



**THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH
CYNGOR CYMUNED ABERTYLERI A LLANHILLEDD**

E-mail : clerk.ALCC@gmail.com

Telephone 01495 217323

www.abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

Council Offices,
Mitre Street,
Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent. NP13 1AE.

Swyddfa'r Cyngor,
Stryd Meitre,
Abertyleri, Blaenau Gwent. NP13 1AE.

Our Ref: **NOTICE OF MEETING**


19 February 2020

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council, to be held in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery on **Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7.00pm**. The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

The Council may suspend standing order 3(x) if it wishes the meeting to last beyond two hours, at the appropriate point in the meeting.

Yours sincerely



Richard Gwynnell
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence and welcomes

2. Declarations of interest or dispensations

Members who consider that they have an interest to declare are asked to state the item in which they have an interest and the nature of the interest. Any member who is unsure should seek advice prior to the meeting in order to expedite matters at the meeting itself.

3. Minutes: Council: (a) 22 January 2020 and (b) 29 January 2020 (attached)

To be confirmed as correct records of those meetings.

4. Minutes – Finance and Grants Committee: 13 January 2020

To be confirmed as a correct record (by the committee) and noted (by Council).

5. Questions from the public: To receive public questions and provide answers where possible

6. Finance Order (attached): To consider spending decisions and the current financial position.

7. Motion from Councillor Dyson (attached): "That Council agrees to go ahead with Party in the Park 2020 on a date and venue to be decided by the Council's officers in consultation with the Leisure and Tourism Working Group and delegate authority to the Council's officers to make bookings and commit spend up to the £13,000 agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget."

8. Progress reports/recommendations from Working Groups:

- (a) Christmas Lights
- (b) Leisure and Tourism
- (c) Shop Local
- (d) Solar Farm Grants
- (e) Well-being
- (f) Youth Engagement

9. Committee terms of reference (attached): To review who does what (e.g. projects).

10. Committee and working group memberships (attached): To review memberships.

11. Electronic Banking: Changes to Financial Regulations (attached): To consider a change to the Financial Regulations to enable electronic banking to go ahead.

12. Financial Risks 2020/21: To receive verbal updates if any on quarterly payment of the precept and moving the Council's reserve account to a different bank.

13. Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy (attached): To consider whether ALCC wishes to express any views to Blaenau Gwent CBC.

14. Wales Audit Office: Consultation on future audit arrangements (attached): To consider whether ALCC wishes to express any views to the WAO.

15. Team Building: To consider how Council wishes to proceed with this suggestion.

16. One Voice Wales (attached): To consider renewing the Council's membership.

17. Reports back on relevant training or other meetings: To receive reports back from members or officers on relevant meetings or training attended on behalf of the Council.

18. Chair's announcements, relevant correspondence and Celebrating Success: To receive announcements from or deal with correspondence raised by the Chair or officers, including reports on local achievements and successes.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
(ALCC) HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2020 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Gill Clark (Chair), Peter Adamson, Michaela Assiratti, Vanessa Bartlett, Roger Clark, Tracey Dyson, Mark Lewis, Beverley Lucas, Perry Morgan, Gary Oakley, Rob Phillips, Allen Rees, Nick Simmons, Bernard Wall (arrived late) and Graham White

Officers: Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk and Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk

Others: None

ABSENT: Councillors Keri Bidgood, Julie Holt, Tracy Postlethwaite and Glyn Smith

168. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked people to use their microphones, speak one at a time and not interrupt others whilst they were speaking.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keri Bidgood, Julie Holt and Tracy Postlethwaite.

Council RESOLVED that staff send a "get well" card to Keri Bidgood on ALCC's behalf.

169. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members that, if they had any personal interests, they needed to declare them verbally and complete a personal interests form. A book of blank forms was circulating around the room as usual.

No members declared any personal interests.

170. MINUTES: COUNCIL – 30 OCTOBER 2019

Council RESOLVED: (with 5 members abstaining) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair.

171. MINUTES: COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2019

Council RESOLVED: (with 6 members abstaining) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair.

172. MINUTES: COUNCIL – 20 NOVEMBER 2019

Council RESOLVED: (with 7 members abstaining) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair.

173. MINUTES: COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2019

Councillor Oakley proposed two alterations to the minutes which he outlined as follows:

- (1) Councillor Julie Holt had stated that she was a member of Friends of Six Bells Park; this was not in the minutes and should be inserted in an appropriate place
- (2) on top of page 7 (page 35 of the agenda): He (Councillor Oakley) had not told groups not to apply; he had “agreed with them that they did not meet the criteria”.

Councillor Wall entered the meeting at this point.

Various members commented during lengthy debate on alteration (1) above that:

- Councillor Holt was not a member of Friends of Six Bells Park
- she had not said she was, because she was not
- Councillor Holt was not at this meeting, so she could not answer for what she said
- Councillor Holt was a member of the Friends of Six Bells Park (FoSBP) Facebook Group; that information was accurate and she may have said that
- some people remembered Councillor Holt saying she was a member of FoSBP
- others remembered Councillor Holt saying she was a member of the FoSBP Facebook Group
- others did not remember her saying either of those things.

8 members indicated that they had heard Councillor Holt say that she was a member of the Friends of Six Bells Park, at the 11 December meeting.

5 members indicated that they had not heard that.

The Clerk explained that neither of those statements was in the minutes, as he did not hear Councillor Holt say either of those things. Councillor Holt may have said either of those things, but with members speaking over each other at times, it was not possible for staff to hear and record everything. Also, as staff had to reply to questions throughout the meeting, it was impossible to record everything that everyone said.

The Chair reiterated that Councillor Holt was not a member of the Friends of Six Bells Park. She had not said that she was, because she was not.

The Chair asked what she could do, if the majority of members agreed an alteration to the minutes, but she (the Chair) did not agree with that alteration.

The Clerk read out standing order 12 in its entirety (points a to e). If the minutes were confirmed today as a correct record, with or without amendments, the Chair could if she wished record in writing that she did not agree that they were accurate.

The Chair objected to the proposed alteration to the minutes at (1) above and stated that she would make a statement to that effect if Council agreed the minutes with that change.

Debate then ensued on alteration (2) proposed by Councillor Oakley.

7 members indicated that they agreed with Councillor Oakley's proposed alteration (2).

5 members indicated that they did not agree with proposed alteration (2).

The Clerk advised that proposed alteration (2) was not accurate, in his view. The minutes were accurate as they stood, in his view. He had written the minutes and he remembered what had been said. The minutes also accurately reflected the notes he took in the meeting.

Councillor Oakley stated that he had also asked for the minutes to record the discussion which took place about the risks of judicial review, during which he (Councillor Oakley) and the Clerk had made statements. This was not reflected in the minutes.

The Clerk pointed to pages 6 and 7 of the minutes (on pages 34 and 35 of the agenda), where that exchange was recorded in detail.

Councillor Oakley conceded that the minutes did record that debate.

The Chair put the minutes to the vote, with the alterations proposed by Councillor Oakley and agreed by the majority (at (1) and (2) above) included.

5 members voted that the minutes as amended were an accurate record of the meeting.

5 members voted that the minutes as amended were not an accurate record of the meeting.

5 members indicated that they were abstaining from the vote.

The Chair used her casting vote; that the minutes as amended were not an accurate record of the meeting.

The Chair asked the Clerk for advice on what to do next, as the minutes had not yet been confirmed as a correct record.

The Clerk advised that Council needed to confirm its past minutes as a correct record. This had not yet happened. Nearly an hour had already been spent today, debating the minutes, and there seemed little chance that more time spent today would end in agreement. The next meeting was on 29 January and Councillor Holt may be present, so she could answer for what she had said at the 11 December meeting. He therefore suggested and:

Council RESOLVED: to revisit the accuracy of the 11 December minutes at the 29 January Council meeting.

174. MINUTES: FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE – 14 NOVEMBER 2019

The Clerk explained that the Finance and Grants Committee had already confirmed its minutes as a correct record. The minutes were therefore for Council's information.

Council RESOLVED: to note the minutes of the Finance and Grants Committee meeting held on 14 November 2019.

175. MINUTES: FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2019

The Clerk explained that the committee had already confirmed its minutes as a correct record. The minutes were therefore for Council's information.

Councillor White stated that the alteration made by the committee (referring to the number of Internal Auditor visits) was not reflected in these minutes.

The Clerk pointed out that the alteration made by the committee was already reflected in these minutes (at the top of page 2).

Councillor Oakley (Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee) concurred with the Clerk.

Council RESOLVED: to note the minutes of the Finance and Grants Committee meeting held on 2 December 2019.

176. MINUTES: HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2019

The Clerk explained that the committee had not yet confirmed its minutes as a correct record, as there had been no further meeting of the committee since 29 November. The minutes needed to be confirmed as a correct record (HR Committee members could say whether they were correct) and noted by Council.

The members of the HR Committee confirmed that the minutes were a correct record of the HR Committee's meeting.

Council RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 29 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair of the committee, and noted.

177. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no public questions for this meeting.

178. FINANCE ORDER

The Deputy Clerk outlined the Finance Order and reminded members of the longer than normal period it covered (due to the Council meeting in December being held earlier in the month than normal and before the relevant bank statement was received).

A question was asked about why some ward grants had not been approved at the Finance and Grants Committee meeting held on 13 January 2020.

The Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee explained that the criteria and process conflicted and had been referred back to Council for clarification. When that had been done (on 29 January) the applications would be considered again by the committee (in March).

The Deputy Clerk responded to detailed questions from members on staff salary payments (ref jury service and breakdowns of costs). An amount had been deducted from a salary payment due to jury service undertaken in September. This would be reflected in the

Finance Order when the invoice was received from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC), which managed ALCC's payroll. Quarterly payments were made to BGCBC, so these were shown in the Finance Order. Under data protection legislation, no one was entitled to see the exact take-home payments of individual staff, as employees' personal tax codes for example were confidential. Members could however come into the office and see cheques paid and payroll calculations if they wished.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the payments listed in Tables 1 and 2 of the finance order
- (2) to authorise the payments listed in Table 3 of the finance order
- (3) to note the financial position on the current and reserve accounts.

179. BUDGET 2019/20 QUARTER 3 REPORT

The Deputy Clerk outlined the Quarter 3 budget report. He explained in brief that:

- there was currently a small (c£6k) overspend against budget for the three quarters ending 31 December
- a small underspend (c£14k) was predicted at year end (31 March)
- of this £14k, just over £8k was for as-yet-unallocated "new projects"
- of this £14k, the underspend on "allocated" funds was less than £6k
- considering ALCC had a budget of £234k, this degree of variance did not represent any cause for concern.

Questions were asked by various members about:

- whether the unspent Fun Run costs (£3k) were included in the underspend?
- how any underspends (e.g. on members allowances and the Deputy Clerk's pension payments) would be dealt with?
- why potential commitments (e.g. members' allowances and the Deputy Clerk's pension) had to be allocated in the budget, if they were not going to be spent?
- where the funds for those potential spending commitments sat during the year?
- whether it was a legal requirement to provide for these potential commitments?
- why these out-turn figures were not available at the Finance and Grants Committee on 13 January?

The Deputy Clerk responded that:

- the Fun Run (£3k) would not be spent this year, so that was part of the underspend
- if the Council had a surplus at year-end, this should in theory be put into reserves
- this had not been done in the past as ALCC had been "catching up" after several years of underspending and poor budgeting
- it was intended this year to put the majority of any surplus into reserves
- the funds for the Deputy Clerk's pension and members' allowances sat in the current account
- that spending had to be budgeted for, as it was a potential liability and may need to be spent during the year
- if those costs were not budgeted for, and then they were claimed, the Council would

- not have enough money to meet its spending commitments
- the Council could choose to put any year-end surplus into reserves, or decide to keep it in the current account and reduce the following year's precept if it wished
- Quarter 3 out-turn figures were not available at the time of the Finance and Grants Committee meeting as bank statements were awaited
- the Council (not the Finance and Grants Committee) was responsible for deciding the budget and precept.

Comments were made by various members that:

- there would always be a small difference between planned and actual spend
- members' allowances and the Deputy Clerk's pension were not large liabilities; they could be paid for out of reserves (if they were claimed) instead of the current account
- the Deputy Clerk had said he would never claim a pension and could not simply change his mind
- £3k could be taken off the budget and precept if Council wished to (as pension payments were not being made to the Deputy Clerk in reality)
- the Council had a legal responsibility to offer the Deputy Clerk a pension; he could if he wished refuse to take it but he could also change his mind at any time
- the Deputy Clerk would need to give 28 days' notice
- the Council had already resolved to build up its reserves, at least to the minimum level recommended by the Welsh Government (i.e. 3 months to 6 months spend)
- next year, more information on spending to date would be available earlier, so decisions on whether to reduce the precept or increase reserves would be easier
- the underspend was less than 5% of the budget; this was a significant achievement for which everyone involved should be congratulated.

The Deputy Clerk reiterated that:

- he had said in the past that he would not take a pension, but he could change his mind at any time; the Council had to budget for all its liabilities, including pensions
- if he left ALCC and the Council employed another Deputy Clerk, that person may decide to take a pension; the Council had to have the funds to pay for that
- it was a legal requirement to offer a pension to all staff
- the Council could not prevent staff making the choice they wished to make.

Council RESOLVED: to note the current position.

The Chair and Councillor Lucas asked members again to use their microphones and speak in turn and one at a time, so that everyone could hear what was being said.

180. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21

The Chair read an email received from Councillor Julie Holt as follows:

Unfortunately, I can't be at the meeting on Wednesday and therefore can't vote on the rise of the precept. Can it be announced that my opinion is that, bearing in mind that we haven't spent all the money this year, even though we've replenished reserves, I am not supporting any rise in the precept. Not even a cost of living rise. I would like this read out at the meeting and in the minutes please.

Several members objected to the email from Councillor Holt being read out. Comments were made that:

- 3 days' advance notice was needed of any agenda items; Councillor Holt's email was not on the agenda
- nothing should be read out if it attempted to influence members
- Councillor Holt was Chair last year; she appeared to be using that to influence others
- Councillor Holt was a Blaenau Gwent CBC member; she had a conflict of interest
- ALCC's spending this year was within 5% of its total budget, so the statement that ALCC had not spent all its money this year was "ridiculous"
- the Council had decided to replenish reserves if there was any underspend, so these comments were "meaningless"
- these comments should be recorded in the minutes.

The Chair stated that she had read out the email; members could either take Councillor Holt's views into account, or not. It was up to them. Councillor Holt was a member of BGCBC but this did not mean she had a personal interest. Many members of Tredegar Town Council (TTC) were also BGCBC councillors. If being a member of BGCBC prevented people from deciding on the budget, TTC would not be able to set a budget. She asked the Clerk to advise.

The Clerk advised that:

- members did not have a proxy vote
- if members were not present at a meeting, they had no vote
- the Chair had read out a short email; he did not see a problem with that
- Councillor Holt had merely expressed an opinion and asked for it to be read out
- members could ignore Councillor Holt's opinion if they wished
- Councillor Holt's opinion was about the budget, which was on the agenda
- all members could comment at meetings about items on the agenda; these comments were not published in advance of the meeting either.

Councillor Oakley objected to the Clerk calling him "Councillor Oakley" in a "raised voice". He asked to be addressed as "Gary". He stated that this was derogatory and that the convention was to use first names to refer to each other in Council meetings.

The Clerk apologised for any offence caused. He stated that he was unaware of any "first name" convention in Council meetings and did not mean any disrespect. There was an issue of people speaking over each other, which made it difficult for people to be heard.

Councillor Oakley stated that he accepted the apology.

The Deputy Clerk referred to the budget attached to the agenda, which had been agreed by the Finance and Grants Committee, for recommendation to Council. Since the meeting of the committee on 13 January, it had been confirmed that, when the lease expired in June, the Council could keep its existing printer, at no cost (except the cost per page of printing and a standing monthly charge). The £1,500 shown in the budget for printer rental was therefore no longer required and the budget could be reduced to £238,541.52.

Councillor Oakley, Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee, outlined the budget put forward by the committee (as attached to the agenda), commenting particularly that:

- the budget for the year ahead was not significantly different from the current year
- it was intended that any increase this year be limited to "inflation only"
- 2019/20 had been a very successful year for ALCC, with many good things happening and new initiatives started
- the proposed 2020/21 budget built on the good work started in 2019/20
- three Finance and Grants Committee meetings had been held to discuss the new budget; many hours and much thought had been put in by members and officers
- no changes were proposed to staff salary costs (the first yellow section)
- the staff training budget had been cut from £1,200 to £400
- the committee had agreed that the £800 difference should be put into reserves and ringfenced for other staff training if needed (e.g. CiLCA)
- the budget for member training had also been reduced to £1,000 (from £2,000)
- IT costs were estimated and should be discussed further at future meetings
- there was little room for manoeuvre on administration costs (the blue section), grants and members allowances (the second yellow section) or environment and leisure costs (the brown section)
- the "elective spending proposals" (the green section) was where Council had the most choice
- the items in the green section had been submitted by members
- the Finance and Grants Committee had gone through those in detail, to come to a final budget and precept which added inflation only to the current budget.

Councillor Oakley moved that Council agree £240,041.52 as its budget and precept for 2020/21.

Comments were made that:

- £1,500 was not needed for printer rental costs
- £3k could be removed from the budget as the Deputy Clerk was not in the pension scheme and ALCC did not have to pay those contributions.

Councillor Oakley stated that he was moving £240,041.52 as the budget for 2020/21 in any case. This was about continuing the good work started in 2019/20 and if there was any underspend at year end, this could be used to increase reserves. He invited questions.

Members commented or questioned (main points):

- the Finance and Grants Committee should have been given the up to date position on all accounts at its 13 January meeting
- the budget contained too much "guesswork" e.g. the figure of £22,000 for "In Bloom"
- more details were required of the spending actually needed
- there was a 5% underspend this year; it may be 10% next year if commitments were not clear enough at the start of the year
- the budget represented "picking figures out of the air"
- was there a consensus for raising the precept?
- increasing reserves was not a good enough reason to increase the precept

- given past underspends, the precept could be reduced by £20k
- members needed to consider the effect of increases on Council Tax payers
- ALCC's population was approx. 17,000 but not everyone paid Council Tax
- the effect of an increase, on those who did pay, was greater
- some members had not been happy with an increase last year and were not happy with another increase this year
- if members wanted to reduce the budget, they would have to decide what not to do
- for example, money did not have to be provided for shop local initiatives
- the Shop Local Working Group had agreed to ask for more in next year's budget
- members submitted spending ideas because they were asked to do so
- the public were not happy with a further increase in the ALCC budget
- the Business Forum wanted more money for shop local initiatives; more events would bring more people into Abertillery
- £20k had been budgeted last year for extra staff, but that had not been spent; it had gone into reserves instead
- effectively therefore this was a proposal to increase the budget, to increase reserves
- considerably more than £20k was being spent on additional youth workers
- the figures presented last year were also "plucked out of the air"
- ALCC had surveyed the public, and the public had said they wanted more services and were willing to pay more for that
- ALCC had to be prudent with money, spend wisely and also increase its reserves
- why was it necessary to have reserves?
- why did ALCC pay £40 to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) every year?
- how many members claimed a members' allowance?

Councillor Oakley replied (during the questions/comments session above) that:

- setting the budget was a learning process
- end of year spending figures were not available when the new budget had to be set
- the new financial accounting system would help with more up to date information
- "In Bloom" costs were a guess but getting accurate information from outside sources was not easy
- if ALCC reduced its budget, it would need to decide what to stop doing
- the £20k for extra staffing costs had gone into reserves
- members had submitted their proposals for greater spending, which were reflected in the budget
- if members did not want a budget increase, any new spend would have to be removed from the budget (e.g. £10k for shop local initiatives)
- shop local initiatives benefitted the whole of the area, not just Abertillery
- members had their differences, but the Council was delivering very well overall
- no complaints had been received last year about the increase in Council Tax
- the increase proposed represented approx. 35p more per person per year
- not everyone paid Council Tax, but everyone wanted the benefit of better services
- the budget needed to go up by inflation every year, or services would slide back
- if members received complaints from the public, they needed to let ALCC know
- ALCC had to build up its reserves in line with Government guidance, to pay for any unforeseen spending such as employment tribunal or court costs
- having adequate reserves was a legal requirement

- the local community now had a well-run, well-financed Council, which it deserved
- the Council needed a proper precept, to continue the good work
- reserves should be 25% to 50% of the budget; the Welsh Government guideline was a minimum of three to six months' budget, which ALCC did not yet have in reserves
- reserves should not be too high (e.g. 100% of the budget) as that meant Council Tax payers paying to increase council bank balances, not improve services
- many councils were increasing reserves, expecting asset and service transfers.

The Deputy Clerk responded to other questions and comments:

- ALCC was building its reserves; they were nearly 25% of the annual budget now
- too much reserve was as bad as too little, in the eyes of external auditors
- some things had been ringfenced within reserves (e.g. external auditor costs) so the purpose of having reserves, and what they may one day be spent on, was clear
- generally however, unallocated reserves were needed for unforeseen spending
- paying the ICO was a legal requirement, because the Council held personal data
- only 4 members currently claimed a members' allowance of £150, but ALCC had to budget for 19 allowances, as 19 members could choose to claim it next year
- £1,500 was not now needed for printer rental costs next year.

Councillor Oakley again moved that Council agree £240,041.52 as its budget and precept for 2020/21. He stated that he was moving this amount deliberately, as any underspends (on printer rental for example) could then go into reserves at the end of the year.

The Chair put the motion to the vote. 6 members voted in favour of the motion. 6 members voted against the motion. 3 members abstained.

The Chair sought advice on how to proceed, given the equality of votes.

The Clerk advised that some members appeared to be unsure on how (and whether) they should vote. The vote had been inconclusive. Whether sufficient debate had taken place was a matter for the Chair to decide. If the Chair and members wished to do that, the budget could be debated further, as extra discussion may help people make up their minds.

Members agreed to debate the budget further. The following main points/questions arose:

- the increase proposed this year was approx. £6k, or 2% of the budget
- the budget made no mention of increasing reserves
- how would the public respond to this increase?
- the budget had more than doubled last year
- many people commented on social media that they were not happy with Council Tax going up again
- people did not see it as "only 35p more per year"
- increasing the budget by inflation was normal
- BGCBC also raised Council Tax by inflation every year
- ALCC was doing a lot more now than it had done in years gone by, for example providing defibrillators in every local community, paying for detached youth workers and paying for food for young people who did not otherwise eat
- more money was needed to make all this happen

- costs went up with inflation every year, so inflationary rises were not a problem
- if members did not understand what was being spent on what, they could ask for more information at any time.

Councillor Oakley responded (main points) (during the above exchange):

- there would always be some people who were opposed to any increase
- ALCC however needed to provide for all communities and people
- the work ALCC was doing around youth services for example was vital
- that work led to reductions in anti-social behaviour for everyone
- it was a statutory requirement to have adequate reserves
- ALCC was doing its best for communities
- too little funding would lead to fewer services
- the increase last year had equated to approx. £13 per house per year
- this had paid for defibrillators, youth workers, food for young people and other things
- did members wish to take those things away?

Discussion ensued on whether members were ready to vote again. A member argued that this was not possible, as a vote had already been taken. Council agreed, on a motion from Councillor Phillips, that a further vote be taken.

Councillor Oakley again moved that Council agree £240,041.52 as its budget and precept for 2020/21.

The Chair put the motion to the vote. With 9 members voting in favour, 2 voting against and 4 abstaining:

Council RESOLVED: to agree £240,041.52 as its budget and precept for 2020/21.

181. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(x)

Council RESOLVED to suspend standing order 3(x) to extend the time limit for the meeting beyond the normal two hours.

Councillor Phillips left the meeting at this point.

182. FINANCIAL RISKS: PAYMENT OF PRECEPT AND BANK ACCOUNTS

The Deputy Clerk stated that he would report in further detail to the Council next week on these issues. For now, there was an identified risk that, if the Council's bank collapsed, any funds in excess of £85,000 held with that bank could be lost. If Natwest collapsed however, the whole of the UK would be affected. This was very unlikely. To mitigate this risk, he would recommend to Council next week that it ask Blaenau Gwent CBC to pay the precept in quarterly instalments (not one annual lump sum) in future and that ALCC place its reserves with a different UK bank (e.g. Lloyds or the Post Office) going forward.

This was a situation report in the meantime.

Council RESOLVED: to note the report.

The meeting ended at 9.05pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
(ALCC) HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2020 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Gill Clark (Chair), Peter Adamson, Michaela Assiratti, Vanessa Bartlett, Roger Clark, Tracey Dyson, Julie Holt, Mark Lewis, Beverley Lucas, Perry Morgan, Gary Oakley, Rob Phillips, Tracy Postlethwaite, Allen Rees, Nick Simmons, Bernard Wall and Graham White

Officers: Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk and Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk

Others: 1 member of the public

ABSENT: Councillors Keri Bidgood and Glyn Smith

183. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Keri Bidgood and Glyn Smith.

Welcomes were extended to everyone present.

184. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded members of the need to declare interests verbally and fill in a form.

Personal interests were declared later in the meeting. See minutes 190 and 194 below.

No other members declared any personal interests.

Councillor Adamson requested and Council agreed to consider agenda item 5 next.

185. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PETER ADAMSON

Councillor Adamson read out his motion as follows:

“That full Council consider if they have confidence in the Councillor Gill Clark, the Chair of ALCC Council 2019-2020, after presiding over the following: the disorderly conduct of meetings in the final months of 2019, namely the lack of minutes from previous meetings at the Dec. 11th 2019 meeting (and to date); the ignoring of council resolutions from previous meetings (i.e. the awarding of Solar Farm Grants); and failure to recognise councillors not declaring interests when voting on awarding Solar Farm Grants.”

Councillor Adamson pointed out that the past minutes had in fact been submitted to Council on 22 January.

Councillor Adamson made the following statement:

"Statement: no confidence in the ALCC Chair, January 2020.

I'm sorry it has come to this. Currently we have five councillors who have been reported to the Ombudsman and the Blaenau Gwent monitoring Officer, and the Chair is one of them.

The complaints have been lodged because of what happened at the December 11th 2019 full council meeting, where I, for one, was appalled at the total disregard of a resolution made at a previous meeting of how to award the solar farm grant money.

I wasn't the only councillor who was appalled.

There was a lead up to the events of the December 11th meeting. The most significant point in this lead up period for many of us was the email debate about the five year rule, and how it should be interpreted. Then there was the seeking of legal advice and the EGM meeting to consider the legal advice. Eventually it seemed Council had reached a democratically agreed way forward on awarding the solar farm grants, including how the five year rule would be interpreted, and notwithstanding the clerk's own substantial involvement in trying to influence how Council voted at that EGM.

