

Monmouth Town Council

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 11 March 2013 at 7.00pm
The Shire Hall, Monmouth

Present: Chairman: The Mayor Cllr G Bright

Cllr T Ashton	(TA)	Cllr Mrs J Gunter	(JG)
Cllr R Bradley	(RB)	Cllr Mrs Hall	(JH)
Cllr Mrs S Chivers	(SC)	Cllr R Hayward	(RH)
Cllr T Christopher	(TC)	Cllr A Owen	(AO)
Cllr S Davis	(SD)	Cllr Mrs A Were	(AW)
Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst	(AD)	Cllr Mrs S White	(SW)
Cllr J Fletcher	(JF)	Cllr S J Wilson	(SJW)

In Attendance: Mrs S James, Town Clerk and Mrs J Lloyd Administration Assistant

Presentation by Monmouth Rowing Club (Represented by Mr P Scott, Mr J Jenkins, Dr J Allison) for Monmouth Town Council to consider the transfer of ownership of The Town Field to the Rowing Club.

It was made clear that the Rowing Club has, and does enjoy a good and close relationship with the Town Council who have always shown a willingness to help the Club especially in regard with the Regatta, and it is hoped that this excellent relationship will long continue.

An introduction was given to the history, background and income of the Rowing Club. The three annual rowing events throughout the year provide the main source of income with the profits coming mainly from town business through sponsorship and catering. (Not from competitors who attend from all parts of the United Kingdom).

The main rowing events require use of all space around the clubhouse including the Town Field and the area from the boathouse to Wye Bridge; this is the boat parking and crew preparation area for the Regatta. The Club has been able to cope with the erosion of some of this area but now have the real threat of the new MCC car park for 50 vehicles which, if bollarded from the river, would result in the loss of a substantial area used as the regatta boat yard. The Club has recently purchased nearby fields bought to protect the income stream and the Regatta's future, but this area is impractical to use for boat storage and then carrying boats to the steps. The Club accept that the proposed car parking area had become a quagmire this winter and improvements are necessary.

Ownership of the Field would give the Club confidence to protect the future of rowing and recreation in the area. It was suggested that for the Town Council, it would provide a better income for the benefit of other areas in the Town and the public would still have use of the field as it could be included in the contract to agree to allow use of the Field to the Town Council for a set number of days per annum including Bonfire Night. It would also be necessary to reach agreement on the future running and management of the skateboard park. The Rowing Club would be happy to comply with the restrictions imposed by the Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust as it is dedicated to providing and maintaining recreation which is within the spirit of the Trust.

Questions were asked which included if there were plans for future access to the river and the future use of the Town Field (at the moment only used for camping and catering purposes). Plans by the Rowing Club to improve the often muddy area at the base of the ramp, and alteration of the ramp itself, to include storage, were outlined.

It was established that the Town Council did not presently allow vehicle access on to the field with normal permissions, but members suggested this may be considered in the future if necessary. Problems with boat trailer access and vehicle manoeuvrability, especially with new bollards in place, were established as very difficult now, which use of the Town Field would improve. The Rowing Club also explained they had put forward ideas to MCC regarding the placement of the new bollards in the area but these seem to have been ignored.

It was confirmed that if the Rowing Club should ever be dissolved, all assets would go directly to local sports associations.

The Chair proposed agenda item 9 be brought forward as this linked to this issue

Proposed: Cllr Hayward Seconded: Cllr T Christopher
For: 14 Against: 1 Abstention: 0

It was proposed that a Working Group be set up to investigate this and report back to this Council.

Proposed: Cllr T Christopher Seconded: Cllr R Hayward
For: 6 Against: 9 Abstention: 0 Motion failed

It was then proposed that a Special meeting be held to discuss this and resolve this issue.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S Chivers Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Hall
Unanimous Motion Carried

Colin Phillips, Special Projects Manager MCC, gave a presentation on the Monnow Bridge and Gate Draft Interpretation Plan.

