



Minutes of a HYBRID meeting of the **FINANCE MEETING** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Talbot Street, Maesteg and remotely via Microsoft Teams and, on **Monday, 3rd February 2025**

PRESENT: Clerk
**COUNCILLORS
IN PERSON:** **G Thomas (Chair)**
C Davies, C Knight, A LeGeyt & R Martin

APOLOGIES: P Davies & L Thomas

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: Cllr C Davies declared an interest in any matters relating to BCBC.

392. TO REVIEW Q3 ACCOUNTS (APRIL – DECEMBER) AND BUDGET POSITION

Members were provided with all signed bank reconciliations up to Q3 and a Q3 summary sheet.

Report to the finance committee on current and possible future budget Q3 results as at 31/12/2024

Cash on hand = 432,675.66
Unpresented payments = £0.00

Budget Position

Budget Spend for the year was set at £601,696.20 during December Extraordinary Council meeting with a precept request of £357,241.84.

With the additions of money carried forward from 2023-24 and additional money added to some budget lines after Q2, the budget is: £723,152.62

Position at end Q3.

Council spent £442,597.55 (excluding money transferred from Lloyds to CCLA & VAT) which is equivalent to 61.20% of the budget.

Forward View and comments.

The councils spend has been categorised as:-

- long term commitments, those being contractual spend or items committed by the council that can't easily be amended.
- Discretionary spend – short term spending that may be contractual or not but that can be varied by the council should it wish.
- Other items – items that don't fit the above categories or deserve special mention such as one-off purchases.

For each Budget line a comment is made on how much is expected to be spent on that item in the full financial year, so includes a best estimate or latest view to enable a year end position to be calculated for budget setting purpose. Appendix A shows an easy-to-read table format that shows, budget allocation, spend to date, expected spend and better/worse than budget.

<i>EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Budget Remaining</i>	<i>Spend to Date</i>	<i>% of budget spent</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
CAPITAL PROJECTS					
<i>Capital Projects (Traffic scheme, Maesteg Park memorial & trial bus service)</i>	<i>50,000.00</i>	<i>14,962.49</i>	<i>35,037.51</i>	<i>70.08</i>	in line with expectations
<i>Capital Projects Grade II* listed building</i>	<i>187,853.00</i>	<i>28,463.51</i>	<i>159,389.49</i>	<i>84.85</i>	in line with expectations
<i>Upgrade Office IT systems</i>	<i>3,000.00</i>	<i>1,500.01</i>	<i>1,499.99</i>	<i>50.00</i>	
<i>CAT Blaencaerau Park</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	still waiting for refurbishment quotes
<i>Capital Project - Graffiti Murals</i>	<i>12,390.00</i>	<i>11,440.00</i>	<i>950.00</i>	<i>7.67</i>	1 mural completed
REVENUE BUDGET					
<i>Car park toilet</i>	<i>50,000.00</i>	<i>50,000.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	
<i>CAT</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	Still waiting for outstanding clubs to complete the CAT process.
<i>Cenotaphs</i>	<i>2,200.00</i>	<i>1,000.00</i>	<i>1,200.00</i>	<i>54.55</i>	Completed - no further spend
<i>Children's Playschemes</i>	<i>6,600.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>6,600.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	Completed - no further spend
<i>Christmas lighting</i>	<i>36,351.00</i>	<i>36,351.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	waiting for invoice
<i>CMO equipment allowance</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>236.81</i>	<i>1,763.19</i>	<i>88.16</i>	in line with expectations
<i>Defibrillator Maintenance</i>	<i>1,100.00</i>	<i>263.03</i>	<i>836.97</i>	<i>76.09</i>	in line with expectations
<i>Dog waste bags</i>	<i>5,932.30</i>	<i>327.70</i>	<i>5,604.60</i>	<i>94.48</i>	in line with expectations
<i>Elections</i>		<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>		by-election in September - BCBC have yet to send invoice or costs
<i>Floral displays</i>	<i>12,000.00</i>	<i>1,850.00</i>	<i>10,150.00</i>	<i>84.58</i>	in line with expectations

