

NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes - Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at 18:43pm on Tuesday 13th January 2026 the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina.

A meeting to which members of the public were entitled to attend

Present: Cllr D Hillman, Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee, presiding
Councillors L Harris, C Hillman, M Williams, L Higgins, M Evans, A Fryer, S Howlett, E Singleton and D Finch.

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO
Mr K Rowland, Assistant Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting, The Chair informed of the procedures to be taken in the event of an emergency. **Resolved** to note the information received.

Declaration of Interest

Members were invited to declare matters of interest either at the beginning or at any time during the proceedings. Members were reminded that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that The Town Clerk declared a personal and professional interest in item 7d.

1. Apologies for absence:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence and to formally resolve to accept. **Resolved** to note that apologies were received from Councillor G Morvan, W Lewis and D Wright.

Further Resolved that the apologies be accepted.

2. Questions from the Public:

To receive any questions from the public regarding matters itemised on the agenda (limited to 10 minutes total).

3. Correspondence:

Members were invited to consider the listed correspondence, plus with the Chairman's permission, any urgent information that was received prior to the date of the meeting.

a) Community Gentle Exercise Sessions (for information/consideration):

Email from Rachael Pugh BSc offering details of a scheme to help with the fitness of people aged 60+ and with various health requirements. Scheme would approximately cost £500 for the ten-week program with numbers depending on venue size. Members were informed of the additional two emails received in support of the proposal.

Members discussed the scheme, its value and whether other organisations already provided a similar scheme in the area. It was stated that a lot of people could benefit from this scheme for the amount of money it would cost, although some Members thought the approximate costs of the sessions were confusing. Members considered that an application form in respect of a small financial donation would be more suitable,

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that an application form be supplied in order to apply for a financial donation.

b) Appropriate Sum under Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 – Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2026-2027 (for information):

Email from Martin Bull of the Local Government Finance Policy & Sustainability Division outlining the changes to the Section 137(4)(a) for 2026-2027.

The Town Clerk / RFO explained how the limit/information would apply to the Town Council, i.e. the Town Council could legally spend an approximate maximum of £104,400 on expenditure incurred under s.137 for the financial year 2026/27 (approximate 9000 electors x £11.60). Members were reminded that any expenditure incurred via s.137 would need to be budgeted for and was not an additional amount available from the Welsh Government

Resolved to note the information received.

c) One Voice Wales For information & consideration):

Email informing of a joint training event with Planning Aid Wales re: 'Improving our local places – Welsh case studies and planning updates'.

Members were informed to contact the Town Clerk if they wished attend. It was also queried if there were other media through which the training could be delivered at a more affordable cost.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** to enquire if other options of attaining the training through other media were available at a lower cost.

Additional correspondence with permission of the Chair:

*The Town Clerk / RFO declared a personal and professional interest in item 7d below. **Resolved** that the Town Clerk / RFO remain in the meeting as the item was for information only.*

d) Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO (for information):

Letter of resignation from the post of Town Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer.

Members were saddened by the news of Mrs T Hughes' resignation and that she would be a great loss to Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council. Due to the Town Council Leader/Chair of the Personnel Committee, Cllr G Morven not being present, that a Personnel Committee meeting be arranged to discuss the required actions.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that a Personnel Committee meeting be arranged to further discuss the required actions.

4. S.137 donations (Local Government Act 1972 & Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

As previously resolved, Members were invited to consider making further financial donations to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank to assist residents of Nantyglo and Blaina for the month of January 2026.

Resolved that a financial donation of £200.00 be made to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank to assist Nantyglo & Blaina residents for the month of January 2026.

5. Application to the Community Grant Fund:

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s), plus with the Chairman's permission any additional applications that were received prior to the date of the meeting. Members were also reminded that applications would need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

a) *None received to date.*

Resolved accordingly.

6. Salem Chapel:

Members were invited to consider the attached inspection reports:

- December 2025:

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that whilst the condition of the Chapel continued to deteriorate, there did not appear to be any additional issues.

Members were updated that completion date for the sale of Salem Chapel was 21st January 2026. The reserve price was £27,000 and the Chapel sold £38,000 prior to any costs.

Resolved that the report be approved and **Further Resolved** to note the information received.

7. Confidential Information:

The following item(s) might contain information that is of a confidential or personal nature and was therefore exclusive to Members of the Town Council only. (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960). **Resolved** that the motion be supported.

a) Precept, Income and Expenditure Report:

Members were invited to consider, and if appropriate approve the Precept, Income and Expenditure Report for:

- November 2025:

Queries and comments were invited:

In response to a member querying the amount shown in July the Town Clerk/RFO informed that this amount was from the sale of some of the items from Salem Chapel and that all details of income and expenditure were retained.

Resolved that the report be approved and **Further Resolved** to note the information received.

- December 2025:

Comments and queries were invited:

It was commented that the expenditure forecast had lowered and was now in the recommended range.

Resolved that the report be approved.

b) Periodic Financial Reports:

Members were invited to consider, and if appropriate approve the following reports for October – December 2025:

- Budget & Monitoring Report – 1st April 2025 to 31st December 2025:

Comments and queries were invited:

It was commented that the Salem Chapel budget would soon not be required.

