

Monmouth Town Council
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MINUTES OF MEETING OF MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
Held on Monday 22 November 2010 at 7.00pm
Shire Hall Monmouth

PRESENT: Chairman the Mayor Cllr Mrs J Hall

Cllr R Bond	Cllr G Bright
Cllr Mrs S Chivers	Cllr T Christopher
Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst	Cllr J Fletcher
Cllr Mrs J Gunter	Cllr N Hacket Pain
Cllr R Hayward	Cllr M Jones
Cllr C Munslow	Cllr J Saran
Cllr Mrs B Smith	Cllr Mrs A Were
Cllr Mrs S White	

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S James Town Clerk and Mrs J Lloyd Admin Assistant

Mr G Edmunds (MCC) gave a presentation on Waste Management Services throughout Monmouthshire. Municipal waste data April 2009 to March 2010, which are audited by Welsh Assembly Government, were given. Last year over 47,784 tonnes of municipal waste were collected in Monmouthshire- which is commercial, domestic, dry waste and green collections. There is a need for recycling as the landfill tax is increasing by £8 per ton per year and for the environment benefits of reducing waste with the subsequent reduction of greenhouse gases.

Recycling targets have been set by the government. For the year 2024/2025 the target to be met is 70% against 2009/2010 of 40% -which, to March 2010, Monmouthshire had hit 41.31% -being 2nd in Wales for food and waste recycling and from 22nd position to 5th for dry waste. Once this target has been met it will have to be maintained until the next target date. For the first 6 months of this year, 49% has been met on average. If fail to reach targets, the authority will be fined £200 per ton. 10 years ago there wasn't a landfill tax, but it is currently £48 per ton. In 3 years time it will reach £72 per ton

The introduction of red and purple bags in Nov 2009 has doubled the amount of dry cycling, which is now covering 99% of Monmouthshire since its introduction. It has gone up from 93 ton (black box) a week to 152 ton a week.

95% cover for green and food waste collection which, in the next few weeks, will go up to 100% with the introduction of fortnightly collections. To date there has been no complaints from Magor/ Undy regarding fortnightly collection since they have had the system since July this year.

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

None received

88. To receive Apology for absence:

None received

89. To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 minutes:

Mr R Nicholas: Thirty weeks ago Mr Nicholls reported problems with the pavement at the Post Office at Kings Fee and to date it still hasn't been resolved. Cllr Mrs White reported that the works should have been completed in conjunction with the works at Wonastow Road. Mrs White has now been informed there was not enough money left to do the 7 meter squared area but Cllr Mrs White keeps reminding Highways of the problem making them aware that someone could fall and injure themselves. A letter will be written by the Town Clerk including previous pictures taken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on a previous visit to the area.

Mr Nichols also commented that Wonastow Road has undergone major renovation since the question was raised with machinery on site of every description. The Post Office is only 85 paces away.

Mr Nicholas' second query concerned, in his opinion, the waste of money producing 7 signs in Welsh for the Rockfield area of Monmouth. He maintained that in 2004, without consultation, MCC decided that the Welsh name for Rockfield should be 'Llanoronwy. information was found that Joseph Bradney, in the 'History of Monmouthshire,' in 1907 stated that there was no Welsh name for Rockfield, therefore all the signs should remain as "Rockfield", which would save the Council money.

Mr D Pugh: Asked the Council to consider when discussing Agenda Item 101 that the Council take into consideration the fact that any reports for the Beacon would not be in the papers until a week later as the cut off time is on Tuesday lunchtime.

90. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 October 2010:

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 October 2010 were confirmed correct and signed

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Gunter
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Mrs Were

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

The office will close over the Christmas holidays from noon on Friday 24th December and will re-open on Tuesday 4th January.

The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) will be exercising their Freedom of Monmouth on Sunday 5th December. The Parade will be leaving the Old Monnow Bridge at 1pm, marching up Monnow Street and the Mayor will take the salute from outside the Shire Hall. Council members are also invited to be present around the dais as the salute is taken. The Mayoral party and Cllrs have then been invited to walk into St Mary's Parish Church to join a short service of thanks giving. There will be a presentation of medals by HRH the Duke of Gloucester on the Castle ground afterwards which the Mayor is to attend, and I will confirm as soon as possible, by memo, if other Cllrs may be present.

