

Monmouth Town Council

Market Hall
Priory Street
Monmouth NP25 3XA

Tel: 01600 715662

Email: townclerk@monmouth.gov.uk

www.monmouth.gov.uk



Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council held on Monday 17th August 2009 in Market Hall, Priory Street, Monmouth starting at 7.00 pm.

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

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk and Councillor Mrs J Hall

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

None received

42. To receive apologies for absence

Councillor J Fletcher, Councillor Mrs B Smith and Councillor Mrs A Were

43. To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting dated 29th June 2009

The minutes were approved and signed as correct

**Proposed: Councillor Hacket Pain
Unanimous**

Seconded: Councillor Bond

44. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

i) To approve the accounts for payment between 23/06/2009 & 27/07/2009.

The accounts were received and approved for payment.

**Proposed: Councillor Mrs Dewhurst
Unanimous**

Seconded: Councillor Hacket Pain

ii) To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 30/06/2009.

The bank reconciliations were reviewed and considered correct.

iii) To review a statement of income as at 30/06/2009

The Chair confirmed that the majority of income was from the first precept payment and the VAT refund from the last quarter

45. To consider payment of the following invoice:

Monmouth Priory Room Hire Charges £23.00

It was unanimously agreed that this should be paid for from the Utilities Budget, as this was not something that had been budgeted for. Members expressed gratitude to the Priory for making the room available for Council meetings.

**Proposed: Councillor Bright
Unanimous**

Seconded: Councillor Mrs Chivers

46. To receive correspondence:

National Assembly for Wales: Consultation for the Legislative Competence Order (LCO) 2009

It was agreed to accept the offer from One Voice Wales to respond on behalf of Community and Town Councils on the proviso that a copy of the correspondence was forwarded to the Council. Members requested a copy of the details of the LCO be forwarded to them for their further individual consideration.

Action - Clerk

MDCTC: Request for information about CCTV Working Group

Councillor Hacket Pain was asked to respond to this request by providing details of the steps that the working party had agreed following their last meeting.

Heddlu Gwent Police: Acknowledgement of request for inclusion on CSAT Partnership

The Clerk was asked to write a letter to the Police to ask whether or not the request for inclusion onto the partnership had been agreed to at the July meeting.

Monmouthshire Beacon: Response to complaint about 'Town Council News'

Noted

47. To consider Action Review summary and Town Clerk's report

Action Review

Investigate identification cards/tags for members

The Clerk reported that a quote had been obtained and the costs would be £84.00 plus travel for the staff from the company in Newport/Cwmbran. In addition to this there would be a small additional charge for lanyards. Members agreed to accept this cost and that the expense would be allocated to the Admin Contingency fund. The Clerk suggested that as photographs of members would all have to be taken at the same time it would probably best to try and do this prior to an Environment meeting as most members sit on this committee.

Proposed: Councillor Bright

For: 7

Seconded: Councillor Mrs Dewhurst

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Consider and approve Town Council's risk management process and practices

Councillors Hayward and Hacket Pain had been delegated to approve the Council's risk management processes and reported that everything was being dealt with satisfactorily.

Town Clerk's report

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Annual Report which covers activities for 2008/09 has been circulated. The past year saw a continuation of the upward trend of the number of complaints received by the office over the previous years. Historically complaints about housing and planning matters have been the most numerous but last year for the first time ever, health complaints topped the table accounting for 21% of all complaints. Another role of the Ombudsman is to investigate complaints that members of local authorities have broken the Code of Conduct. There were only 27 complaints against Community Councils in Wales during this period. Of the total number of 1422 complaints about a public body during 2008/09 over 60% are not investigated and less than 10% being upheld either in whole or in part. Of the total 231 Code of Conduct complaints only 8 were referred either to the Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel after investigation, this represents approximately 3%. The Ombudsman has recognised that being the subject of the Code of Conduct complaint is generally a stressful circumstance for a Councillor to find themselves in and therefore in almost half of the complaints received a decision as to whether or not to investigate is made within a fortnight.

Monmouthshire County Council had 28 complaints made against them, 8 were out of jurisdiction, 8 were premature, 8 were not merited investigation, 2 were discontinued, 1 was settled and 1 was upheld in whole or in part.

Monmouth Town Council had 1 complaint but it was ruled that an investigation was not merited.

