



**GARW VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**CYNGOR CYMUNEDOL CWM GARW**

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT HALO LEISURE, PONTYCYMER**  
**AND VIA ZOOM ON MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2026 AT 6.30 pm**

Present: Councillor M Lewis (Chair)

Councillors:

G Andrews (via zoom)

J Coles

D Davies (via zoom)

W Davies

D Williams

G Walters (via zoom)

Apologies: Councillors H Griffiths, C Lloyd & G Lloyd

No Apologies: Councillors N Harwood Scorer, L Thomas & M Trowbridge

Also Present: Yiota Haramblos (REACH), Gareth Kiddie (Gareth Kiddie Associates), 2 members of the public

186/25-26 Apologies (as above)

## MEETING OF COUNCIL - 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2026

Due to an issue with the wifi the meeting started later than scheduled at 6.38 pm. The Chair introduced those attending online to those attending in person and welcomed the members of the public to the meeting.

### **187/25-26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor	Item	Interest
J Coles	REACH Project	Holiday cottage owner
D Davies	Richard Price Centre	Director
M Lewis	All Bridgend County Borough Matters Calon y Cwm CIC Tyn yr Heol Primary School	Member Director Governor
D Williams	Awen Cultural Trust/Blaengarw Workmen's Hall	Volunteer at Blaengarw Workmen's Hall

### **188/25-26 TO RECEIVE GARETH KIDDIE AND YIOTA HARAMBLOS ref. REACH PROJECT**

The report's Executive Summary had been provided with the meeting papers. The full report will be circulated after the council meeting. Gareth Kiddie quickly went through the main findings. 80% of respondents were in favour of the pump park, there was a mixed response to the activity hubs. The visit to Parc Bryn Bach was well worth the visit and was excellent to see. Councillor J Coles said the report's attention to detail was outstanding.

Yiota Haramblos of REACH addressed the council and said that unfortunately the Northern Valleys Initiative funding was no longer available. However the pump park would fit the Pride in Place larger funding scheme and she encouraged the council to apply for the funding using the report as evidence for the project.

**Resolved:** The Chair thanked Gareth Kiddie for all the company's hard work.

### **189/25-26 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2026 ORDINARY MEETING**

The February 2026 Ordinary Meeting minutes were presented for approval.

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the February 2026 Ordinary Meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.

**190/25-26 TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FEBRUARY 2026 MEETING**

**Minute 169/25-26 Matters Arising from the January 2026 Meeting**

The Clerk informed the council that BCBC's work on the lakes started today. The initial work will remove areas of reeds and nesting birds will not be disturbed. There is an ecologist on board to keep a daily eye on progress. The next phase, to remove soil, will start around 17<sup>th</sup> April; the delay being the restrictions on fish and spawning; NRW has given the go ahead for the work to start on this date. In addition, the contractor has a public relations officer on board who will provide the Clerk with weekly updates which will then be shared with councillors, on the council website and on social media. Any notices will be published in the nearest noticeboards to the work at the Co-op, WEXA and Visitor Centre.

**Working in Partnership with V2C in Bettws:** a response has been received to the council's letter to the CEO and has been passed on to councillors.

**Borough and Ward Reports:** the Clerk had received a response to the council's letter to Awen Cultural Trust ref. Bettws Life Centre and shared the response with the meeting.

**National Forest Wales:** the timeframe for the bid did not allow enough time to obtain the quotes needed to apply; in addition the cost of the risk assessment could not be included as it did not fit the criteria.

**Minute 170/25-26 Crime Figures January 2026**

PCSO Elliott is confirmed as the Garw Valley PCSO.

**Minute 172/25-26 Pantygog Play Area**

The Clerk had not progressed this matter as a BCBC councillor had informed her that it is no longer an issue as it is on BCBC's future list of refurbishments.

**Minute 173/25-26 Land at Hill View, Pontycymer**

A site visit will take place in April.

**Minute 174/25-26 Items for the April 2026 T&CC Forum Agenda**

The meeting has been cancelled due to the post-election period.