<i>General Fees</i>	8,166.00	1,497.00	6,669.00	81.67	Still waiting for Audit Wales fees for 2023-24 audit
<i>Insurance</i>	3,876.47	-	3,876.47	100.00	Completed - no further spend
<i>Maesteg Cemetery</i>	1,500.00	375.00	1,125.00	75.00	In line with expectations
<i>Maesteg Festival - Keeper Run</i>	15,000.00	1,508.70	16,508.70	110.06	£1,508.70 Overspend
<i>Maesteg Festival - Summer Festival</i>	20,000.00	20,000.00	-	-	
<i>Maesteg Festival - Christmas grotto & parade</i>	36,000.00	1,646.26	34,353.74	95.43	one invoice for additional grotto hours to be paid
<i>Mayoral Office</i>	3,300.00	1,544.66	1,755.34	53.19	in line with expectations
<i>Members expenses</i>	5,152.00	904.67	4,247.33	82.44	in line with expectations
<i>Office costs</i>	5,500.00	1,895.83	3,604.17	65.53	in line with expectations
<i>Premises running costs</i>	32,000.00	10,397.86	21,602.14	67.51	Additional NNDR costs not incorporated into the budget as they were not presented to MTC until April 2024
<i>S.137 donations</i>	20,000.00	6,164.28	13,835.72	69.18	in line with expectations
<i>Staff costs</i>	87,558.90	10,290.40	77,268.50	88.25	overspend due to CMO retiring and new CMO, plus NALC pay increases
<i>Telephones and IT</i>	5,500.00	1,028.36	4,471.64	81.30	
<i>Training</i>	3,000.00	2,230.00	770.00	25.67	Not many Cllrs attended any training in Q1 - Q3
<i>Van</i>	2,500.00	1,649.23	850.77	34.03	in line with expectations
<i>Ward Specific - Caerau</i>	8,346.91	3,666.83	4,680.08	56.07	in line with expectations
<i>Ward Specific - Maesteg East</i>	6,795.18	5,570.18	1,225.00	18.03	in line with expectations
<i>Ward Specific - Maesteg West</i>	9,235.86	4,901.98	4,333.88	46.92	in line with expectations
<i>Ward Specific - Nantyffyllon</i>	10,000.00	8,676.68	1,323.32	13.23	in line with expectations
<i>Sponsorship donations</i>	5,295.00	-	5,295.00	100.00	Completed - no further spend in 2024-25
<i>Maesteg Welfare Park 100 anniversary</i>	50,000.00	38,230.00	11,770.00	23.54	1 event in Q3 so far
<i>Warm Hubs</i>	5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	waiting for a policy
	<u>723,152.62</u>	<u>275,555.07</u>	<u>442,597.55</u>	<u>61.20</u>	

Members discussed the above and the following was raised:

- Chair of Finance queried how much was needed for the Maesteg welfare park memorial and the bus trial for 2024-25? Clerk advised that this would need to be checked.

- CAT Grant – members were advised that the Caerau All Whites FC CAT final paperwork is with BCBC Legal department and it is hoped that this will be complete before the end of the financial year.
- It was noted that the Salaries budget will be overspent in Q4, it was estimated in the meeting that £10k should be recommended to be moved from reserves to cover staff overspend
- A member queried how there was an overspend to the keeper of the colliery event – chair of finance advised that he recommended previously to move money from that budget to another budget before the final payment had been received.
- A member queried what the budget line for Mayoral Office was for, it was explained that this covered civic Sunday, AGM and any ticket costs accrued by the Mayor during their mayoral year.

