

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 1 August 2016 at 7.00pm
The Shire Hall, Monmouth

Present: **Chairman:** The Mayor Cllr C Munslow

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|-----------------|----------------|
| Cllr Bradley | Cllr J Gunter |
| Cllr Bright | Cllr J Hall |
| Cllr S Chivers | Cllr R Hayward |
| Cllr A Dewhurst | Cllr A Were |
| Cllr M Feakins | Cllr S White |
| Cllr J Fletcher | Cllr S Wilson |

In attendance: Mrs S James (Town Clerk) and Mrs J Lloyd

Mr David Farnsworth gave an update on The Place Plan.

Since the last update given to the Council by Mr Farnsworth in May 2016 the Working Group have been involved with the following:

- Dialogue with major businesses regarding future options for the town, including the Haberdashers Schools, Waitrose, Town Traders, Monmouth Partnership Forum, Civic Society and the Chamber of Commerce. Gained useful guidance from MCC County Councillors which in turn lead to a meeting with senior officers within MCC discussing planning, operations and Community involvement. The Working Group has received tremendous encouragement and support for work on the Place Plan and those met to date are very supportive of the basic idea of using the plan to co-ordinate future issues and groups.
- Dialogue with MCC Planning regarding the future housing allocation for when the new Local Development Plan is reviewed at the end of the year.
- Work regarding the design for improvements at Agincourt Square.
- Working to co-ordinate the design of the Gateway Scheme which MCC want to involve the Community and Monmouth Partnership Forum with in seeking funding for the project.
- Engaging public opinion under the MCC 'Wellbeing Act'.
(During August, MCC will go out to all towns in Monmouthshire asking the public for their opinions on what makes 'Wellbeing' in the town, and in September contact groups in the town will be asking the same question. Place Plan have agreed to exchange information with MCC.)
- Working with MCC on issues about improving the quality of car parking, signage and footpaths in the town.

- Looking into market research in 2 areas - future employment, and the retail future of Monnow Street which in the next 10 years will undoubtedly go through major changes.
- Exploring options for investment for Chippenham Play Area.

Mr Farnsworth explained that collecting information and mapping out the plan is only half the work, the other half is the decision making which will be from the Town Council and other agencies. The Working Group are busy gaining all of the dialogue and opening up new dialogue with others but they need to find a way of involving the Town Council as a Council in the process. When items arise requiring decisions, it doesn't always fit to the standard 6 weekly meetings of the Town Council. A way has to be devised, maybe, by representation of Councillors on the Working Group, of integrating the Town Council decision making with the Place Plan job of collating information.

Cllr Dewhurst added it is crucial to find out public opinion but sadly the Community Affairs Committee are not interested in hosting this, maybe the Town Council will.

Mr Farnsworth asked if the Town Council is happy with the work so far. The Mayor responded positively and the Council would continue to support the Place Plan group.

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

None received.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllr S Davis.

3. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20 June 2016 and the extra meeting held on Monday 23 May 2016.

The minutes from Monday 20 June were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Munslow seconded: Cllr Dewhurst **All in favour.
Motion carried.**

The Pink Paper minutes from Monday 23 May were confirmed as a true record and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Feakins seconded: Cllr Hayward **All in favour.
Motion carried.**

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

Mrs Wright asked a question relating to the progress of decisions taken at the Full Council meeting last October, when MCC Mr Tom James gave a presentation regarding the MCC 'Whole Place Plan'.

Seven Town Councillors were named in those minutes of the Town Council to work alongside representatives from community groups and businesses, in the Town Council Place Plan working group.

Since October five of the seven Town Councillors have withdrawn from the working group and only one Councillor has replaced the missing five. This has resulted in an unbalanced group of three Town Councillors to five community representatives. This imbalance doesn't hinder the gathering of information by the group.

The Place Plan working group have established lines of communications between Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council. Unfortunately with only three Town Councillors, any meetings at County Hall with Senior Officers during working hours are difficult to arrange.

The Town Council can gain influence with Monmouthshire County Council when Town Councillors in the working group attend meetings at County Hall .

Mrs Wright requested more Town Councillors to become members of the Place Plan working group. (Cllr Feakins agreed to join the group.)

