Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council Training Policy

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Training Policy

1. All Members and officers of the Council shall be offered the opportunity to undertake any and all of the following training modules within twelve months of the beginning of the Council term to ensure they have sufficient skills and understanding (or, in the case of co-opted Members, within twelve months of taking office).

    - New Councillor Induction
    - Module 1 – The Council
    - Module 2 – The Councillor
    - Module 3 – The Council as an Employer
    - Module 4 – Understanding the Law
    - Module 5 – The Council Meeting
    - Module 6 – Local Government Finance
    - Module 7 – Health and Safety
    - Module 8 – Introduction to Community Engagement
    - Module 9 – Code of Conduct
    - Module 10 – Chairing Skills

    Additional modules are also available and can be attended once all the above have been completed. The full list of training modules and a brief description of each can be found in **Appendix A**.

    On 30 April 2025, Council RESOLVED to agree that Code of Conduct training is completed every 5 years (minute number 9).

2. All Members of the Finance and Governance Committee will be offered the opportunity to undertake the *Local Government Finance* module within six months of their appointment to the Committee. If a Member of the Finance Committee has not completed the *Local Government*

Finance module within six months of their appointment to the Committee, a motion to de-select that Member from the Committee shall be tabled at the next Full Council meeting.

3. All Members of the HR Committee will be offered the opportunity to undertake the *Council as an Employer* module within six months of their appointment to the Committee. If a Member of the HR Committee has not completed the *Council as an Employer* within six months of their appointment to the Committee, a motion to de-select that Member from the Committee shall be tabled at the next Full Council meeting.

4. The Chair of Council, Vice-Chair of Council and all Chairs of Committee will be offered the opportunity to undertake the *Chairing Skills* module within six months of their election/appointment. If a Chair of a Committee has not completed the *Chairing Skills* module within six months of their appointment as Chair of the Committee, a motion to de-select the Chair of the Committee shall be tabled at the next meeting of that committee. The individual can remain on the committee.

5. A Member may claim special dispensation if they had completed a training module during the twelve months immediately preceding the beginning of the Council term (or, in the case of co-opted Members, during the twelve months immediately preceding their taking office). The Full Council (or Committee, as appropriate) shall decide whether special dispensation shall be allowed for this or for any other reason.

6. A Member who is deselected from a Committee or from the role of Chair of a Committee for the reasons above shall not be reappointed to that position for at least six months.

7. A Member shall be deemed to have been deselected from a Committee or from the role of Chair of a Committee if they resign from that position having failed to complete the necessary training module within the specified time period.

8. This policy refers to the titles of committees and to the title of training modules delivered by, or through, One Voice Wales as of November ~~2025~~ 2026 This policy shall remain in force if the title of a committee changes but its duties and responsibilities remain broadly similar. This policy shall also remain in force if the title of a training module changes, and/or it is delivered by a different training provider, but its content remains broadly similar.

9. Training Needs - It is essential that councillors identify what training they require (for example, Local Government Finance if they are on a finance committee) and receive adequate training to understand the role to which they have been elected, enabling them to undertake their

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role and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities when undertaking their role as a councillor. Training enables councillors to carry out their duties to the best of their ability and be kept up to date with all current legislation. The costs associated with the Councillor Training Programme will be met from the existing ALCC budget provision. One Voice Wales will invoice ALCC directly and anyone attending the training course will get their certificate emailed to them after completion.

Staff training will be identified by the Clerk through the recruitment and annual appraisal processes or as and when new legislations is brought in that requires training.

When One Voice Wales releases a list of available training courses and dates, officers will email it to councillors. It is the responsibility of each individual councillor to request a date to attend. Once a place has been confirmed, an email with the details will be sent out. Another email with a link to join the meeting will be sent 24 hours before the course starts.

If you aren't able to attend because of unforeseen circumstances, you must contact the Clerk as soon as possible. It may be possible to re-arrange. Failure to attend without prior notification (except in exceptional circumstances, such as sickness or a domestic emergency) will result in the councillor being charged for the course. Currently, this is £44.00 as we are members of One Voice Wales £65.00 (for non-members of One Voice Wales).

10. Training courses from providers other than One Voice Wales may also be available and will be shared with councillors and staff.

