

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY
COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 30 MARCH 2022 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery and via video
conferencing (Zoom).**

PRESENT

Councillors: Gary Oakley (Chair); Nick Simmons (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Roger Clark; Tracey Dyson; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Glyn Smith; Bernard Wall; Graham White.

PRESENT VIA VIDEOLINK

Councillors: Michaela Assiratti; Ben Owen-Jones; Jaqui Ledbury; Beverley Lucas.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk).

Other: Lyn Maloney, Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association

Cllr Peter Adamson raised a point of order saying that he had received an email from a member of the public who had pointed out that notice of the meeting had not been published on the Council's website. He asked whether, under Standing Order 15b, the meeting should go ahead.

The Clerk confirmed that The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by Schedule 4 to The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires notices of meetings to be published electronically at least three clear days before the meeting, but he had neglected to publish the notice online until the afternoon of the meeting. The Clerk had received a similar email from the same member of the public who had claimed that this lapse "invalidated the meeting." The Clerk stated that the summons to attend the meeting was sent to Members in accordance with the Regulations and notice of the time and place of the meeting, including how it may be accessed virtually, was published in a conspicuous place in the community in accordance with the Regulations.

He added that, under the Local Government Act 1972, a council meeting, or a meeting of a committee thereof shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held, and all the persons present at the meeting shall be deemed to have been duly qualified, and to have the power to deal with the matters referred to in the agenda, unless the contrary is proved.

In the absence of the proof to the contrary demanded by the 1972 Act, he had advised the Chair that failure to publish the notice electronically would not invalidate the meeting or resolutions made within it.

The Chair stated that the Clerk had been unable to advise him on a clear mechanism in legislation or Standing Orders for cancelling or postponing a meeting once a summons had been issued and the meeting was quorate. As it was his duty to manage Council meetings, he believed that he would need to take responsibility for deciding whether the meeting should go ahead or not. His decision would be final but he suggested a show of hands to enable Members to demonstrate their views.

Following the show of hands, the meeting began at 7.13 pm.

180. Apologies for Absence and Welcomes

Apologies were received from Cllr Allen Rees. Condolences were passed to Cllr Beverly Lucas following a recent sudden family bereavement. The Chair welcomed Lyn Maloney.

181. Declarations of Interest or Dispensations

Barrie Page declared a prejudicial interest in item 183 a) as he is a member of the committee of Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association

Roger Clark declared a personal interest in item 184 a) as his wife is a trustee of Abertillery Workmen's Welfare Institute.

Tracey Dyson declared a personal interest in item 184 a) as she is a trustee of Abertillery Workmen's Welfare Institute.

The Chair stated that he would move consideration of grant applications up the agenda so that Mr Maloney would be heard nearer the start of the meeting.

182. Minutes – 26 January 2022 and 23 February 2022

The Clerk reminded Council that confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of 26 January 2022 had been deferred following a claim by Cllr Roger Clark that the Chair had promised on 26 January that Cllr Clark could make a statement at the following meeting of the Council and that this promise had not been recorded in the minutes. The Clerk had checked a recording of the January meeting for the exact words used by the Chair, which were:

"If any councillors want to discuss it further, they should write in – in writing – to the clerk, saying what they want. The clerk can then take advice from the Monitoring Officer and we can agenda it for the next meeting, but we can't discuss it any further tonight."

Cllr Clark asked the Clerk whether the Chair had actually said that. The Clerk confirmed that he had. Cllr Clark replied, "No he didn't." The Clerk said that he did not believe that the Council should allow him "to be, more or less, defamed in meetings by councillors." The Clerk asked Cllr Clark whether he would like him to prove the veracity of his statement by playing a video recording of the meeting in question. Cllr Clark replied, "No, you carry on, butt." The Clerk repeated that the words he had quoted were, verbatim, those that the Chair had said. Cllr Clark repeated, "No he didn't," but did not offer any amendment to the minutes.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of 26 January 2022 as a correct record.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of 23 February 2022 as a correct record.

183. Council Grants

- a) Cllr Barrie Page left the chamber at 7.24 pm.

The Clerk reminded the Council that it had previously deferred consideration of a grant application by Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association pending the appearance before it of a representative from the group.

Lyn Maloney explained that the 'Friends of Granny's Wood' project would enable the group to extend public access to the wood, to provide educational access for pupils of St Illtyd's School, to improve access for disabled people and to develop an off-road cycle track. The project conformed to the principles of using greenspace and woodland to promote physical, psychological and social wellbeing propounded by the national Woodland Wellbeing movement and training funded by the grant would be City & Guilds-accredited.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise payment of a grant of £1193.85 to Llanhilleth TRA.

Cllr Barrie Page returned to the chamber at 7.38 pm.

Mr Maloney remained in the meeting as a member of the public.

- b) Council **RESOLVED** to authorise payment of a grant of £250 to Abertillery Amateur Dramatic Musical Society.
- c) Council **RESOLVED** to authorise payment of a grant of £300 to Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum.
- d) Council deferred a decision on a grant application by Ebbw Fach Community Group pending further information regarding the specific purpose of the grant.

184. Ward Grants

The Chair remarked that Ward Grants would usually be approved by the Council's Finance and Grants Committee but, as that committee was not scheduled to meet again before the end of the financial year, consideration of two applications had been brought to the Full Council.

- a) Council **RESOLVED** to authorise payment of £200 to Abertillery Workmen's Welfare Institute in respect of an application by Cllr Roger Clark.
- b) Council **RESOLVED** to authorise payment of £200 to Six Bells Over-Fifties Club in respect of an application by Cllr Peter Adamson.

185. Carbon Literacy for Local Authorities

Cllrs Peter Adamson and Barrie Page reported back to the Council on the course organised by the Centre for Alternative Technology in February 2022. The course had highlighted that, while central governments have policy responsibility for environmental issues, public bodies operating at a lower level can use their local knowledge to bring about a greater impact within their communities. For instance, grant funding could be used to invest in the protection of wildlife habitats of local environmental importance and clauses could be included in contracts and grant applications to promote greener energy use locally.

The Chair asked that the Members' presentation be posted on the Council's website.

Members proposed other suggestions such as inviting young people to give their views on long-term environmental issues to the Council and bringing together local schools and community groups to identify environmental priorities in the community council area.

Lyn Maloney left the meeting at 8.45 pm.

186. Resolution to Exclude the Press and Public

Council **RESOLVED** that, by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public would be excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

187. Suspension of Standing Orders

Council **RESOLVED** to suspend standing order 3(x) to extend the meeting for longer than two hours.

Cllr Jaqui Ledbury left the meeting at 8.59 pm.

188. Confidential minutes

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm Confidential Annex FC3-2022 as a correct record of the confidential and privileged section of the meeting of 23 February 2022.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes and Confidential Annex FC4-2022 as a correct record of the Extraordinary Meeting of 16 March 2022.

188. Audit Wales report for 2014-2015

Full minutes of this agenda item are contained in Confidential Annex FC5-2022.

189. Date of next meeting

27 April 2022

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.

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

Minutes produced by David Cartwright, Clerk.