



2nd June 2021

Dear Councillor.

You are hereby summoned to attend **BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCE MEETING at 6:30 pm on WEDNESDAY 9th JUNE 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.

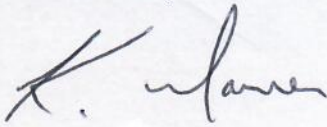
Members of the public have the right to ask questions at Council meetings and to speak in Welsh or English, provided that at least 3 working days' notice in writing of the question has been provided to the Clerk.

Agenda

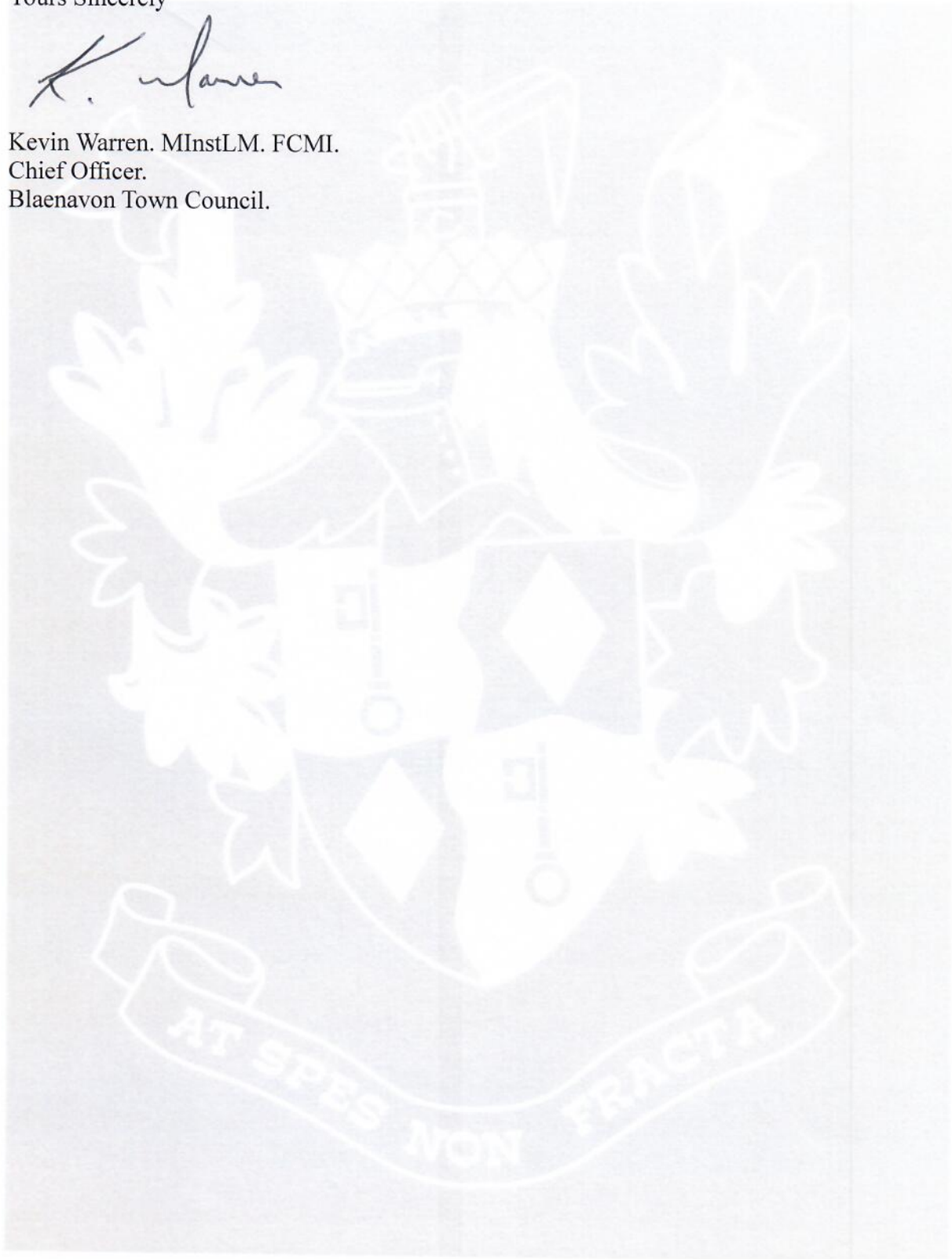
1. To receive any questions from the public.
2. To receive and accept apologies.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Members are invited to declare any interests they may have in any items on the Agenda.
4. **Council Meetings:** To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 12th of May 2021.
5. To receive and discuss a report from **Mr Andy Smith (Internal Auditor)** relating to the recent audit of Project Management Arrangements.
6. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Return for Blaenavon Town Council 2020/21
7. To discuss potential Town Council projects for allocation into the Project Action Plan 2021/22. Relevant updates or new projects as notified.

