

Monmouth Town Council

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Finance & Policy Committee

**Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council
held on Monday 20th September 2010
in The Shire Hall, Monmouth starting at 7.00 pm**

Present: **Chair** Chairman Councillor R Hayward
Councillor G Bright
Councillor Mrs J Hall
Councillor J Fletcher
Councillor Mr R Bond
Councillor Mr M Jones

Deputy Chair Councillor N Hackett Pain
Councillor Mrs S Chivers
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst
Councillor Mrs J Gunter
Councillor Mrs S White

In Attendance: Mrs Sue James

A presentation was made by Mr Gary Witcombe of Welsh Electors Community Group, at the commencement of the meeting, concerning the "Charter of King Henry VI and the Act of Parliament King George IV".

Mr Witcombe claimed he had seen the original charter but was unwilling to reveal its location. The Mayor thanked him for his presentation.

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

Councillor Mrs S White declared a personal interest in Agenda item no. 66

Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst declared a personal interest in Agenda item no. 66

54. To receive apologies for absence

None received

55. To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meetings dated 9 August 2010

The minutes were approved and signed as correct.

Proposed: Cllr R Bond

Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Hall

Unanimous

56. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

- i.** To approve the accounts for payment between 03/08/2010 & 17/09/2010
- ii.** To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 31/08/2010
- iii.** To review a statement of income as at 31/8/2010
- iv.** To receive quarterly report on committee's expenditure to date

Cllr Mr G Bright raised the issue and discussion took place regarding the cost of emptying the bin at Blestium Street. The clerk confirmed that the council was invoiced for twice daily

emptying. To be referred back to the Environment Committee.

The accounts were received and approved.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall

Seconded: Cllr Mr R Bond

Unanimous

57. To receive correspondence

- a. Chamber of Commerce e-mail 11/8/10 Re: Monmouth Festival and CCTV
- b. Email 17/8/10 re. SLCC Clerks' Manual update and costs
- c. Andrew Mason, CCTV Engagement Officer for MCC rec'd 12/8/10: Letter re. Conditions, Temporary Agreement & Memorandum of Understanding. All re: CCTV
- d. Email 13/8/10: Cllr R Hayward: initial thoughts on Memorandum of Understanding CCTV
- e. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 7/9/10: Re: Complaint to Ombudsman by Mr Charles Boase, referred back to MTC
- f. Charles Boase 8/9/10: Complaint that council private session during meeting 6/9/10 should have been held in public
- g. Email 18.8.10 Re: SLCC Advice confirmation of Agenda wording for meeting 6/9/10
- h. Email 19/8/10 Re: Event Management Training
- i. SLCC August 2010 Greater Gwent Branch Newsletter
- j. Monmouth Branch of the Royal British Legion: Acceptance of invitation to organise Remembrance Day Parade
- k. Mon CC: Agenda for Central Monmouthshire Area Committee mtg 15th Sept 2010
- l. SLCC: Information incl. The Clerk journal, "Being a good employer"
- m. Disability Wales Membership application invitation

Late correspondence was also considered:

1. **Mark Walton Bridges Community Centre:** Request for letter of support for Grant Application
2. **Murray Andrews Monitoring Officer, Mon CC. email:** Personal View on Complaint
3. **Zurich Insurance Policy Renewal**
4. **Lyn Llewellyn One Voice Wales email:** Views on complaint
5. **Andrew Mason MCC:** Update request and minutes of Mon CC CCTV Working Group 14.9.10

Late correspondence items 2 and 4 were summarised by the Clerk.

Cllr Mrs S Chivers requested copies of these 2 items.