48. To receive update from the CCTV working group

Councillor Hackett Pain advised members that the working group had agreed to take a step by step approach to the review and deal with each issue one at a time. The first obstacle was the exclusion of the Town Council from the CSAT Partnership. A letter had been written to Inspector Boycott to request that a representative be allowed to join, it has been confirmed that although this was discussed at their last meeting no response had yet been received. Members were reminded of the importance of the Police convincing the Council that this matter would be taken seriously and that it will be necessary to demonstrate this.

49. To receive update from the Services working group

Councillor Christopher reported on the last meeting held on 21st July 2009 at which two ongoing projects were discussed, taking over responsibility for the toilet blocks and also the allotments. Members were advised that there was a delay due to information not being received about the legal status of Chippenham from MCC and the Clerk agreed to chase this up. Quotes are presently being sought to ascertain whether or not the Town Council can demonstrate any cost benefits in taking over the responsibility of the toilets.

50. To discuss the Council's accommodation requirements at the Shire Hall

It was confirmed that under the terms of the HLF application that available rooms for community use must be multi-functional and that the Hall would not have any room dedicated for civic use. A letter from Steve Greenslade confirmed that there would not be a formal council chamber post renovations, due to this members were asked to consider what accommodation would be the most suitable for Council meetings. It was unanimously agreed by the members that in the absence of the council chamber that the Court Room would make a very suitable alternative and would lend a dignity and gravitas to meetings. It was agreed that Councillor Hackett Pain and the Clerk would continue to represent the Councils' interests and would meet with MCC to make arrangements for a block Monday booking for the Court room. It was also confirmed that the Clerk would move back to her former office. Other items for further negotiation would include booking and use of the Mayor's Parlour and the Clerk's stationery cupboard. A discussion also took place regarding future use of the old council chamber furniture and members agreed to be vigilant to ensure that it isn't disposed of.

51. To consider the report from the Consultant Objects Conservator about the Monmouth Maces and discuss the recommendations for repair, storage and conservation

Members have now had an opportunity to see the comprehensive report and recommendations on the Monmouth Maces. Although the report was very detailed the Clerk only made reference to the condition, storage arrangements and use of the maces. Members agreed that the maces should continue to be used, as always with the utmost care, reflecting the historical value and significance that is placed on them. Reference was made to the preference that the maces should not get wet but it was agreed that on all occasions, despite the weather, they should be present but that special attention should be paid to ensure that they are washed with distilled water and air dried completely before storage. It was agreed that at present no work would be undertaken to repair any of the damage. The Clerk was asked to investigate the cost of purchasing a suitable storage box for them and to report back to members.

52. To consider protocols for Civic Events

Councillor Mrs Chivers expressed her disappointment at the poor organisation at the parade for the Civic Service, in particular that there was confusion about where people should be standing. It was recognised that whilst protocols for civic occasions will vary according to their nature it would be advisable to adopt an agreed procedure and a line up of personnel and groups which could be distributed to members and organisations. The Clerk agreed to meet with the Regimental Sergeant Major to clarify what protocols exist and also Mr Jones from the Legion. Councillor Mrs Chivers would provide a suggested plan for the Civic Service parade. It was agreed that further discussion would be needed to confirm arrangements once all the information was available.

53. To discuss the format of the Town Council's question time from members of the public

The Clerk prepared and circulated a draft policy, after some debate there were some amendments made and it was agreed to recommend it for approval at the next Full Council meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Christopher
For: 7

Against: 0

Seconded: Councillor Hacket Pain
Abstentions: 1

54. To review subscriptions, contracts, fees and charges

The members agreed that each committee should be responsible for reviewing its contracts but that this committee would monitor the exercise and note recommendations made. The main subscriptions for this committee are reviewed annually but the Clerk has delegated authority for expenditure within this budget.

Proposed: Councillor Hayward
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Hacket Pain

55. To review the Complaints Book

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting

56. To agree items of business for next meeting

Consider quotes for 'past mayor' badge

Consider invitation for a public meeting to discuss distribution of monies and budget setting

Confirm request from Environment Committee to transfer monies from reserves for planting

57. Next meeting: Market Hall, Priory Street on Monday 21st September 2009 at 7.00pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signature: _____ Date: _____