Mr Phillips explained that this was a composite of three elements

1. Complete restoration of the Monnow Bridge and Gate at a cost of £117,000
This would include external and internal works. External- to include the installation of structural anchors to the Gate, but due to the horrendous weather of the summer 2012 workers have not been able to use the scaffolding in the river to secure loose stone work and strengthen them. The presence of bats has delayed the work further until an agreement of the method statement is achieved. Work is due to start again when permission is given to re enter the river.
Internal - to provide rope rails, wood treatment and install electrical supply and lighting to allow people to go inside the building. This work is timetabled to complete in April this year.
2. Design study at a cost of £40,000.
Currently in the process of showing the options these are less dramatic than the previous ones. Mr Phillips asked members to encourage many friends, relations and constituents to attend which will help officers choose the preferred option. The planning application should be put forward May/June 2013.
3. Interpretation Plan at a cost of £14,500.
From the previous Town Council meeting, this was a contentious issue and reported in the local paper.

Mr Phillips then explained how the proposals were arrived at. Architects can only propose ideas so MCC have held workshops to gain opinions of what people want.

MCC have been trying to think of options to excite people into viewing the bridge, to be as unobtrusive as possible, but allowing the building to remain the focal point. Road graphics had been suggested -putting soldier footprints and hoof prints into red sandstone slabs to be installed at each end of the bridge, the use of audio Soundscape, a system which would be simple but effective, producing sound effects via audio player, PIR or guide activated. As the inside of the gatehouse is a confined area, this could provide ambiance giving a sense of its past history.

As the Monnow Bridge is an icon of Monmouth, the ideas are to keep the themes for a tourist attraction simple such as, the use of the Gates to defend Monmouth, the tolls for people coming to market and the use of a jail.

A Town Improvement Grant is available to improve properties in that part of the town.

The project will cost approximately £25,000 and at the moment there is a budget of £14,600 with £5,000 or £6,000 coming from Tourism pot, Mr Phillips asked if the Town Council would consider a contribution of up to £5,000 towards the project.

After discussion, there were concerns raised regarding this funding as the precept had already been set for the forthcoming year. Concerns were expressed of taking money from reserves although Committee budgets could be an option such as the Environment Committee, Town Centre Enhancement Fund.

Without the funding, parts of the project may have to be delayed until further funding becomes available.

The Chair proposed agenda item 9 be brought forward as linked to this issue

Proposed: Cllr Bright Seconded: Cllr Mrs Gunter
For: 14 Against: 1 Abstention: 0 Motion carried

8.10 pm Cllr J Fletcher left the room

It was proposed to consider financial assistance for the Monnow Bridge and Gate Interpretation Plan up to a maximum sum of £5,000, subject to negotiations with MCC on the interpretation of their plan.

(as support in principle was already agreed at Full Council on 28 January 2013)

Proposed: Cllr Christopher Seconded: Cllr Davis
For: 12 Against: 2 Abstention: 0 Motion carried

After discussion on where the funding would come from, the Town Clerk suggested that this be taken from any committee funds remaining at the end of the financial year, and any remaining balance from Reserves.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Dewhurst Seconded: Cllr Christopher
For: 12 Against: 3 Abstention: 0 Motion carried

1. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

None received.

8.15pm Cllr Fletcher returned to the meeting

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllr M Jones

3. To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 minutes.

None received

4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2013.

The minutes (as amended to include members attendance shown on page 1), were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward Seconded: Cllr Fletcher
Unanimous

5. To receive the Town Clerk's report (for information only).

Town Council representation on the Community Health Authority: Further to deferred agenda item 18 from the Full Council meeting of 28th January regarding Town Council representation on the Community Health Council, Cllr Christopher has established that membership is only open to Unitary Authorities, nominated representatives from voluntary organisations, or co-opted individuals.

Deputy Mayor visit to Rimini: Cllr Mrs Hall attended a conference by invitation in Rimini, Italy, representing the Town Council, together with Mr Mike Booth last week, to talk about Monmouth being the world's first Wikipedia town.

6. To receive correspondence that the Mayor wishes to place before the Council.

The Town Clerk brought to the attention of the Council the newsletter from HMS Monmouth and correspondence from the Wye Valley Festival Monmouth Committee requesting funding. This was to be put forward to the Community Committee.