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

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Cllr Mrs White asked for letter No 42 to be read out to the members, the letter was from Mr D Matthews (Gwent Police) in relation to the candlelit procession and opinions/reasons of the police against going ahead

93. To note the reports and minutes of the council's committees and outside bodies:

- a) **Planning Committee:** As per minutes: Cllr Bond reported the situation with the current planning application for the Almshouses, and expressed their concerns with the areas of the Clinic and Old Hospital.
Next meeting to be held on Monday 6 December 2010
Environmental Affairs Committee: As per minutes: Cllr Christopher reported that the Christmas tree and Christmas lights should be in place by the end of the week. On Saturday 20 November 7 trees were planted at Blestium car park. On Friday 19 November the working group met with Mr Glyn Edmunds and Mr Jones to discuss the placement of bins. They are to be placed outside 14 Old Dixton Road, Barclays Bank, behind Marks and Spencer's, and Boots the Chemist. It was also decided that in future there would be uniformity to the bins.
Cllr Chivers asked if the old Christmas lights from Monnow Street could be used for Overmonnow, Cllr Christopher explained he had been advised that they were not in good condition and not reusable but possibly lights for Overmonnow and St Mary's Street could be looked at within the 3 year programme.
Next meeting to be held on Monday 20 December 2010
- b) **Community Affairs Committee:** As per minutes: Cllr Mrs Dewhurst reported that a decision had been made to contribute to this year's Play scheme, Attik, Carnival and Festival as per budget. For the Candlelit procession there would be battery operated candles available as well as the normal tapered ones
Next meeting to be held on Monday 29 November 2010
- c) **Finance & Policy Committee:** As per minutes: Cllr Hayward reported that items discussed were the budget, CCTV and the public toilets. MCC had offered a grant of £1,200 towards the cost of £16,000 to keep the toilets open. Since then there had been discussion that there could be movement regarding the conditions. Cllr Hayward asked if the Environment Committee could look at this item again. Next meeting to be held on Monday 13 December 2010
- d) **CSATS Committee:** Cllr N Hackett Pain reported that there had been problems with the theft of farm gates and burglaries in secluded rural areas.
Lighting on Monnow Street had been tested and found to comply with the European standard. This was disputed by the members and Cllr Bond expressed his opinion that lighting in Agincourt Street was even worse.
- e) **Monmouth Partnership Forum:** Cllr Mrs Smith reported that at the last meeting of 20 October, they too had heard the presentation by Glyn Edmunds, which was well received.
Rockfield Community Centre Committee reported that the Community Hall plans to have allotments, and in the garden area of the hall, plan to ask the 'Get Up and Grow' Team from Attik to plant shrubs and maintain the area. The Team were complimented on the work they have completed at the bus station. Next meeting to be held on Wednesday 1 December 2010
- f) **Vision Monmouth:** No meeting. Next meeting to be held on Friday 3 December 2010 and will be discussing the possibility of a roundabout at Beech Road and A40

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- g) **Others: A day in the Life:** Cllr Munslow announced the launch of the book now on sale at Monmouth Tourist Information Centre and the Library at a cost of £4.95 and would like to thank all of those involved

94. To receive the Member's attendance summary of committee meetings

Members	Env	Planning	Town Council	Env Special Meeting	Comm	Plannin g	F&P	Planning
2010	04-Oct	11-Oct	11-Oct	15-Oct	18-Oct	25-Oct	01-Nov	08-Nov
Cllr R Bond	Apology	Apology	Apology	Apology		Apology	1	1
Cllr G Bright	1		1	1	1		1	1
Cllr Mrs S Chivers	1	1	1	Apology	1	1	1	1
Cllr T Christopher			1	1	1		1	
Cllr Mrs A Dewhurst	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr J Fletcher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cllr Mrs J Gunter	1	1	1	Apology	1	1	1	1
Cllr N Hacket Pain			1				1	
Cllr Mrs J Hall	1	1	1	Apology	1	1	1	1
Cllr R Hayward	1	1	1	Apology		1	1	1
Cllr M Jones	1	Apology	Apology	Apology	Apology	1	Apology	
Cllr C Munslow	1	1	1	1	1	Apology		1
Cllr J Saran	1	1	1	1		1		1
Cllr Mrs B Smith	1		1	1	1	1		1
Cllrs Mrs A Were	1		1	1	Apology		10	
Cllr Mrs S White	1		1	1	1		Apology	
Total In Attendance	11+2	8	14	8	10	8+1	10	9+1
Members on Committee	12	10	16	14	12	10	12	10
KEY								
	Non Committee Member							
	Non Committee Member attendance							
	Absent							