Which brings me to a central complaint about how the Chair has acted, or rather not acted in what has been a heated episode that began in October 2019, and will continue to run until third parties provide a verdict.

Did the Chair allow the clerk a free hand in his involvement in the SFG episode, and by so doing allow the clerk to take sides in the debate on how and to whom the solar farm grants would be awarded?

I think the Chair did allow this to happen.

I understand this is a serious allegation in its implications, because the clerk is not supposed to take sides. The Chair can take sides because they have a casting vote in the case of a tied vote. The Chair is also there to mediate amongst council members (where possible), and to give guidance to the Clerk on behalf of Council, because surely the Clerk can stray from the strict remit of their job description, and become over involved in particular debates?

I concede making a judgement on whether to give guidance/instruction to paid members of staff is not necessarily an easy judgement to make. But the Chair has a special responsibility to make those judgements.

One of the main errors of judgement was to allow for the build-up of unwritten minutes from October onwards and through November/December. The Chair should have found a way of getting those minutes written up in time for the December 11th meeting. If the Chair had managed that task I would have much less of a case against her.

The effect of not having the minutes paved the way for the disorderly meeting on December 11th, when a properly agreed approach to awarding the Solar Farm grants, albeit hotly contested, was overthrown, and in some people's view, illegally so.

What happened on December 11th regarding the awarding of the SFG was an injustice to the only application the Solar Farm Working Group judged to be eligible and recommended for receiving the grant, which was the Roseheynorth Woodlands application.

The fact the grants were awarded in the end to unexceptional projects around the area, unexceptional in that they did not meet the special criteria of the SFWG - flew in the face of the efforts of most of the members of the Solar Farm Working Group. It has left many of us feeling cheated, not personally, but on behalf of the recommended project.

We need to move on. There is much new work to do. However to do this work we need to have confidence in each other and our officers.

I propose the Chair stands down and Council elects an interim Chair to hold office until the next normal change of office in the spring of this year."

The Clerk asked Councillor Adamson to clarify what he was moving, as the motion he had submitted asked Council to consider if it had confidence in the Chair. The motion submitted did not propose a vote of no confidence.

Councillor Adamson stated that he was moving a motion of no confidence in the Chair.

Following contradicting comments on whether the motion needed to be seconded before a debate took place, the Clerk read aloud the relevant excerpt of standing order 1.

Councillor Oakley seconded the motion of no confidence. He also asked that Councillor Adamson's statement be included in full in the minutes of this meeting.

The Clerk was asked to advise on the practical implications, if the majority of members voted that they had no confidence in the Chair.

The Clerk explained that the law specified that the Chair was elected at the annual Council meeting. The Chair remained as the Chair until the next annual Council meeting, unless they became disqualified or resigned in the meantime. If Council agreed that it had no confidence in the Chair, as she was not disqualified, it would therefore be a decision for her to make (whether to resign or not), pending the annual Council meeting in May.

The Chair stated that she had no intention of resigning. She had done nothing wrong.

Councillor Lewis asked whether he could vote, as he had not been present at the meeting on 11 December. The Clerk advised that the key question was whether members had confidence in the Chair or not. The motion contained a context, including what happened on 11 December. It was for Councillor Lewis to decide for himself, whether and how to vote.

Various members commented or questioned (main points):

- this was all irrelevant as the Chair was not going to resign
- Council could therefore go straight to a vote
- if a member had not been present on 11 December; he perhaps should not vote
- the issue here was not just about the solar farm grant decision on 11 December
- it was about the decisions in September, October, November and December

- people could not change the decision made on 11 December
- some members wanted all the funding to go to the Roseheyworth and Bournville Community Woodlands Association, but that had not happened
- people had voted and the majority had won; that was democracy
- the Chair had Chaired several very difficult meetings and had done so effectively
- this episode was an eye opener, for new members especially
- members were meant to be here to do their best for communities, not be at war with each other; what was going on?
- the Council had to make decisions in compliance with the law and standing orders
- previous resolutions had to be followed through
- the Council received legal advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and held an extraordinary meeting on 18 November
- Council agreed in November to stick to the criteria agreed in September
- after much debate, the Clerk referred to the NALC advice on 11 December and advised that the Council could do whatever it wanted to do
- the Council made a mistake on 11 December
- a letter had been written (by Councillor Oakley) to the Clerk, suggesting further action to resolve the issue, but that action had not been taken
- the Clerk on 11 December advised Council, when he was asked to do so
- he reiterated the legal advice received from NALC, in answer to member comments
- the comments made by the Clerk on 11 December were being misapplied
- the legal advice had said the Council could decide the criteria meant whatever it wanted them to mean, but, once decided, that decision must be publicised, to be fair to all applicants
- that publicity had not happened.

The Clerk reminded members that the opportunity to apply for a solar farm grant had been advertised on 27 September. The closing date for applications was 10 October. Publicising a clarification of the meaning of the criteria, after the 18 November meeting (for the benefit of potential applicants) was therefore too late, as Council had decided (on 18 November) that there was no further opportunity to apply (after 10 October) for a solar farm grant. If solar farm grants were available in 2020, it would be necessary to publicise (in advance of the deadline) what the criteria actually meant.

Various other members commented (main points):

- ALCC did not have to take advice received through One Voice Wales (OVW)
- the legal advice was received through OVW, not from OVW
- ALCC had had some difficult times over the years, but not like this
- members should not be arguing; some should consider their positions
- Council needed to move on and get on with improving life for communities
- the Chair was staying until May, so this debate was a further waste of time
- almost half of Council members felt cheated at what happened on 11 December, on behalf of the Roseheyworth Woodlands project
- the responsibility for that laid with the Chair, for not overseeing the solar farm grant debate properly and for allowing a backlog of minutes to build up
- "the lack of minutes paved the way for the chaotic debate on 11 December".

The Chair stated that she could not force staff to produce minutes of meetings, when there was not enough time to produce those minutes. ALCC's two staff were already working overtime, without pay, and she was concerned about that. The HR Committee had agreed to consider this matter further and to seek external help (e.g. from One Voice Wales). This situation was ongoing and would be reported back to Council in due course.

Further comments were made (main points):

- the law specified that minutes must go to the next meeting
- other tasks were undertaken by staff, when minutes should have been written
- writing minutes should be the number one priority of staff
- staff could have identified a problem and the HR Committee could have agreed to pay overtime, but this had not happened
- Council needed to move forward now and build on all the good work done over the last year
- getting rid of the Chair after all the good work done made no sense at all.

Councillor Oakley objected to comments made by Councillor Roger Clark. Councillor Roger Clark apologised. Councillor Oakley accepted the apology.

Further comments were made (main points):

- Council made decisions, not the Chair
- Council could not make decisions and then change them, the following month
- the Chair could not know everything, so had to rely on officers for advice
- seven local groups had received £5,000 each for solar farm grant projects
- all the communities involved were benefitting from that funding
- the funding would have been lost if the Council had delayed any further
- decisions had to be made and the funding had not been lost
- members should not be discussing these issues, due to the recent complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Councillor Adamson again moved "that the Council has no confidence in the Chair". The motion was seconded by Councillor Oakley.

Councillor Holt moved an amendment: "that the Council has every confidence in the Chair as she has done a very good job of a very hard job".

Comments were made that the amendment negated the motion. The Clerk was asked to advise.

The Clerk advised that the amendment removed words from the motion and added different words, so it was technically valid. However, Councillor Holt could, if she wished, withdraw the amendment. Members would then have a simpler choice; for or against the motion.

Councillor Holt withdrew her amendment and asked for a recorded vote.

The following 8 members voted for the motion: Councillors Peter Adamson, Perry Morgan, Gary Oakley, Rob Phillips, Allen Rees, Nick Simmons, Bernard Wall and Graham White.

The following 8 members voted against the motion: Councillors Gill Clark, Michaela Assiratti, Vanessa Bartlett, Roger Clark, Tracey Dyson, Julie Holt, Beverley Lucas and Tracy Postlethwaite.

Councillor Mark Lewis abstained from the vote.

The Chair used her casting vote, against the motion, and the motion was lost.

In answer to further comments from Councillor Adamson, the Chair stated that she would not stand aside and that she had every confidence in herself.

Comments were made by various members that the Chair and Councillor Roger Clark had personal interests and could not vote.

The Clerk confirmed that, in line with legislation, the Chair must preside if they were present at the meeting, the Chair could vote, Councillor Roger Clark could vote, and the Chair had a casting vote.

Council returned to agenda item 3 at this point.

186. MINUTES: COUNCIL – 11 DECEMBER 2019

Councillor White asked why the minutes had not been amended after the meeting on 22 January 2020. The Clerk explained that the Council had not agreed any amendments to the minutes on 22 January, so the minutes had not been amended. They were on this agenda for confirmation as a correct record, as they had not yet been confirmed.

Councillor Adamson asked whether Councillor Holt had declared an interest in the Friends of Six Bells Park solar farm grant application, as that was not in the minutes.

Councillor Oakley proposed an alteration to minute 151 as follows:

- (1) Councillor Julie Holt had stated “everyone knows I am a member of Friends of Six Bells Park and I do whatever I can to help them”; this was not in the minutes and should be inserted in an appropriate place.

Councillor Rees proposed a further alteration to minute 151:

- (2) that the number of votes cast for and against each application at the Solar Farm Grant Working Group held on 4 December be included in paragraph 2 (as the Chair had read out the votes at the 11 December meeting).

Councillor Oakley proposed two more alterations to minute 151:

- (3) on page 6 of the minutes (page 8 of the agenda); he had said “Brynithel Community Centre did not apply because they felt they did not meet the criteria” (he had not said “Brynithel Community Centre had been told they could not apply”)
- (4) on top of page 7 of the minutes (page 9 of the agenda); He (Councillor Oakley) had not “told groups not to apply”; he had however “agreed with groups that they did not meet the criteria”.

Councillor Holt commented on proposed alteration (1) above that:

- she had said she was on the Six Bells Park Facebook Group
- more than 600 other people were also on that Facebook Group
- she would not answer any questions as this matter was the subject of a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- she was on 92 Facebook Groups
- she was on the Gwent Police Facebook Group, but she was not a policewoman
- there were approximately five people on the management committee of the Friends of Six Bells Park
- she had no involvement in or position on the Friends of Six Bells Park committee
- as a Borough Councillor, she was actively encouraged to be on as many Facebook groups as possible, as being on social media was a good way for members to get involved in and find out what was happening in their local communities
- Councillor Morgan, who had complained about her, was on the Roseheyworth and Bournville Community Woodlands Association Facebook Group
- he had made comments on that group, that he would not invite two ALCC councillors to meetings as they were “fools”.

8 members voted in favour of proposed alteration (1) above.

8 members voted against proposed alteration (1) above.

The Chair used her casting vote, to reject proposed alteration (1) above.

Comments were made by the Chair, Councillor Lucas and other members that it was very difficult to hear and understand what was going on at this meeting, as several people were speaking at the same time. This was not fair on anyone.

Following clarification of the wording of proposed alteration (2) above and with 10 votes in favour and other members abstaining, Council agreed proposed alteration (2) above.

Following clarification of the wording of proposed alteration (3) above and with 7 votes in favour and other members abstaining, Council agreed proposed alteration (3) above.

The Clerk explained that proposed alteration (4) attempted to alter the record of what he (the Clerk) had said at the 11 December meeting. He knew what he had said, and the minutes were a correct record of what he had said.

Councillor Bartlett stated that she remembered word for word what the Clerk had said. The minutes were accurate. If it was not true, the Clerk would not have said what he did.

Councillor Oakley withdrew that amendment.

Council RESOLVED (with 3 members abstaining from the vote): that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the inclusion of alterations (2) and (3) above.

Further comments were made that:

- Councillor Oakley and some other members were abstaining from the vote on the accuracy of the minutes, even though they had insisted on alterations to the minutes and they had insisted earlier that they remembered clearly, who said what
- he (Councillor Oakley) could not remember exactly what was said, so he could not vote that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting
- the debate had been very heated on 11 December; it was difficult to remember who said exactly what
- members could not “have it both ways”.

The Clerk expressed a view that it was difficult to understand how these positions could be reconciled. He had 30 years’ experience of writing minutes. If members could not clearly remember, they should not be questioning the accuracy of the minutes. This amounted to members not trusting the Clerk to get it right, which was not a good place to be.

187. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no public questions for this meeting.

188. GRANT APPLICATION: MENASH

The Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee (Councillor Oakley) reported that the committee recommended Council to seek further information from MENASH on its status, before making a decision on this application.

Council RESOLVED: to seek further information from MENASH before making a decision on this application.

189. WARD GRANTS CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The Clerk highlighted the proposed changes to the process (in process item 1), which had been agreed by the Finance and Grants Committee. The change allowed members to apply for ward grants for groups based outside their wards, if the groups served a multi-ward area or the whole ALCC area. This would bring the process in line with the criteria. Items 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the process had also been amended, to reflect decisions previously made by the Council on how ward grants were approved (by the Finance and Grants Committee).

The Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee (Councillor Oakley) stated that:

- the changes made it easier for members to make ward grants
- this was in line with the legal advice received from NALC (that Council could change its criteria from time to time if it wished by ordinary resolution)
- he still did not know why a £200 ward grant had to go to a committee for approval
- surely £200 grants could be agreed by councillors individually
- the committee on 13 January had made some mistakes with some ward grants
- the committee would consider ward grants again in March, including any ward grants which had not yet been agreed
- the ward grants for the Museum would be approved by the committee in March.

