

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Governance and Audit Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadryr USK on Wednesday, 28th January, 2026 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: Andrew Blackmore, (Chairman)
County Councillor Tony Easson, (Vice Chairman)

Lay members: Siwan Davies, Colin Prosser and Rhodri Guest

County Councillor: Sara Burch, John Crook, David Jones,
Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Peter Strong and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
Jan Furtek	Chief Internal Auditor
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Richard Jones	Performance and Data Insight Manager
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance/Section 151
Steve Wyndham	Audit Wales Officer
Hannah Carter	Performance Analyst
Daniel Francis	Finance Business Partner Corporate

APOLOGIES:

None

1. Declarations of Interest.

Item 5: 2024/25 Welsh Church Fund/ Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Statement of Accounts Final and ISA260 Audit Reports for Trust Funds.

County Councillor Ann Webb declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as Chair of the Welsh Church Fund Committee. County Councillor Malcolm Lane declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as a member of the Welsh Church Fund Committee.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=rvvgqH5ICftRAcf&t=27>

2. Public Open Forum.

No Members of the public were present.

3. To note the Action List from the previous meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=ZyDNbKmOMKaPdde3&t=92>

1. Commissioning Framework: The Performance and Data Insight Manager reported that this action has been added to the Forward Work Programme, and the update will be

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provided at the April 16th 2026 meeting. The update will be provided by the Procurement Team in partnership with Ardal. [OPEN]

2. Updated valuations – Castlegate Business Park: The Head of Finance updated the Committee that a report will be presented to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in early April to include an updated valuation of Castlegate Business Park. [CLOSED]
3. Ombudsman Annual Letter: The Monitoring Officer circulated an e mail response to all Committee Members explaining that the Monitoring Officer has no remit or powers in respect of the internal management of town and community councils. These are entirely separate entities to the County Council. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) has the statutory power, pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000, to investigate complaints of maladministration. Audit Wales also has the power under Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 to intervene in relation to issues under their remit.

In relation to issues of standards and the member code of conduct, only the PSOW has the statutory power to investigate whether or not a member has breached the code. If the PSOW investigates a complaint and finds that there is a case to answer, then it will either refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer to arrange a hearing of the Standards Committee (who will then make a determination on breach and any sanction); or for more serious issues, it will refer the matter directly to the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

The Monitoring Officer is able to advise clerks of town and community councils on issues such as training and on how complaints about standards issues may be dealt with; for example, by following the relevant local resolution protocol for minor breaches or referring the matter to the PSOW. The Monitoring Officer has no powers to investigate or intervene in these matters. [CLOSED]

4. 2024/25 Welsh Church Fund / Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Statement of Accounts Final and ISA260 Audit Reports for Trust Funds.

The Head of Finance and Audit Wales Officer presented the 2024/25 Welsh Church Fund/Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Statement of Accounts Final and ISA260 Audit Reports for Trust Funds. Following presentation of the report, Committee Members were invited to ask questions:

https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxlQOIQ?si=aKslWN_KmrNzSZWm&t=209

In line with the report recommendations, the Committee resolved:

1. That the audited 2024/25 statement of accounts for The Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 1) are approved in conjunction with the Audit Wales ISA260 Audit of Accounts report for The Welsh Church Act Fund.
2. That the independently examined financial statements for The Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund for 2024/25 (Appendix 3) are approved in conjunction with the Independent Examination Report for The Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund.

5. Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update.

The Performance Officer and Performance and Data Insight Manager presented the Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

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https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=92BwbZa8_DOr4X5r&t=925

As per the report recommendations:

1. Members scrutinised the Council's response to the Audit Wales work programme, sought assurance and was generally satisfied that adequate progress is being made.
2. Members had the opportunity, but did not on this occasion, refer any issues contained within Audit Wales national studies to other committees for consideration where they identify there are findings of particular relevance to the council that need further scrutiny.

[ACTION]: Information was requested from the Head of Strategic Change, Partnerships and Procurement on the Strategic Improvement Change Programme FPOP specifically the Organisation Development Framework.

6. Treasury Management Activity Update - Quarter 3 2025/26.

The Finance Business Partner Corporate and Head of Finance presented the Treasury Management Activity Update – Q3 2025/26. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=MbMFICVmltSTwxPZ&t=1914>

As contained in the report recommendations the Governance & Audit Committee reviewed the results of treasury management activities and the performance achieved in quarter 3 as part of their delegated responsibility to provide scrutiny of treasury policy, strategy and activity on behalf of Council.

7. National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2024-25 Exercise.

The Chief Internal Auditor introduced the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2024-25 Exercise. Following presentation of the report, Members were invited to ask questions:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=XaVmFbxFbMPv1J6S&t=2686>

As per the report recommendations, Members of the Governance and Audit Committee noted the work completed on the National Fraud Initiative data release 2024/25 to 01st December 2025 and were assured that appropriate procedures are in place to help detect and minimise the impact of fraud.

8. Governance and Audit Committee Forward Work Plan.

The Forward Work Plan was noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=nXEHuNgJAyBiQNVY&t=3447>

9. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/8SiLjxIQOiQ?si=EAvyOY4-Rga2DXyY&t=3467>

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10. **Date of Next Meeting: 26th February 2026 at 2.00pm.**

Meeting ended at 2.59 pm