

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 31 March 2014 at 7.00pm
The Shire Hall, Monmouth

Present: Chairman: The Mayor Cllr J Hall

Cllr R Bradley	(RB)	Cllr R Hayward	(RH)
Cllr G Bright	(GB)	Cllr A Owen	(AO)
Cllr S Chivers	(SC)	Cllr G Pritchard	(GP)
Cllr T Christopher	(TC)	Cllr A Were	(AW)
Cllr S Davis	(SD)	Cllr S White	(SW)
Cllr A Dewhurst	(AD)	Cllr S J Wilson	(SJW)
Cllr J Gunter	(JG)		

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

Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer for Enterprise, MCC, to discuss potential Monmouth Town Council contribution towards funding and running Tourist Information Services in Monmouth.

As Ms Beirne was unable to attend, the presentation was made instead by Ms Nicola Edwards and Mr Mike Booth of Monmouthshire County Council.

Ms Beirne had previously written to the Town Council requesting a contribution towards running the Tourist information Services in Monmouth, and it was confirmed that all members had seen the letter.

Ms Edwards explained that the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Tourist Information Centres (TIC) budget had been given a target saving of £97,000 for the year 2014-15, and the Shire Hall budget a target saving of about £35,000. It had been identified that the only way of achieving these savings was to reduce opening hours as staffing costs are the largest costs. Staffing would need to be focussed on times when the largest amount of income is produced. Unless financial support from Monmouth Town Council, who are being asked, along with the other county Town Councils, is forthcoming, TIC opening hours would have to be reduced.

There are different circumstances in the Monmouthshire towns, for instance the Abergavenny TIC will also be relocated as the Brecon Beacons National Parks authority has withdrawn support.

Mr Booth confirmed that the Shire Hall is expected to be cost neutral within 3 years, implying £35,000 savings this year, with the only options being to increase income and/or to reduce expenditure (staffing).

The Shire Hall caretaker post had already been lost, and the building was open on average 70 hours per week during the last year.

Sunday opening 10am to 4pm produces only a very small income, and with staff costs is not cost effective. However, Mr Booth was aware of the economic benefits to the community of Sunday opening. The TIC element of the Shire Hall is now based on a local, not national base. Mr Booth confirmed that when looking at reducing opening hours, he was considering Sunday closure during the winter months, not Easter to September.

Members were invited to ask questions by the Chair.

When asked about the use of volunteer staff, it was confirmed that student placements and apprenticeship staff are already used, and a larger volunteer base would help.

On measuring the value of the TIC, Mr Booth confirmed that £12.79 was the added value to the destination area as a result of each enquiry – from survey information.

Members questioned if the MCC Cabinet had asked for TIC cuts within the budget decision, or whether this was an officer led initiative implying the Town Council could potentially be also approached for support on other funding issues in the year. It was confirmed that the officers had been given project mandates as a result of the Cabinet decision for £97,000 of savings, with officers tasked to implement.

Cllr Pritchard asked about the TIC portion of the Shire Hall budget, and Mr Booth was unable to distinguish as all staff members act as TIC staff. Cllr Pritchard suggested that any contribution made would then be towards the Shire Hall budget. Mr Booth suggested that approximately £12,000 staff costs are attributable to Sunday opening during the winter months.

Cllr Bright asked about local business – possible Chamber of Trade support as he believed businesses benefitted from the TIC services. Mr Booth believed the local community also benefitted from the TIC service and also confirmed there were no longer plans to include Visitor TIC services within the proposed Welcome centre project near the Monnow Bridge.

Cllr Wilson asked how much funding MCC were asking MTC for, and no specific figure was available, but as an example, Abergavenny Town Council had agreed £10,000.

The Chair proposed that agenda Item 12 be brought forward.

Proposed: Cllr Hall, Seconded: Cllr Wilson

Unanimously approved.

12. To consider and agree request from MCC to contribute towards funding and running Tourist Information Services in Monmouth (further to presentation from Kellie Beirne)

The Chair asked members to consider deferring this resolution and it was suggested more specific information and figures were required before an informed decision could be made. Cllr Christopher reminded members that during budget setting discussions last November, the council considered consulting with Monmouth people about what responsibilities the Town Council should take on.

It was proposed that consideration of this item be deferred to the Finance and Policy Committee with more information and specific costs available, with recommendation then being made to Full Council

Proposed: Cllr J Hall, Seconded: Cllr T Christopher

For: 9, Against: 5

Proposal agreed.

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

None received

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr J Fletcher and Cllr B Ramsey.

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 17th February 2014.

The minutes of Monday 17 February 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr S Wilson, Seconded: Cllr R Hayward

Unanimously agreed.

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

The Clerk brought to the attention of members:

No. 32: World War One Monmouth Project Community Consultation invitation from Karin Molson, for 9th April.

Councillors Chivers, Hall, Bright, Gunter and White expressed an interest in attending that would be forwarded on.

No. 33: Monmouth Support Fund. Members were asked to be aware of this fund and any possible beneficiaries it may be able to assist.

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

Lloyds Bank -It has been found that 2 cheques issued, including one grant award, had not been honoured by MTC bankers. This issue has eventually been resolved, and was down to a manual bank error. The cheque recipients have been contacted and have now been able to cash the cheques. Compensation has been secured from the bank in recognition of potential damage to MTC reputation and a promised letter of apology will be forwarded on receipt.

Civic Service - The service will not be held in mid-June this year as previous years, a date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Annual Meeting - The next Full Council meeting is the Annual Meeting on Monday 12th May where a Mayor, and deputy Mayor will be elected and also new Committee membership confirmed.

