

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2021 AT 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Gary Oakley (Chair); Nick Simmons (Vice Chair); Peter Adamson; Mark Lewis; Bev Lucas; Perry Morgan; Rob Phillips; Glyn Smith; Bernard Wall; Graham White.

Officers: David Cartwright (Clerk); Steve Edwards (Deputy Clerk).

Others: Sgt Neil Pigeon, Gwent Police; PC Kate Evans, Gwent Police (until end of item 119).

ABSENT: Michaela Assiratti; Roger Clark; Tracey Dyson and Allen Rees,

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Michaela Assiratti, Tracey Dyson and Allen Rees.

The Council expressed their condolences to Cllr Michaela Assiratti on her recent family bereavement.

The Chair welcomed Sgt Pigeon and PC Evans.

118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Rob Phillips declared a personal interest with regards to Item 123 as his nephew is Secretary of Abertillery Cricket Club, which had applied for a Solar Farm Grant.

119. POLICE UPDATE

PC Evans reported that crime figures in the borough were currently low and that Abertillery's crime rate was now the lowest of the four towns in the borough. She reported that anti-social behaviour (ASB) calls to the Police regarding youth nuisance in the Community Council area had fallen from 207 in 2019/20 and 142 in 2020/21 to only 94 so far in 2021/22. PC Evans stated that the *Off The Streets* youth project, funded by the Community Council, had had "a measurable impact" on the number of youth nuisance incidents. Sgt Pigeon agreed to report back to the Council regarding the proportion of ASB calls to the Police that led to prosecutions.

Councillors remarked on the lack of enforcement action taken against vehicles parked on pavements and vehicles parked illegally outside businesses, preventing deliveries. Sgt Pigeon stated that the offence of causing an obstruction required the individual judgment of officers. He reported that Gwent Police were in dialogue with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) regarding both enforcement and prevention.

Councillors asked about illegal off-road motorcycling. PC Evans reported that Gwent Police has officially asked all petrol stations in Blaenau Gwent not to sell fuel for off-road motorbikes, particularly where it was suspected that the rider was under-age. Sgt Pigeon added that the Police were working with the BGCBC Enforcement Team regarding a co-ordinated response to further preventative measures.

Sgt Pigeon and PC Evans left the meeting.

120. MINUTES

Full Council 29 September 2021

Cllr Graham White questioned whether the employment status of the representative from *Off The Streets* had been stated correctly. The Chair responded that the

minutes recorded accurately how the representative had described her employment status in the meeting.

Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes as a correct record.

121. BANK MANDATE

The Council **RESOLVED** to include the new Clerk on the Council's bank mandate.

122. AR DIGITAL

Council **RESOLVED** to move payment to AR Digital for photocopying and printing services to Direct Debit.

123. SOLAR FARM GRANTS

Council considered the recommendations from the Working Group that none of the grant applications should receive a Solar Farm Grant. Cllr Graham White asked whether the unallocated grant funding could be passed to the Council. The Chair replied that the criteria agreed with CIC Community Green Energy in 2017 specifically state that the Council cannot be a beneficiary of Solar Farm Grants.

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of the Working Group, to extend the closing date for Solar Farm Grant applications to a date in November and to amend the criteria to permit applications from groups that have not received a Solar Farm Grant within the last two (rather than five) years.

Council **RESOLVED** to add Cllr Peter Adamson to the Solar Farm Grants Working Group and instructed the Working Group to meet as soon as possible to review the criteria for applications for future years.

124. COUNCIL GRANTS

Council **RESOLVED** that officers should request more information from Tenovus Cancer Care and that the charity's application for a Council Grant should be deferred to a later meeting.

Three applications that failed to meet the criteria for Solar Farm Grants were, with the applicants' permission, submitted for Council Grants.

The Clerk informed Members that the Local Government Act 1894 precluded councils from funding "ecclesiastical charities" for "any spiritual purpose." Although this restriction appeared to be overturned by the Local Government Act 1972, the principle had never been clarified in the courts and, consequently, such funding could be open to legal challenge.

Council **RESOLVED** to award a Council Grant of £740 to Bethany Christmas Craft and Gift Project subject to any overtly religious literature being distributed separately from materials funded by the grant.

Council **RESOLVED** that officers should provide information about previous Council grant funding for Abertillery Orpheus Ladies Choir and that the choir's application for a Council Grant should be deferred to a later meeting.

Council **RESOLVED** that officers should provide information about previous Council grant funding for Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association and should request more information about the 'Friends of Granny's Wood' group and that the association's application for a Council Grant should be deferred to a later meeting.

125. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Cllr Rob Phillips noted that, from 31 December 2021, Henley's Coaches would no longer provide a bus service to Cwmtillery, Blaenau Gwent or Brynithel. He also noted the recent reduction of taxi services in the Community Council area during the

evening. He stated that the Ebbw Fach Valley is not a wealthy area and relies disproportionately on public transport. Consequently, many local people were in danger of becoming isolated.

Council **RESOLVED** that officers should write to the constituency MS, regional MSs, constituency MP and local Borough Councillors inviting them to a meeting to address the issue.

Council **RESOLVED** that public transport should be added to the responsibilities of the Community Council's Planning and Environment Committee.

126. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Council **RESOLVED** to release the following budgeted monies to community groups:
Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association (£3,000)
Brynithel Community Centre (£1,500)
Swffryd Community Centre (£1,500)
Bourneville Community Centre (£1,500).

Council **RESOLVED** to add funding of Christmas lanterns at their usual cost.

127. CO-OPTIONS

This item was moved higher up the agenda by the Chair in order to ensure that it was addressed within the meeting's two-hour time limit.

Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mihangel ap Williams as Member for the Abertillery ward.

The Clerk informed the meeting that three applicants had applied for two vacancies as members of the Llanhilleth ward. Members would need to choose two of the three to be co-opted to the Llanhilleth ward. The remaining applicant would be co-opted to either of the other wards with a current vacancy.

Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Barrie Page and Jaqueline Ledbury as Members for the Llanhilleth ward.

Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Ben Owen-Jones as a Member and that he be asked to become a member for either Abertillery or Six Bells.

128. PENYBONT CRAFTERS

This item was moved higher up the agenda by the Chair in order to ensure that it was addressed within the meeting's two-hour time limit.

The Clerk reported that Penybont Crafters had received a Council Grant of £185 earlier this year to fund the purchase of a food mixer but had subsequently received a suitable food mixer as a gift.

Council **RESOLVED** that Penybont Crafters be permitted to use the Council Grant for a similar purpose to that originally intended.

129. CHAIR'S CHARITY

This item was moved higher up the agenda by the Chair in order to ensure that it was addressed within the meeting's two-hour time limit.

The Chair announced that his nominated charity for 2021-22 would be Clwb Llan of Llanhilleth.

130. FINANCE AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

This item was moved higher up the agenda by the Chair in order to ensure that it was addressed within the meeting's two-hour time limit.

Council **RESOLVED** to authorise the Finance and Grants Committee to review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in the New Year.

131. CHAIRS' PHOTOGRAPHS

Council **RESOLVED** to continue the tradition of displaying framed photographs of previous Chairs of the Council but to defer releasing a suitable budget until officers had confirmed whether four previous chairs would agree to having their photographs displayed and three suitable quotes had been obtained from professional photographers.

- 132.** The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed to be 24 November 2021 at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.

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

Minutes produced by David Cartwright, Clerk.