

Monmouth Town Council

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL Held on 13th October 2008 at 7.00pm at Osbaston Church in Wales School, Osbaston Road, Monmouth

PRESENT: Chairman the Mayor Councillor T Christopher
Councillor R Bond, Councillor G Bright, Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst,
Councillor J Fletcher, Councillor R Hayward, Councillor L Robson
Councillor N Hacket Pain, Councillor Mrs J Hall, Councillor M Jones,
Councillor Mrs B Smith, Councillor Mrs A Were and Councillor Mrs S White

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk and Mrs Jane Lloyd Clerical Assistant

Presentation by Ms J Lloyd of Citizens Advice Bureau

Ms Lloyd reported that at the last presentation to the Council the CAB were on the verge of introducing a virtual call centre which took place in January of this year. There were a few teething problems in the beginning but these have all been rectified.

In the last quarter the centre dealt with 86% of calls. An automated service will hopefully be introduced in the near future. There are at present 11 volunteers working in the Monmouth bureau and they are in the process of training three more. There is a drop in centre service still available but it is hoped to change to an appointment system by 2009.

The CAB is very grateful to the Town Council for its continued support.

64. To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda:

None received

65. To receive apologies for absence:

Councillor Ms C Edwards and Councillor Mrs S Chivers

66. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2008:

The minutes were confirmed correct and signed.

Proposed: Councillor Bond
For: 11 **Against:** 0

Seconded: Councillor Hacket Pain
Abstentions: 2

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

1. The normal arrangements for Remembrance Day this year will be changed due to the refurbishment of the Shire Hall. The parade will assemble and form up at Castle Square and proceed to the cenotaph down Castle Hill and along Priory Street as normal. The Commanding Officer has given permission for the Mayor to invite guests into Great Castle House for a drink before the formalities commence. An invitation will be sent to all members in due course with full details.
2. The invoice for the May election costs has now been received. The total cost is £1377.31 which is well within the budget that was set for this year. Within the five wards there were two that were uncontested and polling stations were set up within the other three wards. The costs include charges for the returning officer fee, administration charges, ballot papers, poll cards and other miscellaneous staff costs.
3. The External Auditors have completed the Annual Audit for 2007/2008. This year once again there are no qualifications and the only opinion that has been given relates to a minor rounding error which needed to be drawn to the attention of the Council. The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005 state that the Council displays a notice for the period of at least 14 days stating that the audit has been complete and that the Annual Return is available for inspection by local government electors. This notice should be accompanied by a copy of the certified return and this will be displayed on the Town Council notice board with immediate effect.
4. There will be a fund raising event organised by the Shire Hall Stewards which will take place on Friday 17th October at 7.30. The event will be hosted by Viyella Stores at Bridges Community Centre and the evening will comprise a fashion show and a free prize draw. Included in the cost of a £6.00 ticket will be a complimentary drink and entry into the raffle. Please support this event as all proceeds will be for the Shire Hall Restoration appeal. I have a number of tickets available with me if anyone wishes to purchase one.
5. Capita Symonds will undertake on behalf of MCC further investigative work this week on the Slaughter House wall. They will be looking to locate 1 rotary borehole in the car park at the rear of the library close to the retaining wall and fence. The work will take two days to complete and they have recommended the closure of the entire car park, although deliveries etc would be able to access the area, however this will not affect pedestrian access across Vauxhall Bridge.
6. A request was received recently from a visitor to town to ask for lighting of the Charles Rolls Statue. This point was raised at the Project Team meeting last week and the Project Manager advised that there was no funding within the budget for this work. This is not a priority as the statue is not normally lit at night and would potentially cause difficulties for the contractors with cables etc.

68. To receive correspondence that the mayor wishes to place before the council:

Members were notified of an amended date for Shire Hall Stewards AGM from 14th October to 21st October.
The Clinical Futures meeting is to be held on Wednesday 15th October 6.00 pm at Monmouth Leisure Centre.

69. Matters raised by members: Nothing received in writing

Councillor Mrs Were reported her concern regarding the response by the Housing Association to the homes they manage in relation to problems that arose during the heavy rain falls in September.

Councillor Mrs Were brought to the attention of the Council that the Ryder Cup would be coming to the area in two years time and suggested that the Town Council should set up a working party with other interested groups in the Town to maximise opportunities. Councillor Robson suggested that as three months after this event it will be the centenary of Charles Rolls death that this should be incorporated into any event. Councillor Mrs Were also expressed her concerns regarding the lack of provision for those wishing to have an allotment. Councillor Bright added that some of the allotments were not being looked after. Councillor Mrs Smith as a member of the Allotment Association explained that records are kept of those not attending the allotments and reports are made to the One Stop Shop but there seems to be a reluctance to take further action. If the Town Council could offer support the Association would be extremely grateful. To be discussed at the next Environmental Committee meeting.

