Monmouth Town Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council held on Monday 7th April 2008 in Market Hall, Priory Street starting at 7.00 pm.

Present: The Chairman Councillor D Stevens
Councillor GFW Buckland, Councillor T Christopher, Councillor Mrs S Chivers, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor N Hacket Pain, Councillor R Hayward and Councillor Mrs V Mitchell.

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk
There were two members of the public present, Miss M Chivers and Mr S Wilson.
Mr Wilson asked the Chair for permission to address members regarding his concerns over the recently erected fence around the cobbles in Agincourt Square. He stated that in his opinion MCC was not carrying out its statutory duty of cleaning this area and had used the excuse of health and safety as the reason why it was being fenced off. Mr Wilson said that he would be sending a letter to the press.

102. To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda

None Received

103. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor R Bond and Councillor Mrs C Pearce

104. To approve minutes of the previous meeting dated 18th February 2008

The minutes were approved and signed as correct subject to one correction, Councillor Mrs Chivers had sent her apologies to the previous meeting and this had not been recorded in the minutes.

Proposed Councillor Stevens
Seconded Councillor Mrs Mitchell **For 6 Against 0 Abs 2**

105. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

i) To approve the accounts for payment between 12/02/2008 & 25/03/2008. (Page 1)

The accounts were received and approved for payment.

Proposed Councillor Stevens
Seconded Councillor Hacket Pain **For 7 Against 0 Abs 1**

ii) To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 29/02/2008. (Pages 2,3,& 4)

The bank reconciliations were received and approved as correct.

Proposed Councillor Stevens
Seconded Councillor Hayward **For 7 Against 0 Abs 1**

iii) To consider a virement for Staff Training and Subsistence in the Administration Section which is over budget by £158.00

The Clerk advised members that due to an additional petty cash item the amount that would need to be vired now totalled £165.00. It was suggested and agreed to transfer this sum from the councillor expenses/ travel budget.

iv) To consider a virement for Insurance in the Administration Section which is over budget by £322.00

Members agreed that this amount should be vired from the salaries budget to cover the overspend.

v) To consider a virement for Subscriptions in the Administration Section which is over budget by £322.00

The Clerk advised that this item should not be on the agenda. The members agreed that it should be disregarded.

Proposed Councillor Mrs Dewhurst
Seconded Councillor Christopher **Unanimous**

106. To review expenditure for 2007/2008 and consider earmarking reserves

The members reviewed the year to date expenditure and the Clerk advised that there are still several invoices yet to be paid. Members were asked to consider whether or not to earmark funds from the Publicity and Website budget, the website had already been modified and this would be covered in the IT Help desk invoice that was awaiting payment. It was agreed that this was not necessary. The Clerk pointed out that the cost of moving from the Shire Hall had not been budgeted from anywhere and it was agreed that the Administration contingency would be earmarked to cover this expenditure. The Clerk requested that two new desks be purchased and this was also agreed.

Proposed Councillor Mrs Mitchell
Seconded Councillor Christopher **Unanimous**

107. To confirm authorisation of payment of the following invoice and agree where to allocate spending within the agreed budget

One Voice Wales Subscription for 2008/2009 £1073.00

The Clerk read out a letter received from OVW which outlined their involvement with a number of projects, and plans for forthcoming development and training in the coming year. Members agreed that the subscription whilst on the high side was seen as providing good value and that the invoice should therefore be paid from the subscriptions budget.

Proposed Councillor Hayward
Seconded Councillor Mrs Dewhurst **Unanimous**

108. To consider correspondence

One Voice Wales	**–**	**Update on training seminars**	Noted
Gwent Police	**--**	**Review of Neighbourhood Policing**	Deferred to next council

109. To receive reports from R.F.O

HMS Monmouth expenditure

The Clerk informed members that the expenditure for hosting HMS Monmouth had been under the agreed budget. The total spent was £429.30.

Staff overtime

It was noted that the Admin Assistant had worked additional hours and that an overtime request was made for payment of an extra 20 hours pay at the standard rate. It was suggested that a record of hours worked should be kept and the Clerk should sign to agree on a weekly basis.

Torfaen CBC Pension Fund Contributions

The Clerk advised that with effect from 1st April 2008 the Local Government Pension Scheme is changing the way that employee contributions are deducted. The new rates are on a sliding scale relevant to earnings. The amount that is presently paid by the Clerk is 6% and this will rise with immediate effect to 6.5%.

