

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 7 December 2015 at 7.00pm
The Shire Hall, Monmouth

Present: **Chairman:** The Mayor Cllr G Pritchard

Cllr Bright	(GB)	Cllr J Hall	(JH)
Cllr S Chivers	(SC)	Cllr R Hayward	(RH)
Cllr S Davis	(SD)	Cllr C Munslow	(CM)
Cllr A Dewhurst	(AD)	Cllr A Owen	(AO)
Cllr J Fletcher	(JF)	Cllr A Were	(AW)
Cllr J Gunter	(JG)	Cllr S White	(SW)
		Cllr S Wilson	(SJW)

In Attendance: Mrs Jane Lloyd.

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

None received.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr R Bradley and Cllr Christopher.

3. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26 October 2015.

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26 October were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Pritchard Seconded: Cllr White
For: 11 against: 2 abstention: 1

Motion carried

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

None received.

5. To receive the Office report (for information only).

- Request for help to hand out Road Closure notices to Monnow Street for the Candlelit Procession.
- Advice on Shire Hall closure for Christmas being 5.00pm on The 23 December and will re –open on 4th January 2016.

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

Cllrs asked for letters from correspondence to be read to the members regarding temporary road changes in Monnow Street Monmouth.

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 confirm recommendations of Finance & Policy Committee (23 November 2015) for a total Council budget of £277,108 for 2016/2017

Some members felt if the precept is increased by 17% as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee this would mean since 2011 an increase of 96% with no extra benefit to the Town only being a movement of expenditure from MCC to the Town Council.

The budget recommended included subsidising the Museum opening times. CCTV in Monmouth, extra clerical support and the running costs of Blestium Street toilets and the Monmouth Cemetery. The Finance & Policy and Policy Committee recommended that the Town Council should not agree to supporting the grass cutting at Chippenham Fields or maintaining the hours of the One Stop Shop/Library.

Community Affairs:

It was proposed to accept the draft budget of £34,500 budget for 2016/2017.

Proposed: Cllr Dewhurst Seconded: Cllr White

**All in favour.
Motion carried.**

Environment Committee:

It was proposed to accept the draft budget of £39,000 budget for 2016/2017.

Proposed: Cllr Hall Seconded: Cllr Fletcher

**All in favour.
Motion carried.**

Finance & Policy:

It was proposed to accept the draft budget of £135,808 budget for 2016/2017.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson Seconded: Cllr Fletcher
For: 12 against: 1 abstention: 1

Motion carried.

Museum.

After discussion it was agreed to maintain the hours of the museum to the cost of £5,000.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson Seconded: Cllr Hall
For: 7 against: 7 abstention: 0

With the Mayor's casting vote this motion was passed.

Motion carried.

CCTV.

A motion was put forward to sign up for CCTV for 1 year, with a report to be prepared by a County Working Group to look into the benefits of CCTV as it was felt the Town wasn't getting the true value of the system and no proof that CCTV actually reduces crime. The savings from not having the system could be used to improve lighting in the Town and security advice.

It was noted that people and organisations of Monmouth want CCTV to feel safe.

It was proposed to sign up for 1 year with a valuation by the end of the year to include the effectiveness over the last 4 years.

Proposed: Cllr Were seconded: Cllr Hayward
For: 4 against: 9 abstention: 1

Motion defeated.

It was then proposed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for 3 years from 1st April 2016 to 31 March 2019 with the opt out clause of 6 months at a yearly cost of £12,800.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson seconded: Cllr Hayward
For: 11 against: 2 abstention: 1

Motion carried

Blestium Street Toilets and Cemetery:

Some members felt the figure of £35,000 as recommended by the Finance & Policy Committee, was very low for ownership and the running costs of both utilities.

Discussions took place regarding the reasons for closure of the cemetery and Councillors were of the opinion that more work and research should be completed before taking over the ownership and running of the Cemetery.

It was stated that closure was due to a member of the public slipping and falling, MCC had to build steps and pathways making it safe for members of the public, in order to do this MCC applied for planning to put in land drains – MCC Planning informed them they were effectively opening up a new cemetery which would mean complying with new legislation for cemeteries.

There was a fear that money could be spent on reopening the cemetery but it could be closed again at any time wasting all money spent. A rough estimate on the costs of running the cemetery was given as at least £50,000/£60,000 with Health & Safety, plus staffing for the site, and administration staff.

Cllr Hayward suggested there wasn't enough money to do this next year but to obtain an agreement to open negotiations for the running of the cemetery and see if this was a feasible option.

