

Monmouth Town Council

Market Hall
Priory Street
Monmouth NP25 3XA

Tel: 01600 715662

Email: townclerk@monmouth.gov.uk
www.monmouth.gov.uk



Finance & Policy Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council held on Monday 13th December 2010 in The Market Hall, Monmouth at 7.00 pm

Present: Chair Chairman Councillor R Hayward
Councillor G Bright
Councillor Mrs J Hall (from 8.10pm)
Councillor J Fletcher
Councillor Mr R Bond (left at 8.15pm)
Councillor Mrs S White (from 8.20pm)

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

In Attendance: Mrs S James Town Clerk, Councillor C Munslow, Mr Tristan Blanchard and Mr Robert Hughes from Monmouth TIC

Mr D Cummings, Chair of MDCTC gave an update and suggestions on potential closure of Monmouth TIC

Mr Cummings outlined the current situation with Monmouthshire County Council's apparent moves to "modernize" Monmouthshire's Tourist Information Centres. He felt that the suggested modernization of introducing touch screens and possibly closing the centres themselves would be greatly detrimental to businesses and the area. He has organised a petition to go out to local businesses to measure local support, and wants to present to Kellie Beirne, MCC. Members agreed that a touch screen service should not provide a substitute, but an enhancement to current service provision. Cllr Mr R Hayward confirmed that County Councillors were not aware of the proposals until the previous week. Mr Cummings believed that a period of consultation, starting from 1/1/11, for 6 weeks, had now been achieved due to publicity of the proposals, which were originally due to be presented to MCC Cabinet on 6/1/11. Cllr Mr C Munslow made a statement regarding the importance of tourism to Monmouth and Wales, with Monmouth being the "Gateway to Wales". It was also established that the footfall into the Monmouth TIC had increased over the last 18 months. Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst raised concerns that petitions were not considered as valid as individual letters by MCC, with Mr Cummings explaining that he believed it the best and easiest way for people to express their opinions. After some discussion about the level of communication between MCC and MTC, and the implications for the potential closure of the Monmouth TIC, it was agreed that a vote be taken at the next Full Town Council meeting on 4th Jan, to support keeping the Monmouth TIC open, and to make every effort to assist this.

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

None made

97. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies from Cllrs Mrs J Hall and Mrs S White (Both attended the meeting later)

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

Approved.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Gunter, Seconded: Cllr Mr T Christopher.

Unanimous

99. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

Cllr Mrs S Chivers complained that she did not receive the expenditure information 3 days before the meeting. It was explained that information was as up to date as possible for the meeting, and councillors could attend the office to view figures. Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst offered to hand deliver information for those not on email.

A vote was taken to propose figures sent out with agendas.

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Hayward Seconded: Cllr: Mr T Christopher

For: 3, Against: 7

Therefore agreed to stay with present system.

- i. To approve the accounts for payment between 30/10/10 and 10/12/10
- ii. To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 31/10/2010 and 30/11/10
- iii. To review a statement of income as at 30/11/2010
- iv. To receive quarterly report on committee's expenditure to date

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Bond, Seconded: Cllr Mr N Hacket Pain

For; 9 Abstention: 1

100. To receive correspondence

- i. Lloyds TSB: 8.11.10 Changes to Banking Terms & Conditions.
- ii. C Boase: Letter rec'd 18.11.10 Request copy of legal advice given to MTC
- iii. Lloyds TSB: 25.11.10 Change in Corporate Markets trading name.
- iv. SLCC: 26.11.10 Membership 2011 Renewal
- v. MDCTC: Email 30.11.10 CCTV Press Release and comments
- vi. MDCTC: Email 5.12.10 Threat of Closure of Monmouth TIC
- vii. MCC Robert Greenland: Email 6.12.10 Re. Threat of Closure of Monmouth TIC
- viii. MDCTC/R Greenland: Emails re. TIC 7.12.10
- ix. MTC: 7.12.10 Email confirmation of D Cummings to attend mtg 13.12.10 to update
- x. MDC: Letter 6.12.10. Reply to C Boase

Late correspondence lists were distributed

Late Correspondence for meeting to be held on Monday 13th December 2010

1. **6/12/12 WAG** – Request for Town Clerk to complete survey – understanding work of Town and Community Councils
2. **8/12/12 Mazars** – External Auditors, Certified Annual Return 2009/10, and fee request £550+VAT
3. **8/12/12 SLCC Branch Newsletter.**
4. **8/12/10 Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst** – emails sent to Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst
re. Monmouth Market – request for Shire Hall/top of town presence, from
 - a. James Leedam (+ photo),
 - b. Jackie Crossman,
 - c. Tim Russell-Smith
5. **8/12/12 MCC Press Release Re: TIC review**
6. **9/12/12 MDCTC** – Copy of letter from Cllr B Greenland & Kellie Beirne to all Cllrs (County)
7. **10/12/10 MDCTC** – Proposed Petition against TIC closure wording and Sticker
8. **10/12/10 Cllr Mr R Bond** – Letter re: Possible changes to Tourist Information provision

9. **13/12/10 MCC** –Council Tax Precept 2011/12 request
10. **13/12/10 MDCTC** – Copy info for Monmouth businesses re. TIC closure proposal & petition

Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst had received several emails (Late correspondence 4) regarding concern at the decision on location of the market. These were read out as being of the essence of local opinion and also of the lack of communication or apparent consultation from Monmouthshire County Council.

