



MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor's Parlour, Shire Hall, Monmouth, NP25 3DY

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Minutes of meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council Held on Monday 30th January 2006 in the Old Library / Community Room starting at 7.00 pm.

Present: Chairman, Councillor G F W Buckland
The Mayor Councillor Mrs Sue Chivers, Deputy Mayor Councillor Mrs C Pearce.
Councillor R Bond, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor R Hayward,
Councillor D Stevens, Councillor Mrs A Were and Councillor Mrs S White

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk.

1 Apologies were received from: -

Councillor L Robson

2 'Declarations of interest' in items on the agenda: -

N/A

3. To consider for approval minutes of Finance and Policy Meeting of 19th December 2005 & 5th January 2006.

The minutes were approved and accepted.

Proposed Councillor Hayward
Seconded Councillor Mrs Pearce

4. a To receive the summary of expenditure by 'Cheque' page 1

Decision Required To approve the accounts to date for payment.

Proposed Councillor Bond
Seconded Councillor Stevens

Unanimous

2342	1-Dec-05	The Open Spaces Soc - Subscription	40.00	-
2343	8-Dec-05	S.E.T-Stationery	34.52	5.14
2344	8-Dec-05	S Robson - Travel expenses to Neath	70.62	1.64
2345	8-Dec-05	Anglo Leasing	230.85	34.38
2346	8-Dec-05	T Christopher Telephone Expenses - 2 quarters	50.00	-
DD	15-Dec-05	Payroll December Salaries	1,209.94	-
DD	15-Dec-05	Payroll December Pension Contribution	247.95	-
2347	19-Dec-05	Petty Cash	250.00	-
2348	19-Dec-05	Clerks & Councils Direct - Subscription	9.00	-
2349	19-Dec-05	Bathers Electrical - Lights storage and erection costs	6,008.38	894.88
DD	19-Dec-05	I Love Payday Charges	15.86	2.36
2350	21-Dec-05	Food & Drink for Reception re J Smith Memorial	101.98	-
2351	21-Dec-05	SLCC - Membership Renewal	108.00	-
2352	21-Dec-05	Zurich Insurance - Additional insurance premium	268.84	-
DD	22-Dec-05	In;and Rev TAX/NI Charge for November	444.25	-
		Total to end of December	9,090.19	938.40
2353	4-Jan-06	Monmouth CAB - Final Instalment	2,000.00	-
2354	4-Jan-06	Monmouth Womens Festival - Comm Contingency Fund	100.00	-
2355	5-Jan-06	Huckabuck - additional water costs re flooding	36.00	-
2356	5-Jan-06	Streetentertainers	587.50	87.50
2357	10-Jan-06	Mr R Griffiths - Town Maintenance	192.00	-
2358	10-Jan-06	Cllr Mrs Were - Telephone Expenses Oct - Dec 2005	25.00	-
2359	10-Jan-06	Cllr Bond - Telephone Expenses Oct - Dec 2005	25.00	-
2360	10-Jan-06	Cllr Robson - Telephone Expenses Oct - Dec 2005	25.00	-
2361	11-Jan-06	Cllr Mrs Pearce - Telephone Expenses Oct - Dec 2005	25.00	-
2362	11-Jan-06	Cllr Christopher - Telephone Expenses Oct - Dec 2005	25.00	-

b To receive a statement of the cash balance (pages 2,3,4 & 5).

Proposed Councillor Mrs White
Seconded Councillor Mrs Were

5. To consider the authorisation of payment of the following invoices and decide where to allocate spending within the agreed budget:

i) Local Council Administration Book £50.00

Members were advised that the book had been stolen from outside The Clerks Office due to Gary Witcombe borrowing the book and leaving it outside the office when the office was closed. Although a letter had been sent to Gary Witcombe asking him for confirmation that he had left the book outside he has not responded. The Clerk advised that a new edition would be coming out in May 2006 and that although authorisation for expenditure for the book was being requested now, it was not anticipated that a replacement would be bought until the latest addition is released.

Proposed Councillor Mrs White
Seconded Councillor Mrs Dewhurst

6. To receive RFO,s Report.

N/A

7. To Discuss Quotation received for repairs to Deputy Mayors Pendant.

The Clerk advised that a quotation has been received from Thomas Fattorini Ltd of Birmingham to repair the Deputy Mayors Pendant. There were two options available the more expensive option costing £1160.18 includes stripping, disassembling of the pendant centre and stripping the entire enamel and resin completely from the rim and re-painting. Option two costing £551.33 involves manufacturing a new sterling silver rim which would be attached over the top of the existing damaged one, using this method it is hoped not to require a new hand painted centre. Both options would include a sonic clean and refinish with 24ct hard gold plate.

