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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Held on 12 June 2006 at 7.00pm
In The Old Library Community Room

Present: Chairman The Mayor Councillor T Christopher, Deputy Mayor Councillor R Bond, Councillor Mrs M Atkins, Councillor G F W Buckland, Councillor Mrs S Chivers, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor J Fletcher, Councillor R Hayward, Councillor Mrs V Mitchell, Councillor N Hacket Pain, Councillor D Stevens, Councillor Mrs A Were and Councillor Mrs S White.

In Attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk and Mrs Jane Lloyd Clerical Assistant.

1. To Receive Questions From Members Of the Public for a Maximum of 10 Minutes:

Mr J Russell spoke on behalf of the Waldbronn Twinning Association and the celebration of twenty years of twinning with Monmouth with a request for funding towards a gift that the association wish to be presented at a reception due to be held in August 2006.

Councillor T Christopher proposed to put this item on the Finance & Policy Agenda for 17 July 2006

2. To Receive Declaration of Interest in Items on the Agenda:

None received.

3. To Receive Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Mrs C Pearce and Councillor L Robson.

4. To Confirm & Sign the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15th May 2006:

Confirmed correct.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs S White

Seconded: Councillor D Stevens

Unanimous.

5. To Receive the Town Clerks Report (For Information Only).

1. Can I please remind members that the reception to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the twinning of Monmouth with Carbonne will be held this Sunday in The Shire Hall at 5.00pm. There will be a presentation made to Monsieur Helle in the form of a framed scroll. The twinning committee has advised me that they are expecting there to be about 60 people attending. I trust that as many members that can attend, will be there to represent the town.
2. Members who attended the recent Environmental Committee meeting will have been advised of an incident that occurred at the town field. A number of vehicles rammed the gate and in the process not only damaged the gate also removed the gatepost. The Police were called and having made further investigations in relation not only to trespassing but to the criminal damage that was caused no arrests were made. A claim will be made against the insurance policy and a quote has been obtained for a replacement gate and post. It is anticipated that the work will be completed within the next couple of weeks.

3. Debbie McCarty from the OSS has advised me that a loop system is now available for use in the Community Room. This device will only be of assistance to hearing aid users, however she has advised me that there is a P.A. system that the Museum currently has that will be available to use in tandem with the loop system. I will arrange next week to have a demonstration so that I can then train other members to use the systems so that they will be used not only at Full Council meetings but also at committee meetings as and when appropriate.
 4. I will be taking a couple of days annual leave this week, however Jane has agreed to cover these hours so that the office will remain open as normal. However on Friday 23rd June, Jane and I will both be on holiday and The Mayor will be in the office at this time to receive any calls.
Yesterday's Civic Service was a great success, everything went very well and I would like to thank all of those involved.
- 6. To Receive Correspondence that the Mayor Wishes to Place Before the Council.**
Cllr Mrs S Chivers asked for the letter from Mrs Evans to be read to the council regarding why the sudden change in procedure of Mayor making, the Town Clerk also read out the letter of reply.
- 7. Matters Raised by Members:**
Nothing received in writing.
- 8. To Receive and Consider Reports & Minutes of Committees:**
- a. Planning Committee: As per minutes.
Councillor Bond was voted in as Chairman with Councillor Buckland as his Deputy. The chairman reported on an application made for Drybridge House (Old Toll House) recommended approval but noted disappointed with the loss of character to the property.
Proposed barn conversion at Fiddlers Elbow Staunton Road, a site meeting was held and the committee agreed to approve the plan with provision that ample drainage facilities are in place.
 - b. Environmental Affairs Committee:
No meeting has been held since the last Full Council meeting. Next meeting scheduled to take place on 19 June 2006. The Mayor thanked the last committee for all their hard work.
 - c. Community Affairs Committee: As per minutes.
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst voted in as Chairman with Councillor Mrs A Were as her Deputy. The Chairman thanked Councillor Robson for his work on 'Shaping the Future'. A second meeting was held to discuss the Section 106 money being offered from the Rockfield Development fund.
Discussions were held and there was a rigorous procedure to decide which of the applications they would like to put forward for recommendation. The decision made was in support for funding for further Adult Recreation in and around Monmouth.
The committee has agreed to pay £200 towards the Veterans Day celebrations.
 - d. Finance & Policy Committee: As per minutes.
Councillor GW F Buckland and Councillor B Hayward have been reappointed as Chair and Deputy. The accounts have been approved and pension provision for staff was discussed, with proposals for an increase for the coming year.
The forward plan for 2006/2007 was proposed for the coming year.
A member of the committee has agreed to carry out the six monthly checks on all payments.
There will be a comprehensive review of standing orders.
Agreed that the minutes would now be circulated as soon as they are available, and not as previously when they were forwarded with the agenda papers.
 - e. Monmouth Partnership Forum:
Nothing to report as next meeting will be Thursday 29 June 2006.
 - f. Others:
None.
- 9. To Nominate Representatives for Outside Organisations:**
See attached sheet for update.
- 10. To Approve Recommendation of Environmental Affairs Committee re Purchase of New Christmas Lights:**
Councillor Stevens thanked Councillor Mrs Pearce who has put in a lot of work in preparing for the purchase of new lights for which the Town Council has set aside £15,000. It is estimated that the cost

should be in the region of £11,000 - £13,000. Councillor Stevens proposed that the Town Council sanction £13,000 and if needed the committee will come back at a later date if any additional funds are needed. It was also noted that it is necessary to take into consideration within this funding, monies that will need to be spent to ensure that the Health & Safety requirements for the installation of the lights, are complied with.

