

The Chair of Caldicot Town Council  
Sandy Lane  
Caldicot  
NP26 4NA

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

Concerns over the governance of Caldicot Town Council

Dear Chair,

Please find enclosed my complaint concerning a number of governance issues within Caldicot Town Council.

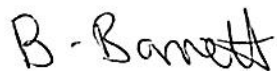
I have sought to present the concerns factually where there is supporting evidence. Where I have expressed an opinion, these have been identified as such. I take my responsibility as a town councillor very seriously, and I feel the following concerns must be addressed.

I am committed to supporting effective governance and maintaining public confidence in the council's work.

I request that an extraordinary meeting of the council be convened to discuss the matters raised within my complaint.

In support of my request, as per Standing Order 6b, Cllr Harris supports my request for an extraordinary meeting of the council.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Ben Barrett

I support the convening of an extraordinary meeting to consider the enclosed complaint.

Cllr James Harris



### **Complaint 1: Failure to comply with Standing Order 4. d) vi & vii**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

Standing Orders

#### **What occurred**

At the Personnel Committee meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026, the committee appointed its own chair, following the advice of the locum/temporary clerk.

Standing Orders 4. d) vi & vii state that full council should appoint the chairs for standing committees. By definition, the personnel committee is a standing committee, as it is a permanent committee with delegated authority. Therefore, this is a breach of Standing Order 4.

Further to this, Standing Order 4. d) ii states that a standing committee shall arrange a calendar of dates up until the next annual meeting. Given this was agreed at the 2026 Annual Meeting, this must be a standing committee.

#### **Evidence**

Personnel Committee Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Undermines the council's agreed governance framework.
- Decisions taken under the leadership of an improperly appointed chair may be open to challenge, causing uncertainty regarding the validity of committee proceedings.
- Failure to follow Standing Orders sets a precedent that governance requirements can be disregarded, weakening compliance across the Council.
- The breach compromises transparency by removing a decision from the forum designated by Standing Orders to make it.

## **Complaint 2: Failure to comply with Standing Order 5(b)**

### **Relevant requirement:**

In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.

### **What occurred**

The date for the annual meeting was not decided by council, but instead council were informed by the chair at the Full Town Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026. This item was not on the agenda. It was also not decided at the annual meeting of 2025. It appears that the annual meeting may have been ultra vires.

### **Evidence**

Minutes of the Full Town Council meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2025.

### **Governance Impact**

- All decisions made at the 2026 Annual Meeting may have been made without powers.
- Loss of public confidence in the correct governance of the Town Council.

### **Complaint 3: Failure to comply with Standing Order 9(b)**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

#### **What occurred**

At the Full Town Council (Planning and Resources) of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026, two items were proposed, seconded, and resolved to take action, although these items were not on the agenda. One item was during public participation, and the other was at the end of the meeting, during the 'date of next meeting' agenda item.

#### **Evidence**

Agenda for the Full Town Council (Planning and Resources) of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Minutes for the Full Town Council (Planning and Resources) of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Non-compliance with standing orders loses public confidence.
- Shows weaknesses in the governance of the council.

#### **Complaint 4: Failure to comply with Standing Order 12(f)**

##### **Relevant requirement:**

No later than seven working days of a council meeting, the council must publish electronically a note setting out:

- The names of the members who attended the meeting, and any apologies for absence;
- Any declarations of interest; and
- Any decisions taken at the meeting, including the outcomes of any votes.

The requirements regarding the note to be published after a council meeting do not apply for private business or where disclosure would be detrimental to acting on those decisions.

##### **What occurred**

On numerous occasions, the town council has failed to follow Standing Order 12(f), and has issued the draft minutes or a note setting out the details above, after the required 7 working days.

##### **Evidence**

Meeting Date	Date that the draft minutes were first published		Additional information
29 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 Full Town Council	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	These were published within the reports for the Planning and Resources Meeting for 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	These were only released following a Freedom of Information request.
24 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 Personnel Committee	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	These were published within the reports for the Planning and Resources Meeting for 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2026.	I raised this with the office on 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2026.
13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 Personnel Committee	Not published		I raised this with the chair on 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 and 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2026.

