

# NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes Town Clerk/RFO

Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina NP13 3BN  
Swyddfa'r r Cyngor, Sefydliad Blaenau, Y Stryd Fawr, Blaenau, NP13 3BN

Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

Dear Member,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council to be held at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina at **1.00pm on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022**.

If any Council Member or member of the public wishes to attend the meeting remotely (**audio only**), please contact the Town Clerk at the above e-mail or phone by 12 noon on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 for details of how to access the meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Town Clerk

## AGENDA

### A meeting to which members of the public are entitled to attend

#### Declaration of Interest

Members are invited to declare matters of interest either at the beginning or at any time during the proceedings. Please note that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided.

**1. Apologies:**

Members are invited to consider the apologies for absence received and to formally resolve to accept.

**2. Town Mayor's Communications:**

The Town Mayor's communications for March 2022.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 (pages 152 – 156)**

Members are invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**4. Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 (pages 157 - 160)**

Members are invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**5. Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (pages 161 – 162)**

Members are invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**6. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (pages 163 – 168)**

Members are invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**7. Correspondence:**

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

- a) One Voice Wales – (for information – copies attached):
- i E-mail informing of Bank Phishing Scam
  - ii Remote training sessions January – March).
  - iii E-mail re: emergency accommodation – Ukraine conflict.
  - iv E-mail informing of invite to focus group re: Co-ordinating volunteers to respond to emergency situations in Wales.
- b) Blaenau Gwent Foodbank – (for information – copy attached):  
E-mail confirming receipt of donations and of numbers of people helped within Nantyglo & Blaina.
- c) Audit Wales – (for information – copy attached):  
Letter inviting views to inform the Auditor General's future audit work programme for 2022/23 and beyond.
- d) Welsh Government – (for information – copy attached):  
Information regarding the new rules for Wales for Alert Level 0 (Covid 19).
- e) Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent (for information – copy attached):  
Newsletter – March 2022.
- f) Parc Nant y Waun – (for information – copy attached):  
E-mail informing of opportunity to help plant trees at Parc Nant y Waun LNR on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
- g) Men's Den (for information – copy attached):  
E-mail informing of the re-start of Men's Den.

**8. Review of Policies 2022/23:**

Members are invited to review and if appropriate resolve the policies listed below for 2022/23:

- a) Financial Regulations 2022/23 (copy attached):

**9. Application to the Community Grant Fund:**

Members are invited to consider the listed application(s). Members are also reminded that applications will need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

*None received to date*

**10. Members Updates:**

Members are invited to inform and provide updates of any recent activities and / or concerns:

**11. Confidential Information:**

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

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Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

## Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held remotely at 1.00pm on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.

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

Present: Councillor D Hillman, Town Mayor, presiding  
Councillors C Hillman; G Morvan; K Jenkins; K Jones JP; L Harris & M Williams

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk informed that there were no members of the press or public in attendance. **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. Please note that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that no such declarations were received.

#### 1. Apologies:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence received and to formally resolve to accept. **Resolved** to note that apologies were received from Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer.

**Resolved** to accept the apology received.

#### 2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for February 2022.

The Town Mayor informed that there had not been any events etc during February 2022.

In respect of the Town Mayor's Appeal it was agreed to contact the local primary schools within Nantyglo and Blaina to enquire if any fund raising such as a mufti-day could take place.

**Resolved** to contact the four local primary schools to enquire about fundraising for the Mayoral Appeal.

#### 3. Minutes of the Task & Finish Group (Attendance Allowance) Meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (pages 128 – 130)

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (pages 131 – 136)**  
Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

5. **Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (pages 137 - 140)**  
Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

**Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

6. **Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (pages 141 – 145)**

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

Page 143 – should read ‘did **not** want to duplicate events’.

**Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

7. **Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (pages 146 – 151)**

Members were invited to consider the above minutes and if appropriate to approve them as an accurate record of proceedings.

- a) Matters arising, for information & clarification only:

Page 148 – Gwent Public service Board – Members were informed that the 4 electric vehicle charging points were located in Blaina Car Park. It was commented that this information should have been included within the document.

Page 150 (b) – include ‘speaking on behalf of joint local councils’. Councillor K Jones JP commented that the Town Mayor’s responses at the Liaison Meeting may have been a factor in Blaenau Gwent CBC deciding not to increase the council tax for 2022/23.

Page 150 (2.22) – should read ‘this helped with the provision of the grant’ rather than free school meals.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that Blaenau Gwent CBC had confirmed that Wayne Evans was still in post as the manager of Blaenau Gwent Foodbank but that contact had not been made to date.

**Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

**8. Correspondence:**

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

a) One Voice Wales – (for information):

i Survey results re: Multi Location Meetings:

members considered the survey results and the following comments were made:

- Page 3 – It was queried what 'meeting by other means' entailed?
- Page 3 and 4 – It was commented re: mandatory mask wearing – meetings in person had not been lawful for a considerable period of time until quite recently and if a Council could hold hybrid meetings. Internal/External Auditors should note if a Council had held unlawful meetings.
- Page 7 and 8 – Both positives and negatives were noted.
- Page 11 – Commented on non-compliance with the current legislation regarding holding meetings.

Members also commented that many of the points detailed in the survey were stated by the Town Council when completing the survey

**Resolved** to note the information received.

ii Remote training sessions January – March).

Any Member wishing to attend any of the training modules to contact the Town Clerk.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

iii E-mail and guidance re: Councils and Councillors during the Pre-Election period.

The restrictions in place during the pre-election period were emphasised and although it was noted that there were some exceptions, it was recommended that care was needed to avoid contravening the restrictions.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

b) Gwent Police – (for information):

Ward updates.

Members agreed that dates of future police surgeries were required so that Members could attend if necessary.

Councillor Morvan offered to provide an update at a later date.

**Resolved** to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that the Town Clerk contact the Community Support Officer to request details of future police surgeries.

## 9. Review of Policies 2022/23:

Members were invited to review and if appropriate resolve the policies listed below for 2022/23:

### 10) Standing Orders 2022/23:

The Town Clerk informed that all proposed changes for consideration were highlighted. Members considered the proposed changes and the following points were made:

Page 3 – remote meetings. It was emphasised that changes in the legislation meant that all Councils had to hold remote meetings in addition to meetings in person. The Town Clerk informed that wi-fi had now been installed in the Council Chamber and that the remote meeting system (OWL) had been ordered to enable hybrid meetings to take place.

Page 8 (point o) – emphasised.

Page 21 (4.6) – a Member supported this inclusion due to possible conflicts of interest and that it would be sensible to adopt. Members agreed to adopt this inclusion.

Members thanked the Town Clerk for her work on this and the following (Risk Assessment) document.

**Resolved** to adopt the Standing Orders for 2022/23 with the agreed changes.

### 10) Risk Management Policy 2022/23:

The Town Clerk informed that proposed changes for consideration were highlighted.

Members considered the proposed changes and the following points were made:

Page 4 – Covid 19. It was accepted that this could change at any time.

Page 6 – Customer/citizen Risk. The importance of this was emphasised.

Page 9 – Security. This was for information only.

Page 11 – Political Risks (forthcoming election). This was for information only.

Page 12 – Social Media. This linked to Customer/Citizen risk (above).

Page 12 – technological Risk. This risk had been reduced due to the Council's new IT equipment, system and security.

Page 13 – Environmental Risk. Members agreed with this point.

Page 13 – Customer/Citizen Risk. This was highlighted.

Page 16 – Reputation. It was emphasised that both wards required equal resources as far as practicable.

Page 18 – Technological Risk. This was for information only.

Page 18 – Covid 19. This was for information only.

**Resolved** to adopt the Risk Management Policy for 2022/23 with the agreed changes.

## 10. Application to the Community Grant Fund:

Members were invited to consider the listed application(s). Members were also reminded that applications would need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

*None received to date.*

**Resolved** accordingly.

**11. Members Updates:**

Members were invited to inform and provide updates of any recent activities and / or concerns:

There were no updates provided.

**Resolved** accordingly.

Meeting declared closed at 1.50pm

156 (21/22)



# NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

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Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

## Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held remotely on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 at 1.50pm

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

Present: Councillor K Jenkins, Chair of Events Committee, presiding  
Councillors G Morvan; D Hillman; C Hillman; L Harris; K Jones JP & M Williams

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Town Clerk informed that there were no members of the press or public in attendance. **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. Please note that all declarations of interest must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that no such declarations were received.

#### 1. Apologies:

Members were invited to consider the apologies for absence received and to formally resolve to accept. **Resolved** to note that apologies were received from Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer.

**Further Resolved** to accept the apology received.

#### 2. Correspondence:

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

*None received to date.*

**Resolved** accordingly.

#### 3. Easter Events:

Members were invited to discuss and consider if it was appropriate and achievable to provide any suitable Easter events. Members would also need to consider the

pre-election period which would be in force from 16<sup>th</sup> March until 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Members discussed providing an Easter Egg to all children at the four local primary schools as in 2021. In response to a query regarding finance, the Town Clerk / RFO explained that Easter Eggs could be paid for from the 2021/22 budget and commemorative jubilee gifts could be paid for from the 2022/23 budget.

Members also discussed contacting the Town Centre Manager to query if any funding was available to assist with this purchase. Members also agreed that stickers be put on each egg to inform that they were a gift from the Town Council.

**Resolved** that an easter egg be purchased for each pupil at the four local primary schools and **Further Resolved** to enquire if any funding was available for this from the Town Centre Manager.

#### 4. **Queen's Platinum Jubilee – June 2022:**

Members were invited to consider the proposed schedule of events to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

##### Commemorative Gifts for local schools:

Members were informed that as the Assistant Officer was currently away from the office, Councillor Morvan had contacted the four primary schools and discussed any preference in respect of Jubilee commemoration gifts and two schools confirmed their preference for the pen sets, 1 school confirmed their preference for drinking bottles and 1 school confirmed their preference for a mixture of both pens sets and drinking bottles.

The Town Clerk informed that she would check what printing was available for the gifts but that it should include 'a gift from Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council' and the costs for the gifts.

**Resolved** to purchase the appropriate number of Jubilee Commemorative gifts as detailed above.

##### Art & Poetry Competitions:

Councillor Morvan informed that he had spoken to all four primary schools and they confirmed they would take part in both competitions.

It was discussed and **Resolved** that the categories for both competitions would comprise of:

- Under 11 years
- 11 – 17 years
- 18 + years

It was discussed and **Resolved** that appropriate judges for both competitions were required and that the winning entries would be framed and displayed in the Council Chamber.

It was discussed and **Resolved** that the Town Clerk make enquiries into the possibility of displaying all entries in an empty shop within the town.

Donations to other organisations:

Members discussed the possibility of awarding grants for jubilee celebrations/parties to qualifying organisations. It was considered that the Council's existing financial grants/donations policy would cover such applications.

**Resolved** that no special provision to made for awarding such grants to qualifying organisations.

Bunting:

Members discussed and **Resolved** to purchase and erect bunting throughout Nantyglo and Blaina as appropriate. **Further Resolved** that the Town Clerk contact the Town Centre Manager (Blaenau Gwent CBC) to enquire if any financial assistance was available to purchase this.

Planting Trees at Nantyglo & Blaina:

Councillor Morvan informed that he had contacted Dave Watkins at Blaenau Gwent CBC to enquire about tree planting at locations in Nantyglo and Blaina. Although a response was still awaiting from Dave Watkins (BGCBC) it was understood that permission from the relevant landowners would be required.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

Service in respect of the Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022:

Members considered the proposed details of the service in respect of the Platinum Jubilee on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 and **Resolved** to accept the format of the day as outlined in the report, subject to necessary permissions granted.