Resolved that the report be approved.

- Bank Reconciliation – 1st October 2025 to 31st December 2025:

Comments and queries were invited – none received.

Resolved that the report be approved.

- General & Earmarked Reserves – 1st August 2025 – 30th November 2025:

Comments and queries were invited:

The Town Clerk / RFO provided further information in respect of the general reserves and RFO Contingency Reserves.

In response to a query regarding the need to change the reserve accounts following the sale of Salem Chapel, the Town Clerk/RFO informed that this information was detailed in the draft budget and precept report 2026/27 (item 7e).

Resolved that the report be approved and **Further Resolved** to note the information received.

c) Actuarial Valuation (LGPS) – Torfaen County Borough Council (for information):

Members were invited to consider the information received from Torfaen County Borough Council in respect of the Town Council's contributions for the Local Government (Greater Gwent) Pension Scheme for a three-year period as from 1st April 2026.

The Town Clerk/RFO explained that from April 2026 and for the following three years the pension scheme contributions would be at a reduced rate for a number of reasons.

Resolved to note information received.

d) Investment / Financial Risk Assessment Report 2026/27:

Members were invited to consider and if appropriate, to approve the following report.

Members discussed investing some of the balance with the Lloyds 'Deposit' account into the Swansea Building Society account with its better interest. The Town Clerk/RFO did state that the Swansea Building Society account was not a current account and that direct debits and other payments could not be made from the account, but an appropriate amount could be transferred and was for members to consider. It was also mentioned that other bank accounts should be investigated that may give better rates.

Resolved that the report be approved and **Further Resolved** that the recommendations detailed within the report be approved.

e) Draft Budget and Precept 2026/27:

Members were invited to discuss and consider:

- **the draft precept & budget figures for 2026/27:**

It was noted that an additional £6,000 was earmarked as reserves for Events expenditure if required.

Resolved to note information received and **Further Resolved** to clarify the £6,000 additional Events Reserve account.

- **the draft budget and precept report for 2026/27:**

Section 2 – Overview 2025/26

Page 4 all recommendations (i-v) **Resolved** as detailed, **Further Resolved** that Town Council meetings be held at an appropriate venue within Nantyglo.

Section 3 – Challenges arising during 2025/26

Item b) page 5 – That the Town Council set up a Task & Finish Group to consider an appropriate reserve account for the distribution of the proceeds from the sale of Salem Chapel - **Resolved** as stated.

Item c) page 6 - Members considered the need for an appropriate power supply due to the sale of Salem Chapel, in respect of future Christmas Lights. The possibility of utilising St Peters Church had been considered. Members also considered displaying lengths of Christmas Lights around lampposts as seen in nearby towns, although the difficulties of putting any Christmas lights on lampposts were acknowledged. All considerations/recommendations (page 6 – I to vi) in regard to Christmas Lights are **Resolved** as stated. **Further Resolved** to query with Christmas Lights contractor, Mr R Dunham if lengths of Christmas lights could be displayed around lampposts (as seen in other towns).

Item d) page 6/7 – Members discussed and **Resolved** the occasional previous practice to hold occasional meetings at a venue in Nantyglo for accessibility. **Further Resolved** that all Members be provided with a copy of the Town Council's powers and duties. **Additionally Resolved** all recommendations regarding public consultations.

Item e) page 7) – Members stated that at a recent Personnel Committee meeting it had been discussed that a working from home policy was being considered.

Item f) page 7) – Annual pay award for 2026/27 was **Resolved** as stated.

Item h) page 8) – Member enquired about installing a speaker system or ear loops so that members sitting towards the rear of the chamber may hear discussions better. **Resolved** to investigate a suitable system.

Item i) page 8) - Recommendations regarding Devolved Services and other possible changes be supported and **Resolved** as stated.

Section 4 – Potential Changes to Local Government.

Proposed and Resolved that Standing Orders be suspended due to the time being 8pm – meeting to continue meeting.

Considerations (page 9) regarding boundary changes to local Government **Resolved** as stated.

Section 5 – Proposed Council Programme for the Financial year 2026/27

All Members were encouraged to attend as many events as possible.

Page 10) That all recommendations (I – iii) were **Resolved** as stated.

Section 11 – Recommendations.

It was proposed and seconded that the Precept should remain at £105,000 for 2026/27.

It was proposed and seconded that the Precept should increase by £10,000 to £115,000 for 2026/27. A Member responded that as it was a transitional year, there would be a need to show a plan for increased events and increased expenditure.

Voting was as follows: 5 in favour to keep the precept at a standstill
6 in favour to increase the precept by £10,000

Resolved to note information received and **Further Resolved** that the recommendations as stated above i.e. 2i-v, 3d, 3f, 3i, 3j, 3h, 5 & 8 and considerations 3b, 3c, & 4 and all addendums as detailed above. **Additionally Recommended** that the Town Council precept requirement for 2026/27 be increased to £115,000 - for **Ratification at Full Council in January 2026**.

- the amounts of Council Tax payable by residents of Nantyglo & Blaina for 2026/27.

Resolved to note information received

Meeting declared closed at 8:14pm