##### **Governance Impact**

The repeated failure to issue draft minutes within the required timeframe reduces transparency, hinders councillors' ability to scrutinise decisions, and means councillors and the community are not up to date with council decisions and information.

### **Complaint 5: Failure to comply with Standing Order 13(b)**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall undertake training in the code of conduct within six months of the delivery of their acceptance of office form.

#### **What occurred**

It appears that not all councillors have completed the mandatory Code of Conduct training within the required six months. Within the town council training plan, there are only 8 serving councillors mentioned. The other 8 councillors of Caldicot Town Council are missing, and the training plan includes councillors that have either resigned or died.

#### **Evidence**

Caldicot Town Council – training plan web page.

#### **Risks & Governance Impact**

- Failure to show compliance with the statutory training requirements.
- Increased risk of breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Failure to recognise conflicts of interest, due to lack of training.
- Failure to declare personal and prejudicial interests, due to lack of training.
- Decisions may be taken by members who do not fully understand legal obligations.
- Reduced public confidence.

### **Complaint 6: Failure to comply with Standing Order 24(a)**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of Monmouthshire County Council representing the area of the Council.

#### **What occurred**

I believe that the council has not been following Standing Order 24(a); sending an invitation along with the agenda for council meetings to the county councillors representing the Caldicot wards (none of which also serve as town councillors for Caldicot Town Council).

#### **Evidence**

I raised this with the town council, as a Freedom of Information request, which was not answered. Instead, I received a cover letter for another Freedom of Information request that I submitted.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Limits engagement with the elected representatives of Monmouthshire County Council who represent the Caldicot wards.
- Reduces opportunities for information sharing and engagement.
- Undermines confidence that the council's governance procedures are being applied.

## **Complaint 7: Failure to comply with Financial Regulations 4.3 & 4.7**

### **Relevant requirement:**

No later than November each year, the RFO along with the Clerk shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year along with a forecast for the following three financial years where possible, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

Having considered the proposed budget and two-year forecast, the council shall determine its budget requirement by formally setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January or the date set by Monmouthshire County Council for notification for the ensuing financial year.

### **What occurred**

The draft budget was not made public or presented to council until the full town council meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026. It also does not appear in these documents that a 2-year forecast was produced. As per Financial Regulation 1.5, in the RFO's absence, the clerk assumes the role of RFO.

### **Evidence**

Reports presented to the full council for the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.

### **Governance Impact**

- The delay in a budget gives members less time to make an informed decision.
- Reduces transparency and hence loses public trust.
- Undermines accountability to taxpayers.
- Indicate weaknesses in financial management, budget control and compliance with the council's adopted Financial Regulations.

### **Complaint 8: Failure to comply with Financial Regulations 6.10 & 7.8**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council (or finance committee). The council (or committee) shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next [council] meeting (and appended to the minutes).

#### **What occurred**

The council is breaching the Financial Regulations above by not providing council with a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, or a full list of payments made in a month. As per Financial Regulation 1.5, in the RFO's absence, the clerk assumes the role of RFO.

#### **Evidence**

This can be observed by viewing any council meeting agendas, minutes and reports.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Reduces transparency to the councillors and members of the public.
- Prevents councillors from effectively scrutinising expenditure.
- The absence of documented authorisation weakens the audit trail but also means lawful expenditure cannot be demonstrated.
- Indicates deficiencies in the council's internal financial control framework.
- Undermines public confidence in the financial management of the council.

**Complaint 9: Failure to comply with statutory financial requirements**

**Relevant requirement:**

Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014

Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004

**What occurred**

Contrary to the Regulations and Law above, the town council has not published:

- A final budget for 26/27
- A final estimate for 25/26
- An annual return for 24/25
- Final accounts for 23/24 and 24/25.

**Evidence**

The Town Council Finance page of the website.

**Governance Impact**

- Reduces transparency to members of the public.
- Indicates deficiencies in the council's internal financial control framework.
- Undermines public confidence in the financial management of the council.

## **Complaint 10: Unauthorised spending and breach of the terms of reference**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Caldicot Town Council terms of reference adopted May 2025.

### **What occurred**

At a personnel committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026, members resolved to support the proper officer with investigating locum RFO arrangements within the delegated authority and approved budget. I do not believe there is the mandate for this decision within a committee, based on the terms of reference. I also cannot see a budget relating to a locum RFO.

