

Monmouth Town Council

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Finance & Policy Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on Monday 18 April at 7.00 pm at The Shire Hall Monmouth

Present: Chair Councillor R Hayward
Councillor Mr R Bond
Councillor Mr M Jones
Councillor Mrs S Chivers
Councillor J Fletcher
Councillor Mrs J Hall

Deputy Chair Councillor N Hacket Pain
Councillor Mr G Bright
Councillor Mrs S White
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst
Councillor Mrs J Gunter

In Attendance:

Mrs S James, Town Clerk, Cllr Mr C Munslow

A Presentation was given on the Draft Shire Hall Business Plan, by Mr M Booth, Manager of the Shire Hall, with Ms K Beirne and Ms M Wilkinson of MCC

Mr Booth introduced the business plan for the Shire Hall that was originally written in 2006, which has been reviewed inline with the current operational phase as required by the Heritage Lottery Fund. He explained that the defects liability period runs to July 2011 and various remedial projects are continuing within this. The interpretation side is complete with audio-visual guides, and a guide book will soon be available. Scene setting of Court Room 1 and the Judge's Chamber to the 1840s is complete.

Education and learning has featured strongly for user groups, with many activities and groups/societies having used rooms or the whole building. 250 groups and activities have been held at the Shire Hall. The TIC moves back into the building next week, and the staff will become Shire Hall staff, enabling the Shire Hall to open seven days per week. The Shire Hall is hoped to become a beacon of tourism in Monmouthshire. A Chartist play is to be staged next February. A new Shire Hall website has been developed and should be available soon, and new technology is being embraced. Many events are envisaged and planned, and a Wedding Licence is now held with 2 weddings already booked. Aventa (economic and rural development) may have offices within the Shire Hall.

The project phase is now moving to a development and operational phase. The learning fund is a concern as the HLF funded one educational officer post for only 3 years.

Access for all needs to be provided throughout the building, and Agincourt Square issues such as parking, benches, hanging baskets and planters, and cycle racks, all impact on what happens in the Square, and need to be resolved.

The draft plan is to be given for consultation and feedback before going to MCC cabinet in June.

Councillors were then invited to ask questions, and issues raised included winter opening, which was confirmed, the progress of the Service Level agreement with the Town Council, which is ongoing, and that the Town Clerk's office will be returning during the second week in May.

The Shire Hall would also welcome, but not expect, contributions from the Town Council towards the educational posts/projects. It was questioned whether public would be able to use the building at the same time as a wedding or other function, and it was confirmed that the TIC would always remain open, but that the financial gain from exclusive use of the building or area was important to income generation.

It was requested that the toilets, especially disabled toilets, be made open to the public. Mr Booth confirmed that there are disabled toilets for the use of visitors to the Shire Hall.

Kellie Beirne then addressed the issue of the location of the market as felt is was appropriate within the discussion of the Shire Hall development plan. She proposed that the community be engaged regarding the future and location of the market, by receiving views by an evidence gathering session at the Shire Hall, chaired by an independent Chair, with documented views being passed to herself and Moyna Wilkinson. She stressed that the priority was that the future development of the market maximises the future growth and development opportunity of Monmouth town. Ms Beirne proposed the session be held during the day, on the 9th May, at the Shire Hall. It was questioned whether views already expressed through the local paper would be considered, and it was confirmed that the evidence gathering session would be used in consultation for a final decision. It was also stated that not all representations already received were in favour of the return of the market to the Shire Hall.

Councillors raised the point that the lottery funding was in part based on the location of the market returning to the Shire Hall. Ms Beirne stated that circumstances change, and it would be developed in the most sustainable and viable position. Mr Booth confirmed that HLF were keen that "a" market would be held in Agincourt Square, but not necessarily "the" market. Councillors questioned the democracy of the decision on the market location, to which the evidence gathering exercise was posed as the most open and transparent way. It was asked if the majority view from the evidence gathering would be taken into account and Ms Beirne responded that it would generate options and opportunities to look at. The possibility of a trial period was raised.

Mr T Buckland, a member of the public, and previous Town Councillor involved with the Shire Hall project, was invited to speak, as requested beforehand. He confirmed that at the time the Shire Hall project was progressing, it was confirmed that the Friday and Saturday markets would return. He also stated that it was previously agreed, wherever possible, the Shire Hall would not compete with either The Priory or Drybridge House, referring specifically to the Wedding licence, a factor against the return of the market. He also noted that the lottery fund was very keen that the town was involved with the Shire Hall, and public opposition was now a danger.

Ms Beirne confirmed that details of the evidence gathering would be given in a press release.

The speakers and majority of the public present then left the meeting.

