



BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22nd of APRIL 2026 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 (Chair) L. Cowles, N. Matthews, M. Wheeler, S. Maslen, I. Parfitt, J. Davies, T Griffin, A. Lewis.

Absent: Cllrs T. Porter, J. Hunt.

Youth Representatives: Boyd Paynter & Daniel Morse

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

Visitors: Neighbourhood Sergeant, Kyle Tayler, Gwent Police.

Ward Member, Cllr Janet Jones, TCBC.

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 Beavan

It was proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the apologies be accepted.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Cowles – item 20 – personal.
- Cllr Parfitt – item 20 – personal.

4. To receive an update from Gwent Police.

Sergeant Kyle Taylor (Gwent Police) provided an update to Members.

Reports of anti-social behaviour at the Resource Centre have decreased, although incidents have been reported in the town centre. Members were reminded of the importance of residents reporting incidents to ensure accurate data.

Police attended a fire at the tennis courts in early April, which caused damage and has resulted in their temporary closure. Discussions are ongoing regarding the installation of CCTV in the area and other locations across Blaenavon, with suitable sites being considered to act as a deterrent and to assist in identifying individuals.

An injunction with strict conditions has been served on a Blaenavon resident, with any breaches to be dealt with by the youth court.

Members were advised that off-road vehicle activity is expected to increase with the improved weather; this is being addressed through local operations and increased patrols, including planned activity on 3rd, 23rd and 24th of May 2026, supported by the rural crime team and drone use to try and identify vehicles.

The Community Action Team (CAT) has been operating proactively in the area, including a community engagement day held on 31st of March, and will continue to support local policing.

Members were also informed of the launch of the Neighbourhood Alert System and encouraged to sign up and promote it to residents.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

5. To receive a TCBC update from Ward Councillors.

No apologies had been received from Cllr Horler.

Cllr Janet Jones provided the following update:

10/03/2026 attended the steering committee meeting. Drone footage of was shown of Ty Mawr House, which was very disappointing. Estimated repair cost is £300,000.00

20/03/2026 Gave a reading for the 25th Anniversary event for the UNSECO World Heritage site.

18/03/2026 Attended the Scrutiny of Children Services meeting.

31/03/2026 Attended the opening of the family hub at Stanley Road.

2/04/2026 Attended the fire at the tennis courts alongside emergency services.

Liasing with the warden and commoners regarding the number of sheep entering town.

Attended education scrutiny meetings alongside Cllr Cowles.

Cllr Jones updated members that an incident that took place during the Easter period at Garn Lakes between dog owners is being investigated by Gwent Police.

Attended a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) meeting.

Regular meetings with Gwent Police Officers in their surgeries.

Have been appointed as a Trustee to Garnsychan Partnership.

Cllr Cowles provided the following update:

Residents raised concerns regarding garages on Rifle Street. Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) Environmental Health has identified the landowner, and the matter is being progressed.

Members noted that vandalism led to the closure of the tennis courts during the Easter holiday period. A further meeting will be arranged to consider additional security measures.

Members were updated that keys for the Arthur Jenkins Home were returned to TCBC on the 18th of February, and the lease was formally surrendered on the 23rd of February.

A survey of the premises has since been undertaken, and a meeting with Ward Members will be arranged to discuss future use once this is completed.

Cllr Cowles sought an update from Asset Management and was advised that options for the future use of the building are currently being developed, with a report expected to be presented to the Leadership Team on the 5th of May. Further updates to follow.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

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

Cllr Evans attended the 25th Anniversary event for the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

7. Council Meetings: To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 25th of March 2026.

Minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments.

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

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

8. Chief Officer's Update – April 2026.

Item 8 within the minutes as per the instructions from members, to send a follow up e-mail to the secretary of the County Association RBL.

The Chief Officer explained that he was going to send the e-mail at the end of March 2026 and update members at this meeting. The passing of the County RBL Chairman has been two months.

The Chief Officer asked members if they are still in agreement for to progress this as there still hasn't been a response from my follow up e-mail in January 2026.

It was proposed by Cllr Wheeler and seconded by Cllr Lewis that a follow-up email be sent.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Chief Officer to send a follow-up email to the County Association RBL.

Item 12 within the minutes as per the instructions from members.

