

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held at Cadoxton Community Centre and Online on Monday 20 May 2024 at 6.00pm

Presiding Councillor H Harry

Present In Person - Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, A Burton, C Lewis, L Rabaiotti Jones, A M Broom, G Morgan, G T Morgan, J Betts, C Heath
Online - Councillor C Williams, R Lewis

Apologies Councillors S Mitchell, D Jones, L Bromham-Nichols, W Evans, J Howell

5536 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5537 Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor H Harry be appointed Chair for 2024/25, and Councillor Harry duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chair.

5538 Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor C Williams be appointed Vice-Chair for 2024/25, subject to his duly signing the Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Vice Chair.

5539 Members Code of Conduct

RESOLVED that the Members Code of Conduct be adopted by Council.

5540 Membership of Committees

RESOLVED that Members be elected to the following Committees as indicated –

Resources Committee – Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, J Betts, G Morgan, R Lewis and C Williams, with Councillors A Burton and H Harry nominated as alternate Members should the need arise.

Environment Committee – Councillors J Hale, J Betts, L Rabaiotti Jones, W Griffiths, W Evans and C Lewis subject to the Clerk confirming with Councillor W Evans that he would accept the nomination.

Festivals Committee - Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, A Burton, A M Broom, C Heath, J Betts and L Rabaiotti Jones.

Staffing Committee - Councillors R Lewis, C Heath, G Morgan and A M Broom.

Appeals Committee – Councillors J Hale, G T Morgan, W Griffiths and J Betts.

5541 Membership of Outside Bodies

RESOLVED that Members be elected to the following Outside Bodies as indicated –

Neath Port Talbot CBC/Community Councils Liaison Committee –
Councillors D Jones and G Morgan, subject to the Clerk confirming that Councillor Jones accepts the nomination

One Voice Wales, Neath Port Talbot Area Committee and Larger Councils Committee – Councillors J Hale and W Griffiths.

School Governing Bodies – Council representation continue as follows –

- Bryncoch CIW Primary Councillor A Burton
- Blaenhonddan Primary Councillor A Burton
- Catwg Primary Councillor S Mitchell, subject to the Clerk confirming that Councillor Mitchell accepts the nomination

that the following nomination be made once the present term of office ends –

- Waunceirch Primary Councillor W Griffiths

that the Clerk confirm circumstances relating to the following nomination -

- Cilffriw Primary Ms J Cook

5542 Income and Expenditure 2023/24

The Clerk submitted the Income and Expenditure Report for 2023/24 in advance of its submission for audit along with a bank reconciliation for the year. RESOLVED that the accounts be approved.

5543 Annual Investment Strategy 2024/25

The Clerk submitted a draft Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25. RESOLVED that the Draft Strategy be approved.

5544 Policies and Procedures

RESOLVED that the following policies and procedures be adopted–

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Health and Safety Policy
- Freedom of Information Scheme
- Risk Management Plan and Risk Assessment Schedule

(Councillor C Williams left the meeting)

5545 Draft Annual Report 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's Report on preparation of the Draft Annual Report for 2024 be noted, and that it be submitted to Council for consideration as soon as possible.

5546 Applications for Financial Assistance

RESOLVED that all applications for financial assistance be considered at the October and April meetings of Council, and that Council's policy of preferred support for local applications be reaffirmed.

5547 Financial Management Arrangements

RESOLVED that present arrangements be confirmed and specifically that –

- existing financial arrangements as outlined in the Annual Investment Strategy and the Clerk's Report be endorsed
- the following Members be authorised to act as bank signatories on the Council's behalf – Councillors W Griffiths, D Jones, J Hale
- Council endorse the ongoing three-year appointment of KLG Internal Audit as its Internal Auditor
- Council authorise payments by Direct Debit or Standing Order for utility services, telephone/internet/mobile provision, facility management charges and bank charges, and by Debit Card for occasional purchases as authorised by Financial Regulations
- Council continue to engage the following for reasons of continuity, their ongoing understanding of the Council's land, buildings and their operational systems, and the occasional need for emergency response –
 - mjs cymru – building maintenance and improvement advice and specification
 - KLG Internal Audit – internal audit services
 - Platinum Gas – heating and plumbing services
 - CCS Electrics – electrical services
 - The Arb Team and Our Tree Company – tree surveys and maintenance
 - Colin Moses Roofing – roofing services
 - Knight Alarm Services – intruder alarm maintenance
 - Chubb – fire extinguisher inspection and maintenance
 - Acorn Chemical Services Ltd – water risk assessment and inspections.

5548 Member Remuneration

The Clerk indicated that the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had been received. He outlined its recommendations and Council's previous practice in its consideration. RESOLVED that –

- The Clerk prepare an "opt out" form regarding Member Payments and liaise with all Members on their personal decisions accordingly
- A Specific Responsibility Payment be made to the Chair but that the Clerk prepare an "opt out" form and liaise with the Chair on her personal decision accordingly
- Travelling expenses and subsistence payments be paid to Members for relevant duties as per current practice, on receipt of a claim form prepared by the Clerk
- A financial loss payment be paid to Members for relevant duties on receipt of a claim form prepared by the Clerk

- The Clerk prepare a form for Members to claim reimbursement of care costs in appropriate circumstances, should they wish to make a claim
- A Chair's allowance in the sum of £500.00 be paid in 2024/25 in accordance with current practice
- No Vice-Chair's allowance be paid in 2024/25
- Requirements with regard to publication be adhered to, relevant payments be made as soon as practicable in the financial year, and payments be recovered on a pro rata basis if any Member ceases to be a Member of Council.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm.

Signed

Dated 17 June 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 20 May 2024 at 7.00 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
Present In Person - Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, A Burton, C Lewis, L Rabaiotti Jones, A M Broom, G Morgan, G T Morgan, J Betts, C Heath
Online - Councillor R Lewis
Apologies Councillors S Mitchell, D Jones, L Bromham-Nichols, W Evans, C Williams, J Howell

5549 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5550 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 15 April 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 15 April 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5551 Matters Arising

- 1 Further to Minute 5519.1 regarding the Bryncoch CC Storage Building, the Clerk confirmed that the transaction had been completed. RESOLVED noted.
- 2 Further to Minute 5519.2 regarding Waunceirch District Park Car Park, the Clerk indicated that contact with NPT CBC had been made and he was awaiting a proposal. RESOLVED noted.
- 3 Further to Minute 5522.2 relating to a hirer at Owain Glyndwr Community Centre, the Clerk confirmed that the booking had been cancelled. RESOLVED noted.
- 4 Further to Minute 5528 regarding the proposal from NPT CBC to purchase replacement equipment for Caewern Playground, the Clerk indicated that a shortfall in funding had been identified and NPT CBC had enquired as to whether the Council was able to meet the shortfall. RESOLVED that the Council make a contribution in the sum indicated.