Income

Income for Q3 comprises of the following:

Income Analysis 2024/25

	TOTAL	Notes
<i>Bank Interest</i>	504.65	In line with expectations
<i>BCBC - SPARKS Drummers grant</i>	3,840.00	Received in Q3
<i>BCBC - Christmas Grant</i>	4,000.00	Received early in 2024-25
<i>BCBC - Precept</i>	357,242.00	As requested
<i>BCBC - ROW Agency Agreement reclaim</i>	-	to be claimed in Q4
<i>BCBC - Transforming Towns Grant</i>	67,986.60	In line with expectations
<i>CCLA Redemption</i>	350,000.00	As and when required
<i>Cheque from Caerau Men Shed - return of S137 from Oct 2022</i>	500.00	As requested
<i>HMRC VAT</i>	51,138.61	Q3 to be claimed
<i>Llan Middle - Chamber hire</i>	100.00	As requested
<i>Llan Middle - Office Rental</i>	1,300.00	As requested
<i>Llan Middle - Poop scoop bags & Defibrillator</i>	461.96	As requested
<i>Llan Middle - Printing</i>	27.20	As requested
<i>Llan Middle - Selection Boxes</i>	441.42	As requested
<i>Public Sector Depository (Investment Dividends)</i>	18,459.87	In line with expectations
<i>Room Hire</i>	15.00	As and when required
<i>Screwfix Refund</i>	57.75	As expected

Vault Rental	1,125.00	In line with expectations
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857,200.06

Income is expected to continue in line with expectations. This income is not considered in the budget spend and will be added to reserves.

393. Q3 YEAR LATEST VIEW POSITION.

If spend was “to budget” from existing bank balance (neglecting income due to the small value) then the council would be left with a year-end reserve of £157,120.59

	£
Cash at end of Q3	432,675.66
Budget spend	- 275,555.07
End of year cash in bank	157,120.59

Members were reminded that the above figure of £157,120.59 was based on spending all of the remaining budget, however it is likely that we could potentially have nearer to £205K at the year end.

394. TO DISCUSS ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Clerk has joined a Facebook Clerks networking group and asked the following question:

I have been tasked with looking into accounting software can anyone recommend some. We currently use excel spreadsheets, so the easier the better.

The following responses received:

- Scribe has my vote
- Scribe is fantastic. So easy to use and great support when you need it.
- I've gone from excel to Easy PC, really pleased with it
- I went from Excel to EasyPC. It was a good move. Life is a lot simpler. Looked at Scribe and RBS and was staggered by the cost. I am going to assume that they fund all the presentations and support by charging a LOT of money. EasyPC has all the features most Councils need in a cash book based accounting package. Plus there is lots of documentation, help and support to get you going. Just don't expect endless invites to presentations. The package is focused on Parish Councils and provides almost all the tools you could need. Plus it is slowly evolving.
- Scribe is very good, simple to use, easy to understand reports. Spend some time setting out your centres and codes and life is great
- I have used RBS Alpha, Edge IT, and Scribe as well as spreadsheets in councils of varying sizes. Book a free demo, see what they "feel" like, ask questions if the software (in the version your council is prepared to pay for) does what you want it to do. Consider if it would be useful to have remote access for you, any current

or future colleagues, councillors or your internal auditor. Do you have cemeteries or village hall bookings that you may need to accommodate? Would you like software for that? Then consider the whole suite not just the finance. You are likely to be using this software for many years, so you must be comfortable with the support you will be getting.

- EasyPC is a good system for a small council
- Scribe - very good. Spend some time on setting it up and you'll find it simple and straightforward to use with excellent reporting and support.
- Another vote for scribe. Once you've set it up, you just carry the cost code information from year to year. It's easy to use and their support is brilliant. They have a lot of online training as well for all sorts of tasks for clerks/RFO's
- Easy PC is very cost efficient and a smaller step from excel than some of the major packages. Used it for years now
- We use Xero and i find it easy to use.
- Scribe without doubt

Clerk and Deputy Clerk have met with the following companies for an online demonstration of their software:

Scribe – date of demonstration 06/11/24

Quote = £797 initial set up
£1,008 annual fees

Looks very easy to use, once set up the cost centres are used every year. It can run reports:

- Monthly finance reports –
 - expenditure & income
 - receipts & payments
- Annual Return
- VAT

