

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 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; Roger Clark; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Josh Rawcliffe; Glyn Smith; Bernard Wall; Mariola Walters; Graham White

**Officers:** David Cartwright (Clerk)

**BY VIDEOLINK**

**Other:** Mr Mark Lewis

**Apologies:** Michaela Assiratti.

**43. APOLOGIES AND WELCOMES**

Apologies were received from Michaela Assiratti due to illness.

The Chair welcomed Mr Mark Lewis of Cwmtillery who attended the meeting via Zoom videolink as a member of the public.

**44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS**

Barrie Page and Josh Rawcliffe both declared a personal interest in item 51a) as both had taken part in voluntary activity at Aberbeeg Community Centre and knew Pat Tovey who had submitted a grant application on behalf of Aberbeeg Tenants and Residents Association.

**45. MINUTES – 27 JULY 2022**

The Council **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes were a true and correct record of the meeting.

**46. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE 2022-23**

Graham White asked why the Council still had no internal auditor when it had resolved to appoint a firm at a meeting in April 2021. The Clerk confirmed that, following the resignation of its previous internal auditor, the Council had resolved to appoint IAC Audit for a period of twelve months from April 2021 in order to carry out the internal audit of its accounts for 2020-21. However, those accounts had not been closed down until April 2022. No letter of engagement or contract with IAC Audit was entered into by the Council and the twelve-month period covered by the resolution of April 2021 had now lapsed.

The Council **RESOLVED** to refer internal audit arrangements for its accounts to the Finance and Grants Committee.

The Clerk noted that Beverley Lucas, who had resigned as a Member of the Council in July, had been one of the Council's four cheque signatories.

The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise Nick Simmons to sign Council cheques.

#### **47. FINANCIAL AUTHORISATIONS**

- a) The Vice-Chair reported that St Michael's Church in Abertillery, which had traditionally hosted the Council's annual carol concert free of charge, was now unable to stage the event. A suitable alternative venue had been found in the shape of The Met but a hire fee would be required.

The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise the transfer of £500 from the People and Communities Committee's Outdoor Cinema Event budget to its Musical Concerts budget.

- b) The Vice-Chair explained that the People and Communities Committee had concluded that the standard of acts and amusements at the Council's Party in the Park events in previous years would have been improved had it been able to secure bookings several months in advance.

The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise expenditure by the People and Communities Committee of up to £5,000 on a Party in the Park event for 2023 during the financial year 2022-23.

#### **48. COUNCIL VACANCIES**

Rob Phillips noted that there had been little appetite to seek to fill vacancies on the Council immediately following the elections of May 2022. The new Council had now bedded in and he believed that it was time for the Council to endeavour to fill all of its vacancies.

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to immediately inform the Returning Officer of six vacancies on the Council and, where necessary, to give public notice of those vacancies.
- b) The Council **RESOLVED**, should no election be called, to instruct officers to immediately carry out the policy and procedure for co-opting new councillors and to bring resultant applications to the earliest scheduled meeting of the Council.

The Vice-Chair said that she believed that the Council should be discerning and co-opt only those applicants who would be willing to play an active role in the Council's work and not just be 'bums on seats' in Council meetings.

#### **49. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY**

The Chair noted that the Town in Bloom Working Group had identified some small parcels of land owned by Blaenau Gwent Council where the environmental benefit could be greatly improved with only a small investment. The PlaCE Committee had no proposals as yet but wanted to be able to consider transferring some of these sites to the Community Council's ownership.

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

#### **50. DEFIBRILLATORS**

The Clerk noted that, while the Council had supported the provision of defibrillators in the community for a number of years, it had never agreed a strategy to guide its decision-making and budget allocation.

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Automated External Defibrillator Policy.

**51. COUNCIL GRANTS**

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £600 to Aberbeeg Tenants and Residents Association to help fund the lowering of a kerb to improve access for wheelchair users and other people with mobility issues.

Barrie Page and Josh Rawcliffe both remained in the chamber for this item but neither took part in the debate or cast a vote.

- b) The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £500 to Abertillery Piranhas Swimming Club to help fund the purchase of a diving block.
- c) The Council **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £300 to Zion Miners Chapel to help fund the running costs of its community and special interest groups.

Mr Mark Lewis left the meeting at 7.59 pm.

**52. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Council **RESOLVED** that, by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public would be excluded from discussions on the following item 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.

**53. RECORDINGS OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The Clerk informed the Council that he had refused to release a recording of the Council meeting of 22 July 2022 to Graham White on the grounds that it would be likely to constitute the unlawful publication of personal data, a breach of confidence that would be actionable in law and the publication of defamatory matter. Cllr White had pointed out that the Council had resolved on 28 April 2021 to have video recordings of Council meetings published on the Council’s website. The Clerk invited the Council to reconsider that resolution.

The Council **RESOLVED** that a video recording of a Council meeting may be published on the Council’s website. If the video is not published, it shall be deleted once the minutes of the meeting are agreed as a correct record.

The Clerk reminded Members that they were, collectively, the Council’s officers’ employer. Members had every right to express concerns to the Council’s HR Committee about the conduct, performance or professional standards of officers. However, if a Member personally disparaged or insulted a Council officer – or made allegations of lying, dishonesty or criminality by a Council officer – in a public forum such as a Council meeting, it could be regarded as harassment or bullying in the workplace. Both the Member concerned and the Council as a whole could also be open to being sued for defamation.

The Vice-Chair left the meeting at 8.27 pm and returned at 8.28 pm.

**54. Date of next meeting**

26 October 2022

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm.

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