

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 25 MAY 2022 AT 7.00pm  
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors:** Nick Simmons (Chair); Tracey Dyson (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Michaela Assiratti; Roger Clark; Ben Owen-Jones; Beverley Lucas; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Josh Rawcliffe; Bernard Wall; Mariola Walters; Graham White.

**Apologies:** Glyn Smith

**Officers:** David Cartwright (Clerk)

**Other:** Mr Stuart Gould

**23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES**

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Glyn Smith. The Chair welcomed Mr Stuart Gould, who attended the meeting as a member of the public.

**24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS**

Barrie Page declared a personal interest in Item 30 as he knew the person who had submitted the application on behalf of Brynithel RFC.

**25. MINUTES**

**27 APRIL 2022**

Graham White stated that he and two other members had abstained during all three votes on the Accounts and Annual Return for 2020-21 but that this had not been recorded in the minutes. The Clerk replied that, under the Council's Standing Orders, a request for votes to be recorded must be made at the time the vote is taken. If such a request is made, the minutes should show how each Member present had voted.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of 27 April 2022 as a correct record.

**ANNUAL MEETING 11 MAY 2022**

Roger Clark noted that the out-going Chair had urged the Council to work as equal partners with the new borough councillors for Abertillery and Six Bells. Cllr Clark reminded members that the Community Council area covered three borough council wards served by seven borough councillors and he believed that the Community Council should seek to work with them all equally.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of 11 May 2022 as a correct record.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to Item 19 in the minutes of the Annual Meeting, which recorded that Graham White had questioned whether the Chair of the Council should be chair of other committees. The Clerk had replied that the Council's Standing Orders, when referring to committees and sub-committees state that "the Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at the meeting." The Clerk reported that he was at least the fourth officer to give this advice at a meeting of the Full Council or its committees. Nevertheless, he had subsequently checked this clause back to when the Standing Orders were first adopted and it was clear that it should apply only to meetings of the Full Council. Another Standing Order stipulates that the Chair of the Council automatically becomes Chair of the HR Committee and that the Full Council,

if it so wishes, can appoint the Chair of the Finance and Grants Committee. However, other committees were free to appoint their own chair, whether or not the Chair of the Council was present at the committee meeting. Therefore, the Clerk's advice had been wrong and Cllr White had been right. Cllr White received a spontaneous round of applause from Members of the Council.

**26. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE**

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise Members of the Finance and Grants Committee to appoint a chair of that committee.

**27. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES – BEN OWEN-JONES**

Ben Owen-Jones proposed the motion that:

*This Council instructs its officers to immediately inform the Returning Officer of five vacancies on the Council and to request to begin the process for co-options immediately.*

Cllr Owen-Jones stated that the Community Council has been allotted 19 council seats because that was the number deemed necessary, under the Local Government Act, to carry on the business of the Council and to fully represent the interests of the local community. If the Council failed to take action as soon as possible to fill its five vacancies, not only would its local communities be under-represented, it would be open to public and political criticism for restricting membership of the Council. If the Council began the process to co-opt additional members immediately, the forthcoming Party in the Park event would offer an ideal opportunity to solicit applications from prospective co-optees, especially younger people.

The Vice Chair urged Members to allow time for the newly-elected Council to settle in and work cooperatively before looking to co-opt additional Members. She also questioned whether it would be prudent for the Council to seek to co-opt five new Members at once. She was supported by Graham White, Bernard Law and the Chair who all questioned why anyone seeking to join the Council had not stood in the Council elections held less than three weeks previously. Rob Phillips questioned the need to begin the co-option process immediately as the summer break meant any new Members would be unlikely to attend their first Council meeting until late September.

The Chair expressed his intention to propose an amendment that would commit the Council to filling its vacancies in 'a staged manner' over a period of time.

Cllr Owen-Jones withdrew his motion.

Roger Clark urged Members to pass details of anyone who expressed a sincere interest in becoming a community councillor to the Clerk. The Vice Chair and Cllr Owen-Jones suggested that the Council should solicit such expressions of interest at the forthcoming Party in the Park event. Cllr Wall and Peter Adamson urged the Council to solicit expressions of interest more widely, including via the Council website.

The Clerk undertook to keep Members abreast of the extent of any expressions of interest to help them gauge when they would wish to return to the issue of co-options to fill Council vacancies.

**28. SINGLE-USE PLASTICS – BARRIE PAGE**

Barry Page proposed the motion that:

*This Council shall adopt the proposed Single-use Plastics Policy.*

Cllr Page stated that the Community Council could not expect the local community to take a responsible attitude towards the issue if it did not take the lead. The proposed policy sought an approach that was practical, reasonable and feasible.

Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Single-use Plastics Policy and **RESOLVED** that responsibility and authority for its implementation shall be delegated to the PlaCE Committee.

**29. PAPERLESS MEETINGS – BARRIE PAGE**

Barry Page proposed the motion that:

*This Council instructs its officers to provide an environmental and financial cost/benefit analysis, on or before 27 July 2022, of moving to paperless council meetings.*

Cllr Page stated that the manufacture of paper involved high energy usage and that the printing of paper documents for Council meetings was costly. He was not seeking to force individual Members into adopting laptops or tablets against their will. He wanted the Council to investigate how it could reasonably help those Members who would like to go paperless to do so.

Peter Adamson proposed an amendment to:

*Delete the words "...instructs its officers..." and insert "...instructs the PlaCE Committee..."*

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the amendment.

Council **RESOLVED** to instruct the PlaCE Committee to provide an environmental and financial cost/benefit analysis, on or before 27 July 2022, of moving to paperless council meetings.

**30. COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION**

Roger Clark stated that Brynithel RFC was important to the local area and that, by supporting the club's Platinum Jubilee event, the Council would help the club to promote its facilities to the local community. The Vice Chair added that she recognised that the community of Brynithel sometimes felt itself to be forgotten by the Council.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise a grant of £799.20 to Brynithel RFC.

**31. NEXT MEETING**

29 June 2022

The meeting ended at 8.16 pm.

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

*Minutes produced by David Cartwright, Clerk.*