

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 17 February 2014 at 7.00pm
The Shire Hall, Monmouth

Present: Chairman: The Mayor Cllr J Hall

Cllr S Chivers	(SC)	Cllr A Owen	(AO)
Cllr T Christopher	(TC)	Cllr G Pritchard	(GP)
Cllr A Dewhurst	(AD)	Cllr B Ramsey	(BR)
Cllr J Fletcher	(JF)	Cllr A Were	(AW)
Cllr J Gunter	(JG)	Cllr S White	(SW)
Cllr R Hayward	(RH)	Cllr S J Wilson	(SJW)

In attendance: Mrs S James Town Clerk, Mrs J Lloyd Administration Officer

Debbie McCarty, Andy Mason MCC and representative from local police to talk regarding the scope of CSATs

Recently appointed Inspector Taylor attended representing Monmouth Police.

Debbie McCarty explained how CSATS works (Community Safety Advisory Team). It consists of representatives from different agencies in Monmouth (Youth Group, Police, Housing Association and Town Council) and anyone else deemed fit to come and work on the different issues. It is driven by being a partnership and working together as a team being an equal partnership between all the agencies not just for reporting problems. The Group meets every six weeks. If there is a potential problem a Task & Finish Group meets to look at and discuss with potential solutions.

Issues dealt with are issues that cross over the agencies, so Town Council issues regarding parking would be dealt with by the police - if it is a criminal act it is a police matter. CSAT's receives statistics collected by the police, so if hot spots or problems arise (mainly anti-social behaviour) CSAT's act. However, police issues sit with the police and council issues sit with MCC. An example of CSAT's use is if there was high level of vehicle thefts in a particular area the group would question perhaps trees/hedges sheltering offenders, works or perhaps improved lighting to combat some factors involved.

CSAT's is now looking to the future. Under the Local Service Board is the 'Safer Monmouthshire Group' with a significant plan, the ultimate aim of all groups being for all to feel safe, be safe and healthy.

Question: Councillor Dewhurst - requested many times that CSATs look at parking issues on Priory Street being a safety matter. As a lorry or bus comes through there is no room for vehicles to pass with vehicles mounting the pavements, this could be stopped by enforcement of the no parking rule but to date this is not being dealt with.

Answer: A driving (parking) offence would be a police matter, with only the police day to day enforcing. However if it was a problem of no yellow lines then it would become a County Council problem – but it is a single agency problem not a problem that crosses over the different agencies, and hence not CSATs.

Later in the discussion, Cllr Dewhurst mentioned initiatives such as leafleting cars parked on Priory Street on yellow line, so owners were more aware of the problems created for pedestrians. This was considered to be more of a potential dual agency initiative and hence possibly CSATs.

Cllr Chivers commented that councillors have reported parking problems to the police on a regular basis but the police do not appear to act, leaving it to their discretion of officers and many times the parking offences are ignored. An example was given in that on Sunday there was an accident on the A40 with a diversion through the town put in place but it caused havoc as PCSOs did not move on the illegally parked vehicles in Priory Street. Time and time again it is found that both police and MCC departments say issues are not their responsibility passing the issue to another department which in turn deny responsibility.

Question: Councillor Chivers reported that PCSOs had been given a description of cars which regularly flaunt the no parking rules but no action has been taken.

Answer: Although valid issues these are single agency issues and should be dealt with by the appropriate single agencies.

Inspector Taylor explained she had walked around the Hereford Road area with one of her Sergeants and Dave Mathews from Gwent HQ, and identified issues which have been passed on. If councillors physically saw PCSOs ignoring parked vehicles over the weekend while a traffic diversion through Monmouth was in place Inspector Taylor would find out why.

Regarding A boards and benches (specifically on the old Monnow Bridge), Debbie McCarty reported that a policy has been re-written as previous policies could not be enforced. This will be heard at the next MCC Select Meeting, and an invitation has been given for Councillors to comment

Question: Cllr Pritchard asked about issues where CSATs had been successful and also about levels of publicity.