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

- a. **Planning:** As per minutes of meetings held on 1st, 15th and 29th September
Next meeting to be held on Monday 27th October 2008.
- b. **Environmental Affairs:** As per minutes of meeting held on 6th October
Next meeting to be held on Monday 17th November 2008.
- c. **Community Affairs:** As per minutes of meeting held on 15th September
Next meeting to be held on Monday 20th October 2008
- d. **Finance & Policy:** As per minutes of meeting held on 22nd September
Shire Hall: he reminded members that a request has been made to MCC for a schedule of the works, details of payments to the contractors, the liability for overrun and contingency plans for being over budget.
CCTV: It was reported that a request for £11,500 from MCC for payment of CCTV had been made when at a previous meeting Mr Chris Norman had said all outstanding money would be written off.
The working group has visited the CCTV control room at Caerphilly and at the end of the month interviews will take place with a number of interested parties.
Next meeting due to be held on Monday 3rd November 2008

Proposed: Councillor Bond
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Fletcher

e. Shire Hall Renovation Project:

Councillor Mrs Chivers and the Town Clerk attended the recent meeting of the project team. The construction work is well under way, initial stages of setting up have now been completed.

There has been a delay with erecting the scaffolding which have now been resolved and this will be going up shortly. Also concerns were voiced about with how the scaffolding would be tied into the building, CADW have agreed that scaffolding can be tied in without compromising the building.

The HLF have appointed two monitors who will be working with the team making sure that the project goes ahead in line with the application.

There has been a set back regarding the railings as it was hoped to have bi folding ones to give more flexibility but CADW insist that railings should be the same as the original ones which would confine the market under the arches. A project board meeting will take place at the end of the month to include CADW when hopefully this can be re-considered.

Terms of reference have been set and will be confirmed at the Project Board meeting at the end of the month. Financial details were discussed and the team was advised that the robust contract in place does allow for penalties to be imposed if the project is not completed on time. The Clerk was advised that the contract in place is a standard industry one and the official date for completion of construction is set at 11th December 2009. Although construction is due to finish in 2009 the building will probably not be open officially until late spring early summer which will allow for internal work to be completed. The project teams meetings will take place now on a bi monthly basis the next one being 11th December.

f. Shire Hall Stewards: As per minutes

Councillor Bond reported about fund raising taking place.

A fashion show by Viyella is due to take place on Friday 17th October at Bridges.

Cwmbran Male Voice choir have been approached to put on a concert in April.

Prego are going to hold an Italian evening with eighty tickets to be made available.

Councillor Hackett Pain had attended a meeting with Richard Wills and Barbara Wright which they gave a verbal commitment that any outstanding money they will still continue to fund raise and repay the Town Council, any assistance with fund raising would be greatly welcomed.

Next meeting to be held on Tuesday 21st October 2008

g. CSAT'S:

The Police are trying to combat shed burglaries in rural areas and shed alarms will be given out by the Police to the hot spots and high risk areas.

Halloween Action Plan: The police patrols will be concentrating on hot spots

The Attik will be arranging a trip to Thorpe Park on 31st October, thirty young people will be on the trip and CSAT's will be contributing towards the cost.

Bonfire Night: Fires being built should be reported to the One Stop Shop, it is not possible this year for Housing Associations or other groups to organise area bonfires due to restrictions and H&S issues.

The Attik: CSAT'S is to visit the Attik to look at quick alert systems that could be installed to protect staff when working with large groups of young people.

h. Monmouth Partnership Forum: As per minutes

Councillor Mrs B Smith reported that the AGM was held on 1st October in which a number of ongoing issues were discussed.

i. Others:

Attik: Nearly a thousand pounds has been raised by the abseiling team.

There have been a number of local residents come forward to offer their help to the steering committee. The police are very positive with work going on at Attik and happy to work with the young people and staff.

71. To resolve to agree threshold figure of £25.00 for gifts and hospitality and confirm requirement of registration:

The Clerk reminded Councillors that under the Code of Conduct there is a requirement of registering within 28 days the receipt of any gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage above a value specified in a resolution of this authority. In addition, written notification must be provided to the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift, hospitality, material benefit or advantage. The suggested threshold of £25 was agreed unanimously.

Proposed: Councillor Robson
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs White

72. To resolve to purchase a gift for the town of Waldbronn to commemorate the Mayor's visit to a maximum of £100.00 to be allocated to the Civic Hospitality Budget:

The Mayor informed members that he had purchased a silver miniature Monnow Bridge brooch as a gift from the people of Monmouth to Waldbronn when he makes his visit at the end of the month. It was agreed unanimously by members that this should be paid for from the Hospitality Budget.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs White
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs Hall

73. To resolve to pay the National Joint Council rate allowable to Community and Town Councillors for subsistence to the Mayor on his visit to Waldbronn to represent Monmouth:

The Mayor confirmed that he wished to claim for two days subsistence and one night's accommodation for his visit to Waldbronne. The Clerk informed the Council that the National Joint Council along with One Voice Wales have agreed subsistence allowances which permit overnight stays to the cost of £94 within London and £82 outside London. The Mayor stated that his accommodation costs would fall well inside these figures.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs S White
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Hackett Pain

74. To resolve to accept recommendation from F&P committee to pay contribution for Shire Hall refurbishment in three instalments:

It is proposed that Monmouth Town Council offers to pay its £125,000.00 contribution towards the Shire Hall refurbishment by making a 25% payment in March 2009 followed by a further 25% payable in September 2009 and the full 50% plus shortfall from the Stewards on completion of the project. The steward's commitment for payment is at the end of the project also. The Town Clerk pointed out that the distinction should be made between the end of the project and the end of construction as the end of the construction will be approximately six months prior to the end of the project.

