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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Held on 7th August 2006 at 7.00pm
In The Old Library Community Room

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

In Attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk

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

Ms Helen Wragg a theatre studies teacher from HMSG gave a brief presentation about the summer film school that is taking place during August. It is a joint initiative involving 26 students from the three high schools, pupils are aged between 11-18. The plan is to make 4 short films and 1 film plotting the process of the film making over the course of a week and at the end of the project there will be showing of the films at The Savoy Theatre. There was a request for £300.00 to assist with the costs.

The Mayor suggested that this item is deferred to the next Finance & Policy Committee meeting due on Tuesday 29th August 2006 for a decision then.

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

N/A

3. To Receive Apologies for Absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors R Bond, Mrs S Chivers, Mrs V Mitchell, Mrs C Pearce, S Roberts and L Robson.

4. To Confirm & Sign the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 June 2006:

The minutes were approved as correct and signed.

Proposed: Councillor Stevens

Seconded: Councillor Hayward

Unanimous

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

1. Monmouthshire County Council Highways Department have contacted me regarding their maintenance programme. They are planning their work schedule until 31st March 2007 and want to know dates of any events that we are hosting so that they can work this into their schedule. Can all committee chairmen please give this their consideration at their next meeting, particularly the date for the Christmas event so that I can advise MCC and ensure that it does not clash with any proposed works due to be carried out around that time.

2. Unfortunately despite several letters and e-mails to Jenny Lewis I have no news to update members on the current status of my enquiries in relation to the taking over of the Cenotaph area. At a previous meeting members expressed an interest in managing this area but requested that MCC answer a number of questions prior to any decision being taken.
Jenny Lewis has recently informed me that due to restructuring in County Hall it is proving difficult to obtain the information that has been requested. She will continue to try and get some answers and will report back in due course. The same applies for the traffic order on the old Monnow Bridge.
3. Judging for Wales in Bloom took place on Monday 10th July but I have not yet received any official confirmation of the outcome. However the initial reaction of the judge seemed favourable in as much as he could see that feedback that had been given last year had been considered and he said that he was pleased and could see that there were some marked improvements in certain areas. There was a noticeable lack of hanging baskets in town and this year the judge was taken to the Rockfield Development to see the wildlife corridor and some private residential gardens. The report is due out shortly and copies will be made available to members.
4. Jane is taking some annual leave and will be out of the office from Monday 7th August until Tuesday 15th August. As I have been unable to arrange cover for Friday 11th August the office will be closed for the morning. However if there are any members who are free and would be interested in coming into the office to answer the phone then please let me know, otherwise I will place a notice on the door to advise of the closure. I will also be taking a few days holiday from Monday 21st August returning Thursday 24th August. During this time Jane has agreed to work additional hours to cover the office.
5. The Shire Hall will be open between 2 – 5pm on the weekend of 9th/10th September as part of the European Heritage Weekend, which is organised by members of Monmouth Civic Society. Members of the public are invited to go to various places of interest in and around town including the Castle and Regimental Museum, The old Monnow Bridge, Nelson Gardens, The Priory, The Methodist Church and The Roundhouse at The Kymin. The regalia will be on display in The Council Chamber, also there will be photographs on display, The Court Room will be open and also The Henry V Tapestry will be displayed to visitors. This is part of The Open Doors scheme, which is Wales' biggest celebration of architecture and heritage, which is open free to the public during September. I will need some volunteers to help and if anyone is interested please can you let me know indicating whether you are available on the Saturday or Sunday.
6. Please can I remind members of the invitation that has been sent to attend the celebration of 20 years twinning with Waldbronn, Germany. It will take place on Tuesday 8th August at the Leisure Centre commencing at 6.30pm. The evening will include speeches from officials from both communities, refreshments and entertainment.

6. To Receive Correspondence that the Mayor Wishes to Place Before the Council:

The Clerk brought three items for attention which are listed on the correspondence sheet.