On the 26/3/26, the Chief Officer explained that he has submitted the UK Town of Culture Bid to DCMS and received confirmation the same day that the bid has been received.

Once all the EOI's have been assessed by their expert advisory panel, the Council will be made aware of the outcome.

Also, since the last meeting, the Chief Officer has held briefing sessions with the deputy mayor discussing Council operational and financial matters and operational meetings with his 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 Griffin updated members that the TCBC Lone Deaths project is now up and running.
- Cllr Lewis updated members regarding the Town Council coach trip to Bristol. The day was a great success, cost effective and well supported by residents, many who have expressed interest in any future trips.
- Cllr Davies supported the Town Council Greenmeadow Community Farm trip.

Resolved: Members noted the updates.

10. Community Development and Wellbeing Officer's update (April 2026)

The Community Wellbeing Development Officer's report for April 2026 was forwarded to all members prior to the meeting.

The CWD Officer provided Members with an overview of the report.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

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

Instagram views were reported to be lower than the previous month. Members noted that reels and video content generate the highest engagement, and that the "Precept Explained" video represented a missed opportunity.

A potential project was discussed whereby the Youth Representatives would create a series of "Meet the Team" reels featuring Cllrs.

Each Youth Representative would be allocated six Cllrs, with short videos covering background and motivations for becoming a Cllr. Further updates will follow.

Members noted that a date for the Family Quiz has not yet been confirmed due to ongoing communication with the Constitutional Club. The CWD Officer is making further enquiries.

The new pop-up banner for the Youth Representatives was displayed for Members to view.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

12. To discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning Blaenavon World Heritage Day.

There had been no update received from TCBC regarding funding to enable the Town Council to organise a World Heritage Day event. This matter has been ongoing since early March.

Members discussed the situation and expressed concern at the lack of response from TCBC, noting that an explanation is required as to why no update had been provided. Members also noted the need for a long-term plan with TCBC for future events.

In the absence of confirmation of funding, no decisions could be made at this stage regarding a potential event.

It was agreed that the Event Working Group would consider the matter in more detail and report back to Members at the May 2026 Finance meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

13. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to the One Voice Wales Civility and Respect Pledge 2026.

The Civility and Respect pledge was forwarded to members ahead of the meeting for them to consider.

A discussion took place amongst members.

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews and seconded by Cllr Cowles to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

All members in agreement

Resolved: Mayor, Cllr Evans to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge on behalf of Blaenavon Town Council.

14. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating the Blaenavon Heritage and Tourism Walking Group Project.

Cllr Matthews provided Members with an overview of the project.

Prepared content focuses on Blaenavon's industrial heritage, its public houses, past and present, and the social and cultural history that connects them. The proposed walking trail aims to promote tourism and heritage within the Blaenavon area, while also supporting public houses that remain in operation.

Members noted that the preferred format for delivering the trail is likely to be a mobile app, with the potential to also produce a printed or e-book version.

To progress the project, it was agreed that the Working Group would meet to consider the next steps, and that Cllr Matthews would contact A. T. Creative to seek advice on suitable app options and obtain a quotation. Update to follow.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

15. To discuss and make any relevant determinations regarding a potential Mayor's Civic Ceremony and Grant Funding Awards Evening.

Members discussed the possibility of holding a combined Mayor's Civic Ceremony and Grant Fund Awards Evening.

Potential venues and dates were considered. It was noted that the Heritage Centre had been approached as a possible venue for an evening gathering following a ceremony; however, it is unavailable for evening use due to staffing constraints.

Further discussions took place around potential venues.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that decisions regarding the Mayor's Civic Ceremony and Grant Fund Awards Evening be deferred until after the appointment of the mayor for 2026/27 at the Annual Meeting in May 2026.

Resolved: Mayor's Civic Ceremony and Grant Fund Awards Evening be discussed after the appointment of the mayor for 2026/27 at the Annual Meeting in May 2026.

16. To review, discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to Council appointments to committees and working groups.

A list of all Council appointments to committees and working groups was circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that the Tourism Working Group had not scheduled any meetings, and that attendance at some working group and committee meetings had been poor.

Members discussed these matters.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Lewis that the Tourism and Events Working Groups be combined.

All Members in agreement.