### **Evidence**

Personnel Committee minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> March.

I also raised this matter, as a member of the public, at the Full Town Council meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026. It was not answered with clarity, as the chair stated the council cannot discuss individual members of staff. I believe this is unauthorised spending.

### **Governance Impact**

- Loss of public trust in the council and its views on transparency.
- Unauthorised spending by the council, and so potentially illegal.

**Complaint 11: Breach of the terms of reference (finance committee)**

**Relevant requirement:**

Caldicot Town Council terms of reference adopted May 2025.

**What occurred**

The last finance committee meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The terms of reference state that the committee shall meet at least quarterly.

**Evidence**

Finance Committee Terms of Reference.

Finance Committee page on the Town Council website.

**Governance Impact**

- This indicates governance weaknesses by failing to monitor budgets and finances.
- Financial reports have not been scrutinised and overseen.
- The council's financial oversight arrangements are not operating.

## **Complaint 12: Special responsibility payment concern**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Finance Committee Terms of Reference.

### **What occurred**

As per the payments to members document, a member was paid £500 special responsibility payment as the chair of a committee. This committee did not appear to meet during the relevant period, and the last recorded meeting took place in December 2024. In the absence of committee meetings, it is unclear what committee business was conducted and what additional responsibilities were discharged by the committee chair in support of the Special Responsibility Payment.

### **Evidence**

Payments to members Apr 2025 – Sep 2025.

### **Governance Impact**

- Raises questions on accountability, transparency, and the council's oversight of member payments.
- Member payments are funded by public money and so reduces public confidence.
- Lack of financial control within the town council.

### **Complaint 13: Absent declarations of interests**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

Caldicot Town Council code of conduct.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 'The Code'.

#### **What occurred**

At the annual meeting of full council on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026, council voted to approve the recommendations from the grants committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026. At the grants committee meeting, 3 councillors declared prejudicial interests in items on the agenda, and it was minuted that they left the meeting and did not vote at the relevant points.

At the annual meeting, these 3 councillors did not declare an interest, and continued to vote to approve the recommendations within the minutes. One of these councillors voted to approve a grant to an organisation in which they had a declaration of interest. The clerk nor the chair presiding at the meeting intervened, even when questions were raised by members.

#### **Evidence**

Annual meeting minutes.

Councillor declaration of interests.

The code of conduct.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Lack of transparency and clear governance.
- Loss of public trust.

## **Complaint 14: Failure to maintain an accurate and current register of members' interests**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Caldicot Town Council code of conduct.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 'The Code'

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Guidance

Local Government Act 2000

Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013

### **What occurred**

The register of members' interests displayed on the website is significantly out of date. It contains details of only 4 serving councillors. The other 9 are former councillors who no longer hold office, and at least two of which are deceased. As a result, the published register does not appear to accurately reflect the interests of the current membership of the council and may not provide members of the public with access to current information regarding councillors declared interests.

I have been unable to identify an up-to-date published register containing declarations for all serving councillors.

### **Evidence**

Councillor declaration of interests.

### **Governance Impact**

- Reduced transparency regarding councillors' personal and financial interests.
- Reduced public confidence in the council's governance.
- Impaired accountability, as the public cannot easily determine whether councillors have complied with their obligations to register interests.
- Increased risk of procedural challenges where questions arise regarding members' participation in council decisions.
- Failure to maintain accurate governance records undermines the integrity and reliability of information published by the council.
- Uncertainty regarding whether the council is effectively monitoring and maintaining compliance with members' Code of Conduct obligations.

## **Complaint 15: Inaccuracies and lack of information in the training plan**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Under Section 67 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, town and community councils in Wales have a statutory duty to create, publish, and review a training plan for all councillors and staff.

### **What occurred**

The training plan on the website, albeit detailed as a temporary training plan, is out of date. It includes a member of staff that is no longer employed by the town council, 4 councillors who resigned in February 2026, and a councillor who died in February 2026. It is also missing 2 councillors who were elected uncontested in April 2026, and 4 councillors who were elected (by-election) in May 2026.

There is also no evidence on this training plan that all staff are adequately trained for their positions, and have the skills required to carry out their duties.

