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

Minutes of the hybrid Meeting of the Town Council held at 5.30pm Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at the Council Chamber, Blaina Institute, High Street, Blaina.

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

Present: Councillor K Jones JP, Deputy Town Mayor, presiding
Councillors L Higgins (R); D Hillman; C Hillman; L Harris; D Wright (R); A Fryer; M Evans; W Lewis; D Finch & S Howlett

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

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

To receive: Robert Davies of Volunteering Matters/Befriending Project

Members were reminded to note the Standing Orders relating to guest speakers:

1. Members were to receive the presentation.
2. Questions were to be invited at the end of the presentation.
3. Members were requested to ask only one question each – if time allows AND with permission of the Chair, a second question may be asked.
4. Members were reminded that there was to be no discussion or exchange of points of view between Members and that all dialogue was to be directed through the Chair.

The Chair introduced Robert Davies of Volunteering Matters and welcomed him to the meeting.

Robert Davies informed Town Council of the Befriending group which operates in the Blaenau Gwent area. The number of socially isolated people has grown since Covid, especially in older age groups and it has a significant impact on their mental and physical health. The project enlists volunteers to spend time with isolated people, providing company or helping them to contact others and access social groups. Social contact increases positive mental health and volunteering can also increase employment prospects as well as the volunteers own mental and physical health. Robert informed that he helps run a 'Knitter Natter' group in Abertillery.

Cllr L Higgins joined the meeting remotely at this juncture.

Questions were invited at this juncture:

Q. What age groups were mostly affected, and were men or women most affected?

A. Isolation & loneliness usually concerned people over the age of 50 but is more prevalent in those who are 80 plus. Both genders were equally susceptible to social isolation

Q. Where are you based and what areas do you cover?
A. Funded to cover Blaenau Gwent, used to have office in Ebbw Vale but now working from home. Happy to visit service users at home or at a suitable venue.

Q. Is service aimed at for groups or individuals?
A. Usually work with individuals but can work with appropriate groups.

Q. What type of activities were arranged?
A. Usually small scale as they currently have a small number of volunteers and clients, funding is also low but they are hoping to obtain more funds and more volunteers. Currently a small waiting list for help but there was a need to recruit more volunteers to help drive the project forward to help communities. The project needs to achieve its aims.

Q. How do people find out about the service?
A. Reliance on partner services like Social Services or Doctors Surgeries for referrals. People can self refer if they do not engage socially but older people struggle to reach out on social media.

Q. If the project is aware of service user's issues can you help them with other help?
A. Yes we monitor and can help to refer to other services, other help or social services if necessary. We aim to provide support.

Q. Some of the people most in need of help are difficult to help?
A. Agreed, they often fall through gaps and don't engage or reach out. The project is trying to reach increased numbers,

Q. How are you funded?
A. We're a Lottery project with 3 years of funding. We started the project one year ago so two years left but funding is limited. Can fund volunteers expenses and some activities as well as two members of staff.

Q. Any clients from the NHS?
A. Yes, we also provide a telephone befriending service with approximately 5-10 people from Blaina.

Q. Do you receive NHS or BGCBC support?
A. Not formally supported be we do work with Social Services to identify possible needs. We have a very good relationship with GP services, but it is all very informal.

Q. Do you work with Community Connectors?
A. No, but will certainly look into that.

Q. re: Community Connectors, GAVO also has well being officers and a member of the Town Council is a trustee of Men's Shed.
A. Thank you, Gavo do offer limited resources.

The Chair thanked Robert Davies for attending the meeting and providing his presentation.

Robert Davies left the meeting at this juncture.

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.

The Chair welcomed Councillors Wayne Lewis, Susan Howlett and David Finch to their first meeting as Town Councillors for Nantyglo & Blaina.

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 Councillors G Morvan, L King, M Williams & E Singleton. **Further Resolved** that the apologies be accepted.

2. Town Mayor's Communications:
The Town Mayor's communications for August & September 2025.

Due to the apologies given by the Town Mayor, the Deputy Mayor informed, on behalf of the Town Mayor, that during August, he attended the Beach Party Day at St Peter's Church in Blaina (which was organised by Blaenau Gwent CBC). On 5th August, the Town Mayor's Mayoral Charity Concert took place at St Peter's Church, Blaina whereby Abertillery Male & Ladies Orpheus Choirs kindly performed in aid of the Town Mayor's Appeal, The Community Hope Project. The Town Mayor attended Blaenau Gwent's CBC Bloc Party at St Peter's Church, Blaina and on 15th August, he attended a commemoration service in respect of 80th Anniversary of VJ Day at the War Memorial, Central Park, Blaina. The event was jointly organised by the Town Council and the Royal British Legion (Blaina Branch) and was led by Reverend Roy Watson and attendees included Mrs S Gwyer-Roberts (Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gwent) and her Consort. The Town Mayor attended the Merchant Navy Day at Bedwellty House, Tredegar and visited the Demetia Café at the Cwtch in Blaina. The Town Mayor also represented the Town Council at Police Surgeries held locally at Blaina Library on 4th & 22nd August and 1st September and again on 11th September at Asda, Nantyglo. On 12th September, the Town Mayor (accompanied by the Chair of Events, Cllr L Higgins), attended the unveiling of the statue and the interview session to honour the athlete Steve Jones at Ebbw Vale.