Answer: Debbie McCarty and Andrew Mason responded that although CSATs is not high profile it has successfully dealt with issues such as graffiti in the town, co-ordinating agencies to deal with this, although unfortunately funding is no longer available now. In the past, CSATs has tried to run initiatives – sometimes raising money as well as specific safety initiatives such as selling shed alarms and personal alarms at shows and road shows. Safety packs have been produced and problems such as spiking of teenagers drinks in bars, bike safety, anti-social behaviour and gathering of youths in areas have been addressed.

Issues in Church Street have previously been addressed by CSATs and following an assault at Goldwire Lane a small team looked into the problem and a mobile CCTV camera was placed in the area-resulting in a reduction of calls by 40%.

It was explained by the MCC officers that the Town Council was one of the agencies involved in CSATs and could not only bring issues to the Team but also contribute to finding solutions. However some disillusionment of CSATs was expressed by members unhappy with responses to problems previously reported.

It was established that single agency issues should only be reported to the specific agency, any criminal offences, usually including parking matters, directly to the police.

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

None received.

2. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr G Bright.

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 Monday 6th January 2014 and Monday 27th January 2014

The minutes of Monday 6 January 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson Seconded: Cllr Hayward Unanimous in favour

The minutes of Monday 27 January 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson Seconded: Cllr Hayward
In favour: 14 Against: 0 Abstention: 1

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

The Town Clerk brought to the member's attention the following:

Letter 16: Rob Butler WWI Centenary entertainment. (Fwd: JH)

Letter 25 GAVO: E bulletin including details for nominations for consideration for the New Year 2015 Honours List. Enquiries had been made on previous occasions by members regarding the nomination process, and full information now available.

Letter 35: OVW: War memorials conference agenda for meeting 27 March Royal Welsh Showground Builth Wells.

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

Catenary wires in Church Street: A potential solution to this ownership issue was agreed by Environmental Affairs Committee, following further correspondence from Mr Cummings, the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, the issue is becoming more complicated by the day. A meeting with Mr Cummings, along with Chris Munslow and Cllr Hayward has been arranged for the following week in an effort to resolve this.

Meetings: The "free" Monday evening on the Council calendar of 10th March has been provisionally booked for the Community Grants award evening.

Mr Mike Moran has also indicated that, regarding the award of S106 funding, he will consult with Monmouth Town Council and the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee to obtain views on the recommendations as to how the funding should be allocated, so that these views can be reported to the County Council Cabinet Members before a decision is made. An extra Full Council meeting on 17th March may be arranged accordingly but will be confirmed.

A full list of Council and Committee meetings from June onwards will be distributed within the next week or so.

7. To answer questions from Councillors

(Standing Orders 9: A member may ask the Mayor, the chairmen of Council Committees or the Clerk any question concerning the business of the Council, provided notice is submitted to The Clerk in writing two working days prior to the meeting, and the response will be printed within the minutes of the meeting. Every question shall be put and answered without discussion. Answers to verbal questions put to the Mayor, Chairmen of committees or the Town Clerk may be deferred until no later than the next meeting. No supplementary questions will be allowed.)

None received.

8. To receive and consider reports and minutes of the council's committees and outside bodies:

a Planning Committee: As per minutes.

Cllr Wilson reported from the Planning Committee meeting earlier that evening :

- Confirmation had been received that the LDP had been agreed for 450 houses but there is a shortfall and in 2016/2017 further housing will be required with 500 houses per year for the next 15 years.
- Pre applications will now be chargeable from 1 April 2014
- Concerns over Almshouses development regarding high rents and occupancy rates.
- New Planning Bill Wales - similar to the English version designed to enable development faster and easier.

b Environmental Affairs Committee: As per minutes.

Cllr Owen reported from the meeting held on 17 February:

- Tree survey at the Town Field: Small amount of remedial work required which the working Group will deal with.
- Permission was given for the removal of Himalayan Balsam.
- Two sites were suggested for Poppy seeds being Wonastow memorial and between the sports field/river bank alongside the Monnow.
- Town maintenance contract
- Dog fouling, MCC pilot scheme to start in March
- MCC –“Managing our Highways”, regarding A boards. The Committee believe the scheme is flawed and held a meeting to discuss and write to MCC R Hoggins.

c Community Affairs Committee: As per minutes.