58. To consider action review summary and receive Town Clerk's report

Town Clerk's Report:

1. I have ordered and received updates to the office copy of The Clerks' Manual at a cost of £19.00. It became apparent these were long overdue when drawing up advertisements with out-of-date requirements for applications for co-option onto the Council.
2. Councillor Mrs S Chivers has requested the posts at the Agincourt Square end of Church Street needing repainting. I have had a site meeting with Ms Bermingham from the One Stop Shop and confirmed these are MCC property, with a request having been made, hopefully this will happen before the visit of the Princess Royal.
3. Shire Hall opening. It appears that all Councillors should have had invitations sent to their home addresses by now. Invitations have not yet been received by the Mace Bearers, myself or Jane, but I have now confirmed we have been invited as staff. Final protocol detail has to be confirmed, but the Mayor and her consort will be presented to the Princess Royal at the entrance to the Shire Hall, and then, the Council will be presented by the Mayor (with Mace Bearers in attendance), and Mr Mike Booth, in the Mayors Parlour.

4. Two possible insurance claims may be made in the near future. A litter bin has been burned out near the rowing club although I am still trying to confirm it was one owned by Monmouth Town Council. Also I have contacted Mr Ned Haywood with regard to damage to the tiles on the Millennium Wheel close to the Old Monnow Bridge. He has been asked for a quote before any repair work commences, to establish whether a claim should be submitted.
5. The Public Catalogue Foundation have contacted me regarding the inclusion of a picture owned by Monmouth Town Council in the Catalogue. Their correspondence was on the list before Full Town Council 6th Sept. I have spoken to Mr Andrew Helme at the Museum and he confirms that the service is free and official. Mr Helme thinks the picture referred to is one that belonged to the Borough Council and is currently in safe storage in the museum. He is agreeable to the picture being catalogued by the Foundation at the same time the museums pictures are also catalogued later in the year. Mr John Blake has referred to the possibility of another picture, that of Town Clerk Wallis. However, all that is required of the Town Council at present is for agreement to the cataloguing, which I feel is appropriate.
6. Finally, may I remind members, that there are 2 telephone lines to the office and, especially if only one member of staff is present and is perhaps talking to a visitor in the office, or is taking another call, your call can sometimes not be answered. All messages are responded to as soon as possible.

Item 5 from the Town Clerk's Report was approved.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S White

Seconded: Cllr N Hacket Pain

Unanimous

Cllr Mrs S Chivers responded to Item 6 in that when the answer-phone message is obtained, it gives the impression to the caller that there is no-one in the office. No alternative solutions could be offered, but it was suggested that the current message could be 'softened'.

Amendment-1.11.10 It was also felt that the current message was adequate, and the call waiting signal was to be removed

59. To receive update from CCTV working group and discuss.

Councillor Mr N Hacket Pain reported on the current situation. The CCTV Working Party had organised four meetings which have taken place – two with the police, one with Monmouthshire County Council (Andy Mason), and one with the Monmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Mr Andy Mason could not answer all the questions raised at the meeting, but has since responded to some. The working party now has a better understanding of the position of the police (although Superintendent Dave Johnson is now moving on from Monmouthshire).

The main area of difficulty remains with Monmouthshire County Council. One concern is that, when CCTV is up and running, Mon CC's decision making process over the project may change (eg alter their commitment) and this is processed through the CCTV scheme meeting which appears weighted towards MonCC. The Working Party members were invited to the CCTV scheme meeting recently only if Monmouth Town Council were intending to rejoin the Scheme, although Cllr Hacket Pain was also invited at short notice. The Working Party did not attend, but have received minutes of the meeting. A further area of concern raised by the Working Party is that there is no Service Level Agreement, but rather a Memorandum of Understanding which implies obligations on Monmouth Town Council, and responsibilities on Monmouthshire County Council. It appears that as other members of the CCTV Scheme accepted this, the only way for changes to be made would be to join the Scheme first and then work within the group for change.

Other areas of concern were that: the move of the Control Centre to Blaenavon was not yet agreed and there were doubts over its viability, that two documents had not yet been seen – The Gwent Users Code, and the Practice and Procedure Manual, and that the cost of entry £11-12,000, plus £6880+VAT as an upfront payment for the CCTV cameras in Monmouth to be turned on again with no guarantees as to how long for. Councillor Hacket Pain explained that there were many issues still to be resolved, including the potential use of mobile cameras countywide- not exclusively in Monmouth, and that different Councils have different problems and hence requirements, but at the moment, Monmouthshire County Council do not seem to be softening their approach. Councillor

Hayward confirmed that the Working Party was still active, and Councillor Bright expressed his view that the Council was being well led on this matter.

