

Monmouth Town Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council held on Monday 19th May 2008 in Market Hall, Priory Street starting at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillor R Bond, Councillor G Bright, Councillor T Christopher, Councillor Mrs S Chivers, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor N Hacket Pain and Councillor R Hayward.

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk and Councillor J Fletcher
The meeting did not start until 7.45pm due to the late finish of the previous meeting.

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

None Received

2. To receive apologies for absence

No apologies were received

3. To elect a Chairman of Finance & Policy Committee

There was one nomination received for Chairman, Councillor R Hayward. On being put to the vote the members agreed unanimously to accept the nomination.

4. To elect a Deputy Chairman of Finance & Policy Committee

There was one nomination received for Deputy Chairman, Councillor N Hacket Pain. On being put to the vote the members agreed unanimously to accept the nomination.

5. To approve minutes of the previous meeting dated 7th April 2008

The minutes were approved and signed as correct.

Proposed Councillor Hacket Pain
Seconded Councillor Bond

For 5 Against 0 Abs 2

6. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

The members raised questions regarding payments that had been made for room hire charges which had been made due to the move from the Shire Hall. It was agreed that this issue needed further discussion and to defer this matter until the next Full Council meeting.

i) To approve the accounts for payment between 26/03/2008 & 12/05/2008. (Page 1)

The accounts were received and approved for payment.

**Proposed Councillor Hacket Pain
Seconded Councillor Mrs Chivers**

Unanimous

ii) To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 30/04/2008. (Pages 2,3,& 4)

The members asked about the high balance on the current account, the Clerk explained that this was due to the first instalment of the precept being received. It was agreed that in future it would be helpful if in addition to a report showing expenses an additional report showing income could also be circulated.

The bank reconciliations were received and approved as correct.

**Proposed Councillor Bond
Seconded Councillor Christopher**

Unanimous

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

N/A

8. To consider correspondence

Gwent Police -- Review of Neighbourhood Policing

The chair reminded members of the previous approach that had been made to the Council for funding to employ an additional PCSO. Inspector Smith from Monmouth Police Station had given a presentation to Full Council in which he was unable to offer any guarantees that a newly appointed officer would only be deployed in Monmouth. The members at this time had shown concern that this would not represent value and that there was no guaranteed benefit as the officer could be sent anywhere outside the local area. This committee agreed that as this was a new Council that new members should be given an opportunity to review the situation. This item will be placed as a matter for discussion at a Full Council meeting once the six month period has passed since it was last debated.

9. To receive reports from R.F.O

Pay Update 2008/2009

At a meeting of the National Joint Council for Local Government Staff the employer's side made a further offer which it stated that this is its final offer for this pay round

2.45% on all scale points on the national pay spine, giving a rate of £6.53 per hour on scale point 7, the first point to which the 2.45% applies. An additional £100 on scale points 4, 5 and 6, giving an increase of 3.3% on those scale points and pay rates of £6.20, £6.28 and £6.37 pence an hour. These spinal column points are below the minimum level in the NALC/SLCC agreement.

The NJC will seek to conclude the review of the National Agreement agreed as part of 2007 settlement. NALC and SLCC have agreed to review the agreement for the local council sector in 2009 once this NJC review has taken place. The NJC will seek to agree by 31 December 2008 the pay settlements effective from 1 April 2009 and 1 April 2010

The large public sector unions are consulting on whether they will take industrial action in support of their claim.

10. To consider employer contribution rate for Greater Gwent Pension Fund

The Clerk circulated a letter from Torfaen CBC, the administrators of the staff pension fund. The letter advised that this financial year would see the introduction of the new Local Government Pension Scheme. It outlined funding levels and explained that for some employers the contribution levels would be reaching a plateau. The rate at which employers contribute is now optional and the Clerk advised members how it had increased over the last four years to minimise the effect of the shortfalls of the funding level. Members asked whether or not the level of the payment reflected the amount that the employee would receive in due course. It was agreed to defer any decision until further information was available. The Clerk agreed to report back to the next meeting so that a decision could be made then.

11. To consider Forward Plan for 2008/2009

The Forward Plan that had been circulated was accepted as it stood.

12. To consider main objectives for committee

The members considered the objectives that had been previously set and with some minor amendments it was agreed that on the whole the remit of this committee had not changed. Members requested that some additional wording was included and that this should then form part of a new policy document setting out the Council's objectives over the coming four years. The Clerk suggested that once this exercise had been carried out by each of the committees that a working party could be set up to collate the information into one document setting out a plan similar to 'Shaping our Future' the last policy document that the previous Council adopted.

13. To consider Annual Report for 2007/2008

Councillor Hayward agreed to write the report for this committee. Members were advised that each of the committees would also be asked to write a summary showing the main objectives and achievements in a brief review of the past year. The Mayor would be asked to make a contribution and that once it had been agreed by Council it would be made available through a number of different channels, the website, the press, the notice board and those people on the mailing list.

14. To appoint Councillors to carry our internal six monthly review of accounts

Councillors Hayward and Hackett Pain were appointed unanimously to monitor the accounts and carry out the six monthly reviews.

15. Matters arising from previous meetings

i) Town Council move to Market Hall

The Clerk was asked by members to make enquiries relating to the maximum number of people that the meeting room should be allowed to accommodate on the grounds of Health and Safety. Members expressed concern that despite some tables having been removed from the room that the emergency access was not adequate and it was felt that whilst the room was comfortable for committee meetings that for Full Council it did not provide enough space. The Clerk reminded members that this was only ever intended to provide temporary accommodation. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the next Full Council meeting.

ii) Any other matters arising from Finance and Policy Meeting of 7th April 2008 not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.

N/A

16. 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.

The Clerk advised that a letter had been received from the committee of Monmouth Regatta requesting sponsorship. It was agreed that this fell outside of the remit of the Community Grant Scheme of which the Rowing Club had received a substantial amount for in previous year. Members agreed to refuse the request and asked the Clerk to write reminding the committee that the Town Council is supporting this event by agreeing use of the Town Field.

A request was made by Councillor Bright to consider making a donation towards the Royal British Legion. Members were reminded that donations had been made in the past and that the organisation was eligible to apply for a Community Grant for a specific project. It is not the Council's policy to make ad hoc donations and particularly not to national organisations, it preferred to support local groups. Councillor Bright asked Councillor Hayward if there was anything in his capacity as a County Councillor that he could do to assist.

17. Next meeting: Market Hall, Priory Street on Monday 30th June 2008 at 7.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____