5552 Payments – May 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be approved.

(Councillor C Lewis left the meeting)

5553 Planning Applications – May 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0100	Dormer Extensions	11 Osprey Close Bryncoch
P2024/0270	Extensions	15 Ty'n yr Heol Road Bryncoch
P2024/0269	Rear Extension	8 Gilfach Road Bryncoch
P2024/0310	Dormer Extensions	74 Ffynnon Dawel Aberdulais

RESOLVED no objection to the following application, subject to the views of the NPT CBC arboricultural officer –

P2024/0267	Work to TPO Trees	45 Rowan Tree Close Bryncoch
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RESOLVED no objection to the following application, subject to the following observations –

P2024/0257	C/Use to Gym	Carpet Right, Vale of Neath Retail Park Cadoxton
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Council is concerned about traffic circulation and capacity at the bottom of Penywern Hill, and about a 24-hour operation in proximity to residential properties.

(Councillor A Burton left the meeting)

5554 Community Centre Management

- 1 The Clerk reported a letter from the Bryncoch Art Group relating to their inability to hold an annual weekend art exhibition at Bryncoch Community Centre because of another booking held on the Saturday morning. Members were made aware of the circumstances which gave rise to the situation and to the compromise solution which had been arranged and implemented over the last few years, and discussed the situation relating to both hirer requirements. RESOLVED that the Clerk speak to both hirers to establish whether a further compromise could be discussed that would involve one or other group using another Council venue on the weekend involved.
- 2 RESOLVED that the proposal by Bryncoch Football Club to hire a waste disposal facility during their weekend football festival at Owain Glyndwr CC and Waunceirch Playing Field be noted.

(Councillors H Harry and L Rabaiotti Jones declared an interest in Item 1 above)

5555 Police Matters

RESOLVED noted that the Caewern vehicle burglar had been apprehended and that the local PCSO was pursuing perpetrators of anti-social behaviour in lanes in Caewern.

5556 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no specific reports for Council.

5557 2023-24 Accounts

The Clerk summarised the Final Report of the Council's Internal Auditor indicating that there were no specific items that the auditor wished to bring to Council's attention. He confirmed that the Internal Auditor had, therefore, signed the Annual Return and Governance Statement, which reflected the financial statement previously submitted to Council. RESOLVED that the Internal Auditor's Final Report on the 2023-24 Accounts be accepted and that

the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign the Annual Return and submit to Audit Wales.

5558 Civility and Respect Pledge

Council considered an approach from the NPT Standards Committee regarding a Draft Civility and Respect Pledge drafted by a number of bodies including One Voice Wales and considered its content accordingly. RESOLVED signs up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

5559 Capital Programme Schemes

The Clerk reported on progress with the two capital programme schemes previously agreed by Council. RESOLVED that –

- Council agree to prioritise the Caewern CC Roofing Scheme in view of its likely time and weather dependencies;
- A decision on Caewern tenders received be delegated to the Resources Committee to expedite progress;
- The Clerk be authorised to enter into a legal agreement with NPT CBC to facilitate the Caewern CC scheme's implementation;
- An application for Community Councils Minor Projects Grant be submitted if appropriate;
- Tenders in respect of the Bryncoch CC ceiling and insulation scheme be invited when appropriate.

Further RESOLVED that the Clerk seek to engage a civil engineering advisor to assist with future projects involving pedestrian access at Waunceirch and Cilfrew, and drainage issues at Cilfrew and Cadoxton Parks.

5560 NPT CBC Replacement Local Development Plan

The Clerk reported that a consultation had recently commenced with regard to the NPT Replacement Local Development Plan's Key Issues, Vision, Objectives, Potential Growth Options and Spatial Options. He referred to the website link circulated to Members. RESOLVED that the consultation be noted at this stage.

5561 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following three items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5562 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising.

5563 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5564 Personnel Matters

The Clerk reported the appointment of Mr D Elkins as a new caretaker to cover the Aberdulais and Cadoxton Community Centres. He also indicated that

interviews for the post of Assistant Clerk (Administration) had been conducted by the Chair and himself, and that an offer of employment had been made with a response to the offer awaited. RESOLVED noted, and in the event that the offer relating to the Assistant Clerk post was not accepted, the Clerk return to Council with options as to how to proceed further.

5565 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be noted –

1	Swansea Bay UHB	Consultation on Hospital Visiting Policy
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RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be actioned as indicated –

2	Jeremy Miles MS	Clarification of Workplace Recycling Law
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A review of all litter bins on Council land be undertaken and a report be submitted to Council in due course.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Signed

Dated 17 June 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 17 June 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath

Presiding Councillor C Williams
Present Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, C Lewis, A M Broom, J Betts, W Evans,
Apologies Councillors H Harry, A Burton, S Mitchell, D Jones, L Bromham-Nichols, J Howell, G Morgan, G T Morgan, C Heath, R Lewis

6 Members of the Public were in attendance

5566 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5567 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

(Councillors C Williams, J Hale and W Griffiths declared an interest in this Item and Councillor Williams vacated the Chair. Members nominated Councillor J Betts to take the Chair for this Item)

The Chair invited the members of the public present to indicate whether they had any matters which they wished to raise with Council. All present spoke in turn about the planning application submitted in respect of Caewern Lodge. Concerns were expressed about the loss of the building, properties being overlooked by the new development, traffic generation, construction traffic, the wider impact on Caewern and the potential for occupants to adversely affect the area and its residents. The Clerk clarified the role of the Community Council as a consultee in the planning process and advised those present of the Council's response to the Statutory Pre-Application Stage consultation in October 2022. The members of the public were reminded that information was available on the NPT CBC website and that they were all able to make representations on the planning application submitted. The Chair thanked the members of the public for attending.

(Councillor C Williams in the Chair)

5568 Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 20 May 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 20 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5569 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 20 May 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 20 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5570 Matters Arising

1 Further to Minute 5538, the Clerk confirmed that the Vice-Chair, Councillor C Williams, had completed his acceptance of office form. RESOLVED noted.

- 2 Further to Minute 5541 regarding membership of outside bodies, the Clerk reported on the following –
- that Councillor D Jones had indicated that she would prefer not to accept the nomination to the NPT CBC Liaison Committee. RESOLVED that Council retain Councillor G Morgan as its sole representative on the Liaison Committee
 - RESOLVED that, following Councillor S Mitchell’s decision not to accept the nomination to the Governing Body of Catwg Primary School, Council nominate Councillor A M Broom
 - Following advice received by the Clerk from the Local Education Authority, RESOLVED that Ms J Cook be retained as the Council’s nominee on the Governing Body of Cilffriw Primary School until the end of her term of office.
- 3 Further to Minute 5554.1 relating to the use of Bryncoch Community Centre by two hirers on a Saturday, the Clerk reported on the responses from the two hirers concerned. RESOLVED that the present compromise arrangements be retained.

5571 Financial Matters – June 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk’s report on payments and transfer of funds in June 2024 be approved.