Comments were made or questions were asked by members (main points):

- councillors had already been advised by officers several times
- councillors could not make individual financial decisions
- at Blaenau Gwent CBC, “ward grant” decisions were made by the Executive
- why had some ward grants to Abertillery and District Museum not been agreed at the 13 January committee meeting?
- what would happen to those ward grants?
- all members needed to be more diligent in future (what they put in grants criteria).

Council RESOLVED: to replace the existing criteria and process with the proposed criteria and process (as attached to the agenda).

190. REPORTS BACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Christmas Lights Working Group (CLWG): Councillor Phillips (Chair of the CLWG) summarised the notes and recommendations of the Christmas Lights Working Group, which were attached to the agenda as follows:

- the CLWG was very pleased with the Christmas lighting 2019, with a few minor exceptions (e.g. the tree at Warm Turn and the lack of lights at Bournville)
- discussions would be held with the contractor and Council later in the year about changes for next year (e.g. more lights in the fir tree at West Bank, Cwmtillery and a different location for the tree outside St Michael’s Church (e.g. in Jubilee Square))
- Swffryd, Llanhilleth and Brynithel were very happy with ALCC’s grant funding to pay towards their lights
- Bournville residents wished to install their own display in future too
- the CLWG proposed that Council make a grant of £800 for Bournville Christmas lights for the year ahead (as ALCC would otherwise have spent £800 installing lights there as part of the contract)
- this would require the decisions made at Council on 30 October (minute 102 (1) to (4) to be rescinded; this would have to be revisited later in the year
- the lighting at Somerset Street had been reduced in 2019, because more lighting was being provided in outlying areas, to give all communities a fairer share
- this reduction in lights at Somerset Street would remain the case.

He stated that the CLWG also agreed to recommend to Council that the grants given in 2019 for groups to provide their own Christmas lights displays (at Swffryd, Llanhilleth and Brynithel) be repeated in 2020, that the groups be informed and the grants be paid out as soon as possible in the new financial year, so those groups could plan ahead.

Questions were asked about the reduced number of lights at Somerset Street and where the blue stars had gone. Some shopkeepers had said they paid for lights in years gone by.

Councillor Phillips explained that:

- many years ago, ALCC decided only to fund lights in Somerset Street up to its junction with King Street

- the former Town Centre Manager had, without ALCC's knowledge, found a budget to purchase six blue stars for Somerset Street (beyond the King Street junction) and paid to have them installed there
- that had only lasted one year, after which ALCC ended up paying for the lights to be installed there by default, when Abertillery no longer had a Town Centre Manager (as the funding ceased)
- he had no idea whether shops had contributed to them, more than 10 years ago
- shops had never contributed to ALCC's costs of installing lights there every year
- decisions had been made over many years to put lights in different places
- ALCC last year decided to "share out" lighting to a wider area (e.g. Aberbeeg etc)
- ALCC had to cut down in other areas, as it did not have a limitless pot of money
- the lights previously provided in Division Street and High Street were also no longer being provided, as well as lights beyond the King Street junction of Somerset Street
- ALCC did its best but it was not possible to keep everyone happy.

Other members commented or questioned (main points):

- the Olde Sweet Shoppe was not there 10 years ago
- the Wales Audit Office warned ALCC about 10 years ago that it was spending far too much on Christmas lights and had to cut down
- the "tree" structure near Friars Walk in Newport was very good; could ALCC enquire how much a similar one would cost in Abertillery?
- some shopkeepers in Somerset Street were not happy at being left out this year
- ALCC had to stop somewhere, or it's precept would be "sky high"
- ALCC had to serve a lot of people in a lot of areas; lights could not be everywhere
- lights should have been provided at Bournville this year and were not, because the decision to add them to the contract was not taken till 30 October; this saved ALCC approx. £800 this year
- could ALCC give that money to Bournville, to pay for equipment needed to remove their lights from that tree?
- ALCC could pay its own contractor to remove those lights
- the lights provided in that tree by Bournville Community Hall were worth over £4k
- if ALCC's contractor was going to remove them, Councillor Morgan wanted to be on site when that happened; he therefore needed to know when it would happen
- if ALCC's contractor took them down, as the lights did not belong to ALCC, it had to be quite clear that ALCC took no responsibility for their condition.

Councillor Dyson, Councillor Lucas and the Chair again asked other members to show some consideration to other people and to stop speaking over other people and speaking when other people were already speaking, as it was very difficult for others to hear and understand what was going on, especially if they had hearing difficulties.

Council RESOLVED at this point:

(1) to suspend standing order 3(x) to extend the time limit for the meeting beyond the normal two hours.

Councillor Rees left the meeting at this point.

Following a further brief disturbance and a further request for order from the Chair:

Council RESOLVED:

- (2) to note the updates
- (3) to consider any outstanding issues later in the year (e.g. the St Michael's Church tree, the fir tree at Cwmtillery and grant funding for the Bournville lights)
- (4) to pay ALCC's contractor to remove the Christmas lights from the tree outside Bournville Community Hall (BCH)
- (5) to return those lights to Councillor Morgan (representing BCH) on the site
- (6) that the grants given in 2019 for groups to provide their own Christmas lights displays (at Swffryd, Llanhilleth and Brynithel) be repeated in 2020, that the groups be informed and the grants be paid out as soon as possible in the new financial year, so that those groups could plan ahead.

Following queries from members, Councillor Morgan commented that he had not voted, as he was Chairman of Bournville Community Hall. He would complete a form to that effect.

The Clerk reminded members that they needed to declare interests verbally and complete a personal interests form, if they had an interest to declare.

Leisure and Tourism Working Group (L&TWG): No update was given.

Shop Local Working Group (SLWG): Councillor Lewis (Chair of the SLWG) reported that:

- work was being undertaken on a number of initiatives, including an outdoor cinema event, Halloween event and car boot sale
- £135 more was needed for more window stickers
- posters would in future be put up on buses where possible
- the Abertillery Business Forum was now holding regular meetings again
- illegal parking at Market Street and access for deliveries at Church Street continued to be concerns
- further discussions were planned re car parking, the car park survey and CCTV
- the Police had been contacted about a number of recent incidents in the Arcade
- concerns had also been raised about a number of thefts and about people living in the Old Police Station on Somerset Street; again the Police had been informed
- he was speaking to the street cleaner later this week about the opening hours of Jubilee Square.

Wellbeing Working Group (WBWG): Councillor Simmons (Chair of the WBWG) reported that:

- progress was being made on well-being mapping
- more links needed to be made with other town and community councils
- ALCC would need to consider getting involved in local Well-being Working Groups (which were being established by the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board) in future.

Youth Engagement Working Group (YEWG): Councillor Oakley (Chair of the YEWG) reported that:

- the Space Youth Café was seeking more funding for the youth food project
- the working group would need to meet to discuss this further
- BGCBC Youth Services had advertised more than once for the additional detached youth workers paid for by ALCC
- there had been very few applications, due to the limited length of the contract term
- the latest closing date had passed.

Council RESOLVED:

(7) to note the updates

(8) to spend another £135 on more shop local window stickers.

191. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

This item was deferred to a future meeting, given that it was now 9.20pm.

192. ELECTRONIC BANKING AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING PACKAGE

The Council considered a report of the Deputy Clerk, which he outlined briefly, seeking agreement to move to electronic banking and purchase a financial accounting package.

The Deputy Clerk responded to questions:

- officers would set up payments electronically
- they would then email the three members who currently signed cheques, to seek authorisation of the payment
- one member would need to log in to the system to authorise the payment
- signatories could be reviewed by Council in due course if it wished to do that
- the new financial management system would need to be installed this financial year, to ensure it was up and running in time for the new financial year
- payment for the new system would not be required until the new financial year
- none of the companies who had been approached about a package would provide retrospective accounting, as the data would be historical, not "live" and they would not be held responsible for accounts created outside their systems
- the new system could go live from April, if installed soon
- the Council had contracted with the Internal Auditor for three years
- there was no clear correlation between a new package and the number of Internal Auditor visits in the short term.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) that officers set up electronic banking for all the Council's bank accounts as soon as possible
- (2) that Councillors Rob Phillips, Julie Holt and Glyn Smith (who were the current cheque signatories) be set up as the Online Electronic Banking payment authorisers, so that there is consistency of financial authorisations for all Council payments
- (3) that Financial Regulations are amended if required and are appropriate to allow for

- electronic banking, with any changes brought back to Council for approval
- (4) that officers put in place and action a formal tendering exercise to procure and install a financial accounting package within the budget already agreed by Council.

193. FINANCIAL RISKS 2020/21

The Council considered a report of the Deputy Clerk, which he outlined briefly, informing the Council of financial risks (as reported to previous meetings) and seeking agreement to appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) that the officers conduct a comparison exercise across the major UK banks to find the one which has the best interest payments on a business reserve deposit account, which allows for instant access
- (2) once this comparison exercise has been carried out, the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) decides which new bank account to set up and officers take all required actions to move the current Natwest reserve accounts (not the current account) to that new bank account, whilst retaining existing authorisation controls
- (3) that the RFO requests Blaenau Gwent CBC to pay the precept to ALCC in four quarterly instalments in future.

194. FORMER QUEEN STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL: COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Councillor Tracey Dyson declared a personal interest in this issue as her daughter was a member of Abertillery Youth Drama and Musical Society (AYDMS) Junior Section.

Councillor Roger Clark declared a personal interest in this issue as his granddaughter was in the AYDMS Primary Group.

Councillor Gill Clark declared a personal interest in this issue as her granddaughter was in the AYDMS Primary Group.

Councillor Tracy Postlethwaite declared a personal interest in this issue as her granddaughter was in the AYDMS Primary Group.

Councillor Phillips reported that he had been a school governor at Queen Street School. The school building had needed a lot of work for some years. He would have reservations for that reason. In principle however he supported the transfer. He moved and:

Council RESOLVED: to support the proposed community asset transfer of the former Queen Street Primary School to Abertillery Youth Drama and Musical Society, for use as a multi-use Arts Facility.

195. REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) PREFERRED STRATEGY

Councillors Adamson and Assiratti left the meeting at this point.

Councillor Simmons informed Council that:

- the replacement LDP had potentially significant implications for the ALCC area
- members should read all the documents involved and circulated by the Clerk
- ALCC should respond collectively (and as a member of the Joint Committee of Local Councils) in his view
- a new Abertillery railway station was included, thanks to pressure put on by himself and Councillors Oakley and Phillips
- he would go through the plan in detail and circulate notes to members, with a view to Council considering this further at its next meeting.

Council RESOLVED: to receive further details from Councillor Simmons about the draft replacement LDP preferred strategy at the next Council meeting.

196. REPORTS BACK ON RELEVANT TRAINING OR MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Deputy Clerk reported that he attended Blaenau Gwent CBC's Budget Consultation meeting recently. BGCBC were proposing a 4% increase in Council Tax for the year ahead. Education spending needed to increase by 5% (for teachers' pensions and other things). A further meeting of BGCBC would be held on 6 February.

Councillor Simmons reported that he attended a recent Joint Consultation meeting with BGCBC and reps of other town and community councils in the area. The Charter had been signed by all except Tredegar Town Council. Brynmawr had since then withdrawn their agreement to the Charter too. Joint Consultation meetings would however continue.

Council RESOLVED: to note the updates.

197. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS, RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

The Clerk reported that he had been notified of five complaints made recently to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. He was not able to tell members what the complaints were about, who made the complaints, or who the complaints were about.

Council RESOLVED: to note the update.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2020 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery

PRESENT: Councillors:

Gary Oakley (Chair), Gill Clark, Perry Morgan, Allen Rees and Nick Simmons (see 163 below)

Officers: Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk and Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk

Others: Councillor Graham White (not a member of the committee) and one member of the public

ABSENT: Councillor Glyn Smith

161. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Glyn Smith.

162. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal interests.

163. MINUTES – FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE – 2 DECEMBER 2019

Councillor Simmons arrived at this point in the meeting.

The minutes were moved as a correct record.

Discussion ensued on progress with the new buzzer in the Council Chamber (which was on order) and on the number of visits to the Council offices by the Internal Auditor in the previous year.

The Chair asked for the minutes of this meeting to record that the £1,500 budgeted for the Internal Auditor was for up to 30 hours work over a year, not for a specific number of visits, although it was hoped that visits would be less frequent in future (in theory, three visits per year including the June Council meeting).

Councillor Morgan moved that the words “the Internal Auditor visited 11 times last year” be added to the ninth bullet point of minute 145.

The Clerk reminded members that minutes were a record of decisions and a brief summary of the key issues discussed (not a full account of every detail discussed).

The Committee RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the Finance and Grants Committee meeting held on 2 December 2019 as a correct record, for signature by the Chair, subject to the addition of the words moved by Councillor Morgan.

164. GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Chair and the Clerk reminded members that the committee could approve (but not refuse) ward grant applications and that council grant applications had to go to full Council in any case for approval.

The committee considered the applications attached to the agenda. Detailed questions were asked, information was given and discussion ensued on the applications. Discussion focussed particularly on whether councillors could apply for ward grants if the organisation was not based in their ward and whether ward grants could be given to groups which were companies. The Clerk circulated and outlined the ward grants criteria which had been adopted by the Council on 25 September 2019, in response to comments and questions. The Deputy Clerk pointed out that point 2 of the criteria allowed for groups which were outside members' wards to be funded (if the group served people in the whole ALCC area) but point 1 of the process restricted applications to groups within members' wards only. The Council would need to decide if it wished to amend the criteria or the process or both. If an application had not been made in the past for a group (because of the limitation in point 1 of the process), an application could be made in future, when the process was clarified.