Training Plan

It is the objective of Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council to consider how training and development needs are identified and reflected in the training plan. All councillors will be offered new councillor induction training plus modules 1-10 as shown in the training policy. Priority will be given to the training requirements identified in points 2,3 and 4 of this policy. Additional training may be provided if a need/gap is identified for development. For example, if Council decides to organise a community event for the first time, a clear need may be for a councillor or staff member to attend health and safety or community engagement training. There is a limited budget for training and this needs to be balanced with the overall needs to support councillors and staff.

Please see **Appendix B** for the Councillor Training Plan and **Appendix C** for the Staff Training Plan.

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Appendix A

One Voice Wales - National Training Programme for Community and Town Councils in Wales

New Councillor Induction – Only available at Election time and Bespoke sessions

This session covers the following topics:

- What town and community councils do
- How they serve their communities
- The changing world of councils
- What makes a good council
- Your role as a councillor
- Your commitment and the Code of Conduct
- Fulfilling your duties and responsibilities
- Being the voice of the community

Module 1 - The Council

- The Council as a Corporate Body
- The "Team" of Members and Staff
- The Council's Role Working with Unitary Authorities
- Building Partnership Working

During the presentation we will cover the council as a corporate body, the 'team' of members and staff, the council's role, working with unitary authorities, and building partnership working with a wider group of organisations. By the end of this presentation, you should have a good understanding of the range of responsibilities of community and town councils as well as their changing role in serving local communities in Wales today.

Module 2 - The Councillor

- The Councillor and their Commitment
- Register of Interests
- Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
- Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees
- Debating and Making Decisions

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- Representing Your Electorate
- Building Bridges

During the presentation we will cover the councillor and their commitment to the office of councillor, the Register of Members Interests, the Code of Conduct and ethical behaviour expected of a councillor, the role of the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee, the rules of debating and making decisions, how you represent on your electorate, and the need to "build bridges" between yourself, the council and other interested parties.

Module 3 - The Council as an Employer

- Contracts of Employment
- Role and Person Specification
- Recruitment and Retention
- Discipline, Grievance and Appeals
- Health and Safety
- Training and Development
- Sources of Advice

During the presentation we will explore the role of the council as an employer. We will cover contracts of employment and how these define the employment relationship, the role and person specification, you may know the role specification as the 'job description', recruitment and retention, what you should do if things are going wrong, health and safety, and perhaps the most important of all getting the best out of everyone to help serve your local community, through training and development. Employment law and best practice is a complicated area, so lastly, we will finish by looking at some sources of advice.

Module 4 – Understanding The Law

- Statutory duties and powers
- Ultra Vires
- The Powers of Delegation
- Welsh Language Act
- The duty to promote Equal Opportunities
- Data Protection and FOI Act
- Sources of advice

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During the presentation we will cover a range of legislation and legal duties that affect community and town councils. We will cover statutory duties and powers, the principle of 'ultra vires', the powers of delegation, the Welsh Language Act, the duty to promote equal opportunities and the main statutes and regulations in this area data protection and Freedom of Information act and finally, sources of advice.

Module 5 - The Council Meeting

- Calling meetings
- Types of meetings
- Standing Orders
- Agendas
- Conducting the meeting
- Passing resolutions
- Recording proceedings

During the presentation we will cover the different aspects of council meetings. We will talk about calling meetings, the different types of meetings including Annual Statutory Meetings, Extraordinary Meetings and Ordinary Meetings, the importance of Standing Orders setting and using agendas, conducting the meeting, passing resolutions, and recording proceedings.

Module 6 - Local Government Finance

- The Role of the Responsible Finance Officer
- Accounting and Strategy Guidance
- Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment
- Budgets and Precepts
- Internal and External Audit
- Insurance Income and Expenditure Powers
- Other Sources of Income

During the presentation we will review all the important areas in overseeing local government finance. We will cover the role of the Responsible Finance Officer, some of the general principles of accounting', the main financial regulations and, most importantly how to assess the risks involved, setting budgets and precepts, putting robust internal and external audits in place, the insurance requirements of the Council, the income and expenditure powers of the Council, and finally other sources of income.

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This is a large agenda, and financial management can sometimes appear daunting, but the aim of the session is to provide you with an understanding of the financial framework of the Council, the core information you need to know and the sources of more detailed information that you should refer to when you need to.