7. To note the reports and minutes of the council's committees and outside bodies:

- a Planning Committee:** As per minutes -Cllr Hall reported that ongoing items were Hadnock Road, LDP and the listed status of pillboxes. Questions had also been raised on Vauxhall gates being left open.
- b Environmental Affairs Committee:** Cllr Mrs Were reported that draft minutes are out for consideration
- The boulders had been installed on the Allotment Road
 - Money left over to be earmarked for the railings at Chippenham Mead
 - Discussed the crossing on the far side of new Monnow Bridge
 - Agreed money for further banners and pendants in Monnow Street and the repair of ones in place.
 - Agreed to put 2 dog bins at Chippenham Mead
 - Agreed to continue with City Illuminations for Christmas lighting.
- c Community Affairs Committee:** As per minutes, Cllr Gunter reported on the success of the Community Grants evening and personally thanked the committee for their work in her absence due to illness.
- d Finance & Policy Committee:** Business as per minutes from the meeting of 11 February 2013
- Due to the increase to the precept this year the percentage of reserves has fallen.
 - Shire Hall Service Level Agreement, most issues agreed but asked for some changes particularly in the negotiation with the agreement after 10 years of occupancy.
 - Revised Standing Orders.
 - Discussed the paper of consultation on the electoral arrangements, a map was put up in the Town Clerks Office. One verbal comment referred to the size of the Drybridge Ward with a suggestion of increasing the members to 4 splitting the ward in 2 with 2 representatives for each ward.
- e CSATS representative:** Items discussed were
- PCSO's working individually and not in pairs
 - Issues arising at Carbonne Close and Goldwire Lane
 - The new cheap Alcohol shop in Monmouth and possible use of an additional camera in the area, (funded by CSATS)
 - CCTV on The Shire Hall building, conservation Officer says this is fine and planning is not required. Installation should begin next week.
- f Monmouth Partnership Forum:** Cllr Owen reported that at the meeting on Wednesday 30 January Mr Phillips gave the same presentation as this evening but there the main query was the 'hoof prints' with most of those attending not keen on the idea. There was a request from the Wye Valley River Festival committee asking for people of Monmouth to get involved with the Festival.
- g Vision Monmouth:** No meeting.

h Central Monmouthshire Area Committee: Cllr Mrs White reported the following

- Mr Phillips had given the same presentation as this evening
- Priory railing, contractors hope to finish by April as inclement weather has delayed the project.
- Monmouth Links Project admitted some mistakes had been made but hopefully now rectified
- Discussion took place about bus and transportation service and how it is effected with Welsh Government cuts
- Discussed the 'Active Travel Campaign', all Local Councils may have a duty to provide walking and cycling routes around the county. The committee will find out if the County Council has to comply with this scheme to be implemented next year.
- Mr Roy Nicholas complimented MCC officers as they gained QEII Trust status for the field at Cross Ash.
- Highways Officers attended the meeting to discuss lack of signage to road closures reacting to landslides, which take a long time to order and deliver by which time the works have usually been completed.
- Single Integrated Plan is out for consultation and urging people to take part, details can be found on the MCC website.
- The Rockfield Road Community Development scheme is going to plan, meeting in March to form an action plan.

i Others

Osbaston Playground Group: Cllr Mrs Hall reported that they had been unsuccessful in receiving funding from the Army's Grant Association scheme, however will be going ahead with further grant applications.

8. To receive the Member's attendance summary of committee meetings.

Members	Extra Planning	Planning	Full Council	Community	Planning	F&P	Planning	Environment
2012/2013	23.01.13	28.01.13	28.01.13	4.02.13	11.02.13	11.02.13	25.02.13	4.03.13
Cllr T Ashton			1	1		1		
Cllr R Bradley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr G Bright			1	1		1		
Cllr Mrs S Chivers	Apology	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr T Christopher			1	1		1		1
Mr S Davis	1	1	1		1		1	1
Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Fletcher		1	1	Apology	1	1	1	1
Cllr Mrs J Gunter	Apology	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr Mrs J Hall	1	1	1	Apology	1	1	1	
Cllr R Hayward	1	1	1		1	1	1	Apology
Cllr M Jones			1	1		1		
Cllr A Owen			1					1
Cllrs Mrs A Were			1	1		1		1
Cllr Mrs S White			1	1				1
Cllr S Wilson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total In Attendance	6	9	16	11	9	13	9	11
Members on Committee	9	9	16	13	9	13	9	12

KEY

	Non Committee Member
	Non Committee Member attendance
	Absent

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Hall Seconded: Cllr Mrs White
 Unanimous

9. To consider request from Monmouth Rowing Club regarding possible purchase of the Town Field

This item discussed earlier in the meeting.

10. To consider financial assistance for Monnow Bridge and Gate Interpretation Plan (support in principle already agreed FC 28.1.13 min 10)

This item discussed earlier in the meeting.