NB two brief adjournments were held while the Clerk went to the office to find and copy an email relating to a ward grant application and the ward grants criteria.

Councillor Gill Clark declared a personal interest in the application at agenda item 4(n), for £200 for Abertillery Bluebirds AFC, because her son and her grandson were both members and players of Abertillery Bluebirds AFC.

The Committee RESOLVED:

- (1) To recommend that Council seek further information from MENASH on the nature of the organisation (e.g. whether it was a national charity, how many beneficiaries there were and exactly what the £500 requested would be spent on)
- (2) That the ward grant application from Councillor Gary Oakley, for £200, for the Friends of St Illtyd be approved
- (3) That the ward grant application from Councillor Michaela Assiratti, for £200, for Brynithel Community Centre, be approved
- (4) That the ward grant application from Councillor Gill Clark, for £50, for the Llanhilleth Miners Institute (Luncheon Club) be approved
- (5) That the ward grant application from Councillor Keri Bidgood, for £50, for the Llanhilleth Miners Institute (Luncheon Club) be approved
- (6) That the ward grant application from Councillor Allen Rees, for £150, for The Friendly Group, Soffryd Community Centre be approved
- (7) That the ward grant application from Councillor Graham White, for £200, for the Hospice of the Valleys, be approved
- (8) That the ward grant application from Councillor Bernard Wall, for £200, for the Hospice of the Valleys, be approved
- (9) That the remainder of the ward grant applications (at agenda items 4(c), (d), (e), (f), (j) and (n)) be deferred until the committee's meeting on 10 March 2020
- (10) That Council be recommended to change process (1), to allow members to apply for ward grants for groups outside their own wards, if the groups concerned had a multi-ward or whole-area benefit (e.g. the Museum, Hospice of the Valleys etc) and

(11) That members be informed of the new deadline to apply for ward grants.

165. DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2020/21

The Deputy Clerk circulated A3 copies of the draft budget (which was attached on A4 paper to the agenda).

Lengthy debate ensued, with questions asked and answered about what was spent against various budget lines in the past year, what was left over and what the existing budget paid for. Members expressed various opinions about whether specific budget lines should be increased, decreased or removed altogether.

NB a brief adjournment was held while the Deputy Clerk went to the office to find the spend-to-date on member training.

Debate took place and questions were asked specifically on the required budget for:

- staff training and conferences; the committee agreed to propose that the budget be £400 (instead of £1,200) for the year ahead, given past underspends on this budget, and as the costs of staff undertaking CiLCA could be ringfenced within reserves and met from reserves if needed
- member training; the committee agreed to propose that the budget be £1,000 (instead of £2,000) for the year ahead, given past underspends on this budget
- the proposed IT upgrade, projector and data storage solutions; members had differing views on what was required; the Chair was of the view that external advice was required on the appropriate specification and quotes would be needed from a number of suppliers of IT equipment
- One Voice Wales membership; the Chair questioned the value for money of this
- printer rental; the existing lease was due to end in the next few months
- Internal Auditor costs; whether they could provide payroll services and the length of the contract
- travel and mileage
- marketing and publicity
- defibrillators maintenance
- council grants; the budget should be £10,000 in line with a previous Council decision
- allotments; the budget should be £542.40 due to a recent annual rental increase
- Christmas lights outside Bourneville Community Hall and at Somerset Street; some members felt more lights should be funded via the core contract or through grants; others pointed out that this was for the Christmas Lights Working Group to discuss and recommend to Council in due course
- car park community asset transfer; the committee agreed that the proposed budget should be removed
- Abertillery underpass; the committee agreed that the proposed budget should be removed
- Youth services; the figures should read £37,806 (for additional youth workers) and £3,380 (for the Space Youth Café Food Project)
- the "In Bloom" figure of £10,000 (listed under Leisure and Tourism Group); the committee agreed the proposed budget should be removed
- pay for use toilets; the committee agreed the proposed budget should be removed

- the “In Bloom” figure of £35,000 (listed under Well-being); the committee agreed that the proposed budget should be £22,000 (not £35,000)
- War Memorial Maintenance (Bourneville and Blaenau Gwent); the committee agreed to propose that an additional sum of £3,000 be added to the budget
- concerns were expressed about who would do all the new work required
- Halloween event; the committee agreed the proposed budget should be removed
- Food Festival; the committee agreed the proposed budget should be removed
- Shop Local events; the committee agreed a sum of £10,000 for events generally (with specifics to be agreed during the year).

The Deputy Clerk reported that the total budget to be proposed to the Council on the basis of the committee’s deliberations was £240,041.52.

The Committee RESOLVED: to recommend to the Council that it agrees a budget for 2020/21 of £240,041.52, based on the draft budget presented to this meeting, as amended at this meeting.

166. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(x)

The Committee RESOLVED (during the budget debate above) to suspend standing order 3(x) to extend the time limit for the meeting beyond the normal two hours.

167. FINANCIAL RISKS: PAYMENT OF PRECEPT AND FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPENSATION SCHEME (FSCS)

The Deputy Clerk reminded members that ALCC had all its funds with one bank and that there was a risk of losing those funds, if the bank collapsed. He had contacted a number of other town and community councils in Wales. They all also had only one bank.

The Chair commented that this was because town and community councils in Wales did not know about the risks and the £85,000 Financial Services Compensation Scheme limit, possibly due to a lack of training.

The Deputy Clerk explained that:

- there was a risk of loss of funds in any case and the Council would be wise to move its reserves to a different bank (which paid interest on balances), to mitigate that risk
- ALCC could also ask Blaenau Gwent CBC to release payment of the precept to ALCC in quarterly instalments, so that ALCC did not have a sudden cash injection of £240k in April but could have four payments spread throughout the year instead. That would further mitigate the risk
- BGCBC had already indicated that they would be willing to do this if requested
- if ALCC moved to full electronic banking, staff would be able to move funds between banks and bank accounts much more quickly if required, to further mitigate the risk.

The Committee RESOLVED: to recommend to Council that it takes the following steps as soon as possible, to mitigate the risk of financial loss in the event of a bank collapse:

- (1) ALCC moves its reserve account to a different bank
- (2) BGCBC is asked to pay the precept to ALCC in quarterly instalments, rather than in one

annual lump sum in future years
(3) ALCC moves to full electronic banking.

The meeting ended at 9.30pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk



THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH
CYNGOR CYMUNED ABERTYLERI A LLANHILLEDD

Email: clerk.alcc@gmail.com

Telephone 01495217323

www.abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

Council Offices
Mitre Street
Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent, NP13 1AE

Swyddfa'r Cyngor
Stryd Meitre
Abertyleri, Blaenau Gwent, NP13 1AE

**The accounts Listed hereunder are presented at the 27 February 2020 Council Meeting
(Finance Order No 9 – January 2020 to February 2020)**

Cheques that have been presented between 3 January 2020 to 5th February 2020

(Table 1)

PAYEE	Date	Cheque No	Amount
AYDMS, Defibs Advert in programme	06/01/2020	7595	£25.00
AYDMS - Party in the Park performance	06/01/2020	7596	£150.00
Fiona Angwin - Story Telling at Winterfest	06/01/2020	7645	£115.00
A1 Jump & Bounce - Rodeo Reindeer at Winterfest	10/01/2020	7644	£280.00
Perry Morgan Members Allowance 2018/19 - Replacement Cheque	15/01/2020	7629	£150.00
One Voice Wales - The Councillor Training (Michaela Assiratti/Beverley Lucas/Tracy Postlethwaite)	20/01/2020	7641	£120.00
One Voice Wales - Charing Skiils (Tracey Dyson)	20/01/2020	7642	£40.00
Solar Farm Grant - Friends of Six Bells Park	22/01/2020	7650	£5,000.00
Solar Farm Grant - Roseheyworth & Bounville Community Woodlands Association	22/01/2020	7651	£5,000.00
Solar Farm Grant - Abertillery Bowls Club	30/01/2020	7655	£5,000.00
Newport Leaflets Ltd - Distribution of Defibs Leaflets	30/01/2020	7657	£495.00
Nat West - Bank Charges	31/01/2020		£19.50
Solar Farm Grant - Llanhilleth Miners Institute	04/02/2020	7652	£5,000.00
Solar Farm Grant - Swffryd Community Centre	04/02/2020	7656	£5,000.00
Total			£26,394.50

Cheques and payments that have been issued but not yet presented as at 5 February 2020

(Table 2)

PAYEE	Cheque No	Amount
AYDMS – Trudy Williams Ward Grant	7464	£100
AYDMS – Tracey Dyson Ward Grant	7473	£50
Abertillery Town Band - Council Grant	7599	£500.00
Solar Farm Grant - Tyleryan Belles Sports Association	7653	£5,000.00
Solar Farm Grant - Abertillery Youth Drama and Musical Society	7654	£5,000.00

SLCC - Deputy Clerks Annual Membership	7658	£175.00
Mrs Eryl Dykes - Rental Adam Street Allotments	7659	£532.40
Owl Sanctuary - Winterfest	7660	£265.00
AR Digital - December Printing	7661	£94.06
Pinkies Parties Ltd - Characters for Winterfest	7662	£300.00
Mark Lewis - Paint and Brushes for Sleigh	7663	£45.91
Mark Lewis - White Spirit for Sleigh	7664	£1.80
ICO - Annual Charge	D/D	£40.00
Bernard Wall - Members Allowance	7665	£150.00
Perry Morgan - Members Allowance	7666	£150.00
Mark Lewis - Members Allowance	7667	£150.00
Glyn Smith - Members Allowance	7668	£150.00
Graham White - Members Allowance	7669	£150.00
Office Furniture Online - Meeting Room Table	7670	£262.20
Viking Payments Stationary	7671	£84.26
SLCC - Clerks Annual Membership	7672	£227.00
CF Corporate - Printer Lease (March - June 2020)	7673	£302.89
Central Security and Fire - Door Entry Phone in Chamber	7674	£234.00
Vison ICT - Website Review	7675	£705.00
Centregreat Limited - Christmas Lights	7676	£18,900.00
Friends of St Illtyds - Gary Oakley Ward Grant	7677	£200.00
Brynithel Community Centre - Michaela Assiratti Ward Grant	7678	£200.00
Llanhilleth Miners Institute - Keri Bidgood Ward Grant	7680	£50.00
Llanhilleth Miners Institute - Gill Clark Ward Grant	7681	£50.00
Soffryd Friendly Group - Allen Rees Ward Grant	7682	£150.00
Hospice of the Valleys - Bernard Wall Ward Grant	7683	£200.00
Hospice of the Valleys - Graham White Ward Grant	7684	£200.00
Total		£34,619.52

**Invoice received or expected, or Council decisions made but payments not yet made.
(Table 3)**

PAYEE	Amount
BGCBC (Payroll) - 3 Months Staff Costs – Oct to Dec 2019	£14,441.25
Gwyn Palfrey – Application to Welsh Athletics Association for licence for 10k Run	£50.00
BGCBC (Payroll) 3 Months Staff Costs – Jan – Mar 2020	£14,550.15
One Voice Wales – Advanced Local Government Finance Training (Gary Oakley, Nick Simmons, Allen Rees)	£120.00
One Voice Wales – Local Government Finance Training – Abertillery, 20 People	£417.90
One Voice Wales – Local Government Finance Training – (Keri Bidgood, Tracey Dyson)	£80.00
AR Digital – January Printing	£92.92
Viking Stationary	£84.26
One Voice Wales Annual Membership	£2,624.00
Total:	£32,460.48

**Grant Applications Received but not yet approved
(Table 4)**

<u>Application</u>	<u>Date of Application</u>	<u>Amount</u>
MENASH (Mental Health Support Group) Ebenezer Chapel, Abertillery. Funding Request	26/11/19	£500.00
Abertillery Museum –Tracy Postlethwaite Ward Grant	9/12/19	£200.00
Abertillery Museum –Tracey Dyson Ward Grant	18/12/19	£150.00
Abertillery Museum - Keri Bidgood Ward Grant	18/12/19	£100.00
Abertillery Museum – Gill Clark Ward Grant	18/12/19	£100.00
Ebbw Fach Choir – Beverley Lucas Ward Grant	16/12/19	£150.00
Abertillery Bluebirds – Riger Clark Ward Grant	7/1/20	£200.00
Abertillery Bowls Club	29/1/20	£600.00
Total:		£2000.00

Income

No new income during this period

Monthly Finance Update – Current Account.

Current Account Balance 5/2/20:	£120,736.18
Issued Cheques (Table 2):	£34,619.52
To be issued (Table 3):	£32,460.48
Grants, if approved (Table 4):	£2,000.00

Current Account Balance **£51,656.18** of which **£891.90** is ring fenced for the Chair's Charity Appeal

RESERVES

Reserves currently stand at **£61.658.18**, of which **£5,000** is ring-fenced for external auditor costs for 2014/15 to 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Council notes the payments in Tables 1 and 2.**
- 2. Council authorise the payments in Table 3 above.**
- 3. Council notes the financial position on the current and reserves accounts**



Clerk Clerk <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

Motion for party in the park

1 message

Tracey Dyson <traceydyson.alcc@gmail.com>
To: Clerk ALCC <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

12 February 2020 at 11:36

Hi Rich

Can I submit a motion for inclusion at the next meeting.

"That Council agrees to go ahead with Party in the Park 2020 on a date and venue to be decided by the Council's officers in consultation with the Leisure and Tourism Working Group and delegate authority to the Council's officers to make bookings and commit spend up to the £13,000 agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget."