Jubilee Beacon:

Members considered the information regarding providing and lighting a Jubilee Beacon but considered the health and safety implications to onerous and difficult for the Town Council to safely provide.

**Resolved** not to provide or light a Jubilee Beacon.

## **5. Award Ceremonies:**

Members were informed that the presentation for the following events would be held as follows (This was to ensure that the presentations take place as soon as possible and prior to the pre-election period which was in force from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 until 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The presentations would take place over two mornings to ensure compliance with the Council's risk assessment.

- a) In Bloom awards – would take place in the Council Chamber on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 commencing at 11am (light refreshments would be provided).

**Resolved** to support the In Bloom presentation as detailed above.

- b) ARC Awards – would take place in the Council Chamber on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 commencing at 11am (light refreshments would be provided).

**Resolved** to support the ARC Awards presentation as detailed above.

## **6. Battle of Britain Exhibition:**

Members were invited to consider the attached information regarding the proposed Battle of Britain exhibition.

Councillor G Morvan informed that he had spoken to Squadron Leader John Dunn and it was clarified that the exhibition comprised of 'pop-up' banners that could be accommodated within the Council Chamber. It was also confirmed that the exhibition would need to take place prior to November 2022 and that Squadron Leader Dunn would advise of a suitable time. The Town Clerk informed that a risk assessment regarding this would be undertaken nearer the date.

**Resolved** that the exhibition be sited in the Council Chamber at an appropriate date and **Further Resolved** that Councillor Morvan continue to Liaise with Squadron Leader Dunn to arrange this.

## **7. Planters:**

Members were invited to consider the quotations received in respect of the proposed larger planters for Nantyglo & Blaina.

Members discussed the quotes received and agreed that six planters were required and proposed and **Resolved** that six square planters (black with gold coloured top) be ordered.

Members discussed the suitability of 'screw on' plaques for the planters to bear the Council name and it was Proposed and **Resolved** for this to be looked into.

Members also discussed where the planters could be delivered and stored. It was **Resolved** to contact Tai Calon to enquire if they could assist with this.

Meeting declared closed at 2.50pm

Item no. 3

# NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL

## CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Mrs T Hughes - Town Clerk/RFO  
Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina NP13 3BN  
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Tel: 01495 292817 E-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

### Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held remotely at 1.00pm on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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

Present: Councillor K Jones JP, Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee, presiding  
Councillors G Morvan; L Harris; D Hillman; K Jenkins; M Williams & C Hillman

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk informed that no members of the press or public were in attendance. **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 a personal declaration in item 3c was received from Councillor G Morvan.

#### 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 Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer.

**Further Resolved** to accept the apologies received.

#### 2. Correspondence:

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

##### a) One Voice Wales:

E-mail informing of pre-consultation – Dwr Cymru Welsh Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 – Pre Consultation (*For information*).

**Resolved** to note the information received.

b) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:

E-mail informing of BGCBC's response regarding parking etc within Nantyglo (*for information*).

**Resolved** to note the information received.

c) Natural Resources Wales:

E-mail informing of Wales-wide conversation about the future of the natural environment (*for information*).

**Resolved** to note the information received.

**3. Planning Applications:**

Members were invited to consider any further applications that might be received prior to the date of the meeting:

- a) Planning Application No. C/2022/0039 – Land opposite the rear of nos. 2 & 3 Cwmcelyn Newydd, Blaina:  
Proposed garage.

**Resolved** that no representations or objections be made.

- b) Planning Application No. C/2022/0041 – Blaina Institute Ltd, Community Hall Institute, High Street, Blaina:  
Change of use of a part of the building to A3 use (food & drink).

For clarity it was stated that the Town Council Offices and Chamber were located on the first floor of the building.

**Resolved** that no representations or objections be made.

*Councillor G Morvan declared a personal interest in item 3c. **Resolved** that he remain in the meeting but take no part in the discussion or vote.*

- c) Planning Application No. C/2022/0043 – Ty-Meddyg, Farm Road, Nantyglo:  
Installation of two air source heat pumps.

**Resolved** that no representations or objections be made.

**4. Licence Applications:**

Members were invited to consider the application(s):

- a) *None received to date.*

**Resolved** accordingly.

Meeting declared closed at 1.25pm

# NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

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Tel: 01495 292817 e-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

## Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held remotely at 1.25pm on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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

Present: Councillor G Morvan, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, presiding  
Councillors K Jones JP; D Hillman; L Harris; C Hillman; M Williams & K Jenkins

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk informed that no members of the public or press were in attendance. **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 must be recorded in the book provided. **Resolved** to note that no such declarations were received.

### 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 Mrs N Horner, Assistant Officer.

**Further Resolved** that the apologies be accepted.

### 2. Correspondence:

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

#### a) One Voice Wales:

Renewal of annual subscription to One Voice Wales for 2022/23.

The Chair highlighted that the membership fee for the Town Council for 2022/23 was £1,537 and invited comments/queries:

- In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that OVW provided an excellent resource for the Council and that she often requests advice and information which was received in a timely manner.

**Resolved** that the Town Council's membership to One Voice Wales for 2022/23 be renewed.

b) Audit Wales – (for information):

Information in respect of Audit Wales Fee Scheme for 2022/23.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that no response had been received from Audit Wales in respect of the external audit and annual return for year ending March 2021, despite making enquiries. Recent communication with Tredegar Town Council had also confirmed that they had also not received any response from Audit Wales in respect of their external audit and annual return. All present agreed that Audit Wales service and lack of communication was extremely poor.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

*Additional correspondence received with permission of the Chair:*

*Councillors D Hillman and C Hillman declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 2c.*

c) Aneurin Bevan University Health Board – (for information):

E-mail informing of the Health Board's 'Roadshow' which would be at Ebbw Vale Market at 10am – 2pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

d) Town Centre Manager (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council):

In response to a query received from the Town Council, the Town Centre Manager responded (via e-mail) that the cost of an online Facebook training session (one hour session for up to 20 people) would cost £150.

Members considered and discussed this information and expressed disappointment and concern as to the proposed fee. Councillor M Williams informed that he could provide the relevant practical Facebook training (free of charge) required as he provides this in a professional setting as part of his work duties. The Town Clerk would contact One Voice Wales and other relevant organisations to enquire as to the legislative requirements in respect of the Town Council having an appropriate and fit for purpose Facebook page.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

e) Blaenau Gwent Foodbank (for information):

E-mail received from Wayne Evans, manager of Blaenau Gwent Foodbank confirming receipt of all payments received from the Town Council together with thanks and details regarding the number of individuals and families who had benefitted from the donations within Nantyglo and Blaina



Members welcomed the information which helped inform the public of the help provided by the Town Council. members also agreed that the figures illustrated the shocking need for help within Nantyglo and Blaina and that this was likely to increase due to the current increase in energy prices. A Member informed that every household within Blaenau Gwent would receive £150 off their council tax bill to help with the rising energy costs. Additionally, a loan was available from the Welsh Government of £200 which was to be repaid over five years (interest free). It was also commented that all energy companies had a duty to provide help and advice.

In response to a query the Town Clerk informed that whilst details of payments were made were already on the Town Council's website, this additional information could also be added.

**Resolved** to note the information received.

**3. 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 March 2022.

Due to receipt of the information received by Blaenau Gwent Foodbank (see item 2e above), Members considered a number of options and due to the forthcoming elections agreed to a £200 donation to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank for the month of March 2022 and to continue to consider donations on a monthly basis until the Local Elections have taken place in May 2022.

**Resolved** that a financial donation of £200 be paid to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank in respect of March 2022 and **Further Resolved** that this be considered on a monthly basis until the Local Elections have taken place.

**4. Independent Remuneration for Wales – Annual Report 2022/23:**

Members were invited to consider the annual report of the Independent Remuneration panel for Wales in respect of payments to members of Community & Town Councils. Members were informed that some decisions will require resolution prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council when council positions and representatives will be resolved. Please note that only the information relevant to Town & Community Councils was included.

Members considered the information and the following comments were made:

- Financial loss payment was highlighted.
- There was a requirement for the Town Council to resolve the senior allowance payments/roles, financial loss payments and travel & subsistence payments.
- The determinations in respect of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had already been resolved by Council.
- It was clarified that senior role payments had never been paid to the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition/minority group.
- There was a need to retain working Councillors.
- In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that, for the time being, the basic

allowance was taxable as was any attendance allowance payments.

- Members noted that the changes contained in the report would take effect from 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- members also noted the group number (group 3) the Town Council was placed in.

**Resolved** that the determinations be agreed as detailed below:

- Determination 44 – Mandatory, no resolution required.
- Determination 45 – that an annual allowance of £500 be paid to three senior roles.
- Determination 46 – that travel costs be paid (if claimed) in respect of attending approved duties.
- Determination 47 – Whilst unlikely, payment for an overnight stay and/or subsistence can be claimed whilst on an approved duty.
- Determination 48 – that Financial Loss compensation can be paid if claimed in accordance with the determination.
- Determination 49 – Attendance Allowance. Council has previously resolved that this be paid if claimed.
- Determination 50 – Mayoral Payment. Council has previously resolved this payment.
- Determination 51 – Deputy Mayoral Payment. Council has previously resolved this payment.
- Determination 52 – Application of the remuneration framework by relevant group) – included within specific determinations as stated.
- Determination 53 – Not currently applicable.

**Additionally Resolved** that the report be agreed in its entirety.

## **5. Budget Expenditure:**

Members were invited to consider the report in respect of budget expenditure and reserve accounts and if appropriate approve the recommendation.

The Chair informed that the report was presented to Council as a result of appropriate advice from the Internal Auditor whilst undertaking periodic checks.

The Town Clerk informed that whilst the Council had already resolved the use of specific reserve accounts in respect of the Events budget and the Miscellaneous budget, it was best practice for Council to be made aware of this requirement and for Council to specifically resolve the use of the reserve accounts. In respect of the s.137/Financial Donations budget, no specific reserve account had been allocated and therefore Members were requested to consider the virement of a maximum of £1,000 from the RFO Contingency reserve account to make up the short fall (due to the ongoing support provided to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank).

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that the OWL remote meeting system should be delivered next week (week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022).

A Member informed that the bullet point 'to comply fully with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations is not recommended that Standing Orders be suspended when

considering financial matters' – was sometimes necessary to make a point and not to challenge Council.

**Resolved** to support the recommendations as contained within the report and **Further Resolved** to support the comments and advice provided by the Internal Auditor.

**6. 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 might be received prior to the date of the meeting. Members are also reminded that applications would need to be considered in conjunction with the current policy.

- a) *None received to date.*

**Resolved** accordingly.

**7. Salem Chapel:**

Members were invited to consider the attached inspection report:

- February 2022:

Questions and comments were invited:

In response to a query re: 'had the condition of the Chapel changed or altered in any way?' The Town Clerk informed that there were no obvious changes to the building to her untrained eye except for general deterioration as to be expected.

**Resolved** that the report be approved.

**8. Confidential Information:**

The following item(s) may contain information that was 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.

## Tracy

**From:** Tracy Gilmartin <tgilmartin@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Sent:** 04 March 2022 08:43  
**To:** Tracy Gilmartin  
**Subject:** FW: Bank Phishing Scam - please inform others...  
**Attachments:** Bank Phishing C.PNG; Bank Phishing E.PNG

For your information / Ar gyfer eich gwybodaeth

**From:** Jordan Gareth DC 357 <gareth.jordan@dyfed-powys.police.uk>  
**Sent:** 03 March 2022 18:07  
**To:** Tracy Gilmartin <tgilmartin@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Subject:** Bank Phishing Scam - please inform others...