60. To discuss CSAT'S issues

The Members were reminded that this was an opportunity to pass on issues to the Council Representative on the CSATs Committee – Councillor Hacket Pain.

Councillor Mrs Hall confirmed that she had emailed a concern today.

Councillor Bright raised issues regarding traffic management of work taking place outside the Shire Hall, and possible drug dealing issues which had been reported to him and he had tried to pass onto the police.

Councillor Hayward requested more enforcement regarding parking on the pavement on the Hereford Road.

Councillor Bond requested clarification on the provision of receptacles for cigarette stubs on buildings, and if so, for this to be enforced.

61. To discuss protocol and procedure, especially regarding the Remembrance Day Parade

Councillor Mrs Chivers reported that the protocol Working Group had cancelled their last meeting as inquorate. The Town Clerk had requested protocol advice specifically for Remembrance Day, especially following a query regarding the Mayor providing drinks before the March. Councillor Mrs Chivers said that this was at the discretion of the Mayor, The Chair confirmed that it was misunderstandings like this that had led to previous problems and ambiguity. A protocol document is needed to set out what is procedure and what is protocol to make sure there were no ambiguities.

Councillor Bond agreed that a meeting needs to be arranged and to liaise with Rev'd McGladdery establishing the procedures. The Chair asked Councillor Chivers to send a draft copy around to Councillors for them to add comments or questions. Councillor Chivers said this was in hand but the Town Clerk had been unable to type this up today. Due to the timescale, the Chair requested the protocol for Remembrance Day including - ,where, time to be etc. to be issued before the next meeting. Councillor Bright noted that the Royal British Legion Parade Marshall was in control of the parade only, not of the meeting place, jurisdiction in church, seating etc.

It was agreed that the committee should give a draft procedure to each member, with members given 2 weeks to reply with suggestions, and that the procedure is completed and formalised and presented as complete at the next meeting. The decision regarding who should/not parade is that of the Town Council, (in the past this decision has been delegated to a small committee be given delegated powers) and this should be put on the Agenda for the next Full Town Council meeting (11th October)

Proposed: Councillor Mr R Hayward

Seconded: Councillor Mrs J Hall

For: 7

Against:

Abstentions:4

Concerns were raised regarding protocol for the opening of the Shire Hall. The Town Clerk informed the members of the limited information received from Kevin Smith of Monmouthshire County Council, that day, and that the information had been passed onto the 3 members of the protocol group before the meeting. Invitations had gone direct to Councillors from MonCC and queries should be addressed to Kevin Smith. Councillor Mrs White clarified that Kevin Smith requested members to be in the Mayor's Parlour for 1.30pm on the day.

Councillor Mr G Bright protested that the Town Council have been treated disrespectfully by MonCC. Councillor Mr Jones agreed that the Town Council had been treated like second class citizens.

The Chair suggested that the Councillors obtained copies of Beechings report-

in order to quote to the Council that they have a duty to pass things down to and involve the council.

Councillor Mrs White reported on the poor quality of the invitations. Other Councillors agreed that the organisation and protocol issues had been poor and changing. Councillor Mrs S Chivers suggested that a letter be written to Paul Matthews regarding how disrespectful this has been to the Town Council. Councillor Mr G Bright hoped that a Welsh flag would be flying with the Union Flag above the Shire Hall on the day.

Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst stated that the Town Council are representing the people of Monmouth and should be wearing the full Regalia.

The Town Clerk to draft a letter to Monmouthshire County Council objecting in the strongest terms to complain.

62. To consider main objectives for coming year

The Chair asked members at the last meeting to think about the direction the Council wanted to go regarding funding of bigger events or projects, or to spread funding more evenly on smaller projects and helping as many people as possible. The possibility of a turnaround - one year a big project, the next spreading funds more evenly but thinner, was suggested and discussed.