5572 Planning Applications – June 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0270	Amended Plans - Extensions	15 Ty’n yr Heol Road Bryncoch
P2024/105	Amended Plans – Dormer Extension	14 Church Close Bryncoch

(Councillors C Williams, J Hale and W Griffiths declared an interest in the following application and Councillor Williams vacated the Chair. Members nominated Councillor J Betts to take the Chair for this application)

RESOLVED that Council defer consideration of the following application until the next meeting, but that its previous resolution, when it considered the proposals at the Statutory Pre-Application Stage, be conveyed to NPT CBC as follows –

P2024/0301	Demolition, Construction of Affordable Flats	Caewern Lodge Dwr y Felin Road Caewern
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Council is disappointed at the loss of the existing building, but accepts that redevelopment is necessary and hopes that amended proposals could be drafted which increase the quantity of sheltered accommodation, as this would place reduced pressures on highway infrastructure, local schools and other services.

(Councillor C Williams in the Chair)

5573 Community Centre Management

The Clerk reported that a request for a hot water dispenser for Caewern Community Centre had been received, and indicated the scale of costs for purchase and installation. RESOLVED that the request be not acceded to at present, but that an item be placed on a future agenda and that provision at other centres be considered at the same time.

5574 Police Matters

RESOLVED noted that the culprit who vandalised a bench at Princess Drive Waunceirch had been identified.

5575 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no specific reports for Council.

5576 2024 Fun Day

Members expressed their appreciation to those who assisted with the Fun Day. The Clerk reported on expenditure and income for the event. RESOLVED noted.

(Councillor W Evans left the meeting)

5577 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following three items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5578 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

Further to Minute 5564 relating to Personnel Matters, the Clerk confirmed that Ms M Phillips had accepted the Council's offer of employment as Assistant Clerk and had commenced her duties. RESOLVED noted.

5579 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5580 Caewern Community Centre Roofing Scheme

The Clerk presented a confidential report to Members on Tenders for the Caewern Community Roofing Scheme. He outlined the response to tender invitations and the tender sums involved. Given the potential scale of expenditure, he indicated that he engaged with the Council's architectural advisor about amendments that could provide a cost saving to the Council, and subsequently invited tenderers to resubmit prices based on the amended specification. Comparable quotes were received and the outcome was summarized in the report. Members were advised that prices that included insulation boards would be preferable, that no contingency sum had been included in the costs, and that all tenders would require a commitment from balances as each was in excess of the available budget. RESOLVED that Council accept the lowest tender for an insulation board solution submitted by Glamorgan Services Ltd in the sum of £88,374.72 plus VAT and that Council fund the scheme from its current capital budget and from balances.

5581 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be noted –

1	20s Plenty for Us	Update on Welsh Speed Limit Review
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The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Signed

Dated 15 July 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 15 July 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
Present In Person - Councillors W Griffiths, J Hale, C Lewis, J Betts, W Evans, A Burton, S Mitchell, L Bromham-Nichols, J Howell, G T Morgan
Online - C Williams
Apologies Councillors A M Broom, D Jones, G Morgan, R Lewis

3 Members of the Public were in attendance, 1 in person and 2 online

5582 Chair's Statement

The Chair made a brief opening statement highlighting excerpts of the Council's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct. RESOLVED noted.

5583 Declarations of Interest

Councillors C Williams, J Hale and W Griffiths declared an interest in Planning Application P2024/0301 at the start of the meeting.

5584 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

The Chair invited the members of the public to indicate whether they had any matters which they wished to raise with Council. All three spoke about planning application P2024/0301 in respect of Caewern House, highlighting their concerns about the loss of the building, properties being overlooked by the new development, traffic generation, construction traffic, the wider impact on Caewern and the potential for occupants failing to integrate within the Caewern community. The recently convened meeting with the developers was considered inadequate and unhelpful and the wider role of Members of the County Borough Council and the Community Council was discussed. The Chair thanked the members of the public for attending and expressing their views.

5585 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 17 June 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 17 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5586 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5587 Financial Matters – July 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in July 2024 be approved.

5588 Planning Applications – July 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0053	Amended Plans - Extensions	Ainon Baptist Chapel Elias Road Bryncoch
P2024/0397	Extensions	17 Dyffryn View Bryncoch

RESOLVED to object to the following application on the following grounds –

P2024/0301	Demolition, Construction of Affordable Flats	Caewern Lodge Dwr y Felin Road Caewern
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Whilst Council has previously understood the proposals under discussion for the above, it has reflected on the new proposals and noted the extensive concerns of local residents. There are concerns shared by Members about overlooking of adjacent properties, the impact on the local highway infrastructure, the demands on utilities in the area, the loss of mature trees, the mix of properties proposed and their integration in the community of Caewern. Members were particularly disappointed with the inability of submitted documents, and staff representing the applicants/agents, to answer basic questions about the proposals, specifically with regard to the historic significance of the property, accessibility, and the development feasibility issues which might have allowed the existing property to be refurbished. On this basis, there is little confidence that the proposed development would contribute positively to the community of Caewern, or indeed that Caewern could cater for the needs of the proposed residents, and Council is of the view that it should be radically reconsidered by the applicants.

5589 Community Centre Management

There were no reports on Community Centre Management

5590 Police Matters

Other than requesting that ineffective management of the car park barriers to the Lidl Store in Cadoxton be referred to the Police, there were no reports on Police matters. RESOLVED noted.

5591 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no specific reports for Council.

(Councillor C Williams left the meeting)

5592 Caewern Community Centre Roofing Scheme

The Clerk provided an update on progress with the delivery of the Caewern Community Centre Roofing Scheme, and specifically on the following –

- Completion of the Licence for Work and Deed of Variation with NPT CBC
- Arrangements for building control through Total Building Control
- Contract progress, including discussions on an amended specification for the roof, that would result in a cost saving on the contract

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be noted and that all the items be endorsed, subject to the Clerk being satisfied with explanations to queries regarding the revised specification.

5593 Playground Reports

The Clerk advised Members that –

- playground inspections would be undertaken in August and reports would then be submitted to Council
- the replacement slide at Caewern Playground would be installed once received in September 2024
- vandalism had occurred once again at Caewern Playground
- a piece of play equipment had been compromised at Cilfrew Playground when the Fire and Rescue Service had to assist an individual who had misused the item

RESOLVED noted.

5594 NPT CBC Monitoring Officer

The Clerk indicated that the NPT CBC Monitoring Officer had indicated that he would appreciate the opportunity to come and address Council. RESOLVED that he be invited to attend the next meeting of Council.

5595 Training Opportunities

The Clerk requested authority to arrange new training opportunities to allow staff to update themselves with the Council’s financial software. He indicated the range of costs involved and that Council had an established budget for training purposes. RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to arrange any appropriate training.