Much discussion took place, including Cllr Mr C Munslow giving a statement on his views as expressed in a letter – on the character of Monmouth and how this may change with the permanent change of location of the market from Agincourt Square.

Cllr Mr R Hayward outlined the difficulties of the market returning to the Shire Hall, as previously given by Ms D McCarty of MCC, although it was not believed that shop keepers at the top end of the town had been consulted as requested.

Much criticism of the decision was made, but also of the lack of consultation on both the decision on market location and potential closure of the Tourist Information Centre by MCC. The stance of the Town Council regarding letters by members to the local press was also clarified. Previously, letters by members were discouraged in misrepresenting the Council's position. However, this seems to have discouraged letters being written at all which was not the intention. It was confirmed that councillors are entitled to express their views, as individuals and/or councillors, but must make clear they are not representing the views of the Council unless these have been agreed and voted upon as such.

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

Action Review Summary

Considered. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged in January with the Shire Hall Service Level Agreement working group and Mr Mike Booth.

Clerk's Report

Recent past Mayor's photographs have been received from Des Pugh who kindly took and provided them free of charge.

Insurance – has now been updated to include events

The external auditors – Mazars have now completed work on, and certified the Town Council's Annual Return.

Mike Booth, Manager of the Shire Hall has asked me to remind members that the Shire Hall will be closed from lunchtime on Christmas Eve, until Tuesday 4th January. If anyone does require access within this period, please let the office know in the next day or two.

A reminder to members who signed up for the Signing and Working Safely on Highways course. It is this Wednesday at 9am at Raglan Training Centre – directions available from office if required.

102. To discuss the possible closure /move of Monmouth Tourist Information Centre

As discussed earlier with Mr D Cummings. Confirmed members can sign petitions, write letters, as individuals. Vote to be taken at Full Town Council meeting, 4/1/11.

103. To discuss CSAT'S issues

Cllr Mr G Bright raised concerns about fly posting for events- not necessarily taking place in Monmouth. Cllr Mr R Hayward confirmed MCC Enforcement Officer should be contacted to prosecute. He also requested that he be informed.

Cllr Mrs J Hall entered meeting

Cllr Mr R Hayward again raised concerns over cars parking on pavements at the lower end of the Hereford Road.

It was also noted that cars have been seen parking on the cobbled area in front of the Shire Hall.

104. To discuss if some of the chairs at Shire Hall should be restored.

The Clerk introduced the issue that several of the chairs at the Shire Hall, many currently stored in the Clerks Office, were in need of repair. It was suggested that a decision should be made on whether to keep, repair or dispose of some chairs, before they are put into storage. Photographs were passed around. The issue of where all the remaining chairs were to be stored on the Town Council's return to the Shire Hall was also raised.

Cllr Mrs Dewhurst suggested that the chairs should be considered part of the Shire Hall and restored as such.

Cllr C Munslow suggested an expert be asked to value, and give estimates for repair of, the chairs, and was able to provide details of contact.

It was agreed that the chairs should be valued and quotes obtained for repairs before further decision could be made.

Cllr Mr R Bond left the meeting

105. To discuss amending Budget 2011/12 following decision on CCTV

Cllr Mr R Hayward explained that subsequent to the budget being set, including £20,000 provision for CCTV, the decision had been made not to rejoin the scheme.

It was hence proposed that the budget be amended to no longer include the CCTV provision.

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Hayward Seconded: Cllr Mr N Hackett Pain

For: 9 Abstention: 1

106. To agree Clerk's attendance on RBS Omega Year End Course in Swindon at a cost of £160 + VAT

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Hayward Seconded: Cllr Mr T Christopher

Unanimous

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

Cllr Mrs S Chivers questioned who had placed item on the agenda. The Clerk and Cllr Mr R Hayward explained there had been several unofficial complaints, and that there was a fine line between expressing a point of view and being overly aggressive. This was especially important when referring to employees of organisations.

It was agreed as a sad fact that members needed to be reminded of manners, and of comments outside Chair's hearing, to avoid any official complaints.

It was agreed that a copy of p.12 of the Code of Conduct be sent to all members as a reminder, and to be considered for inclusion in Standing Orders.

108. Review complaints book

Only one complaint, from Mr Boase, is logged, regarding the procedure for co-option, which has subsequently been amended following his complaint. Members were advised on the latest correspondence from and to Mr Boase.

109. To discuss Review of Standing Orders

Members were reminded that Standing Orders should be reviewed every 12, but up to a maximum of 18 months. Last review completed November 2009.

Protocol procedures should be included, as well as protocol for Mace Bearers, as requested at previous meeting, but not yet produced.

The Clerks notes on a debriefing meeting following the Remembrance Day Parade were raised, and it was confirmed that these simply contained ideas for discussion by the Protocol committee.

Cllr Mr C Munslow requested that that interviewing procedures were included.

Cllr Mr R Hayward offered to review the Standing Orders, with his recommendations available to members before they were presented at a meeting within the timeframe required.

110. To agree subscription renewal to SLCC at cost of £168

Agreed.

Proposed: Cllr Mr T Christopher, Seconded Cllr MR R Hayward.

For: 10, Abstention: 1

111. Items of discussion for future meetings

Cllr Mr R Hayward suggested a committee could be set up to take responsibility for organising events for celebrating the 600th Anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, in 2015.

Cllr Mr G Bright again requested that the Protocol for Mace Bearers be presented.

Cllr Mr T Christopher requested update on quotes for chairs repair and decision on repair and location.

112. Date of Next meeting: Monday 24th January 2010, 7pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm

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.