Can be set up to link purchase orders with invoices

Can be set up to create invoices – then track invoices with payments

Name	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
Monthly Subscription			
Accounts subscription fee per month	£84	Billed annually	£1,008
Initial Payment			
Initial Payment - Accounts	£797	1	£797
Add-ons (Optional)*			
Transactions Import - Rialtas	£399	1	£399
Additional Services			
Support via phone and email	FREE	Unlimited	£0
Access to training via Scribe Academy™	FREE	Unlimited	£0
Additional Users	FREE	Unlimited	£0
Data Back-ups	FREE	Daily	£0
Accounting support	FREE	Unlimited	£0
Integrations (MTD, Stripe etc..)	FREE	Unlimited	£0
TOTAL (initial payment, excl VAT)			£797
Total Thereafter (excl VAT)			£1,008

*Not included in initial payment

This proposal is valid for 30 days from 06/11/2024

RBS Rialtas Omega – date of demonstration 12/11/24

www.rialtas.co.uk

Software looks very confusing to use and a lot of accountant specialised wording. Can have various licenses 1 person, up to 5 users, up to 10 etc whereby you can set up different access permissions on different users. Reports vary depending on what you ask.

Following quote received:

NAME	UNIT PRICE	NO	TOTAL PRICE
Omega Base Software (one off cost)	£756.00	1	£756.00
Sales Ledger Software (one off cost)	£431.00	1	£431.00
Purchase Ledger Software (one off cost)	£431.00	1	£431.00
Install and Set up Omega (one off cost)	£489.00	1	£489.00
Training Full Day (one off cost)	£520.00	3	£1,560.00
Initial Costs			£3,667.00
Omega Base Support and Maintenance (annual cost)	£555.00	1	£555.00
Sales Ledger Support and Maintenance (annual cost)	£222.00	1	£222.00
Purchase Ledger Support and Maintenance (annual cost)	£222.00	1	£222.00
Annual Costs			£999.00

Gov Finance

Whilst attending a demonstration with CloudyIT (cloud computing company) they advised that they also provided accounting software with the following costs:

MTC QH-04682

Initial Costs:	
Deployment & Integration (install historic data from the council) Training on system online and in person Pre-paid support	£4,362.50
Annual payment for accounting software	£3,364.00

Prices in comparison

Company	Initial set up costs	Annual costs
Scribe	£797.00	£1,008.00
Rialtus Omega	£3,667.00	£999.00
Gov Finance	£4,362.50	£3,364.00

Members were in agreement that the Council should invest in accounting software.

Members discussed the quotes received and **agreed** to recommend Scribe Accounting for accounting software.

395. TO DISCUSS COMMITTEE BUDGET DELEGATION

The Chair of finance provided the below report to the committee:

The Local Government Act 1972, s 101 provides for delegating authority to the Clerk and to committees for making decisions on behalf of the council as and when appropriate. S101 requires formally agreed Terms of Reference by the Council.

At present the council have to approve every spend individually, but other councils collectively approve the budget and then delegate it to a committee, Chair of Finance would like to propose something similar in that at the AGM the council delegates several budget lines to committees with a spending limit of £5K per transaction. So for example if the budget for Christmas was £30K the committee could approve any spend up to £5K as long as it didn't go over the £30K cap. So in the instance of the extra day needed in the grotto the committee could just approve that without needing the full council to vote on it. I would also propose that in "extreme" circumstances the Mayor / RFO & Committee chair could approve up to the £5K but would have to explain in a minute of the council why it was needed. I can see a few instances where this would be very useful.

