

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 26th April 2024 at 6:00pm in the Council Meeting
Room at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Steve Bard (Chair); Mark Lewis; Josh Rawcliffe.

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

Apologies: Peter Adamson;

Absent: Peter Adamson; Nick Simmons; Glyn Smith.

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest or dispensations

None.

3. Minutes 16 February 2024

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

4. Budget Outturn for 2023/2024

The Committee noted the total underspend of £18,793.00 against budget, and that closer monitoring of project budgets is now in place.

5. Rialtas Year End Close Down Issues

The Committee discussed the three issues that had been raised.

- The Officers will attempt to find the £375.11 VAT credit for 2019/2020 and report back to the Committee.
- The officers had advice from the Internal Auditor, the £10,000 charge on the property should be put on the Asset Register.
- The Committee will keep a watching brief on the amount of cash assets against budget, it is assumed that now the Council has tighter fiscal control this should not rise significantly in the future.

6. Annual Return 2023/2024.

The Committee looked at the Annual Return and noted the following;

- General Reserves had risen from £199,383 to £284,958, this was mainly due to a prepayment for the detached youth workers that had occurred in 2022/2023 so a false low figure of £199,383.
- The interest received has increased dramatically, interest rates in general had risen and we had also moved to new bank account for reserves that paid higher interest than Nat West our previous bankers.
- Staff hours had increased from 50 hours to 90 hours from August 2023, so big rise in staff costs.

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- Training costs had almost doubled, we had two new staff and a number of new Councillors.
- Bank Charges are slightly lower as we have moved banks.
- Audit fees are higher as we have paid for external Audit for five previous years
- Elections was a one-off unexpected cost for a single election
- There was a substantial increase in Youth Worker costs from BGCBC
- Outdoor cinema name to be changed to Summer Cinema

At this stage the Clerk gave the Internal Auditor update. All the relevant papers had been sent to the Internal Auditor. We are now awaiting his final Audit report to bring back to the Committee who can then recommend the Annual Return to Council.

7. **Bank Reconciliation.**

No issues concerning the actual reconciliation for March. The Clerk reminded members of the Committee that they had responsibilities to carry out reconciliation duties when they were due or at least inform the officers if they cannot attend at the earliest possible time so that a replacement can be found.

8. **Recommendation to Move Reserves**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that

- £10,000 of current general reserves be moved to Earmarked Reserves to buy for any office consumables that may fail in future years.
- £20,000 of current general reserves be moved to Earmarked Reserves to pay for elections, next due in 2027
- The remaining General Reserves be moved to the Public Sector deposit fund so we then comply with the Investment Policy. This fund pays on average 5.26% and is instant access. This is the fund recommended by the Internal Auditor.

9. **Bank Charge Card**

With the change of banks, the Council no longer has a debit/charge card, this has led to the situations where officers have twice this year paid for services and then claimed the money back from Council. This is against the Financial Regs.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the officers set up a charge card from Unity Bank with a limit of £1,000. The costs will be £50 start up fee, and then £3 per month (£36 per year). Same authorisations as BACS payments. The officers will write up a payment authorisation process to bring back to the Committee to review.

10. **Recycling costs**

The Council were now legally responsible for its business recycling. New Welsh Government Legislation had come into force from the beginning of April. This had not been budgeted for, but officers only had a small timeframe to put recycling in place. There is now a contract with BGCBC for our recycling. The Council will keep this in place and review at the beginning of 2025 to see if there is better value for money elsewhere.

11. VAT reclaim 2023/2024.

The Clerk reported that the VAT reclaim of £14,764.23 would be shortly sent off to HMRC

12. Date of next meeting

As required. It should be noted that the Chair is away 10-12 May and 19-23 May.

The meeting ended at 7:06pm.

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

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk.

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 April 2025 at 6:00 pm at the Council Offices, Mitre
Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Steve Bard (Chair) Josh Rawcliffe (from 6:05 pm), Bruno Goes Maciel, Frankie Baker and Nick Simmons.

Officers: Steve Edwards (Clerk) and Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk).

Others: Graham White.

Absent: Glyn Smith and Mike Whatley

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declarations of interest or dispensations

None

3. Minutes 14 March 2025

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

Josh Rawcliffe joined the meeting.

4. Audit Wales Report on objections to accounts 2020-2021

The Committee reviewed the report.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that Code of Conduct training be done every 5 years for Councillors.

The Committee noted that notification of confirmed minutes of Committees will now be given at future Council meetings as per an observation from the Internal Auditor in his 2024/2025 interim report, so all decisions are reported to Council.

The Committee noted that there was now a full budget setting process in place that will avoid any last-minute issuing of papers prior to a budget meeting.

The Committee noted that we now have an Internal Auditor in place since 2023/2024 and are pleased with his work as a critical friend.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the staffing matter referred to in the report be delegated to the HR Committee who were the correct Committee to deal with all staffing matters.

