

Monmouth Town Council

Shire Hall
Agincourt Square
Monmouth NP25 3DY

Tel: 01600 715662
Email: townclerk@monmouth.gov.uk
www.monmouth.gov.uk



Finance & Policy Committee

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 3rd October 2011 at The Shire Hall Monmouth

Present: Chairman Cllr Mr R Hayward

Cllr N Hacket Pain

Cllr Mr R Bond

Cllr Mr G Bright

Cllr Mr T Christopher

Cllr Mr J Fletcher

Cllr Mrs J Gunter

Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr M Jones

Cllr Mr C Munslow

Cllr Mrs B Smith

Cllr Mrs Dewhurst

In Attendance: Mrs S James, Town Clerk

1. **To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda**
None made
2. **To receive apologies for absence**
Apologies received from Cllr Mrs S Chivers
3. **To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting dated Monday 22nd August 2011.**
Minutes approved and signed.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Gunter Seconded: Cllr M Jones
For: 12, Against: 0, Abstention: 1
4. **To receive and approve the summary of expenditure**
 - i. To approve the accounts for payment between 16/08/11 and 27/09/11
 - ii. To review a statement of the bank reconciliations as at 31/08/11
 - iii. To review a statement of income from 31/7/2011 to 27/09/11
 - iv. To receive report on committee's expenditure to 27/09/11.

It was confirmed that the final contribution to the Shire Hall of £62,500 would be paid on receipt of an invoice from MCC
Accounts approved

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

5. To receive correspondence

1. **J Goodwin, Adventa:** Request for space for advertising festivals etc
2. **R Summerhill, Creo:** Website enhancement info & examples
3. **A Murray, MCC:** Standards Conference 2011, 5th Oct Llandrindod (6 places avail for all Town/Community Councils in Monmouthshire, £60 delegate, C/D 16/9/11
4. **One Voice Wales:** Information regarding disability awareness training
5. **Cllr R Hayward:** Information re attendance of Cllr to Standards Conference 2011 and costs
6. **SLCC:** Information re Conference for the South West on Wednesday 9 November re legal and HR legislation
7. **One Voice Wales:** Information regarding Conference and AGM to be held on Saturday 8 October 2.15pm
8. **SLCC:** Information re 37th National Conference on Friday 14 – Sunday 16th October 2011
9. **Ellis Whittam:** Information from an Employment Law Adviser to the SLCC re IOSH managing safely training
10. **Ombudsman:** Acknowledgement of information regarding complaint by Mr C Boase
11. **Independent remuneration panel for Wales** draft Annual report – December 2011
12. **MTC:** Information request regarding Insurance details and liability to ~Councillors
13. **SLLC:** Utility bills savings
14. **MCC:** Info on MCC acting as Payroll service
15. **MCC:** CSATS Agenda for 3/10/11, and previous minutes

LATE CORRESPONDENCE:

16. **LCAS:** Response to advice requested re: Contractor/employee concerns
17. **Zurich:** Policy renewal information requested
18. **Mike Booth (&MTC Reply):** Request for confirmation of insurance value of tile tapestry and ownership and support for training
19. **MCC D McCarty:** Briefing note for Draft Action Plan (Agenda 14)
20. **R Wills, Shire Hall Stewards:** Fund raising completed for HLF match funding
21. **R Nicholas :** Comment on item 11 above
22. **Unison:** Notice to employer (MTC) of official Industrial Action Ballot (Re. a Playscheme worker no longer employed?)
23. **M Griffiths (Google Analytics):** Website visitor statistics
24. **R Nicholas (Llangattock VA CC):** Correspondence from Dr M S Matharu re Monmouth Ambulance station report – possibility of representing views.

Letter 10 was read aloud and the Chair explained the possible outcomes as a result of the Ombudsman's findings

Letter 20 was read aloud and the Shire Hall Stewards congratulated on completing the fund raising for the Heritage Lottery Fund match funding – for The Shire Hall.

Letter 22 was read aloud and confirmed as not applicable

Correspondence 24 was read aloud and discussed. It was proposed that Dr Matharu be asked to also represent Monmouth Town Council, as well as Llangattock Vibon Avel Community Council regarding the ambulance station provision.

