



MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council Held on Monday 13th March 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,
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor Mrs V Mitchell, Councillor L Robson
Councillor D Stevens, and Councillor Mrs S White

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk.

A brief presentation was given by the pupils of Monmouth Comprehensive School outlining their plan to visit Kenya to help a local school with a building extension project. They are seeking to raise funds and wish to ask members for any financial support that could be given.

- 1. Apologies were received from: -**
Councillors Bond, Hackett Pain, Hayward, Mrs Pearce and Mrs Were.
- 2. 'Declarations of interest' in items on the agenda: -**
N/A
- 3. To consider for approval the minutes of the Finance & Planning Committee of 30th January 2006 and the minutes of Finance & Planning Committee Closed Session Pink Paper of 30th January 2006 and the Budget Presentation by Graham Down of 3rd February 2006.**

Proposed Councillor Mrs Chivers

Seconded Councillor Mrs White

For 4 Against 0 Abs 3

- 4. a To receive the summary of expenditure by 'Cheque' pages 1&2**
Decision Required To approve the accounts to date for payment.

DD	13-Jan-06	Payroll January Salaries	1,308.78	-
DD	13-Jan-06	Payroll January Pension Contribution	336.24	-
DD	16-Jan-06	I love payday payroll charges	15.86	2.36
2363	17-Jan-06	SWALEC - Electricity re Clerks Office	382.04	52.09
2364	17-Jan-06	SET - Stationery Costs	56.68	8.44
2365	17-Jan-06	BOSS - Copying Charge	35.37	5.27
2366	17-Jan-06	MCC-Election costs re Dixon/Osbaston Ward-Contingency	2,239.75	-
2367	17-Jan-06	Dennis Walker - Christmas Tree (recouped from MDCTC)	80.00	-
2368	17-Jan-06	Washrite contribution towards transportation of Tree	20.00	-
DD	20-Jan-06	Inland Revenue - Tax/Ni Contribution Dec 2005	322.14	-
2369	1-Feb-06	Merlin Waste - Dog Bin and Mounting Bracket	265.55	39.55
2370	1-Feb-06	Bathers Electrical Balance of payment re Christmas Lights	2,442.83	363.83
2371	7-Feb-06	MCC - Replacement for previous chq no 2233		
2372	7-Feb-06	MCC - Contribution re Summerplayscheme	2,500.00	-
2373	15-Feb-06	SET - Office stationery supplies	25.80	3.84
2374	15-Feb-06	Tweedle&Pip - Christmas bags for Grotto	45.00	-
2375	15-Feb-06	Merlin Waste - Dog Bin Quarterly charges	152.75	22.75
DD	15-Feb-06	I Love Payday - February Salaries	1,247.57	-
DD	15-Feb-06	Payroll - Pension Contribution February	256.05	-
DD	15-Feb-06	I Love Payday - February Salary charge	15.86	2.36
2377	21-Feb-06	Councillor Mrs Chivers - Mayors Allowance	625.00	-
2376	21-Feb-06	MCC - CCTV Charge for 2005/2006	11,500.00	-
2378	21-Feb-06	B.T - Phone charges re Clerks Office	227.30	33.84
2379	21-Feb-06	Anglo Leasing - Lease re Photocopier	230.85	34.38
DD	22-Feb-06	Inland Rev TAX/Ni Jan 06	337.57	-

Proposed Councillor Buckland

Seconded Councillor Mrs White

Unanimous

There are no Section 137 payments for approval.

b To receive a statement of the cash balance (pages 3,4,5 & 6).

**Proposed Councillor Buckland
Seconded Councillor Mrs White**

Unanimous

c Virements

Overall 'Other Admin Costs' are within budget but the following sub items have exceeded the agreed budget.

- i) Postage is over its individual budget by £13.95. The agreed budget figure was £350.00 the overspend has been due to the increase in outgoing mail.

Members agreed to vire money from the 'stationery' subheading of 'other admin costs' in the sum of £30.00.

- ii) Copying is over its individual budget by £82.69. The agreed budget figure was £1100.00 the overspend has been due to the purchase of the new printer at a cost of £268.00 net which was not allowed for in the original budget.

Members agreed to vire money from the 'office sundries' subheading of 'other admin costs' to cover the overspend.

**Proposed Councillor Mrs Dewhurst
Seconded Councillor Mrs Chivers**

Unanimous

d Monies remaining from 2005/2006 to be earmarked for deferred capital spending, a decision will be required by the April meeting unless made earlier. Any remaining monies not so earmarked will be transferred to general reserves.

The committee chairmen were reminded that this item has been placed for discussion on the agenda for their forthcoming meetings so that decisions can be made about earmarking unspent funds from their budgets for capital items to be carried forward to the following year.

Councillor Stevens wished to advise members that a decision had been made at the recent Environmental Affairs Committee with regard to £10,000.00 of unspent monies that had been budgeted for match funded items. Monies have been agreed for a 50% match funding scheme with MCC to erect a metal fence around the oak tree in Oak Crescent, Wyesham. He also confirmed that following advice from the Clerk and the decision to support the vote by the Chair of Finance the committee had also agreed to vire £5000.00 from match funding to town maintenance. The reason for this decision being made at committee level was due to timings with year end approaching and the possibility if these monies were not earmarked for capital expenditure that they would otherwise go back into general reserves. The monies were specifically to be spent on Drybridge Park playarea to replace equipment that the engineers report has highlighted, and also to upgrade and maintain the surfaces and replace the bark.

