



**6th May 2021**

Dear Councillor.

You are hereby summoned to attend **BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCE MEETING at 6:30 pm on WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021.**

**The meeting will be held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020**

**Any members of the public who also wish to attend on this basis please contact the Clerk so that arrangements may be made for them.**

Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk.

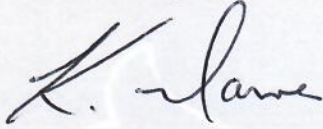
### **Agenda**

1. To receive any questions from the public.
2. To receive and accept apologies.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Members are invited to declare any interests they may have in any items on the Agenda.
4. **Council Meetings:** To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.
5. To receive and discuss the Internal Audit Report for the 2020/21 Financial Year.
6. To receive and consider the content of the Town Council's Annual Return for the 2020/21 Financial Year.
7. To discuss and make a determination regarding the procedure and authorising of any spend towards the World Heritage Day Event 2021
8. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

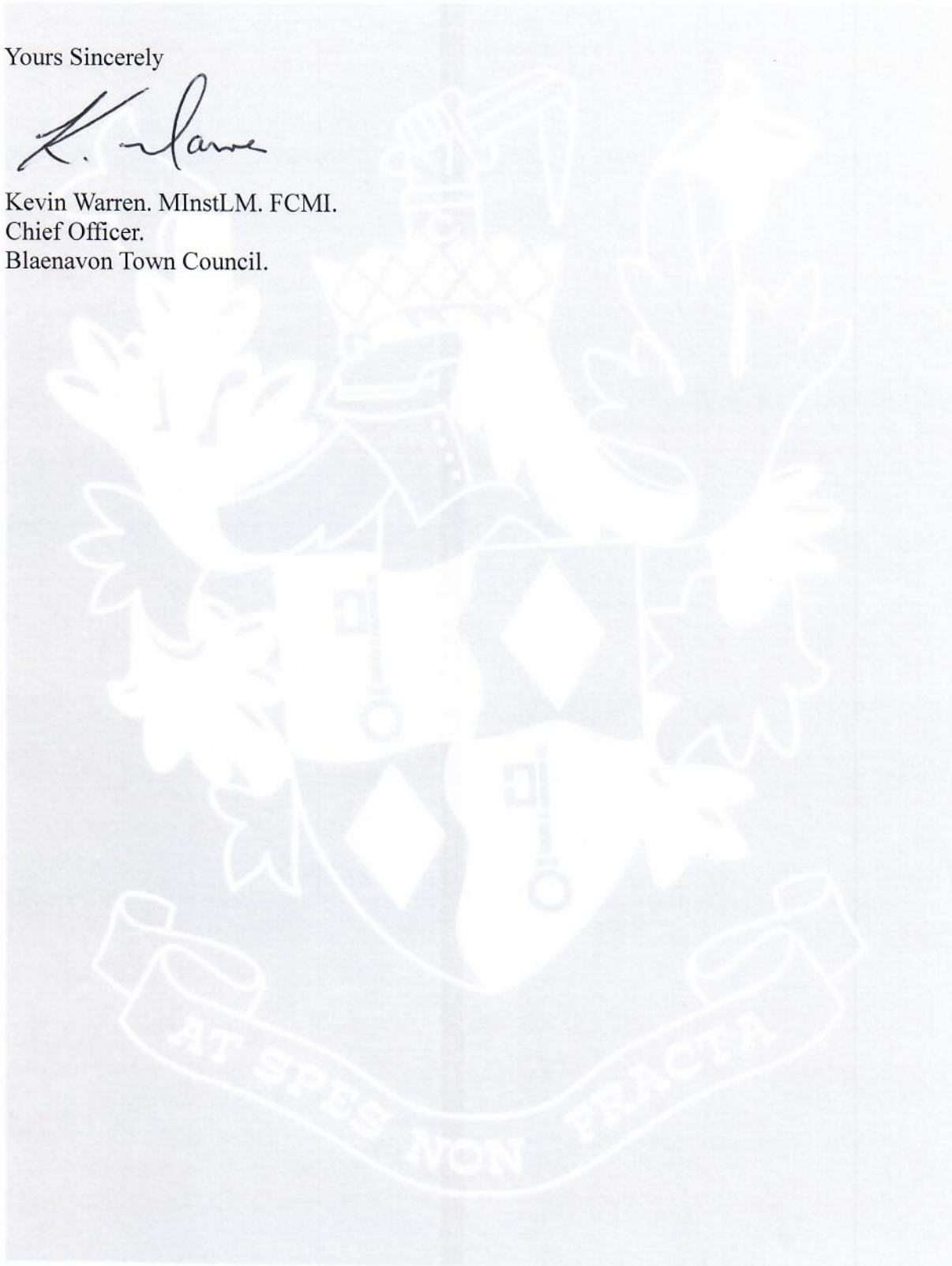
- Cllr Huybs – Litter Picking Project.