It was also discussed that the Council did not publicise the projects enough and receive good press on all the occasions it could. Councillor Mr M Jones raised the issue of bad publicity and that Councillors, if they take all allowances available would only receive £100 per year.

Examples of possible projects could be a bandstand, but also projects such as 'The Day in the Life of' and funding for the Blue Plaque Trail, the Attik and the CAB are already taking place .

The Chair suggested that any ideas should be emailed to him and he would collate and bring forward to a future meeting a concord of views.

63. To discuss complaint made by Mr Boase regarding Agenda items 66 and 67 at the Town Council meeting of 6th September 2010.

The Chair explained the details of the complaint regarding the exclusion of the public during the process of co-option. The Chair's personal view was that during co-option there may have been issues of confidentiality that may have arisen, such as the candidate's constraints perhaps caring for a sick partner or political views etc, and this was the advice he gave to the Clerk and the Council. The Chair believed that this was correct, but advice has been received from One Voice Wales and Murray Andrews (MCC), which suggests that the public interest would be served better allowing the press and public access to the co-option procedure.

It was proposed that having received this advice from One Voice Wales and Murray Andrews that in the future, the Chair would advise the Council that the press and public may remain. A statement should be made to this effect.

It was noted that the complainant was present at previous meetings when co-option took place with the public excluded without comment. It was confirmed that the co-option procedures that have taken place previously still stand and that there is no reason for decisions to be invalid.

It was agreed that the Chair would make a statement/press release that in the future co-options will be made in public.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs J Hall

Seconded: Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst

Unanimous

64. To approve the Town Clerks attendance on an Event Management training Day, 6/10/10, at a cost of approximately £54 (subject to numbers), plus travelling expenses.

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst

Seconded : Cllr Mr R Bond

Unanimous

65. To discuss invitation to membership of Disability Wales at a cost of £45

The Clerk read out details from correspondence m.

Discussion took place that it was the responsibility of Monmouthshire County Council to enforce the Disability Acts, not Monmouth Town Council. Cllr Mr J Fletcher raised the issue of footpaths being blocked at the Monnow Bridge car park with implications for disabled people that has been reported. This instance is due to incorrect signage.

Issues still should be reported and the Clerk to circulate name and contact details of Monmouthshire County Council Disability Officer.

It was resolved not to join Disability Wales

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall

Seconded Cllr Mr M Jones

For: 9

Against:0

Abstentions:2

66. To discuss request for a letter of support for Bridges Community Centre regarding grant application.

The Clerk read from Late Correspondence item 1.

Cllr Mrs Dewhurst spoke about the work of young people involved in the designs and the appearance of the entrance/reception of Bridges. Cllr Mrs S Chivers requested to see the design which was passed around the table.

It was resolved to write a letter of support for the grant application by Bridges.

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Hayward

Seconded Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst

For:6

Against:4

Abstentions:1

67. To discuss and approve Annual Contract of Insurance renewal.

The Chair suggested that copies of the Asset Register be sent to members of the Committee by the Clerk. Members to contact the Clerk by 4th October if they wish any items to be added to the inventory

It was resolved that if no further assets are requested to be added to the inventory by 4th October, the Clerk should proceed to accept and arrange payment for the Insurance Renewal.

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Hayward

Seconded: Cllr Mr N Hacket Pain

Unanimous

68. Items of discussion for future meetings

Cllr Mr G Bright requested discussion regarding the storage of gifts-memorabilia

Cllr Mrs J Gunter requested discussion regarding the office workload

Cllr Mr G Bright requested discussion regarding access to the Shire Hall

Cllr Mr J Fletcher requested discussion regarding the acoustics in Court Room no.2

69. Date of Next meeting: Monday 1 November 2010, 7pm, The Shire Hall, Monmouth.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Minutes of the meetings can be found on our website

Signed.....

Dated.....

Please contact the Town Clerk if you foresee any problems with these minutes so they may be amended if appropriate and circulated to all members before approval at the next meeting.