

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 22 May 2024 AT 8.00pm  
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors:** Josh Rawcliffe (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Michaela Assiratti; Bruno Góes Maciel; Lucy Harmer; Ralph Henderson (MBE); Chris Hill; Wayne Lewis; Barrie Page; Nick Simmons; Glyn Smith; Rob Phillips; Bernard Wall.

**Via Video Link:** Ben Owen-Jones; Mark Lewis.

**Absent:** Steve Bard; Tracey Dyson (Chair); Graham White.

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

**Members of the public:** Mike Whatley.

**23. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Tracey Dyson, Steve Bard and Graham White.

**24. Declarations of interest or dispensations**

None.

**25. Minutes: 24 April 2024.**

Cllr Mark Lewis requested that the following amendment be made:

- Item 11 – add ‘the work is to be completed within 12 months and a report given to Council confirming it has been done.’

Council **RESOLVED** that, with this amendment, the minutes are a true and correct record.

**26. April Bank Reconciliation**

Cllr Josh Rawcliffe presented the bank reconciliation for April and reported that there were no issues.

Cllr Mark Lewis queried two payments:

- The £15,943.78 payment to Blachere for Christmas Lighting Year 2. Cllr Mark Lewis asked whether a new tender had gone out for repairs to the faulty socket in Somerset Street. Cllr Josh Rawcliffe responded that a local electrician had been contacted for this since the infrastructure is outside of the main contract with Blachere Illuminations.
- The £533.91 payment to Royal Mail, for the delivery of Car Scheme leaflets (PlaCE Committee). Cllr Mark Lewis queried whether the deliveries have actually been made where they should have. Deputy Clerk Molly Jones explained that a complaint had been made to Royal Mail regarding missing deliveries, but they had replied stating that the missed addresses were on walk boundaries and so they cannot guarantee delivery in these areas.

**27. Co-option**

Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mike Whatley as a Councillor for Llanhilleth Ward, as per the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 5. (5)

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## **28. Council grant applications**

Mike Whatley left the Chambers.

Council **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £700 to Adam Street Allotments for paint to rejuvenate the allotments and new gardening tools. (Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908, s.26).

Council **RESOLVED** to defer the grant request of £300 for Six Bells Over 50s Club for discussion at a Six Bells Ward grant meeting.

Mike Whatley returned to the Chambers.

## **29. Unity Trust Bank multipay card**

The Clerk reported that Council has not had a debit card since moving to Unity Trust Bank in November 2023. This has resulted in a small number of payments being made by officers with their own debit cards, which have then been reimbursed by Council. This has been due to several places only accepting debit cards or PayPal as payment options. This is against Council's Financial Regulations.

The officers provided costs for a Unity Trust multipay card, which functions as a debit card and would have a £1,000 transaction limit. Payments made via the card would still be subject to authorisation.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the application for a multipay card with Unity Trust Bank.

## **30. Unity Trust Bank reserve account**

The Clerk reported that, as per the Council's Investment Policy, Council should not hold all of its funds with one bank. The Internal Auditor recommended moving the Council's general reserves to the Public Sector Fund. This would provide a higher amount of interest and would diversify the Council's funds.

Council **RESOLVED** to transfer the general reserves from Unity Trust Bank into the Public Sector Fund.

## **31. Notice Boards**

Deputy Clerk Erika Davies provided an overview of noticeboard options for outside the Council Offices. Cllr Barrie Page queried if there would be a requirement for planning permission. Deputy Clerk Erika Davies replied that this would be investigated.

Council **RESOLVED** to agree the following conditions for the noticeboard:

- for the noticeboard header to say 'Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council' rather than the abbreviated 'ALCC'.
- to purchase a 9xA4 sized noticeboard.
- to authorise officers to spend up to £750 on a noticeboard for outside the Council Offices.

## **32. War Memorial**

The Clerk reported that the tender process to repair the railings around the War Memorial had received no responses. The People and Communities Committee (now the Leisure and Tourism Committee) recommended that Full Council give authority to the officers to spend up to the allocated budget of £10,000 to repair the railings.

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Council **RESOLVED** to authorise officers to spend up to £10,000 to repair the railings around the War Memorial.

