

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Tracey Dyson (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Steve Bard; Roger Clark; Chris Hill; Ben Owen-Jones; Barrie Page; Allen Rees; Bernard Wall; and Graham White.

Via Videolink: Josh Rawcliffe and Mariola Walters.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk)

Other: Mark Lewis

Apologies: Nick Simmons (Chair); Michaela Assiratti; Rob Phillips; Deb Pitt; and Glyn Smith.

94. APOLOGIES AND WELCOMES

Apologies were received from Nick Simmons (Chair); Michaela Assiratti; Rob Phillips; Deb Pitt; and Glyn Smith.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair presided over the meeting.

The Clerk informed Members that, following a change in work circumstances, Tom Langley-Noel had resigned from the Council.

The Vice Chair welcomed former-community councillor Mr Mark Lewis of Cwmtillery who attended the meeting as a member of the public.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS

None.

96. MINUTES – 25 JANUARY 2023

Barrie Page noted that The Council had resolved to reduce the 'Christmas lights overhaul and maintenance' budget line from £20,000 to £15,000 and not as stated in the draft minutes. The Clerk stated that he had checked a recording of the meeting and his contemporaneous minutes, which confirmed that Cllr Page was correct.

The Council **RESOLVED** that, subject to that amendment, the minutes were a true and correct record.

97. FINANCIAL REPORT AND AUDIT UPDATE

The Clerk reported that officers had met a Senior Auditor from Audit Wales on Friday 17 February to go through specific details of the Council's accounts for 2020-21 and 2021-22. A meeting with the internal auditor had been fixed for Friday 3 March to discuss arrangements for the 2022-23 accounts.

The Council noted the financial report.

Steve Bard proposed that finance orders be regularly presented to the Full Council. The Clerk noted that Full Council had delegated the management of the majority of its budgets to officers or to committees, which undertook scrutiny of expenditure and had the authority to approve payments.

The Council **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to present finance orders to the Council on a quarterly basis.

98. BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURE – PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Vice Chair – the Chair of the People and Communities Committee – explained that items such as venue and transport hire for the planned Community Summer Cinema Events needed to be pre-booked. This expenditure may need to take place in the financial year 2022-23. The Committee had unspent funds available but required the Full Council's approval to use these funds for expenditure in 2022-23 in respect of events that will not take place until the financial year 2023-24. An additional transfer of some of the unspent funds to the Committee's Musical Concerts budget would remove the possibility of the forthcoming St David's Day concert generating a small overspend.

Allen Rees sought an assurance that total expenditure on the planned Community Summer Cinema Events would not be inflated as a result of any budgetary movements. The Vice Chair replied that the People and Communities Committee had already resolved that total expenditure on the 2023 community summer cinema events would not exceed the £10,000 budget approved by Full Council at its meeting on 25 January 2022 regardless of the financial year in which elements of expenditure took place.

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise the expenditure of up to £2,000 from the 2022-23 People and Communities Committee's Outdoor Cinema Event budget in respect of deposits and hire fees for the 2023 Community Summer Cinema Events.
- b) The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise the virement of £500 from the People and Communities Committee's Outdoor Cinema Event budget to its Musical Concerts budget in respect of the 2023 St David's Day concert.

99. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Clerk informed Members that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council had announced a new timetable for the preparation of its Local Development Plan. The Welsh Government expected community councils to play an active role in the consultation process for Local Development Plans. The Council should consider how it wished to engage in the consultation process.

The Council **RESOLVED** to add the following to the Terms of Reference of the PlaCE Committee:

"The Committee shall engage on behalf of the Council in informal and formal public consultation and public examination of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan and relevant Place Plans."

100. COMMITTEES

The Council made the following appointments:

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Steve Bard as a member of the People and Communities Committee.
- b) The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Chris Hill as a member of the PlaCE Committee.
- c) The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Steve Bard and Allen Rees as members of the Finance and Grants Committee.
- e) The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Tracey Dyson as a member of the Community Empowerment Committee.
- f) The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Josh Rawcliffe as a member of the Blaenau Gwent Consultative Committee.

