

Monmouth Town Council

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Held on 17 March 2008 at 7.00pm
In The Community Room, Shire Hall

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

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

Mr Thorpe of Treenergy gave a presentation regarding the development of a small wood fuel power plant which would produce enough energy to supply approximately 10,000 houses and surplus that could be exported to the National Grid. The timber would come from well managed forests or recycling. The long term goal would be to make Monmouth a self sufficient town in terms of power supply. There would be less carbon dioxide emissions than currently given off by present fossil fuels. Planning and finance are still being arranged for the proposed site at Hadnock Road which would include a shop and café which would use Fair Trade and ethically sourced products, an Education Centre for environmental education and the possibility of tours and a spa.

Further information can be found on www.treenergy.net

A long service presentation by The Mayor Terry Christopher was made to Councillor Buckland for his key role during sixteen years service to the Town Council; he will be standing down at the next election.

122. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None received

123. To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 Minutes

124. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Mrs M C Atkins and Councillor S Roberts

125. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2008

The minutes were confirmed as correct and signed

Proposed by: Councillor R Bond **Seconded by:** Councillor D Stevens

For: 11

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2

126. To receive the Town Clerk's report (for information only)

1. The Shire Hall Closure Party went ahead as planned on 6 March despite there being no announcement by the HLF regarding the decision to support Stage II of the application. 74 tickets were sold in total and monies were raised by the sale of raffle tickets and the proceeds of the bar. The total amount raised was £1004.00 and once the cost of the disco, band and food has been deducted there will be a net amount raised of £371.
2. The parade by the Ship's company from HMS Monmouth went ahead as planned on Saturday with about 80 personnel attending from the Ship along with Town and County Councillors and a number of invited guests. The parade assembled on the old Monnow Bridge and proceeded along Monnow Street then turning up Castle Hill towards the square. There was a reception held afterwards at the Officers Mess in the Castle and the Mayor made presentations to two members of the Ships Company, one for conduct and one for long service. There was also a brief ceremony to exchange flags. It was a proud day for town to welcome back the Ship after their nine month deployment last year, and members of the public showed their appreciation in town by clapping as the parade marched past. It was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the affiliation that the town has with the Ship and to welcome them back with to enjoy our hospitality.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for all her hard work in the organisation of the march with HMS Monmouth at short notice.

127. To receive correspondence that the Mayor wishes to place before the Council

Councillor Chivers asked for the letter from MCC regarding the tree preservation order at Hereford Road to be read before the Council

128. Matters raised by members

Nothing received in writing.

129. To consider and approve reports and minutes of the council's committees

a. Planning Committee: As per minutes

The application for the proposed Croft y Bwla development had been opposed by the Town Council planning committee all along but outline application was approved on the second vote of Monmouthshire County Council Planning Meeting, a local member voted for approval. Councillor Buckland has asked for a letter to be written to Monmouthshire County Council asking them to finance an independent report as members are not satisfied with the reports on drainage and transport.

The application at 17 Dixton Close has been refused by Monmouthshire County Council despite the members approving this development as an infill which was considered better than using open countryside. There have been 2 appeals to date but now waiting to see if modified plans are to come forward.

Next Meeting to be held on 31 March 2008

b. Environmental Affairs Committee: As per minutes

Councillor Mrs Mitchell reported that the Committee was continuing in its efforts to finish the various local area projects that had been started. At the meeting on 11th February the County Council has agreed that the Town Map furniture was their responsibility and have undertaken to paint it and replace damaged Perspex at their expense. The Committee agreed to provide underwriting of £500 up to the end of the next financial year for the Partnership Forum's 'Big Green Monmouth Shopper.

At the meeting on 10 March it was reported that the County Council had agreed to provide a new electricity supply from the Rockfield Road for the lights in Drybridge Park. Members had agreed that monies allocated to specific projects should be placed in earmarked reserves if they were not spent by the end of the financial year and that of the remainder, up to £7,500 be earmarked for the 'Overlooking the Wye' project. In response to a request for funding for essential works at the Nelson Garden, the Committee agreed to pay 50% of the estimated cost of £1,974.36.