**9. Responsible Finance Officer's Update:** To receive the April 2021 financial update.

Yours Sincerely



Kevin Warren. MInstLM. FCMI.  
Chief Officer.  
Blaenavon Town Council.





**BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL FINANCE MEETING**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12th MAY 2021.**

**The meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020.**

**In attendance:**

Councillor: J. Huybs (In the Chair)

Councillors in attendance: A. Jones, N. Horler, J. Skyrme, L. Evans, G. McCann, L. Cowles, M. Harris, S. Bright. E, Harvey.

**Officers:** Mr K. Warren (Chief Officer)

**Visitor:** Mr Andy Smith (Community Finance Solutions)

The Council Finance meeting was opened at 6:30pm by the Chairman Councillor Jackie Huybs who welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

**1. To receive any questions from the public.**

None received.

**2. Apologies**

- Cllr Davies – Medical Condition
- Cllr Harvey – Work Commitment (Running late)

Cllr Harris proposed that the apologies be accepted; this was seconded by Cllr Cowles.

**Resolved:** Apologies accepted by members.

**3. Declaration of interests**

Cllr Horler – Item 7 on the agenda- Member of World Heritage Committee.

**4. To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 as a true and accurate record.**

The minutes were read for accuracy with no amendments being offered.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Skyrme that the minutes be approved.

**Resolved:** Minutes accepted as a true record.

**5. To receive and discuss the Internal Audit Report for the 2020/21 Financial Year.**

The Chief Officer had sent out the internal audit report to members prior to the meeting. The Chairman explained that the report was extremely detailed and if any member wanted to specifically mention anything within it.

Cllr Jones commented that the report was excellent and wanted to thank the Chief Officer and the internal auditor Mr Smith for their hard work in its preparation.

Cllrs Cowles also commented that the report was detailed, and it clearly demonstrated that the internal audit was a deep dive as a result of several of the comments depicted within it, in particular, the 36 transactions that were randomly tested. Cllr Cowles also expressed his thanks to Mr Smith and the Chief Officer for a robust internal audit.

The Chairman reaffirmed the comments alluded to by members and asked if the Chief Officer wanted to add anything further.

The Chief Officer confirmed that this year's audit was intrusive and some of this work focused on the Healthy Blaenavon projects covering grant funding. It was confirmed that the analysis of this work has been captured in a separate report that Mr Smith will forward to members when fully completed.

The Chief Officer requested if Mr Smith wanted to explain to members the nature of his role covering the internal audit for 2020/21.

Mr Smith explained that as a result of the Council's audit engagement letter, and in light of the proposed changes by Audit Wales moving forward certainly in terms of enhanced scrutiny, then this year's audit reflected over and above what Audit Wales would normally test.

Mr Smith provided an example of this by alluding to the comment made by Cllr Cowles regarding random testing on 36 separate transactions.

Mr Smith explained to members that together with all the other testing across the audit which included examination of Council minutes and cross referencing this within the website, it demonstrated that the governance of Council business was thoroughly examined which has been the expectation within Council audits in recent years.

Mr Smith also alluded to the work conducted in relation to project governance which was as

previously explained formed part of the additional testing for this year. This was all in line with financial regulations.

Areas in relation to externally funded projects have been highlighted for closer scrutiny certainly in terms of the internal file content and will form part of the separate report when this is completed.

Cllr Skyrme clarified that this was basically covering project controls, this was confirmed by Mr Smith who offered to attend the next finance meeting to explain the report in further detail.

Members were in agreement for Mr Smith to attend the June 2021 finance meeting. Mr Smith was again thanked for a very detailed report.

It was proposed by Cllr Cowles and seconded by Cllr Jones that the internal audit report for 2020/21 be accepted. All members were in agreement.

**Resolved:** Internal Audit report for 2020/21 accepted. Mr Smith to be invited to the June 2021 Finance Meeting.

**6. To receive and consider the content of the Town Council's Annual Return for the 2020/21 Financial Year.**

The Chairman explained to members that the Annual Return document was forwarded to members by the Chief Officer prior to the meeting and confirmed if members had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with its content?

Members confirmed that they had read it and were asked by the Chairman if there were any questions for the Chief Officer regarding its content?