Signature: _____

95. **To consider the report of the external auditor, to then approve the Annual Return (and re-approve the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31st March 2010. (**

Agreed and signed

Proposed: Cllr R Bond
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr R Hayward

96. **To accept the recommendation of the Finance and Policy Committee regarding the budget and the precept demand for 2011/12:**

Cllr Mr R Hayward outlined that it was clear to members that local tax payers should not be burdened with additional costs due to any raise in the precept. It was agreed that there would no increase on this year's precept for the forthcoming year, setting it at £141,300 again, as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee. Although extra costs may be incurred for Shire Hall, if necessary, the Council would utilise reserves to fund this.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs White
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Fletcher

97. **To discuss Public liability insurance and to accept quotes for events cover:**

It had been discovered that the public liability insurance held, does not cover annual events such as the candlelit procession and the Civic Service. However the Remembrance Day parade cover was agreed free of charge just before the event. It was agreed to pay £168 including VAT from the Finance and Policy budget for the cover.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs White
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Mrs Dewhurst

Cllr Hayward congratulated the Town Clerk for spotting this error.

98. **To discuss training of members/outside groups to comply with Highways-Chapter 8 of the traffic signs manual requirements for events:**

MCC can provide a course costing £330 for 12 people on Wednesday 15 December in Raglan. This course will also include Marshalling. Cllr Mrs Were requested it be noted that we now have to pay for training for charity events. Cllr Dewhurst thanked the Town Clerk for all her efforts and especially for the time spent on this issue. It was agreed that this course be booked for Councillors for attend, and representatives from other local organisations if spaces. To be paid from Councillors training budget

Proposed: Cllr Mrs White
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr R Hayward

99. **To discuss disabled access at the Gatehouse Public House**

Cllr Mrs S Chivers brought to the attention of the Council letters that have appeared in the press concerning the lack of disabled access in business premises in the Town along with problems arising once again with "A" boards on pavements, Cllr Chivers concerns are the lack of knowledge regarding the DDA Act itself.

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MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CCTV WORKING GROUP

NOVEMBER 2010

This report acts as a “follow up” to the report and recommendations that were made to the Monmouth Town Council (“MTC”) by the CCTV Working Group in 2009.

In accepting that report, the MTC undertook to maintain a watching brief over how Monmouthshire County Council’s (“MCC”) CCTV project might develop and how it might inter-relate with any changing circumstances both within the Town and within the CCTV project itself.

Consequently during the latter part of the summer of 2010, MTC’s CCTV Working Group (“CCTVWG”) again undertook a number of investigations and interviews, and thereafter undertook follow-up work on issues arising from those investigations and interviews. Since then the CCTVWG has met to consider its findings and to format its recommendations.

In reaching its findings the CCTVWG worked on two particular bases:

1. MTC is effectively being asked to provide very substantial funding (in terms of the size of its precept) to a project whose control is out of their hands, and
2. Whilst CCTV is, in principle, a good idea, its purpose and potential should be measured by its practical application, its management, its proven success and, during this period of relative austerity, its cost.

Hence this report is laid out below in two sections dealing with (i) Partnership Arrangements, and (ii) Operational & Cost Analysis.

PART ONE: PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

MCC argues that any CCTV project in Monmouth would be run as a partnership. With the past history of CCTV projects in Monmouth, the CCTVWG believes that the MTC needs to carefully review this area before considering operational and/or cost factors. It is extremely important that the MTC has a clear understanding of any potential level of its involvement, its responsibility and its commitment to this project when determining its future stance. MCC’s assertion of partnership was therefore explored closely by the CCTVWG.