The Mayor reminded Councillors it was unrealistic to take over these assets at the moment and we must justify ourselves to the electorate and auditors.

Cllr Wilson suggested taking over ownership of Blestium Street toilets with no costs involved at this stage.

Blestium Street Toilets:

It was proposed no revenue be provided in the 2016/2017 budget for Blestium Street toilets but we still seek ownership at a later date.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr Hall
For: 10 against: 3 abstention: 1 **Motion carried.**

Monmouth Cemetery:

Cllr Wilson proposed that £10,000 budget towards the costs of taking over of the cemetery only.

Proposed: Cllr Wilson seconded: Cllr Davis
For: 8 against: 4 abstention: 2 **Motion carried.**

(Recommended budget reduced from £35,000 to £10,000)

Additional Clerical Officer:

At the moment we have two members of staff, This financial years allocated money for additional administration support which has not been spent, it was felt it was unnecessary to have an additional fourth member of staff at the present time.

It was proposed not to employ a fourth member of staff.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr Hall
For: 11 against: 2 abstention: 1 **Motion carried.**

(Recommended budget reduced by £15,000)

The Finance and Policy budget for 2016/2017 is £27,800 + £135,808 = £163,608

It was proposed to accept the Town Council budget of £237,108 for 2016/2017.
(An increase of less than half a percent over 2015/2016)

Proposed: Cllr Pritchard seconded: Cllr Were
For: 13 against: 1 abstention: 0

9. To confirm recommendations of the Finance and Policy Committee (23 November 2015) that the precept request for 2016/2017 should fully fund the budget of £277,108.

The auditor do expect 40% of the turnover of expenditure to be in reserves, the projected figure is well within this, and no money will be taken from reserves.

It was proposed that the 2016/2017 precept is £237,108

Proposed: Cllr Hall seconded: Cllr Davis

**All in favour
Motion carried**

10. To confirm the recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee to agree the acquisition of the Agincourt Street toilets from Monmouthshire County Council.

It was proposed to go ahead with the acquisition of the Agincourt toilets.

Proposed: Cllr Pritchard seconded: Cllr Were
For: 13 against: 0 abstention: 1

11. To confirm the recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee to agree the Shire Hall Service Level agreement with Monmouthshire County Council.

All points have now been covered by MCC. Cllr Hayward wished to thank Shire Hall Aileen Atkinson and MCC Ian Saunders for all of their help in progressing this.

It was proposed to agree the Service Level Agreement.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr Pritchard

All in favour.

12. To discuss and agree a response to the request from HMS Monmouth for a Freedom Parade to be held on Sunday 20 March 2016. (GP)

Cllr Pritchard is in discussion with HMS Monmouth regarding shared funding for the event.

It was proposed to agree with the request from HMS Monmouth for the Freedom parade to take place on Sunday 20 March 2016. The costs will be taken from the Civic budget.

The Mayor will continue and conclude discussions on shared funding for the event.

Proposed: Cllr Pritchard seconded: Cllr Hall
For: 12 against: 1 abstention: 1

Motion carried

13. To discuss the possibility of the appointment of an administrative assistant

As this item had previously been agreed as part of the 2015/2016 budget at the Town Council meeting in December 2014 the position should be advertised.

14. To note the reports of Council Committees and outside bodies:

- a **Planning Committee:** As per minutes.
- b **Environmental Affairs Committee:** As per minutes.
- c **Community Affairs Committee:** As per minutes.
- d **Finance & Policy Committee:** As per minutes.
- e **CSATS: As per minutes:**
- f **Monmouth Partnership Forum:**
- g **Vision Monmouth:** No meeting
- h **Central Monmouthshire Area Committee:** No meeting
- i **Others:**
 - Neighbourhood Plan:** Second meeting to take place at 2.00pm on Monday 11 January.
 - OVW:** Cllr Dewhurst reported on her response to the Welsh Government consultation of Community Councils on the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act Cllr Dewhurst asked all members to read the response which had been written on their behalf as next year this will have to be put into action.

15. To note the Mayor's engagement list.

Noted.

16. To review the Member's attendance summary of Committee meetings.

Correction: Cllr Hayward after giving apology's for the Planning meeting dated 12 October was present at the meeting arriving later.

17. Items for discussion for future meetings.

None received.

18. To confirm the date of the next meeting.

Monday 18 January 2016 at 7.00pm Shire Hall, Monmouth

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.17pm