

# Monmouth Town Council

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## MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on 1 October 2007 at 7.00pm

At the

Junior Hall, Osbaston Church in Wales School, Monmouth

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

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

### **To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 minutes:**

Mr Barry Englefield from Monmouthshire Youth Service gave a comprehensive account of the work The Attik is doing. This facility caters for young adults and in its first 3 years was assisted with funding by the lottery, and then from 2003 funding from Monmouthshire Youth Service and also annual contributions from the Town Council. There are a range of activities including disco's, provision of counselling, careers advise, basic skills, the 'post 16 project', helping with education or training and also learning facilities for the disabled. Up to June 2007 over 1,000 people per month were going to The Attik, there has been a recent drop in numbers, which would be expected during the summer break. The running costs are £30,000 but this does not include staff salaries. The highest overhead is the rent, being £24,000 with other running costs of approximately £6,000. The Attik are looking for cheaper premises but space is an issue as well as location. They have received grants from 'The John Paul Getty Foundation', which has helped towards education with drug abuse. Recent surveys have suggested that over 70% of young adults in the local schools are aware of 'Attik'.

Sue Middleton spoke on behalf of the A.O.N.B Lottery bid. The bid is for £2.6 million to cover forty-two sites of interest from Hereford to Chepstow, they will require match funding which will have to be raised. The place of interest in Monmouth they would like to restore is the Monmouth Quay near the rowing club, this will involve renovating the wall, removing vegetation and placing a railing around the area. The cost of this would be £60, 000 which A.O.N.B are looking for a contribution of £7,500 over three years. To be placed on the Environment Committee Agenda on the 15 October.

Councillor Mrs Chivers passed a note to The Clerk at this point requesting that it be noted in the minutes that she is making an objection to this presentation as it does not appear on the agenda.

**60. To receive declaration of interest in items on the agenda:**

None

**61. To receive apologies for absence:**

Councillor R Hayward and Councillor S Roberts

**62. To confirm & sign the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2007:**

Confirmed correct with the following correction to item 50 – reports and minutes from The Partnership Forum: should read 2 more public meetings to be arranged one on transport and the one on the MCC Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Proposed:** Councillor Mrs White

**Seconded:** Councillor Stevens

**For:** 11

**Against:** 0

**Abstentions:** 2

**63. To receive the town clerks report (for information only):**

1. I can report that the gates that are along Cowlins Lane between Rockfield Road and Osbaston Road which are on property owned by The M.O.D have over this last weekend been locked. There have been a number of requests in recent months to restrict vehicular access because there have been several incidents were there were near misses with pedestrians and cyclists being endangered due to a small number of irresponsible drivers driving in a reckless manner.
2. A meeting has been convened by Caldicot Town Council between members of the other Town Councils in Monmouthshire to discuss the future of the CCTV system. The Meeting will be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 9.30am in Caldicot. The two council members that are on the CCTV User group panel are both unavailable to attend so if there is another member who wishes to attend with myself can you please advise me at the close of this meeting.
3. The fund raising evening that was held last Friday on behalf of The Shire Hall Stewards entitled The September Spectacular has raised approximately £1700.00. There was a good response with ticket sales in the region of 250 and a packed evening of music and comedy was held at HMSG which the school kindly agreed not to make any hire charges for the performance.
4. The European Heritage Open Doors Weekend that was held in September had an excellent response this year. There were 12 properties that opened their doors once again to visitors and there was an average attendance each day of approximately 50 people to each of the places that was on display.
5. On October 18<sup>th</sup> between 9 – 12 at the OSS in Priory Street there will be the first 'Highways' surgery taking place. Mr Paul Keeble a senior highways manager will be in attendance to see members of the public who wish to express their comments in relation to any aspect relating to highways. It is not necessary to make an appointment, as it will be a drop in session, however I have been advised that people are encouraged to phone in advance and register their interest so that an idea of numbers can be ascertained.

**64. To receive correspondence that the mayor wishes to place before the council.**

Councillor Mrs Chivers asked for the following letters to be read to the Council and attendees.

**Number 11:** e-mail J Roocroft, requesting a bylaw to save the burning and wilful damage of seats/posts placed around the rivers (copy sent to MCC)

**Number 30:** Royal British Legion, Re denied request from Welsh Electors Pressure Group to lay wreath on Remembrance Day, could set precedence to other parties

**Number 31:** Gwent Police, Re custody facilities at Monmouth Police Station

**Number 59:** Graham Boulton: Observations regarding last Council meeting held at Osbaston.

**Number 67:** Monnow Vale, letter to confirm qualified nurses are on duty at all times within the facility

**65. Matters Raised by Members:**

Nothing received in writing.