7. Matters Raised by Members:

Nothing received in writing.

8. To Receive and Consider Reports & Minutes of Committees:

- a. **Planning Committee:** Councillor Buckland reported that he had recently attended a training seminar for Planning which had been very useful, copies of the notes have been distributed to all planning members. The new Unitary Development Plan has been agreed and hopefully would soon be ready for distribution. The plans for the LIDL store have been submitted and it was reported that this would affect many people. Councillor Buckland reported that in the past members have been frustrated about retrospective planning being granted but reported that this quite within the legal framework of the Planning Dept.

- b. Environmental Affairs Committee:** Councillor White reported that the committee had been made most welcome at the recent meeting that had been held at St James Community Hall in Wyesham. A variety of topics had been covered including a proposed town centre plan, law and order which included a recent complaint concerning glass bottles that are being disposed of on Chippenham.
- The question of trying to raise a bye law was raised, also the car parking debate continued but it was agreed that this issue should be deferred, there was also a review of committee objectives and also a review if bins and benches etc. The future of the water irrigation was discussed and finally it was agreed that in collaboration with the Chairmen of each committee the Clerk should have delegated authority for expenditure up to a certain limit.
- c. Community Affairs Committee:** Councillor Dewhurst reported that there had been a successful meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the out of hours service in Monmouthshire and the concern that has been raised about the planned closure of 3 of the 5 primary health care centres for our of hours provision. Also arrangements were discussed for the Carnival/Festival, and a discussion about members assisting with a fund raising initiative that Monmouth Comprehensive are planning for a trip to Kenya. The Community Grant scheme was discussed and to date 24 applications have been sent out with only 9 having been completed to date. Councillor Dewhurst advised members that Mike Moran has been invited to attend the next meeting to talk about the play scheme.
- d. Finance & Policy Committee:** Councillor Buckland reported that the committee has been dealing with the routine business of the Council and that everything is up to date. The main topic of interest at the present time is in progressing the devolution issue and a working party had been set up to try and look at how this can be taken forward. Councillor Buckland also reported that The Clerk's recent seminar had raised a number of interesting points particularly in connection with the 'clustering' of smaller community councils for specific joint projects.
- e. Monmouth Partnership Forum:** Councillor Stevens reported that progress is being made with the 'Town Guide' and that Dave Evans is working on this project at present. 'The friends of Monmouth Cemetery' are meeting this week with a view to tidying up this area of town. There has been a request to the forum from the OSS for the Town Council to present items for discussion at the next meeting and although it is too late to go on the next agenda, Councillor Stevens advised that if any members wished to raise any matter to let him know.
- f. Others:** The Mayor, Councillor Christopher advised that since his inauguration he has been having regular meetings with Jenny Lewis, and that at a most recent meeting the proposed works in Agincourt Square were discussed. The Mayor has requested that when the plans are ready for consultation that the engineer is invited to attend the next Environmental committee meeting to give members an opportunity to ask questions.

Councillor Mrs Dewhurst reported that the duck race that took place to raise funds for Attik went very well, and that there is a sponsored abseil due to take place on 16th September and Councillors Stevens and Hayward will be joining her in their descent from St Mary's Church.

9. To Resolve to Approve and Adopt the Annual Report for 2005/2006:

(As previously circulated):

The Clerk advised that once this document has been adopted that it will be circulated on the website, copies placed on the Town Council notice board, The OSS, The Library and also a copy will be sent to The Free Press and Monmouthshire Beacon. It is hoped that it will reach as wide an audience as possible.

Proposed: Councillor Hayward

Seconded: Councillor Mrs Dewhurst

Unanimous

10. To Confirm ‘Statement of Accounts and Statement of Assurance’:

The Clerk reminded members of their obligation under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2005 to confirm the Statement of accounts and Statement of assurance. Members had all been given a copy prior to the meeting and The Clerk read out each statement for confirmation. The information was confirmed and the Clerk and Chairman both signed the form in the presence of the members.