Members were asked to consider which committees to sit on in order for lists to be established before the meeting.

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.)

No questions from members of the public received.

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

- a** Planning Committee: (SJW)
As per minutes
- b** Environmental Affairs Committee(AO)
Outstanding grant of £200 from Tidy Towns now confirmed to be repaid, consideration has been given to Drybridge play area – painting of equipment and moss removal, boulder provision and surfacing, for next years projects. A working group to establish a policy for bench provision is to meet 3/4/14.
- c** Community Affairs Committee: (JG)
A successful small grants awards evening had been held and an extra Committee meeting is planned for 22nd April to consider larger project grant awards.
- d** Finance & Policy Committee:(RH)
As per minutes.
Advice from One Voice Wales confirmed that no upper limit on Committee size (except all members). An important Welsh Government Consultation on Byelaws is being considered again at the next committee meeting.
- e** CSATS:(SJW)
A bike safety competition is being launched in conjunction with the June National Road Race Championships. PCSOs are concentrating on Chippenham issues and dogs. Cllr Wilson has asked CSATs to look into the safety issues created when the underpass floods.
A new CCTV camera is in place near Joules and there have been some CCTV successful outcomes. Graffiti removal service provision has finished.
- f** Monmouth Partnership Forum: (AO)
Meeting on 19/2/14 with a presentation about the National Cycling Championships 23-29th June 2014.
- g** Vision Monmouth(SW)
No meeting
- h** Central Monmouthshire Area Committee(JH)
Concern raised by Cllr Hall over curb edge extension on Hereford Road and photographs reported to the MCC officer present who would investigate. "A" boards issues considered and common sense approach suggested. Car parking issues also considered, including charge for Blue Badge holders. Granville Street area air quality and access concerns, the mud by the riverside and the skateboard park were also all discussed.
- i** Others:
Monmouth Civic Society (JH)
The AGM in March was given a talk by Steve Clarke on Monmouth and the Iron Age lake. Monmouth pub histories, the new Society website and Open doors weekend (6-7th September) were discussed. Experiments with silver birch trees in pots near busy streets being found to greatly reduce air pollution were discussed with reference to air pollution alongside the A40 and to be investigated further.

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

Members	Planning	Full Council	Community	F&P	Planning	Environment
2012/2013	17.02.14	17.02.14	25.02.14	3.03.14	17.03.14	24.03.14
Cllr R Bradley	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr G Bright		Apology	1	Apology		1
Cllr S Chivers	1	1	1	Apology	1	1
Cllr T Christopher		1		1		
Mr S Davis	1	1			1	Apology
Cllr A Dewhurst	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Fletcher	1	1	Apology	1	1	1
Cllr J Gunter	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Hall	1	1	1	1	1	
Cllr R Hayward	1	1		1	Apology	Apology
Cllr A Owen		1		1		1
Cllr G Pritchard	1	1	1	1	Apology	
Cllr B Ramsey		1	1	1		
Cllrs A Were		1	1	Apology		1
Cllr S White		1	1			1
Cllr S Wilson	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total In Attendance	10	15	10+1	11	8	10
Members on Committee	10	16	11	14	10	12

KEY

	Non Committee Member
	Non Committee Member attendance
	Absent

It was proposed to accept the attendance summary as shown.

Proposed: Cllr Davis, Seconded: Cllr Wilson
For: 13, Against: 0, Abstention: 1

Proposal agreed

10. To discuss and agree future MTC involvement with CSATs (from Community Committee).

Cllr Wilson reported that a very negative response from MTC had been reported back to CSATs following the presentation/questions at the Full Council meeting. Much dis-satisfaction with CSATs had also been expressed by the Council in the past.

Town Council withdrawal from CSATs was discussed, with a hoped increase in direct communication with the police and enforcing departments of MCC.

It was suggested that CSATs would soon be restructured and any decision should await new developments. It was also considered beneficial to remain within the group even if not participating actively.

It was proposed to continue Monmouth Town Council membership of CSATs

Proposed: Cllr White, Seconded: Cllr Hall

It was then confirmed that the Community Affairs Committee had hoped to meet directly with the local police more frequently.

The proposal was amended to:

It was proposed that Monmouth Town Council continue membership of CSATs and also form a closer interaction with the police.

Proposed: Cllr White, Seconded: Cllr Hall

For: 11, Against:3

Proposal agreed

11. To confirm and agree use of Town Field by Monmouth Rowing Club in 2014 for 23-26 May, 27-28 September and 6/7 Dec, and in 2015 for 22-25 May, 26/27 Sept and 5/6 Dec

It was confirmed these dates were for the annual regattas and Heads, and permission to be given according to normal conditions without parking on the field.

It was proposed to confirm and agree use of the Town Field by Monmouth Rowing Club in 2014 for 23-26 May, 27-28 September and 6/7 Dec, and in 2015 for 22-25 May, 26/27 Sept and 5/6 Dec, subject to normal conditions.

Proposed: Cllr S Davis, Seconded: Cllr White

Unanimously agreed

12. To consider and agree request from MCC to contribute towards funding and running Tourist Information Services in Monmouth (further to presentation from Kellie Beirne)

Item discussed earlier in the meeting

13. Items for discussion for future meetings.

Cllr Christopher requested that an agenda item "to agree to make arrangements to consult with the people of Monmouth regarding taking on additional responsibilities" be placed on the next Finance and Policy Committee agenda.

14. To confirm meeting dates.

Next meeting is the Annual meeting with the election of the Mayor, to be on 12th May 2014, 7.00pm, at Shire Hall, Monmouth.