1. Responsibilities

The obligation upon a town council to provide funding for CCTV is rare; indeed nowhere outside of Monmouthshire within the Gwent Police area has there been such a request. The remit for CCTV in Monmouth, as with other towns, lies squarely with the principal local authority, in this case MCC who are responsible for running the scheme and for organising funding.

Accordingly, the CCTVWG felt that it was right and proper, should MTC agree to commit funding to the scheme, to seek a Service Level Agreement (“SLA”) between MCC and MTC that covers, amongst other things, contractual arrangements, apportionment of costs, operational decision making and dispute resolution. This is particularly important to the MTC when such a high proportion (around 10%) of its annual precept would be consumed by this

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one single project. It is noteworthy that this is an even greater amount each year than the MTC has previously committed towards the restoration of the Shire Hall.

The CCTVWG took evidence that currently the other participating Town Councils within the County provide funding to MCC under a Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU"). Such a document is usually perceived to be a pre-contract arrangement and not a basis for service provision. A copy of the current MoU was obtained and scrutinized by the CCTVWG who found within it a number of difficulties:

- a. The MoU places an unfair and disproportionate burden of obligation upon town councils,
- b. There is no process for dispute resolution within the MoU. This is considered to be a serious omission given the level of dispute over CCTV that has existed between the parties over the past seven years,
- c. Whilst it suggests that the Monmouthshire CCTV Partnership (which would include the MTC on rejoining) is the principle decision making arena for the project, it is quite apparent that MTC's obligations and budgets therein would be tied to this structure (irrespective of the fact that this arena is dominated by representatives of MCC). Conversely the MoU does not place obligations upon MCC and any of their responsibilities within it would not be tied to this forum, and
- d. For this to be a true partnership the CCTVWG believes that it should include MCC, MTC, the Control Centre and the Police. However, CCTVWG was told emphatically by the Police that they would never join this partnership.

It was therefore requested of MCC to negotiate an arrangement which would be appropriate for the MTC and that could be formalised into a SLA. This request was rejected by MCC by both their legal department and also by a meeting of their CCTV Partnership whose minutes state that should the MTC wish to alter the current agreement, they must first rejoin the scheme and then argue their cause from within. This would be extremely difficult for MTC to achieve because of MTC's natural minority position at CCTV Partnership meetings and due to the apparent built-in MCC majority at such meetings.

The CCTVWG were generally disappointed with the attitude by MCC over negotiations and particularly disappointed that they were not prepared to field more senior officers who may have been able to negotiate more effectively. This created the perception that CCTV is not high on MCC's agenda which was only enhanced by MCC's reticence to answer questions made to them.

2. Taxation & Budgets

The CCTVWG was given evidence that the total budget for the CCTV project across the county was between £200k and £250k. £150k is provided by MCC; they project for a further £50k from the four participating town councils; and up to a further £50k is raised through various forms of sponsorship.

These figures suggest that 75% of the budget for Monmouth is provided by MCC, yet no cameras in Monmouth are supposedly in operation. No explanation was provided to the questions as to why this was the case nor to where those monies that are supposedly budgeted for Monmouth are actually being spent.

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It is also apparent that Monmouth is the smallest and the quietest of the four supposedly participating Towns. It was queried as to whether it was necessary to have the same level of commitment and budget for Monmouth as the other three towns.

The CCTVWG heard evidence that, statistically, town centres are the most prone areas to anti-social behaviour and other crimes. It is understood that this is essentially a consequence of them being amenity areas used by the greater population of the County for shopping, recreation and entertainment purposes. This raises the question as to why the residents of a town should be expected by MCC to pay a disproportionately greater proportion of the cost of CCTV via a Town Council precept for these amenity areas than those residents of the County who live outside the major towns yet, effectively, make the same use of these facilities.

When added to the fact that only a small proportion of residents of Monmouth actually living in the area covered by the CCTV cameras, the CCTVWG believe that this is a strong argument for the entire CCTV budget (excepting those parts raised through sponsorship) to be raised via MCC's precept and that the current demands by MCC for Town Council funding equates to double-taxation on the residents of Monmouth.