Cllr Gunter reported that:

- The Community Grants Group had met and recommended awards which would be confirmed at the next meeting to be held on Monday 24 February.
- Wye Valley River festival has a meeting at Shire Hall on Monday 24 February which unfortunately clashes with Community Affairs meeting.

d Finance & Policy Committee: As per minutes.

Cllr Hayward reported items discussed were:

- Committee agreed an additional allowance for councillors for paper/ink consumables for councillors using email rather than written/posted documentation – subject to checking on legality.
- Changes to Monmouth ward boundaries. (to be discussed at agenda item 10)
- The Paper regarding the parking report will be coming before the MCC Select Committee on Thursday 20th February 2014.

e CSATS: No report

f Monmouth Partnership Forum:

Cllr Owen reported from the meeting held on 8th January 2014

Will McLean from MCC Strategic Partnerships spoke regarding progress in implementing the Single Integrated Plan (SIP). Certain issues highlighted, poverty in rural communities, ageing population, disparity in children's education achievements and alcoholism, all being addressed in various ways by consultation with the appropriate agencies.

At the next meeting Debbie McCarty will be speaking about the British Cycling Championships to be held in the area at the end of June.

g Vision Monmouth:

No meeting

h Central Monmouthshire Area Committee:

No meeting

i Others:

No reports

9. To review the Member's attendance summary of committee meetings

Members	Planning	Full Council	Community	Planning	F&P	Planning	Environment
2012/2013	6.01.13	6.01.13	13.01.13	21.01.13	21.01.13	3.02.13	10.02.13
Cllr R Bradley	Apology	Apology	1	1	1		
Cllr G Bright		1	1		1		Apology
Cllr S Chivers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr T Christopher		1			Apology		
Mr S Davis				Apology		1	Apology
Cllr A Dewhurst	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Fletcher	1	1	1	Apology	Apology	1	1
Cllr J Gunter	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Hall	1	1		1		1	
Cllr R Hayward	1	1		1	1		1
Cllr A Owen		1			1		1
Cllr G Pritchard	1	1	1	Apology	Apology	1	
Cllr B Ramsey		1	1		1		
Cllrs A Were		1	1	1	1		1
Cllr S White		1	1				1
Cllr S Wilson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total In Attendance	8	14	11	7+1	10	8	9
Members on Committee	10	16	11	10	13	10	12

KEY

	Non Committee Member
	Non Committee Member Attendance
	Absent

Proposed: Cllr White

Seconded: Cllr Hayward

Unanimous in favour

Attendance summary confirmed

10. To confirm Finance and Policy Committee consideration of response to proposed review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements proposals

At the Finance and Policy Committee meeting of 21st January, some anomalies in the proposed boundaries had been identified, and that the draft proposals be discussed for final consideration of response at this Full Council meeting.

Maps and details had previously been distributed to all members again, and maps were displayed via a screen at the meeting.

Cllr Hayward explained the arrangements were not imposed by MCC but they were administering the change on behalf of the Welsh Government, and that suggestions for alternatives can be made up until 28 February 2014.

He explained the changes were to make sure Community/Town Council ward boundaries were not split between County Council ward boundaries and to correct discrepancies between ratios of number of electors to councillors throughout the county. It was proposed that Monmouth Town Council ward boundaries be based on approximately 1 councillor to 500 electors. The boundary changes under consultation are only about Town and Community wards but since County Council wards could not divide Community Council wards this had to be taken into consideration. Draft proposals and consultation had been ongoing for several months with maps and details available (online earlier in consultation) and councillors had been invited to report and make alternative suggestions if not agreeable.

It was proposed to accept the draft proposals as made by Monmouthshire County Council as previously distributed.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward Seconded: Cllr Were

Cllr Wilson proposed to amend the proposal to:

To modify the draft proposals as made by Monmouthshire County Council by taking five separate votes on the five external ward boundaries with a sixth vote on the number of future Councillors.

