

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY
COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 27 MARCH 2019 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Peter Adamson, Keri Bidgood, Gill Clark, Roger Clark, Tracey Dyson, Julie Holt (Chair) (in the Chair), Mark Lewis, Beverley Lucas, Perry Morgan, Gary Oakley, Allen Rees, Nick Simmons and Glyn Smith

Officers: Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk and Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk

ABSENT: Councillors Amanda Edwards, Rob Phillips, Bernard Wall, Graham White and Trudy Williams

227. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Amanda Edwards, Rob Phillips, Bernard Wall and Trudy Williams.

The Chair welcomed and introduced Julian Meek and Tony Flatman, of the Abertillery and Ebbw Valleys Dynamic News, as well as two people who were making a film about the new newspaper and were filming this meeting, for the purposes of that film.

Julian Meek thanked the Chair, staff and members for allowing him to speak and for allowing the filming of the meeting. He referred to the history of the newspaper, which had started in 2015 and ceased production in 2017, but was due to be relaunched, as a free, independent newspaper for the local area, in approx. 7 weeks' time. He stated that the paper would cover ALCC meetings and local news and encouraged members to support the paper and spread the word of its relaunch.

The Chair welcomed the relaunch of the paper and wished success to all concerned.

228. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal or prejudicial interests.

229. MINUTES – COUNCIL – 20 FEBRUARY 2019

Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair.

230. MINUTES – HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH 2019

The members of the Human Resources Committee confirmed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting.

Council RESOLVED that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 1 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, for signature by the Chair, and

their contents be noted.

231. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no public questions for this meeting.

232. COUNCIL ACTION LIST

The Chair referred to the large number of previous decisions which had been actioned and reminded members that those items would now come off the list.

Council RESOLVED to note the updates shown in the action list.

233. FINANCE ORDER

Council RESOLVED to note and approve the payments listed in the Finance Order.

234. BUDGET 2019/20: PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS WORKING GROUP (P&PWG) REPORT

The Clerk circulated copies of the notes of the P&PWG meetings held on 11 March and 18 March 2019, containing the working group's recommendations back to Council.

The Chair stated that the Council on 17 April would be considering the year-end report on the 2018/19 budget. It would at that point have more information on the spending made in the current year, which would help inform spending plans for the year ahead. It would be appropriate therefore to delay further discussions on the budget itself (i.e. the amounts the Council wished to spend on what new initiatives) until then. Furthermore, that delay would allow time for the new working groups to have their initial meetings (if Council agreed to establish new working groups) and discuss what projects they might propose to take forward in the year ahead. The Council tonight should therefore focus on the recommendations of the P&PWG dated 18 March, not 11 March.

Following discussion of the benefits of smaller working groups and discussion of who wished to serve on which groups, Council **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That a Youth Engagement Working Group be established, to work with external agencies, examine whether any external grants/funding may be available, examine how ALCC can support existing youth engagement activities, whilst avoiding duplication, formulate proposals for youth engagement initiatives, and report back to the Council with recommendations
- (2) That Councillors Gill Clark, Julie Holt, Perry Morgan, Gary Oakley and Glyn Smith be appointed to the Youth Engagement Working Group, and the group invite other members and partners to meetings as it sees fit, for specific discussions
- (3) That a Leisure and Tourism Working Group be established, to work with external agencies, examine whether any external grants/funding may be available, examine how ALCC can support existing leisure and tourism activities, whilst avoiding duplication, formulate proposals for a 2019 Party in the Park, a Fun Run, Town in Bloom, a Rugby 7s tournament, public toilets and car parking provision, and report back to the Council with recommendations

- (4) That Councillors Peter Adamson, Keri Bidgood, Tracey Dyson, Mark Lewis, Beverley Lucas and Nick Simmons be appointed to the Leisure and Tourism Working Group, and the group invite other members (e.g. Councillors Roger Clark, Rob Phillips and Allen Rees) and partners to meetings as it sees fit, for specific discussions
- (5) That the working groups elect their own Chairs at their first meetings
- (6) That the relevant members be consulted on the dates, times and venues for the first meetings of the working groups
- (7) That Council invites the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent to a future meeting, to discuss police resources.

