

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Tracey Dyson (Chair); Josh Rawcliffe (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Michaela Assiratti; Steve Bard; Ralph Henderson (MBE); Chris Hill; Mark Lewis; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Nick Simmons; Glyn Smith; Bernard Wall; Graham White.

Absent: Ben Owen-Jones.

Officers: Steve Edwards (Clerk); Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk); Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk).

Members of the public: Hwyl Clatworthy; Emily Clatworthy.

93. Apologies for absence

The Chair reported that Cllr Ben Owen-Jones was unwell and requested for Council to send a 'get well soon' card.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to send a card to Cllr Ben Owen-Jones.

94. Declarations of interest or dispensations

Mark Lewis declared an interest in respect of the Council Grant Application for Friends of Blaenau Gwent village and Roseheyworth park (agenda item 12).

95. Minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the 13 December 2023 minutes as a correct record.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the 10 January 2024 minutes as a correct record.

96. Telephone Kiosk (Papers attached)

Council discussed how they should respond to BT's proposal to remove a traditional telephone box in Six Bells.

Cllr Peter Adamson asked whether there was any data which proved that the box was being used. Hwyl Clatworthy reported that 35 phone calls had been made by the phone box this year, with BT aiming for 52 per year.

Council **RESOLVED** to write to BT objecting to the proposed removal of the telephone kiosk and supporting it being kept as a working phone line.

97. Bank Reconciliation (Papers attached)

The Chair of Finance reported on Council's new financial process, which includes two members of the Finance Committee reviewing and signing a monthly bank reconciliation for each bank account. These reconciliation documents were presented for Full Council for information only.

The Clerk agreed that a more detailed report would be available in future meetings.

98. Armed Forces Covenant (Papers attached)

Council **RESOLVED** to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

99. Disposal of old office equipment

Deputy Clerk Molly Jones reported that a Health and Safety officer from Blaenau Gwent had suggested removing some furniture being stored in the Council offices due to the potential fire risk, as some of the furniture is missing fire labels. The current quote for disposing of all of the furniture is £600+VAT.

Cllr Graham White requested that the furniture be offered to the original owner, Mr Allan Thomas, before considering disposal.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to offer the furniture to the original owner, Mr Allan Thomas, or to dispose of the furniture if Mr Thomas does not wish to retrieve it.

100. Wetherspoons Report (Papers attached)

Deputy Clerk Erika Davies summarised the Wetherspoons Report, stating that it would cost a significant amount to restore the building to an acceptable condition for use as a Community Hub.

Council **RESOLVED** not to continue with the Wetherspoons project.

101. Allotment Rents

The Clerk reported that there are ongoing issues regarding lease agreements for Council's allotments. He recommended that allotment rents be suspended for this financial year as it would be unfair to continue charging rent without a clear agreement in place.

Council **RESOLVED** to suspend allotment rents for the 2023-2024 financial year.

102. Training Policy (Papers attached)

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the new Training Policy.

103. Solar Farm

The Clerk reported that the company providing Solar Farm grants have confirmed that the grant amount for 2024-2025 will be £70,000 rather than £35,000, due to an outstanding balance being carried over from 2016.

Cllr Graham White observed that Aberbeeg had received £10,000 in 2016 and questioned whether the outstanding balance was correct.

The Clerk reported that he had checked with the company multiple times and had been sent copies of their accounts confirming that the amount will be £70,000.

Council discussed how the Solar Farm grant application process may need to be altered this year to adapt to this new amount, but were unable to reach a conclusion.

Council **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next meeting, where officers will present a list of the options discussed and a timetable for the grant application process.

104. Council Grant Requests (Papers attached)

The Clerk reported that there is already an £11,000 overspend in the Council Grants budget for 2023-2024.

Council **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of these grant requests until April, when the new budget is in place:

- Friends of Blaenau Gwent Village and Roseheyworth Park
- Llanhilleth Miner's Institute

Council **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of any new grant requests until April 2024.

105. Compensation claim against the Council

The Clerk gave a verbal report on a claim currently with the courts. He stated that there are no powers for a Council to voluntarily pay any compensation. There are currently no projected legal costs.

106. HR Committee Terms of Reference

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the recommended changes to the HR Committee Terms of Reference.

107. Evacuation Safety Chair Training

Deputy Clerk Erika Davies reported that the officers had never been trained to use the safety evacuation chair in the Council Offices, and that training was available at a cost of £450+VAT.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to purchase training for the safety evacuation chair, provided they contact the Fire Service first to enquire about free training.

108. Date of next meeting

28th February 2024.

The meeting ended at 7:57pm.

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

Minutes produced by Molly Jones, Deputy Clerk.