Proposed: Councillor D Stevens
Unanimous.

Seconded: Councillor Mrs S White.

11. To Approve Annual Accounts for 2005/06 as Recommended by Finance & Policy Committee.

Councillor Buckland advised members that The Clerk had made a report at the previous Finance & Policy meeting concerning the 2005/2006 accounts and a copy had been circulated to all members. He recommended approving the accounts as they stood.

Proposed: Councillor G W F Buckland
Unanimous.

Seconded: Councillor R Bond.

12. To Consider Making a Legal Sworn Declaration Regarding Town Council Use of Shire Hall Prior to 1974.

Councillor Buckland would recommend that a statement should be made by a former clerk to hold on record of the use of The Shire Hall by the old Borough Council prior to the changes in 1974. Councillor Buckland would like to approach the former Town Clerk, Derek Watts and get a written statement. He advised members that at present there are not any problems with the use of the building and does not predict any trouble but it would give The Town Council a record for future posterity.

Proposed: Councillor G W F Buckland
For: 12

Seconded: Councillor J Fletcher

Against: 0

Abstention: 1

13. To Resolve to Re-Instate The Finance & Policy Committee to Full Council Status.

Proposer: Councillor Mrs S Chivers

Secunder: Councillor Mrs C Pearce

Councillor Stevens noted that in his opinion it would be a backwards step. One of the reasons that it was agreed that the F&P Committee should have limited numbers was to ensure a smoother and more effective decision making process. The decision making process is carried out at committee level with some delegated authority then brought to the Town Council for approval, where necessary. It was noted that to revert back to full council status effectively is having a Full Council meeting every 3 weeks. Councillor Stevens felt that there would be very little to gain by this and a lot of hard work and effort that had been made over the last year could be lost. If the Town Council is to take on more responsibility then the Finance and Policy committee will have to deal with these matters and initially it would be very hard to go forward on this basis and make effective and timely decisions if the committee were to revert back to having 16 members.

For: 2

Against: 11

Abstention:

14. To Resolve to Amend Town Council Policy Regarding Press Releases and Letters.

Proposer: Councillor Mrs Chivers

Secunder: Councillor Mrs Dewhurst

Concerns have been expressed recently regarding letters appearing in the press stating that the writer is representing this Council when the opinions expressed are personal opinions. It is proposed that an amendment to the original document should be included as shown below.

Councillor Mrs A Were objected to the Council saying what she can and cannot write but she stated that she is perfectly happy to make it clear within the contents of the letter on what authority she is writing, but wanted her objection noted.

Councillor Mrs A Were asked for the statement to be minuted, see below.

Correspondence by Councillors to the Press or Public.

It is clear that individual councillors have the right at any time to discuss with the press or public any matters affecting or concerning the Town Council.

All Councillors should consider how any statement they make will affect the status of the Town Council or benefit the town.

The Town Clerk should have prior notice of any items written by members that are to be released using their status as a Council Member. The Mayor and The Chairs of the relevant committee's will then be kept informed.

Councillors should give a balanced statement of their views and make it clear when they speak for themselves and not the Council.

Any member who wishes to write either a letter or an article or press release and express a personal opinion as a private individual must make it clear in writing, either separately or as part of the body of the document that they are doing so in this capacity, and not use their status as a Councillor.

Committee chairmen may use written statements or interviews to explain their committee's actions or intentions. They should make it clear on what authority they are acting.

The Mayor may act similarly on behalf of the full Council.

For: 11

Against: 1

Abstention: 1

15. Any Other Business.

Councillor L Robson:

The member has suggested that all Council members should consider donating their telephone expenses for one year towards Monmouth Comprehensive School Duke of Edinburgh Award for those students who have difficulty in finding the funds. Some Councillors expressed that they had no problem with the donation but asked that it should be noted that they and some students within the school did feel it was rewarding some students while hard working students were being penalised and had to pay for themselves.

Councillor B Hayward:

The member pointed out that the old hospital is now closed but the two boards having information on gifts and legacies given still remain on the site. Councillor Hayward expressed his concern that these should not be lost and as the new hospital and the library have no room for them Councillor Hayward wondered if they could be installed in the Council Chambers.

Councillor Mrs S Chivers:

A request was made to the Town Clerk to check on the traffic order for the Old Monnow Bridge regarding the prevention of cars parking and the enforcing of the order by the Traffic Warden. The Town Clerk has advised the Local Area Office but as yet they have not come back to her. The Town Clerk will check on the situation with Mrs Jenny Lewis.

Councillor T Christopher:

The Mayor wished to remind members of the presentation to Monsieur Helle of Carbonne which is to be held in the Community Room followed by food in the Council Chambers on Sunday 18 June. The reason for the use of the Council Chambers is the Community room is not large enough to hold the presentation and lay the food out. The Town Clerk has been in touch with the twinning association and been advised that there will not be anyone present with disabilities. The Mayor pointed out that should the situation change arrangements would be made to accommodate this.

16. To Agree Meeting Dates.

Agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.03pm

Signed:

Date: