



## MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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### **Minutes of meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council Held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007 in the Community Room starting at 7.00 pm.**

**Present:** Chairman, Councillor G F W Buckland  
The Mayor Councillor T Christopher, Councillor R Bond, Councillor Mrs S Chivers,  
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor N Hacket Pain, Councillor R Hayward,  
Councillor Mrs V Mitchell and Councillor D Stevens

**In attendance:** Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk, Councillor J Fletcher and Jenny Lewis Area General Manager- Monmouthshire County Council

At the commencement of the meeting Councillor Buckland thanked members for their support over the last year in attending meetings and taking part. He informed members that this would be the last F&P meeting that he would chair.

#### **1. Apologies were received from: -**

None received.

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

None received.

**Councillor Buckland asked that Item 11 be brought up the agenda so that Jenny Lewis could make her presentation and leave afterwards.**

#### **11. To discuss draft report re collaboration agreement with MCC and Community & Town Councils.**

Jenny Lewis handed out a document entitled 'Connections' and explained that it was very much an outline document, she would aim to set out where it came from and that its purpose was to set a framework for communication protocols. In 2004 the Rural Forum came up with a list of things that it believed were wrong with partnership working. MCC decided to arrange a meeting of Clerk's to gather feedback and it was decided as a follow up to have a seminar which was held in 2005. The result of this was to consider setting up a charter of roles and responsibilities and The Chief Executive of MCC set up a new working party to carry this work on and in 2006 a brief working document was agreed upon. In the meantime the Welsh Assembly Government had also produced a draft document and a new working party was set up, Monmouthshire was well represented on this group. However MCC decided to take the initiative as progress seemed to be slow and go ahead under its' own steam. It was suggested that providing a very basic document would leave more room for additions to be made at a later date as the process grew organically.

Several members expressed their concerns regarding the purpose of such a document and felt that the views of the Town and Community Councils were rarely taken into consideration during the decision making process by MCC. However Mrs Lewis explained that this is an attempt to establish rules around a consultation process that would give more credibility. She explained that there is recognition by MCC that to date communication has been poor and that this document is just a start on which further work could be developed.

Another concern that members had was in relation to some of the smaller community councils who felt at a disadvantage because of their size.

Mrs Lewis reassured members that whilst this would be a complicated process protocols need to be looked at and implemented. She explained that a standing body would be set up to review the effectiveness of the strategy and on this group would be representatives from a number of different organisations.

A suggestion was made to Mrs Lewis that there are some simple ways in which communication could be improved and that one easy way would be to provide all town and community councillors with a Monmouthsure.gov e.mail address. This could hopefully foster more of a partnership spirit and encourage co-operation between the different groups represented.

In summary Mrs Lewis closed by advising that an unofficial report to the Chief Exec would feedback that members generally feel that this is seen as a meaningless gesture but there is willingness to accept that this is a start but recognising that there are some specific problems that need to be overcome first.

**3. To consider for approval the minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee of 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007.**

The minutes were approved and signed as correct

**Proposed Councillor Hayward  
Seconded Councillor Stevens**

**Unanimous**

**4. To receive the summary of expenditure.**

**i) Decision Required. To approve the accounts between 17/03/2007 & 31/03/2007 for payment. (Page 1)**

The accounts were received and approved for payment.

**Proposed Councillor Bond  
Seconded Councillor Hayward**

**Unanimous**

**ii) To review a statement of the bank reconciliation's as at 31/03/2007. (Pages 2, 3 & 4).**

The bank reconciliation's were received and approved as correct.

**Proposed Councillor Buckland  
Seconded Councillor Hacket Pain**

**Unanimous**

**iii) Monies remaining from 2006/2007 to be earmarked for deferred capital spending. Any remaining monies not so earmarked will be transferred to general reserves.**

The Clerk reminded members of the previously agreed funds from the Publicity and Website budget in the sum of £500.00 could be carried forward into the following year for upgrading the website.

The Clerk advised that The Environment Committee have proposed earmarking the following monies from their 2006/2007 budget:

**Match Funding Budget**

Chippenham Field Lighting	£3500.00
Newland Parish Council (Redbrook)	£650.00

**Street Decorations and Christmas Capital**

There is a surplus against these budget heads of £1671.00 and £674.00 respectively and this has been earmarked for capital funding for eyebolts in Monnow Street and lighting for the Christmas Tree.