Module 7 - Health & Safety
To explore the legal obligations of Councils and to highlight the processes and procedures that need to be in place to ensure compliance.

Module 8 - Introduction to Community Engagement
The aim of this introductory module is to explore what is meant by the term 'community engagement' and how councils and councillors can improve how they engage with the communities they serve. Using an interactive approach, the module explores why, how and where councillors currently engage with their communities. The session includes a short overview of key public policy in relation to community engagement and covers the key elements and terminology of community engagement. There is an opportunity for councillors to share and learn from their personal experiences and the session ends with a community engagement planning exercise.

Module 9 - Code of Conduct
A highly interactive and informative module that enables participants to understand the Nolan principles of public life and develop a more in-depth knowledge of the Code of Conduct and how it applies to local councillors.

The module specifically covers the following:

- The Nolan Principles
- What Councillors must do and must not do
- Personal/Prejudicial interests
- Predetermination & Predisposition
- How the Code is Policed

The learning will be reinforced through practical exercises and a DVD of the Ombudsman explaining his role will be featured.

Module 10 - Chairing Skills
To explore the role of the Chair and to consider the associated issues and highlight effective approaches to effective chairing of meetings.

Module 11 – No Longer included in the programme

Module 12 – Creating a Community Place Plan To provide Councils with the knowledge and skills to create community plans and better understand strategy and forward budgeting.

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Module 13 - Community Engagement Part II (Tools & Techniques)
To provide an insight into the way in which Councils can build on community engagement approaches and provide real leadership to help their communities and towns grow and thrive.

Module 14 - Equality & Diversity
Providing Councils with a better understanding of equality law and the Welsh Language Act and assisting Councils to promote equality and avoid unfair discrimination.

Module 15 - Information Management To provide Councils with a better understanding of the legislation relating to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

Module 16 - Use of IT, Websites & Social Media
To provide Councils with a greater knowledge of the benefits of reaching out to their communities through electronic communication.

Module 17 - Making Effective Grant Applications
To enable Councils to better understand the type of grant schemes available and to put together effective applications to support capital projects.

Module 18 – Effective Staff Management
To provide an insight into the ways in which Councils can arrange for the effective management of their staff.

Module 19 – Devolution of Services / Community Asset Transfer
Devolution of services is currently an important topic in Wales and the challenges and opportunities it presents are / or will be of concern to most Community and Town Councils. The training module provides a highly interactive experience for councillors and clerks and covers the following key areas:

- Models for asset transfers
- Understanding lease issues and freehold transfers
- Models for and approaches to Service Devolution
- Policy Drivers
- Opportunities, Pitfalls and Planned outcomes
- Due Diligence Arrangements
- Asset Management Responsibilities
- Important role of Councillors
- Community Engagement approaches

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Module 20 – Wellbeing of Future Generations ~~Act 2015 / Sustainability~~
This course will explain the principles of Sustainable development and relate these principles to the needs and aspirations of the communities you serve, identify relevant policies (e.g. Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015) and relate them to the powers and duties of local councils ensuring readiness to lead a process of Sustainable development planning and reporting.

Module 21 – Understanding Local Government Finance – Advanced
This course is aimed at building on the knowledge gained from attendance at Module 6 – Local Government Finance. It will appeal especially to Chairs, those serving on Finance Committees and to any Councillor who wishes to learn more about the governance and accountability framework in which councils are required to operate.
This Module covers the following areas:

- Governance and Accountability
- Roles and Responsibilities
- The Annual Governance Statement
- The Statement of Accounts
- Internal Controls and their Review
- Compliance with the Law
- The Rights of Electors
- Risk Assessment
- Internal Audit
- Liabilities and Commitments
- Trust Funds
- Reserves and Provisions
- Investments

Module 22 - Understanding Mediation – Not available remotely, unless on a bespoke basis.

Module 23 – Community Asset Transfer
To provide Community and Town Councils with a practical 'step-by-step' guide to taking on a Community Asset Transfer project and to raise awareness of some of the common issues that might arise and how these might be overcome. It will also highlight some of the skills that will be required and the tools that you can use to help make your CAT project successful.

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Module 24 – Finance and Governance Toolkit
To help Community and Town Councils operate within a framework of law and good practice and to see how the Toolkit helps Councils to meet legal requirements and achieve good practice and understand that operating professionally gives the Council, Officers and Community confidence that the Council is competent in all aspects of financial management, governance and service delivery.