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

The Town Clerk reported on the following:

Election: Osbaston and Dixton Ward vacancy. An election has been requested by the required number of signatories which, if contested, will take place on Thursday 1st September. The deadline for receipt of nominations to the Returning Officer is 4pm Thursday 4 August 2016.

The Drybridge Ward vacancy has now been advertised and if by 17th August, 10 electors request an election, this will be held before 20th October 2016.

Audit: The External auditors requested clarification on some outstanding points for last year's audit. Mrs Lloyd has spoken with the internal auditor and completed and returned responses to these.

Millennium Wheel: Through Facebook, last Tuesday evening, it became apparent that 2 tiles from the Millennium wheel had been found nearby and were being held securely at Callisto hairdressers nearby. A reputable local tiler, Jamie Tyler had also offered to repair and replace them onto the wheel.

Ned Haywood of Chepstow who made and supplied the wheel was contacted. He confirmed it would be appropriate for them to be re fixed locally and we also discussed the possibility of plain replacement tiles to be ordered as spares, which will be referred to the Environment Committee. Although not following normal procedure, Cllr Hayward and the Clerk agreed it would be most speedy and appropriate to allow the tiles to be re fixed locally and at no cost. Previously, when tiles have been removed or damaged, adjacent tiles are much more vulnerable.

Thank you to these 2 local businesses and the facebook community for resolving this quickly.

Monmouth Leisure Centre: Will be running a "Monmouthshire Games" for 5 - 11 year olds this summer. Members are invited to visit and speak to the young people involved. Please let the office know if you would like to attend, date by arrangement.

6. To receive correspondence that the Mayor wishes to place before the Council. (Enc 1)

None received

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 note the reports, including Annual Committee reports, and minutes of the council's committees and outside bodies:

- a Planning Committee:** As per minutes
- b Environmental Affairs Committee:** As per minutes
- c Community Affairs Committee:** Cllr Dewhurst reported
- Carnival deemed to be a success.
 - The Smaller Grant Scheme has now opened with a closing date of Monday 19th September 2016.
 - Invitation from the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Mayor and 2 members to attend. Councillors are being asked for questions to be raised at the meeting.
- d Finance & Policy Committee:** As per minutes
- Cllr Were reported that Cllr Hayward had been elected Chair of the Committee with Cllr Were Deputy.
 - It is now a legal requirement that all allowances and expenses claimed by Councillors will be published on the website. There is no longer a need to keep the register of members' interest's book but the forms must be completed.
- e Monmouth Partnership Forum:**
As representatives couldn't attend the meeting a copy of the minutes received from the meeting held on 30 June was circulated to Members.
- f Central Monmouthshire Area Committee:**
Nothing to report.
- g Neighbourhood Plan. (Should read Place Plan)**
Update by Mr David Farnsworth at the beginning of the meeting.
- h Others:**
None received.

9. To receive and accept the resignation of Cllr Graham Pritchard Town Council member for Drybridge Ward.

The Mayor Cllr Munslow read the letter of resignation to members.

10. To consider and confirm issue of polling cards for by elections.

It was advised by MCC John Pearson that Polling cards be used. The approximate cost would be in the region of £700, but using them is more transparent and makes the public more aware of the election.

Cllr Hayward informed members it is the best way to inform voters which in turn means a higher turnout on Polling Day.

It was proposed to issue Polling cards, with associated costs, for both elections in Dixton/Osbaston ward and the Drybridge Ward.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr White

**All in favour.
Motion carried.**

11. To fill current vacancies for Council representatives on outside Bodies for 2016/2017 for GAVO, OVW, Monmouth Youth Project, Monmouth Festival Committee, Central Monmouthshire Area Committee and Monmouth Civic Society. (Enc 2.)

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| GAVO: | Cllr Wilson and Cllr Feakins |
| OVW: | Cllr Were, Cllr Dewhurst and Cllr Feakins |
| Monmouth Youth Festival: | None |
| Monmouth Festival Committee: | Cllr Gunter |
| Central Mon Area Committee: | No extra member |
| Monmouth Civic Society: | Cllr White |

Cllr Feakins will join the Place Plan Working Group, Cllr Hayward and Cllr White offered to help with the work of the Town Council Place Plan working group, on the understanding that they would not regularly attend the fortnightly meetings, but would attend when requested.