5596 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following two items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5597 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5598 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5599 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be actioned accordingly –

1	Councillor D Jones	Letter of resignation from Council
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Clerk to write to Councillor Jones and thank her for many years of service to the Council, and liaise with the Electoral Services Team at NPT CBC regarding the Casual Vacancy.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Signed

Dated 16 September 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 16 September 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, C Lewis, J Betts, A Burton, G Morgan, C Heath, J Howell, G T Morgan
Online - R Lewis
Apologies Councillors W Griffiths, W Evans, S Mitchell, L Bromham-Nichols, A M Broom, C Williams

5600 Mr L T Thomas

The Chair referred to the passing of Mr Triv Thomas who had served the Council as a valued member of staff for many years. All present stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

5601 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5602 Craig Griffiths, NPT CBC

The Chair welcomed Mr Craig Griffiths, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services at NPT CBC. Mr Griffiths addressed the Council on the Members' Code of Conduct referring to his presentation and providing advice and guidance for Members regarding the application of the Code, how Members should respond to its provisions and where they could seek advice. Following the presentation, the Chair agreed that the Clerk should circulate the presentation to Members and thanked Mr Griffiths for his time and contribution, whereupon Mr Griffiths withdrew from the meeting.

5603 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

5604 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 15 July 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 15 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5605 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5606 Financial Matters – August and September 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in August and September be approved.

5607 Planning Applications – August and September 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0269	Amended Plans – Rear Extension and Decking	8 Gilfach Road Bryncoch
P2024/0424	Rear Extension	9 Ynysygerwn Crescent Aberdulais
P2024/0523	Rear Extension	18 Millbank Waunceirch

5608 Community Centre Management

RESOLVED to note the following matters reported for information –

- Issues with billing practices at E.onNext which were in hand
- Problems arising from squirrels at Cilfrew Community Centre which would be resolved.

The Clerk also reported a request that Council support an event at Aberdulais Community Centre being organised for the community by the NPT CBC Youth Service. In view of the Council’s previous aborted attempt to promote a community event at Aberdulais, RESOLVED that Council partner the County Borough Council in this venture and provide appropriate accommodation and financial support as requested.

5609 Police Matters

Members were advised of a recent incident which took place at Caewern and that a homeless person had been sleeping outside Cadoxton Community Centre, and reassured Members that the Police and relevant authorities were aware of both situations. RESOLVED noted.

5610 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no specific reports for Council.

5611 Casual Vacancy Aberdulais Ward

The Clerk indicated that the Electoral Services Team at NPT CBC had confirmed that no election had been requested in relation to the Casual Vacancy at the Aberdulais Ward, and that Council should, therefore, co-opt an individual to the role. He confirmed that the relevant notice had been served and that 3 October 2024 was the closing date for expressions of interest. A report would be submitted for consideration at the next meeting of Council. RESOLVED noted.

5612 Playground Reports

The Clerk advised that inspection reports had been received from ROSPA and that meetings had been arranged with playground suppliers. A further report would be submitted in due course. RESOLVED noted.

5613 Caewern CC Roofing Scheme

Members were advised that the Roofing Scheme at Caewern Community Centre had been completed ahead of schedule in accordance with budgetary expectations, and that hirers were now returning to the Centre. A report would be submitted to Council in due course. RESOLVED noted.

5614 Church in Wales Land

The Clerk updated Members on the following –

- One request had been received to transfer an existing Garden Tenancy Agreement to a new owner in Beaconsfield Street, Cadoxton, and a further request for a new Garden Tenancy Agreement in the same street had been received. These were consistent with Council's previous arrangements and had been processed by the Clerk and signed by two members of Council. Action to address knotweed infestation at the rear of the properties was also in hand. RESOLVED that the actions undertaken be endorsed.
- An approach had been received following damage to a vehicle caused by a tree which may be situated on Council land, and the affected party had been advised to submit information which could then be forwarded to the Council's insurers for their attention. RESOLVED that the matter be referred to the insurers at the appropriate time.

5615 Community Centre Licenses

Members were advised that a number of licensing bodies had contacted the Council to enquire as to whether the correct licences were in place to allow music and screened productions to be heard and viewed at the Council's six community centres. Given that the potential costs were quite high, a review of the requirements would be appropriate and as the situation was complicated, a report would be submitted in due course. RESOLVED noted.

5616 Wauceirch District Park

The Clerk reported correspondence from NPT CBC Property Services enquiring as to whether Council was proceeding with discussions to sub-let part of the Wauceirch District Park to Bryncoch Football Club. The e-mail outlined various matters that would need to be addressed if the request from the Club was to be progressed. The Clerk indicated that he had informed NPT CBC that no formal proposal had been submitted to Council since the meeting of officers in January 2023 and that, should the Club wish to progress further, more detailed proposals would be needed to facilitate any discussions. As nothing was currently forthcoming, there was nothing for Council to consider and the current lease and licence arrangements would remain. RESOLVED that the Clerk's response be endorsed.

5617 NPT Standards Committee

The Clerk referred to the Annual Report of the NPT Standards Committee and briefly summarised its contents. RESOLVED that it be circulated for Members' perusal.

5618 Council Website

The Clerk sought Members' guidance on whether they would wish to have their images included alongside their names and contact details on the Council's website. Following a discussion, RESOLVED that images be included, unless a Member expressly requests that their image be excluded.

5619 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following three items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5620 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5621 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5622 Office Personnel Matters

The Clerk outlined short term arrangements which were in place to deal with duties previously the responsibility of the Assistant Clerk (Business Support), and confirmed that training had been undertaken to enable those arrangements to take place effectively. He indicated that the need to update some of the Council's historic accounting practices had been identified and the opportunity to complete this improvement may require some outside consultancy assistance at a cost made known to Members.

Members were advised that, given present staffing arrangements, the reappointment of a third part time member of staff would be in the best interests of the service, but that a recruitment and retention crisis was currently evident in the sector, and that a successful recruitment process might prove difficult. As the present structure and remuneration arrangements had been established many years ago, significant changes had taken place. Members were asked to consider a Job Evaluation exercise for office personnel prior to any recruitment exercise, and a cost for this to be undertaken by HR personnel at One Voice Wales was made known to Members.

RESOLVED that –

- Improvements to the Council's accounting arrangements be undertaken and if appropriate, the Clerk be authorised to engage external assistance to effect any changes
- A Job Evaluation exercise be commissioned from One Voice Wales in respect of office personnel, with an option to extend the exercise to other staff members in due course
- The Clerk prepare a staffing report on office personnel once the job evaluation has been undertaken and submit this to Council as a matter of urgency to facilitate consequential decisions, particularly in respect of the current vacancy.

5623 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be actioned as indicated –

3	Ms NL	E-mail re Allotments
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An item be placed on a future agenda for consideration.

7	ZW	Request to use Cadoxton CC Car Park
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The request be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of Council for consideration.