As a councillor, I have had no information in relation to the new RFO's financial training and skills, and if he is suitably qualified to undertake this role.

### **Evidence**

Caldicot Town Council – training plan on web page.

### **Governance Impact**

- Failure to show compliance with the statutory training requirements.
- Undermines confidence in the council's monitoring of training requirements.
- Reduced public confidence in the council's ability to govern effectively.
- Weaknesses in the council's arrangements for member and staff development.
- Reduced public confidence.

**Complaint 16: Inability to respond appropriately to Freedom of Information requests**

**Relevant requirement:**

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000

**What occurred**

Various Freedom of Information requests have been requested, and the responses have either exceeded the deadline, unfairly denied, or not received a response.

**Evidence**

I submitted a Freedom of Information request relating to the cemetery, which I feel was unfairly denied, and was also responded to 1 day over the deadline.

I also submitted a Freedom of Information request relating to Standing Order 24. My request was not answered, but instead, I received the exact same document as the response to my cemetery request.

**Governance Impact**

- Denial of the statutory right of the FOIA means there is no accountability or transparency to the public.

## **Complaint 17: Outdated policies and procedures**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014

Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### **What occurred**

Most of the town council policies, procedures and risk assessments on the website are out of date. There are no policies or procedures available in relation to the cemetery or allotments. The terms of reference on the website do not match the terms of reference agreed by council at the 2025 annual meeting.

The Publication Scheme also contains contact details for the former clerk, which is inappropriate, given that this clerk retired over four years ago.

### **Evidence**

Town Council website – policy and procedure webpage.

Terms of reference – annual meeting 2025.

### **Governance Impact**

- Difficulty demonstrating compliance to auditors, regulators, and the public.
- Reduced organisational resilience when staff or councillors change.
- Policies may no longer reflect current legislation, guidance, or best practice.
- Increased risk of challenge, complaint, or regulatory intervention.
- Failure to identify and mitigate foreseeable risks to employees, contractors, councillors, and members of the public.
- Reputational damage arising from preventable incidents.
- Inability to demonstrate that risks have been appropriately considered and managed.
- Difficulty demonstrating that public funds are being managed prudently.
- Increased risk of poor value for money.
- Councillors and staff may not possess the knowledge required to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

**Complaint 18: No evidence of legionella risk assessments or testing**

**Relevant requirement:**

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

HSE Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) L8

**What occurred**

There appears to be no evidence that any legionella risk assessments or testing have been completed.

There have been no Health and Safety Committee meetings since March 2024.

**Evidence**

There are no policies or risk assessments relating to legionella.

**Governance Impact**

- The absence of risk assessments raises concerns over the council's compliance with its health and safety obligations.
- Potential health and safety, legal, financial and reputational risks.
- The council may be unable to demonstrate that it has identified, assessed and managed risks associated with water systems under its control.

### **Complaint 19: Absence of a dog policy or risk assessment**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

#### **What occurred**

It was minuted at the full town council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, that the council resolved to approve a dog policy, subject to clarification on a red zone on Public Spaces Protection Order. Neither a dog policy nor risk assessment is available on the website, and it is unknown whether that clarification was sought.

#### **Evidence**

Not present on the policy page or in the risk assessments on the website.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Failure to comply with statutory risk assessment duties.
- Increased risk of injury to staff, councillors, volunteers and members of the public.
- Increased exposure to legal claims and liability.
- Potential invalidation or limitation of insurance cover if risk management requirements have not been met.
- Evidence of weaknesses in the council's health and safety management arrangements.
- Reduced ability to demonstrate that decisions were made with due regard to foreseeable risks.

## **Complaint 20: Absence of proper contracts**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Procurement and Financial Regulation Compliance

### **What occurred**

Grounds Maintenance and Cemetery Maintenance contracts expired in January 2026, and full council agreed to delay new contracts for 3 months. These are still outstanding, and contractors are working without contracts.

### **Evidence**

Full Town Council Planning and Resources minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

### **Governance Impact**

- Loss of public confidence in fair and proper contracts.
- Lack of contractual protection.
- The services being provided are potentially not providing value for money.
- May expose the council to financial, operational and legal risks.