Thank you

Cllr Tracey Dyson
Chair Leisure and Tourism working group

ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL
TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEES AND GROUPS 2019/20

Effective from 21 November 2019

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

- 1.1 To consider and respond to consultations and express the views of the community council relating to planning applications and other development control matters within the boundary of the Community Council.
- 1.2 To consider and respond to the Planning Authority in matters relating to statutory structure and local plans.
- 1.3 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of highway matters.
- 1.4 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of listed buildings.
- 1.5 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of conservation orders and environmental matters.
- 1.6 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of licensing applications within the boundary of the Community Council.
- 1.7 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of tree preservation orders.
- 1.8 To consider and respond to the relevant body in respect of other environmental issues.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Committee will comprise of the Chair of the Council, Vice Chair of Council and three other members, to be determined by the Council.

The Committee will meet at least once per year, with additional meetings when required as determined by the Chair of the Committee and the Clerk.

The Committee will elect its own Chair and Vice Chair for the year at its first meeting following the Council's annual meeting.

The quorum of the Committee will be no less than three members.

The Committee will exercise on behalf of the Council its powers relating to:

1. Recruitment, rates of remuneration, termination of service, education, training, conditions of service, career development and all other similar matters relating to employees and where relevant (such as in matters of training) members of Council.
2. Performance reviews and annual appraisals.
3. All matters concerning working conditions, employee service, staff welfare, agreements concerning salaries, sickness and grievance procedures, disciplinary measures, disputes and consultations with employees and their representatives.
4. All matters relating to safety at work, risk assessment and safety policies.
5. The exercise of any discretion in respect of any employee under the Local Government Superannuation Act and regulations.
6. All other routine Human Resource matters within the general policies of the Council.
7. To undertake the annual review of staffing and pay structure.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

A Complaints and Appeals Committee will be summoned to meet when required.

The Committee will consist of four members of the Council, to be determined by the Chair of the Council and the Clerk, depending on the nature of the complaint or appeal. Where appropriate this will include the Chair of the most relevant Committee.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee will carry out its function in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy, where it is dealing with a complaint.

In most instances it is not intended that political proportionality will be considered when appointing members to a Committee. However, if all members of a political group could be deemed to have a bias about a complaint or appeal, then, where practicable, the membership will consist of members of more than one political group.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee cannot hear complaints or appeals regarding members or their compliance with the Member Code of Conduct. These must be referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Council itself takes all decisions relating to the approval of spending or grants (except ward grants, which the Committee may approve (but not refuse)).

The Finance and Grants Committee's purpose is to consider and approve (but not refuse) ward grant applications and to prepare, monitor, review and assist in the effective financial management of the Council. Its role is to make recommendations to the Council in any of the matters listed below:

1. To keep under review the financial resources required by the Council to enable it to fulfil its statutory obligations and provide services for the well-being of its community, namely:
 - a) Preparing an annual budget and making recommendations to Council for the precept required.
 - b) Reviewing and making recommendations to Council on borrowing requirements, reserve funds, investments and banking arrangements.
 - c) Reviewing and making recommendations to Council on the Council's charging policy for services.
2. To monitor, annually review and make recommendations to the Council on the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal financial control system, specifically:
 - a) Ensuring compliance with Statutes, Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
 - b) Ensuring an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control, on receipt of the annual report.
 - c) Monitoring income and expenditure against budget.
 - d) Ensuring that accounts are properly maintained and reflect current best practice.
 - e) Ensuring that bank reconciliations are undertaken regularly

- f) Receiving and reviewing the draft accounts, draft Annual Return and draft Annual Governance Statement, prior to their submission to the Council for approval annually.
3. To monitor financial transactions including receipts, payments and bank transfers.
4. To identify business risks which may prevent the Council achieving its aims and objectives and make recommendations to the Council.
5. To ensure the Council has appropriate insurance cover in place relating to buildings, property, staff, members, public liability and employers' liability as may be necessary and make recommendations to the Council.
6. To consider and make recommendations to the Council in respect of all requests for financial assistance submitted to the Council, excluding solar farm grants and excluding ward grants (which the Committee may approve but may not refuse).
7. Any other matters, which, for reasons of expediency, are referred to this committee.

NB Financial Regulations 1.13, 1.14 and 5.1 specify that:

The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- *setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);*
- *approving accounting statements;*
- *approving an annual governance statement;*
- *borrowing;*
- *writing off bad debts;*
- *addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,*

shall be a matter for the full Council only.

In addition, the Council must:

- *determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts;*
- *approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and*
- *in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.*

The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

- Chair of the Council (who will not be the Chair of the Committee)
- 5 other members of the Council.

Council members who are not members of the Finance and Grants Committee may attend meetings and speak with the permission of the Chair. They may not vote.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

- The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the Council.
- The Chair of the Council signs the annual accounts and therefore shall not be the Chair of this committee.

QUORUM OF THE COMMITTEE

- At least one third of the total membership of the Committee
- Minimum 3 members.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

- To be held at a time and on a day to be determined by the Committee ideally in April, June, November and January at the Council offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.
- Extra meetings to be held as and when required.

OTHER MATTERS

Members joining this committee must undertake to attend all relevant meetings and all relevant financial and other training to enable them to be adequately equipped to undertake the role.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SHOP LOCAL WORKING GROUP

To discuss with local traders' representatives and other members of the public any matter pertaining to the promotion of local shopping areas including a "Shop Local" campaign, to develop plans and report back to the Council with recommendations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING GROUP

To discuss options relating to Christmas lighting and report back to the Council with recommendations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WELL-BEING WORKING GROUP

To consider how to move forward effectively, in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board's draft Well-being Plan and the Welsh Government Review of the Town and Community Council Sector in Wales, and to come up with a shared vision for the future and specific proposals for future well-being initiatives and report back to the Council with recommendations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

To work with external agencies, examine whether any external grants/funding may be available, examine how ALCC can support existing youth engagement activities, whilst avoiding duplication, formulate proposals for youth engagement initiatives, and report back to the Council with recommendations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE LEISURE AND TOURISM WORKING GROUP

To work with external agencies, examine whether any external grants/funding may be available, examine how ALCC can support existing leisure and tourism activities, whilst avoiding duplication, formulate proposals for a 2019 Party in the Park, a Fun Run, Town in Bloom, a Rugby 7s tournament, public toilets and car parking provision, and report back to the Council with recommendations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SOLAR FARM GRANT WORKING GROUP

To consider the way forward in respect of the Solar Farm Grant for 2019 and future years, take appropriate steps to monitor progress arising from past Solar Farm Grants, and report back to Council with recommendations.

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2019/20

Effective from 20 November 2019

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – ALL COUNCILLORS:	HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - COUNCILLORS:
<u>NB All ALCC councillors are on this Committee:</u> Peter Adamson Michaela Assiratti Vanessa Bartlett Keri Bidgood Gill Clark (Chair of the Council) (and Chair of the Committee) Roger Clark Tracey Dyson Julie Holt Mark Lewis Beverley Lucas Perry Morgan Gary Oakley Tracy Postlethwaite Robert Phillips Allen Rees Nick Simmons Glyn Smith Bernard Wall Graham White	Gill Clark (Chair of the Council) (and Chair of the Committee) Tracey Dyson (Vice-Chair of the Council) Julie Holt Robert Phillips Allen Rees
COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS COMMITTEE	FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE – COUNCILLORS:
4 members to be decided upon by the Chair of the Council and the Clerk, depending on the subject nature of the complaint or appeal	Gill Clark (Chair of the Council) Perry Morgan Gary Oakley - Chair Allen Rees Nick Simmons Glyn Smith
LEISURE AND TOURISM WORKING GROUP – COUNCILLORS:	YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP - COUNCILLORS:
Peter Adamson Michaela Assiratti Keri Bidgood Tracey Dyson - Chair Mark Lewis Beverley Lucas Robert Phillips Tracy Postlethwaite Nick Simmons	Gill Clark Julie Holt Perry Morgan Gary Oakley – Chair Allen Rees Glyn Smith
SHOP LOCAL WORKING GROUP – COUNCILLORS:	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING GROUP – COUNCILLORS:
Peter Adamson Michaela Assiratti Perry Morgan Mark Lewis – Chair Robert Phillips Tracy Postlethwaite	Gill Clark Julie Holt Robert Phillips – Chair Glyn Smith Graham White

WELL-BEING WORKING GROUP – COUNCILLORS:	SOLAR FARM GRANT WORKING GROUP
Peter Adamson Keri Bidgood Gill Clark Tracey Dyson Julie Holt Perry Morgan Gary Oakley Robert Phillips Nick Simmons – Chair Allen Rees Graham White	Peter Adamson Gill Clark - Chair Perry Morgan Gary Oakley Rob Phillips
JOINT COMMITTEES	COUNCILLORS
JOINT COMMITTEE OF LOCAL COUNCILS IN BLAENAU GWENT (5 representatives) (JCLC)	Mark Lewis Perry Morgan Nick Simmons Glyn Smith Bernard Wall
CONSULTATION WITH COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (out of Joint Committee) (2 representatives) (usually Chairman plus one other) + Clerk)	Bernard Wall Nick Simmons Gill Clark (Chair of Council) NB substitutes allowed if required – to be selected from JCLC list above
OUTSIDE BODIES	COUNCILLORS
ONE VOICE WALES GWENT VALLEYS AREA COMMITTEE (2 representatives) NB plus Clerk	Gill Clark Glyn Smith
ONE VOICE WALES LARGER LOCAL COUNCILS COMMITTEE (1 rep) NB plus Clerk	Glyn Smith
ABERTILLERY AND DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION (2 representatives)	Robert Phillips Tracey Dyson
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (1 rep on each)	
St Illtyd's Community Primary Soffrydd Primary Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg	Gill Clark Vacancy Beverley Lucas
ABERTILLERY REGENERATION (2 reps)	Nick Simmons Glyn Smith
BLAENAU GWENT HERITAGE FORUM	Peter Adamson Mark Lewis
BLAENAU GWENT ARMED FORCES COVENANT STEERING GROUP	Tracey Dyson
LOCAL LIST OF BUILDINGS OF INTEREST – ABERTILLERY AND DISTRICT WORKING GROUP	Gill Clark Graham White

ELECTRONIC BANKING: CHANGES TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Report for Council Meeting on 26th February 2020.

The Council resolved at its meeting on 29th January 2020 for the officers to set up Electronic Banking, it additionally resolved “that Financial Regulations are amended if required and are appropriate to allow for electronic banking, and any changes brought back to Council for approval”.

The Council's methods of making payments are detailed in Section 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

The current regulations already allow for electronic banking but there needs to be one small amendment to ensure that there is dual, not a single authority, in the setting up and the administration of an electronic banking system.

The first sentence in Section 6.15 currently states “Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator”.

This should be amended to read. “Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO *and Deputy Clerk* shall be appointed as the *Dual* Service Administrators”. This ensures that administrative authority is not vested in a single person.

Recommendation:

1. That Council **Resolves** to amend the first sentence in section 6.15 of the Council's Financial Regulations to read.

Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO and Deputy Clerk shall be appointed as the Dual Service Administrators.



Clerk Clerk <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

LDP Preferred Strategy 2018-2033

1 message

Nick Simmons <nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com>

10 February 2020 at 20:22

To: Tracy Postlethwaite <tracypostlethwaite.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracey Dyson <traceydyson.alcc@gmail.com>, Allen Rees <allenrees.ALCC@gmail.com>, Beverley Lucas <beverleylucas.alcc@gmail.com>, Clerk ALCC <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>, Gary Oakley <garyoakley.alcc@gmail.com>, Gill Clark <gillclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Glyn Smith <glynsmith.alcc@gmail.com>, Graham White <grahamwhite.alcc@gmail.com>, Julie Holt <julieholt.alcc@gmail.com>, Keri Bidgood <keribidgood.alcc@gmail.com>, Mark Lewis <marklewis.alcc@gmail.com>, Nick Simmons <nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com>, Perry Morgan <perrymorgan.alcc@gmail.com>, Peter Adamson <peteradamson.alcc@gmail.com>, Rob Phillips <robphillips.alcc@gmail.com>, Roger Clark <rogerclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Michaela Assiratti <michaelaassiratti.alcc@gmail.com>, Vanessa Bartlett <vanessabartlett.alcc@gmail.com>

Good evening All

I Agreed at the last council meeting to list the areas of the above which has relevance to ALCC. Attached is that, you will have to refer it to the Preferred Strategy document.