12. To discuss the way forward regarding communication between Monmouthshire County Council and the Town Council. (SC).

Cllr Chivers has already spoken with MCC Chief Executive Paul Matthews regarding this issue, as she is finding it more and more difficult to get through to Council Officers. If a message is left for them on most occasions, there is no response. Cllr Chivers raised this as being a continuing problem over many years. Cllr Chivers has also contacted the given number for complaints and is still awaiting a response.

Cllr Dewhurst mentioned that there is a real staff shortage and Officers work very hard to communicate.

After discussion it was suggested the Town Council write to the Chief Executive expressing disappointment in the lack of communication between certain Cllrs and Officers and ask the question if he thinks if it would be a good idea to speak at a future Full Council meeting.

13. To confirm permission for the use of the Town Field by the Rowing Club for the following dates in 2016 and 2017.

(Sunday 11 December 2016 (Saturday 10th December 2016 already confirmed), Saturday & Sunday 28 May 2017, Sunday 24 September 2017 and Sunday 10 December 2017.)

The dates were agreed, Cllr Hayward asked if the Rowing Club would give us an explanation in future to clarify the purpose of use i.e. camping, storage, temporary works to access to the field. His concerns are that now the field is a designated Queen Elizabeth Field that there could be restrictions regarding the use.

It was proposed to give permission for use of the Town Field on the dates requested

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr Feakins

All in favour.

Motion carried.

14. To receive an update written report from MCC Cabinet Member P Hobson regarding Chippenham Play area.

The Chair read the report to members.

It was proposed to stand down Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr White

All in favour.

Motion carried.

Mrs Rachel Jupp informed the Council that a Group called 'Friends of Chippenham Mead has now been formed with the intentions of going forward with moving the Chippenham Play Area to a new site. They will hold open meetings and intend to have a competition called 'Design a Dream' involving children of all ages to engage in the project, Mrs Jupp asked for Town Council support.

Cllr Feakins replied that the present plan of refurbishment should move forward, but still keep the group carrying on with the proposal of moving the site. If refurbishment doesn't continue there is a real fear of losing the 106 monies, which is due to the 2018 deadline of expenditure on the project. He pointed out that some money could be lost but the new equipment for refurbishment could be moved to the new site when the correct funding and plans were in place.

Cllr Wilson raised the issue that land/site had to be found for relocating the play area. The correct funding had to be put in place, and appropriate planning permission granted. As Chippenham is a Village Green, Welsh Government permission will be required which alone could take years.

The designated 106 money has to be spent on the given project by 2018 otherwise it returns to MCC so there was a great fear this money would be lost. Cllr Wilson believes it would be illegal for MCC to change conditions to one Council regarding 106 monies which all other Councils had adhered to and this could cause serious consequences.

The movement of the Play area project at this stage is an idea, not a motion and MCC Cabinet would only approve it as a motion. This would require funding and at this stage the scheme does not have any. All surveys would have to be in place and Cllr Wilson pointed out that one of the suggested sites on Chippenham Mead is in front of, and on, a flood embankment.

Cllr Wilson suggested that the new Group go forward by getting the funding and plans in place.

Cllr Hayward pointed out that the Town Council is all in favour of play areas and supports them. The new play area at Osbaston had taken Cllr Hayward and Cllr Hall 5+ years to put in place.

The refurbishment of Chippenham was not raised by the public but raised by the Town Council who managed to procure £85,000 to refurbish the main play area at Chippenham, and now a pressure Group is threatening to lose this money.

Cllr Hayward pointed out that when open meetings of the Town Council were held in respect of 106 monies, no one came forward to discuss how the money should be spent on the play area. Mr Hobson's letter does not confirm that MCC will guarantee the going ahead of the moving of the play area and Cllr Hayward would be against something that may jeopardise the present refurbishment which the Town Council worked very hard for.

Cllr Were pointed out the movement item had already been agreed in principle at Community Affairs Committee but the Town Council cannot consider to agree or support it further until we know what the proposed specific site and plans are.

It was proposed to reinstate Standing Orders.