**Minute 175/25-26 Assertion 10 Annual Governance Statement**

This had not been a priority this month; it is not time sensitive.

**Minute 176/25-26 Events Committee/Purchase of Equipment**

The items have been purchased and are stored by Councillor Williams.

**Resolved:** All information was noted and actions approved.

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### **191/25-26 CRIME FIGURES FEBRUARY 2026**

There were no SW Police PCSOs at the meeting.

**Resolved:** The crime figures were noted.

### **192/25-26 PC LAN USE FOR GENDER REVEALS**

Council recently gave permission for a gender reveal in Parc Calon Lan. As gender reveals are becoming more popular the Chair said the council needs to be mindful of future requests.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that Councillor D Williams would research gender reveal guidelines and report back to council at the next meeting.

### **193/25-26 DRAFT SEXUAL HARRASMENT POLICY**

A draft policy had been circulated with the meeting papers. This was discussed.

**Resolved:** The policy was unanimously adopted.

### **194/25-26 DRAFT LONE WORKER POLICY**

A draft lone worker policy had been sent out with the meeting papers. This was discussed. It was noted that the draft had been circulated as a starting point for a discussion and for councillors to add to it.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that the Clerk would recirculate the draft policy and the OVW lone policy document for councillors to compare the two and feedback their comments at the next meeting to form a more detailed policy. In the meantime, the Clerk would obtain more information about the use of a mobile phone app suitable for lone workers.

### **195/25-26 DEFERRED FINANCIAL REQUESTS**

A paper detailing the council's deferred requests for 2025/26 had been included with the meeting papers. It was noted that the 2025/26 donation budget line had been spent as a donation had been made earlier in the year to Cwm Garw Fun Palace, however there are funds in the contingency budget line should the council wish to donate/s.

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The deferred requests were from the Wales Air Ambulance, Teenage Cancer Trust, Urdd National Eisteddfod Ynys Mon 2026, Cerebral Palsy Wales, Hope Rescue, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Marie Curie.

A proposal was made to donate £25 each to the Wales Air Ambulance and Marie Curie. The Blaengarw councillors offered to make these donations from its ward funds.

**Resolved:** The offer from the Blaengarw councillors was unanimously agreed and a donation of £25 to the Wales Air Ambulance and Marie Curie would be made.

### **196/25-26 PRIDE IN PLACE FUNDING**

Information on this funding available from the UK Government via BCBC had been shared with councillors; there are two funds a small one for schemes up to £25,000 and a larger one for schemes up to £300,000. All projects must be deliverable by March 2027. This was discussed.

**Resolved:** Despite the two day turnaround to application, the Clerk was asked to apply for the pump park using the REACH project report as evidence. It was agreed to apply for £71,250 of funding, using the project budget line for 26/27 and some of the reserves for the remainder as the total quoted cost is £86,250.

### **197/25-26 FINANCE & ACCOUNTS**

**Payments:** Authority was requested for the payments for March 2026 presented totalling £7,602.94. The balance carried forward £76,052.59.

**Income:** No income had been received in the month.

**Rights of Way Agency Claim:** It was noted that the Clerk had submitted the claim for 2025/26.

**Financial Requests:** Two requests had been received this month for the Llangeinor ward: Llangeinor and District Senior Citizens Association had requested £320 towards the cost of a coach for an organised trip for their members and Llangeinor Community and Wildlife Gardens had requested £660 to purchase top soil to maintain their raised bed.

**Resolved:** All information was noted. Authorisation was given for all payments on the sheets presented. The budget monitoring sheets were approved. The Llangeinor councillors agreed to fund the two financial requests for their ward from their ward funds.

**198/25-26 BOROUGH AND WARD REPORTS**

There were no ward reports given.

**Councillor M Lewis:** said potholes near the surgery in Pontycymer are a huge issue, updated members on the bottom half of the community route and an update on work on King Edward Street.