Please feel free to ask any questions about anything I have listed. We are now into the 6 week consultation. Then it will be unchallenged and become the plan. (Also attached)

chers
nick

Cllr Nick Simmons
Abertillery Ward Councillor
Wales Well-being Act Working Group Chairman
Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com
07671624979

*NB Preferred Strategy &
other documents sent
out by email 24 and
20 January 2020*

2 attachments

2018-33 LDP.docx
13K

Full_Doc_Prefered_Strategy_English.pdf
10218K

The Summary of the preferred strategy is a general overview of the whole borough the only way you can get the effect over our area is drill down into the Proffered strategy document it self

Page 11 Par 2.33

Page 16 Par 3.6

Page 17 Par 3.7

Page 18 Par 3.14 3.15 3.16

Page 19 Par 4.2

Page 23 Par 4.6 4.7 4.8

Page 24 Par

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Page 76 Par



Clerk Clerk <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

Fwd: For information and sharing

1 message

Clerk ALCC <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

24 January 2020 at 12:04

To: Allen Rees <allenrees.ALCC@gmail.com>, Beverley Lucas <beverleylucas.alcc@gmail.com>, Gary Oakley <garyoakley.alcc@gmail.com>, Gill Clark <gillclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Glyn Smith <glynsmith.alcc@gmail.com>, Graham White <grahamwhite.alcc@gmail.com>, Julie Holt <julieholt.alcc@gmail.com>, Keri Bidgood <keribidgood.alcc@gmail.com>, Mark Lewis <marklewis.alcc@gmail.com>, Michaela Assiratti <michaelaassiratti.alcc@gmail.com>, Nick Simmons <nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com>, Perry Morgan <perrymorgan.alcc@gmail.com>, Peter Adamson <peteradamson.alcc@gmail.com>, Rob Phillips <robphillips.alcc@gmail.com>, Roger Clark <rogerclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracey Dyson <traceydyson.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracy Postlethwaite <tracypostlethwaite.alcc@gmail.com>, Vanessa Bartlett <vanessabartlett.alcc@gmail.com>

Dear members

I included the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy summary leaflet in the papers for Council on 29 January. I sent you an email about this on 20 January. There are several documents of many hundreds of pages, so if you wish to comment on the detail of the preferred strategy, please have a look online at those documents. There is a further link here to all the information, which I trust you find helpful.

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/planning/local-development-plan/local-development-plan-2018-2033/preferred-strategy-pre-deposit-stage/>

If you propose that the Council as a whole comments on the detail, please come to the meeting on 29 January with the relevant sections of the relevant documents, so that all members can see what you are referring to. If you bring copies into the office in advance, we can of course photocopy them for you.

Best wishes

Richard Gwinnell
Town Clerk
Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery. NP13 1AE.
(Telephone 01495 217323)

Fwd: Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy Consultation / Ymgynghoriad ar y Strategaeth a Ffefrir ar gyfer Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd Blaenau Gwent 2018-2033

1 message

Clerk ALCC <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

20 January 2020 at 09:50

To: Allen Rees <allenrees.ALCC@gmail.com>, Beverley Lucas <beverleylucas.alcc@gmail.com>, Gary Oakley <garyoakley.alcc@gmail.com>, Gill Clark <gillclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Glyn Smith <glynsmith.alcc@gmail.com>, Graham White <grahamwhite.alcc@gmail.com>, Julie Holt <julieholt.alcc@gmail.com>, Keri Bidgood <keribidgood.alcc@gmail.com>, Mark Lewis <marklewis.alcc@gmail.com>, Michaela Assiratti <michaelaassiratti.alcc@gmail.com>, Nick Simmons <nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com>, Perry Morgan <perrymorgan.alcc@gmail.com>, Peter Adamson <peteradamson.alcc@gmail.com>, Rob Phillips <robphillips.alcc@gmail.com>, Roger Clark <rogerclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracey Dyson <traceydyson.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracy Postlethwaite <tracypostlethwaite.alcc@gmail.com>, Vanessa Bartlett <vanessabartlett.alcc@gmail.com>

Dear members

Please see below an email from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, announcing their consultation on the Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Local Development Plan. They are consulting on the preferred strategy and associated documents from 16 January to 27 February 2020.

The email from BGCBC contains links to various documents, comment forms and online surveys.

I will put this on the Council agenda on 29 January for a whole Council response (if Council as a whole wishes to respond).

In the meantime, please have a look at the documents. You can respond as individual councillors if you wish.

BGCBC are also holding consultation events if you wish to attend as follows:

Timetable of Events

Location	Date and Time
Ebbw Vale Library	Thursday 30th January 13.30-17.30
21 Bethcar Street, Ebbw Vale NP23 6HH	Friday 31st January 9:00-13:00
Abertillery Metropole	Thursday 6th February 13.30-17.30
Mitre Street, Abertillery	Friday 7th February 9:00-13:00
Tredegar Indoor Market	Thursday 13th February 12.30-16.30

Gwent Shopping Centre, Tredegar NP22 3EJ	Friday 14 th February 9:00-13:00
Brynmawr Learning Action Centre 8 Market Square, Brynmawr NP23 4AJ	Thursday 20 th February 13.30-17.30 Friday 21 st February 9:00-13:00
Civic Centre Municipal Offices, Ebbw Vale NP23 6XB	Wednesday 19 th February 15:00-19:00

Best wishes

Richard Gwinnell
Town Clerk
Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery. NP13 1AE.
(Telephone 01495 217323)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <Hayley.Spender@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk>

Date: Wed, 15 Jan 2020 at 15:39

Subject: Blaenau Gwent Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy Consultation / Ymgynghoriad ar y Strategaeth a Ffefrir ar gyfer Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd Blaenau Gwent 2018-2033

To:

I am writing to inform you of the commencement of a six-week public consultation period on the Preferred Strategy for the Replacement Local Development Plan. The consultation period runs from Thursday 16th January to Thursday 27th February 2020. The Council would welcome your views.

The Preferred Strategy and supporting Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment documents are subject to consultation and are available to view and download by clicking on this link. Should you wish to make any comments on the documents, we would be grateful if you could complete the corresponding comment forms which are also available via the link. Alternatively you can comment on the preferred strategy via a detailed online survey which is available via this link.

A summary leaflet of the Preferred Strategy document which is a shorter and simpler version is available by clicking here. You can comment on this summary leaflet via a comment form or an online survey which can be accessed via this link.

Hard copies of all of the above documents are available to view during opening hours at all local libraries, the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale and Anvil Court, Abertillery.

Please note that the background evidence in the form of a series of background papers and supporting documents are also being made available for information by clicking [here](#).

We are holding a number of consultation events across the County Borough where you can speak to a planning officer. Click [here](#) for further details.

If you should have any queries regarding the aforementioned or indeed any aspect of the Replacement Local Development Plan, please do not hesitate to contact the team on (01495) 355538 or 354740 alternatively email planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Ysgrifennaf atoch chi i'ch hysbysu am gychwyn cyfnod ymgynghori chwe wythnos ar y Strategaeth a Ffeirir ar gyfer Cynllun Datblygu Lleol Newydd. Mae'r cyfnod ymgynghori'n rhedeg o Ddydd Iau Ionawr 16 tan Ddydd Iau Chwefror 27, 2020. Byddai'r cyngor yn croesawu eich barn.

Ymgynghorir ar y Strategaeth a Ffeirir ac ar yr Adroddiad Gwerthusiad Cynladwyedd Integredig ac Asesiad Rheoleiddio Cynefinoedd sydd yn gefnogol iddi ac maent ar gael i'w gweld a'u lawrlwytho trwy glicio ar y ddolen hon. Os hoffech gynnig unrhyw sylwadau ar y dogfennau, byddem yn ddiolchgar petaech chi'n cwblhau'r ffurflenni sylwadau cyfatebol sydd hefyd ar gael trwy'r ddolen. Fel arall, cewch gynnig sylwadau ar y strategaeth a ffeirir trwy arolwg ar-lein manwl sydd ar gael ar y ddolen hon.

Mae taflen sy'n grynodeb o'r ddogfen Strategaeth a Ffeirir sydd yn fersiwn fyrrach ac yn symlach ar gael trwy glicio yma. Cewch gynnig sylwadau ar y daflen o grynodeb ar ffurflen sylwadau neu trwy arolwg ar-lein y gellir cael hyd iddynt trwy'r ddolen hon.

Mae copïau celyd o'r holl ddogfennau uchod ar gael i'w gweld yn ystod oriau agor ym mop llyfrgell leol, yn y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Glyn Ebwy ac yn Llys yr Eingion, Abertyleri.

Noder os gwelwch yn dda fod y dystiolaeth gefndirol ar ffurf cyfres o bapurau cefndir a dogfennau cefnogol hefyd ar gael er gwybodaeth trwy glicio yma.

Rydym yn cynnal nifer o ddigwyddiadau ymgynghori ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol lle cewch siarad â swyddog cynllunio. Clicier yma am ragor o fanylion.

Os oes gennych unrhyw ymholiadau ynglŷn â'r uchod neu yn wir ynghylch unrhyw agwedd ar y Cynllun Datblygu Lleol newydd, na phetruser rhag cysylltu â'r tîm ar (01495) 355538 neu 354740 neu fel arall drwy e-bostio planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Kind Regards

Hayley

Prif Swyddog Cynllunio / Principal Planning Officer

Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent / Blaenau Gwent County Borough council

Llawr 1a / Floor 1a

Swyddfydd Bwrdeisiol / Municipal Offices

Canolfan Dinesig / Civic Centre

Glyn Ebwy / Ebbw Vale

NP23 6XB

Ffon / Telephone: 01495 355538

E-bost / Email: hayley.spender@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu yn y ddwy iaith. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r neges ebost hon, ynghyd ag unrhyw ffeiliau sydd ynghlwm wrthi, yn gyfrinachol ac at ddefnydd yr unigolyn neu sefydliad y cyfeiriwyd hi ato. Pe dderbynioch y neges hon mewn camgymeriad, byddwch mor garedig a rhoi gwybod i'r rheolwr system. Mae'r nodyn hwn hefyd yn cadarnhau bod y neges ebost hon wedi cael ei archwilio am bresenoldeb feirws cyfrifiadurol.

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify the system manager.

This e-mail also confirms that this e-mail message has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.



Clerk Clerk <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

Fwd: FW: Consultation on future audit arrangements for Community Councils in Wales / Ymgynghoriad ar Trefniadau Archwilio yn y Dyfodol ar gyfer Cyngorau Cymunedol yng Nghymru

1 message

Clerk ALCC <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

11 February 2020 at 09:47

To: Allen Rees <allenrees.ALCC@gmail.com>, Beverley Lucas <beverleylucas.alcc@gmail.com>, Gary Oakley <garyoakley.alcc@gmail.com>, Gill Clark <gillclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Glyn Smith <glynsmith.alcc@gmail.com>, Graham White <grahamwhite.alcc@gmail.com>, Julie Holt <julieholt.alcc@gmail.com>, Keri Bidgood <keribidgood.alcc@gmail.com>, Mark Lewis <marklewis.alcc@gmail.com>, Michaela Assiratti <michaelaassiratti.alcc@gmail.com>, Nick Simmons <nicksimmons.alcc@gmail.com>, Perry Morgan <perrymorgan.alcc@gmail.com>, Peter Adamson <peteradamson.alcc@gmail.com>, Rob Phillips <robphillips.alcc@gmail.com>, Roger Clark <rogerclark.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracey Dyson <traceydyson.alcc@gmail.com>, Tracy Postlethwaite <tracypostlethwaite.alcc@gmail.com>, Vanessa Bartlett <vanessabartlett.alcc@gmail.com>

All

Please see the message below that has come to use from the Wales Audit Office via One Voice Wales. I know that accounts and audits are not the most riveting of subjects, but this is very important as whatever decisions the WAO make will have an impact on us. I attach the consultation document. Please read the attached. Anyone can comment as individuals but Council could decided at the next meeting to also respond as Council as well.

Regards

Steve Edwards
Deputy Clerk
Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery. NP13 1AE.
(Telephone 01495 217323)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Tracy Gilmartin-Ward <tgilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales>

Date: Thu, 6 Feb 2020 at 11:39

Subject: FW: Consultation on future audit arrangements for Community Councils in Wales / Ymgynghoriad ar Trefniadau Archwilio yn y Dyfodol ar gyfer Cyngorau Cymunedol yng Nghymru
To: Tracy Gilmartin-Ward <tgilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales>

For your information and attention / Er eich gwybodaeth a'ch sylw

From: Michelle Stephens <Michelle.Stephens@audit.wales>

Sent: 06 February 2020 10:18

Subject: Consultation on future audit arrangements for Community Councils in Wales

Mae'r neges hon yn ddwyieithog. Darlennwch y fersiwn Saesneg isod.

This communication is bilingual. Read the English version below

Ymgynghoriad ar Trefniadau Archwilio yn y Dyfodol ar gyfer Cyngorau Cymunedol yng Nghymru

Mae'n ofynnol i'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol archwilio cyfrifon blynyddol pob cyngor cymunedol a thref yng Nghymru.

O 2020-21 ymlaen, rydym yn cynnig rhaglen archwilio tair blynedd sydd wedi'i chynllunio i fodloni cyfrifoldebau statudol wrth ddarparu lefel ddigonol o sicrwydd archwilio am gost resymol.

Mae'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol yn ceisio barn parhau â diddordeb ar y trefniadau archwilio arfaethedig.

Oes gennych chi brofiad neu wybodaeth am archwilio cyngorau cymunedol a thref yng Nghymru? Hoffem glywed gennych.

Sut i ymateb

Rydym yn eich gwahodd i rannu eich barn ac rydym wedi darparu [mwy o wybodaeth a linc i'n arolwg ar ein gwefan.](#)

Y dyddiad cau ar gyfer ymatebion yw **Dydd Iau 19 Mawrth 2020.**

Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau am yr ymgynghoriad, e-bostiwch post@archwilio.cymru

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru / Wales Audit Office

www.audit.wales

Rydych chi'n cael yr e-fwletin hwn gan fod angen inni gyfathrebu â chi i roi cyhoeddusrwydd i'n gwaith yn rhinwedd ein pwerau atodol, o dan adrannau 9 a 14 Deddf Archwilio Cyhoeddus (Cymru) 2013, sy'n ymwneud â pherfformio tasg er budd y cyhoedd.

Consultation on Future Audit Arrangements for Community Councils in Wales

The Auditor General is required to audit the annual accounts of all community and town councils in Wales.