The Chairman asked the Chief Officer if he wanted to add anything further. The Chief Officer outlined to members that this was a first glance opportunity to note the contents of the Annual Return prior to final sign off at Full Council at the end of the month.

A brief overview was provided by the Chief Officer regarding the opening and closing balances and that a more detailed overview regarding variances would be provided at Full Council.

The Chairman confirmed that the document only needed to be noted at this stage.

**Resolved:** Members noted the content of the draft Annual Return for 2020/21

**7. To discuss and make a determination regarding the procedure and authorising of any spend towards the World Heritage Day Event 2021**

The Chairman explained to members the reason for the agenda item was because it had been brought to the attention of the Council that the World Heritage Committee had been informed that the Town Council were the main funders for the World Heritage Day event for 2021.

The Chairman highlighted that even though this was a budgeted grant it was not an authorised one and requested if the Chief Officer wanted to expand on this? The Chief Officer confirmed that a budgeted figure is simply just that, and has not been authorised, these are two separate things.

This was further clarified in that any monies authorised for spend towards the World Heritage Day needs to be justified and that members need to satisfy themselves that this is the case.

The Council will be required to demonstrate due diligence on any monies allocated and this will then comply with the Council's audit requirements in terms of value for money.

The Chief Officer provided members with examples of what this means, namely:

- What level of reserves does the World Heritage Committee have?
- The Council would need to have sight of bank accounts to justify the need for allocation of funds.
- What would the allocation of funds be spent on?
- A breakdown of costs linked to the request for funding.
- What other funding opportunities have the World Heritage Committee explored?
- What other grants have been allocated to the World Heritage Committee to run that particular event?

In short, what cannot happen is that the Council hands over £5k without being presented with evidence relating to the points previously mentioned.

The Chief Officer explained that the concerns that he has in his capacity as RFO is that it is now the middle of May, and assuming that the event will be taking place at the end of June 2021, there has still not been a request received from the World Heritage Committee for allocation of funds to support the event.

The Chairman asked Cllr Horler if he wished to comment? Cllr Horler explained that the Chair of the Heritage Committee Gareth Davies has now resigned, and an emergency meeting has been called to discuss the future of the World Heritage Committee.

Cllr Horler explained that it had been agreed that there will be some form of social media presence on the day, and this is all he is aware of at this time pending the result of the emergency meeting.

A further brief discussion took place amongst members regarding key positions within the World Heritage Committee and the situation looked precarious which was very sad indeed.

The Chairman requested a proposal in order to make a determination regarding the authorisation of any spend.

Cllr Cowles proposed that any spend follows the Town Council procedure for the authorising of grants, this was seconded by Cllr Jones.

**Resolved:** Any authorisation of funding to the World Heritage Committee to follow the Town Councils financial procedures. World Heritage Committee to be informed regarding this by the Chief Officer.

**8. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2020/21. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.**

- Cllr Huybs – Litter Picking Project.

Cllr Huybs provided members with an overview on the current situation regarding the Litter Prevention Project and explained that now restrictions were being lifted, moves are being made to make plans to promote the project and an example of this was holding a competition on Facebook for the community to come up with a group name for the litter picking group.

Negotiations will be taking place with the local school to design a poster for the project and hopefully this will start to take shape and be implemented during the next month.

**Resolved:** Members noted the update.

**9. Responsible Finance Officer's Update: To receive April 2021 financial update.**

Mr Kevin Warren (RFO) forwarded members the April 2021 financial reports electronically in advance of the meeting which detailed the following areas:

- Income and Expenditure
- Credit Card Payments
- Cheque Payments
- Bacs Payments
- Cash Book Transactions
- Bank Reconciliation
- Project Revenue
- Project Expenditure
- Budget
- VAT
- Bank Statements

Mr Warren presented to members each of the above areas of finance and highlighted any relevant information. Members were invited to ask any questions in relation to the areas referenced.

The Chairman requested clarity regarding the payment of £25 to the Torfaen Museum Trust. Mr Warren explained that this was the fee that is paid to the museum regarding membership for the appointed Cllr who represents the Town Council within that organisation.

At present Cllr McCann represents the Town Council within the Torfaen Museum Trust.

Mr Warren provided members with an explanation with regards to the spend allocated to the Community Brew project which is still waiting to be finalised.

Members were also signposted to the newly added Community Brew section within the finance system which will accurately record all spends allocated to this project.

Members were happy with the presentation.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Harvey that the April 2021 finance update be accepted.

**Resolved:** Financial update for April 2021 accepted by members.

The meeting was ended at 19:06

**Chairman Signed:**



**Date: 10/6/21**