## **Complaint 21: Reduced accessibility for older and disabled allotment holders**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Equality Act 2010

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 3)

### **What occurred**

The council made a significant change affecting allotment users without evidence of consultation, impact assessment, equality considerations, or a documented decision-making process.

The allotment water was turned off on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and then turned back on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026. Since it has been turned back on, the allotment holders have access to fewer taps and are no longer able/allowed to use hosepipes to fill their water butts. The taps have also changed, meaning they are more difficult for allotment holders to use. It appears that there may not have been due diligence and consideration under the Equality Act 2010. It also appears that there may not have been considerations for accessibility and reasonable adjustments for disabled users.

### **Evidence**

Council meetings and allotment working group minutes.

Notices displayed (or previously displayed) at the allotments.

I have also visited the allotments to see first hand the difficulties that some allotment holders are facing.

### **Governance Impact**

- Reduced transparency if significant changes to allotment facilities were implemented without a clearly documented rationale or supporting evidence.
- Failure to adequately consider the needs of service users before implementing operational changes.
- Increased risk of decisions being perceived as arbitrary, inconsistent, or insufficiently evidence based.
- Reduced confidence amongst allotment holders in the fairness and effectiveness of council decision-making.
- Potential failure to identify and mitigate foreseeable impacts on allotment users through appropriate risk assessment and planning.
- Potential failure to consider accessibility and equality implications for older and disabled users prior to implementing changes.
- Increased risk of complaints, disputes, and reputational damage arising from a lack of consultation or engagement with affected users.

## **Complaint 22: Unfair and improper terms within the allotment tenancy agreement**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Equality Act 2010

Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908

Allotments Act 1922 and 1950

General Data Protection Regulation

### **What occurred**

Clause 12 – It appears that this does not cover all assistance dogs, contrary to the Equality Act 2010.

Clause 29 – This seems to be completely inappropriate to have to disclose specific health conditions to the council, and a breach of GDPR. It does not explain how this information will be used or kept, and who would have access to this sensitive information.

Clause 34 – there is no explanation as to who decides the amount of compensation due.

Clauses 40 and 43 seem unfair and potentially contradictory.

Clause 45 – it is unknown what the council mean as ‘disablement’, and this may be a breach of the Equality Act 2010.

GDPR statement – it is unknown why the allotments records are retained indefinitely; there seems to be no statutory reason.

### **Evidence**

The Allotment Tenancy Agreement 2026.

### **Governance Impact**

- Potential risk of complaints, disputes or legal challenges from tenants.
- Loss of public confidence with a one-sided contract.
- Unfair and inconsistent treatment of users could lead to complaints.

**Complaint 23: Lack of evidence of inspections of the King George V Field play park**

**Relevant requirement:**

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Occupiers' Liability

BS EN 1176

Insurance requirements

**What occurred**

There is no evidence that inspections of the play park have been completed. This was raised by Cllr J. Harris, but the office did not provide any information or evidence that this is being completed.

**Evidence**

There is no evidence to suggest that this essential inspection work is being undertaken.

**Governance Impact**

- Failure to manage health and safety risks may lead to injuries and complaints.
- Increase liability exposure.
- Failure to protect assets.
- Potential breach of insurance conditions.
- Reputation damage following incidents or defects.

## **Complaint 24: King George V Playing Field trustee governance failures**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Charities Act 2011

Charity Commission Guidance

### **What occurred**

The trustee (Caldicot Town Council) has failed to demonstrate effective governance and strategic management of King George V Playing Field.

There is no current management plan for the playing field, which means there are no maintenance priorities, accessibility improvements and risk management arrangements.

The last accounts were delivered late to the Charity Commission. This indicates potential weaknesses in governance and compliance.

Accessibility issues have remained unresolved for several years, following an encampment by travellers. The gates were closed and locked at the King George V playing field. This was the main entrance and exit for those visiting the town centre. Due to the steps, anyone wishing to visit the town centre who uses a wheelchair, pushchair, or unable to manage steps, has to exit via Waghausel Close, or the lane alongside the football club. Previously, those attending the bowls club or football training/games (usually parents), would park in the car park, which is no longer possible.

The council has discussed opening the gates for pedestrians, mobility scooters and wheelchairs etc, but as of June 2026 the gates are still locked and closed.

### **Evidence**

Charity Commission filing history.