Module 25 – Biodiversity basics Part 1 and Module 26 Part 2
A 2-part course teaching Councils the basics of biodiversity, nature recovery and ecology need to make good decisions and effective Biodiversity Action plans. It follows the same '5 pillars of biodiversity' as introduced in the guidance document. After attending this course Councils will be better placed to write robust BAPs and Section 6 Reports and meet that Section 6 duty of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Module 27 – Nature Project Management
A course delivered over 1 session that demonstrates the basics of project management in the context of nature and environmental projects. Handouts will include a project checklist for Councils to help them manage projects in line with Biodiversity principles, on time and in budget. It is hoped that all Councils that attend this course will have already attended the Biodiversity Basics Course first

Module 29 – Digital Foundations
This module will provide clarity about what we mean about digital tools such as remote meeting platforms and use of outlook with one drive. It will also cover email, cloud storage, accounting software, specialist platforms, cyber security tools and basic AI tools. The module will be delivered in a way that will be understandable to all attendees.

Module 30 – Digital Basics to Confident Practice
Building on Part 1 'Digital Foundations' it will help attendees use digital tools more confidently; make better and more informed decisions about technology and help reduce the risks as more council business moves online. The module will be delivered in a way that will be understandable to all attendees.

Module 31 – Introduction to Culture Change
"The key aims of the module are to assist councils in understanding their organisational culture; to recognise how culture impacts on effectiveness; to help attendees reflect honestly on current behaviours and practices; and to identify what practical steps can be taken to achieve positive change.'

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Appendix B

Abertillery And Llanhilleth Community Council
Councillor/Member Training Plan

This training plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 67 of the 2021 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act
This training plan has been prepared with guidance from One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks. This plan has been approved by Council and will be reviewed annually or, as and when a councillor or staff member requests training. (the date when the training was last completed is shown).

	New Councillor Induction	Code of Conduct	Local Govt Finance	Local Govt Finance - advanced	Chairing Skills	The Council Meeting	The Council as an Employer	Understanding the Law	Planning & Flood Risk in Wales	Biodiversity Action Plan	Equality & Diversity
Module Number	**n/a**	**9**	**6**	**21**	**10**	**5**	**3**	**4**			**14**
Ben Owen-Jones		Nov 2021									
Barrie Page		Nov 2021			Feb 2023		Feb 2023				
Steve Bard		Mar 2024	Aug 2023	Aug 2026	July 2023			Jun 2026		Jan 2026	
Graham White	Jul 2017	Aug 2017									
Joshua Rawcliffe	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Nov 2022	Aug 2023	Aug 2023		Nov 2023		Mar 2026	Jan 2026	
Chris Hill		Jan 2024									
Nick Simmons	Jul 2017	May 2025	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Sept 2024		Aug 2024	Nov 2018			
Peter Adamson		Jun 2025	Feb 2024								
Rob Phillips		Nov 2021	Nov 2019				Mar 2023				
Ralph Henderson		Feb 2024									
Tracey Dyson	July 2017	Nov 2023	Nov 2019		Nov 2019		Feb 2024				
Bernard Wall	July 2017	Aug 2017									
Mark Lewis	July 2017	July 2025	Feb 2024	Jun 2026	Jul 2026		Jul 2026	Nov-2025			
Bruno Goes	Jun 2024	Jun 2024	Sept 2024								
Lucy Harmer	Jun 2024	Jun 2024	Nov 2025		Jun 2025		Mar 2026				
Mike Whatley	Jun 2024	Oct 2024	Dec 2024								Jan 2025
Ivor Beynon		Jan 2025									
Frankie Baker		Mar 2025	Mar 2025								
Richard Catlin	Sept 2025	Sept 2025									
Riley Overton (YR)											
Jackson Powell (YR)	Feb 2025	May 2025									