Proposed: Councillor Buckland **Seconded:** Councillor Mrs White **Unanimous**

11. To Resolve to Consider Membership of Finance & Policy Committee:

Councillor Buckland advised members that this committee currently has 13 members and that this is in breach of the terms of reference for the committee’s, that state that there should only be 10 members. There was a reminder that recently a resolution had been brought and defeated to reinstate this committee to full council status, and that by trying to limit the numbers of the committee’s it would be more manageable to achieve focused and productive outcomes. Councillor Stevens reported that he felt that whilst this was not the only committee that was oversubscribed it would be better to change the standing orders, as by having a potentially greater pool of members there would be less likelihood of meetings not being quorate. Also it was stated that if there are to be larger committee’s that it is up to the ‘Chair’ to ensure strong leadership and control the meeting. It was agreed that all of the committee’s needed to be treated equally and that standing orders in relation to this issue should be suspended pending the proposed amendments to standing orders being ratified by Full Council.

Proposed: Councillor Hayward **Seconded:** Councillor Hacket Pain
Unanimous

12. To Resolve to Commit £1000.00 from ‘Future Development Budget’ to Progress

Devolution Issue:

Councillor Buckland advised members that when the budget was set, this fund was allocated with the expectancy of developing future plans and projects between Monmouthshire County Council and Monmouth Town Council. The request was made that the Finance & Policy committee be given authority to commit to set aside the sum of £1000.00 to cover additional staff salary expenditure that would be necessary for the increased hours that would be necessary to help develop a business plan. It was agreed that a figure of up to £1000.00 could be set aside however it was understood that a more defined proposal would be required with a degree of flexibility built in.

Proposed: Councillor Buckland **Seconded:** Councillor Hayward
For: 7 **Against:** 0 **Abstention:** 3

13. To Agree to Hold Next Full Council Meeting at St James Community Hall Wyesham and Confirm Budget for Publicity:

The Mayor, Councillor Christopher has suggested that The Town Council needs to raise its’ profile and that he felt that people were out of touch with what was going on. It is proposed that by taking meetings to each of the wards and with sufficient publicity and the invitation to members of the public to attend and pose questions that we could increase the interest and involvement of the press and public. The Clerk advised that there would be no need to request funding to publicise the event as The Youth Offenders team had been contacted and will be able to carry out a leaflet drop at no cost. It was agreed that the next full Council meeting on 18th September be held at Wyesham.

Proposed: Councillor Christopher **Seconded:** Councillor Mrs Dewhurst
Unanimous

14. Any Other Business:

Councillor Mrs Atkins requested what was the course of action for the purchase of a litter bin for Drybridge Park. The Clerk advised that the office staff would make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible.

Councillor Mrs Were advised members that there is a concert at The Leisure Centre to raise funds for some pupils from Monmouth Comprehensive School to go to Kenya. It is due to take place on 30th September and there will be a number of bands taking part.

Councillor Stevens raised some concern regarding the 'totem pole' at the back of Marks & Spencer store. He recalled from the planning application that the sign should be approx 2m tall and it seemed however that it is much larger than was anticipated.

Councillor Mrs Dewhurst advised members that the laminated copy of the town map that the Community Affairs committee had organised will be kept behind the curtains in The Community Room to be used at all meetings of The Town Council, as and when necessary.

Councillor Hayward asked The Clerk to comment on the insurance aspects of the water irrigation system and was advised that it is covered by The Town Council under the public liability section.

The Clerk advised members that as part of a risk assessment programme Monmouthshire County Council will be commencing the testing of memorials in Monmouth cemetery at the beginning of September.

The Clerk advised that a small pot of money had been found to tackle the graffiti problem and that the following areas would be requested to be cleaned, the two underpasses, Howells Place, Chippenham Park play area, Monnow Bridge and the alleyway at the side of The Vine Tree pub.

15. To Agree Meeting Dates.

Agreed

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Signature: _____

Date: _____