**33. BG Headteacher letter**

Cllr Josh Rawcliffe presented a letter from local headteachers to the local authority and the Senedd, regarding underfunding for education. This letter was sent to Council with a request for support. Cllr Josh Rawcliffe proposed that Council approve the writing of a letter from the Council to the local authority and the Senedd in support of the local schools.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve writing a letter to the local authority and the Senedd in support of the local schools.

Council **RESOLVED** for Cllr Ralph Henderson (MBE) to assist in writing the letter, due to his experience as a headteacher.

**34. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 7pm.

The meeting ended at 8:46 pm.

*Minutes produced by Molly Jones, Deputy Clerk.*

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



**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 22 May 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; Bruno Góes Maciel (Late see meeting minutes); Lucy Harmer; Ralph Henderson (MBE); Chris Hill; Wayne Lewis; Barrie Page; Nick Simmons; Glyn Smith; Rob Phillips; Bernard Wall.

**Via Video Link:** Ben Owen-Jones; Mark Lewis.

**Absent:** Steve Bard; Graham White.

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

**Members of the public:** Mike Whatley.

**15. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Steve Bard and Graham White.

**16. Election of Chair for 2024-2025**

A question was asked concerning how many successive years a Chair could hold the post. The Clerk replied that there was now legal limit, but general convention and good governance should be that a Chair has a maximum of two years in succession.

There were two nominations. Tracey Dyson and Josh Rawcliffe.

Josh Rawcliffe declined the nomination as he wanted to remain on the Finance Committee and see through the good work they had started.

Council **RESOLVED** that Tracey Dyson is elected Chair of Council for 2024/2025.

**17. Chairs Address**

Well what an amazing year we have had, so much has changed and it now feels that the council is moving in the right direction and I am sure that if we all work together for our community we can continue to make improvements in our residents' lives.

We have again had a lot of negativity on social media about our precept and the clerks wages and why we have taken on more staff, which we so desperately needed but it is just a minority of voices who mostly don't know what we do and that has to change, we must going forward shout about all the good work we are doing, show who we are supporting with grants and our valuable time. There have been so many successful projects implemented in the last year and these are being repeated again this year, we have some new projects on board and I hope these are as successful as the others.

We changed our suppliers for our Christmas lights and they were amazing and it is also nice to see more communities, like Cwmtillery and Aberbeeg take responsibility for their own lights, hopefully over the next few years they will have as wonderful displays as Llanhilleth, Brynithel and Swffryd achieve every year.

We have also just taken a new contractor to look after our In Bloom project and I personally hope that they are more successful than the last one. I would like to thank everyone for their support for me being chair and I hope I served the position well.

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I want to welcome all our new councillors to our team and hope that they work as hard for the community as we do, and have the patience to know that your ideas for change take time and don't give up hope because working together we can achieve anything. Let's have another successful year, and not fall out over the Solar farm grant this year.

#### **18. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

None

#### **19. Appointment of Vice Chair**

There were two nominations. Josh Rawcliffe and Mark Lewis.

Mark Lewis declined the nomination as he stated he had not had the required training.

Council **RESOLVED** that Josh Rawcliffe be appointed Vice Chair of Council for 2024-2025

#### **20. Appointment of bank authorisers**

Council **RESOLVED** to re-appoint the current four authorisers. Tracey Dyson, Barrie Page, Rob Phillips and Nick Simmons.

#### **21. Committees**

Council **RESOLVED** that the Council will have the following Committees.

Leisure and Tourism Committee, previously the People and Communities Committee

Planning, Commerce and Environment (PlaCE) Committee

Finance Committee

Human Resources Committee

Community Empowerment Committee

Joint Committee of Local Councils in Blaenau Gwent JCLC

And that each Committee could form its own sub-committees and /or working groups

#### **22. Terms of Reference for Committees**

Council **RESOLVED** that the current Terms of Reference remain apart from changing the name of the People and Communities Committee to the Leisure and Tourism Committee and a number of changes to the Terms of Reference of the Finance Committee, where the following changes were made.

*1: Paragraph 1 – Amend “Members” to “Committee Members”*

*2: Paragraph 2 – delete “and the Chairs to which the Council has delegated powers to authorise expenditure”*

*3: Paragraph 2 – Amend “members” to “a member”*

*4: 4th paragraph from the end – Delete and replace with “The Finance Committee will call in Chairs or responsible project leads or RFO to agree actions to address potential significant variations in the budget.”*

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## 23. Appoint Members of the Committees

Council **RESOLVED** the following

- Leisure and Tourism Committee maximum size be increased to 9 members and Ralph Henderson and Lucy Harmer become members of that committee.
- PlaCE Committee maximum size be increased to 9 members and that Ralph Henderson becomes a member of the committee.
- Finance Committee maximum size to remain 7. Peter Adamson resigned from the Committee
- Human Resources Committee remains the same, no changes
- Community Empowerment Committee maximum size to remain 5. Peter Adamson moves from a non-voting to a voting member of the Committee.