**66. To Receive and Consider Reports & Minutes of Committees:**

**a. Planning Committee:** As per minutes.

The application for Gibraltar House was approved to include improved parking, the infill at Victoria Estate was recommended for approval, 2 Ancre Hill cottages was recommended for refusal as the proposal would cause disproportionate problems to the other half of this semi-detached property. The application in Dixon Close for 4 houses on a restricted site, there was an appeal to the Welsh Assembly who approved the application.

The committee has responded to the Local Development Plan and it was felt that the consultation system does not run very well. The plan is difficult to understand and it would be helpful if a summary was provided.

**b. Environmental Affairs Committee:** As per minutes

It was agreed that heritage style seats would be placed at Dixon Road, Hereford Road also it was agreed to pay for grass cutting on the riverbank between the two bridges at a cost of £136 each. Also the funding of re-surfacing of the access road to the allotments from this years budget. A letter has been received from MCC requesting match funding for a litter-picking machine especially for needles and broken glass and £1000.00 has been allocated. Monmouth Links Project has requested funding for a cycle ways project and £1,500 has been approved for match funding. Eight entries have been received for the Planting competition which will be judged on Wednesday 3 October with prizes being awarded to the winning entries on Wednesday 10 October

**c. Community Affairs Committee:** As per minutes

The questionnaire results regarding the summer play scheme will be known before the next meeting to be held on 8 October. The committee has agreed to donate £7000.00 from the Community Grant Scheme with the second part to be held in January. Other items such as the Hospital and the closure of the Job Centre are on going.

**d. Finance & Policy Committee:** As per minutes

There was a review of standing orders and it was agreed that nothing at this present time needed changing with the exception of provision for increasing the number of bank signatories available. Next years budget will be looked at from November and it is anticipated that every effort will be made to keep the precept down. It was noted that most of the precept goes back into the town i.e. Attik, Citizens Advice Bureau, Monmouth Festival and Carnival and community projects etc

**Proposed:** Councillor Fletcher

**Seconded:** Councillor Bond

**For:** 12

**Against:** 0

**Abstentions:** 1

**e. Shire Hall Renovation Project:** As per minutes

Councillor Buckland reported that the project is reaching a critical stage over the next two months; to date everything is on time for the December deadline for submitting the bid and after this it will then take three months for the bid to be considered by the HLF. The Town Council have saved £10,000 from the precept each year and the earmarked fund now stands at £80,000 at the moment and a figure of £120,000 has been promised in total.

**f. Monmouth Partnership Forum:** As per minutes

At the AGM on 19 September Mr Simon Brown was voted the new Chairman. There are plans over the next 2 years to have a shared space for the Town Centre, also working with The WAG in order to become a sustainable town. It is hoped to build a broader base for the forum and to enlarge membership especially with younger people. Next meeting to be held on 28 November 2007.

**g. Others:**

N/A

**67. To receive recommendation from the Planning Committee to approve the application for the Welcome Centre Monmouth:**

The planning committee recommend approval of the plans as they stand.

A point was raised by a member of the public regarding the opening hours of the toilets when the Welcome Centre is closed and whether or not this will reduce the times when they are available.

**68. To consider recommendation from the F&P Committee to change Standing Orders in relation to cheque signatories for the bank account.**

There is a requirement that states that any two of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chair and Deputy Chair of F&P can sign the cheques. In order to gain more flexibility it is recommended that this arrangement be changed to the Mayor plus the four chairs of committees being able to sign, with the requirement of any two of these five people with this authority being able to sign.

**Proposed:** Councillor Stevens

**Seconded:** Councillor Bond

**Unanimous**

**69. To Consider recommendations from the Environment Committee in relation to a litter policy:**

This item has been withdrawn due to there being no formal recommendation from the committee.

It was suggested that this item should be discussed at the extra Environment meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

Councillor Mrs Atkins expressed her concern that this item was continuously being pushed off the agenda due to time pressure at the meetings and wanted this item discussed at Full Council for approval as per the agenda.

It was noted that the litter group working party is subordinate to the Environment committee and as this had not been discussed and agreed at the Environment meeting on 24 September it could not be considered at this meeting for a formal recommendation.