Rydym yn parhau i weld pobl yn mynd i drybini oherwydd troseddwr sy'n esgus eu bod yn gweithio i'r banc ac yn dweud bod cyfrif banc person wedi'i gyfaddawdu.

Weithiau, mae'n dilyn neges destun ffug (mae'r dioddefwr yn sylweddoli mai twyll ydyw ac yn dileu'r neges destun).

Fodd bynnag, ddiwrnod yn ddiweddarach mae'r dioddefwr yn derbyn galwad ffôn. Mae'r troseddwr yn esgus ei fod yn gweithio i'r banc ac yn dweud ei fod yn ymwybodol bod yr unigolyn wedi derbyn neges destun ffug, ond mae'r cyfrif banc wedi'i gyfaddawdu rywsut yn awr.

Y cam nesaf yw cael y dioddefwr i symud ei arian i gyfrif 'diogel' – nid yw'r dioddefwr yn ymwybodol, ond cyfrif troseddwr yw'r cyfrif hwn.

Os yw'r dioddefwr yn dweud bod yr ap bancio'n dweud bod y cyfrif yn newydd ac na ellir ei ddilysu, bydd y troseddwr yn dweud mai cyfrif newydd ydyw, ond ei fod yn ddiogel.

Bydd y troseddwr yn aml yn dweud wrth y dioddefwr am ffonio'r rhif ar gefn ei gerdyn banc i wirio hyn – ond mae'n dweud y gallai'r dioddefwr golli ei holl arian gan fod yn rhaid iddo aros i gael ei gysylltu a mynd drwy'r broses ddilysu gydag aelod arall o'r staff bancio.

Mae'r dioddefwr dan bwysau, ac mae'n poeni y bydd yn colli ei arian, felly mae'n trosglwyddo'r arian heb ffonio'r banc.

Nid yw troseddwr yn poeni pwy maen nhw'n dwyn oddi wrthynt. Busnes ydyw iddyn nhw.

Rhybudd!

- Mae troseddwr yn ffonio ac yn esgus eu bod yn gweithio i'ch banc.
- Maen nhw'n dweud bod eich cyfrif wedi'i gyfaddawdu a bod angen ichi symud arian i gyfrif diogel.
- **Ni fydd banc go iawn byth yn gwneud hyn.**
- Os fyddwch chi'n derbyn y math hwn o alwad, rhowch y ffôn i lawr a pheidiwch â sgwrsio â'r galwr.
- Arhoswch 5 munud cyn galw unrhyw un arall rhag ofn bod y llinell wedi'i chadw ar agor.
- Galwch y rhif ar gefn eich cerdyn banc os fyddwch chi byth angen cadarnhau manylion gyda'ch banc.

+++

We are continuing to see people falling foul of criminals that pretend to be from the bank and stating that a person's bank account has been compromised.

Sometimes it follows a fake text message (the victim realises it is a scam and deletes the text).

However, a day later the victim receives a call and the criminals pretend to be from the bank and state that they are aware that the person has received a fake text message, and the bank account has now somehow become compromised.

The next stage is to get the victim to move their money into a 'safe' account – the victim is unaware, but this account is a criminal's account.

If the victim says that the banking app is stating that the account is new and cannot be verified, the criminal (pretending to be the bank) will state that the account has only just been set up, but is safe. They will often tell the victim to phone the number on the back of their bank card to check – but they put in the proviso that the victim may lose all their money as they have to wait to be connected and go through the verification process with another member of the banking staff!

The pressure is on, the victim is worried about losing their money, and so they go ahead and transfer the money without phoning the bank, as they believe they are speaking with a trusted employee of the bank already...

It is a reminder that criminals do not care who they steal from, it is a business.

#### Warning!

- Criminals are phoning and pretending to be your bank.
- They tell you that your account has been compromised and that you need to move money to a safe account.
- **A real bank will never do this.**
- If you receive this type of call, put the phone down and do not engage in conversation.
- Wait 5 minutes before calling anyone else in case the line has been kept open.
- Phone the number on the back of your bank card if you ever need to confirm details with your bank.

Kind regards,  
Gareth

---

DC357 Gareth Jordan  
Swyddog Seiberamddiffyn / Cyber Protect Officer

Tim Troseddau Seiber / Cyber Crime Team

Heddlu Dyfed-Powys / Dyfed-Powys Police

Pencadlys Heddlu Dyfed-Powys, Blwch Post 99, Llangynnr, Caerfyrddin, SA31 2PF

Police Headquarters, Po Box 99, Llangunnor, Carmarthen, SA31 2PF

Always report suspicious emails to: [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

You can also report suspicious texts by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad.

#### Please note:

Currently working mainly from home and often not available on my usual extension number.  
It is best to contact me via Skype or by Email, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

e-bost/e-mail: [gareth.jordan@dyfed-powys.police.uk](mailto:gareth.jordan@dyfed-powys.police.uk)



# WARNING!

- Criminals are phoning and pretending to be your bank.
- They tell you that your account has been compromised and that you need to move money to a safe account.
- A real bank will never do this.
- If you receive this type of call, put the phone down and do not engage in conversation.
- Wait 5 minutes before calling anyone else in case the line has been kept open.
- Phone the number on the back of your bank card if you ever need to confirm details with your bank.



Heddlu Police

**DYFED-POWYS**

**Tracy**

**From:** Wendi Patience <wpatience@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Sent:** 09 March 2022 09:46  
**To:** Wendi Patience  
**Cc:** Wendi Patience  
**Subject:** REMINDER - TRAINING - FEBRUARY & MARCH 2022 / ATGOFFA - HYFFORDDIANT - CHWEFROR & MAWRTH 2022  
**Attachments:** Application for free training place Cym.docx; Application for free training place.docx; Letter in relation to free training places November 2020.docx; Letter in relation to free training places November 2020Cym.doc; Bursary letter up to Feb 2021-22 - £100.docx; Bursary letter up to Feb 2021-22 £100 Cym.docx

Dear Colleagues,

Please find below details of Remote training sessions that are taking place in February and March, please bring this to the attention of your council.

The cost of the training is £30 for members or £50 per person for non members. You will be invoiced after the training has taken place.

There is a bursary available to eligible councils.

Session times are listed against the module date – Please note all training sessions are in English unless otherwise stated.

Date	Day	Module	Time
14/03/2022	Monday	Understanding the Law - Module 4	6.30-8.00pm
15/03/2022	Tuesday	Local Government Finance - Module 6	6.30-8.00pm
15/03/2022	Tuesday	Community Engagement Part II - Module 13	2.00-3.30pm
16/03/2022	Wednesday	Effective Staff Management - Module 18	6.30-8.00pm
16/03/2022	Wednesday	The Council as an Employer - Module 3	6.30-8.00pm
17/03/2022	Thursday	Advanced Local Government Finance - Module 21	6.30-8.00pm
17/03/2022	Thursday	Code of Conduct - Module 9	6.30-8.00pm
17/03/2022	Thursday	The Councillor - Module 2	2.00-3.30pm
21/03/2022	Monday	The Council Meeting - Module 5	6.30-8.00pm
21/03/2022	Monday	Advanced Local Government Finance - Module 21	6.30-8.00pm
22/03/2022	Tuesday	Health & Safety - Module 7	6.30-8.00pm
22/03/2022	Tuesday	The Council - Module 1	6.30-8.00pm
22/03/2022	Tuesday	The Council as an Employer - Module 3	6.30-8.00pm

23/03/2022	Wednesday	Introduction to Community Engagement - Module 8	2.00-3.30pm
24/03/2022	Thursday	Equality & Diversity - Module 14	6.30-8.00pm
24/03/2022	Thursday	Chairing Skills - Module 10	2.00-3.30pm
24/03/2022	Thursday	Understanding the Law - Module 4	6.30-8.00pm
28/03/2022	Monday	Local Government Finance - Module 6	6.30-8.00pm
28/03/2022	Monday	The Council as an Employer - Module 3	6.30-8.00pm
29/03/2022	Tuesday	Effective Staff Management - Module 18	6.30-8.00pm
29/03/2022	Tuesday	Understanding the Law - Module 4	2.00-3.30pm
30/03/2022	Wednesday	Information Management - Module 15	6.30-8.00pm
30/03/2022	Wednesday	Advanced Local Government Finance - Module 21	6.30-8.00pm
31/03/2022	Thursday	The Councillor - Module 2	6.30-8.00pm
31/03/2022	Thursday	The Council Meeting - Module 5	2.00-3.30pm

Please contact me via email to place a booking.

Many thanks.  
Wendi

Mobile – 07929 715990

Annwyl Gyfaill,

Wele isod fanylion sesiynau hyfforddiant o bell a gynhelir ym mis Chwefror & Mawrth 2022.

Cost yr hyfforddiant yw £30 i aelodau neu £50 y person i unrhyw un arall. Danfonir anfoneb atoch ar ôl i'r hyfforddiant ddigwydd.

Mae bwrsari ar gael i gynghorau cymwys – gofynnwch am fanylion.

Rhestrir amserau sesiynau ar gyfer dyddiadau'r modylau..

Sylwch fod pob sesiwn hyfforddi yn Saesneg oni nodir yn wahanol.

Dyddiad	Dydd	Modiwl	Amser
14/03/2022	Dydd Llun	Dealltwriaeth o'r Gyfraith - Modiwl 4	6.30-8.00pm
15/03/2022	Dydd Mawrth	Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol - Modiwl 6	6.30-8.00pm



**Tracy**

---

**From:** Tracy Gilmartin <tgilmartin@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2022 10:24  
**Subject:** FW: Ukrainian Refugee Crisis - Sent on behalf of Beverly Owen  
**Attachments:** Communication to Local Authority Chief Executives and Heads of Housing.docx; Immediate accommodation.xlsx

**Importance:** High

For your information and urgent attention / Er eich gwybodaeth a'ch sylw brys

**From:** Ria.Hawkins@gov.wales <Ria.Hawkins@gov.wales>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2022 09:02  
**To:** Lyn Cadwallader <lcadwallader@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Cc:** Claire.Bloomfield@gov.wales; Richard.Baker@gov.wales; Amanda.Mark@gov.wales; Andrew.Jones2@gov.wales  
**Subject:** Ukrainian Refugee Crisis - Sent on behalf of Beverly Owen  
**Importance:** High

**Sent on behalf of Beverly Owen**

NANTYGLLO & BLAINA

15 MAR 2022

TOWN COUNCIL

Good morning

The Russian attack on Ukraine has caused the displacement of many tens of thousands of Ukrainian people from their homes and marked the onset of what could be the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe for decades.

We understand that we all want to do what we can to help those who have been displaced in their hour of need. You will also be aware that the First Minister has already announced £4m of financial and humanitarian aid will be provided, along with medical supplies from our NHS.

However, as a Nation of Sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers we in Wales need to do everything we can to support the Ukrainian people by providing a warm welcome and safety for those seeking refuge from the horrendous circumstances they find themselves in.

Our welcome of refugees and asylum seekers needs to include safe and secure accommodation. These needs will be immediate as well as longer term, and sit alongside the challenges we all face including from rising numbers of people at risk of homelessness currently in temporary accommodation across Wales (c7500 at end December 2021) and the continued high number of further presentations.

Working together during the pandemic shows that we can find solutions to unprecedented challenges. However, supporting those who come to Wales will need us to be more creative, especially as we expect the majority of those who join us, certainly in the first instance, to be women and children.