(Councillors A Burton, J Hale and C heath declared an interest in Item 7 above and took no part in the discussions thereon)

RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be noted –

1	One Voice Wales	Conference Invitation
2	NPTCBC Highways & Drainage	Letter re Flood Alleviation Scheme, Cadoxton
4	Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru	Guide to the 2026 review of Senedd Constituencies
5	Tenovus Cancer Care	Invitation to Collaborate
6	Electrical Safety First	Request for Campaign Support
8	NPTCBC Planning	Planning Appeal Notification, Cilfrew

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Signed

Dated 21 October 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 21 October 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, J Betts, G Morgan, C Heath, W Griffiths, W Evans, A M Broom, G T Morgan
Online - None
Apologies Councillors C Lewis, J Howell, L Bromham-Nichols, C Williams, R Lewis

5624 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5625 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

One member of the public was present and raised concern about the speed of traffic on Dwr y Felin Road near the railway bridge and the junction with Twyn Teg. The member of the public was advised that this was a matter for the Local Highway Authority and that the local Ward Member on Neath Port Talbot CBC would address the situation directly

5626 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 16 September 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 16 September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5627 Matters Arising

1. Further to Minute 5612 relating to Playground Reports, the Clerk indicated that a quotation for repairs at Caewern and Cadoxton Playgrounds had been received in the sums indicated to Members. RESOLVED that the quotation be accepted. Further RESOLVED that a separate quotation for replacement of the ageing swing unit be deferred pending budget considerations, but that the swing seats be removed to mitigate risk of any failure.
2. Further to Minute 5614 relating to Church in Wales land, the Clerk updated Members on knotweed eradication and an unconnected insurance claim submitted, and outlined a request to purchase an interest in part of the land that the Council leases. RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Clerk investigate the lease options with agents acting for the Church in Wales.

5628 Financial Matters – October 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in October be approved.

5629 Planning Applications – October 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0269	Amended Plans – Extension and Decking	8 Gilfach Road Bryncoch
P2024/0532	Extensions	11 Rosser Terrace Main Road Cilfrew
P2024/0580	Work to TPO Tree	Ty'n y Coed 1 Blaenwern Bryncoch
P2024/0612	Work to TPO Trees	13 Cloda Avenue Bryncoch
P2024/0635	Work to TPO Tree	49 Daphne Road Bryncoch
P2024/0650	Demolition / Extension	48 Bryn Catwg Cadoxton

RESOLVED that, as there appeared to be very little in the amended proposals to reflect its previously expressed views, Council reiterate its objection to the following application as per Minute 5588 of Council on 15 July 2024, and also convey its views directly to the developer's agent. Further RESOLVED that the Clerk enquire with Neath Port Talbot CBC as to the nature of any discussions which had taken place prior to the submission of the amended plans.

P2024/0301	Amended Plans – Demolition and Residential Devt	Caewern House Dwr y Felin Road Caewern
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5630 Community Centre Management

RESOLVED that Council renew its contract with MSS Water, in the sum made known to Members, for Water Management at Cilfrew Community Centre.

5631 Police Matters

Council was advised by Members that the Police were aware or were pursuing the following–

- a recent incident which took place at Caewern involving an individual
- the need to ensure again that cars are safely locked in Caewern
- that potential door to door scammers were at work in Caewern
- that there were local concerns about a possible dog being exercised in Dyffryn Woods.

RESOLVED noted.

5632 Reports from Outside Bodies

Councillor G Morgan presented a report on the recent Neath Port Talbot CBC Liaison Committee meeting and summarised discussions on –

- The NPT CBC budget, referring to Welsh Government funding, its own funding gap, cost increases, proposals for budget saving and departmental aspirations
- Issues raised by Town and Community Councils relating to highways, planning training, buildings in disrepair, the use of NPT CBC equipment and the cost of event management.

RESOLVED noted.

5633 Casual Vacancy Aberdulais Ward

The Clerk indicated that no Expressions of Interest were submitted in order to fill the present Casual Vacancy in the Aberdulais Ward and, therefore, that the vacancy would need to be re-advertised. RESOLVED noted.

5634 Business Opportunities

The Clerk reported on two requests to operate business opportunities at Council premises – one street food operation at Cadoxton CC Car Park and an indoor/outdoor market operation at Bryncoch CC and Car Park. Members were advised of the details of the proposals, the Council’s legal position and of the planning and licensing implications of such operations. They were also appraised of arrangements that would be needed to agree a charging structure, along with possible implications for existing users as well as local residents. RESOLVED that the requests be not acceded to and that the applicants be advised of the Council’s reasons for declining the opportunities.

5635 Allotments

Members were reminded of a request from Ms NL that Council consider establishing allotments in Blaenhonddan to supplement the existing eight which were already in existence. The Clerk scoped the process involved in exploring and potentially establishing such an initiative. He highlighted the need, in the first instance, to identify an appropriate parcel of land, emphasising that public land would be easier to deliver, but that there was limited scope within the Council’s existing estate. RESOLVED that the Clerk explore whether there was scope to work with NPT CBC and Tai Tarian on land which was under their control.

5636 Annual Report 2024

Members were reminded that the circulated Draft Annual Report for 2024 was deferred from the Annual Meeting of Council. RESOLVED that the Annual Report 2024 be adopted.

5637 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following four items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5638 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5639 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5640 Office Personnel Matters

The Clerk indicated that Ms M Phillips had submitted her resignation from the post of Assistant Clerk and that as a result there were now two office personnel vacancies. He stated that consequential discussions with the Chair had resulted in a refinement of the brief to the HR professional currently undertaking a Job Evaluation exercise on office posts, and that further information would be outlined in the next agenda item. RESOLVED noted.

(The Clerk left the chamber at this point and took no part in the discussions on the following item)

5641 Job Evaluation of Office Personnel Posts

The Chair circulated her Private and Confidential Report on the Job Evaluation exercise undertaken and reported upon by an HR professional employed at One Voice Wales. The Chair’s report summarized the brief, and indicated that the brief was amended to explore a possible change in structure, given the situation referred to in Minute 5640 above. The report summarized the job evaluation outcome and recommendations for the existing posts if retained as at present, and also for three posts in an amended structure. The advice indicated that the amended structure was possibly better suited to and typical of a large council such as Blaenhonddan, and would provide greater resilience addressing an inherent weakness with no nominated post to cover the Clerk / Responsible Financial officer role. The Chair’s report outlined the financial implications of all options if Council was disposed to accept the recommendations of the HR professional. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that Council –

- amends the staffing structure for office personnel and appoint a Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer, an Assistant Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer and an Administration Assistant
- accept the recommendations of the job evaluation exercise in respect of the three posts in the new structure, both in terms of remuneration and hours of employment
- instructs the Clerk to make the necessary contractual amendments and advertise the two vacant posts immediately on the basis of amended job descriptions and the new terms and conditions.

5642 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be actioned as indicated –

2	One Voice Wales	Response to Senedd Inquiry into Town and Community Councils
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Clerk to circulate for Members’ information.