Proposed: S Cllr Wilson

Seconded: Cllr Pritchard

Cllr Wilson requested named voting be taken.

In favour (of the amendment):

RB, SC, TC, SD, AD, JF, JG, JH, RH, AO, GP, BR, SW, SJW. (14)

Against: AW (1)

The proposed amendment was agreed.

Maps of all ward boundaries and individual wards were available to councillors and also projected on a screen for the following discussions.

- i. External proposed Monmouth Town Council ward boundaries.
It was established that Rockfield Studios would be left out, and Troy House gained within the new boundary proposals.

It was proposed to accept the MCC draft proposed external ward boundaries (as shown on attachment 1)

Proposed: Cllr Wilson

Seconded: Cllr Hayward

In favour: TC, SD, AD, JF, JG, JH, RH, AO, GP, BR, AW, SJW. (12)
Against: RB (1)
Abstention: SC, SW, (2)

Proposal agreed

- ii. Wyesham ward proposed boundaries
It was established that the MCC draft proposed Wyesham ward boundaries were the same as existing ward boundaries.

It was proposed to accept the MCC draft proposed ward boundaries of the Wyesham ward

Proposed: Cllr Wilson
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Hayward

Proposal agreed.

- iii. Dixon with Osbaston proposed ward boundaries
It was proposed to accept the MCC draft proposed Dixon with Osbaston ward boundaries.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson (not seconded)

Cllr Hayward explained that the new boundary was proposed by MCC to limit the size of the Dixon with Osbaston ward which would become much larger than recommended otherwise, and it seemed more appropriate for Osbaston School and the Forge area to be now included within the draft proposed ward boundary. It was reported that if this proposed draft boundary was changed to follow the roads of Dixon Road and at the traffic lights, Monk Street, the opposite side of the (Dixon) road and Comprehensive School would fall within the Town ward

**Cllr Dewhurst proposed to amend the proposal to:
To accept the MCC draft proposed Dixon with Osbaston ward boundaries with alterations to the boundary with the Town Ward (as shown on attachment 2, marked in red)**

Proposed: Cllr Dewhurst

Seconded: Cllr Ramsey

In favour: RB, TC, SD, AD, JF, JG, JH, RH, AO, GP, BR, AW. (12)
Against: SJW, RH, AW. (3)

Amended proposal agreed.

Cllr Were questioned the voting on the amended motion of the original proposal and that a further vote should now be taken on the amendment. Cllr Hayward confirmed that once a proposal has been amended and seconded it becomes the substantive motion.

- iv. Town, Drybridge and Overmonnow proposed ward boundaries.

Cllr Wilson explained the changes from existing boundaries where the three wards converge, and suggested that the original boundaries at these points should remain. Cllr Hayward responded that if this were the case, the Drybridge ward electorate would increase to approximately 2400, Overmonnow ward increase to 2200, both above the Welsh Government new guidelines, and Town ward decrease to 1300- below the guidelines given. He suggested a compromise of calling the Town ward "Old Monmouth" to indicate the historic nature of the area.

Cllr Christopher suggested resolving this by reducing the proposed number of members for the proposed Town Ward. Cllr Hayward confirmed that he believed this would also be unacceptable according to the Welsh Government guidelines as Town/Community wards were to be the basis of County wards, and cannot be split. County wards could not have such a high number of electors as these suggested changes would involve.

It was suggested that the area of new housing potentially to be sited from the LDP, be placed within the Drybridge rather than Overmonnow ward, but it was reported that this option would also imply the Drybridge would remain too large.

**Cllr Wilson proposed to amend the proposal to:
To accept the MCC draft proposed Town/Drybridge/Overmonnow ward boundaries with alterations to the boundaries (as shown on attachment 3, marked in red, being the existing boundary)**

Proposed: Cllr Wilson
In favour: RB, TC, SC, SD, AD, JF, JG, JH, AO, GP, BR, SW, SJW. (13)
Against: RH, AW. (2)
Seconded: Cllr Chivers

Amended proposal agreed.