We need to explore all options, including existing empty residential dwellings/ buildings; vacant sites, which could accommodate temporary dwellings; buildings in general that could be readily converted for residential accommodation or used for other purposes in supporting relocated refugees; and finally any new ideas/suggestions you may have to meet the coming challenges. For LA representatives to be aware, Welsh Government officials are already working closely with Directors of Housing and a copy of the email issued to LA Chief Executives and Heads of Housing

is attached. The email also included an accommodation schedule to be completed. The deadline for this return to be completed is close tomorrow, with responses being issued to

[UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales](mailto:UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales)

I am sure many of you are already engaged on this request. But I would also be grateful to receive any other ideas or options, which you or colleagues within your sectors feel can assist with the current crisis. We would be particularly interested in plots of land that could easily be used to accommodate modular housing/residential accommodation. I would be grateful if you could submit any ideas/proposals to Richard ([richard.baker@gov.wales](mailto:richard.baker@gov.wales)), who will co-ordinate the responses within Welsh Government.

Given the recognised urgency, I would be extremely grateful if responses could be submitted by close Friday 18 March.

Ystadau Cymru Team

[YstadauCymru@gov.wales](mailto:YstadauCymru@gov.wales)

Sganiwyd y neges hon am bob feirws hysbys wrth iddi adael Llywodraeth Cymru. Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn cymryd o ddifrif yr angen i ddiogelu eich data. Os cysylltwch â Llywodraeth Cymru, mae ein [hysbysiad preifatrwydd](#) yn esbonio sut rydym yn defnyddio eich gwybodaeth a sut rydym yn diogelu eich preifatrwydd. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn anfon ateb yn Gymraeg i ohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi. On leaving the Welsh Government this email was scanned for all known viruses. The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our [Privacy Notice](#) explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy. We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**To Local Authority Chief Executives and Heads of Housing, RSL CEOs.  
Copied to WLGA**

Colleagues

Thank you for your engagement this week on responding to the crisis in Ukraine and especially to those of you who have been in touch since.

As you will appreciate things are moving extremely quickly although we still lack clarity on significant issues.

As highlighted earlier in the week, we need to understand what stock may be available for immediate use and what stock you hold that may be able to quickly be bought into use. Understanding what, where and what level of works might be needed to bring into use will enable us to identify the number of families and individuals we may be able to support and accommodate quickly.

Please provide information as per the attached spreadsheet at your earliest convenience, ideally returning by email to [UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales](mailto:UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales) by close of play **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>**. We will shortly also be looking for your input on slightly longer term options, but for the moment please focus on providing us with details of any accommodation which might be able to be in use within the next 12 weeks. We appreciate not all information might be available; please send what you can with other information to follow if necessary.

The spreadsheet asks you to indicate an outline of the works needed to bring the property into use. Whilst we should be ensuring that properties are safe, warm, free from hazards and suitable, we appreciate that they will not necessarily meet WHQS. We are exploring temporary accommodation standards related to this and will be working with the housing sector to rapidly develop these.

A separate exercise via relationship managers will explore hotel and B&B availability - please do not include such provision in this exercise.

Many thanks for your ongoing support, should you have any queries please contact us at [UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales](mailto:UkraineResponse.Housing@gov.wales)

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

15 MAR 2022

TOWN COUNCIL

**Tracy**

**From:** Tracy Gilmartin <tgilmartin@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2022 16:09  
**To:** Tracy Gilmartin  
**Subject:** FW: Co-ordinating Volunteers to respond to emergency situations in Wales/  
Cyflynu Gwirfoddolwyr i ymateb i argyfyngau yng Nghymru

For your information / Ar gyfer eich gwybodaeth

**From:** Cinzia Yates <Cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2022 15:40  
**To:** Tracy Gilmartin <tgilmartin@onevoicewales.wales>  
**Subject:** Co-ordinating Volunteers to respond to emergency situations in Wales/ Cyflynu Gwirfoddolwyr i ymateb i argyfyngau yng Nghymru

We are holding a focus group to inform the development of an Emergency Planning Framework for Wales for the British Red Cross that covers the Statutory, Private and Voluntary sectors. The focus group is available to book via EventBrite and we would be delighted if you or one of your colleagues could attend:

Welsh Framework for Co-ordinating Emergency Volunteers: Statutory and Private Sector (March 29, 1pm)

If you are unable to attend we would be happy to enter into one-to-one structured conversations in order to explore in more detail any thoughts you have. Please contact [cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk](mailto:cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk) to arrange a conversation.

We also have a survey which we would like you to complete [here](#)


For further information please see below or check out our webpage [here](#) / [yma](#)

British Red Cross, with the support of the Wales Community Resilience Forum, has secured strategic grant funding from WCVA/Welsh Government's Volunteering Wales Fund. Working with the breadth of organisations in Wales who support, plan or deliver emergency volunteering activities it is intended to co-produce a framework that achieves effective collaboration between organisations. This is intended to improve outcomes for both emergency volunteers, and those who benefit from their activities. By emergency services we mean the humanitarian services directly linked to an emergency, rather than wider support for health, social care and independent living.

British Red Cross have appointed [Richard Newton Consulting](#) to co-produce this framework with the sector in Wales, building on the sector's direct experiences, and the transfer of knowledge from other areas of the UK.

Mae'r Groes Goch Brydeinig, gyda chymorth Fforwm Cymru Gydnerth, wedi sicrhau cyllid grant strategol oddi wrth CGGC / Cronfa Gwirfoddoli yng Nghymru, Llywodraeth Cymru. Gan weithio gyda'r ystod eang o sefydliadau yng Nghymru sy'n cefnogi, cynllunio neu drosglwyddo gweithgareddau gwirfoddoli mewn argyfwng, bwriedir cyd-gynhyrchu fframwaith fydd yn sicrhau cydweithio effeithlon rhwng sefydliadau. Bwriedir i hyn wella deilliannau ar gyfer gwirfoddolwyr brys, a'r bobl hynny fydd yn elwa o'u gwaith. Wrth gyfeirio at wasanaethau brys, rydym yn golygu'r gwasanaethau dyngarol sy'n gysylltiedig gydag argyfwng yn uniongyrchol, yn hytrach na chefnogaeth ehangach i ieuchyd, gofal cymdeithasol a byw'n annibynnol.

Mae'r Groes Goch Brydeinig wedi penodi cwmni [Richard Newton Consulting](#) i gyd-gynhyrchu'r fframwaith hwn gyda'r sector yng Nghymru, gan ehangu ar brofiadau uniongyrchol y sector, a throsglwyddo gwybodaeth o ardaloedd eraill y DU.

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## Welsh Framework for co-ordinating Emergency Volunteers: Statutory Sector

by RNC

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### Date and time

Tue, 29 March 2022  
13:00 – 14:30 BST



### Location

Online event



### **Co-ordinating Volunteers to respond to emergency situations in Wales/Cydllynu Gwirfoddolwyr i ymateb i argyfyngau yng Nghymru** **About this event**

The significant community response to the Covid 19 pandemic, alongside other emergencies; has highlighted both the value of volunteering, and the need for effective collaboration between third sector, private sector and public sector bodies (including those with statutory duties to response to an emergency).

British Red Cross, with the support of the Wales Community Resilience Forum, has secured strategic grant funding from WCVA/Welsh Government's Volunteering Wales Fund. Working with the breadth of organisations in Wales who support, plan or deliver emergency volunteering activities it is intended to co-produce a framework that achieves effective collaboration between organisations. This is intended to improve outcomes for both emergency volunteers, and those who benefit from their activities. By emergency services

we mean the humanitarian services directly linked to an emergency, rather than wider support for health, social care and independent living.

British Red Cross have appointed Richard Newton Consulting to co-produce this framework with the sector in Wales, building on the sector's direct experiences, and the transfer of knowledge from other areas of the UK. This relationship will be discussed at this focus group to better understand the needs of the sector.

We would be delighted to enter into one-to-one structured conversations in order to explore in more detail any thoughts you have. Please contact [cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk](mailto:cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk) to arrange a conversation.

We are also conducting a survey for both statutory, private and voluntary sector organisations here.

<http://www.richard-newton.co.uk/brceng/>

Mae'r ymateb cymunedol sylweddol i'r pandemig Covid 19, ynghyd ag argyfyngau eraill, wedi amlygu gwerth gwirfoddoli yn ogystal â'r angen am gydweithio effeithlon rhwng cyrff y trydydd sector, y sector preifat a'r sector cyhoeddus (yn cynnwys rhai sydd â dyletswyddau statudol i ymateb i argyfyngau).

Mae'r Groes Goch Brydeinig, gyda chymorth Fforwm Cymru Gydnerth, wedi sicrhau cyllid grant strategol oddi wrth CGGC / Cronfa Gwirfoddoli yng Nghymru, Llywodraeth Cymru. Gan weithio gyda'r ystod eang o sefydliadau yng Nghymru sy'n cefnogi, cynllunio neu drosglwyddo gweithgareddau gwirfoddoli mewn argyfwng, bwriedir cyd-gynhyrchu fframwaith fydd yn sicrhau cydweithio effeithlon rhwng sefydliadau. Bwriedir i hyn wella deilliannau ar gyfer gwirfoddolwyr brys, a'r bobl hynny fydd yn elwa o'u gwaith. Wrth gyfeirio at wasanaethau brys, rydym yn golygu'r gwasanaethau dyngarol sy'n gysylltiedig gydag argyfwng yn uniongyrchol, yn hytrach na chefnogaeth ehangach i iechyd, gofal cymdeithasol a byw'n annibynnol.

Mae'r Groes Goch Brydeinig wedi penodi cwmni Richard Newton Consulting i gyd-gynhyrchu'r fframwaith hwn gyda'r sector yng Nghymru, gan ehangu ar brofiadau uniongyrchol y sector, a throsglwyddo gwybodaeth o ardaloedd eraill y DU. Trafodir y berthynas hon yn y grŵp ffocws er mwyn deall anghenion y sector yn well.

Byddem yn falch iawn i gael sgysiau un-i-un strwythuredig er mwyn archwilio'n fanylach unrhyw feddyliau sydd gennych. Cysyllter â [cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk](mailto:cinzia@richard-newton.co.uk) i drefnu sgwrs.

Rydym hefyd yn cynnal holiadur ar gyfer sefydliadau sector statudol, preifat a gwirfoddol yma.

<http://www.richard-newton.co.uk/brcwym/>



## Tags

Online Events

Online Networking

Online Charities & Causes Networking



## Share with friends



## Date and time

Tue, 29 March 2022

13:00 – 14:30 BST



Item no 7b

BLAENAU GWENT FOODBANK  
Church on the Rise  
54 Beaufort Rise  
Beaufort  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 5JQ  
Tel. No: 07812425130

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

- 8 MAR 2022

TOWN COUNCIL

Email: [info@blaenau-gwent.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@blaenau-gwent.foodbank.org.uk)  
Website: [www.blaenau-gwent.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.foodbank.org.uk)

7<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council  
Council Offices  
Blaina Institute  
High Street  
Blaina  
NP13 3BN

FAO: Tracy Hughes – Town Clerk

Dear Sir / Madam

#### FINANCIAL DONATIONS

I write to thank the council for your generous support throughout this Covid season helping us to support local families in crisis in the Nantyglo and Blaina area and confirm the following amounts received for the various financial years for your records.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> Mch 2021

06 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2020	£162.85
14 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2020	£200.00
07 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2020	£200.00
28 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2020	£200.00
09 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2020	£200.00
27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2021	£200.00
04 <sup>th</sup> Mch 2021	£200.00

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> Mch 2022

19 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2021	£600.00
25 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	£200.00
10 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2021	£200.00
15 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2021	£200.00
17 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2021	£200.00
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2021	£200.00
16 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2021	£400.00
16 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2021	£200.00
20 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2022	£200.00
10 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2022	£200.00

Total £1362.85

Total £2600.00

For your information we have been able to support local families in your area as follows:

Number of Families	Number of Adults	Number of Children	Total Fed	Amount of meals catered for
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021				
251	385	268	653	5,877
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022				
238	380	228.	608	5,472
TOTAL HELPED DURING COVID SEASON				
489	765	496	1261	11,349

Estimated amount of food distributed to your area

2021 6.2 tons

2022. 6.0 tons

I trust this information will be adequate for your records but any queries please do get in touch and again we thank you so much for your donations during this Covid season.

All the very best

R. Wayne Evans  
Blaenau Gwent Foodbank Management Team  
Tel 07812425130

This foodbank is a Trussell Trust franchise and run in partnership with local churches, facilitated and managed by the charity Blaenau Gwent Community Aid No. 1191264 Registered in England and Wales.  
A Local Network of Foodbank Distribution Centres in the County of Blaenau Gwent



We're inviting views to inform the Auditor General's future audit work programme for 2022-23 and beyond.

**On behalf of the people of Wales, we examine public spending and identify ways to improve public services.**

A lot has changed in the environment for public services. Public services were already under severe pressure due to austerity and the COVID-19 pandemic has only served to exacerbate those pressures.

It is imperative that our audit focus evolves to reflect how public services are organising themselves to respond to the challenges we face.

We will use three key themes to help shape the work programme – a changing world, the ongoing pandemic, and transforming service delivery.

**You can read more about our plans by looking at our Work Programme Consultation via our consultation web page.** You'll be able to respond by using our electronic form or by downloading a printable version that you can complete and send into us.

**If you have any questions about our consultation, please email [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)**

Thank you in advance for your feedback.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

- The Auditor General is the independent statutory external auditor of the devolved Welsh public sector. He is responsible for the annual audit of the majority of the public money spent in Wales, including the £24 billion of funds that are voted on annually by the Welsh Parliament. Elements of this funding are passed by the Welsh Government to the NHS in Wales (over £9 billion) and to local government (over £6 billion).
- The audit independence of the Auditor General is of paramount importance. He is appointed by the Queen, and his audit work is not subject to direction or control by the Welsh Parliament or government.
- The Wales Audit Office (WAO) is a corporate body consisting of a nine member statutory Board which employs staff and provides other resources to the Auditor General, who is also the Board's Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. The Board monitors and advises the Auditor General, regarding the exercise of his functions.
- Audit Wales is the umbrella name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office. Audit Wales is a registered trademark, but it is not a legal entity in itself.

**Archwilio Cymru / Audit Wales**  
[www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)

You are receiving this e-bulletin because we need to communicate with you to publicise our work in exercise of our supplementary powers, under sections 9 and 14 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013, which is in the performance of a task in the public interest.

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NANTYGLO & BLAINA  
- 31 JAN 2022  
TOWN COUNCIL

## Coronavirus – New Rules for Wales for Alert Level 0

This document is an update of the 'Coronavirus –  
New Rules for Wales from 28 January'  
document published in February 2022



This is an Easy read document from the Welsh Government

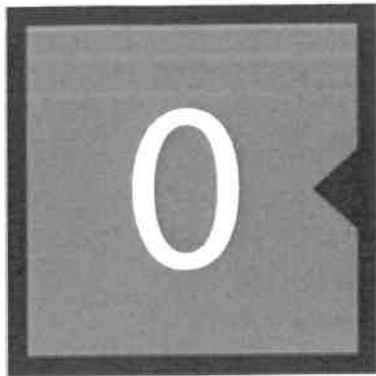
Published February 2022

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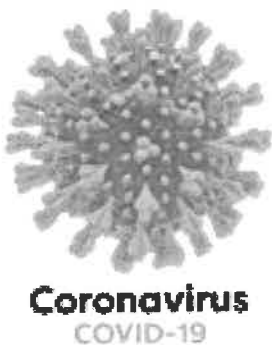
# Introduction



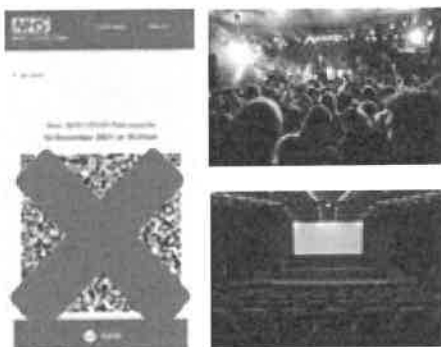
Since 28 January Wales has been in Coronavirus Alert Level 0. This means that most of the rules about where we can go and who we can meet – indoors and outdoors ended.

From 18 February some more rules will end.

Here is the link to information about what you can do in Alert level 0 [gov.wales/alert-level-0](https://gov.wales/alert-level-0).



**But remember:** Coronavirus has not gone away and everyone must still work together to help stop the spread of the virus.



## COVID Pass

From 18 February you don't have to show the NHS COVID pass to go to indoor and outdoor events, and venues like cinemas, theatres and nightclubs.



But you will still need COVID pass for travelling abroad.



## What we **MUST** still do

From 28 February you must only wear a face mask (if you are able to) on public transport, and some indoor places –  
in shops or visiting your doctors, dentist, hospital or a care home.  
This is still the law in Wales.



If you have signs of coronavirus you must self-isolate and get a test.

## We all have our part to play

Here are things we can do to Keep Wales Safe:



- Make sure you're double jabbed and get your booster jab

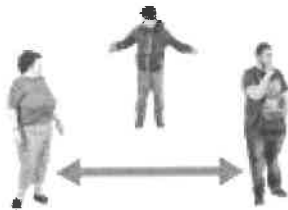
- Work from home if you can.

- Do a lateral flow test before you meet other people





- Meeting outside is safer than inside.



- Keep your distance when you can.



- Wear a mask.



- Wash your hands lots of time during the day.



## Further information

For all the latest information  
on COVID-19 in Wales go to  
[gov.wales/coronavirus](https://gov.wales/coronavirus)

cyngor ar  
bopeth

citizens  
advice

Caerffili  
Blaenau Gwent  
Caerphilly  
Blaenau Gwent

Item no. 7e.

# News

March 2022

CITIZENS ADVICE CAERPHILLY BLAENAU GWENT  
**21<sup>ST</sup>**

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

14 MAR 2022

TOWN COUNCIL

# ANNIVERSARY

**JUNE 16TH, 2022**

**Turn to page two for more information**



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**[www.citizensadvicecbg.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicecbg.org.uk)**

To receive this publication in an alternate format, or to contribute, email  
[Emma.Gray@cacbg.org.uk](mailto:Emma.Gray@cacbg.org.uk)

## A message from our CEO

.....

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent, as we know it now, was officially 21 in September/October 2021. The anniversary marks the merger of the bureaux in the county of Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent into one entity.

Unfortunately, we could not celebrate due to Covid so we are hosting a 21 and 12 months anniversary event this year. The past 21 years has seen the organisation grow exponentially from having a handful of staff to over 200. On June 16th we have an event planned to make sure we celebrate our successes and highlight the challenges faced as we move out of Covid restrictions.

We will be welcoming the Chief Executive of National Citizens Advice Dame Claire Moriarty and Director of Citizens Advice Cymru Rebecca Woolley to help us mark this milestone. Partners will be invited to a celebration at Llancaiach Fawr Manor. We will keep you posted on plans in the next newsletter. In the meantime, keep an eye out for your invites.

# **QUARTER THREE IN NUMBERS**

**BETWEEN OCT 1 AND DEC 31 2021**

**ACROSS CAERPHILLY AND BLAENAU GWENT**

**WE HELPED**

**2,342**

**PEOPLE**

**TO SOLVE**

**11,733**

**PROBLEMS**

**INCREASED INCOMES BY**

**£811,539**

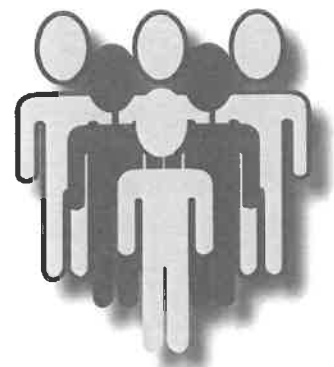
**WRITTEN OFF DEBTS OF**

**£657,725**

**OUR CAERPHILLY CONTACT CENTRE  
GENERALIST AND SPECIALIST SERVICES**

**ADVISED 76,929**

**PEOPLE FROM ACROSS  
WALES AND ENGLAND**



# The end of an era at CACBG

March signals an end of an era for us at Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent (CACBG) as our Operations Manager Ann Matthews retires.

The day she began her career with us at CACBG will be forever etched in her memory. She arrived home, following her first day as a volunteer, to find images of two aeroplanes engulfed in flames in the Twin Towers.

Ann said: "I joined the bureau on the day of the 9/11 attacks, firstly as a volunteer to gain experience and enhance my CV, ready to return to employment after bringing up my three children.

"Within eight months I was overjoyed when I secured my first paid post, working as an Outreach Adviser."

Ann grasped every opportunity available to her and developed the skills and experience to work her way to becoming an Advice Session Supervisor at the former Caerphilly Town Centre office.

"When we relocated to the Caerphilly Contact Centre, I led on the Adviceline Cymru and Proof of Concept project, which evolved into the National Adviceline project. I then worked on developing and delivering services in partnership with the British Legion."

The past decade has seen Ann lead the operational side of the business, responsible for our Advice Service Managers, the volunteers service, as well as expanding our services in partnership with others.

Ann said: "I feel it's important that people can access free and confidential advice. Until Covid hit I regularly advised clients on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. I really enjoyed this and felt it kept me in touch and up to date with what our clients were having issues with".



Although sad to leave us, Ann is taking away many happy memories and leaving us to try and live by her motto.

"Believe everything is possible and always try to see the good in people and most of all be kind."

Chief Executive Simon Ellington said the skills, knowledge and experience she has shared with colleagues has helped us become the largest Citizens Advice in the whole of Wales.

"Ann has been an integral part in influencing change and developing new services that meet the needs of local communities," he said. "Always keen to support staff, Ann has shared a wealth of knowledge and skills with teams across the organisation to make sure that the highest quality of advice is being delivered. When Covid hit, Ann responded to the changes that needed to be implemented quickly and effectively with strong leadership and support for the management team. Her contribution has always gone above and beyond what is expected.

"Much as we will miss Ann, we know she has lots of plans for the future and we wish her all the best.

# Community support for CACBG praised by Ceri

***"It is an important organisation and is needed even more as we see Covid measures lifted and the full impact is seen."***

We have a new Senior Manager at CACBG ready to help us drive forward our vision for the future of advice services. And what better way to introduce Ceri Morgan, our new Operations Manager, than a visit to one of our local communities to pick up a generous donation.

Ceri (pictured left) joined Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council at their Borough in Bloom presentation to accept a cheque for £1,160. The council had been holding the money raised for CACBG as part of the Mayor's nominated charity fund, more than 18 months ago.

Councillor Ken Jones (pictured right) held the Mayor's position when the pandemic hit and has served two terms in office. Councillor Jones joined the current Mayor Councillor Des Hillman to celebrate the winning gardens and give Ceri a cheque of £1,160.

Thanking the community of Nantyglo and Blaina for their generosity, Ceri said: "We were inundated with people needing our services at CACBG both before and during the pandemic.

"And as we are returning to normality we

will continue to support large numbers of people as the cost of living impacts on our local communities. Funding has become very difficult to secure so all donations are appreciated. They go towards helping deliver services across Nantyglo and Blaina.