Proposed: Cllr J Fletcher Seconded: Cllr M Jones
For: 3, Against: 9

It was agreed that a letter should be written to the ambulance station for clarification, and this should then be passed to the Community Affairs Committee

The Clerk brought correspondence 21 and 11 to the attention of the Committee

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

Action Review:

The Clerk gave brief details of past issues at Lydney Town Council, and that Lydney now had insurance to provide cover against Clerk's extended sickness, and were imminently looking to engage employment/legal/Health and Safety consultants to the Council. The Clerk is to obtain a copy of the External Auditors report when available, and bring to the attention of the Committee.

It was confirmed that the Clerk and members of the working group for the Service Level Agreement for the Shire Hall had met with a representative of MCC, and were awaiting confirmation of the payments for the next 10 years.

A suitable display cabinet for the robes may cost up to £20,000, but the Shire Hall manager would look out for cheaper options

Clerk's Report

The two Mace Bearers have now been paid this years allowances.

The Remembrance Day Parade and Service are on Sunday 13th November. Meetings are arranged with the RSM and Parade Master, and then representatives of the police, highways and Father McGladdery. Any Parade details which may have changed since last year will be circulated to members.

A Planning training session for all members, will be given by David Swanson of MCC, at the Shire Hall Monday, 10th October, at 2pm.

7. To discuss CSAT'S issues

Cllr R Hayward had been unable to attend the CSATs meeting earlier that day. Issues of children possibly using gas on Chippenham Mead, parking concerns, a further reminder of 101 call responses that would only react to witnessed criminal activity, and concerns that proposed increased housing would exacerbate existing problems with ambulance responses, police presence were reported.

8. To approve costs for and confirm signage for Agincourt Toilets

Signage costs were approved.

It was explained that the provision of an out-of-hours number would imply call out charges from MCC when responded to.

It was proposed to agree authority for MCC to respond to reasonable out of hours requests, and charge the Council accordingly.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded: Cllr M Jones

Unanimous

Information regarding lighting and opening hours was still awaited.

It was established that monitoring usage of the toilets needed to be undertaken before a decision could be made on whether to continue to support their opening next financial year.

Cllr Bright agreed to organise this, with Cllr C Munslow, Cllr Mrs J Hall, Cllr J Gunter, Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst and Cllr Mrs B Smith offering assistance.

9. Clarify insurance renewal issues

The Clerk raised concerns about the status of the Town Maintenance person, and recommended that he be considered an employee rather than contractor as at present. He could thus then be included within the Council's Public Liability insurance. Advice would be sort on further implications such as equipment and training.

It was confirmed that play equipment was not presently insured for damage, but a quote had now been obtained based on modern equivalent equipment. The insurance values of specific items such as regalia were confirmed as increased as per insurers' suggested 3%pa, which differed from asset register values.

It was proposed to accept the quote of £4,013.98 that included renewal of existing policy, inclusion of Engineers report on play equipment, replacement of play equipment, extra employee and legal expenses.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded: Cllr M Jones
Unanimous

10. To update and confirm procedures - amending minutes, emailing summonses.

It was proposed not to send out amended minutes of any meeting before being agreed, but to list any suggested amendments, together with the proposers name, to be circulated at the following appropriate meeting before being agreed.

Proposed: Cllr M Jones, Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Hall
Unanimous

It was proposed that members who are willing to accept Summons to a meeting, and other Town Council information by email as appropriate service, instead of by hand or post, sign a declaration to that effect.

Proposed: Cllr R Bond, Seconded: Cllr Mrs B Smith
Unanimous

11. To clarify web link for Town Guide following Full Town Council recommendation.

This was previously agreed at Full Council, but confirmed that the Town Guide could be included on the Monmouth Town Council website via a pdf.

12. To resolve that the Town Council formally request the Royal British Legion to organise the Civic Remembrance Day Service and Parade on behalf of the Town Council (but not to delegate the choice of person to attend the Parade).

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

It was suggested that following next years elections, this resolution could be made for the life of that Council

13. To confirm occasions for which specific approval should be gained from the Full Town Council for the Mayor's Regalia to be worn

Some discussion took place regarding different occasions when the jewel or the full regalia should be worn by the Mayor.

8.15pm Cllr M Jones left the meeting

It was suggested that insurance should be the only consideration in taking the regalia abroad, with the type of occasion dictating whether full regalia was taken.

It was agreed that the Protocol committee should decide if it should be the Mayor's prerogative to decide on the regalia for each occasion, or otherwise to standardise different types of occasion/event, and the appropriate regalia that should be worn.

