Review 2023-25

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Meeting ended at 20:25 hrs

Signed Chairman:

A. Khan

Date: 22/10/25.