(Bruno Goes arrived at 7:36pm)

- JCLC size remains at 4 plus the Clerk. Peter Adamson and Glyn Smith are replaced by Bruno Goes and Peter Adamson

## 24. Chairs of Committees

Council **RESOLVED** that, with the exception of the Human Resources Committee (where the Chair of Council is automatically the Chair of the Committee), the Members of each Committee of the Council shall appoint the Chair of that Committee. If the current Chair of any Committee, excepting the HR Committee, remains on that Committee then they shall remain Chair until such time as they resign from the position, or Council or the Committee elect a new Chair.

## 25. External Bodies

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint the following members to external bodies

- Blaenau Gwent CBC Scrutiny Committee – Josh Rawcliffe
- Abertillery and District Twinning Association – Rob Phillips and Nick Simmons
- Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum – Peter Adamson and Barrie Page
- Blaenau Gwent Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group – Josh Rawcliffe

## 26. Full Council Meeting 2024-2025

Council **RESOLVED** the following meeting dates for 2024-2025

26 June 2024	15 January 2025 – Budget setting
31 July 2024	29 January 2025
25 September 2024	26 February 2025
30 October 2024	26 March 2025
27 November 2024	30 April 2025
18 December 2024	21 May 2025 – Annual Meeting

## 27. Date of next meeting

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Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 7pm. The Clerk stated that there was likely to be an Extraordinary Council meeting before 26 June to sign off the Annual Return.

The meeting ended at 7:44 pm.

*Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Clerk.*

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

DRAFT



**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND  
LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 12 June 2024 AT 7.02pm  
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

**PRESENT**

**Councillors:** Tracey Dyson (Chair); Josh Rawcliffe (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Steve Bard; Lucy Harmer; Chris Hill; Wayne Lewis; Barrie Page; Nick Simmons; Glyn Smith; Rob Phillips; Bernard Wall; Graham White.

**Via Video Link:** Bruno Góes Maciel; Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk);

**Absent:** Michaela Assiratti; Ralph Henderson (MBE); Mark Lewis; Ben Owen-Jones; Mike Whatley

**Officers:** Steve Edwards (Clerk).

**28. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Michaela Assiratti; Ralph Henderson (MBE); Mark Lewis; Ben Owen-Jones;

**29. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

None

**30. Internal Audit 2023/2024**

Steve Bard presented the Internal Audit Report as recommended by the Finance Committee. He was pleased with the progress that Council had made over the past year and he thanked the members of the Finance Committee and the Officers for the work that they had put in.

Graham White disagreed with the overall assessment and said there was a lot of things that need picking up on, but he did not specify anything, he also made a claim that there were different Internal Auditor signatures on various reports but did not produce any documentary evidence to substantiate this.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Interim and Final Auditor reports.

**31. Annual Return 2023/2024.**

Steve Bard presented the Annual Return, which had been through scrutiny by the Finance Committee.

Graham White queried the increase in the staffing budget during the year which led to an overspend of £19,000 on the staff costs budget. Steve Bard replied that at the time of the staffing increase the HR Committee had unlimited powers concerning all staffing matters which included recruitment. Subsequently the Finance Committee had identified this as a major Financial Risk, which has now been mitigated by amending the HR Committee's Terms of Reference so any annual increase of staffing budget over 10% now has to be agreed by Full Council.

Graham White asked the Clerk to send him a copy of the Terms of Reference of the HR Committee that were in force at the time when the increase in staff hours was agreed.

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Peter Adamson queried some of the dates in the RFO's report, the Annual Governance Statement section. The first paragraph of that section should be amended from "2022-2023" to 2023-24. The "2022-23" in part 4 is correct.

Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Return for 2023/24.

The Clerk stated that this would now allow Council for the first time in many years to have the account done by the required 30<sup>th</sup> June date.

The meeting ended at 7:15 pm.

*Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Clerk.*

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

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