8.24pm Cllr R Bond left the meeting

14. To complete Draft Action plan for Charter between MCC, and Community and Town Councils.

Copies of the Charter and template for the draft Action Plan were previously distributed. Guidance notes on completion of the Action plan were issued, and the Clerk asked Councillors for examples or experiences to include. The Chair explained the positive aspects and potential of the Charter for the Town Council.

It was agreed to defer completion until the next Full Council meeting to allow further thought to be given to it.

15. To discuss and confirm Finance and Policy Committee budget for 2011/12

Discussions took place regarding an initial draft budget for the Finance and Policy Committee for the next financial year. This would not be finalised or agreed until the next meeting.

Suggestions were that: the salary budget would rise to £35,000, staff training would need to remain at about £650 to cover new employment status of town maintenance staff, member training should be increased to about £700 to cover requirements of a new Council, insurance budget would need to increase in line with agenda item 9, and also insurance for the Agincourt Street toilets if applicable. Shire Hall Year 2 payments would increase as previously agreed, although utility payments remained unknown until the Shire Hall Service Level Agreement was finalised. The Administration budget, after initial discussions, appears to require increasing by approximately £5000.

The Civic Affairs budget to remain fairly static apart from potential Election costs of approximately £3750, although MCC is yet to confirm this, or decide if these costs will be re-charged to the Town Council.

It was confirmed that the Council's Reserves were quite healthy, and some members expressed a wish for the precept to remain as this years. Further discussion and decision to be made at the next meeting, with details of other Committee budget requests.

16. To draw up and confirm a Salvage list for Town Council Property at the Shire Hall

It was agreed that the Mayor's regalia, now kept in the Shire Hall, should be listed for salvage purposes.

A log system to be set up to confirm the presence of the regalia at any time.

17. To grant Monmouth Rotary Club use of the Town Field for its Bonfire and Fireworks evening 5th November 2011.

It was resolved to allow the Rotary Club use of the Town Field for this occasion, subject to the ground being re-instated to its previous condition.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs J Hall, Seconded: Cllr T Christopher

Unanimous

The Clerk confirmed that appropriate insurance and risk assessments for the event would be requested.

18. To consider budget for Councillors training on Disability Awareness Course (GAVO) £450 plus refreshments and room hire costs, (3 hours)

The Clerk explained that the provision of such training had been previously agreed at a Community Affairs Committee meeting.

Several bodies had been approached, with course content and costs varying considerably. The GAVO training was suggested as the median quote, and the training appeared most appropriate to the Councils needs. The Clerk confirmed that some of the cost could be offset by allowing Shire Hall staff to take up extra available places, paying per person proportionately. Negotiations with the Shire Hall manager have meant that costs of room hire and refreshments would not need to be met by the Town Council.

It was agreed that the training should be arranged with as much notice as possible given to Councillors, to enable attendance. The Clerk quoted advice from One Voice Wales, reminding Councillors that, “.....as in the case of all other decisions taken by a Council, each Councillor is expected to accept a majority based decision as being binding on each member of the ‘corporate body’”

It was proposed that the GAVO training course on Disability Awareness to be booked and undertaken by Councillors and staff, with costs minimised as discussed.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst, Seconded: Cllr Mrs J Gunter
Unanimous

19. To confirm £60 delegate costs + travelling, for Cllr Mrs A Were, attending the 2011 Standards Conference, 5th October 2011 at Llandrindod Wells

Details of the 2011 Standards Conference were late in reaching the Council, although had been included in late correspondence at the previous Full Council meeting. Cllr Mrs A Were had expressed an interest to attend, and the Chair and Clerk had been consulted. The Chair briefly outlined the purpose of the conference.

Proposed: Cllr R Hayward, Seconded: Cllr C Munslow
Unanimous

20. Items of discussion for future meetings

To consider other Finance and Policy Committee budget, other committee budgets and make precept recommendation for 2011-12 to Full Council.

Charter Action plan – to Full Council

Advertising in good time for next years elections

Possible recruitment and training of a further Mace Bearer

Communication of Town Councils work to the public – newsletter, published information.

21. To confirm date of next meeting:

Monday 14th November 2011, 7pm, Shire Hall, Monmouth

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.11pm

Please also contact the Town Clerk before the next meeting if you have any comment on these minutes.