8. Responsible Finance Officer's Update: To receive the May 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 9th JUNE 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, G. McCann, L. Cowles, E. Harvey, G. Davies.

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 Harris – Work Commitment.

Cllr Cowles informed the Chairman that he had received information from Cllr Evans that they have connection problems and is unable to log into the meeting. It was explained that the apology has not been sent via the proper channels namely the Chief Officer.

Cllr Davies proposed that the apologies be accepted for Cllr Harris; this was seconded by Cllr Harvey.

The Chairman asked members if there was a proposer and seconder to accept Cllr Evans's reason for non-attendance.

Cllr Davies proposed that the reason for non-attendance be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr McCann.

Resolved: Apologies accepted by members.

3. Declaration of interests

None declared.

4. To confirm the minutes of the Council Finance Meeting held on the 12th of May 2021 as a true and accurate record.

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

It was proposed by Cllr Harvey and seconded by Cllr Cowles that the minutes be approved.

Resolved: Minutes accepted as a true record.

5. To receive and discuss a report from Mr Andy Smith (Internal Auditor) relating to the recent audit of Project Management Arrangements.

The Chairman reiterated to members that a copy of the report had been sent to members by the Chief Officer ahead of the meeting and did members have the opportunity to read the report?

The Chairman asked Mr Smith if he was happy to take questions from members regarding the report or to outline to members the content of the report.

Mr Smith stated that he would like discuss a few points within the report itself and stated that at first glance the report seems quite critical, but from an audit point of view, what the Council have self-identified is extremely positive, and have clearly implemented measures to minimise an area of risk prior to this being identified by an internal or external auditor.

Mr Smith stated that based on the above points he would be happy to take any questions from members or further explain any of the points within the report.

A series of questions were received from members regarding the report and explanations provided by Mr Smith.

Cllr Cowles thanked Mr Smith for the preparation of a very useful report and echoed the comments made by Mr Smith in that this was a report requested by the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to gauge where the Council were particularly in terms of the external funding projects, bearing in mind that this level of finance was relatively new to the Council in comparison to the volume of projects that are currently active.

Cllr Cowles alluded to a section of the report that identified a lack of member scrutiny regarding externally funded projects and requested if Mr Smith could expand on this further in order that members could improve in this area moving forward.

Mr Smith explained to members that his area of work and experience was in relation to external funding and highlighted several points that reflected the comments alluded to in his report namely.

- The depth and breadth of information contained within project files.
- The requirements of contracted legal documents related to external funding.
- Delivery profiles in relation to how funding is allocated and spent.
- Capturing evidence for funders to demonstrate correct project spend.
- The quality of reports being presented to members in comparison to project profile.

Mr Smith explained that to minimise both financial and reputational risk with funders then this is where scrutiny by members is extremely important certainly in terms of reporting against profile and targets.

Cllrs Davies enquired if funders would withdraw funds based on the risk points alluded to or would they advise and assist initially?

Mr Smith explained that funds would usually only be withdrawn if something was drastically wrong, or the project was nearing a conclusion and the funding had not yet been spent.

Cllr Davies asked a supplementary question relating to spend attributed to total Council income and how crucial funding income is in terms of the growth of the Council.

