

Monmouth Town Council

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Held on

Monday 9th January 2006 at 7.00pm
In The Old Library Community Room

Present: Chairman The Mayor Councillor Mrs S Chivers
Deputy Mayor Councillor Mrs C Pearce, Councillor Mrs C Atkins, Councillor R Bond,
Councillor T Christopher, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor J Fletcher,
Councillor R Hayward, Councillor L Robson, Councillor D Stevens,
And Councillor Mrs A Were.

In Attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk

1. To Receive Questions from Members of the Public for a Maximum of 10 minutes:

Mr Stephen Clarke addressed members; he circulated a new report from Mr Jerry Ross regarding the condition of the Catalpa Tree. This is the most recent report that has been commissioned and Mr Ross believes that the tree is far from dying but concedes that it is in serious decline at present. Mr Clarke reminded members that there were already two other reports in circulation, one done by Mr Roy Finch and the other for MCC by Mr Steve Ambler. He advised that Mr Colin Berg the Chief Exec at MCC and Mrs Jenny Lewis have dismissed this 3rd report. Mr Clarke advised members that he had challenged Mr Bergs comments that he made regarding the tree where he referred to the tree as diseased, when in fact Mr Clarke felt that this was very misleading as the tree should be described as decayed. Mr Clarke challenged Mr Berg regarding the amount of correspondence that MCC had received in support of the tree and was advised that a count had not been made. Mr Clark suggested that a way forward would be to commission a report on how the tree should be treated and proposed that Mr Roy Finch should be asked, and that also a detailed risk assessment should be undertaken. It seems that MCC still intends to destroy the tree and Mr Clarke advised that he has instructed Solicitors to issue proceedings to request a judicial review of the decision made. He advised that in his opinion had MCC carried out its legal obligations to maintain the tree then this should never have happened. Funds are being raised at present through donations and the sale of prints of the tree.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda:

None Received.

3. To Receive Apologies for Absence:

Councillor GFW Buckland, Councillor N Hackett Pain and Councillor Mrs S White.

It was agreed that Agenda Item 9 should be moved for discussion at this point.

9. To Consider Town Council's commitment to Capital expenditure for The Shire Hall HLF Bid.

Councillor Hayward gave a brief background history to the bid and the reasons behind the additional request for monies by Monmouthshire County Council to The Town Council. In order to achieve the necessary committed funding required by HLF to bring the total percentage below 70% it was recognised that one way to do this would be to increase the amount of the contribution made by Monmouth Town Council. Councillor Robson pointed out that we should be celebrating the fact that Monmouth Town Council is making such a significant contribution and endorsing the bid by showing our full support. He said that the Council should feel proud of this achievement and to strengthen the partnership with MCC in taking this project forward. Councillor Stevens wished to remind members that this contribution would significantly reduce the amount of reserves held by the Council and that with depleted reserves he hoped that this would not mean that options for taking on additional services for the future would be limited unless they are precept funded. Councillor Hayward wished to point out that in his opinion this allocation of reserves is exactly the proper use for reserves and that it will not have any impact on the coming years budget. The funding is in place already and this will not increase the precept whilst leaving the reserves at a more acceptable level.

The Finance & Policy Committee therefore recommended to Full Council that the capital contribution of £100,000.00 already committed should be increased to £125,000.00 and that a revenue contribution of £81577.00 should be made over the first ten years post completion.

Proposed: Cllr R Hayward

Seconded: Cllr L Robson

Unanimous

4. To Confirm & Sign the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th November:

The Minutes were agreed as being a true and present record of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs S Chivers

Seconded: Cllr R Bond

5. To Receive the Town Clerks Report:

1. The Clerk's Office will be closed on Friday 13th January, Thursday & Friday 26th & 27th January due to staff holidays. The answer phone will be available for anybody wishing to leave a message. A notice will be placed on the notice board outside the Shire Hall.
2. I would like to commence again the system of emailing documents to members who wish to receive agenda's and minutes electronically. This will not only reduce the amount of time spent on photocopying documents but also reduce the amount of postage charges. If you have an email address but do not wish to receive documents via email please can you let me know and I will ensure that paper copies are sent instead. Can I please advise you that it will be your responsibility to check your email when you would normally be expecting documents, as the office does not have the resources to enable us to ensure that you have looked at your incoming mail.
3. I have received from Everett & Tomlin, the Solicitors acting on behalf of Chepstow, Usk and Abergavenny Town Councils in the application for a judicial review, papers as follows: - Sealed application for Judicial Review, Form of Acknowledgement of Service, and Bundles 1&2. The papers have been sent because Monmouth Town Council is classed as an interested party. We have been given the option of filing the Acknowledgement of Service to say that we do not want to take any part in the proceedings, and are content to be bound by the outcome of the proceedings. This was the decision that was made by The Town Council at the meeting of 17th October 2005. I have spoken to the Solicitor involved in connection with the filing of the form, and returned the document to The Court to confirm that Monmouth Town Council does not intend to contest the claim. Also received on 3rd Jan 2006 a letter from MCC to confirm that they intend to contest all of the claim.

