

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

Mrs T Hughes Town Clerk/RFO

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Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Town Council held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina.

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

Present: Councillor M Williams, Town Mayor, presiding
Councillors G Morvan, D Hillman, C Hillman (remote), K Jones JP, L Harris,
L Higgins, L Emanuel & D Wright

In attendance: Mrs T Hughes, Town Clerk / RFO

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Town Clerk informed that no members of the public or press were in attendance. **Resolved** to note the information received.

The Town Mayor welcomed Councillor D Wright to his first meeting and congratulated him on his successful co-option. The Town Mayor presented Councillor D Wright with the Town Council tie. **Resolved** accordingly.

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 whilst no apologies were received, Cllr D Hillman informed that Cllr C Hillman would attend the meeting remotely.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:

The Town Mayor's communications for April 2025.

The Town Mayor informed that the Hospice of the Valleys Charity shop had been burgled, and raffle prizes stolen. As the Town Mayor's appeal was in aid of Hospice of the Valley's, he had replaced the raffle prizes utilising the Mayoral expenditure budget. The Town Mayor also thanked the Post Office for displaying the replaced raffle prizes safely behind the glass screen.

Resolved to note the information received.

3. Questions from the Public:

To receive any questions from the public regarding matters on the agenda (please note this was limited to 10 minutes).

Resolved to note that no such questions were received.

Cllr C Hillman joined the meeting remotely at this juncture.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 25th March 2025 (pages 147 – 150)

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 (4a) – In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that erection the Town Council sign had been requested and promised. It was noted that Mr R Dunham (contractor) was currently erecting the Town Council's bunting and flags in respect of VE Day.

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

5. Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting held 25th March 2025 (pages 151 - 152)

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 152 (4) – it was noted that whilst the open/advice days were well attended by organisations, they were poorly attended by the public for whose benefit they were arranged for.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

6. Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held 8th April 2025 (pages 153 - 154)

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:

Unanimously Ratified the resolutions and **Resolved** that the minutes be approved.

7. Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held 8th April 2025 (pages 155 - 156)

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.

8. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 8th April 2025 (pages 157 - 161)

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 158 (3b) – add ‘duties and functions incorporated and fulfilled by the Boundary Commission’.

Page 159 (5) – it was noted that Cllrs K Jones JO, G Morvan and M Williams were school governors for the purposes of declaration of interests. It was advised that there was no personal or pecuniary interest and that each school had received the same financial amount as per the resolution.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

9. Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held 15th April 2025 (pages 162 - 163)

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:

The Leader of the Council informed that Mr Kevin Rowlands was interviewed for the position of Assistant Officer and the Personnel Committee were impressed by his interview. All Members of the Personnel Committee were in agreement that he be offered the position of Assistant Officer subject to a six month probation period (as detailed on the job advert) and would start his employment with the Town Council on Tuesday 6th May 2025.

Resolved that the minutes be approved and **Unanimously Ratified** that Mr Kevin Rowland be appointed as Assistant Officer.

10. 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) Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – (For information/consideration):

- i) Email informing of Town & Community Council Liaison Meeting at 1.30pm on Thursday 15th May 2025 at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale. Please note that a pre-meeting will take place at 1pm.

It was agreed that Councillors D Hillman, C Hillman, M Williams and G Morvan attend the meeting (the Town Clerk was unable to attend).

Resolved to note the information received.

b) One Voice Wales – (for information and consideration):

- i. The Town Council has been shortlisted for an award which will be presented at the Annual Conference on 30th April 2025 which will take place at Llanelwedd, near Builth Wells.

It was confirmed that the cost per delegate was £65 and Cllr G Morvan (Leader of the Council and representative to One Voice Wales) was nominated to attend on behalf of the Town Council.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that Cllr G Morvan attend the conference on behalf of the Town Council.

ii. Motions for the Annual General Meeting 2025.

Resolved to note the information received.

iii. E-Bulletin (issue no.1)

Resolved to note the information received.

iv. Joint OVW / SLCC event on Ethical Frameworks in England & Wales on 14th May 2025.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the cost to attend was £65 per delegate, and it was agreed that this was expensive for member councils (who already paid a membership fee) to pay to attend an event held online.

Resolved to note the information received.

Additional correspondence with permission of the Chair:

c) Tredeggar Town Council:

Email invitation to all Members to attend the VE Day Celebration of Beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace at 9.30pm on Thursday 8th May 2025 at the Aneurin Bevan Stones, Bryn Serth, Tredeggar.

Resolved to note the information received.

11. Mayoral Chain:

Members were informed that a repair is required to the Mayoral Chain (one of the clips had broken). Members were invited to consider the quotation(s) received and advise.

The Town Clerk informed that another two quotations had been requested but not received to date and that due to the amount in question, providing that three quotations had been sought, the Town Council's financial regulations had been adhered to.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that she would check the insurance details but thought that an excess of £100 (more than the cost of the repair quotation) would be payable.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that the Mayoral Chain be repaired.

12. 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.