Mr Smith explained that overall funding is important to the Town Council certainly in terms of not increasing precept, but if the total budget including the funding levered in is compared to operating costs which looks a lot, then overall this is acceptable.

Mr Smith explained further that a recommendation to deal any financial risk would be the implementation of an external funding policy.

The Chief Officer provided a brief overview regarding the role of the Healthy Blaenavon Officer in terms of reporting and the management of the external funding and concurred that as a result of the depth of audit, this has now been identified and rectified which has been reflected within an amendment to the Financial Regulations.

A brief discussion then took place amongst members regarding the preparation of a policy and procedures document in relation to external funding based on some practical points raised by Mr Smith.

A discussion around this point was further conducted by members and it was generally agreed that this should be a Council wide piece of work in the form of setting up a working group.

This was proposed by Cllr Harvey and seconded by Cllr Davies.

Mr Smith was thanked by the Chairman for the valuable input to the Council.

Resolved: A working group to be established to prepare and ratify a policy and procedure document in relation to the management of external funding.

6. To receive, discuss and make a determination regarding the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Return for Blaenavon Town Council 2020/21

The Chairman confirmed with members if they had received and read the report which had been sent out disseminated by the Chief Officer and whether there were any comments regarding its content?

The Chairman asked the Chief Officer if he would like to comment on the report. A brief overview regarding the report and its requirement in law was provided to members.

The Chairman asked members if there were any questions or views. Cllr Davies stated that the remuneration reflects the fact that members are elected by the community to provide services on their behalf and the payment is not in existence as a payment for as a volunteering role.

Members were in agreement with this observation.

Cllr Cowles raised a point in relation to audit and what would be the repercussions if the report had not been submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Chief Officer explained that this would generate a qualified audit opinion.

It was proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Harvey that the report be accepted.

Members were all in agreement.

Resolved: Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Return for Blaenavon Town Council 2020/21 accepted by members.

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

None presented.

8. Responsible Finance Officer's Update: To receive May 2021 financial update.

Mr Kevin Warren (RFO) forwarded members the May 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.

It was explained by the RFO regarding the scrutiny and processes involved in relation to BACS payments and the role of the appointed signatories in receiving, viewing, and authorising all invoices and associated payment requests.

Mr Warren reminded members that this was tested robustly during the recent audit process with 36 transactions randomly examined.

Cllr Cowles mirrored the comments made by the RFO regarding the scrutiny of BACS payments and the role of the signatory.

Cllr Davies raised a point regarding income and expenditure relating to the budget and in furtherance to his original point made during item 5 relating to spend attributed to total Council income.

Cllr Davies suggested that a proposal / debate is listed for Full Council in terms of potential precept rises taking into account a requirement for the Council to secure external funding as an offset to a precept increase.

The Chairman invited members to comment on the points made by Cllr Davies. There were no comments raised. The Chairman asked the Chief Officer if he had a view regarding Cllr Davies's opinion.

The Chief Officer explained that as a Council and in order to deliver services as an example projects, then the Council have tax raising powers which can be supplemented by external funding, and this is the advice from external auditors if the requirement to do so can be justified.

The Chief Officer explained further that in relation to submitting funding bids then this would be a matter for members but based on the current budget, funds have been carried over and therefore there is no requirement for a precept increase. If the finances were spent during that period, then any increase consideration would be made during the budget setting.

The Chief Officer reiterated the fact that any external funding applications are not guaranteed, and the volume of work entailed to submit bids was considerable and in essence a balance needs struck.

At this point in the financial year, it is too soon to establish what will be spent and any consideration on levering in funds should be taken towards the end of the year bearing in mind that surplus funds have been carried over and the budget has been agreed by members. It would be a better option to revisit this towards the end of the year.

The Chief Officer made it clear that to raise precept when there was no requirement to do so was unacceptable, but if there was a requirement, then this was within the Council's gift. It was also pointed out that the Council had carried over £86k through no fault of their own.

The Chairman enquired from Cllr Davies how he would foresee the Council leveraging in external funds based on the points raised by the Chief Officer.