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 to10 minutes). **Resolved** to note that no such questions were received and **Further Resolved** to note that no members of the public or press were present.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held 22nd July (rescheduled from 8th July) ***(pages 26 - 27)***
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 27 (5) – it was clarified that the applicant (in respect of the personal licence) resided in Blaina.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

5. Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 22nd July 2025 (rescheduled from 8th July) ***(pages 28 - 31)***

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 29 (4) – In response to a queries regarding the Charter of Common Agreement, the Town Clerk informed that this would be queried with Blaenau Gwent CBC.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

6. Minutes of the Full Council held 22nd July 2025 ***(pages 32 – 35)***

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 33 (7) (page 19 of Annual Report) – a discussion ensued as to some members not wanting their photo on the Town Council's website. It was mentioned that in some cases it could be a security concern or other legal reasons, and that not all Town/Community Councils have photos on their websites.

Page 34 (7) Cllr D Hillman informed that he had not received any contact from Blaina Community Institute Ltd, in his capacity as representative. It was agreed that the Town Clerk query this with the group.

Resolved that the minutes be approved and Further Resolved that the Town Clerk query contact with the Town Council's representative.

7. Minutes of the Events Committee held 22nd July 2025 ***(pages 36 – 40)***

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 40 (7) – an update was asked regarding the designing of a new Nantyglo and Blaina Town Council logo. In response to a query, the Assistant Officer informed that the design of the new logo was ongoing project.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

8. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held 9th September 2025** ***(pages 41 - 44)***

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 42 (3b) – no further update has been received.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

9. **Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 9th September 2025** ***(pages 45 - 50)***

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

Page 47 - Amend in minutes to specify £200 per month regarding August and September payments to Blaenau Gwent Foodbank.

Resolved that the minutes be approved.

10. **Correspondence**

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

a) One Voice Wales – *(for information/consideration)*
Remote training dates available between September – November 2025.

Any Member who wished to attend training was advised to contact the Town Clerk.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk informed that the Town Clerk was in the process of updating the Council's own Induction training, but that Members had the option to attend either the inductions training provided by OVW, in house or both.

Resolved to note the information received.

b) Tracy Gilmartin – One Voice Wales – *(for information/consideration)*
Welsh Government Consultation on extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings.
One member commented that the lack of information about meetings was worrying.
Another member did mention that all the information is available online 7 days before.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** to support extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings.

c) One Voice Wales – *(for information/consideration)*
Joint one Voice Wales/SLCC EVENT – Wednesday 12th November 2025.

The Town Clerk informed members that the cost would be needed to be checked and would inform members when it was known.

Resolved to note the information received.

Additional correspondence/information with permission of the Chair:

d) Mr M Turner – Fixed Penalty Notice received *(for information)*:

Mr Turner (Blaina resident) has informed that he had been issued with a fixed penalty notice (FPN) by Blaenau Gwent CBC for putting left over bread out to feed the birds outside his home. The Town Clerk informed that she had advised Mr Turner to contact Blaenau Gwent CBC Ward Councillor L Winnett for advice due to the FPN having been issued by Blaenau Gwent CBC and as time was of the essence.

Members stated that CCTV footage can only be filmed on that person's property, not overlooking a public space or someone else's property otherwise they would need to register. Members were confused as to why bread counted towards being litter and as to why he was issued a fine. It was also mentioned that ring doorbells would also have to be registered should they look outside of your property.

Resolved to note the information received.

11. 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.

12. Audit Action Plan *(for information/consideration – copies attached)*

Members were invited to consider the Audit Action Plan for year ending 31st March 2025 (Internal Audit), and if appropriate, approve the plan. Members were informed that the Audit Opinion for year ending 31st March 2025 from Audit Wales had not yet been received.

The Town Clerk / RFO informed that the issue regarding the minutes detailing the precept was now resolved in that all minutes were published on the Town Council's website. The Town Clerk / RFO informed that this was the first instance that this issue had been highlighted by an internal or external auditor. Council's reserves would be given further consideration when setting the annual precept in January. All actions were as detailed in the audit action plan.

Resolved to note the information received and **Further Resolved** that the Audit Action Plan be approved.

13. Training *(for information/consideration)*

Members were invited to consider the cost of the Assistant Officer subscribing to the SLCC so that the previously resolved training can be accessed.

The Town Clerk informed that subscription to SLCC was per person, not per Council and that she suggested not to renew the subscription in her name, as the same information could be accessed.

Resolved that the subscription to SLCC in respect of the Assistant Officer be aet up and **Further Resolved** that the SLCC subscription in respect of the Town Clerk would not be renewed.

14. Confidential Information:

The following item(s) might 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.

Salem Chapel:

The Town Clerk informed that there had been an enquiry from Risca Chartists regarding rehoming the old printing press. This enquiry had been passed to Mr R Dunham, as the printing press belonged to the Charter Group.

Members agreed that the printing press should be rehomed with the Risca Chartists. It was also noted to new members that some internal items at Salem Chapel had recently been sold at auction

Member also noted that when Salem Chapel does sell something should be done with the reserves to show positivity in the area. A Task and Finish Group would need to be set up in the future to consider a specific use for the reserves.

Resolved to note the information received.

Meeting declared closed at 18:43pm