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

N/A

6. **To receive RFO's report.**

**Report on expenditure against budget for 2006/2007**

The Clerk circulated a copy of the expenditure against budget for 2006/2007 for each committee and reported back to members where there had been any significant differences. Where there had been an overspend the appropriate virements had been raised. The year-end figures still have not been finalised and there will be a number of accruals and prepayments that will have to be journalled in. It is anticipated that the accounts will be closed off by the end of May.

**Proposed new system of numbering on agenda's / minutes**

The Clerk asked members to approve a change to the system of numbering with effect from the first meetings post AGM. It was proposed from then that the agenda's for Full Council and all of the committee's will be numbered consecutively continuing for a period of one year before reverting back to one. The Clerk explained that this would make it easier for the office when making cross-references to previous meetings.

7. **To approve delegated authority to The Clerk to make specific authorised payments.**

The Clerk advised members that the auditor had recommended introducing a system whereby all invoices should record a reference to the authority and approval under which they are paid. The Clerk confirmed that often-routine payments for items such as stationery and utilities were paid prior to retrospective approval being sought by the committee.

Members suggested that The Clerk should have full-delegated authority to make any payment within the Administration Budget and report back to the Finance committee for information. There would not be a cap on the amount payable providing all payments were made in keeping with the budget provision.

Members moved that this should be the recommendation of the Finance & Policy committee to Full Council at the next meeting.

**Proposed Councillor Hayward  
Seconded Councillor Stevens**

**Unanimous**

8. **To consider reviewing the Town Council's complaints procedure.**

The Clerk circulated a paper from One Voice Wales giving guidance on establishing a complaints procedure, and recommended that members consider adopting the document as part of the Standing Orders. The current provision is very brief and does not give enough guidance. It was agreed that a copy would be circulated to all members for consideration and suggested amendments.

Members moved that this should be the recommendation of the Finance & Policy committee to approve the document at the next Full Council meeting.

9. **To agree finance for drinks/nibbles after AGM from Civic Entertainment Budget.**

Members were advised that the amount spent at the previous Mayor Making Ceremony had been £55.24.

The Clerk asked members to approve a budget of a maximum of £60.00 to be paid for from the Civic Entertainment Budget.

**Proposed Councillor Bond  
Seconded Councillor Mrs Dewhurst**

**Unanimous**

**10. To agree finance for Civic Service and reception.**

Members were advised that the amount spent at the previous Civic Service and reception had been £1030.00.

This had been spent on the Regimental Band, Hire of St Mary's Church and Organist, and the reception at the Priory Rooms.

It was noted that the cost per head last year for the reception had been £6.00 and it had been difficult to achieve this on budget. The Clerk asked members to consider making an increase in the amount allocated for the cost of the reception and members agreed to an all-inclusive sum available to a maximum of £1200.00 from the Civic Entertainment Budget.

**Proposed Councillor Bond  
Seconded Councillor Stevens**

**Unanimous**

**12. Matters arising from previous meetings.**

**i) Risk Assessment.**

On going, nothing further to report.

**ii) Connecting the Spheres**

The Clerk reported that a reply had been received from Phil Cooke at MCC regarding the enquiry about what follow up action MCC was preparing to take in view of the recommendations from WAG regarding 'Making the Connections'. He advised that the matter was now being dealt with by the Chief Exec, Mr Colin Berg and that a fuller response would be received in due course.

**iii) CCTV**

Councillor Buckland reported that a letter had been received from Tracey Harray at MCC to advise that until further notice all meetings of the User Group would be cancelled in the light of another Town Council withdrawing its' funding.

He pointed out however that it should be made very clear that the camera's are all still fully operational and continue to be monitored from the station at Caerphilly CBC.

**iv) Shire Hall**

Councillor Buckland reported that following the recent team meeting concerns are being expressed that a replacement project manager still has not been appointed with the imminent departure of the key officer who has responsibility for the project.

The Clerk reported that works would be carried out over the coming two weeks to erect scaffolding in The Shire Hall to enable a paint analysis to take place and that the Hall would be effectively closed to the public over the next week. The Clerk's office would remain open and would be accessible although access to the upper floors of the building would be restricted.

**v) Any other matters arising from Finance and Policy Meeting of 26th March not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.**

Councillor Mrs Dewhurst asked members to accept formal notice that the Community Affairs committee would be making a request to the Finance committee to approve funding the insurance premium for the Carnival at the next opportunity. A good quote had been obtained and the cost would be £1050.00.

- 13. Any Other Business, i.e. general information or notification of future discussions, no decisions can be made at this meeting on items that arise under this heading.**

Nothing reported.

- 14. Next meeting Old Library Community Room Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007.**

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

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_