- v. Local Development Plan (LDP) housing site ward.

The LDP site was to include 370 houses but has now risen to 450 houses, and assumes 900 electors (estimated 2 per household). Assumptions are being made that the development will take place for boundary considerations.

Cllr Wilson gave estimated figures of electors for the Overmonnow Ward of 1174 and Drybridge ward 2219 without including these additional 900 electors. He suggested the LDP site should remain within the draft proposed Overmonnow ward boundary as the site access was from this ward and would be more appropriate regarding elector numbers. He also suggested further possible developments would lie within the Drybridge ward.

It was proposed to accept the MCC draft proposed ward boundaries with the LDP site being within the Overmonnow ward boundary (as shown on attachment 3 hatched in blue lines).

Proposed: Cllr Wilson
In favour: TC, SD, AD, JF, JG, JH, AO, GP, BR, AW, SJW. (11)
Against: SW, SC, RH, RB, (4)

Proposal agreed.

vi. Number of councillors

Initial amended proposal :

It was proposed to accept the MCC draft proposals regarding number of future councillors.

Cllr Wilson had distributed details of suggested numbers of electors per ward and amended according to previous votes.

Cllr Pritchard reported speaking to John Pearson MCC regarding assumptions made about number of councillors for each authority and believed that nothing was laid down by the Welsh Government about how many electors per councillor. . With suggested figures of 1 councillor for every 500 electors, it implies Monmouth Town Council would have 19 members. He suggested that alternative measures could be based on population per ward rather than electors, and comparing Monmouth with similar sized towns, suggested Monmouth could have 13 councillors. This appears to also follow studies from Birmingham University based upon 1 councillor per 1000 population. Cllr Pritchard suggested that perhaps ratios could be 1 councillor for 650 population, wherever the boundaries are agreed, which would mean a lower number of MTC councillors.

Cllr Hayward stressed that the guidelines of 1 councillor for 500 electors were the basis for the proposed boundary changes.

Cllr Were responded that councillors do not directly cost the taxpayer anything and that a reduction in number would not necessarily improve efficiency. Others suggested there is a high burden of workload and expertise should be shared with higher numbers of councillors, and also that it is more an issue of democracy and amount of representation. More councillors may be appropriate with increased future council responsibilities and expertise. Views were also expressed that more councillors may imply more difficulty in making decisions.

Cllr Were pointed out in future the Town Council would have more responsibilities therefore more Councillors would be required for a higher workload with more expertise required.

It was proposed to increase the number of Councillors from 16 to 19. (As initial amended proposal, 19 being the number of councillors within MCC's draft proposals)

Proposed: Cllr Were
In favour: RB, SD, AD, JG, AO, AW. (6)
Against: SC, TC, JH, JF, RH, GP, BR, SW, SJW. (9)
Seconded: Cllr Bradley

Proposal failed.

Cllr Wilson proposed to amend the proposal to:

It was proposed to decrease the number of councillors to 15 with the MCC draft proposed boundaries changes previously agreed.

Comprising of: Wyesham ward:3, Overmonnow Ward:4, Dixton with Osbaston: 3, Drybridge:4 and Town Ward:1

Proposed: Cllr S Wilson	Seconded: Cllr S Chivers	
In favour: SC, TC, GP, SW, SJW.		(5)
Against: RB, SD, AD, JG, JH, JF, RH, BR, AO, AW		(10)

Proposal failed.

Cllr Hayward then proposed an amendment that;

It was proposed to leave the boundary Commissioners to determine the number of councillors dependent upon final boundaries.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward	Seconded: Cllr Were	
In favour: RH, AW.		(2)
Against: RB, SC, SD, JG, JH, JF, GP, BR, SW, SJW.		(10)
Abstention: AD, TC, AO,		(3)

Proposal failed.

It was suggested that all Councillors make their own representation as individuals, as the Council as a whole could not come to a conclusion.

Councillors were all reminded that they were encouraged to also make individual representations regarding the draft proposals.