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be noted –

1	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales	Draft Annual Report 2024-25
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The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Signed

Dated 11 November 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 11 November 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, J Betts, G Morgan, W Griffiths, L Rabaiotti Jones, G T Morgan, C Lewis
Online – Councillors L Bromham-Nichols, A Burton, S Mitchell
Apologies Councillors C Heath, W Evans, C Williams, R Lewis

5643 Armistice Day

The Chair referred to the fact that Council was meeting on Armistice Day. Accordingly, all present stood and observed two minutes silence as a mark of respect.

5644 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5645 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

5646 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 21 October 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 21 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5647 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5648 Financial Matters – November 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in November be approved.

5649 Planning Applications – October 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following application –

P2024/0621	Detached Outbuilding	The Builders Yard Farmers Road Bryncoch
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5650 Community Centre Management

- 1 RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on electrical inspections and repairs be noted.
- 2 RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate toilet specifications at all community centres.

5651 Police Matters

RESOLVED that the following information from Members be noted –

- Progress with regard to door-to-door scammers at work in Caewern and Bryncoch
- A recent health emergency at the Bryncoch Inn
- Anti-social behaviour in Cadoxton and the Rhyddings during Halloween dealt with by the Police
- Proposals by NPT CBC to monitor speed on Dwr y Felin Road and Llygad yr Haul Caewern

5652 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

5653 Casual Vacancy Aberdulais Ward

The Clerk indicated that the deadline for Expressions of Interest to fill the present Casual Vacancy in the Aberdulais Ward was Friday 15 November 2024, and if none were received, that he would further advertise the vacancy. RESOLVED noted.

5654 Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reminded Members of the Council's arrangements for considering applications for financial assistance under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. He summarised the budget agreed for the 2024/25 financial year and commitments made to date, and outlined the applications received.

(Councillors W Griffiths and J Hale declared an interest in Items 3 and 7 below and Councillor C Lewis declared an interest in Item 6)

RESOLVED that the following applications be supported in the sums indicated

—

1	Ainon Baptist Chapel Bryncoch	£80.00
2	Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group	£80.00
3	Bryncoch Community Association	£80.00
4	Cilfrew Community Health and Wellbeing Group	£80.00
5	Pisgah Chapel Fellowship	£80.00
6	Green Footprints Neath	£80.00
7	Bryncoch Community Association	£80.00
8	3 No Senior Citizen Groups (each)	£150.00

5655 Cilffriw Primary School Governing Body

Members were reminded that a decision on a nomination to the Governing Body of Cilffriw Primary School when the term of office of the present nominee ends, had been deferred at the Annual Meeting of Council. As the term of office ends on 13 December 2024, a review of the nomination was now required. RESOLVED that the Council's present nominee, Mrs J Cook, be nominated to continue in the role. Further RESOLVED that all Council nominees to School Governing Bodies be requested to provide feedback to Council on their participation in the role and, subject to complying with confidential and sensitive matters, on the issues and initiatives which prevail in the discussions.

5656 Insurance Claim, Church in Wales Land, Cadoxton

Members were advised that no response had been received to date to the referral made by Council to its insurers following damage caused during the recent storms. RESOLVED noted.

5657 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following four items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5658 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5659 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5660 National Pay Award 2024-25

The Clerk reminded Members of the Council's decision to pay its staff in accordance with National Joint Council (NJC) Pay Scales, and to receive annual recommendations from the NJC in reviewing staff salaries (Minute 3566 of the Resources Committee, 03 December 2015, and Minute 3576 of Council, 14 December 2015, refer). He submitted a factual report on the recommendations for the pay award from 01 April 2024, and outlined the financial implications for Council if the recommendations were accepted, including the implications arising from decisions following the recent job evaluation exercise.

(The Clerk withdrew from the Chamber during the remainder of this Item to allow Members to discuss the details further)

RESOLVED that Council accept the recommendations on Pay Scales from the National Joint Council and implement the 2024-25 Pay Award accordingly. Further RESOLVED that Council proceed with the Job Evaluation Exercise in respect of all non-office-based staff as soon as practicable.

5661 Vacant Posts

The Clerk advised Members of the steps taken to advertise the two vacant office posts and confirmed that in conjunction with the Chair, he hoped to undertake shortlisting and interview at the earliest opportunity. He further confirmed that should there be no suitable candidates, he would, in conjunction with the Chair, modify job descriptions to facilitate a further advertisement to maximize the attractiveness of the posts. RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be noted and endorsed.

5662 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be noted –

1	Welsh Government	S 137 Expenditure Limit for 25/26
2	One Voice Wales	Consultation on Legislation (Procedure, Publication and Repeals) (Wales) Bill

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Signed

Dated 09 December 2024

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 09 December 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
 Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, J Betts, W Griffiths, G T Morgan, A Burton, C Heath, W Evans, R Lewis
 Online – Councillors C Williams
 Apologies Councillors S Mitchell, G Morgan C Lewis, J Howell, A M Broom

5663 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5664 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

5665 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 11 November 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 11 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5666 Matters Arising

1. Further to Minute 5653 regarding the Casual Vacancy in the Aberdulais Ward, the Clerk advised that this would be re-advertised in January 2025. RESOLVED noted.
2. Further to Minute 5656 relating to an Insurance Claim, the Clerk advised that investigations were continuing. RESOLVED noted.

5667 Financial Matters – December 2024

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in December be approved.

5668 Planning Applications – December 2024

RESOLVED no objection to the following application –

P2024/0688	Residential Development	Crown and Sceptre Car Park, Main Road, Cadoxton
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RESOLVED no objection to the following application, subject to the views of the NPT CBC Arboricultural Officer –

P2024/0667	Work to TPO Trees	Wauinceirch House, Dwr y Felin Road, Wauinceirch
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RESOLVED that Council reiterate its previous objection to the following application –

P2024/0301	Amended Plans – Demolition of Caewern House and Development of Residential Accommodation	Caewern House, Dwr y Felin Road, Caewern
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5669 Community Centre Management

There were no reports relating to Community Centre Management.

5670 Police Matters

RESOLVED that the following information from Members be noted –

- Continuing concerns regarding a dog in Dyffryn Woods
- That PCSOs are now based in Neath Police Station and not Skewen.

5671 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

5672 Feasibility Costs for Engineering Works

The Clerk advised Members that there were a number of possible works that would benefit from professional engineering advice before a decision as to how to progress them might be taken. He summarised the works involved and indicated that he had identified an engineer who could offer advice. A scope of works and feasibility costs had been received, but the Clerk recommended that these be held in abeyance pending a decision on capital works in 2025/26. RESOLVED that the Clerk's recommendation be accepted.

5673 Hire Charges for 2025-26

The Clerk submitted a schedule of current hire charges in relation to community centres and playing fields, and charges levied in respect of allotments and grazing land. Members were advised of Council's previous decisions over a period of years, considered whether charges should be amended for 2025-26, and were mindful of the increases in costs which the Council was subject to in letting its facilities. Members requested further information on comparator costs. RESOLVED that the matter be deferred pending a further report from the Clerk.