"We thank Councillor Ken Jones for nominating us as a chosen charity. And we are grateful to the Town Council and members of the local community for their support in raising and donating money during a very challenging period."

Councillor Jones recognised the value that our advice brings to the community that he represents.

"In my opinion Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent does such a wonderful job in the area helping with all manner of problems," he said. "When problems get too heavy for people, they pick up the phone and get advice and guidance. The problem is lifted off their shoulders. It is an important organisation and is needed even more as we see Covid measures lifted and the full impact is seen."

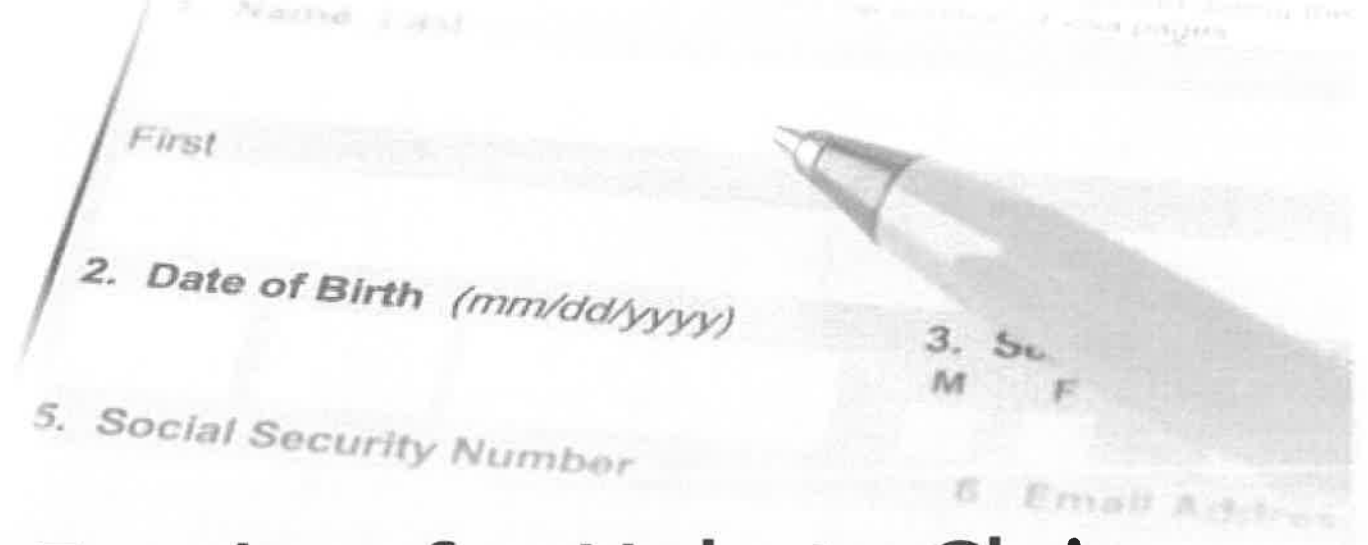
If you or someone you know needs our help, call us for free on 08082 787 935.

# Future funding secured

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent (CACBG) has successfully secured two funding bids to deliver much needed services locally and nationally. We received news in the New Year that we will continue to deliver the Advicelink Cymru service, funded by Welsh Government's Single Advice Fund and the Help To Claim service, funded by the DWP, both locally and nationally.

This means that we can continue to deliver advice in the heart of communities and secure the futures of our workforce. CACBG's Chief Executive Simon Ellington has praised staff for their commitment to delivering high quality advice during challenging times.

"We have successfully secured both funding streams because of the hard work of our staff," he said. "Both in our local communities and nationally. The impact of securing this funding is far reaching. As well as helping the most vulnerable people in society, we are continuing to support the economies of Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent. We welcome the news that we can continue to deliver the Advicelink Cymru and Help To Claim projects."



## Funding for Help to Claim

Staff based at our Bargoed office will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of people applying for Universal Credit.

CACBG will deliver the Department for Work and Pensions 'Help to Claim' support in partnership with national Citizens Advice. Since 2019, Help to Claim has supported over half a million people, with nine in 10 clients rating their overall experience as good or very good. The service will now run until March 2023.

Simon said our trained advisers provide advice for anyone who requires support to

make a new Universal Credit claim.

He said: "Our advisers can help fill in forms, give advice on what information to collect and how to go about it.

"All support is given remotely by phone, webchat and video call. We have seen first hand the difference our advisers make in helping local people access Universal Credit since 2019.

"As people continue to deal with the long term impacts of the Covid pandemic, this funding has never been so important."

# SAF way of delivering advice

In 2019, the Welsh Government changed the way they commission advice services in Wales. They launched the Single Advice Fund (SAF) and invited bids from organisations to deliver in-person and remote advice, improving access to services.

Citizens Advice Cymru successfully secured the funding to deliver Advicelink Cymru across Wales. CACBG was awarded funding to deliver a face to face service locally and a telephone service across the whole country.

In February this year Minister for Social Justice Jane Hutt announced that the Senedd Parliament funding has been extended until 2024. Simon Ellington, Chief Executive, said this means our generalist advice and our specialist Welfare Benefits Debt advice will continue to be available to those who need help in Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent at our Bargoed office and outreach venues, when we resume in-person services.

“Our Caerphilly Contact Centre will continue to deliver the Advicelink Cymru telephone service to people across Wales,” he said. “The funding is helping us to deliver services in a range of ways, to meet demand and help people access free, independent and impartial advice in a way that suits them. This new approach to delivering advice services, mixing face to face, telephone, video and email was introduced to meet the challenges of the pandemic, but makes us more accessible and flexible and is here to stay.”

***“This new approach of mixing face to face, telephone, video and email was introduced to meet the challenges of the pandemic.”***

## Real stories, real impacts

.....

**A**vulnerable disabled 47-year-old man with a range of long-term health conditions was able to see us in-person safely for support to complete a Personal Independence Payment award review.

Due to the Covid pandemic, our generalist outreach drop-in, in-person services had been suspended at community events across Blaenau Gwent.

However, we understand that some of our most vulnerable clients still need the service and put measures in place to take advice to those who need it most.


Phillip (not his real name) had limited

mobility, due to conditions such as sciatica and a prolapse disc in his back, as well as dexterity issues caused by arthritis in his hands.

His mental health issues as well as dyslexia meant he was unable to fill in the forms without in-person support.

Following a Covid risk assessment, we were able to offer Phillip an appointment at our Bargoed office.

In Mid-December Phillip contacted us to say that following the advice he has been awarded the enhanced rate of both the daily living and mobility elements of PIP.



***"When you are serving, all of this is taken out of your hands. Decisions are made for you and you get on with the job."***

# Taking advice to veterans

The financial demands of life out of uniform can overwhelm armed forces veterans as the majority of day-to-day bills are taken care of while they are serving.

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent is working with the Armed Forces Covenant to take advice to former military personnel and help them manage their money and maximise their incomes.

Lisa Rawlings, Gwent Region Armed Forces Covenant Lead met with our Advice Services Managers Lucy Williams and Keith Thorne to help us understand the issues faced by those Lisa represents.

"I am a veteran and I, like the vast majority of former military personnel, was overwhelmed with day-to-day living costs when I left," said Lisa. "I had no idea things like council tax were paid over ten months and the basic cost of living.

"When you are serving, all of this is taken out of your hands. Decisions are made for you and you get on with the job."

A large number of ex-armed forces personnel amass debts as a result of trying to manage their finances and Lisa sees this increasing as

the cost of living crisis hits households.

Debt Services Manager Keith Thorne was able to explain the advice and support his teams can offer from a number of hubs run by Lisa across Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent.

He said: "We have specialist financial capability advisers who can offer practical support such as budgeting, covering priority bills and we can work with them to deal with any current debts.

"As lockdown measures are easing, we are really looking forward to going back out into the community and building our partnership with the Armed Forces Covenant for the benefit of ex-military personnel."

Lucy's teams are able to offer further specialist advice to help maximise incomes.

Lucy said: "We are able to look at what other help Veterans could receive. We can calculate benefits entitlements to ensure service users are maximising their income as far as possible.

"We don't just look at the veteran, we look at the overall household to make sure they are receiving what they are entitled to.

"We can also provide information on a wide range of issues from housing to family."

# Left in the cold by energy hikes



**E**nergy poverty has become a hot topic across the UK with the price cap announcements. We at Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent are seeing how this is directly affecting people from all walks of life. In the past four months, energy advice has consistently remained the third top issue we have been helping with.

The need for energy advice rose by 63% in 2021. In 2020 we helped 109 people but in 2021 this increased to 178 people. With the average bill set to rise by more than £600 we anticipate that we will see more people who feel like they are being left out in the cold.

Pam Thomas, Advice Service Manager responsible for Energy, said of the 63 helped, her team gave 25 people energy advice to help with 35 issues in the first month of this year.

"We have given a range of advice relating to keeping warm and well," she said. "Some have needed emergency energy vouchers to top up gas and electricity. The food shop isn't stretching as far, bills are going up and many simply can't cover their essential costs."

"Our trained advisers have offered tips on conserving energy, insulating rooms, preventing drafts and more. We are also working with Warm Wales to provide more support."

Debt Services Manager Keith Thorne said of the 63 people who presented with an energy issue, his team has helped 38 people.

"The debt service has seen an increase in the number of people coming through for help with fuel debts," he said.

"In the first month of 2022 we helped 38 people with 74 issues. 16 of these people had advice to deal with existing debts."

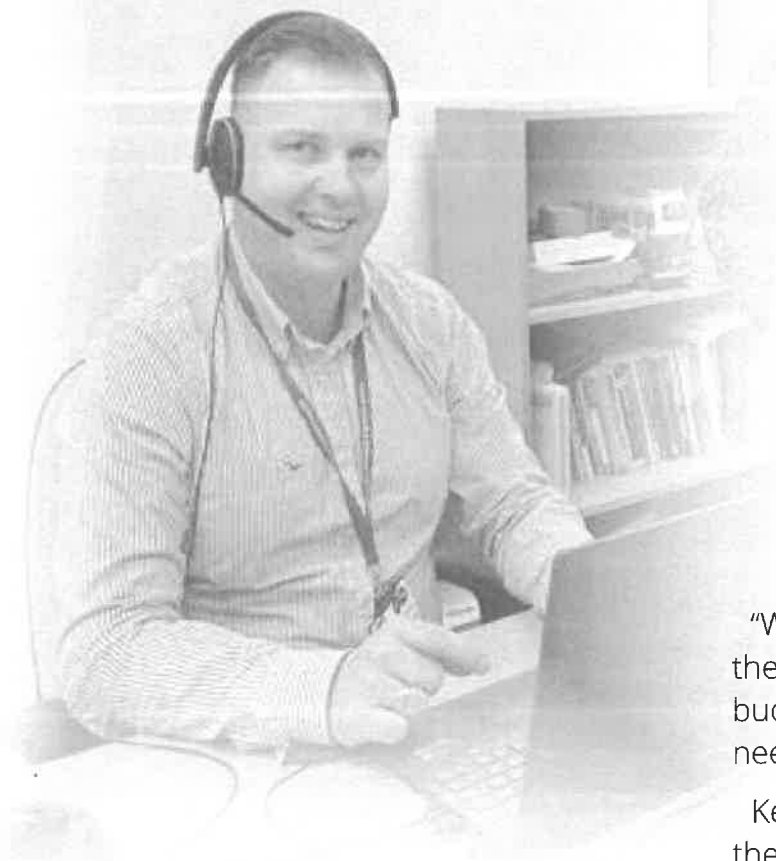
"We're incredibly worried about how people on the lowest incomes will cope. Our advisers are telling us many are already facing desperate choices between heating and eating."