Cllr Davies outlined that there would be capacity for members and the Chief Officer to manage and administer the task of leveraging in external funds and this would be a collective responsibility in that if members brought a project to the table with external funding, then that person should own the project as well as the project reporting.

Cllr Davies explained further and stated as politicians we should demonstrate to the public that all is being considered to not raise the precept and the Council would benefit from this.

Cllr Cowles commented that exploring funding for projects is a consideration but to have a debate on precept at this time of the year when the budget has only recently been set is questionable. The time to consider precept versus external funding would naturally be later on during the financial year and not at next month's Full Council meeting.

The Chief Officer gave an example to members stating that the majority of the finances being carried over this year had come from external funding that has not been spent, and this is available to be used in the form of projects.

What this means is that the Council is already in the position that Cllr Davies wants them to be as a result of external funding resulting in the precept not being raised. The Chief Officer provided members with the projects that had levered in funding the most recent example being £12,250 from Comic Relief.

This means that in order to support the public, projects can be presented to draw down from the already available funds.

Members were happy with the presentation.

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

Resolved: Financial update for May 2021 accepted by members.

The meeting was ended at 19:13

Chairman Signed:

Date: 15/7/21





BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL *CYNGOR TREF BLAENAFON*

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Blaenavon Town Council

Finance Update

May 2021

BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL



Bank Reconciliation 2021-22

Bank Reconciliation

MAY

Opening Balance

Current Account	£118,633.34
Cash in Hand	£21.45
	<hr/>
	£118,654.79

Add Receipts in Period	£0.00
Less Payments in Period	£10,795.15
	<hr/>

Balance at End of Period **£107,859.64**

Balances at Bank

Current Account	£107,841.42
Cash in Hand	£18.22
	<hr/>
	£107,859.64

Clerk

Sign

K. Evans

Date

1/6/21

Chairman

Sign

[Signature]

Date

11/6/21

BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL

Income & Expenditure Statement 2021/2022



Period

MAY

	ACTUAL		BUDGET		VAR
INCOME					
BTC	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
PRECEPT	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
VAT RECEIPTS	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
REVENUE	£ -	£ 4,500.00	£ -	£ -	(£4,500.00)
HBO	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
COMMUNITY BREW INCOME	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
OTHER RECEIPTS	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
	£ -	£ 4,500.00	£ -	£ -	(£4,500.00)
EXPENDITURE					
SALARY	£ 6,366.85	£ 6,151.00	£ 6,151.00	£ 6,151.00	£215.85
ELECTION COSTS	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
ESTABLISHMENT COSTS	£ 3,589.65	£ 2,477.00	£ 2,477.00	£ 2,477.00	£1,112.65
COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCE	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
HOSPITALITY	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
PROJECTS	£ 35.07	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00	(£964.93)
GRANTS	£ 750.00	£ 834.00	£ 834.00	£ 834.00	(£84.00)
COMMUNITY BREW	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£0.00
VAT	£ 53.58	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	£ 500.00	(£446.42)
	£ 10,795.15	£ 10,962.00	£ 10,962.00	£ 10,962.00	(£166.85)

CLERK

SIGN

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

1/6/21

CHAIRMAN

SIGN

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

11/6/21

£ 102.73

CLERK
SIGN K. Wilmore
DATE 11/6/21

CHAIRMAN
SIGN [Signature]
DATE 11/5/21

BLAENAVON TOWN COUNCIL



Petty Cash transactions 2021/2022

MONTH MAY

DATE	CATEGORY	SUPPLIER	DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	TOTAL	DATE PAID
28-May-2021	ESTABLISHMENT	POST OFFICE	RECORDED DELIVERY - AUDIT	£ 3.23	£ -	£ 3.23	28-May
						£ 3.23	

Opening Balance £ 21.45
 Less transactions in Period £ 3.23
 Plus reimbursement in period £ -
 Closing Balance £ 18.22
 Cash in Hand **£ 18.22**

CLERK		CHAIRMAN	
SIGN		SIGN	

DATE

1/6/21

DATE

11/6/21