

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2022 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery and via video
conferencing (Zoom).**

PRESENT

Councillors: Gary Oakley (Chair); Nick Simmons (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Roger Clark; Beverley Lucas; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Glyn Smith; Bernard Wall; Graham White.

PRESENT VIA VIDEOLINK

Councillors: Michaela Assiratti; Tracey Dyson; Ben Owen-Jones; Jaqui Ledbury; Mark Lewis; Allen Rees.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk).

161. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies were received from Mihangel ap Williams.

162. ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES – NOTICE OF DECISION

The Clerk informed the Council that, on 20 January 2022, the Adjudication Panel for Wales gave their formal Notice of Decision on a complaint made to the Public Ombudsman regarding Councillor Perry Morgan.

This followed a Case Tribunal that began on 24 November last year and which did not formally end until 20 January 2022.

The Case Tribunal made six findings of fact, including that Councillor Morgan had deliberately ridiculed Councillor Beverley Lucas both during and immediately after the Council meeting of 30 October 2019.

The Case Tribunal also found that Councillor Morgan deliberately attempted to cause difficulties for Councillor Lucas at other meetings.

The Case Tribunal found unanimously that Councillor Morgan had committed five breaches of Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council's Code of Conduct for Members and that Councillor Morgan should be immediately suspended from acting as a member of Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council for a period of 10 months.

The Case Tribunal also made three recommendations to this Council regarding Councillor Morgan. However, he resigned as a community councillor directly following the Adjudication Panel's decision.

The Clerk added that there is an avenue of appeal open to Perry Morgan.

Cllr Roger Clark asked to read a prepared statement regarding the Adjudication Panel decision. The Clerk advised the Chair that this should be refused as contributions or speeches by a Member should relate only to a motion that appeared on the agenda and for which prior notice had been given.

163. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS

None.

164. MINUTES – 15 DECEMBER 2021

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes as a correct record.

165. COMMUNICATIONS

Cllr Ben Owen-Jones told Members that, under the Welsh Language Act 1993, the Council was required to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme, but there is no evidence of its ever having done so. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 gave the Welsh Language Commissioner the power to impose Welsh Language Standards on Community Councils, which it would be wise to anticipate.

In Scotland, it is a legal requirement for public bodies to prepare a British Sign Language (BSL) policy. Many public bodies in England and Wales already have BSL policies and this may become a legal requirement in Wales in the not-too-distant future.

The Council voted £10,000 into the 2022-23 budget for the provision of a new website through a local community initiative, but the Council had no policy, plan or strategy as to what its website requirements actually are. Neither had the Council considered whether the use of Google as its email provider was appropriate or secure.

The Council routinely used email and internet links to share information and to carry on its business, yet it had little or no idea of Members' IT needs or preferences and any consequential training requirements. There was a danger of the Council creating two tiers of Members: those with strong IT skills; and those without.

The Council's protocols regarding use of email, interaction on social media and electronic communication between Members were unclear. The Council had not agreed any protocol for 'hybrid' in-person/online Council meetings or considered whether they necessitated any change to Standing Orders or other procedures.

While the Council agreed a Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy in November 2018, it did not address any of these issues.

Cllr Owen-Jones moved a series of motions.

The Council **RESOLVED** to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme

The Council **RESOLVED** to prepare a British Sign Language Policy

The Council **RESOLVED** to prepare a strategy for its corporate website;

The Council **RESOLVED** to prepare an Acceptable Use of Internet, Email and Social Media Policy.

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint a Communications Working Group:

- to prepare the above scheme, policies and strategy and to recommend them to the Full Council;
- to consider the standards, training and resources required to enable the Council and its Members to communicate effectively, and to make recommendations to the Full Council; and
- to make recommendations to the Full Council about consequent amendments to Standing Orders, the Code of Conduct and other policies and procedures.

The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Tracey Dyson; Mark Lewis; Beverley Lucas; and Ben Owen-Jones to the Communications Working Group.

166. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and Public by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

167. AUDIT WALES REPORT FOR 2015-15

The Clerk informed Council that the remainder of the meeting would involve discussion of legal advice that was protected by both legal advice privilege and litigation privilege.

Full minutes of this agenda item are contained in Confidential Annex FC1-2022.

168. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23 February 2022.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair.....

Minutes produced by David Cartwright, Clerk.

Draft