11. To agree the publication and costs of the Monmouth Town Council newsletter

A sample newsletter and report for consideration had been previously distributed to members. Cllr Pritchard, Cllr Ramsey and Cllr Dewhurst explained that it is quite common for a Council to have a newsletter for public communication and awareness, with some councils gaining national "Quality" accreditation due to their effectiveness as a result.

It is planned for two a year to be published being late May and November. 5,500 copies could be produced at a cost of £350 per issue, each being two sides of A4 and printed on recycled paper. The content would largely give awareness of the responsibilities of the Town Council and to define the differences of Town Council and County Council work. It would also include diary dates with future issues having a greater elaboration of Town Council responsibilities and Committee work.

Distribution would be as wide as possible by email and hard copy, including house to house delivery by ward councillors and obtainable at public places.

It was suggested to be funded from the Community Affairs Committee Publicity and Communication budget heading, and Councillors responsible for the project will be Cllr Dewhurst, Cllr Ramsey and Cllr Pritchard. All members would see the final version before it is distributed.

It was proposed that two issues be tried with evaluation of its usefulness in February 2015, with costs to be met from the Community Affairs Committee budget.

Proposed: Cllr Pritchard Seconded: Cllr Dewhurst
In Favour: 12 Against:2 Abstention: 2

Proposal agreed

12. To consider any expressions of interest in the appointment of Community Committee Member on the Standards Committee and to confirm Town Council support of any applicants – Cllr B Ramsey. (c/s all 29/1/14)

Cllr Were expressed concerns that Cllrs Ramsey and Pritchard, who requested Council support, were both new councillors, and suggested it would be more appropriate for councillors with more experience to stand. Cllr Pritchard expressed a willingness to withdraw his application in view of this.

Cllr Ramsey gave background information to his previous work and experience relevant to the appointment.

Cllr Hayward proposed that both Cllr Ramsey and Cllr Pritchard be supported by the Town Council if they wished to apply for appointment to the Standards Committee.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward Seconded: Cllr White
In Favour: 12 Against: 0 Abstention: 3

Proposal agreed

13. To confirm recommendation of Planning Committee on the funding of 106 monies (SJW)

Cllr Wilson explained that substantially more money had been bid for the funding than was available.

The Planning Committee had considered lowering the amount requested for the various projects applied for, but had concluded not to vary any applications until at least the first round of assessment had been completed.

The assessment panel will meet to discuss the applications on 31 March 2014.

It was proposed to confirm the Planning Committee recommendation that the Town Council s106 monies applications are not varied at this stage.

In favour: Cllr Pritchard Seconded: Cllr Hayward All in favour

Proposal agreed

14. To confirm recommendation of Planning Committee regarding representation on 106 assessment panel. (SJW)

After discussion at the Planning meeting it was agreed Cllr Pritchard would represent MTC with Cllr Wilson as Deputy.

It was proposed to confirm the Planning Committee recommendation of Cllr Pritchard to represent Monmouth Town Council on the s106 Assessment Panel, with Cllr Wilson as Deputy

In favour: Cllr Wilson

Seconded: Cllr Hayward

All in favour

Proposal agreed

15. To discuss and agree request from the Rotary Club for the use of the field for overspill car park for Model Railway exhibition to be held at the Leisure Centre on Sunday 13 April 2014

Council were sympathetic to this request, but it was felt that as the field is subject Fields in Trust status, in which the council has undertaken "...not to use the property or permit the property to be used for any purpose other than as a public playing field and for general recreation, and events such as bonfire and fireworks displays, and also for charity events..." the use of it as a car park does not really apply.

Also, there were fears of setting a precedent for its use for car parking, for which requests would become more frequent from other organisations if agreed. It was hoped that the event being on a Sunday there should not be a major problem with parking in the area

It was proposed to refuse the request.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward

Seconded: Cllr Pritchard

In Favour of refusal: 13

Against: 1

Abstention: 1

Proposal agreed

16. Items for discussion for future meetings

None received.

17. To confirm meeting dates

Next meeting is to be on 31st March 2014, 7.00pm, at Shire Hall, Monmouth.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35pm