

**MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Nick Simmons (Chair); Peter Adamson; Steve Bard; Chris Hill; Ben Owen-Jones; Tom Langley-Noel; Barrie Page; Rob Phillips; Deb Pitt; Glyn Smith; Mariola Walters

Via Videolink: Josh Rawcliffe; Allen Rees.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk)

Apologies: Tracey Dyson (Vice Chair); Michaela Assiratti; Graham White.

Absent: Roger Clark; Bernard Wall;

75. APOLOGIES AND WELCOMES

Apologies were received from Michaela Assiratti, Tracey Dyson and Graham White. The Chair welcomed Chris Hill, Tom Langley-Noel and Deb Pitt to their first Council meeting and welcomed back Steve Bard and Allen Rees. The Chair congratulated all five on their recent co-option as Members of the Council.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR DISPENSATIONS

Chris Hill declared an interest in item 78 as the Chair of Six Bells Tennis Club. The Clerk stated that the declaration of an interest was the responsibility of individual Members but, as this was Cllr Hill's first meeting, it was right that the Clerk should offer a direct recommendation to Cllr Hill. He advised that it would be reasonable for the public to perceive the interest as likely to impair the Member's ability to judge the grant application from Six Bells Tennis Club objectively and that Cllr Hill should, therefore, declare a prejudicial interest. As it was not merely a matter of considering the suitability of a single grant application but also a choice between competing applications for a share of a fixed fund, the Clerk recommended that Cllr Hill should leave the chamber for the whole of item 78.

77. MINUTES – 30 NOVEMBER 2022

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

Chris Hill left the chamber at 7.05 pm.

78. SOLAR FARM GRANTS 2022

The Council considered seven Solar Farm Grant applications. The Clerk noted that, while applicants had applied for a total of more than £80,000, the total funds available were £35,000:

Six Bells Tennis Club: £22,000

Steve Bard noted that there is no other tennis club in the community council area and that the proposals promised to further enhance the public facilities available in Six Bells Park. Rob Phillips noted that the application fitted the grant criteria very well and had the potential to make a big difference for a relatively low cost. Ben Owen-Jones questioned whether all the costs were realistic but welcomed the inclusion of disabled

people within the proposals. Peter Adamson questioned whether the proposals would have much benefit for anyone not interested in sport. Allen Rees replied that the proposals aimed to create a community resource that could be used by other local groups and that the application represented an ideal opportunity to support a relatively fledgling organisation.

Six Bells Regeneration Ltd: £7,845.49

Peter Adamson applauded the application's focus on energy-efficiency. Steve Bard believed that the proposals would bring fewer wider community benefits than some other applications.

Gelli Crug Allotment Association: £14,356.74

Allen Rees noted that the association had only recently been re-formed and so it had yet to establish a stable track record. Rob Phillips noted that the association had only twelve current members and Steve Bard remarked that, even if the proposals doubled membership, it would still represent a considerable investment in a small number of local people. Peter Adamson noted that the proposals would support biodiversity and the protection of nature, which would bring wider local community benefits beyond the association members.

Abertillery BG RFC: £19,051

Tom Langley-Noel noted that the rugby club supported activities across many different age groups and attracted people into the town. Steve Bard remarked that the club had greatly developed both local community access and its links with other local community groups. Allen Rees agreed that the club was a credit to the town but noted that the neighbouring bowls club had received a substantial Solar Farm Grant in 2021 and a grant to the rugby club could leave the Council open to accusations of directing a disproportionate amount of investment into one location.

Friends of Bethany: £7,938

Tom Langley-Noel remarked that the application failed to identify potential benefits to the wider community beyond the church congregation. Steve Bard agreed that, while the application made clear the need for repairs, it was not apparent how this would increase local community involvement. The Clerk noted that the legal power of community councils to fund repairs to local churches is a grey area in the law, with two statutory provisions pointing in opposite directions. While this confusion remains, many local councils have avoided awarding such grants for fear of being challenged in court.

Abertillery Amateur Dramatic Society: £4,500

Allen Rees remarked that the application was for support for a single theatrical production with no longer-term benefits. Steve Bard noted that the application failed to meet the minimum Solar Farm Grant criterion of £5,000.

Ebenezer Baptist Church: £5,294.

Rob Phillips and Steve Bard both noted that the church was very active locally and was akin to a community enterprise but questioned the wider benefits of fence repairs and the installation of traffic bollards. Deb Pitt noted that access to the church was difficult and that the bollards would make a difference.

Steve Bard suggested that the wider community benefits of two applications made them stand out above the other applications. He proposed that the available funds be split proportionately between them.

The Council **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £20,000 to Six Bells Tennis Club and a grant of £15,000 to Abertillery BG RFC.

Chris Hill returned to the chamber at 7.44 pm.

79. COUNCIL GRANT CRITERIA

Allen Rees remarked that the proposed changes to the Council Grant criteria and process had not been through any degree of scrutiny and that it would be unwise to accept them without this.

The Council **RESOLVED** to refer the proposed Council Grant criteria and process to the Finance and Grants Committee and to instruct the committee to make recommendations to a future Full Council meeting.

80. COUNCIL GRANTS

The Council **RESOLVED** to award a Council Grant of £450 to Clwb Llan for the provision of educational games.

Tom Langley-Noel and Glyn Smith noted that Welsh Air Ambulance was a national charity based outside the community council area. Chris Hill, Ben Owen-Jones and Barrie Page remarked that the topography of the local area meant that the service had been called upon on a number of recent occasions following incidents in the community council area.

The Council **RESOLVED** to award a Council Grant of £500 towards the provision of a rapid response vehicle.

81. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT – PLACE COMMITTEE

As Chair of the PlaCE Committee, Rob Phillips said that they were of the opinion that it was wrong to assign responsibility for overseeing the Council's duties and responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to a single committee. The legal requirements of the Act applied to all decisions made by the Council and its committees.

- a) The Council **RESOLVED** to give a formal undertaking that the Council will take into account the well-being of future generations in every decision made by the Council, its committees and sub-committees.
- b) The Council **RESOLVED** that its duties and responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (attached) shall be added to the terms of reference of every committee and sub-committee of the Council.
- c) The Council asked the Clerk to consider how Members could be helped to gauge the potential impact on the well-being of future generations when making decisions in Full Council, its committees and sub-committees and to submit options to a future meeting for consideration by the Full Council.

82. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11 January 2023 – budget-setting meeting

The meeting ended at 8.24 pm.

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

Minutes produced by David Cartwright, Clerk.