3. Additional Cameras & Equipment

MCC claims that a restored system within Monmouth would be a basis for an enhanced system where additional cameras are bought and deployed in conjunction with Police operations. The CCTVWG understands that the cost of this would be borne by the MTC. Additionally it is understood that it is possible for MCC to use this additional equipment outside of the town of Monmouth. The refusal of MCC to agree a SLA leaves the MTC open to additional costs.

4. Cost of Rejoining

Over the past few years the MTC has been unable to establish whether they would be expected to cover the supposed cost of the re-instatement of CCTV cameras in Monmouth. It has now been confirmed that MTC would be expected to pay such costs and that these would unlikely be less than a further £6k to be paid at inception.

PART TWO: OPERATIONAL & COST ANALYSIS

The CCTVWG found that the general situation had changed little since the last report. All parameters continue to show that the situation in Monmouth is quite different to the other three main towns in the County and any attempts to draw comparison are largely seen as being misleading.

Monmouth remains the smallest of the main towns and statistics show that it has less crime. These facts were accepted by both the Police and MCC in discussions. However, MCC were not prepared to discuss the query as to why Monmouth should be expected to have the same level of coverage at the same cost as other towns. As a smaller town it has a smaller precept which would inflict a greater cost per capita upon residents of Monmouth than anywhere else in the County. This appears to be particularly relevant when arguably CCTV is less needed.

1. Police

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A recurring theme was heard from both current and former members of the Police Force with regard to CCTV. They invariably described it as merely, "one tool in the tool box" when dealing with crime from which the inference was taken that CCTV is not considered by the Police as an essential requirement.

There was an obvious desire on the part of the Police to have CCTV re-instated in Monmouth but, as its re-introduction would have no cost effect upon them, it is hardly surprising that they would welcome a gift of an extra tool in their tool box.

2. Cost

It has long been considered that the most expensive and arguably the least cost-effective part of the CCTV system was the Control Centre. Information was proffered that the Control Centre, currently with Caerphilly County Borough Council at Tir-y-Berth would be moved to a jointly run control Centre with Torfaen at Blaenavon resulting in cost savings.

Further investigations unearthed the fact that whilst this was currently a matter for discussion it was far from becoming reality. Additionally, when its likely costs were calculated, the CCTVWG could not see how this move would reduce costs.

3. External Reports

Britain has the largest surveillance network in the world with some 4.2 million CCTV cameras. Over the last 18 months there have been a number of substantive reports into their effectiveness:

1. In January 2009, a House of Lords report advised the (then) Home Secretary Jacqui Smith to look again at whether CCTV actually helps to reduce crime.
2. In May 2009, a Home Office-commissioned report by Cambridge University found that CCTV cameras on Britain's streets had done virtually nothing to cut crime and those cameras in town centres, housing estates and on public transport "did not have a significant effect". David Farrington who led the Home-office funded study said, "Cameras should only be used in specific targeted areas where they are known to be effective rather than the current broad application".
3. In August 2009, a Scotland Yard report stated that barely one crime is solved each year for every 1,000 CCTV cameras in operation.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION

CCTVWG accepts that should the town council decide not to rejoin the Monmouthshire CCTV Project it is possible that any future event of woe that occurs in the town centre, whether or not in range of a potential CCTV camera, will in the future be blamed upon the MTC. However, the CCTVWG contends that this in itself is not a good argument for rejoining.

This is, after all, a MCC project over which the MTC has no control. Therefore any suggestion that its failure is the fault of the MTC would be entirely inaccurate and misleading

CCTVWG found that the current CCTV project run by MCC for potential coverage of Monmouth Town Centre is inefficient in its make-up, lacks cost awareness, has no record of success and ultimately does not treat its supposed partners in a true sense of partnership. The refusal of MCC to negotiate any agreement with MTC or provide a SLA and, effectively, the total inability of MTC to control events within the project has led the CCTVWG to the conclusion that on this basis it would be inappropriate for the MTC to rejoin the scheme because it would, especially during this period of austerity, be unable to vouch to the residents of Monmouth how such a large proportion of their precept had been effectively spent on their behalf.

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