Absence of a current management plan.

### **Governance Impact**

- Reduced public confidence in the non-compliance with trustee obligations.
- Maintenance, accessibility and investment needs cannot be addressed without a management plan and framework.

**Complaint 25: Failure to prepare and publish annual reports**

**Relevant requirement:**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

**What occurred**

The council has failed to publish an annual report since the year 22/23. This is a breach of statutory obligations.

This report should provide transparency and accountability to residents about the council's activities, use of public funds, and future priorities.

**Evidence**

Caldicot Town Council – Annual Report web page.

**Governance Impact**

- Loss of public confidence in the council.
- Reduction in transparency of the council.
- Residents are unable to assess the council's achievements, progress and priorities.

### **Complaint 26: Failure to follow the Finance & Governance Toolkit**

#### **Relevant requirement:**

Failure to follow the Finance & Governance Toolkit for Community and Town Councils November 2022, and the laws and regulations within.

#### **What occurred**

It appears that the council have not followed the toolkit that was developed by One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks and Welsh Government, with input from Audit Wales. This was developed to support councils with financial management, governance and accountability, and how these may be improved.

#### **Evidence**

Having viewed the toolkit, with the other governance concerns within this complaint, I personally believe the council cannot have used this toolkit due to the poor governance.

#### **Governance Impact**

- Loss of public trust.
- Potential legal breaches.

**Complaint 27: Failure to adequately address internal audit findings**

**Relevant requirement:**

Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Audit Wales

Financial Regulations

**What occurred**

The council is responsible for maintaining an effective system of internal control and ensuring that governance, financial management and compliance operate effectively.

I do not believe that the council has addressed the concerns raised in the interim internal audit report, some points are already noted within this complaint.

**Evidence**

Interim Internal Audit Report

Council agendas and minutes.

Lack of correspondence relating to the implementation of the recommendations.

**Governance Impact**

- Failure to address the audit findings increases the risk of weaknesses in governance, compliance and internal control.
- Lack of independent assurance to members and to the public.
- Increased risk of breaches of statutory, regulatory and procedural requirements.
- Undermined public confidence.

## **Complaint 28: Cancellation of a council meeting without identified legal authority**

### **Relevant requirement:**

Standing Orders

### **What occurred**

Following the cancellation of the Full Town Council (Planning and Resources) meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026, I sought clarification from the mayor regarding:

1. Who made the decision to cancel the meeting?
2. Under what authority was this decision made?
3. Which standing order, council policy or legal provision was relied upon to determine that this meeting could not proceed in the absence of staff?
4. Whether consideration was given to allowing the meeting to proceed, subject to it being quorate?

The Mayor responded that he took the decision as Mayor to cancel the meeting, due to staff shortages and no proper officer to attend the meeting. He stated that such a meeting with no proper officer would hold no validation. However, no specific Standing Order, statutory provision, council policy, delegated authority, or legal advice was identified in support of these conclusions. My request for the legal or procedural basis of the decision therefore remains unanswered.

### **Evidence**

My email correspondence with the Mayor dated 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

### **Governance Impact**

- Failure to follow governance and legal provisions undermined public confidence.
- Lack of transparency and accountability to members of the public.
- Loss of public trust.

**Complaint 29: Appointment of Locum Clerk without evidenced authority, approval or financial disclosure**

**Relevant requirement:**

Terms of Reference

Good governance practice

Standing Orders

**What occurred**

At the Annual Meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026, the council was assisted by a temporary clerk, acting as proper officer. The same temporary clerk also assisted as proper officer at the Personnel Committee meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026. As of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026, members were informed that the council has obtained the services of a part time locum Town Clerk, pending a permanent Clerk and RFO. To date, no report, resolution, delegated decision record, or other documentations has been made available explaining the basis upon which this appointment has been made. There has also been no financial disclosure to members regarding these decisions.

**Evidence**

Annual Meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

Personnel Committee Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

Letter from the Mayor dated 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

**Governance Impact**

- Members were unable to scrutinise or approve the appointment before public funds were committed.
- Council expenditure has been incurred without members being informed of the costs.
- Lack of audit trail causes governance concerns and lack of public trust.
- Public transparency has been reduced.
- Councillors prevented from participating dissatisfies residents.