**70. To consider accepting responsibility for 'The Tile Tapestry' and to include it on the Town council insurance policy:**

The tapestry was a community project undertaken to commemorate the millennium year and is therefore considered to be a community asset owned by the community. It therefore has no such legal ownership and until now has not been covered for insurance purposes. The Clerk reported that a replacement value had been put at £15,000.00. The Town Council could insure the tapestry on an 'all risks' basis for an additional premium of £150. per annum. The Town Council has already agreed to accept responsibility for displaying this at the new Market Hall temporary premises while The Shire Hall is undergoing refurbishment. Members agreed unanimously to include this on the insurance policy.

**Proposed:** Councillor Mrs Chivers

**Seconded:** Councillor Mrs White

**Unanimous**

## **71. To receive questions from members of the public:**

Mr Chris brought to the attention of the Town Council the disgusting state of roads in Osbaston and when would something be done about improving this situation.

Councillor Stevens explained that the Town Council had limited powers but he would e-mail information onto the relevant department on behalf of any residents in connection with this issue.

Another concern raised was in connection with speed bumps and it was noted that some vehicles can quite easily manoeuvre around them without slowing down. It was reported that they do not help the environment as people slow down before them and accelerate away from them.

Mr Hall explained to members that due to a neck and back injury that the speed bumps cause him extreme discomfort when driving over them and questioned whether there was a Health & Safety ground for their removal.

Mrs Kennedy raised the issue of improving the pavements near the school and the fact that there had not been a crossing patrol person for the last six months outside the school. It was highlighted that some traffic doesn't slow down or allow children to cross safely.

Mr Rose pointed out that drivers do not know who has priority on the roads as there is no indication of whether pedestrians have priority or not.

Councillor Buckland encouraged people to write to MCC with there complaints.

It was pointed out by Councillor Christopher the importance when reporting an incident to The OSS of obtaining a reference number so that the query could be traced.

There was a question raised regarding Council Tax and why is it that Monmouthshire has the highest rates. It was pointed out that whilst this was true that Monmouth Town Council had during this term of office consistently been the town council with the lowest increase in its precept demand each year.

One resident asked why some pavements have been replaced unnecessarily and Councillor Mrs Were explained that this was in preparation for the new buses which would be introduced by 2012, giving wheelchair access.

Mr Hall raised a point in relation to the recent new that there were plans within the refurbishment of The Shire Hall to re-instate the railings, and asked would this affect the market returning to Shire Hall.

Councillor Buckland explained that would be made to fold back during the day and close at night to reduce the chances of vandalism or graffiti that might occur at night.

The Clerk read out an e-mail from Mr Davis pointing out that with the frequent vandalism in the Town does the CCTV have any purpose?

Councillor Stevens explained that the CCTV payment uses 10% of the precept and he had asked the same question two years ago. The Town Council have now withdrawn financial backing of the system which cost £11,000 per annum. It was pointed out that they are still fully operational. The main complaint by members had been the lack of regular feedback or records of convictions resulting from evidence captured by the system. It was also confirmed that to date Caldicot have also opted to withdraw funding.

Members and the public were advised by The Clerk that there is a surgery at the One Stop Shop on 18th October 2007 between 9-12 which members of the public can speak directly with Paul Keeble from MCC regarding highways problems.

**72. Any other business:**

**Councillor Mrs S Chivers:**

Please could the Council support a request to write a letter to Mr Tim Bradfield from MCC regarding Chippenham Field. It was reported that recently on a Saturday morning approximately 30 cars were seen parked on Chippenham Fields.

It was also requested that a letter should be written to MCC regarding a locked gate at the nature reserve (near Drybridge House) preventing access.

It was reported that the state of repair of pavements in Glendower Street was very poor.

It is understood that a mobile weighbridge will be installed at the hammerhead at Kings Fee, please could The Clerk make enquiries regarding this?

**Councillor G F W Buckland:**

It was reported that pavements are being filled with tarmac instead of being replaced with flagstones in a conservation area.

**Councillor N Hacket Pain:**

The member has been approached regarding new charges to be implemented by Waitrose at their car park. It is believed that this land was part of the Village Green and not part of the agreement when Waitrose came to Monmouth. Councillor Buckland said there was a verbal agreement regarding free parking on that land with no end date. Councillor Hacket Pain wants to know if The Town Council has the right to look into this matter.

To be put on the agenda of the next Environment meeting 15 October

**73. To Agree meeting dates:**

Councillor Christopher advised members that the next meeting would be held in the Wyesham ward. The venue would be confirmed in due course.

Agreed

**With no further business the meeting closed at 8.55 pm**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_