

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 1st November 2010 in The Shire Hall, Monmouth at 7.00 pm

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

Deputy Chair Councillor N Hackett Pain
Councillor Mrs S Chivers
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst
Councillor Mrs J Gunter
Councillor Mr T Christopher

In Attendance: Mrs Sue James Town Clerk, Councillor Mr C Munslow, Councillor Mr J Saran

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

No declarations made

71. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received for Councillor Mrs S White, Councillor Mr M Jones

72. To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meetings dated 20th September 2010

The minutes were approved and signed as correct with the following amendments:
p.3, after response to item 6 in Clerks report. "It was also felt that the current message was adequate, and the call waiting signal was to be removed"

Proposed: Cllr Mr J Fletcher

Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Hall

For: 9 Abstention: 1

73. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

- i. To approve the accounts for payment between 18/09/10 and 29/10/10
- ii. To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 30/09/2010
- iii. To review a statement of income as at 30/09/2010
- iv. To receive quarterly report on committee's expenditure to date

Received and approved.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs J Hall

Seconded: Councillor Mr R Bond

Unanimous

74. To receive correspondence

- I. **MCC:** Temporary road closure notice for the Monmouth Armistice Day Parade on Sunday 14 November 2010.
- II. **Zurich Municipal:** Local Council Advisory Service-risk management advice
- III. **Roger Hoggins, MCC:** Future Provision of Public Conveniences-possibility of grant.

- IV. **Monmouth Rotary Club:** Request for use of Town field, Risk Assessment and site drawing for Bonfire Night 5th Nov 2010
- V. **C. Boase:** Request for explanation of whole process of co-option.
- VI. **MTC:** Response to C Boase
- VII. **Zurich:** Report of Examination of Play Equipment (Passed onto Mr R Griffiths)

The Town Clerk read out letter III. from Roger Hoggins, MCC

Much discussion took place regarding keeping the public toilets open – which would cost in the region of £16,000 and the little impact that the possibility of a £1200 grant would have. It was also thought that local public houses were to be offered £500 (from Monmouthshire County Council) to make their toilets available to the general public.

It was noted that The Shire Hall toilets would not be available for public use, but only for paying visitors as confirmed by the Manager Mr Mike Booth. It was confirmed that public toilets were available in the museum.

Cllr Mr T Christopher pointed out the capital sum of £16,000 did not include running costs. Councillor Mr J Fletcher thought that Abergavenny had, proportionately, less public toilets to be closed. than Monmouth. It was suggested that Monmouth Town Council object strongly to the toilet block closure. The costs involved to demolish it would be substantial. The possibility of a stand-alone French style self –cleaning toilet was also discussed, or with payments made for using, to cover costs, but both were thought to be uneconomical. Councillor Mr G Bright pointed out that the current toilets were not user-friendly for disabled access. Councillor Mr R Hayward suggested that it was not appropriate to discuss amending Committee budgets at this stage and that the proposal to close the toilets should be put more into the public realm with perhaps more of a public protest arising as townspeople became aware of the situation. Perhaps this would lead to an alternative solution being found. If the toilets are closed, a request should be made to MCC that a notice is put up to explain where nearest available toilets are.

Letter VI. MTC response to Mr Boase. Cllr Mr R Hayward explained letter and response to Mr Boase – that the Co-option selection and procedure will be in public realm, but it would be up to the committee at the time to decide actual manner of voting.

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

No updates to be reported on the Action review summary. It was confirmed by the Clerk that the container for storage of Shire Hall furniture would not be hired until required – when the office moved back into the Shire Hall.

Town Clerks Report:

1. The Insurance Renewal has been accepted as proposed as no further assets were requested to be added.
2. Options of investing the Treasury account for six weeks rather than 1 month at a time are to be investigated as soon as reserve levels are decided and the Shire Hall payments are finalised. Although still very low, the interest rate is slightly better for this length of time.
3. The Vat return for end of September has been completed and filed online. £827.95 VAT has been reclaimed.

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

The CCTV working group is to meet 2nd November and will report back to the next Full Town Council meeting

77. To discuss CSAT'S issues

There was some discussion -on both the noted issuing of parking tickets at the end of Church Street, but also on the lack of enforcement elsewhere.