110. To confirm appointment of Internal Auditor and agree fee

Members agreed that Mr Clive James would be re-appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor and agreed his fee in the sum of £500.00. It was noted that Mr James had now become a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and the terms were noted.

111. To consider storage and insurance arrangements for Deputy Mayor's Chain

The Clerk informed members that the new Deputy Mayor's chain had now been included on the insurance policy. There would be an approximate increase in the annual premium of £14.00 but the extra cost for the remainder of this year will be waived by Zurich.
The Clerk suggested that consideration should be given to the purchase of a storage box for the new chain, and also a new box to replace the one that the mayor's chain is kept in due to the lock being faulty. Members asked the Clerk to obtain a quote for two new storage boxes for the chains. Members were reminded of the necessary security arrangements for the regalia, and that when not in use the chains must be stored in the strong room at a local bank.

112. To discuss guidelines for members representation on outside bodies

Members were in agreement that in most cases two-way communication between the Council and members that represent other organisations was desirable. It was considered that there would be some instances when this might not always be appropriate and the schools governor's role was a case in point. Members will be requested to give a brief report at full council meetings as and when appropriate. Organisations that are funded by the Town Council should be invited to attend a meeting and give a brief presentation and an update on progress on an annual basis.
The list of bodies was reviewed and members were in full agreement to delete the following organisations from the list; Forest Enterprise, Borough Theatre and GAVO.

113. To consider induction training for new Councillors

The Clerk informed members that an invitation from One Voice Wales had been received to provide information about future training requirements. The Clerk suggested that a training course to induct new Councillors would be useful and in addition provision for planning training and training about powers and duties. Councillors endorsed the value of the training provided by OVW for new members that took place after the last election. It was agreed that initially a copy of the 'Good Councillors Guide' and a 'Good Practice Guide' would be sufficient for new members rather than overloading with Council documents and policies.

114. Matters arising from previous meetings

i) Connecting the Spheres/Making the Connections/Delivering Beyond Boundaries.

As there has been no further response from Mr Berg to the letter sent to him on 19th February the members agreed to remove this item from future agendas as there was nothing further to discuss.

ii) Town Council move to Market Hall

The Clerk advised members that everything was in hand in preparation for the office move on Monday 21st April. Letters had been written to all of the necessary utilities companies and arrangements had been made to switch the phone line and broadband connection across. The insurance company have been advised of the move to amend its records. The Clerk asked members to approve the cost of having the mail redirected and it was agreed that this could be done for a three month period at a cost of £23.95. It was also agreed that a new notice board would be necessary and that this would have to be fitted to the inside window of the front door. The Conservation Officer had indicated that Listed Building Consent would probably not be given to put a notice board on the external wall of the building. It was reported that early problems in obtaining key fobs for the alarm were being dealt with and the Clerk was hopeful that this would be resolved prior to the move. It was also reported that a letter had now been received from Mr Greenslade of MCC confirming the position of the Town Council's user's rights and that the temporary relocation would not have any impact of them. The Clerk advised that the inventory had been completed and that a copy would be sent to MCC so that it could be confirmed as correct. Market Hall does not have a caretaker and there are no arrangements for cleaning at present, the Clerk reported that if this became an issue that it would have to be reviewed in the future.

The members were concerned about the security fencing that had been erected around the cobbled area outside the Shire Hall and the Clerk was asked to write a letter to Debra Hill Howells from MCC requesting that the fence be removed from the cobbles so that it just encompasses the arches area. It was unanimously agreed that the unsightly look of the fence was not conducive to the area and that it detracted from the visual appearance of the Shire Hall. The fencing off of the cobbled area was not acceptable on the grounds of the loss of public amenity, as this is a well used open space.
Members agreed that a suitable venue had to be booked to hold the AGM. It was agreed to try and book Monmouth Priory if this was available as it was thought to be the most suitable venue. The Clerk was asked to make arrangements to book a room for the AGM at a reasonable cost.

iii) Any other matters arising from Finance and Policy Meeting of 18th February 2008 not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.

N/A

115. 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.

N/A

116. Next meeting: Market Hall, Priory Street on Monday 19th May 2008 at 7.00pm.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signature: _____Date: _____