101. CO-OPTION

The Clerk reminded Members that, in addition to an existing ordinary vacancy in the Cwmtillery ward, the resignation of Thomas Langley-Noel had created an additional casual vacancy in the Cwmtillery ward. The Clerk would confirm with the Monitoring Officer for Blaenau Gwent that the latter would be considered a casual vacancy and, therefore, that the Council could not begin a co-option process for that vacancy until local electors had been given an opportunity to request that an election takes place.

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to immediately carry out the policy and procedure to co-opt a councillor for the ordinary vacancy in the Cwmtillery ward and to bring resultant applications to the earliest scheduled meeting of the Council.

The Council **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the casual vacancy created in the Cwmtillery ward to a future meeting.

- b) No amendments to the co-option policy and procedure were proposed.

102. BANKING HUB – BARRIE PAGE

Barrie Page noted that LINK – which operates the UK’s inter-bank payment system – had undertaken to carry out an independent assessment of a community’s banking needs when formally requested to do so. Brynithel Activity Group had asked him to propose that the Council ask LINK to assess whether the area should have a ‘banking hub’ to provide counter services for the major banks and dedicated rooms where customers can access the support of community bankers from their own bank. Members noted that there were no bank branches left in the area and the closure of Post Offices in Brynithel and Six Bells had further reduced the number of permanent locations where even basic paying-in services were available. Cllr Page suggested that the Council should request a review that considered all communities in the Council area.

The Council **RESOLVED** to instruct officers to formally request a review by LINK of local community banking needs in the Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council area.

103. COUNCIL GRANTS

- a) The Clerk noted that the grant request from Six Bells Community Centre would still leave it more than a thousand pounds short of the total required to fund an upgrade of its heating system. There was, therefore, no guarantee that the project would go ahead. Allen Rees responded that he had spoken to the Treasurer of Six Bells Community Centre who had informed him that funding from other sources meant that the shortfall was now much smaller than quoted in the grant application form. Members expressed their feelings that it would be unfortunate if a grant from the Council took the community centre close to, but still short of, the full funding required. Steve Bard proposed that officers be given authority to cover the entire remaining shortfall.

The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to make a payment of a Council Grant of not greater than £1,637 on presentation to officers of confirmation from Six Bells Community Centre of the remaining sum necessary to deliver an upgrade of the centre’s heating system.

- b) The Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to make a payment of a Council Grant of £300 to Bournville Social Institute towards the costs of a recently-installed central heating boiler.

104. SECURE EMAIL DOMAIN – UPDATE

The Clerk reported that the migration of Members' existing gmail email accounts to a secure gov.uk domain would begin on Friday 3 March. If any Member did not inform officers of their current gmail password by Thursday 2 March, their gmail account would not be migrated to the new gov.uk domain, where the Clerk would be the registered data controller. The Clerk had contacted the Information Commissioner's Office and had been advised that any Member who did not enable their gmail account to be migrated to the Council's gov.uk domain would be personally legally responsible for the data held on that gmail account and for making any appropriate disclosures required under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection Act. They would also be personally legally liable for the lawful storage, retention and disposal of the personal information in that gmail account and would be liable for any data breaches.

105. NEXT MEETING

The Clerk noted that the next meeting of the Full Council would consider the authorisation of the Council's funding of the Off The Streets and Blaenau Gwent detached youth teams for 2023-24. The proposed date for the next meeting was very close to the end of March and may not allow sufficient time for such funding to be paid by the start of the new financial year.

The Council **RESOLVED** that the date of the next Full Council meeting would be brought forward to Wednesday 22 March 2023.

Members congratulated Abertillery BG RFC on reaching the semi-finals of the Welsh Division Three Cup. The club was now within a game of its first ever Millennium Stadium final.

The meeting ended at 8.37 pm.