Councillor Mrs Dewhurst wanted to clarify that the Town Council has representatives that are permanent members of the Project Board and to make sure that the accommodation is secure and that the Community still has a base there. The Clerk was asked to write to Mr Greenslade at MCC outlining these terms.

Proposed: Councillor Hacket Pain
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs Dewhurst

75. To resolve to accept recommendation from F&P committee to amend the Standing Orders as per annexed list:

Page 3: Conduct in meetings and dress code, concerns had been expressed by members that meetings are running over their times and that chairs were finding it increasingly difficult to conduct them. It was agreed that a more formal procedure should be adopted so that any member wishing to speak at a meeting should do so through the chair. The dress code would apply to committee meetings at which jackets and ties must be worn by men with jeans not permitted. Councillor Robson considered that this could deter future and younger members from being involved with the Council and it may be perceived as being 'elitist'.

Page 4: The law is clear about the quorum of the meetings being one third or 3 whichever the greater.

Page 6: Members attendance at meetings to be reported back as an item at Full Council and minuted for public record

Page 11: The development of Deputy Chairs was considered crucial and to make the Deputy Chair responsible for taking minutes. It was agreed that it could be on a voluntary basis this year but as of next year it would become part of the Deputy Chair's responsibilities. This would also out of necessity mean greater involvement and working with the Chair to enhance the work of the committees.

Proposed: Councillor Hayward
For: 8

Against: 2

Seconded: Councillor Hacket Pain
Abstentions: 3

76. To confirm Town Council insurance policy:

The Clerk advised that the three quotations were not yet available and it was agreed to give delegated authority to the Clerk to make the decision to renew the policy with the best possible terms. (See agenda item 70d)

Proposed: Councillor Christopher
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs White

77. To consider the review undertaken by the F&P committee of pay and service conditions of staff:

It is a requirement of the standing orders that the Full Council reviews the pay and service conditions of staff annually. It was reported to members that two items were to be reviewed

- Comprehensive review of the Administrative Assistants Job Description, this has now been completed.

- Pay review – still no agreement between the employers and the unions, it is hoped that a decision can be reached by the end of December

78. To confirm changes to committee membership:

Councillor Robson has withdrawn his membership from the Finance & Policy Committee. It was agreed to unanimously accept this change.

Proposed: Councillor Mrs White
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Hackett Pain

79. To receive questions from members of the public:

A number of people raised concerns that the residents of Osbaston have with the traffic calming measures. Councillor Hayward explained that MCC are going to hold a general review regarding these issues and will consult with the community before making a decision.

Mr Hill encouraged as many people as possible to attend the Clinical Futures meeting on Wednesday 15th October 2008 6.00 pm at Monmouth Leisure Centre.

Mr Basani wanted to know if the Town Council is monitoring the progress of the forthcoming Local Development Plan and in particular the candidate sites. Councillor Bond explained that at the moment these are only proposed sites but that the planning committee was monitoring the situation.

PC Andrew Mason explained about a Neighbourhood Watch initiative which residents can sign up to and receive automated messages regarding local problems.

80. Any other business:

Councillor Mrs White apologised to the Council for her absence at some meetings especially Community Affairs Committee due to her other commitments this year. Councillor Mrs Dewhurst reminded Councillors that the AGM of the Festival Committee would take place on Thursday Oct 16th at the Three Horseshoes Pub in Drybridge St. Councillor Mrs Smith advised Councillors that Monmouth and District Welsh Society would be offering welsh lessons on the 22nd or 29th of October at 10.00 for anyone wishing to learn the welsh national anthem.

Councillor Christopher advised members of the Vision Monmouth meeting to be held at Rockfield Community Centre to consult on the proposed plans in the document.

Councillor Christopher has also arranged with the One Stop Shop for Councillors to shadow staff to give them a better understanding of the way they work. Would Councillors please contact Jenny Lewis direct if they wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Misbah Restaurant is putting on a Charity meal for the Mayor's charities which will take place on Sunday 19th October at 7.00 pm

81. To agree meeting dates:

There is to be an extra meeting of the Environmental Committee to be held on Monday 20th October at 6.00 pm

It was suggested and agreed that the Full Council meeting scheduled for Monday 22nd December be re arranged for Monday 5th January 2009
Date of next meeting Monday 24th November 2008 at Bridges Community Centre

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55

Date _____

Signature _____