Councillor Mr G Bright referred to a complaint passed on to him by a member of the public that he had previously referred to CSATS, but that he had received no feedback or update on. He was disturbed at the timescale involved, and possible continued issues and outcomes.

Councillor Mr N Hacket Pain confirmed that the concern had been passed on, but no response had yet been received from the police. There may be other bodies involved regarding social welfare, and allegations to be investigated. Councillor Mr G Bright made a strong request that he wished to receive a reply within four weeks.

Parking issues were again raised, with Councillor Mr N Hacket Pain raising the possibility that the Town Council's position may have been misunderstood by the police, with a focus on self regulation rather than a lot of enforcement.

The Chair confirmed that items to be reported to CSATs should be raised, with reports to be given back to full Town Council meeting only, subject to confidentiality.

Councillor Mr R Hayward raised the issue of parking on the pavement area at the lower end of the Hereford Road, which Councillor Mr N Hacket Pain confirmed had been forwarded. The next CSATS meeting is due to take place 9th November.

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

Copies of Protocol and Procedures Amendment 2 had been previously circulated. In Installation of Mayor, it was agreed to move "If more than one member is proposed a vote will be taken" to after no. 5 and no. 11. In Church, in Civic Ceremonies, in the first pew, the consort should be listed before the Mayor, and the second and third pews should be Councillors but not in any specified order. In the Parade order, Deputy Mayor and Past Mayor are followed by Councillors 2x2 but not in any specified order. No. 3, on leaving the Church, the Past Mayor Consort is not included in the party.

Clerk to check on "secret vote" procedure for Mayor/Deputy Mayor appointment.

For Remembrance Day Parade, the Clerk reported that the Reverend McGladdery had recently specified the standard Anglican Procedure for Civic Occasions, which differed from the Church procession in Protocols distributed. Councillor Mrs S White had been informed of this and spoken to other Protocol committee members that this should be accepted.

Councillor Mrs S Chivers claimed she did not know about this.

It was also suggested that further details were required, such as- that it is the Council's decision on who marches, when road closure procedures should be started, march route, times and other details.

Member of the Protocol Committee, Councillor Mrs S Chivers, to liaise with Reverend McGladdery and parade Marshall to finalise details before Remembrance Day and to circulate information to members.

79. To discuss instructions/protocol for Mace Bearers.

Councillor Mr G Bright asked what protocol /procedures are available for the Mace Bearers and whose direction they should be under, something which arose during the opening of the Shire Hall. It was agreed that the role is carried out with Civic pride and Councillors Mrs S Chivers and Mr R Bond agreed the Protocol working group should draft specific protocol/procedures for the role.

80. To consider main objectives for coming year

The Chair reminded Members about previous requests for suggestions / ideas as to where they wanted to take the Council, or which direction to take. Councillor Mr G Bright suggested the aim to bring a national bus service to Monmouth. Councillor Mr T Christopher reminded Members of past working groups that had existed, for instance to enhance the lower end of town and Bridge area, with finance issues of possible precept raises often proving stumbling blocks.

Councillor Mr R Hayward talked about possibly opening the Shire Hall for the public to meet the Town Councillors informally, meetings with the press, or monthly surgeries. Councillor Mrs J Hall referred to past meetings in the Wards, and now the use of the Shire Hall, with the need to increase the flow of communication between Monmouth people and the Town Council. The need to promote the image of the Town Council was raised.

81. To discuss Clerks robes

It was agreed that the Clerk be given dispensation from wearing the existing wig and alternatives are to be investigated.

82. To resolve request from Community Affairs Committee to F & P Committee for funding from general Reserves to cover overspend of Rolls Event (of £351 +£50 St John's Ambulance)

Resolved

Proposed: Councillor Mr R Hayward

Seconded: Councillor Mrs J Hall

Unanimous

83. To discuss earmarked reserves and return to the general reserves.

It was agreed to clarify the amount budgeted in Earmarked Reserves for the Shire Hall Renovation and when confirmed, to reduce accordingly. The remaining outstanding budgets in Earmarked Reserves are all to be transferred back into general reserves.

