

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 29 July 2026 at 7.00 pm in the
Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Josh Rawcliffe (Chair), Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Ralph Henderson MBE, Chris Hill, Mark Lewis (via video link), Barrie Page (via video link), Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, and Mike Whatley

Absent: Tracey Dyson, Lucy Harmer, Bruno Góes Maciel, Ben Owen-Jones, Graham White, Riley Overton (Youth Rep) and Jackson Powell (Youth Rep)

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

66. Apologies for Absence

Tracey Dyson, Lucy Harmer, Ben Owen-Jones, Graham White, and Jackson Powell.

67. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Ivor Beynon for the agenda item 5 concerning the grant application from Ebenezer Church as he is a member of the Church.

Barrie Page for the agenda item 6 concerning the school transports grant for St Illtyds Primary School as he is a school governor.

68. Minutes 24 June 2026

Council **RESOLVED** the minutes for 24 June 2026 were a true and correct record.

69. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

Mark Lewis asked for a recorded vote throughout the meeting, the Clerk replied that a recorded vote will have to be requested for each agenda item.

70. Council Grant Applications

Mark Lewis asked for a recorded vote.

There was a discussion about how little was left in the Council grant budget and that we were only 4 months into the year. The Finance and Governance Committee will look at a review of the current Grants Policy. Members were reminded that they had voted for the current Grant policy this year.

- The motion to award Zion Miners Chapel - £2,500 for food, equipment and running costs for various groups was defeated.

For: None

Against: Josh Rawcliffe, Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Chris Hill, Mark Lewis, Barrie Page Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, and Mike Whatley.

Ivor Beynon left the meeting at 7:11 pm

- The motion to award Ebenezer Baptist Church - £3,000 towards refreshments, equipment and training materials for various groups was defeated.

For: None

Against: Josh Rawcliffe, Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Richard Catlin, Chris Hill, Mark Lewis, Barrie Page, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons and Mike Whatley.

Ivor Beynon returned to the meeting at 7:16 pm

- The motion to award Blaenau Gwent Play team - £1,550 to support additional staff for the Play in the Park scheme was defeated.

For: None

Against: Josh Rawcliffe, Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Chris Hill, Mark Lewis, Barrie Page, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, and Mike Whatley.

- The Council **RESOLVED** an amendment to the original motion. North Gwent Table Tennis Club - £700 to improve equipment and buy new club kit (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19).

For: Josh Rawcliffe, Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Ralph Henderson MBE, Chris Hill, Barrie Page, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, and Mike Whatley

Against: Mark Lewis.

- The Council **RESOLVED** to pay Hospice of the Valleys - £500 to sponsor their Christmas Concert in The Met (Local Government Act 1972 s137)

For: Josh Rawcliffe, Peter Adamson, Frankie Baker, Steve Bard, Ivor Beynon, Richard Catlin, Ralph Henderson MBE, Chris Hill, Mark Lewis, Barrie Page, Rob Phillips, Nick Simmons, and Mike Whatley

Against: None.

Erika Davies reminded Members of about Section 137 spending where Council had no other powers.

71. School Transport Grant

Barrie Page remained online but did not take part in the discussion or the voting.

Council **RESOLVED** to pay the grant of £1,666 to St. Illtyds Primary School for Extra Curricular School Transport. Local Government act 1972 s.137).

72. Clerks Retirement.

The Clerk reported that he will be retiring on 28 February 2027.

Mark Lewis asked for a review of staffing levels and a full business case to be made. The Clerk responded that this should be done as part of the budget setting process for the next financial year.

Mark Lewis asked if we could promote from one the Deputy Clerks, it was stated that as this was a public body recruitments should be advertised externally.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise the HR Committee, under their delegated authority, to carry out all required recruitments to maintain current staffing levels.

73. Solar Farm Grant Update

The Clerk stated that we had 6 applications. The officers would shortly be issuing the application forms to all Members to begin looking at. The Chair stressed that this should be treated as Strictly Confidential. That Councillors should not discuss this between themselves, and under no circumstances should any Councillor contact any of the organisations concerning anything to do with the Solar Farm Grant.

If Councillors have any questions they should pass them to the officers who will collate all questions and answers and supply them back to Councillors prior to the Solar arm Grant meeting in September.

74. Mitre Street Building

A meeting had been setup with County Borough estates because of the broken boilers and lift at the Mitre Street Offices.