Councillor Bond asked the Deputy Mayor to give an explanation as to why the pendant needed repair. Councillor Mrs Pearce explained that she had simply tried to clean the pendant and that the gold plate had been removed in the process. Councillor Hayward asked whether this would be covered under the Town Council insurance policy and the Clerk advised that she felt that this would not be covered because it was not accidental damage. Councillor Hayward suggested that whilst this was true the damage had not been caused intentionally and that an approach should be made to the insurance company to see whether or not a claim could be made.

It was also recommended that a catalogue of regalia should be requested and there was a suggestion that depending on the value of the existing pendant and the potential cost of having it repaired, that maybe the possibility of commission a replacement with a local jeweller may be considered.

The proposal then was made that the insurance company should be approached with a view to trying to make a claim against the policy.

Proposed Councillor Stevens
Seconded Councillor Mrs White

For 8 Against 0 Abs 1

8. To Discuss Procedure for Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Clerk advised that following a number of lines of enquiry it is clear that the only statutory requirement of the AGM, in line with the LGA 1972 is that an election must take place to elect the new Chairman/Mayor of the Council.

After consulting with a number of local clerks it seems that other Town Councils follow a number of methods to reach this point, including the selection prior to the AGM when a Mayor and Deputy Mayor elect are appointed then elected on the night of the AGM with a gentlemen's agreement in place that all members will vote for the Mayor elect. A discussion also took place regarding the selection of the Deputy Mayor, and that in some other councils the Mayor chose the Deputy, however members agreed that the only democratic procedure to follow would be to have an election in the same way that the election for The Mayor would be held.

Members decided that it would be advisable to make a proposal to Full Council to adopt the following method of selection. Written nominations for the position of Mayor and Deputy must be received by The Clerk 10 days prior to the AGM, members can nominate themselves and a seconder is not required. A meeting will be called prior to the AGM to discuss the nominations and to give the candidates an opportunity to present themselves to members to receive questions and to allow them to speak about what their priorities would be if given the chance to represent the Council in this position. This meeting would be a normal Town Council meeting and open to members of the public and press. It was agreed that if this method of selection is adopted that it would form part of the Standing Orders. Members discussed the possibility that this procedure would still not preclude anybody standing as Mayor/Deputy Mayor on the night of the AGM, but that due to the Council's desire to have a more dignified and orderly Mayor Making ceremony it is hoped that members would respect this proposal and follow the procedure as indicated.

9. Matters arising from previous meetings: -

i) Review of Clerks Salary.

Councillor Buckland requested that this item be deferred until the close of the meeting and then be discussed in closed session without the presence of The Clerk. Member and The Clerk all agreed that this was acceptable.

ii) Risk Assessment.

The Clerk advised that she had a successful initial meeting with Ian Hammond, the course provider and was confident that the training sessions would be very constructive and ensure that all the necessary tools would be provided to ensure that satisfactory risk assessments could be carried out. The course is approved by The Health and Safety Executive. The first training session is due to be held on Tuesday 21st Feb between 2-5pm in The Mayors Parlour and those members who have indicated that they wish to attend have been given some preliminary work to do prior to that.

iii) Review of Standing Orders.

The Clerk circulated a number of copies of amended Standing Orders in line with resolutions that have been passed at previous meetings. It was suggested by The Clerk that a resolution is placed on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting to adopt the latest version, it was however recommended that as soon as is practicable a working party should meet to look at revising some of the wording and simplifying them. Councillor Buckland advised that he felt that there are some contradictions contained and agreed that some further work needed to take place.

iv) Update re offer from MCC re taking over services and amenities.

The Clerk has received an acknowledgement from MCC of the letter that has been sent indicating the activities and services that Monmouth Town Council might be interested in taking over from them. The Clerk expressed the reservations that other Town and Community Councils had after the local branch meeting of the SLCC. A discussion took place and members expressed concern about how funding could be obtained if this project was to go ahead because it is anticipated that the only method of raising funds would be through the precept and this would result in a 'double taxing' of local people.

v) Any other matters arising from Finance and Planning Meeting of 19th December not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.

The Clerk wished to remind members of the meeting on Friday 3rd Feb at 7.00 pm with Mr Graham Down from MCC to discuss the County Councils budget. This will be held in the Community Room, Shire Hall.

11. Any Other Business, ie general information or notification of future discussions, no decisions can be made at this meeting on items that arise under this heading.

12. Next meeting Old Library Community Room Monday 13th March 2006.

The Clerk left the meeting at 7.45 pm and members adjourned to Closed Session to discuss item 9i on the agenda.

The Society of Local council clerks had been consulted in the matter of the salary for the Town Clerk. They have recommended a substantial increase but they have also recommended that this increase occurs over a long period of time with one grade per annum being awarded until the maximum was reached. It was felt that this award did not reflect the wishes of the Council and did not reach the level of award which had previously been offered.

It was proposed that the Town Clerk's salary be increased to grade 32 retrospective to 1st October 2005. This grade would then be fixed for the term of employment. However, the grade can be adjusted in the future should either the job description change and involve a greater responsibility or the Town Clerk obtain more qualifications relative to the position.