84. To consider draft Finance and Policy Committee budget and precept for approval of Full Council

The Finance and Policy Committee Budget was agreed at £58,580 (being £52,840 plus Year 1 Shire Hall contribution of £5740), the Environment Affairs Committee budget at £61,600 including £20,000 for CCTV, and the Community Affairs budget at £38,000, totalling £158,180.

It was resolved to recommend to Full Council that there should be no increase on the precept requested from this year (£141,300), hence agreeing a negative budget. If required, the balance of up to £16,880 to be taken from reserves. The Clerk confirmed that the amount outstanding to be paid for the Shire Hall is not yet confirmed, but anticipated enough remained in reserves to cover this.

Proposed: Councillor Mr N Hackett Pain Seconded: Councillor Mr R Bond

Unanimous

Councillor Mrs S Chivers stated that meetings should not go beyond 9pm

85. To confirm Town Clerk's authority to spend up to £1000 on Town and Council expenditure.

It was confirmed that that the Clerk has authority to spend up to £1000 without having to get approval of a Committee, but must report back to the Committee.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs J Hall Seconded: Councillor Mr R Bond

Unanimous

86. To resolve to permit Monmouth Rotary Club to use the Town Field for Bonfire and Fireworks on November 5th and associated access dates.

Resolved

Proposed: Councillor Mr T Christopher

Seconded: Councillor Mrs J Gunter

Unanimous

87. To discuss procedures for meetings with third party representatives and review Members Code of Conduct

This item was adjourned until the next meeting

88. Discuss why Monmouth Partnership Forum meetings are listed on the Annual meeting dates list

Councillor Mrs S Chivers questioned why only these meetings are listed on Councillors meeting date lists, and not others. It was resolved that Members should contact groups and then give details of other meeting dates to the office for inclusion on the list.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs J Hall Seconded: Councillor Mrs J Gunter

Unanimous

89. To discuss Health and Safety /Risk Management Schemes membership.

The Chair outlined the need for Risk Management schemes available to join to ensure full compliance. It was resolved that the Clerk be given authority to spend up to £165 on a suitable scheme

Proposed: Councillor Mrs J Hall Seconded: Councillor Mr G Bright

Unanimous

90. To agree a working group to set up a service level agreement for the Shire Hall occupancy

A working group of Councillor Mr R Haywood, Councillor Mrs J Gunter, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst and Councillor Mr N Hackett Pain was formed to set up a service level agreement for the Shire Hall.

91. To discuss Shire Hall room arrangements

Changing the meeting day to a Tuesday was discussed, with meetings on a Monday no longer necessary due to changes in MCC planning meeting dates. To be placed on the next Full Town Council Agenda for further discussion and decision.

It was also decided that a discussion regarding room choice should be put onto the next Full Council agenda, with different rooms possibly to be tried for meetings.

It was resolved to hold Committee meetings back in the Market Hall until the Town Clerk's Office is located back in the Shire Hall.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst

Seconded: Councillor Mrs J Gunter

Unanimous

The next Full Town Council meeting should be held in Court Room 1.

92. To discuss the storage of gifts/memorabilia

Councillor Mr G Bright asked where memorabilia is stored. The twinning association has a booklet containing a list of gifts. It was established that there is an inventory and all currently in storage at the Market Hall. Gifts and memorabilia to be sorted and displayed if possible on return to The Shire Hall

93. To discuss the office workload

Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst asked if Line Manager and Committee Chairs could assist with this. It was agreed that members should try and limit workload where they can, for instance by drafting letters to ensure no ambiguity and keeping minutes as clear as possible

94. Items of discussion for future meetings

To discuss procedures for meetings with third party representatives and review Members Code of Conduct

95. Date of Next meeting: Monday 13th December 2010, 7pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.35pm

Minutes of the meetings can be found on our website

For further background information or an explanation of any of the information provided, please contact the Town Clerk on receipt of this agenda. Please also contact the Town Clerk if you foresee any problems with any of the agenda items; if possible these will then be resolved before the meeting.