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	Introduction to Community Engagement	Community Engagement II	Effective Grant Applications	Use of Websites, IT & Social Media	Devolution of Services/Asset Transfers	Community/ Place Planning	Well-being of Future Generations Act	Finance & Governance Toolkit	Community Asset Transfers	The Council
Module Number	**8**	**13**	**17**	**16**	**19**		**20**	**24**	**23**	**1**
Ben Owen-Jones										
Barrie Page	Nov 2023	Nov 2023	Feb 2024	Feb 2024						
Steve Bard	May 2018		Feb 2026					Jun 2024		
Graham White	May 2018					Feb 2018				
Joshua Rawcliffe								Jun 2024	Jul 2026	
Chris Hill										
Nick Simmons	May 2018		Oct 2019		June 2018	Feb 2018	May 2018		Oct 2019	
Peter Adamson	May 2018									
Rob Phillips	May 2018		Oct 2018							
Ralph Henderson										
Tracey Dyson	May 2018									
Bernard Wall	May 2018									
Mark Lewis	May 2018		Oct 2018	Mar 2024			May 2018	Sept 2024	Oct 2019	Mar 2026
Bruno Goes										
Lucy Harmer										
Mike Whatley										
Ivor Beynon										
Frankie Baker										
Richard Catlin										
Riley Overton (YR)										
Jackson Powell (YR)										

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	Effective Staff Management									
Module Number	**18**									
Ben Owen-Jones										
Barrie Page										
Steve Bard										
Graham White										
Joshua Rawcliffe										
Chris Hill										
Nick Simmons										
Peter Adamson										
Rob Phillips										
Ralph Henderson										
Tracey Dyson										
Bernard Wall										
Mark Lewis	Jun 2026									
Bruno Goes										
Lucy Harmer										
Mike Whatley										
Ivor Beynon										
Frankie Baker										
Richard Catlin										
Riley Overton (YR)										
Jackson Powell (YR)										

Date approved by Council: 26 November 2025
Date of next review: November 2026
Date approved by Council: 25 November 2026
Date of next review: November 2027

Under section 67(4) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, there is a duty on councils to review the training plan.

The Councillor/Member training budget for the financial year 2025/26 is £1000
The Councillor/Member training budget for the financial year 2026/27 is £1000

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Appendix C

Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council
Staff Training Plan

This training plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 67 of the 2021 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act
This training plan has been prepared with guidance from One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks. This plan has been approved by Council and will be reviewed annually or, as and when a councillor or staff member requests training. (the date when the training was last completed is shown).

Training Attended	Steve Edwards (Clerk/RFO)	Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk)	Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk)
The Council		Nov 2023	Nov 2023
Code of Conduct	Jan 2017	Dec 2023	Dec 2023
Local Govt. Finance	Mar 2017	Jan 2024	Dec 2023
Understanding the Law		Nov 2023	Nov 2023
Local Govt. Finance (Advanced)	Jul 2019		
The Council Meeting		Nov 2023	Nov 2023
Introduction to Community Engagement	May 2018	Nov 2025	
Information Management	Sept 2017	Aug 2025	Aug 2025
Making Effective Grant Applications	Feb 2018		
Use of Websites, IT & Social Media			Feb 2024
Website Accessibility		Dec 2024	
Public Access Defibrillators		June 2024	
First Aid	Sept 2023	Jan 2025	Jan 2025
Road Closures	Nov 2022		
Rialtas Accounting	Mar 2025	Mar 2025	Mar 2025
Accelerate Climate Action		Sept 2024	Sept 2024
Terrorism Awareness		Mar 2025	Apr 2024
ILCA – Intro to Local Council Admin	Mar 2017	Dec 2023	Dec 2023
FILCA – Financial Intro to Local Council Admin		Mar 2025	May 2025
Introduction to CiLCA		Jan 2025	Jan 2025

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EVAC Safety Chair	Mar 2024	Mar 2024	Mar 2024
Training Attended	**Steve Edwards (Clerk/RFO)**	**Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk)**	**Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk)**
Getting People Engaged with Social Media			Nov 2024
CiLCA – Building Your Portfolio		Nov 2025	Nov 2025
Organising Safe, Successful Events			Apr 2025
Introduction to Planning		Nov 2025	
OVW/SLCC Conference			Nov 2025
Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures		Feb 2025	
Managing Local Council Elections			Jan 2026
CiLCA		July 2026	August 2026
Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers			August 2026
Communities Prepared		August 2026	

Date approved by Council: 26 November 2025
Date of next review: November 2026
Date approved by Council: 25 November 2026
Date of next review: November 2027

Under section 67(4) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, there is a duty on councils to review the training plan.