The Finance and Policy Committee decided that they would recommend this decision to the next Full Council meeting.

**Proposed Councillor Mrs White
Seconded Councillor Mrs Chivers**

For 6 Against 0 Abs 1

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

i) MCC – CCTV 2005/2006	£11500.00
ii) One Voice Wales Planning Booklet – 4 required	£20.00
iii) One Voice Wales – Renewal of Membership	£966.00

All invoices approved for payment unanimously.

6. To receive RFO,s Report.

To review letter from Wales Audit Commission re complaints made against Monmouth Town Council by Gary Witcombe.

The clerk advised members that a copy of a letter sent to Mr Witcombe from The Wales Audit Office has been received. This was in response to a list of complaints that Mr Witcombe had made to the Auditor about Monmouth Town Council in relation to: the approval of sub committee's minutes by Full Council, approval of the Community Grants scheme awards and the membership of committees. The clerk advised that on each point the Council had been cleared of any wrong doing or bad practices, and in fact the Auditor had specifically made clear that the arrangements that the Council had put in place were in accord with good practice.

To consider confirmation of advice from NALC re the proper relation between committees and full council.

An e mail has been received from One Voice Wales/NALC in response to a query raised by Councillor Buckland in relation to 'the proper relation between committees and Town Council'. They have confirmed that this matter is a matter for internal procedures when writing the Standing Orders and the committees Terms of Reference. In general terms the acts and proceedings of committees must be submitted to Full Council except where a committee acts under delegated powers or with the authority of the Full Council when its acts and proceedings and submitted for report only.

WAG – Agreed expenditure under Section 137 Payments.

Section 137 payments have had a 2.7% increase for 2006/2007 from £5.30 to £5.44 per local government elector.

7. To consider proposal to purchase Accounting Package from RBS Software Solutions.

The Clerk and Councillor Buckland have recently had a demonstration of a proprietary accounts package. The Clerk feels that transferring the accounting system onto a system that will provide more comprehensive reporting and will also reduce the amount of manual calculations at year end will save a considerable amount of time and effort. The package available provides capacity for The Town Council for considerable growth for the future. The total cost of transferring data and two days training is £1560.00 plus vat. It was suggested that as there had been no provision for such an item in the budget that the invoice could be paid for from the balance of monies in the contingency fund.

**Proposed Councillor Mrs Chivers
Seconded Councillor Mrs White**

Unanimous

8. To consider what format the presentation to The Mayor of Carbone should take and agree the budget from Ceremonial Entertainments budget.

It was agreed that a working party should be set up comprising the Clerk and those former mayors who were present i.e Councillors Mrs White, Mrs Dewhurst and Mrs Chivers. The clerk agreed that there was already a provision made, at a previous meeting for £300.00 for a scroll. It was proposed that the working party should liaise with the Twinning Committee in order to find out what their plans were and then put together suggestions for a civic reception to be held on Monday 19th June 2006. A budget was agreed in the sum of an additional £500.00 for the reception.

**Proposed Councillor Buckland
Seconded Councillor Robson**

For 4 Against 3 Abs 0

9. Matters arising from previous meetings: -

i) Risk Assessment.

The Clerk advised members that the first training session had gone well. The members of the group have already had a follow up meeting to put together the information needed for the risk register, and the Admin Assistant and Clerk were now in the process of collating this information prior to arranging the next training session. The Clerk confirmed that the process was already beginning to highlight potential problems and concerns, but was confident that these issues can be resolved with the training provided and the tools to carry out the necessary risk assessments.

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

The Clerk has been requested to provide MCC further details of the services and amenities that the Town Council presently provide along with the budget details. Councillor Robson requested that the Clerk write a letter to WAG to express Monmouth Town Council's interest in having an opportunity to deliver local key services in town. The reason the involvement from the Assembly is required it because the Council would agree to act as a pilot authority for the scheme. A list of possible services could include, open spaces, street sweeping, public conveniences, cemeteries, allotments etc.

iii) Insurance Claim for damage to Deputy Mayors Chain.

The Clerk reported that verbal confirmation had been received from Zurich Insurance that they have agreed to cover the costs for the repair to the pendant. The excess will be £100.00. Members asked The Clerk to make sure that she liaise closely with Fattorini to ensure that the repairs would be complete and the pendant returned in time for The Mayor Making Ceremony in May.

iv) Any other matters arising from Finance and Planning Meeting of 30th January not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.

The Clerk advised members that confirmation has been received that the 2004/2005 Audit has now been signed off. Nothing was qualified, so a clean bill of health has been given. The notice of conclusion of audit and right to inspect the annual return, has been posted on the notice board for the required period of 10 working days.

10. 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.

11. Next meeting Old Library Community Room Monday 24th April 2006.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.