11. To confirm recommendation of Finance and Policy Committee to close Monmouth Town Council Facebook page

In discussion, concerns raised were:

- information entered on the site is already news in circulation
- Since the announcement of closure of the page, the number of users has increased as a news item in itself.
- Although many Councillors in general were in support of keeping the site open, they didn't want it to use up large amounts of office time.
- Concerns that possibly Councillors could be criticized if they chose not to engage with the site as a media page although this would potentially be against current guidelines in individual members not appearing to speak for the Council.
- Important for the Council to decide what/how the Facebook page is being used for. Information put out on the Facebook page should be for the public to interact with MTC but the MTC website should still remain the main source of information on the web, and this expressed on Facebook.
- Shaping our Future Document for Community Affairs objectives states social inclusion of the public in regard to young people, -with Facebook being a prime example (although it was suggested the average age of people using the site was 40 years, and many lived outside Monmouthshire).

An amended resolution was proposed that:

It was proposed that the recommendation by the Finance & Policy Committee to close MTC Facebook page be rescinded.

The Chair confirmed to members that a "For" vote would be for the page to remain open.

Cllr T Ashton requested a named vote for this item

For: GB, AW, TA, AD, SD, RB, SJW (7)
Against: TC, JG, JF, RH, SC, SW, JH (7)
Abstention: AO (1)

The Mayor Cllr Bright gave the casting vote in favour of the proposal Motion carried

12. To confirm recommendation of Finance and Policy Committee regarding the wording of the Deed of Dedication for the Town Field under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust, and for Cllr G Bright and Cllr R Hayward to sign on behalf of the Council.

Agreed with signing of the document to take place after the meeting

Proposed: Cllr T Christopher Seconded: Cllr T Ashton
Unanimous

13. To confirm council viewpoint on provision of a hotel in Monmouth at Portal Road and to agree to ask MCC for regular updates. (TA)

Cllr Ashton reported that he had liaised with MCC for an update of the situation. The site had been cleared and now waiting for the Consultants report which was due within the next few days.

Cllr Hayward had concerns that as in previous years, the council would be told that the information was confidential. The Chamber of Commerce as a commercial organisation has more information regarding this issue than the Town Council and County Councillors for the area would have information. If the Town Council requires more information it should ask for more participation.

Cllr Dewhurst suggested that updates be given from MTC representatives on the Chamber of Commerce and Monmouth Partnership Forum.

It was proposed that Monmouth Town Council, represented by Cllr T Ashton, requests updates from and communicates with MCC with regard to provision of a hotel on the Portal Road site, Monmouth

Proposed: Cllr T Ashton Seconded: Cllr S Davies
For: 10 Against: 0 Abstention: 5 Motion carried

14. To confirm Mayor's attendance at Carbonne 26th-29th April, with Chains of Office, with the Twinning Association.

Agreed

Proposed: Cllr R Hayward Seconded: Cllr Mrs White
Unanimous

15. To discuss and resolve to support Fairtrade in Monmouth (AD)

Cllr Mrs Dewhurst explained to members the aim to be recognised by the residents, pupils and business community of Monmouth and other local councils as a town that actively supports and promotes Fairtrade. To achieve renewal of Fairtrade Town status for Monmouth for a fourth term, Monmouth being the first town in Monmouthshire to achieve this in 2005, the following resolution was proposed:

It was proposed that Monmouth Town Council

- Will aim to promote and publicise the town's Fairtrade status
- Will, when offering tea, coffee, sugar to its guests and visitors, these will be Fairtrade
- Will allocate responsibility for progression of the Fairtrade Town Initiative to a councillor
- Will elect one of its number to represent the Town council on Monmouth Fairtrade Forum

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Dewhurst Seconded: Cllr T Christopher
For: 11 Against: 2 Abstention: 2 Motion carried

16. To discuss and confirm transfer and details of ownership of Agincourt Street Toilets from Monmouthshire County Council to Monmouth Town Council.

Cllr Hayward explained delays in awarding a tender for cleaning the toilets until transfer of the asset from MCC to the Town Council is completed. Full details of transfer were being awaited, and it was confirmed the toilets would remain open in the meantime, and after transfer is complete.

This item to be deferred until further information received.

17. Items for discussion for future meetings.

None received

18. To confirm meeting dates.

Next meeting to be held on Monday 22nd April 2013, 7.00pm at the Shire Hall, Monmouth

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.17pm