

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 3 January 2025 at 6:02 pm at the Council Offices,  
Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors:** Steve Bard (Chair) via video link, Mark Lewis, Josh Rawcliffe.

**Officers:** Steve Edwards (Clerk/RFO), Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk) and Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk).

**Absent:** Bruno Goes Maciel, Glyn Smith, Nick Simmons and Mike Whatley

**49. Apologies for absence**

Mike Whatley.

**50. Declarations of interest or dispensations**

None

**51. Minutes 29 October 2024**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to amend Item 46, PlaCE Budget, line 3 from “finding” to “funding”

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the amended minutes were a true and correct record.

**52. 9 Month Budget Outturn Report**

The Clerk gave a verbal report using the raw data that had been collated from the Rialtas accounting software. There are no issues and the Clerk was pleased that spending across all areas was in line with the budgets that had been allocated and we should end the financial year with a very small underspend across all budgets. This was testimony to the good work of the Finance Committee in putting in place robust budgetary procedures, and Committees being responsible in their budget spending.

**53. Budget Proposals 2025/2026**

The Committee reviewed and discussed the budget proposals for 2025/26. There were a number of questions and observations from Mark Lewis.

- The headings on the spreadsheet should be 2025/2026 not 2024/2025
- Why has the Christmas Lights central budget gone up from £30,000 to £38,000? This is for the annual switch on and VAT cost that had been missed of the previous draft budget
- Will we replace Zoom with MS Teams. The Council will need to decide to replace Zoom with MS Teams, as the cost was slightly lower.
- If we no longer use Vimeo where are recordings of Councils meetings kept. The Clerk stated that recordings are now only kept to aid the Clerks in the writing of the minutes, these recordings are kept on Zoom and deleted once minutes have been confirmed.
- That there should be a staff training plan

- He was proposing we re-join One Voice Wales, but it was pointed out that the Finance Committee had already passed a recommendation not to join. This will be decided by council at the January Budget Meeting.
- The Council should investigate getting free Defibrillators but this was a matter for the PlaCE Committee not the Finance Committee
- Where would any election costs come from, the Clerk replied that there were £10,000 ear marked reserves for election costs.
- Had the Transport for Schools budget been properly budgeted. The Community Empowerment Committee had agreed the budget and the Finance Committee had already reviewed it
- He wanted the Council to ensure that we receive cost breakdowns for grants the Council pay out. The Clerk said that there will be a motion at the next Finance Committee meeting to change the grant payment process and instead of giving block grants to organisations the Council will require them to submit invoices for the Council to pay. This will have the added benefit of Council being able to reclaim any VAT that is paid out.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the draft budget of £464,023 to Council with no amendments.

#### 54. Precept 2025/26

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the current banking accounts balances and that we were in healthy state. He did point out that we have less wriggle room this year in reducing the precept amount because we have become better at budgeting and so therefore the large underspends from previous years no longer happens. There will be a VAT reclaim over £10,000 for 2024/2025 a small underspend across the whole of the budget.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council; that the precept be set at £30,000 below the agreed budget figure, with the understanding this may require funds to be moved from General Reserves at some point in the next Financial Year.

The Clerks will produce the “cost per household” numbers for the Councils budget meeting with a precept of £434,023.

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#### 55. Date of next meeting

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 6pm.

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Clerk.

The meeting ended at 7:02 pm.

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

Date.....