5674 Budget Monitoring Report for 2024-25

The Clerk submitted a report on the estimated budget out-turn in 2024-25 as the basis for calculating a proposed budget for 2025-26 for Members' consideration, and confirmed that this was not significantly different to the Council's original set budget. He advised Members of assumptions that were made with regard to final expenditure and income, and highlighted key factors which had influenced the expenditure calculations, including increases in salary levels. He also highlighted an increase in income levels but indicated that these could fluctuate based on the level of use of the Council's facilities. RESOLVED that the Clerk's Budget Monitoring Report and estimates be accepted.

5675 Budget and Precept for 2025-26

The Clerk invited Members to reflect on the anticipated budget outturn of income and expenditure in 2024-25, and outlined, for information, key elements of the budget, an indication of projected balances and of the Council Tax Base as indicated by NPT CBC. He indicated a possible budget for 2025-26 with options outlined as examples of budgets and their funding implications, along with the possibility of including or excluding a capital budget.

RESOLVED that Council –

- retain a capital budget for 2025-26
- approve a draft budget in the sum of £328,503
- set a Precept for 2025-26 in the sum of £303,386
- fund the deficit from its balances or through prudent financial management.

5676 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following three items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5677 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5678 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5679 Vacant Posts

The Chair and Clerk advised Members of the process undertaken in shortlisting and interviewing candidates for the two vacant posts in the office. The Clerk advised that both he and the Chair concluded that, given the response to the adverts and differing considerations in respect of the shortlisted candidates, there was merit in combining the two posts into a single appointment of an Assistant Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer. A revised job description was drafted, one candidate was invited to a second interview and was offered the position and had duly accepted. The terms and conditions of the revised post were outlined to Members, along with assurances that an appointment could be made without compromising office opening hours, and within the budget for two posts previously agreed by Council. RESOLVED that the decision to appoint Ms K Wells to the post of Assistant Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer be endorsed.

5680 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be actioned as indicated –

1	Councillor J Howell	Request for Approved Absence
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Given the reasons made known to Members, Councillor Howell be granted six months approved absence.

RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be noted –

2	Heddwch ar Waith	Correspondence re Peace Ambassadors
3	Mid and west Wales Fire and Rescue	Correspondence re Community Ambassador

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Signed

Dated 20 January 2025

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan

Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 20 January 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding Councillor H Harry
 Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, W Griffiths, G T Morgan, A Burton, G Morgan, C Lewis, A M Broom
 Online – None
 Apologies Councillors C Williams, C Heath, W Evans, L Bromham-Nichols, J Betts, R Lewis

5681 Ms K Wells
 The Chair welcomed Ms K Wells who was attending her first meeting as an officer of the Council.

5682 Declarations of Interest
 There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5683 Matters Raised by Members of the Public
 There were no members of the public present.

5684 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 09 December 2024
 RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 09 December 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

5685 Matters Arising
 Further to Minute 5666.2 relating to an Insurance Claim, the Clerk advised that the insurance company was seeking to make contact, but that the claim may not proceed. RESOLVED noted.

5686 Financial Matters – January 2025
 RESOLVED that the Clerk’s report on payments and transfer of funds in January be approved.

5687 Planning Applications – January 2025
 RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0688	Amended Plans - Residential Development	Crown and Sceptre Car Park, Main Road, Cadoxton
P2024/0760	Vehicular Access	144 Main Road Bryncoch
P2024/0768	Extension & Vehicle Crossover	85 Bryn Catwg Cadoxton

RESOLVED that, whilst noting the reason for the amendments, Council reiterate its previous objection to the following application –

P2024/0301	Amended Plans – Demolition of Caewern House and Development of Residential Accommodation	Caewern House, Dwr y Felin Road, Caewern
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5688 Community Centre Management

1. The Clerk referred to ongoing storage issues at all community centres and specifically to problems at Aberdulais and Cilfrew. He offered potential solutions for investigation in the hall at Aberdulais and the storage room at Cilfrew. RESOLVED that the Clerk proceed with his investigations.
2. Members were informed that office phone and broadband services were due to be upgraded to digital provision. RESOLVED noted.
3. The Clerk referred to Council's decision on the operation of a market at Bryncoch Community Centre and Car Park (Minute 5634, Council, 21 October 2024 refers) and to a revised proposal recently submitted. RESOLVED that Council agree to internal use of Bryncoch Community Centre, subject to relevant statutory restrictions being met.
4. The Clerk indicated that a request by an organisation had been received for application of the community hire rate charges to a booking. RESOLVED that, subject to a clarification that the booking would assist clients within the community, the request be acceded to.

5689 Police Matters

Members expressed concerns about PCSO availability within the community. RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the relevant senior police officer to outline the Council's concerns about resources and responses. Further RESOLVED that the following information from Members be noted –

- Continuing concerns regarding dogs in Dyffryn Woods
- Concerns with parking issue responsibilities near Waunceirch Primary School

5690 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

5691 Hire Charges, 2025-26

The Clerk submitted a Hire Charges Review Report to inform discussions on the setting of hire charges for 2025-26. The Report advised Members of comparative prices charged by a number of other local community councils, and a cost benefit assessment of income and expenditure at the council's facilities. Members debated the charges and were mindful of the increases in costs which the Council was subject to in letting its facilities. RESOLVED that a revised schedule of hire charges be agreed in respect of the Council's community centres and playing fields but that no changes be introduced in respect of land which is the subject of lettings. Further RESOLVED that the Clerk refine the Council's policy to reflect -

- new requirements relating to future bona fide community groups
- the difference between internal and client-based bookings made by organisations irrespective of their charitable status

- 5692 Neath Port Talbot Replacement Local Development Plan (2023-2038)**
The Clerk referred to the link previously circulated relating to the Consultation Draft of the Pre-Deposit Preferred Strategy of the NPT Replacement LDP. He outlined the status of the document in the wider plan preparation process, and summarised some key elements of the Preferred Strategy, and the Candidate Sites Register, referring specifically to previous views expressed by Council. RESOLVED that Council note the document at present and await the publication of the Deposit Draft Plan when specific policies and proposals would be available for scrutiny.
- 5693 Woodland Situated on Cwmbach Road Cadoxton**
The Clerk referred to the request that Council consider allowing a third party to lease a portion of woodland on Cwmbach Road Cadoxton, presently the subject of a lease in favour of the Council from the Church in Wales. Agents for the Church in Wales had suggested that Council might consider a sub-let should it wish to proceed. He confirmed that no further contact had been received from the relevant third party and that this was interpreted as an indication of not wishing to proceed. RESOLVED noted.
- 5694 Casual Vacancy, Aberdulais Ward**
The Clerk advised Members that he intended to advertise the casual vacancy in the Aberdulais Ward imminently. RESOLVED noted.
- 5695 Hybrid Meeting Facilities**
The Clerk reported that whilst Council was able to deliver hybrid meetings with equipment installed, he was concerned about the quality of provision and was aware of better solutions in place at other councils. He suggested that an upgrade in facilities might be appropriate and advised that this would require a financial commitment. RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to investigate relevant solutions with appropriate suppliers and report back to Council.
- 5696 Grounds Maintenance 2025/26**
The Clerk reminded Members of the new arrangements established for grounds maintenance in 2024/25 and the three contracts in place to deliver the respective specifications. RESOLVED that the Clerk engage with the Council's existing contractors to seek negotiated prices for 2025/26 based on the agreed specifications.
- 5697 Public and Press**
RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following two items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.
- 5698 Matters Arising from Exempt Items**
There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.
- 5699 Health and Safety**
There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5700 Correspondence