The staff training budget for the financial year 2025/26 is £1500

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Abertillery & Llanhilleth Community Council

Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Council to interact in a way that improves communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website, a Facebook page and Instagram profile, and uses email to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. This Policy will be kept under regular review to reflect any new arrangements.

The Council Facebook and Instagram pages intend to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our communities and promote our community positively.

Social Media communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere which we do not have permission to share
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details
- Be moderated by the officers of the Council
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

All Communications

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council pages are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, the following guidelines should be observed:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged, but personal attacks on

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anyone, including the Council, members or staff, will not be permitted.

- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's pages for commercial purposes or to advertise, market or sell products.

The website and other outlets are not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us.

Sending a message/post via Facebook or Instagram will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Council via email:

clerk@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law.

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore it, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited resources available. Any information posted on the Facebook or Instagram pages not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked. The Council may post a statement that '*A post breaching the Council's Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy has been removed*'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law, the person who posted it will be able to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

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Council Website

Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every comment we receive, particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

The following items will NOT be included on the website:

- Articles affiliated to, or promoting any political organisation;
- Commercial advertisements;
- Publicity for any non-charitable fundraising event.

Council Email

The Officers to the Council have their own council email address: clerk@abertilleryandllanhilleth-wcc.gov.uk

The email account is monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm. We aim to reply to all queries as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message will be used as appropriate.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerks are responsible for dealing with all email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk or Deputy Clerks, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Council's email address. New emails which require data to be passed on will be followed up where necessary with a data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

Individual councillors are also provided with council-owned email addresses and are at liberty to communicate directly with constituents in relation to their own personal views and, if appropriate, copy in the Council email address. Any emails copied to the Clerk become official Council communications and will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Any emails that are sent or received by councillors are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council. This includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

Text Messages and Whatsapp (SMS)

Members and the Clerk may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Use of SMS should be limited to:

- Reminders (but not as the primary means of notification) of practical aspects of meetings, for example dates and times;
- A tool for rapid communication for sharing information in the event of an emerging situation facing the community, for example, flooding;

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SMS should not be used for:

- Day-to-day discussion of, and views on, Council policies and their implementation;
- As evidence of agreement/disagreement;
- An alternative to voting;
- An agreement of a specific course of action or financial commitment by the Council;
- Providing feedback to other Councillors;
- Proposing agenda items, sharing papers, notification in advance of apologies.

Video Conferencing

If this medium is used to communicate, this policy also applies.

The Council is able to hold formal meetings via video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council

The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

Councillors are required to abide by the Code of Conduct and the General Data Protection regulation (formerly the Data Protection Act) in all their work on behalf of the Council

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to be aware of the confidentiality of information they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through prescribed procedures. It may result in a member being reported to the Public Services Ombudsman. It may also lead to criminal proceedings.

Members should also be careful only to copy essential recipients in to emails. Think about whether you need to, and if possible avoid using the 'Reply to All' option, but of course copy in all who need to know and ensure irrelevant email trails (earlier emails on the same subject which are no longer relevant) are removed.

Councillors who post on social media must observe the Code of Conduct. Councillors are personally responsible for the social media content they create, publish and share. Being a Councillor does not prevent a member of the public from pursuing legal action following the publication of untrue statement and Councillors may be held personally liable.

Any Councillor posting, referring to themselves as a Councillor – even if it is in a personal capacity – may be considered as acting in an official capacity.

When posting to social media, it should be remembered that:

- The Councillor is an elected representative of the Council;
- Any post can affect the reputation of the Council;
- It is the Council which is the corporate decision-making body – no Councillor can independently make decisions for the Council over social media;

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- Some issues and communications are best left to the Council's official social media accounts;
- Having a single voice or message can be critical in some situations;
- The Council cannot be involved in party political issues;
- It is not necessary to respond or make comment on everything on social media – in fact sometimes it is better not to;
- Posts must not contain any form of discrimination – including racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or religious intolerance.

Everyone should be reminded that a good general rule is that if there is uncertainty about something – stop, think and ask for advice before doing anything else.

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Date of Review: September 2026

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THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH
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Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of document.

1.2 Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

1.3 Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

1.4 It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.

1.5 In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

2. Scope and Objectives of the Policy

2.1 The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of – and if so by what method.

2.2 There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value. Unimportant records of information include:

- 'With compliments' slips.
- Catalogues and trade journals.
- Non-acceptance of invitations.