"Given what we're seeing through our frontline services, it's clear targeted support will be needed for households on the lowest incomes."

"This is an unprecedented situation and the scale of support provided by the Government isn't enough to support the people we are helping daily."



# Debt message struck a chord



***“While the moratorium on collections led to a fall in demand, this has already bounced back.”***

Our work around debt and financial capability struck a chord with the team at Policy in Practice. So much so, they asked us to lead a webinar to share best practises with around 300 organisations from across the UK.

The company behind the Benefit Calculator social policy software, which helps work out our clients' welfare entitlements accurately and in real-time, read our Impact Reports and were eager to find out more.

Debt Services Manager Keith Thorne (pictured) was asked by Policy in Practice to host a webinar in January to offer an insight into debt issues and possible solutions.

He said: “Debt has an impact on the overall well-being of people who are struggling to manage their finances.

“We have been using the Policy in Practice Benefits Calculator to help our clients to maximise their incomes and help them understand why they found themselves in debt.

“We don't just deal with the debt, we offer them financial capability support to help them budget better and help them alleviate the need for debt advice in the future.”

Keith was able to illustrate the impact that the Government support had on those with debts.

“The moratorium on debt collection gave people a breathing space but we are now seeing a resurgence in debt cases,” said Keith.

“Prevention is better than cure. Helping people to learn to budget and manage their money more effectively does improve a person's overall well-being.”

Attendees found some of the data presented a very bleak read. Policy in Practice founder Deven Ghelani said their analysis predicts that the situation is likely to become worse in April.

During the webinar he tweeted: “The statistic from @CitAdviceCBG shows that while the moratorium on collections led to a fall in demand for debt advice last year, this has already bounced back.

“Our policy analysis finds that this will only get worse in April. There were some highlights. The stories of the positive impact that CACBG and other debt advisers on the frontline are having on preventing homelessness, and on improving health outcomes.”

# Getting to the root cause of hunger



In three months our new partnership with the Trussell Trust has seen our Caerphilly Contact Centre team help almost 1,000 people increase incomes by more than £110,000.

We are working with the Trussell Trust to run a free helpline which can give personalised advice and support to address the underlying causes of hardship across England and Wales.

We have 15 dedicated advisers on hand to help people and households from across the UK facing hardship to maximise their income.

Lisa McLain, Head of Digital Services, explained that people who are struggling to pay for food can ring the helpline for support.

"But the team goes one step further," said Lisa. "They explore the person's current circumstances to identify whether there is any further support we can provide."

Lowrie Evans (pictured) has been working on the project since January and has been helping offer support which is tailored to the specific person.

"People might be calling for help to feed themselves and their families," she said. "But we try to get to the root cause of why they are struggling to make ends meet.


"During our calls, we ask for detailed information such as who they live with, if they are cohabiting/married, employment status and what benefits they receive if any, to mention a few.

"We might identify that the client is experiencing fuel poverty and needs help with their suppliers and managing their bills. Or that they are entitled to certain benefits or reductions in council tax. The ultimate aim is to bring the clients out of hardship and improve their overall well-being."

Since November a total of 989 people have received help with 1,998 issues and seen their incomes increase by a total of £113,134. Of these people, 838 people received support from a food bank, 369 were given benefits advice and 149 needed debt advice. Of those who needed debt advice, 60 people had fuel debts and 34 had council tax arrears.

"As the cost of living increases and the energy price hikes take hold, we anticipate that the number of people who come through the helpline will increase," added Lisa.

"This is why we have expanded the team from five to 15, to meet this expected demand."



***"If I could just make one positive change to a client's life, I would feel like I have accomplished my role."***

## Offering Kacie a Kickstart

The Kickstart apprenticeship scheme is paying dividends and has seen trainees developing the skills and knowledge to deliver generalist advice.

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent's partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions Kickstart scheme, has grown since we launched in July of last year.

Kacey Richards was the first to have successfully completed the six-month paid placement which saw her developing the skills and knowledge to deliver generalist advice over the telephone.

Arwel Williams, aged 24, joined us in September. He has is enjoying his training and is gaining valuable skills by shadowing our trained advisers and providing some advice by webchat. We have also welcomed two more Kickstart placements to the organisation.

Kacie Thomas and Rhiannon White began their placements in December. Kacie, aged 24, and Rhinannon, aged 21, and are eleven-weeks into their training.

Almost three-months into their placements

and Kacie and Rhianon have completed several online modules. They are now in the position to start applying what they have learned in role plays with their training mentors.

Kacie said she's enjoying working through the training but was a bit apprehensive of the role play at first.

The 24-year-old from Fochriw said. "I have enjoyed my experience so far throughout the trainee advisor training programme and have learnt so many new things during my time with Citizens Advice. I have covered modules such as GDPR, Benefits, Debt, Consumer.

"I applied for this scheme because I wanted to use my skills to help people but more to gain new skills, knowledge and meet new people.

"So far I have learnt that I want to progress a career in working with the public, making a difference in people's lives and having a positive impact on the community.

"If I could just make one positive change to a client's life I would feel like I have accomplished my role"

# Read all about it...

**E**ver wondered what day in the life of a Debt Adviser is like? A national newspaper did and who better to ask than a Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent Debt Adviser.

When the i newspaper got in touch with our national Citizens Advice colleagues to ask if we could shed some light on the impacts of the cost of living crisis across the country, Ellie Matthews (pictured) was more than happy to help. Ellie works from our Caerphilly Contact Centre delivering specialist debt advice to people across Wales and England in partnership with the Money and Pensions Service.

She and her colleagues see first hand the impacts that the rise in the cost of living directly has on a person's overall well-being.



Ellie was keen to show that each day is different because every person they speak to has issues unique to them.

She said: "I was asked when and why I joined, a bit about my team and basically the good, the bad and the memorable bits about working as a debt adviser.

"It is so hard to depict a typical day in the life of a Specialist Debt Adviser because there is no such thing as a typical day. Our team deals with calls from across Wales and England. Different communities have their own challenges, as are the challenges of those that help.

"During one call we could be speaking with a woman who is in debt because of historical and current domestic abuse at home. In the next call I might be talking to a young family who are struggling to pay for food and energy costs. It can be difficult to listen to the hardships our clients are facing. What motivates us is the knowledge that we have played a part in improving their situation by helping them manage their finances."

Debt doesn't discriminate. Even the most savvy of spenders who have always managed personal loans, credit card bills and other

forms of credit, can find themselves in financial hardship.

"A change in circumstances can trigger a spiral into debt," added Ellie. "Some people have been fortunate enough to have had long-term job security and spend to their means. If they suddenly become redundant or have an illness that prevents them from working, the income is no longer there to repay creditors.

"We can look at an individual's circumstances, look at the income and outgoings and work through a budget plan.

"There might be support available with energy costs, food bills as well as priority bills like Council Tax and rent. Just having that initial conversation with us can begin to ease the burdens of debt.

"I hope that the interview in the newspaper will encourage more people to pick up the phone and speak to us to find a way forward and improve their overall well-being."

You can read Ellie's full interview with i here <https://inews.co.uk/news/real-life/life-as-a-specialist-debt-adviser-citizens-advice-caerphilly-blaenau-gwent-1453847>

# Positive partnership working...

We are strengthening our partnership with Autistic Minds to make sure that those with Autism and/or a learning disability are receiving all the financial support they need to maintain independence.

Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent are committed to taking advice to the heart of communities. We are working with Caerphilly-based charity Autistic Minds to offer drop-in sessions for those they support.

Our plans to launch the outreach service in the late Autumn 2021 were scuppered by the pandemic. Now that measures have been eased we are hosting our first in-person outreach advice service in April.

Oliver Craner, our Advice Service Manager who leads on the project, said we are looking forward to launching these drop-ins in Spring.

"Forms can bewilder and frustrate people so we want to offer individuals a service where we can help them maximise their incomes for the benefit of their overall wellbeing," he said.

On April 25th, adviser David Williams will be able to offer 45 minute appointments to discuss what free, impartial advice we can offer.

Oliver said: "David has particular experience with helping people with Autism and/or a learning disability. He has helped many families across Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent by carrying out a full assessment, which is tailored to their individual needs.

"Every person is different and we fully understand that. We can offer an in-person appointment at the Autistic Minds Caerphilly



Hub or we can offer a virtual appointment using our Attend Anywhere platform.

"The staff at Autistic Minds have very kindly offered to support people to access this platform, which is safe, secure and very easy to use on a smartphone, tablet or laptop. This means that we can book appointments to follow up with people after the drop-ins by phone or video-call.

"We are grateful to Autistic Minds for helping us to deliver this much needed service in the community and look forward to building on this good work."

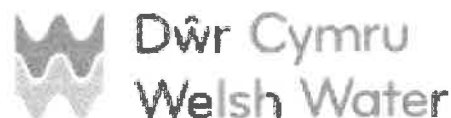
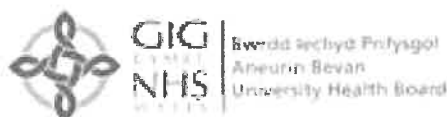
Autistic Minds offer a range of services and host similar advice drop-ins with other organisations. Drop-ins are promoted on their social media platforms with the next sessions being hosted by Caerphilly Sennedd Member Hefin David in March.

To book an appointment with CACBG on April 25th or another agency offering advice in partnership with Autistic Minds, please email [caerphilly@autisticminds.org](mailto:caerphilly@autisticminds.org)

**To speak to CACABG call 08082 787 935.**



**Caerffili  
Blaenau Gwent  
Caerphilly  
Blaenau Gwent**



Citizens Advice Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent is the largest Citizens Advice Service in Wales and one of the largest in the UK.

We are looking for people to join us as Trustees to help drive forward our visions for the future of advice services.

Interested in joining us? Visit [www.citizensadvicecbg.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicecbg.org.uk) or you can email [Simon.Ellington@cacbg.org.uk](mailto:Simon.Ellington@cacbg.org.uk)

Tracy

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**From:** Brannovic, Veronika <Veronika.Brannovic@torfaen.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 14 March 2022 08:49  
**Subject:** FW: Volunteer Day 20th March Parc Nant Y Waun: Tree planting

Hello all

Please see below information about an opportunity to help plant trees at Parc Nant-y-waun LNR on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Take care

Vee

**From:** Morgan, Nadine  
**Sent:** 09 March 2022 10:19  
**Subject:** Volunteer Day 20th March Parc Nant Y Waun: Tree planting

Morning All,

Friends of Parc Nant Y Waun are organising tree planting from 10am- 12pm on SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> March at Parc Nant Y Waun Local Nature Reserve, Nantyglo. The trees are being planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy.

If you are interested in participating, all you need is boots/wellies and appropriate outdoor clothing (and maybe your own gardening gloves). Tools are provided by the group. For more information please visit the facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/509138913889096/>

<https://www.parcnantywaun.org.uk/>

Kind Regards  
Nadine

*Nadine Morgan BSc (Hons)*  
*Ecologist/Ecolegydd*

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

Tel/ Fon: 01495 311556 (switchboard)  
Mobile/ Symudol: 07971 782998  
Email/E-bost: [Nadine.morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:Nadine.morgan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)  
Twitter: @BGECO\_Education

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Tracy

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**From:** Men's Den Blaenau Gwent <mensdenbg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 15 March 2022 19:38  
**To:** Men's Den Blaenau Gwent  
**Subject:** Men's Den (Blaenau Gwent)

**\*Blind copied to multiple recipients\***

Hi,  
Writing to let you know that Men's Den (Blaenau Gwent) will be starting face2face gatherings on Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of this month from 10.00 to 12.00.  
These gatherings will be held at;  
Blaina Community Sport Club,  
Surgery Rd.,  
Blaina.