4. Election in Wyesham Ward – MCC have today confirmed that they have not received the required ten signatures requesting an election. They will be issuing a letter to Monmouth Town Council offering guidelines regarding co-option; this means that an election will not be taking place.
5. Shire Hall HLF Bid. I have received the following electronic documents in the last couple of day. Anyone wishing to have an electronic copy please let me know and I will email it out, otherwise they will be available to inspect on a p.c in the Clerks Office during office hours.

There are in total over 400 pages so please be aware of this. Business Plan, Supporting Statement, Project Initiation Plan, Access Plan, Audience Development Plan, Market Place Analysis, Training Plan and the Interpretation and Learning Plan.

6. MCC – Making the Connections, this is the proposed initiative regarding Town & Community Councils undertaking functions and providing services that are currently under the remit of the County. I have received quite a lot of feedback and these are some of the suggestions that I have had, car parking, street cleansing, public conveniences, grounds maintenance and open spaces, cemeteries, allotments, licensing, planning, powers re freedom of the town, markets, tourist information, street closures, floral, bus stations, and the cenotaph area. I will be returning the completed form with this information and will let members know once I have received a response.

6. To Receive Correspondence:

M L Pearce: Copy of a Letter sent to MCC regarding the Catalpa tree.

MCC: Letter outlining experimental traffic layout in Agincourt Square.

Environment Agency: Proposed Schedule of Test Messages.

7. Matters Raised by Members:

None received in writing.

8. Reports & Issues:

a) Planning Committee:

As per Minutes. Councillor Mrs Were reported that she had attended a Planning Meeting at County Hall in which the issue of 7 Hereford Road was discussed and planning refused, she highlighted that this case had shown the difficulties in obtaining letters of objections from The Planning Dept. She advised members that a letter will be written to Dave Swanson at County Hall and request that in future when papers are issued a note should be printed on the document to advise that anybody wishing to object should ensure that a copy is sent to The Town Council in addition to Monmouthshire County Council.

b) Environmental Affairs Committee:

As per Minutes. Discussions had taken place on the open spaces policy, litter strategies, dog waste. The grant that had been offered by AONB had missed the deadline and it is hoped to re-apply soon with a view to monies being earmarked for the millennium field. Also the Road Safety Strategy was discussed with the top priority being the proposed reduction in speed limit on the A40.

c) Community Affairs Committee:

As per Minutes. The meeting was mostly taken up with the Christmas arrangements but in addition agreed funding to The Attik, Monmouth Women's Festival and CAB. Councillor Robson thanked everyone that took part in the event and commented that it had been a great success.

d) Finance & Policy Committee:

As per Minutes. The Shire Hall funding had been discussed, in addition the possibility of taking over services and amenities from MCC. There was also a reminder to the chairs of the other committees that a discussion needs to be had to formalise the budget requirements for the coming 3 years.

e) **Monmouth Partnership Forum:**

Councillor Dewhurst advised that most of the issues had been covered already. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 12th January 2006.

f) **Others:**

None.

10. To Discuss Nomination of Member to Governing Body of Wyesham Junior School.

The Clerk had received a letter from Governor Services at MCC requesting that as Councillor Hackett Pain seems unable to attend any of the governing body meetings that perhaps a new representative could be nominated. Councillor Robson put himself forward.

Proposed: Cllr L Robson

Seconded: Cllr R Bond

Unanimous

11. Any Other Business:

Councillor Fletcher wanted to know whether or not there had been any progress following on from the meeting last year at Chippenham Surgery when Jenny Lewis had agreed to make enquiries into the ownership of the access road that runs adjacent to Waitrose car park.

Councillor Mrs Chivers wished to bring to members' attention a number of issues that needed acting upon, they are as follows :- there are still buses parking in the coach bay area at the Cattle Market Car park, the new barrier into the car park at the Cattle Market is too low, there are some very deep potholes at The Claypatch off Wyesham Avenue also the street lights have been obscured by overhanging branches. There are two street lights on the new Rockfield Development that are not working, she will advise the Clerk of the exact location.

The Clerk advised members that the Community Committee meeting due to be held on Monday 16th January was not at 6.00 but at 7.00 as per the agenda. This is due to a CCTV Partnership meeting, which will be held with MCC, Dave Arnold, and Jeff Smith are also expected to attend.

The Clerk requested if members would be prepared to meet with Graham Down-MCC to discuss 2006/2007 Budget on a Friday evening. It was agreed that this was suitable and the Clerk is to make arrangements.

12. To Agree Meeting dates:

Agreed.

13. Date and Venue for Next Meeting:

20 February 2006

**There being no further business the meeting closed at
8.05 pm**