In answer to a statement from Graham White the Chair confirmed that the Committee already knew there had been no Internal Auditor for 2020-2021

5. Rialtas End Year Out Turn 2024-2025

The Clerk reported a successful close down of the accounts from our Rialtas system had been completed on Monday 7th April. The Officers were pleased that it had only taken 3 hours this year rather than double the time in previous years.

The Clerk went through the variance report that had been produced from the Rialtas system and said he will bring a full report back to the next Committee meeting as part of its review of the Annual Return.

6. Bank Reconciliation April 2025

The Committee **RESOLVED** that Frankie Baker and Josh Rawcliffe would do the April 2025 Bank Reconciliation.

7. Date of next meeting

There was some discussion about a proposed motion from the Chair of Council at the next Council meeting to move the Annual meeting from 21st May to 14th May. The Finance Committee would be against this as it could be possible that an entirely new Finance Committee will then be dealing with legacy matters.

The Committee agreed its next meeting will be Friday 16th May 2025 at 6pm.

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Clerk.

The meeting ended at 7:02 pm.

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

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND TOURISM COMMITTEE OF
ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 15 April 2025 AT
5:30pm in the Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT:

Councillors: Tracey Dyson (Chair), Lucy Harmer, Ralph Henderson MBE, Barrie Page, Josh Rawcliffe, Ben Owen-Jones (via video-link, late: see minutes), Ivor Beynon (non-committee member).

Officers: Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk; via video-link, late: see minutes), Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk).

Absent: Mark Lewis.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Declarations of interest or dispensations

None.

3. Minutes – 11 February 2025

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the minutes from 11 February 2025 were a correct record.

Cllr Ben Owen-Jones & Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk) joined via video-link at 5:36pm after technical difficulties.

4. Abertillery Shop Window Artwork

Cllr Ivor Beynon attended to discuss this project. He explained that there is some existing artwork from old pupils at the Abertillery Learning Community which is ready to be displayed, but it would be great to evolve the project to include new artwork from all of the schools in the area. The Committee agreed to begin the project with the Abertillery Learning Community, and to look into expanding it once a process has been established.

Andrew Boulton Properties has agreed for the Council to use an empty premise in Abertillery, with the Clerk as a keyholder, for displaying the artwork. A group will need to be set up to put the artwork up, and insurance will need to be held.

The Committee **RESOLVED** for the officers to contact the Abertillery Learning Community Senedd to request for them to discuss their involvement with the project.

5. Summer Cinema

Cllr Tracey Dyson confirmed that The Met has been booked for this year's Summer Cinema dates. The showings will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays again. The Abertillery Learning Community (ALC) will be asked to select films again, via the Senedd ALC. She also asked if the Council's Youth Representatives could be invited onto the Summer Cinema working group.

More will also be done this year to promote the autism-friendly screenings, and the Committee agreed to reach out to relevant groups like The Mitre, The Autistic Society and local schools.

6. Loneliness Project

The Committee **RESOLVED** to defer the grant request of £1,600 for Six Bells Tennis Club until the next meeting, and for the officers to invite the Chair of the club to attend to discuss the application in more detail.

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7. Annual Grants

The Committee **RESOLVED** to authorise the Officers to make payments from the following Leisure & Tourism budget lines, as they fall due:

- Zion Miner's Chapel - £2,000
- Abertillery BG RFC Musical Concerts - £2,000
- Llanhilleth Summer Fete (Off The Streets) - £5,000
- Abertillery Rock & Blues Festival - £2,000
- Six Bells Park (toilets) - £1,740
- Brynithel Community Centre Christmas lights - £1,500
- Swffryd Community Centre Christmas lights - £1,500
- Bournville Community Centre Christmas lights - £1,500
- Pentref Tyleri Christmas lights - £1,500
- Friends of BG & Roseheyworth Christmas lights - £1,500
- Aberbeeg TRA Christmas lights - £1,500

8. Six Bells Centenary

Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk) informed the Committee that plans for the Six Bells Park Centenary Celebrations are going well. The Friday event is invitation only and will include pupils from Six Bells campus, with a ceremonial key-turning, games and a celebration cake.

The Saturday event is being publicised on social media and will be open to the public. It will involve live music, tennis & bowls matches, inflatables, lawn games, stallholders, food vans and other entertainment. A banner advertising this event will be positioned in Six Bells soon.

9. Party in the Park

The Committee **RESOLVED** to defer the update for Party in the Park until the next meeting as a planning meeting was being held later that evening.

10. Viaduct Run

Cllr Ben Owen-Jones informed the Committee that a public meeting for the Viaduct Run was held last week and went well. The focus this year is on ensuring the road closures are well advertised and improving traffic management on the day. This includes a change to the family run route to make it safer for participants. Other plans for the event are all going to plan.

11. Date of next meeting

As needed.

The meeting ended at 6:20pm.

Minutes produced by Molly Jones, Deputy Clerk.

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

Dated