235. SOLAR FARM GRANT 2018: P&PWG REPORT

The Clerk circulated copies of the notes of the P&PWG meeting held on 18 March 2019 regarding the solar farm grant.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the response of the solar farm company to the Council's request dated 5 March 2019 (i.e. that the company will agree to grant the £35,000 requested for the Cwmtillery Project, as listed in the email from the Clerk dated 5 March 2019, with the exception of the £3,032 amount for contingency)
- (2) that the £3,032 funding gap (previously identified as contingency funding) be used instead for the following purposes:
 - £1,500 – Perimeter native hedging around wood
 - £1,000 – Full ecological impact assessment for development of the wood
 - £532 – Memorial Garden planting/landscaping.

236. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS OR ASSISTANCE AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) to grant £200 to the Abertillery Rock and Blues Festival Committee, to pay towards the costs of banners, posters and flyers for the event on 17 to 19 May 2019
- (2) to grant £100 to the Llanhilleth Heritage Society to help towards the costs of their History of Llanhilleth Colliery Exhibition
- (3) to seek further information from Abertillery Bowls Club, on whether they are a limited company and on the amount they are seeking, and report back to Council
- (4) to decline the request for a donation from the Urdd National Eistedfodd 2019, as this is a national event and people and schools have to pay the costs of entry
- (5) to grant £200 to the Wales Air Ambulance Charity, to help towards the costs of life saving Air Ambulance missions, some of which may be in the area of ALCC.

237. DEFIBRILLATORS

The Deputy Clerk updated Council on progress with the defibrillators project. The defibs and cabinets had arrived, but the wrong cabinets (without locks) had been supplied. The correct cabinets were on order (at a cost of an additional £405) and were expected to arrive in the next few days. Agreement had been reached with the owners of the nine sites (except Llanhilleth Institute) where the defibrillators would be installed. Three

quotes from electrical installers had also been received and the successful contractor would be selected when the correct cabinets arrived, on the basis of cost, experience and local labour. Installation and advertising would follow shortly after. The Council did not need to decide on the quotes, as the officers had been given authority by the Council to get on with delivering the project and referring back to Council may delay the project further. Also, different electricians may be used for different sites. Members asked the officers to get contractors in place as soon as possible, so that the defibrillators could be installed as soon as possible after the new cabinets arrived.

Council RESOLVED to note progress.

238. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) to appoint Councillor Beverley Lucas and Councillor Amanda Edwards to serve on the Planning and Environment Committee
- (2) to appoint Councillor Beverley Lucas and Councillor Amanda Edwards to serve on the Projects and Partnerships Working Group
- (3) to appoint Councillor Mark Lewis to serve on the Joint Committee of Local Councils in Blaenau Gwent
- (4) to nominate Councillor Beverley Lucas to serve on the Governing Body of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg and
- (5) to disband the Centenary Events 2018 Working Group.

239. REPORTS BACK ON RELEVANT TRAINING OR MEETINGS ATTENDED

Councillor Glyn Smith and the Clerk reported back on the meeting held earlier today of the Joint Committee of Local Councils in Blaenau Gwent. This was the first meeting of the committee since 2014/15 and further meetings would follow, possibly quarterly. Initial discussions revolved around future arrangements and meeting dates as well as whether any funding may be left over from 5 years ago, when each Council had contributed £200 to the costs of administering the Joint Committee.

Council RESOLVED to note the report back.

240. LLANHILLETH PARK

The Clerk read out a letter received from Mark Howland, the Property Asset and Review Officer of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) on 5 March 2019. Mr Howland had explained that Llanhilleth Rugby Football Club and Football Club were both proposing to submit bids to take on the running of the changing room and pitch/training area at Llanhilleth Park. BGCBC wanted to know if the Community Council wished to take on the running of these facilities instead.