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- Trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to Council business.
- Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
- Out of date distribution lists.

2.3 Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports may be destroyed.

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2.4 Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to be disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations

3. Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

3.1 Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation at least on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.

3.2 Councils should ensure that all employees are aware of the retention/disposal schedule.

4. Document Retention Protocol

4.1 Councils should have in place an adequate system for documenting the activities of their service. This system should take into account the legislative and regulatory environments to which they work.

4.2 Records of each activity should be complete and accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:

- Facilitate an audit or examination of the business by anyone so authorised.
- Protect the legal and other rights of the Council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
- Verify individual consent to record, manage and record disposal of their personal data.
- Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.

4.3 To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:

- Records created and maintained should be arranged in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information under the General Data Protection Regulations
- Documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining should be placed at the records office.

4.4 The retention schedules in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention or Disposal provide guidance on the recommended minimum retention periods for specific classes of documents and records. These schedules have been compiled from recommended best practice from the Public Records Office, the Records Management Society of Great Britain and in accordance with relevant legislation.

4.5 Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

5. Document Disposal Protocol

5.1 Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:

- Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
- Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?

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- Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
- Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?

5.2 When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned. A record of the disposal will be kept to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations.

5.3 Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:

- Non-confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.
- Confidential records or records giving personal information: shred documents.
- Deletion of computer records.
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

5.4 The following principles should be followed when disposing of records:

- All records containing personal or confidential information should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. Failure to do so could lead to the Council being prosecuted under the General Data Protection Regulations.
- the Freedom of Information Act or cause reputational damage.
- Where computer records are deleted steps should be taken to ensure that data is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner.
- Where documents are of historical interest it may be appropriate that they are transmitted to the County Records office.
- Back-up copies of documents should also be destroyed (including electronic or photographed documents unless specific provisions exist for their disposal).

~~5.5 Records should be maintained of appropriate disposals. These records should contain the following information:~~

- ~~The name of the document destroyed.~~
- ~~The date the document was destroyed.~~
- ~~The method of disposal.~~

6. Data Protection Act 2018 – Obligation to Dispose of Certain Data

6.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 ('Fifth Principle') requires that personal information must not be retained longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally obtained. Section 1 of the Data Protection Act defines personal information as:

> Data that relates to a living individual who can be identified:
> a) from the data, or
> b) from those data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller.
> It includes any expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the Council or other person in respect of the individual.

6.2 The Data Protection Act provides an exemption for information about identifiable living individuals that is held for research, statistical or historical purposes to be held indefinitely provided that the specific requirements are met.

6.3 Councils are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the principles of the under the General Data Protection Regulations namely:

- Personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met.

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- Personal data shall only be obtained for specific purposes and processed in a compatible manner.
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant, but not excessive.
- Personal data shall be accurate and up to date.
- Personal data shall not be kept for longer than is necessary.
- Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject.
- Personal data shall be kept secure.

6.4 External storage providers or archivists that are holding Council documents must also comply with the above principles of the General Data Protection Regulations.

7. Scanning of Documents

7.1 In general once a document has been scanned on to a document image system the original becomes redundant. There is no specific legislation covering the format for which local government records are retained following electronic storage, except for those prescribed by HM Revenue and Customs.

7.2 As a general rule hard copies of scanned documents should be retained for three months after scanning.

7.3 Original documents required for VAT and tax purposes should be retained for six years unless a shorter period has been agreed with HM Revenue and Customs.

8. Review of Document Retention

8.1 It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document on a regular basis (at least every three years in accordance with the *Code of Practice on the Management of Records* issued by the Lord Chancellor).

8.2 This document has been compiled from various sources of recommended best practice and with reference to the following documents and publications:

- ~~*Local Council Administration*, Charles Arnold-Baker, 12th edition, Chapter 11~~
- ~~NALC LTN 40 – *Local Councils' Documents and Records*, January 2013~~
- ~~NALC LTN 37 – *Freedom of Information*, July 2009~~
- ~~*Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records* issued under Section 46 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*~~
- *Local Council Administration, Charles Arnold-Baker, 14th edition, Chapter 11*
- *The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) – Local Council Documents and Records, August 2022*
- *NALC – Freedom of Information, April 2021*
- *Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000*

9. List of Documents

9.1 The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention and Disposal. This is updated regularly in accordance with any changes to legal requirements.