Agenda Items

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

None received

2. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr T Christopher

3. To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meetings dated Monday 7th March 2011

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded: Cllr Mr R Bond

4. To receive and approve the summary of expenditure

- i. To approve the accounts for payment between 01/02/11 and 31/3/11
- ii. To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 28/2/11 (Cash book 1) and 31/3/11.
- iii. To review a statement of income as at 31/3/11
- iv. To receive quarterly report on committee's expenditure to 31/3/11 and all committees for 2010/11

The accounts were received and approved.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded Cllr Mr N Hacket Pain

Unanimous

The overspend on salaries was explained by the Chair. The Clerk gave details of amounts to be accrued to the next financial year and the position of the Council's reserves and Earmarked reserves budget for the Shire Hall. I

5. To receive correspondence

1. **One Voice Wales:** Renewal of membership for 2011
2. **One Voice Wales:** National training programme for Community and Town Councils in Wales
3. **Society of Local Council Clerks:** Larger Councils conference Thursday and Friday 14 & 15 April 2011-04-06
4. **SLCC:** Invitation to comment on "Resolving Workplace Disputes" Consultation document via SLCC website
5. **MTC:** response to NatWest regarding return of its incorrectly credit payment – never received
6. **C Boase/MTC:** Confirmation of previous advice referred to.
7. **Ellis Whittam:** Info on Employment Law / Health and Safety service.
8. **Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund:** End of Year Returns revised format info.
9. **SLCC Greater Gwent:** April newsletter
10. **SLCC:**CPD & Conference Programme Spring 2011
11. **Mazars:** (External Auditors) Notice of audit of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2011

Late Correspondence:

1. **SLCC:** CPD Courses coming soon
2. **Monmouth Rowing Club:** Request for use of Town Field 25/9/11(to go to Full Council)
3. **LCAS:** Invitation to LCAS Seminar (to go to next F & P)
4. **Monmouth Rowing Club:** Request to buy/first option if ever sold, on Town field (to go to Full Council)

Correspondence no. 5 was explained by the Clerk

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

The Action Summary was noted. The Clerk advised members of advice taken regarding the Clerk's wig

Town Clerk's Report:

The VAT return for the final quarter of 2010-11 has been returned.

Civic Service, the Church – St Mary's Parish, the Corps of Drums and the Priory rooms have been booked for the Civic Service on 12th June. Road Closures have yet to be arranged.

The office will now move over to the Shire Hall on 11th May, and will hence be closed until the following Monday .

Scanning of archives is progressing slowly but steadily, with 2 full years, and 16 further files of work from 1989-1994 completed. We are sorting at the same time, although the equivalent of 20 boxes remain to be scanned, with only 20% so far completed.

Cllr Mr G Bright thanked the Clerk for her work.

7. To discuss CSAT'S issues

Cllr Mr R Hayward reported that the next CSATS meeting was to take place 19th April 2011.

Issues requested to be raised by councillors were: parking on the old Monnow Bridge including whether fixed penalty tickets were discretionary; lighting problems at the allotments and the presence of CPSO regarding anti-social behaviour; parking on pavements on Hereford Road which is being reported on 101as occurs; and that the CPSOs work is appreciated. Members were reminded to report non-urgent incidents on 101.

Cllr Mrs S Chivers left the meeting at 8.27pm

8. To confirm renewal of One Voice Wales subscription at £1183

Renewal approved

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded: Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst

Unanimous

9. To resolve that Councillors expenses should be claimed within six months of occurring

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Bond, Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Hall

Unanimous

10. To approve recommendation of working group regarding which cost structure to adopt for cleaning of Agincourt Street Toilets.

Cllr Mr R Hayward reported that the working group had concluded that the 363 days a year, 2 cleans per day option be recommended, as operated by MCC at present. It was noted that initial observations on usage were higher than expected. The decision would be reviewed in November. Minor repairs required would be completed by MCC, although the building was generally in good structural condition

The recommended clean/cost option by the working group that the toilets were opened 363 days per year, with 2 cleans per day, was approved.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S White, Seconded: Cllr Mr R Bond

Unanimous

11. To re-appoint internal auditor, Mr Clive James

Approved

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S White, Seconded: Cllr Mr N Hacket Pain

Unanimous

12. To confirm amendments to Standing Orders including Protocol.

Amendments have been discussed and received but not yet written into Standing Orders. This will go to Full Town Council for approval.

13. To agree to donation of chairs no longer required and any other furniture, to voluntary/charitable organisations or disposal.

The working group has decided which chairs are not appropriate to keep at the Shire Hall, and the estimates are being gathered for necessary repair on remaining chairs. Sponsorship was suggested.

It was approved that chairs to be disposed of as per working group recommendation, to local charities or as appropriate.

Proposed: Cllr Mr N Hacket Pain, Seconded: Cllr Mrs S White

Unanimous

The three large modesty tables originally from the dais of the old Council Chambers were discussed, as there is no space for their storage at the Shire Hall.

It was resolved to send these to auction.

Proposed: Cllr Mr R Bond, Seconded: Cllr Mr G Bright.

For:10 Against:1

Mr Booth has agreed the chandeliers, if packaged, can be returned to storage at the Shire Hall. Excess light fittings were also agreed to be sent for auction.

14. Items of discussion for future meetings

To confirm hearing loop is in use at the Shire Hall

To confirm potential for public to use toilets (+disabled) at the Shire Hall

15. Date of Next meeting: Tuesday 31st May 2011

16. To resolve to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1 (2), on the grounds of confidentiality Resolved

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

Unanimous

For further background information or any concerns regarding accuracy, please contact the Town Clerk before the next meeting.