There will be face masks and hand gel available for all who wish to use them, also, we are looking at the possibility of social distancing at the hall.

We are looking forward to welcoming current members and also to meet new ones.  
For those who are new to Men's Den (BG), I would like to share our new web site which gives information about the background and some of the activities we used to have;  
[www.mensdenbg.co.uk](http://www.mensdenbg.co.uk)

Best wishes,  
Rafi ABBAS  
Group Secretary,  
For & on behalf of Men's Den (BG)



# NANTYGLO & BLAINA TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF NANT-Y-GLO A BLAENAU

Council Offices, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina. NP13 3BN  
Swyddfar Cyngor, Sefydliad Blaenau, Y Stryd Fawr, Blaenau. NP13 3BN  
TEL: 01495 292817 e-mail: [clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@nantygloandblainatc.co.uk)

## Financial Regulations

DRAFT

These Financial Regulations were revised & adopted by the Council  
at its Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

Signed by:

Cllr D Hillman  
Town Mayor / Chairman

## Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council Financial Regulations Wales

1. General
2. Accounting and Audit (Internal and External)
3. Annual Estimates (Budget) and Forward Planning
4. Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend
5. Banking Arrangements and Authorisation of Payments
6. Instructions for the Making of Payments
7. Payment of Salaries
8. Loans and Investments
9. Income
10. Orders for Work, Goods and Services
11. Contracts
12. Payments under Contracts for Building or other Construction Works.
13. Stores and Equipment
14. Assets, Properties and Estates
15. Insurance
16. Charities
17. Risk Management
18. Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations

## 1. General

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2 The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4 These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5 At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6 Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7 Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute and may represent a breach in the Councillor's Code of Conduct.
- 1.8 The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office (*s.151 Local Government Act 1972*) to be appointed by the Council. [The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.]
- 1.9 The RFO:
  - acts under the policy direction of the Council;
  - administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines of behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

- maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments comply with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations and to prepare additional or management information, as the case may be, to be prepared for the Council from time to time.
- 1.11 The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate.
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12 The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include;
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the Council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13 The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding;
- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);
  - approving accounting statements;
  - approving an annual governance statement;
  - borrowing;
  - writing off bad debts;
  - addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full Council only.
- 1.14 In addition the Council must;
- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;

- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 39 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A practitioners' Guide* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

## **2. Accounting and Audit (Internal and External)**

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a Finance Committee member [or a cheque signatory] shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance Committee
- 2.3 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations.
- 2.4 The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its systems of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.

2.6 The internal auditor shall:

- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council;
- report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
- to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.

2.7 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances;

- perform any operational duties for the Council;
- Initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any Council employee, except that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of the elector's rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, book, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Public Audit (Wales) Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations.

2.10 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

### **3. Annual Estimates (Budget) and Forward Planning**

3.1 The RFO must each year, by no later than January, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserve and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Finance & General Planning Committee; relevant Task & Finish Group and the Council.

3.2 The Council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the Council's medium term forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.3 The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.4 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

## **4. Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend**

- 4.1 Expenditure and revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the Council for all items over £5000;
  - a duly delegated committee of the Council for items over £500; or
  - the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.
- Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.
- Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.
- 4.2 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget heading or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3 Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in January (or when the relevant information in respect of the national agreement is received from OVW or NALC) for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of the Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chairman as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6 No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7 No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.8 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budget, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date

against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 15% of the budget.

- 4.9 Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by Council as part of the budgetary control process.

## **5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments**

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2 The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to Council [or finance committee]. The Council/ committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Council [or finance committee]. The approved schedule shall be ruled off by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information. This excludes payments in respect of Members Allowances (which MUST be publicly reported as legislated).
- 5.3 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, good or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.
- 5.4 The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Council [or Finance Committee] meeting.
- 5.5 The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no disputer other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or finance committee];
  - b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) providing that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or finance committee]; or



- c) fund transfers within the Councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or finance committee].

5.6 For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund, stationary/essential office supplies (not exceeding £500) and regular maintenance contracts, utilities and the like for which Council [or a duly requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Council [or Finance Committee]. Stationary and Office Supplies are via the Town Council's preferred supplier (Viking Direct & Shaws) or other as appropriate, due to cost, reliability, invoice and time factors.

5.7 A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and be signed by the Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee each month – thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.

5.8 In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.

5.9 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.10 The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members (with appropriate training) in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

5.11 Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by the Council (or relevant committee).

## **6. Instructions for the Making of Payments**

6.1 The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2 Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3 All payments shall be affected by cheque/online payment or other instruction (including online payments) to the Council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of

Council [or Finance & General Purposes Committee].

- 6.4 Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to Council or committee shall be signed by two members of the Council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory for the payment in question. The Clerk/RFO is an authorised counter signatory for emergency situations only.
- 6.5 To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6 Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a Council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatories obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the Council [or Finance Committee] at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7 As resolved by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to the Council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.8 As resolved by the Council, payment for certain items (principal salaries) may be made by a banker's standing order or online payment provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.9 As resolved by the Council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to Council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.
- 6.10 Three nominated members plus the Town Clerk / RFO (processing officer) will be issued with a personal identification number (PIN), card and card reader. These will be the only authorised users of internet banking. Each payment will require authorisation by one of the three members AND the Town Clerk / RFO (processing officer). In an emergency and in the absence of the 'processing officer' all payments will need to be made by cheque until a replacement 'processing officer' can be approved.
- 6.11 No employee or Councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the Council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the Council or duly delegated committee.

- 6.12 Regular back – up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question.
- 6.13 The Council, and any members using computers for the Council's financial business, shall ensure that the anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.14 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator ('processing officer'). The bank mandate approved by the Council identifies three Councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts.
- 6.15 Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved password facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.16 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by [two of] the Clerk /RFO and a member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.17 The process for authorising payments from the Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council Business (Current) Lloyds Bank Account to creditors with reciprocal internet banking arrangements. The relevant electronic bank details of the recipient organisation must be known in order for the transaction to be processed. The maximum permissible payment level is understood to be £250,000 but individual transactions are usually for less than £1,500.
- 6.18 Each transfer requires the physical presence (in the Town Council Office) of at least 2 named individuals, one of whom must be the Town Clerk/RFO, in the presence of one of three authorised members. These designated members are all approved cheque signatories. The Town Clerk must be present for all transactions. Please note that ongoing issues eg coronavirus legislation may impact upon this and that the Town Clerk (processing officer) may process & authorise the payments and then e-mail another authorised member all details of the payments that require authorising and request that these payments be authorised. That authorising member then e-mails the Town Clerk when the payments have been authorised. The Town Clerk then prints a copy of the bank statement to check that only those payments have been authorised and retains a copy for the file.
- 6.19 The Town Clerk/ RFO is responsible for the safekeeping of a security card which authorises the initiation of payments by use of a PIN. The PIN card entry machine is kept securely in the admin office at the Blaina Institute building. Each of the authorised members is responsible for the safekeeping of a security card which authorises the approval of payments by use of a PIN.

6.20 The authorising member witnesses the Town Clerk/RFO logging into the system and entering all relevant details to initiate the payment. The 'date of last log' is clearly displayed on the screen and this can be confirmed by the witness to a file record. This arrangement ensures that the previously recorded payment transaction was legitimate, properly authorised and there has been no other transactions since that date (i.e. nothing in-between). As in 6.19, the printing and retaining of the bank statements will also confirm this whereby it is not possible for the 'logging-on' to the system be witnessed.

6.21 Once the authorised member has witnessed and confirmed their satisfaction with the details of the payment transaction, the Town Clerk/RFO logs out of the system and the screen indicates that there is an outstanding payment awaiting authorisation.

6.22 The authorised member present then logs into the system, using the card reader assigned to them by Lloyds Bank and with their own security card and PIN. The payment transaction details previously entered by the Town Clerk/RFO are then approved (or otherwise) by the member effectively acting as an approved cheque signatory. The process requests final confirmation of approval for the payment, after which the authorised member logs out of the system (the time and date are recorded for future reference).

6.23 A record of the transaction and other printed documents are filed and retained in the Town Council office.

6.24 All expenditure payments must still be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and subsequently ratified at Full Council in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulation.

6.25 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk/RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by Council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed. *(Not currently used)*.

6.26 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Council [Finance Committee]. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the [Council] [relevant committee] and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the [Council] [relevant committee]. *(Not currently used)*.

6.27 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk/RFO and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month - end. *(Not currently used)*.

6.28 The Council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk /or RFO (for example for postage or minor stationary items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

6.29 The Town Council does not currently operate a petty cash system.

## **7. Payment of Salaries**

- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available Council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Council & Personnel Committee.
- 7.4 Each and every payment of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
  - b) by the internal auditor;
  - c) by the external auditor; or
  - d) by any person authorised under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5 The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the Council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Council.
- 7.7 Before employing interim staff the Council must consider a full business case.

## **8. Loans and Investments**

- 8.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full Council.
- 8.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Welsh Government (such a Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3 The Council will arrange with the Council's banks and investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk or RFO.

- 8.4 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council Policy.
- 8.5 The Council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practises and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 8.6 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.7 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.8 Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

## **9. Income**

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying – in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.

- 9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.10 Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the Council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any Council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below)].
- 9.11 The Council may investigate the possibility of accessing and applying for financial grants as appropriate for projects considered necessary by the Town Council for the benefit of the residents of Nantyglo and Blaina.

## **10. Orders for Work, Goods and Services.**

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained where used.
- 10.2 Order books & letters shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimus* provisions in Regulations 11.1 below.
- 10.4 A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council unless this has been resolved by the appropriate committee or Council..
- 10.5 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

## **11. Contracts**

- 11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid as follows;
- a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (v) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
  - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
  - iii. for work to be executed or good or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
  - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
  - v. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/ or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. The full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceeds thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)
- c. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- d. Where a contract is estimated to exceed £25,000, an invitation to tender should state: Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- e. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of the Council.
- f. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- g. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5000 and otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.
- h. The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- i. Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.



- 11.2 The proper Officer shall maintain a register of personal interests, in respect of both members and senior staff.
- a. Members and senior staff should not, so far as is practicable, be involved in the award of orders and/or contracts with organisations or individuals in respect of which a personal interest exists, whether declared or not.
- b. Members and Senior staff should not, so far as is practicable, be involved in the making or authorising payments in respect of orders and/or contracts with organisations or individuals in respect of which a personal interest exists, whether declared or not.
12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works
- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalment the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.]

### **13. Stores and Equipment**

- 13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2 Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stock and stores at least annually.

### **14. Assets, Properties and Estates**

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the Council, recording the locations, extent, plan,

reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations.

- 14.2 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible moveable property does not exceed £250.
- 14.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5 Subject only to the limit set in Reg, 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business.
- 14.6 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continuous existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## **15. Insurance**

- 15.1 Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulations 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers [in consultation with the Clerk].
- 15.2 [The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances affected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

- 15.5 All appropriate members and employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable form of security of fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the Council, or duly delegated committee.

## **16. Charities**

- 16.1 Where the Council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examinations as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

## **17. Risk Management**

- 17.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk /RFO shall prepare, for approval by the Council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk/ RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

## **18. Suspension and Revision of Financial Regulations**

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the Council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.
- 18.2 The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of Council.

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