

## Draft Unapproved Minutes of the Full Council Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Present in person: Councillors H Llewellyn; R Carrol; J McCarthy; P Collins; D IngramJones; M IngramJones; C Andrews; Y Price.

Present remotely: Councillors S HamerThomas; R Price; J Davies; Mr C Gapper (Deputy Clerk)

Chairperson: Councillor H Llewellyn (Mayor)

Also Present: PCSO N Bateman; Mrs. H Williams (Town Clerk / RFO)

Members observed two minutes silence in respect of the recent passing of Mrs Freda May (former town Councillor and Mayoress 2001-2003), and Councillor Josie Bissex (Bargoed Ward Councillor and former Mayoress 2007-2008).

### Police Report

The monthly report was reviewed with Members, and the annual statistics were circulated around the table for Members to draw comparisons. An overall decrease in both crime and anti-social behaviour statistics was noted this month, which proved interesting given December is a month when the schools are off. An increase in vehicle crime including vehicle theft has been reported.

The officer reported that the team feel a move to using Facebook for reporting purposes to be very positive, and Members agreed this is providing easier for the public to reach out and provide information or report issues.

A Member asked for information on the domestic violence initiative to which the officer explained about anti-spiking bottles and that funding has been sought for lip salves to be considered.

At the time of writing the report, engagement sessions in Aberbargoed library had not been confirmed; these are since published as 17/2; 10/3; 7/4/2026.

A Member offered thanks to the officers who attended the peaceful protest in Aeron Place recently. The officer advised Members are welcome to have a walk around in the community with them to engage with the public. Councillors to liaise directly with PCSO Bateman.

To receive Apologies for Absence.

Councillor BissexFoster (bereavement leave)

To receive Declaration of Interests or dispensations on any item(s) on this Agenda, if appropriate.  
None

Press and Public Participation Session.  
None

1. To receive, review and approve the draft unapproved minutes of the full council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**Resolved** to approve the minutes, Councillor Andrews moved and Councillor Collins seconded.

2. To note the draft unapproved minutes of the committee meetings as follows:

(i) Policy and Resources 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – noted

(ii) Engagement and Wellbeing 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 - noted

3. To hear from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor with a request for Members support in making a donation of their respective Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's allowances.

The Mayor sought the support of full council in making a donation of his refused Mayors Allowance for 2025-2026 to the Gilfach Bargoed YMCA.

Councillor Andrews declared an interest in the YMCA as she has recently been appointed to the management committee.

**Resolved** to make a donation of £1,500 to the YMCA.

The Deputy Mayor sought the support of full council in making a donation of his refused Deputy Mayors Allowance for 2025-2026 to support St Gwladys Church Hall.

**Resolved** to make a donation of £500 to St Gwladys Church Hall.

4. To receive items potentially relevant to 2026-2027 budget arrangements:

4.1 Resident communication regarding CTG at Bargoed Library

Members instructed the clerk to respond to the enquiry advising Members uphold the resolution to not continue with funding these sessions post 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, and to provide details of the CTG activity dates in Caerphilly library.

4.2 Special meeting of the Joint CCBC Town and Community Councils Liaison Committee meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

The Mayor and Clerk reported that there was very little discussion on the budget proposals during the meeting other than to ask a question about costs incurred by community boundary changes; the proposed 3% increase on all fees set by CCBC and the 1% cut on school budgets. The Invest to Save Programme was mentioned, with one County Borough Councillor advising of a project to install solar panels on a local primary school. County Borough Members strongly encouraged Town Councillors to complete the budget consultation and to encourage the community to also provide feedback.

5. To receive items from the Clerk as follows:

5.1 Buckingham Palace Garden Party responses

**Resolved** to nominate Mrs Vivienne Stephens and Mrs Susan Horton, for all the voluntary work they do at Cartref Community Hall.

5.2 Pot Hole communication

Members instructed the clerk to respond to the enquiry advising of no remit to deal with Highways issues, and that the Town Council strongly recommends residents report pothole issues directly to Caerphilly County Borough Council. Councillor D IngramJones requested that her CCBC contact details also be provided within the response.

5.3 Consideration of amending standing orders to require all Councillors to complete specific One Voice Wales training modules within their first year of office and at the start of each new term. (This would be in addition to the required Code of Conduct Training which is mandated by Town Council to be completed within six months of appointment)

Modules recommended: (The Council, The Councillor, The Council Meeting, Introduction to Local Council Finance, Understanding the Law, Equality and Diversity)

**Resolved** to amend standing orders and training policy without delay.

6. To consider, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Precepts)(Wales) Regulations 1995, draft budget calculations for 2026-2027 along with recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026: , and provide a resolution on the precept demand to be made to Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Members closely reviewed the draft budget calculations noting the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee as follows:

- \* the use of £14,090 of earmarked project reserves to support budgeted activities 2026-27
- \*2025-26 bank interest to support budgeted activities
- \*50% of forecast bank interest for 2026-27 to support budgeted activities
- \*2025-26 free reserves (ie surplus at year end) to be carried forward to support budgeted activities.
- \*removal of the library activities budget line and requests for activities be considered within discretionary budget line.
- \*a reduction in the budget for older people's events and a new budget line of family events established
- \*maintenance of the total grants and donations budget of £25,000 in the 2026-27 financial year.

along with their previous resolutions in respect of Members Allowances, changes to the small grants scheme and the planned schedule of increased community events and activities for 2026-2027.

The clerk reviewed budget notes and drew attention to:

- \*the virement of refused Members allowances 25-26 to Running Costs Reserves as per resolution of Council, brings the target sum of three months running costs in Earmarked Reserves (£31,775) very close to being reached. This figure is to be reviewed in 2026.
- \* Members Care Costs original resolution to accumulate £10,000 in Earmarked Reserves, and maintained annually according to usage. The 2026-27 budget contains £500 in this budget line which will bring the Earmarked Reserve to the target sum.
- \* Bank Charges budget has been increased by £240 to support increased fees as notified by Unity Trust and the implementation of card payment mechanisms.
- \*IT support, software & security budget has been increased by £250 to support any change to a Gov.UK domain and such like as recommended by Welsh Government.
- \*Family Events budget has been increased by £1,000 in light of recent costs being greater than anticipated.
- \*Festive lighting figurine repairs along with the cost of purchasing replacement tree lights. Members spoke about their need to replace ten figurines for the 2026 displays and approved a plan to provide four new figurines for the Park estate and a further four for the two lamp posts at the Capel Hotel area. An additional two new red figurines are also required for Gilfach. This will free up eight multi-coloured figurines to support the Aberbargoed and Bargoed displays.
- \*HR and Staffing Committee work on staffing requirements and the use of the General Power of Competence moving forward.

**Resolved** to instruct the clerk to liaise with suppliers for prices of ex-rental equipment and source suitable figurines using the remaining 2025-26 budget available.

**Resolved** to add an additional £5,500 to the Growth Fund to support the decisions of the HR and Staffing Committee in early 2026.

Members debated their budgeted expenditure at some length, noting the importance of additional Human Resources moving forward and their desire to use the General Power of Competence. A unanimous **Resolution** was reached to approve a budget of £270,654 and make a precept demand to Caerphilly County Borough Council for the 2026-2027 financial year of £236,723. This equates to a precept of £62.28 per Band D household, which is an increase of £2.87 a year, 6p a week.

*In accordance with Standing Orders, the following agenda item is Confidential, therefore not open to the press and public.*

7. To note the contents of the Draft Unapproved minutes of the HR and Staffing Committee Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

Noted.

This concluded business of the meeting.

The Mayor thanked all present and the meeting was closed at 19.07pm