Proposed: Cllr Munslow seconded: Cllr White

**All in favour.
Motion carried.**

8.25pm: Cllr Fletcher left the meeting.

15. To review the Member's attendance summary of committee meetings. (Enc 3)

Agreed.

16. To note the Mayors engagements 2015/2016. (Enc 4)

Noted.

17. To confirm membership of One Voice Wales for 2016/17 at £1,380.

Cllr Hayward replied that OVW gives a good service and this membership should be renewed.

Proposed: Cllr Hayward seconded: Cllr Feakins

**All in favour.
Motion carried.**

18. To consider and confirm exception to normal procedure, to confirm funding, and to award contract for resurfacing of Drybridge Play Area further to recommendation of Environmental Affairs Committee working group.

Cllr White read notes to the members from the site meeting held by the Environmental Affairs Committee working group on Friday 29 July 2016.

Cllr White reported that the group addressed concerns regarding item 18 of Standing Orders, in relation to due process for quotes and tenders. Advice from the Internal Auditor and One Voice Wales (OVW) had been taken and considered, and the group fully considered three submitted quotes, as tenders, regarding the provision of synthetic carpet for resurfacing of the play area at Drybridge Park.

The award of this contract has been delayed for over 2 years with the surface being further recovered with wood chipping as short term measures. The application for and receipt of s106 monies towards the resurfacing has enabled further consideration to be given, and the need to award the contract is now urgent as recent inspection reports have noted that the existing surface is sunken in some areas and peeling away at some edges. A report on the circumstances and options was received by all members through notes previously circulated with Environmental Affairs committee (11/7/16).

It was reported that the working group felt able to demonstrate that they had considered other quotes, and believed Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) to have provided the best and most transparent quote. Importantly, Monmouth Town Council have used these services in the past, and they are easily accessible, responsive, and tried and tested contractors. The working group recommended that the quote given by MCC is accepted, and the contract be awarded, for the sum of £22,695, of which £5,000 to be funded by 106 monies. Additional factors taken into consideration in this recommendation were that workmanship is guaranteed for 2 years, materials are guaranteed for 10 years, and that the work required, and hence award of the contract, is now urgent on safety grounds if the park is to remain open.

It was also reported that Tim Bradfield will be invited to attend a site meeting to discuss, suitability and siting of 2 new swings, 1 for toddlers and 1 for children with additional needs.

Cllr Hayward stated that MTC Standing Orders (item18), based on the OVW template, states that contracts of over £2000 go out to formal tender. The OVW model version suggests £60,000 but the Standing Orders working group had thought this excessive when recommending to Full Council. He suggested the Standing Orders working group re-convene and consider this figure of £2000 further in light of this issue.

Cllr Hayward suggested that the Environment Committee should use existing funds within the Committee budget for this contract. In the past few years, the committee has significantly

underspent its budget, with surplus funds being returned to general reserves. If towards the end of the year a budget shortfall becomes apparent, the committee could request further budget funding from general reserves.

It was proposed that Council agree to an exception to be made to normal procedure of Financial Controls (18) within Standing Orders in the award of this contract under the circumstances as outlined, and agree to the award of the contract to MCC by recommendation of the working group, in that other quotations had been treated as tenders, been considered fully, and transparency and value for money was being obtained, with the work now considered urgent on safety grounds.

Proposed: Cllr Feakins seconded: Cllr Hayward **All in favour** **Motion carried.**

19. To consider and confirm issues for CSATS.

Members requested reporting the damage to planters on Monnow Bridge and damage to the gates at Chippenham Mead.

Cllr Wilson explained these items should go to individual agencies such as the Police, whereas CSATS is a multiple of agencies communicating with Groups.

Cllr Hayward asked for a point to be raised being MCC paint yellow lines on the roads and the Police prosecute offenders, could CSATS work with both to sort the problem of traffic violations in the Town.

It was agreed to keep CSATS as an agenda item on Full Council.

20. Items for discussion for future meetings.

- Cllr Feakins: Set up a working Group for website content making it more of a forum.
- Cllr Bright: CCTV who does it favour?
- Cllr Chivers: Communication between County Council and Town Council

21. To confirm the date of the next meeting.

Monday 12 September 2016 at 7.00pm Shire Hall, Monmouth.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.53pm