**Resolved:** All information was noted.

**199/25-26 CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair had attended Blaengarw Primary School's Eisteddfod and been a judge; it had been an honour to witness the children's talent.

**Resolved:** The information was noted.

**200/25-26 CLERK'S REPORT incl. WARDEN'S REPORT**

The Warden's report had been included in the meeting papers.

**Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27:** there was only one change for T&CCs; the optional financial loss compensation has been increased to 6.4%.

**Miners' Lamp Llangeinor:** the lights are now switched off during daylight hours

**Bin Pontyrhyl:** BCBC is making enquiries about the removal and return of the council's bin.

**Calon Lan Plaque:** this is being installed in the coming days.

**Bench Meadow Street:** this has been installed; the Clerk gave an update.

**Bus Shelter Murals:** the second shelter has now been completed in the Llangeinor Ward; it is very different to the others in the valley and has received many positive comments.

**Tree Maintenance and Overgrowth PC Lan:** the work has been completed; one complaint from a resident was received and responded to.

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**T&CC Chairs & Clerks Meeting:** this is due to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> March in Sarn, hosted by Ynysawdre CC.

**Working Group Charter Review:** the Clerk gave an update on the working group's progress to date.

**Steps Meadow Street, Pontycymer:** the Clerk gave an update on the response to the council's T&CC grant funding application which has delayed work due to some additional queries raised by BCBC. These have been answered by the Clerk, however BCBC now wishes to assess the safety of the side walls which is delaying the licence.

**Railings The Strand:** the Clerk has received a quote which was slightly higher than expected; the Clerk is seeking two further quotes. A proposed design was shown to members.

**Training:** The Clerk informed members that OVW is offering Chairs and Clerks the opportunity to take up training on accounts closure and preparation of the annual return.

**Website Redaction:** a previous Clerk has asked for some information to be redacted on the council's website.

**Blaengarw Primary School PTA:** have arranged for the contractor who carried out the mural painting to carry out some work at the school. They are purchasing the paint but wrote asking if the council can cover the cost of £381; the cost of the solution needed to be applied before the painting takes place.

**Annual Leave:** the Clerk reminded members about her annual leave dates in late March.

**Resolved:** The information was noted. The Clerk was asked to arrange for the Meadow Street bench to be moved further away from the house entrance, to ask the contractor to delay work on the Meadow Street steps, the proposed railings design was unanimously approved, the Clerk would accept the offer of end of year finance training, the website redaction had been carried out and the Blaengarw ward councillors agreed to cover the cost of £381 for Blaengarw Primary School PTA.

## **201/25-26 CORRESPONDENCE**

All correspondence had been sent out to Members since the last meeting and with the Chair's consent an additional sheet had been distributed for items received after the papers were distributed.

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The Clerk highlighted the following:

- One Voice Wales - membership renewal for 2026/27 received for £1,923
- PiPIF Funding via BCBC - Expression of interest form and invitation to scheme webinar
- Offer of apple trees - expressed an interest, though demand is high
- Resident - Emails received regarding work in the park, complaint about litter in the valley, complaint about tree work and nesting birds, FOI request etc., the bottom half of the community route etc.

**Resolved:** All information was noted. Authority to renew the OVW membership was given, thought would be given to where the apple trees could be planted, the resident emails had been answered by the Clerk and the FOI request would be answered within the response time.

### **202/25-26 PLANNING MATTERS**

All planning information had been sent out to Members since the last meeting.

0 planning request had been received and there were 2 decisions and 0 appeals. 5 Planning Aid Wales had sent out items of correspondence via email.

**Resolved:** All information received was noted.

### **203/25-26 ITEMS FOR THE APRIL 2026 ORDINARY MEETING**

- Lone Worker Policy feedback by all
- Event Opportunities (DW)
- To receive the Warden

**Resolved:** The agenda would be kept open for items to be added in the month.

The date for the next Meeting is Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and will take place at 6.30 pm at Halo Leisure, Pontycymer and via zoom.

The meeting closed at 7.59 pm