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Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council **Appendix A: List of Potential Documents for Retention or Disposal**

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal
Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	Office	Original signed paper copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage.
Agendas	5 years	Management	Office	Bin (shred confidential waste)
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Office	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management	Office	Bin
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive	Office	N/A
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT	Office	Bin
Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste

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Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT	Office	Confidential waste
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste
VAT records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Office	Confidential waste
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste
Timesheets	Last completed audit year 3 years	Audit (requirement) Personal injury (best practice)	Office	Bin
Wages books/payroll	12 years	Superannuation	Office	Confidential waste
Insurance policies	While valid (but see next two items below)	Management	Office	Bin
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	Office	N/A
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Office	Bin
Town Park equipment inspection reports	21 years		Office	N/A
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Office	N/A

Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Office	N/A
Members' allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant		Office	Bin
Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the Parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information).	Office	N/A
Magazines and journals	Council may wish to keep its own publications For others retain for as long as they are useful and relevant.	The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council which after 1st February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table) to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library). Printed works as	Office	Bin if applicable

		defined by the 2003 Act published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds.		
	Record-keeping			
To ensure records are easily accessible it is necessary to comply with the following: • A list of files stored in cabinets will be kept • Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names	The electronic files will be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive and also in the cloud-based programme supplied by the Council's IT company.	Management	Office	Documentation no longer required will be disposed of, ensuring any confidential documents are destroyed as confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
General correspondence	Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in the policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be kept. Records should be kept for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.	Management	Office	Bin (shred confidential waste) A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.

Correspondence relating to staff	If related to Audit, see relevant sections above. Should be kept securely and personal data in relation to staff should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held. Likely time limits for tribunal claims between 3–6 months Recommend this period be for 3 years	After an employment relationship has ended, a council may need to retain and access staff records for former staff for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions and pensions, and in respect of any related legal claims made against the council.	Office	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Recruitment	6 Months	Candidates for any vacancies have up to six months post appointment to appeal if they have been unsuccessful	Office/ Email system	Shredded.

	Documents from legal matters, negligence and other torts Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.		Office	
Negligence	6 years		Office	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Defamation	1 year		Office	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.

Contract	6 years		Office	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Leases	12 years		Office	Confidential waste.
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years		Office	Confidential waste.
Personal injury	3 years		Office	Confidential waste.
To recover land	12 years		Office	Confidential waste.
Rent	6 years		Office	Confidential waste.
Breach of trust	None		Office	Confidential waste.
Trust deeds	Indefinite		Office	N/A
For Halls, Centres, Recreation Grounds				
Application to hire Invoices Record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT	Office	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Lettings diaries	Electronic files linked to accounts	VAT	Office	N/A
Terms and Conditions	6 years	Management	Office	Bin
Event Monitoring Forms	6 years unless required for claims, insurance or legal purposes	Management	Office	Bin. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR

				regulations.
	For Allotments			
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Office	N/A
Minutes	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Office	N/A
Legal papers	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Office	N/A
	For Burial Grounds			
Register of fees collected Register of burials Register of purchased graves Register/plan of grave spaces Register of memorials Applications for interment Applications for right to erect memorials Disposal certificates Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)	Office	N/A
	Planning Papers			
Applications	1 year	Management	Office	Bin
Appeals	1 year unless significant development	Management	Office	Bin
Trees	1 year	Management	Office	Bin

Local Development Plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Office	Bin
Local Plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Office	Bin
Town/Neighbourhood Plans	Indefinite – final adopted plans	Historical purposes	Office	N/A
	CCTV			
Daily notes	Daily	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste
Radio rotas	1 week	Management	Office	Confidential waste
Work rotas	1 month	Management	Office	Confidential waste
Observation sheets	3 years	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste
Stats	3 years	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste
Signing in sheets	3 years	Management	Office	Confidential waste
Review requests	3 years	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste
Discs – master and working	For as long as required	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste
Internal Operations Procedure Manual	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Office	Confidential waste
Code of Practice	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Office	Confidential waste
Photographs/digital prints	31 days	Data protection	Office	Confidential waste