From 2020-21 onwards, we propose a three-year audit programme which is designed to meet statutory responsibilities while providing a sufficient level of audit assurance at a reasonable cost.

The Auditor General is seeking the views of interested parties on the proposed audit arrangements.

Do you have experience or information about the audit of community and town councils in Wales? We would like to hear from you.

How to respond

We invite your views and have provided [more information with a link to our survey on our website](#).

The deadline for responses is **Thursday 19 March 2020**.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please email info@audit.wales.

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru / Wales Audit Office

www.audit.wales

You are receiving this e-bulletin because we need to communicate with you to publicise our work in exercise of our supplementary powers, under sections 9 and 14 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013, which is in the performance of a task in the public interest.

Mae'r e-bost hwn ac unrhyw ffeiliau atodedig yn breifat. Os nad atoch chi y bwriadwyd anfon yr e-bost hwn dylech ddinistrio pob copi a hysbysu'r anfonwr drwy anfon e-bost yn ôl atynt.

Am fwy o wybodaeth am Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru a manylion am ffyrdd eraill o gysylltu â ni, ewch i'n gwefan www.archwilio.cymru

Mae Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb yn yr iaith rydych chi wedi ei defnyddio. Rhowch wybod os yr hoffech dderbyn gohebiaeth gennym yn Gymraeg yn y dyfodol. Ni fydd gohebu'n Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Os byddwch yn mynychu cyfarfod yn Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru, rhowch wybod i'r trefnydd os yr hoffech gyfrannu i'r cyfarfod yn Gymraeg.

This email and any attached files is private. If you are not the intended recipient please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return email.

For further information on the Wales Audit Office and details of other ways to contact us please visit our website at www.audit.wales.

The Wales Audit Office welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English and we will respond to you in the language you have used. Please let us know if you would like to receive future correspondence from us in Welsh. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

If you are attending a meeting at the Wales Audit Office, please let the organiser know if you would like to contribute to the meeting in Welsh.

 **future audit arrangements.pdf**
736K



Clerk Clerk <clerk.alcc@gmail.com>

FW: Membership of One Voice Wales 2020-2021 – Renewal of Membership Details / Aelodaeth Un Llais Cymru 2020-2021 – Adnewyddu Manylion Aelodaeth

1 message

Tracy Gilmartin-Ward <tgilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales>
To: Tracy Gilmartin-Ward <tgilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales>

10 February 2020 at 14:43

Dear Clerk

Membership of One Voice Wales 2020/21 – Renewal of Membership details

I would be grateful if you could bring the details of this email and associated attachments to the attention of your Chair and Council members as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT - Your Invoice/Membership form has been posted out separately - this is due to the fact that they have to be processed via mail merge because each council has a different number of dwellings and price for membership.

To assist your Chair and members on the benefits of membership of One Voice Wales I have included the following documents for their information and attention:

A letter giving details of what One Voice Wales have been up to on your behalf during the 2019/20 financial year

A Frequently Asked Questions Leaflet in relation to the work of One Voice Wales

It is important your members have sight of these documents to appreciate the breadth of work that One Voice Wales carries out on behalf of the Community and Town Council sector in Wales and also to have a full appreciation of the services available to member Councils.

The staff, National Executive Committee, Area Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Training Associates and Associate Consultants and I look forward to working with your Council during 2020/21.

Kind regards,

Lyn

Chief Executive

One Voice Wales	Un Llais Cymru
24c College Street	24c Stryd y Coleg
Ammanford	Rhydaman
Carmarthenshire	Sir Gaerfyrddin
SA18 3AF	SA18 3AF

Tel/Ffon 01269 595400

Fax/Ffacs 01269 598510

Website: www.onevoicewales.org.uk / Gwefan: www.unllaiscymru.org.uk

The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales - Llais Cyngorau Cymuned a Thref yng Nghymru

2 attachments



Schedule of Frequently Asked Questions General Version.pdf
157K



Membership Letter 2020-21.doc
241K

Dear Clerk

Please bring this letter to the attention of your Chair and Councillors.

Membership of One Voice Wales 2020/21

I am writing to invite your council to renew its membership to join One Voice Wales from April 2020. Once again, the past year has seen many positive developments to our services, many of which are outlined in this letter, which we believe add significantly to the value for money offered by One Voice Wales membership.

We continue to represent the sector on the **Local Government Partnership Council** – during 2019-20 we have made strong representation on the role the sector can play in supporting sustainable local services and supporting the Local Government Reform agenda – indeed One Voice Wales provided a comprehensive response to the Local Government and Elections Bill consultation. We have developed even stronger working relationships with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) strengthening the voice of the sector within the public services family in Wales. One Voice Wales continued to make significant contributions to public policy developments through our representation on several Welsh Government advisory panels including the **National Assets Working Group**, the **External Advisory Group on Community Asset Transfer**, **Welsh Government Community Resilience Forum** addressing issues of community resilience, **Welsh Government Litter Advisory Panel**, **Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing**, **Electoral Reform Board**, **NAfW Cross Party Group on Fuel Poverty** and the **National Training and Advisory Group**. One Voice Wales is playing an ever increasing role in the development resources for the sector and during the year has represented the sector on the **Understanding Welsh Places** Advisory Group which has developed a data and information resource for community and town councils with a population greater than 1,000 people – launched in October 2019. We continue to work collaboratively with a range of other bodies including the **Local Government Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales**, **Independent Remuneration Panel**, **Public Services Ombudsman** and **Wales Audit Office**. So, our ability to influence key stakeholder organisations continues to grow.

There are exciting and challenging times ahead for Community and Town Councils in Wales and we will continue to develop our lobbying and representational roles especially in relation to the outcomes of the **Local Government and Elections Bill**. Work has already begun with Welsh Government and WLGA colleagues in developing actions to address the key findings and this will continue into our 2020/21 work programme.

Our representational role means that **we have direct interface not only with the Minister for Local Government and Housing but other Ministers** where our sector's remit extends. During 2019-20 we made several representations to the **Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services** on a range of matters but importantly on the need for greater resources for the sector, the need for skills and capabilities to be developed, devolution of services and asset transfer agenda. During 2019-20 we have extended our

Llais Cyngorau Cymuned a Thref yng Nghymru - The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales

representational role - One Voice Wales' many Councillors across Wales are increasingly able to provide their views on a wide range of policy areas to support our lobbying activities and **influence government and stakeholder organisations** in their decision-making. This includes representation on health trust stakeholder forums and several **Public Services Boards**. These developments have improved and further developed our representational and lobbying roles and we will seek to further develop them in 2020-21.

Some of our other accomplishments over the past 12 months include:

- Hannah Blythyn Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government attended our National Conference, we held our second newly named **Innovative Practice Conference** in July 2019 and our **7th joint training conference** with the **SLCC** (Society of Local Council Clerks)
- Held our **3rd National Awards scheme and Innovative Practice Conference**.
- **Area Committees** continue to play an influential role locally, with many appointments to Public Service Boards, Local Development Plan Stakeholder Groups, Rural Development Partnerships, Standards Committees and the like now being proposed by Area Committees. One Voice Wales has become much more visible at the local level

As current members are aware, we provide the following services and we are aware from feedback by our members that all aspects of the service are highly valued.

- **Provision of free legal advice** from a team of experienced Solicitors which can save members significant time and cost compared with using local solicitors for advice (These savings can in many cases exceed the membership that is payable)
- **Quality and timely advice and support service** on topics relevant to member councils.
- **Training** for members and staff, including policy seminars and new working opportunities.
- **General information via our website including a members' area.**
- **Monthly** editions of our new '**E- Newsletter**'
- **Representation** of the sector on the Local Government Partnership Council.
- Creating **new opportunities for collaboration** with national organisations across Wales.

The training and development agenda is another area where much progress has been made during 2019-20. Under the auspices of the **National Training Advisory Group**, chaired by One Voice Wales, we have continued to refine and develop and extend our training provision to the community and town council sector including a successful bid to Welsh Government for support to update and improve the content of our training materials with the development of 7 e-learning modules. Once again, the breadth of our training programmes has been extended and will be available to members throughout the year. During 2019-20 we provided over XXXX units of training to the sector.

Furthermore, our **Consultancy Services** have been growing at a pace with many councils taking advantage of this service. We are increasingly able to provide 'One Stop Shop' solutions for our members and have supported our councils on **community planning exercises, accountancy services, technical VAT advice, HR and personnel matters including representation at Industrial Tribunals**, assisted in **policy development and health and safety** – and at **costs significantly below market rates**. We are also now able to offer consultancy support in relation to community planning and engagement. Please contact the Ammanford Office if you would like further details on how we can support you through these services.

Importantly our role as a representative body has been significantly improved with a significant growth in our membership during 2019-20 – for the first time we broke the 620 councils in membership level and at year end we had 625 local councils in membership or nearly 85% of all community and town councils.

I hope that this summary of current and future developments has demonstrated that One Voice Wales continues to do all it can to represent the sector and provide a high class information and support service for our members.

In order for your council to have a voice in the future of this vital sector of local government, and to benefit from the support provided by One Voice Wales, please complete the Membership Form which will come to you in the post in the next few working days and return to Tracy Gilmartin-Ward at our office in Ammanford.

If you have any further queries relating to membership, please contact the office on 01269 595400 or email: tgilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales

I trust that your Council will give this invitation full consideration and I hope to be able to welcome you into membership shortly. I look forward to working with your council in 2020-2021.

Yours sincerely,



Lyn Cadwallader
Chief Executive

One Voice Wales



Schedule of Frequently Asked Questions

- a) How many member councils are in our membership?
(The current membership of OVW is 613 which represent 83.5% of all Councils in Wales)
- b) On average what do you think the provision of one piece of legal advice would cost the Council if it were to use its own solicitor?
(This will vary depending on the complexity of the issue – it can range from £350 to £700. This needs to be considered when deciding to join OVW).
- c) Did you know that we have a library of legal topic notes and a wealth of intelligence which is vital to Councils?
(As well as a wide range of information available to Councils we also have access to legal topic notes and legal briefings which are available to Councils in relation to specific requests for advice)
- d) You only know what you know, but what are the consequences of not knowing what you should know?
(It is vital that Councils are well informed in order to avoid major pitfalls relating to actions taken without the benefit of appropriate advice).
- e) Did you know that our training and conference fees are cheaper for member councils?
(Member Councils are able to book our training courses at a much reduced price and can benefit considerably from bespoke courses which can be arranged at a much lower price).
- f) Our consultancy fees for HR, Governance, Health and Safety and Community Planning are significantly lower than you will be offered from other providers. Were you aware of this?
(As well as being a lower cost service, we offer the added advantage of having an in depth knowledge of the work of local councils and our work is appropriately tailored to your needs).
- g) How many subject areas do OVW training sessions cover? i.e. not just Code of Conduct so many others
(We offer 23 training modules and are expanding the range of courses as required to meet the needs of our members).
- h) How long does it take on average to provide you with the advice you require?
(The majority of requests for advice are dealt with within 3 working days and in many cases on the same day).

i) Did you know that OVW has a service level agreement with NALC and that we pay an annual fee to enable member councils to gain access to all of their resources including legal advice?

(One Voice Wales pays an annual subscription to NALC that enables us to have access to the legal advice service and legal topic notes/briefings which are essential to provide member councils with a high quality service which is fully appreciated by member councils).

j) Did you know that OVW is in a position to influence the Welsh Government and other public bodies to assist member councils?

(The Chair and Chief Executive are regularly in contact with the Welsh Government and other public bodies giving them a major opportunity to reflect the views of the sector on a wide range of policy areas. They also meet the Local Government Minister on a number of occasions during the year. They have been highly successful in enabling the sector to be prominent in the development and implementation of public policy in Wales).

k) Did you know that Member Councils receive circulation of all relevant documents from other bodies that use OVW as a source for circulation?

(One Voice Wales is widely regarded as the place to go by a wide range of organisations in Wales who wish to gain contact with Councils in Wales. Being a member ensures that you are kept fully informed of all developments and consultations that will be of importance. We send an e-mail bulletin to Councils on a monthly basis containing relevant information for consideration).

l) We organise three Conferences each year with preferential rates for member councils – this provides the opportunity for Councils to meet up with a range of suppliers to the sector)

One Voice Wales
24c College Street
Ammanford
SA18 3AF
01269 595400
admin@onevoicewales.org.uk
www.onevoicewales.org.uk

ONE VOICE WALES
The Voice of Community & Town Councils

Invoice / Membership Form

Please enter all details in block letters and return original form for our records

I write to inform you that my Council has decided to join One Voice Wales for 2020/21

Clerk to the Council

Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss (Delete as applicable)

Signed: Please print name:

Name & Address of Council - Enter any amendments clearly alongside

Mr Richard Gwinnell, Clerk
Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council
District Office
Mitre Street
Abertillery
Blaenau Gwent NP13 1AE

Tel No's: 01495 217323 /

E-mail address: clerk.alcc@gmail.com

Website: www.abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

Please inform us if any of the above details change

Please tick the preferred language for future correspondence:

☐ Welsh

☐ English

☐ Bilingual

Membership Fee: £2624

Based on 7811 chargeable dwellings @ **£0.336p** per dwelling
(Based on Valuation List, not Electoral Register)

Please make cheque payable to One Voice Wales
Bank details - Account number: 16689360 Sort code: 30-94-85

Please return the form to the following address:

One Voice Wales, 24c College Street, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, SA18 3AF

e-mail: tjilmartinward@onevoicewales.wales Tel: 01269 595400 Fax: 01269 598510