13. Internal & External Audits for 2024/25:

a) Report of the Internal Auditor for 2024/25:

Members were invited to consider the report submitted by Mr John Henry of JDH Business Services Ltd, Internal Auditor to the Council following the internal audit of Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council for the year end 31st March 2025.

The Town Clerk / RFO explained that recommendation no.1 was that the minutes of the precept setting were required to be in the public domain and that whilst the Town Council had always minuted this item in confidential information, it was only now referred to and highlighted as a recommendation by the Internal Auditor. The fidelity insurance (recommendation no. 2) had been discussed and actioned as a result of the 2022/23 internal audit. The Town Clerk / RFO explained that whilst the level of fidelity insurance was carefully considered, this was set annually in May each year and many things could affect the level of cash and bank balances by the following April. The recommended actions would be reported to Council for consideration and resolution at a future meeting as required.

The Town Clerk informed that all other recommendation had been implemented in previous years and were for information only.

Unanimously Resolved that the report of the Internal Auditor to the Town Council for the year end 31st March 2025 be accepted.

b) Statutory Review of Internal Audit:

Members were invited to consider the report regarding the statutory review of the Internal Audit System of the Town Council. Members also considered the overall performance of the Internal Auditor prior to 'signing off' the Annual Return (item 13cv) below.

Members considered the report, and the following comments were made:

- The approach by the current Internal Auditor differed to the previous Internal Auditor.
- The Internal Auditor was appropriately qualified, experienced in local council audits and independent of the Town Council.
- The Town Clerk / RFO informed that the approach of the Internal Auditor was consistent with the sector and that it was appropriate and fit for purpose.
- The Town Clerk / RFO informed that it had been very difficult to obtain a suitable and appropriately qualified Internal Auditor.
- In response to a query, the Town Clerk / RFO concluded that she was happy with the service provided and overall performance of the Internal Audit system.

All Members of the Town Council concluded that the Internal Auditor and Internal Audit system for the financial year 2024/25 in respect of Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council was adequate, appropriate and fit for purpose and also agreed that JDH Business Services Ltd be re-appointed as Internal Auditor for Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council for the next financial year i.e. 2025/26.

Unanimously Resolved that the statutory review of the Internal Audit System for 2024/25 be accepted and **Further Resolved** that JDH Business Services Ltd be re-appointed as Internal Auditor to Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council.

c) Audit Wales (External Auditors) annual Return for 2024/25:

Members were supplied with copies of other financial reports which were required by the external auditors for the purpose of the Annual Return and External Audit, to consider and if appropriate, to approve each report:

Comments and queries were invited for each report:

i. Cash Book Analysis 2024/25:

No comments or queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved that the report be approved.

ii. Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025:

No comments or queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved that the report be approved.

iii. Bank Reconciliation as at 31st March 2025:

No comments or queries were received.

Unanimously Resolved that the report be approved.

iv. Actual Against Budget Expenditure 2024/25:

In response to a query, the Town Clerk / RFO informed that this question had been asked and answered at April's Finance & General Purposes Finance Committee Meeting. The Town Clerk / RFO informed that the figures in the first column was the estimated expenditure for each budget for 2024/25, the figures in the second column was the actual expenditure for each budget for 2024/25 and the figures in the last column was the actual expenditure for each budget for 2023/24 for comparison.

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

v. Annual Return 2024/25 – Members were required to consider the Annual Return, and if appropriate, complete parts 1 & 2 and approve the signature of the Town Mayor (Chair of the Council) on page 3.

Council considered each of the statements on the second page (Annual Governance Statement) and agreed with each statement although an explanation in respect of statement 6 would be entered on page 3, together with an explanation for statement 10 (the Town Council could not adopt the General Power of Competence due to less than two thirds of councillors being elected).

The Town Clerk / RFO highlighted the disclosed expenditure in respect of s.137 payments on page 3.

The Town Mayor/Chair of the Council and Town Clerk / RFO then signed the original Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025 as required.

Unanimously Resolved that the report be approved and **Further Resolved** that the Town Clerk / RFO and Town Mayor / Chair of the Council sign the Annual Return as required by Audit Wales and **Additionally Resolved** that the Annual Governance Statement be completed as detailed above.

13. **Members Updates:**

Members were invited to provide any relevant updates and / or information:

a) Meeting of the Joint Committee of Local Councils held 16th April 2025:

Cllr D Hillman informed that the following issues were agreed by the JCLC for submission to the agenda in respect of the Liaison Meeting with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council on 15th May 2025: potholes and road repairs, Charter and the issues of communication and its implementation, a request for an update on issues relating to travellers throughout Blaenau Gwent, Town Centre events and if these contributed to the regeneration of town centres and an update on the possible change of 20mph speed limits.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Salem Chapel:

Cllr D Hillman informed that he had received an update from the 'contents' auctioneer that he would contact the Town Council week commencing 12th May 2025.

The Town Clerk informed that Mr R Dunham had confirmed that the 2 nos. guns on the 2023 inventory were part of the exhibition items and that they had been relocated to Newport with the other exhibition items.

Resolved to note the information received

Meeting declared closed at 7.05pm