The Council had been given the running costs associated with Mitre Street. At the moment this was for information only. We are awaiting formal options to come back from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Mark Lewis asked for a more detailed breakdown of the costs, The Clerk responded that if Council decided to take on the building then proper due diligence would be done on all costs.

75. Awards Evening/Wales In Bloom

Ralph Henderson gave a brief review of this year's Wales In Bloom. 32 different locations had taken part and the head judge was impressed by the Community involvement.

Abertillery Aspiration Group now has partnerships with TAFY and the Community Council. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have also now expressed their support. A lot of the funding has been used to create infrastructure that will be used in future years.

The head judge expressed an opinion that Abertillery could hold the Wales in Bloom awards evening in 2 years' time.

The Chair thanked Abertillery Aspiration for all their hard work, and the positive impact that the flower displays were having.

Council **RESOLVED** for Council to use £2,000 from general reserves to fund a Community awards evening at Llanhilleth Institute on 17th October 2026. (Local Government Act 1972 s137).

Erika Davies explained to Council what section 137 powers were.

76. CiLCA Pay Award

The Clerk reported that Erika Davies had recently achieved her Certificate in Local Council Administration, and that Molly Jones had completed her work and was just awaiting verification of her final piece of work.

The Chair congratulated both on passing and the hard work that had been put in to achieve it.

Council **RESOLVED** to agree a spine point increase to spine point 21 on their pay scales for Erika Davies and Molly Jones, as per the terms of their contracts.

77. Bank Reconciliation

Council noted the bank reconciliations and schedule of payments for May and June 2026 and **RESOLVED** to authorise them

78. Q1 Budget Outturn

Mark Lewis asked if this was part of the Annual Return, The Chair responded that this was a budget outturn.

Mark Lewis queried the numbers for Rialtas costs, it was explained to him that this was the first quarter outturn and not the full year therefore the spending shown is lower than the overall yearly budget.

The Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee reported that there were no issues for Council to consider.

Council **RESOLVED** to note the Q1 Budget Outturn

79. Civility and Respect Pledge

The Finance and Governance Committee recommend that the Council sign up for the new Civility and Respect Pledge from One Voice Wales.

Council **RESOLVED** to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

80. Community Areas Electoral Review

The Council had previously agreed on the boundary changes. There were a number of points raised. It was noted that the Borough Council should have conducted regular reviews but this was the first one for over 10 years. This is to ensure a fair balance of electors to councillors across wards and areas.

- Why are we now losing two councillors instead of one as previously reported.
- The Council could understand the numbers behind the proposals but wanted some recognition of the amount of work that this Council now does compared to other Councils.
- There should be a correlation between budget and the number of Councillors.

Council **RESOLVED** that the Officers should write to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council opposing the reduction in Councillor numbers from 19 to 17.

81. Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk stated that Councillor Bernard Wall ceased to be a Councillor for the Cwmtillery Ward as of 28 July 2026, under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972. This was because of non-attendance for 6 months.

The notice of the vacancy and to electors had been sent out that day.

Mark Lewis asked if this was 6 months of council meetings, the Clerk replied that this was 6 calendar months from the date of the last attendance.

82. Hire Policy

The Clerk presented a new hire policy. This had been created using AI.

Item 10 should read the Councils Finance and Governance Committee.

The wording of the drop of point was amended so that it would be for Council to decide.

There will be full fee waivers for the first year, or upon any review of Council to sustainable costs.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the policy, the Officers will create a hire form.

83. Rail Spur

The Council were in general agreement in supporting the spur but Peter Adamson was concerned about the impact on the Ebbw Fach trail

The Council **RESOLVED** to support a rail spur bringing the railway and station back to Abertillery. A letter of this support to be sent to the Welsh Government and copied to our Welsh Government members.

84. Vivian Street Playground

The Clerk had visited the site with Councillor Lucy Harmer. It is an ex playground site where all the equipment has been removed and is now looking overgrown and started to be used for rubbish. There are no firm plans yet as to what we could use it for.

Council **RESOLVED** to agree to investigate taking over this area from Blaneau Gwent County Borough Council

85. Committee Minutes

Council noted the following confirmed minutes:

- Community Empowerment Committee – 10 April 2026
- HR Sub-Committee – 13 April 2026
- Finance & Governance Committee – 15 May 2026
- PlaCE Committee – 1 June 2026
- Leisure & Tourism Committee – 2 June 2026
- Leisure & Tourism Committee – 26 June 2026

86. Date of Next Meeting

23 September 2026 at 7pm

The meeting ended at 8:54 pm.

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Clerk

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

Date.....