



How to take part in Council meetings

Meetings of community councils – and their committees – in Wales are normally open to the public (except those parts of any meeting that discuss confidential matters). Public access to the Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council chamber is very limited so, if you would like to attend in person, you should contact us beforehand.

Most Council meetings and many meetings of its committees are broadcast live via a videolink (Zoom). Logging in via Zoom is usually the easiest way to attend a meeting.

If you would like to speak at a meeting, ask a question or simply watch the proceedings, contact the council via the email address clerk@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk. We'll send you the appropriate Zoom link.

Speak at a meeting of the Council or one of its committees

Meetings of the Council and its committees are governed by rules called Standing Orders. These are designed to ensure that meetings are orderly and that everyone has a fair chance to be heard without one or two people hogging the whole proceedings. If you would like to speak at a Council meeting, you will need to follow the Standing Orders.

Not everyone can speak at a meeting of the Council or its committees

Only members of the public who live in, work in or represent an organisation in the local area have the right to speak at meetings. If you are from outside the Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council area, you should contact a Member of the Council and ask them if they would be willing to raise the matter on your behalf.

A member of the public can speak only in respect of business itemised on the agenda

You cannot simply turn up at a Council meeting and spout off about anything you like. You will be allowed to speak only about the business that is on the agenda for that meeting. The agenda for meetings are published at least three clear days before the day of the meeting. You can find full details of when and where meetings of the Council and its committees will take place and what they will be discussing by following the links that are available [here](#).

How do I get the matter about which I want to speak onto the agenda?

Contact one of your ward councillors. You can find their contact details [here](#). Your local community councillor can work with the Council's clerk on your behalf to propose a suitable motion for the agenda of an appropriate forthcoming meeting. However, Council agenda will include only business over which the Council has powers or duties.

You can speak for no more than five minutes

You will be allowed to speak only once (before Members of the Council begin their deliberations on that agenda item) and you won't be invited to take part in the ensuing debate. A five-minute speech would be about 700 words long. That is not much more than one side of A4 paper. So, if you want to make an impact at a Council meeting, we would strongly advise that you carefully prepare what you want to say.

Contact us for advice

The Standing Orders that govern how meetings of the Council and its committees are conducted can seem quite old-fashioned and formal if you are not used to them. If you would like to speak at a meeting, our strong advice would be to contact the Council at clerk@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk well in advance of the meeting. It is the clerk's duty to help you to navigate all the rules and regulations.

Ask a question at a meeting

Members of the public who live in, work in or represent an organisation in the local area are permitted to ask a question at meetings of the Council or its committees. However, you have to tell us what your question will be well in advance (so that we can prepare an answer) and you will need to attend the meeting (either in person or via Zoom).

Give us notice of your question

A question may only be asked at a meeting if the question has been delivered in writing or by e-mail to the clerk no later than midday, five clear working days before the date of the meeting. You must also give your name and address and the name of the organisation you represent, if any.

You may not get an immediate answer

We will do our best to give you a direct oral answer at the meeting but, if the answer is complex, you may have to wait for a written reply. If the answer to your question has already been published, or if the same question has been asked by someone at a previous meeting, we may simply refer you to the published answer.

Can I ask another question?

It will be up to the Chair of the meeting whether to allow you to ask a supplementary question. If you are allowed to ask another question, you will have to stick to the same subject.

The time for questions from members of the public at each meeting will be limited. There will be no debate on questions or answers and, if time runs out before we get to your question, you will have to wait until the next meeting before you can ask it.

You can read the Council's policy on questions from members of the public in full [here](#).