RESOLVED that the following item of correspondence be noted –

1	Welsh Government	Notice of UK Government Day of Reflection 2025	
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The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Signed

Dated 17 February 2025

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Festivals Committee of the Council held on Monday 10 February 2025 at 6.30 pm in Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding --
Present In Person - Councillors W Griffiths, A Burton, J Hale
Online – Councillor C Heath
Non-Voting Members – Councillor C Lewis
Apologies None

5701 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting

5702 Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor J Hale be appointed Chair of the Festivals Committee for 2024/25.

5703 Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor A Burton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Festivals Committee for 2024/25.

5704 Matters raised by Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

5705 Programme of Work for 2025/26

Members reflected on activities undertaken or discussed in the past as summarised by the Clerk, and drew conclusions as to what was likely to work well in the future, and that which would not. A realistic discussion on widening the scope of Council activities and extending engagement informed the Committee's deliberations. RESOLVED that Council be recommended to –

- Arrange a Fun Day at Waunceirch on Saturday 17 May 2025, broadly consistent with that undertaken in 2024
- Consider arranging or supporting smaller events/activities in the summer and autumn of 2025, subject to practicable suggestions being received from Members and the wider Blaenhonddan community.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

Signed

Dated

Cyngor Cymuned Blaenhonddan Blaenhonddan Community Council

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on Monday 17 February 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Cadoxton Community Centre, Neath and Online

Presiding ---
Present In Person - Councillors J Hale, W Griffiths, G T Morgan, G Morgan, C Lewis, C Heath, W Evans
Online – Councillor A Burton
Apologies Councillors H Harry C Williams, S Mitchell, L Bromham-Nichols

5706 Chair

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, RESOLVED that Councillor G Morgan take the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

5707 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

5708 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

There were no members of the public present.

5709 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 20 January 2025

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Council held on 20 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

5710 Matters Arising

Further to Minute 5691 relating to Hire Charges, the Clerk referred to the previously circulated amended hire charges and policy statement, and sought feedback on policy wording to meet the requirements of the previous decision. RESOLVED that the revised policy wording be endorsed.

5711 Financial Matters – February 2025

RESOLVED that the Clerk's report on payments and transfer of funds in February be approved.

5712 Planning Applications – February 2025

RESOLVED no objection to the following applications –

P2024/0794	Rear Extension	50 Ffrwd Vale Neath
P2025/0070	Rear Extension	23 Furzeland Drive Bryncoch

RESOLVED no objection to the following application, subject to the views of the NPT CBC arboricultural officer –

P2025/0081	Work to TPO Trees	Land r/o 11 Rhiwlas Waunceirch
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5713 Community Centre Management

1. The Clerk referred to a booking request from a commercial hirer and given the extended nature of the booking, sought advice on the possibility of a discounted rate to secure the booking, if one was requested. RESOLVED that, given the particular circumstances, the Clerk be authorised to negotiate a discount, on terms identified by Council, if a request is received.
2. Members were informed of parking issues at the Aberdulais Community Centre, and advised that if these persist, a price for installation of a car park barrier may be sought. RESOLVED noted.
3. The Clerk referred to issues reported with the kitchen cooker at Bryncoch Community Centre, which seemed to be over-specified for the needs of the Centre. RESOLVED that, as an alternative to undertaking costly repairs, the Clerk be authorised to purchase a new cooker that would meet the needs of the Community Centre's users.
4. Members were advised of expensive PRS/PPL charges that were anticipated in the coming months. RESOLVED that Council receive a report on the matter in due course.
5. The Clerk advised Members that in order to accommodate a new Youth Club at Aberdulais Community Centre, he had authorised storage arrangements that would meet the Youth Service's needs. Further requirements at both Aberdulais and Caewern were required to meet Youth Club food hygiene requirements and that these could be delivered by Council, but funded by the Youth Service. RESOLVED noted.
6. Following a request from Members, RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate a comprehensive upgrade of toilet facilities at Caewern Community Centre.

5714 Police Matters

There were no substantive reports on Police matters, but Members provided information about anti-social behaviour in Cilfrew and social media reports in Bryncoch. RESOLVED noted.

5715 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

5716 Minutes of the Festivals Committee held on 10 February 2025

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Festivals Committee held on 10 February 2025 be adopted.

5717 Casual Vacancy, Aberdulais Ward

The Clerk advised Members that one Expression of Interest for the Casual Vacancy in the Aberdulais Ward had been received within the specified period, and summarised its content. RESOLVED that Ms C Parry be co-opted to serve as Councillor representing the Aberdulais Ward.

5718 Public and Press

RESOLVED that further to Subsection (1) of Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the following five items, by virtue of the nature of the business to be transacted.

5719 Matters Arising from Exempt Items

There were no matters arising from exempt items on the Minutes.

5720 Health and Safety

There were no reports for submission to Council. RESOLVED noted.

5721 Hybrid Meeting Facilities

The Clerk referred to Minute 5695 of Council, 20 January 2025, when it was agreed to explore appropriate solutions for upgrading Council's current arrangements. He indicated that he had spoken to three parties and outlined proposals and costs received from all three. Members agreed with the principle of securing improved arrangements, but requested further investigation given the potential cost. RESOLVED that the Clerk take further advice and report back to Council in due course.

5722 Tree Surveys

The Clerk indicated that trees on the Council's estate should be inspected on a regular basis, that previous surveys had been undertaken in 2020 and 2022, and therefore, that a comprehensive survey was now due. A price had been sought to survey all 10 of the Council's sites, from the company that undertakes work of this nature for Council, and the cost was made known to Council. RESOLVED that The Arb Company be appointed to undertake a tree survey on all the Council's sites.

5723 Job Evaluation

Members were reminded of Minute 5622 of Council on 16 September 2024 when, whilst progressing a Job Evaluation of the Council's office-based posts, an option was agreed to extend that exercise to all posts on the Council's establishment. The Clerk had now received a quote to undertake a job evaluation of all posts not office based, in a sum made known to Council. RESOLVED that Council proceed and complete the job evaluation process for all staff.

5724 Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence to report.

5725 Date of the April Meeting of Council

RESOLVED that the April meeting of Council be held on Monday 28 April 2025.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Signed

Dated 17 March 2025