Resolved: Tourism and Events Working Groups be combined and known as the Event Working Group.

Further discussion took place regarding Cllrs appointments to the Event Working Group. It was proposed by Cllr Griffin and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the existing membership remain unchanged.

All Members in agreement.

Resolved: That the Cllr appointments to the Event Working Group comprise of Cllrs Matthews, Hunt, Wheeler, Lewis and Beavan, together with the Community Wellbeing Development Officer.

17. To discuss and make any relevant determinations relating to a potential summer community event in partnership with the Heritage Centre.

Preliminary enquiries had been made regarding a potential daytime event in July at the Heritage Centre.

Local businesses and artists had been contacted, and initial discussions explored the ideas of a traditional, hands-on event. Suggested activities included, for example, archery, crafts for both adults and children, music, and workshops.

Members were invited to submit any further ideas or feedback to the CWD Officer.

Resolved: Members noted the update.

18. To discuss and make a determination regarding potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2026/27. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

The proposed project was forwarded to all members prior to the meeting.

- **Cllr Davies – Blaenavon Litter Picking Day.**

Cllr Davies provided Members with an update on the proposed litter-picking project, aimed at covering large areas of Blaenavon within a single coordinated day.

Members were advised that a central hub at BALC would be utilised to provide refreshments and distribute litter-picking equipment on the day. (Date to be confirmed)

A meeting had been held with Bron Afon to discuss partnership working and the potential provision of skips for resident use.

It was noted that evidence gathered from the town-wide litter pick would be used to identify litter “hotspot” areas, enabling skips to be strategically located where they are most needed.

To ensure appropriate use, Cllrs, officers and Bron Afon staff would oversee the skips on a rota basis.

Members discussed the project and associated costs. Concerns were raised regarding the potential for prohibited waste, misuse by businesses, and inappropriate use by residents.

The Community Wellbeing Development Officer (CWDO) advised that Bron Afon had previously delivered similar projects within Torfaen without issue. It was emphasised that effective rota management of the skips would be essential to ensure proper use.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Wheeler that the project be supported, subject to the skips being appropriately managed.

Cllr Griffin abstained from the vote.

Resolved: Litter-picking day project supported, subject to appropriate management arrangements being in place.

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

Four planning applications was forwarded to members prior to the meeting.

- Variation of Condition/revision of design to water vessel - Pithead Baths, Big Pit Blaenavon.
- Installation of overhead crane - Winding House, Big Pit Blaenavon.
- Installation of ASHP's to serve Pithead Baths, Big Pit Blaenavon.
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Resolved: No objections from members.

20. To receive, discuss and make any relevant determinations concerning items relating to Correspondence.

The Chief Officer forwarded two items of correspondence to all members prior to the meeting.

- **Blaenavon Blues AFC – Matthew Cox**

Blaenavon Blues provided an update regarding their third annual football festival, scheduled to take place on 30th May. Previous events have been well attended and successful, and the organisers are aiming to deliver a larger event this year.

The club has requested financial support to assist with delivery of the festival; all participating children receive a medal. Members were asked to consider whether the Town Council would support the event again this year.

- **Forgeside RFC – Luke Jenkins**

A request was received from Forgeside RFC seeking financial support towards a past players' reunion event scheduled for 11th July 2026. The event aims to celebrate the club's history, reconnect former players, and strengthen community links.

Members were asked to consider a contribution towards the event.

Members considered both requests alongside the budget allocated for grant awards, the potential of a future Grant Awards Evening, and the importance of maintaining a fair and transparent application process.

Members agreed that the grant application form should be published on the Town Council website as soon as practicable, with applications to be considered at the May Finance Meeting.

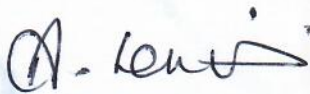
It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Griffin that both organisations be contacted and advised of the grant application process and invited to submit applications for consideration.

Should applications be successful, any awards may be issued in advance of a future Grant Awards Evening.

All members in agreement.

Resolved: Grant application form to be published at the earliest opportunity; both organisations be invited to apply through the formal process; and that any successful awards may be paid prior to a Grant Awards Evening.

Meeting ended at 20:14hrs.

Chairman signed: 

Date: 27/05/2026