1. Events – so if things happen at short notice the events committee could authorise quick changes... for example authorise more barriers to be hired on the day, or more hours for the grotto to open, or to hire some equipment.
2. Bus committee – something happens, and the bus breakdown or driver is sick – committee could authorise overtime payment for a different driver, or for a replacement vehicle.
3. Staffing – we don't have any control over staff costs but personnel committee should approve overtime spends or CMO equipment rather than full council.
4. Blaencaerau park scheme – to get the little bits that need doing done, bins, paint, signs etc.
5. Ward funds – all the spend is under £5K anyway

Members discussed the report in detail, that committees would manage their budgets and cap any spends at £5K per item agreed. It was **agreed** to recommend the budget committee delegation and cap this at £5K per item

396. TO REVIEW RISK REGISTER AND ASSET REGISTER

Members were provided with the Risk Register and Asset Register.

The Chair of Finance requested that the Property Committee review the Asset Register, the committee agreed to this. Clerk advised that it is within Finance as the total assets listed figure is recorded within the annual return.

With the Risk Register the Chair of Finance stated that the current register was incomplete and some of the noted risks due to tighter financial controls should now be listed as low risk instead of medium risk. It was agreed that the Chair of Finance and the Clerk should complete the risk register and bring this back to the finance committee to agree.

397. TO LOOK AT THE NEW MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024 AS PROVIDED BY OVW

Members were provided with the new model financial regulations 2024 as provided by OVW. The Chair of finance went through the model financial regulations, it was noted that there were a number of new regulations added by OVW and some of the proposed limit spends had been increased. It was **agreed** to recommend that Council adopt the new OVW model financial regulations. A copy of this can be found under Appendix 1.

The following changes/new additions to the financial regulations:

- Item 2.6 a member other than Chair or cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations
- Item 4.3 New addition: along with a forecast for the following three financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement
- Item 4.4 New addition: 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council
- Item 4.6 New addition: 4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals and [three-year] forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the finance committee and a recommendation made to the council.
- Item 4.9 BCBC advise they need the precept requirement by beginning of January, however legally it's by the end of February
- Item 5.8 increase from £1,000 to £3,000
- Item 5.9 increase from £250 to £500
- Item 5.15 New additions:
 - the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council or Chair of the appropriate
 - committee, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT.

- a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £5,000 excluding VAT
- the council for all items over £5,000;

- Item 6.6 New addition: 6.6. For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or a duly delegated committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- Item 6.7 New addition: 6.7. A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- Item 8.4 New addition: 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Finance Committee at the next convenient meeting.
- Item 9.1 increase from £250 to £500
- Item 9.2 New addition possibly for CMO? 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- Item 9.4 New addition: 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.
- Item 14.2 New addition: 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.
- Item 15 New item addition: 15. Stores and equipment
- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section] shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
 - 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
 - 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
 - 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

Appendix 1 – Tender process item 4 – Council need a dedicated email address for tenders

398. TO REVIEW THE AUDIT WALES REPORTS

Members were provided with the Audit Wales reports for 2022-23 & 2023-24 – it was noted that these are unqualified accounts.

399. TO LOOK AT THE WELLBEING AND FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

Members were provided with the statutory guidance on the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. (Appendix 2). The Chair of finance advised that during the OVW conference attendees were advised that compliance of the act will be enforced by Audit Wales. Members went through the statutory guidance and to comply with the Act, MTC will need to create a future wellbeing plan focusing on the 7 wellbeing goals as listed within the guidance, many of which were identified within the Grasshopper report.

It was agreed that the clerk and chair of finance to produce a future wellbeing plan ready to be reported during the AGM.

400. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Q3 accounts are accepted.
2. Move money to cover the overspends:

Maesteg Festival - Keeper Run	£10,000.00
Staff Costs	£1,508.70
3. To agree to purchasing accounting software from Scribe
4. To agree to committee budget delegation whereby committees can spend to budget and to authorise up to £5K per item
5. Property Committee to look at the asset register.
6. Chair of finance and clerk to update the risk register and bring back to finance committee to be agreed
7. Accept the new Model Financial Regulations 2024 and upload to website
8. Clerk and chair of finance to produce a future wellbeing plan ready to be reported during the AGM.

**Minutes emailed to all Councillors to Read on 5th February 2025
Read and accepted at a remote meeting of the Council held on 4th March 2025**

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Mayor