Next Meeting to be held on 21 April 2008

c. Community Affairs Committee: As per minutes
£3,050 has been distributed in total from the Community Grants budget as part of the second phase. The awards evening was well received on Tuesday 26 February; this brings the total distributed this year to eighteen voluntary groups and organisations to £8,000.
Arrangements for organising the Civic Awards will now commence with advertisements going out in the local press and radio. Next Meeting to be held on 31 March 2008

d. Finance & Policy Committee: As per minutes
Councillor Stevens reported that the budget had been completed. There were some outstanding issues regarding the provision of training from One Voice Wales. The main item was to discuss the move from Shire Hall which will be discussed at this meeting in detail under agenda item 130. The internal audit took place on 23 February 2008 with all the financial arrangements being satisfactory.
Next Meeting to be held on 7 April 2008

Proposed by: Councillor R Hayward
Unanimous

Seconded by: Councillor N Hackett Pain

e. Monmouthshire County Council:
County Councillor Mrs White gave a brief description of the various committees and outside bodies that she sits on, these include Central Monmouthshire Area Committee, CSAT'S, a Governor at Monmouth Comprehensive School and over Monnow Special Needs Unit, Best Kept Village, GAVO and Vice Chair of Monmouthshire County Council.

f. Shire Hall Renovation Project:
See Agenda Item 130

g. Monmouth Partnership Forum: As per minutes
Councillor Mrs Mitchell reported that there had been two public meetings.
On the 5 February the showing of a film 'Power of Community, 'How Cuba Survived Peak Oil' which was followed by a discussion on transition towns and a resolution to set up a Transition Monmouth Group.
On the 4 March about 30 attended a session to develop the Monmouthshire County Council strategy on climate change and sustainable energy
At the MPF meeting on the 12 March, Jenny Lewis reported that the Monmouth Links Project Board has been advised that probably the best way for it to operate is to seek charitable status. The Sustainable Travel Group plans to hold a 'car free' day in September; this will not be imposed through the closure of streets but will be encouraged by asking people to think about ways of travel other than by car. Emphasis will be placed on working with the schools and has been welcomed by Monmouth Comprehensive.
The next meeting will be on the. Next Meeting to be held on 14 of May

h. Others:
None

130. To consider the proposed move from the Shire Hall by Monmouth Town Council
It was reported that there has been an unsatisfactory period since Christmas mainly due to lack of communication between Monmouthshire County Council, Town Council and the Shire Hall Stewards. Stage two of the Lottery application was submitted on 17 December, however previous correspondence stated it would be at least four months before a decision could be made. There have been indications that it could now be June 2008 before a decision is made. Tenders were invited by four contractors however the meeting scheduled for the 4th February to discuss the tenders was cancelled. At a separate meeting it was announced that there was a seven and a half percent increase in costs from the tenders.
At a meeting last year of the Project Team, members were told that the decision from the HLF would be announced on the 6 March. On the basis of this the Stewards arranged the Shire Hall

132. To consider action regarding obstructions on public footpaths

Councillor Christopher informed members that he had met with officers from MCC to discuss their policy on this subject. The Council's policy of 2002 states that A boards can be placed 1 metre from the shop front as long as the pavement has a width of 18 metres. The question of shop displays is the remit of the Planning department. Councillor Christopher would like a letter to be written to the planning department asking them what their policy is with regard to this issue.

133. To consider failure by members to attend committee meetings without prior apologies

This item was withdrawn as the member in question was not present.

134. To consider F&P recommendation to accept Policy on Unacceptable Behaviour

It was recommended that this policy be accepted in order to ensure that both staff and members were confident that there was a policy in place to protect them against unacceptable behaviour.

Proposed by: Councillor D Stevens

Seconded by: Councillor Mrs A Were

Unanimous

135. To review members representation on outside bodies

The Town Council has members on a number of outside bodies however there is no feedback from some of the organisations. The groups that do not provide reports are mainly the representatives of school bodies, Forest Enterprise, Monmouth Charity, GAVO and the Borough Theatre.

It was agreed to defer this item to the Finance and Policy Committee so that guidelines could be drawn up as to the responsibilities of members who represent the Council on outside bodies.

Proposed by: Councillor L Robson

Seconded by: Councillor Mrs V Mitchell

Unanimous

136. Any other business

Councillor Mrs Were raised the issue of changes to the recycling programme which are to take place as MCC want to take it back in house. Monmouth Community Recycling who presently run this operation is non profit making but if the contract was withdrawn Councillor Were expressed concern about the future of this service. It was reported that Council Officers are also recommending changes to current waste collections to make them fortnightly.

Councillor Hayward stated that he believed that these were only discussions at this stage and not recommendations.

Councillor Christopher announced that the closing date for the applications for position of Deputy Mace Bearer had now passed and that there was only one applicant. Members agreed not to extend the closing date in order to re-advertise and that the panel would meet shortly to consider the application.

137. To agree meeting dates

Agreed

With no further business the meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Signature: _____

Date: _____