Council **RESOLVED** that it does NOT wish to take on the running of these facilities.

241. PAYROLL SERVICES PROVISION

The Clerk reported on the successful negotiations with Blaenau Gwent County Borough

Council's Payroll Services, since the Council's decision on 12 December 2018, and the current position, in relation to changing ALCC's payroll service provider.

Council RESOLVED to note that payroll services (including payment of ALCC staff, pensions and HMRC by automatic bank transfer) will in future be provided by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Payroll Services, at a cost to ALCC of £50 per month, in line with the Council's decisions of 12 December 2018.

242. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) FOR WALES: ANNUAL REPORT

The Clerk outlined the background to and content of the 2019 annual report of the IRP, along with the Council's options and previous decisions on members' allowances.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) To note that the IRP has decided that every member must be paid an allowance of £150 each for expenses/costs incurred per year, unless they individually write to the Clerk, stating that they wish to forego that allowance
- (2) not to pay any additional allowances to members for special responsibilities
- (3) that every member may claim travel costs for approved duties in line with the rates in the IRP report
- (4) that every member may claim subsistence expenses for approved duties in line with the rates in the IRP report, if an overnight stay is required
- (5) not to pay financial loss compensation to any member
- (6) to note that the IRP has decided that every member must be paid "cost of care" reimbursement in line with the rates in the IRP report, on production of receipts
- (7) not to pay a Civic Head Payment
- (8) not to pay a Deputy Civic Head Payment
- (9) to note the other determinations of the IRP relating to town/community councils.

243. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair referred to the recent award of the Freedom of the Borough of Blaenau Gwent to Snooker World Champion Mark Williams of Cwm.

Council RESOLVED to write to Mark Williams with the Council's congratulations.

244. CELEBRATING LOCAL SUCCESS

Council RESOLVED to write to Abertillery Excelsiors FC, who had recently gained promotion; Jack Marshman, who had recently won another UFC fight; and to Bethany Paull, who had recently won Gold and Silver medals at the Special Olympics, with the Council's congratulations, and announce their successes on the ALCC website.

245. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business, by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that disclosure of the matters to be discussed would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of those matters.

The meeting adjourned for a 10-minute break while the public and camera crew left.

246. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Clerk circulated copies of the notes and recommendations of the Christmas Lights Working Group held on 18 March 2018. He also read the contents of a note containing legal advice and advice about insurance liability.

Lengthy debate ensued on the next steps. Members reported that tenants and residents' associations in Llanhilleth, Brynithel and Cwmtillery had stated already that they would provide their own lights in future, with financial help from the Community Council. News was awaited from Six Bells and Aberbeeg, with local ward members due to report back to the Council on those discussions. It was also reported that Bourneville Community Centre had been providing the lights next to the centre for several years already. How much the Council would grant to local areas in future, and what options the Council wished to explore in terms of a new contract were matters for future discussion.

Council RESOLVED:

- (1) That the insurance liability and legal advice be noted
- (2) That the Clerk write to the former contractor, giving him 21 days to remove any remaining lights and informing him that, if he does not do so, the Council will remove them and seek to recover the cost from him
- (3) That the Clerk contact Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to ask whether they could help with removing the remaining Christmas lights (if the former contractor does not remove them)
- (4) That (if the former contractor does not remove the remaining lights and BGCBC is unable to help), the Council seeks quotes for and pays for the removal of the remaining lights and seeks to recover the cost from the former contractor
- (5) That Council notes that groups in Brynithel, Llanhilleth and Cwmtillery have already indicated that they would be happy to organise their own Christmas lights in future, subject to some financial help from the Community Council
- (6) That members continue discussions with local tenants and residents' groups and other groups in Six Bells and Aberbeeg, about them providing their own lights in future, with some financial help from the Community Council, and report back
- (7) That further steps in relation to deciding to go out to tender for a new Christmas lights contract be held in abeyance, pending confirmation of the outcome of members' discussions with local groups.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Clerk