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Introduction

Monmouth is a fantastic town on the border of Wales. It is ideally situated to provide a broad range of sporting and social activities and a great location for families, being well-resourced with a range of state and public schools for our children.

“Long desiredthis perfect country town continues its enviable life in much the same way as it always has.”

The Times Best Places to Live in Wales 2018

Local, national and European changes over the last few years have certainly challenged the environment in which we live. At a local level Monmouth Town Council has been equipping itself to ease the effect of these challenges on our population and help orientate Monmouth to a prosperous and resilient future.



View of Monmouth from The Kymin by Local Resident Robert Harris

This report aims to cast light on how we as a Council are endeavouring to support our town and residents and give an outline of the direction in which we hope to proceed. This booklet will also demonstrate who your Councillors are and re-introduce the Council officers that manage the day to day activity of the Council.

The Council Team

Councillors

The Town Council has 16 elected Councillors, three of whom are also County Councillors. We each represent different 'ward' areas in Monmouth, but work together for the benefit of the whole community. This last year of 2017/18, was the first of a five-year term in which we will serve the communities that elected us. We do not receive any financial reward as Councillors but are able to claim for the expenses of childcare, travel on council business, and telephone/office costs up to £150 per annum.

The Town Mayor and Deputy, are elected by Members of the Council at the Annual Meeting in May and serve for twelve months. The Mayor acts as a Chairperson of the Full Council meeting, and attends many other Committee meetings as required. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are responsible for attending civic and ceremonial functions supporting the town and wider community, and representing the Town Council.



Town Ward (T),Dixton with Osbaston Ward (DO),Wyesham Ward (W),Overmonnow Ward (O),Drybridge Ward (D)
Front to back, left to right:

Caroline Tremeer, Caroline Bright, Felicity Cotton (D), John Blake.

Sue James, Jane Lloyd , Jane Gunter (W), Kelly Jackson-Graham (W).

Dee Lovering , Jess Stephens (W), Claudia Blair (DO), Anthea Dewhurst (DO), Terry Christopher (O), Alice Legg (D).

John Fletcher (O), Jamie Treharne (O), Richard Roden (DO), Susan White (O), Rob Cafell (T).

Ken Breeze (W), Mat Feakins (D), Jane Lucas (O).

Individual contact details available on the website or from the office.

Officers of the Town Council

The Shire Hall is the home of our Council, and here you will find the Council Chambers, Mayor's Parlour, general office and the Town Clerk's office. Our team is made up of part time employees; the Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO), and two administrative officers. The Town Clerk is the senior manager (officer) of the Council, and convenes meetings, guiding Councillors on the legal requirements of their role. The RFO manages the financial side of the Council, and produces the Annual Accounts for external audit, as set in legislation. Other officers, provide assistance to the Clerk and Councillors, with agenda and minutes from meetings being a priority.



Town Clerk: Caroline Tremeer townclerk@monmouth.gov.uk

Responsible Finance Officer: Sue James admin@monmouth.gov.uk

Supporting Officers: Dee Lovering and Jane Lloyd admin@monmouth.gov.uk

The Office is open between the hours of 10am to midday, Monday to Friday for members of the public.

Please visit us at The Shire Hall, Agincourt Square, Monmouth NP25 3DY

Alternatively our contact number is: 01600 715662

Committee Meetings of the Council

The vast majority of our meetings are open to the public, and generally take place weekly from 6pm on a Monday evening. The Full Council meets every 6 weeks to make decisions based on recommendations proposed from our supporting Committees. This is attended by all Councillors and key officers. Often information about projects and activity in the local area are presented at this meeting, and the public are very welcome.

The Committees of the Council currently cover Environmental Affairs, Community Affairs, Finance & Policy, and Planning within the wards of Monmouth.

Copies of agendas and minutes can be found on the Town Council website (www.monmouth.gov.uk) and forthcoming agendas are posted on the Shire Hall noticeboard, or can be obtained directly from the Town Council Office.



MTC Full Council Meeting in the Shire Hall Council Chambers

Working Groups of the Town Council

Frequently our Council will delegate projects to working groups, which have the flexibility to meet as and when required, but which also are designed to fully engage residents. These groups are most prominently 'task and finish' groups, some lasting a few weeks, and others for longer than a year, depending on the project.

Working groups progress areas of interest, and refer decision making back into Council for final debate and approval. They are designed to enable Councillors to fully engage with members of the Community, who may in many circumstances have a specialist knowledge or interest in the activity.

A list of our current working groups can be seen on the website or obtained from the Town Council office. To join, please contact our office for further information.



Some Members of the Litter Working Group

Finances

The services and activities provided by the Town Council are paid for by the residents of Monmouth. This amount which is known as a Precept, is added to your Council Tax bill each year, and is collected on our behalf by Monmouthshire County Council.

Each year the Council decides on the level of service it can provide and calculates how much it needs to raise to support the provision. There is increasing pressure for Town Councils to take on more public services to preserve those under threat from budget cuts at a National and County level. Despite this pressure, Monmouth Town Council has limited the rise in Precept for next year 2018/19 to 4.9%. This includes a budget for the transfer of the Blestium Street toilets from County Council to Town Council, which insures it stays open for our town.

Allocation of expenditure 2017/18

Administration and management of services provided by MTC: £158,716

- Lease of offices, equipment, insurance etc
- Employee/specialist service costs and training
- Agincourt Square Toilet management
- Town CCTV

Community Affairs Committee expenditure: £36,680

- Community Grants
- Community Events including Lantern Parade

Civic Affairs expenditure: £11,436

- Mayor's Allowance/ Councillor expenses
- Civic expenses
- Elections

Environmental Affairs Committee Expenditure £83,055

- Street decorations including Christmas lights
- Dog waste bins
- Town Maintenance/Repair
- Town enhancements including banners and benches
- Street Sweeping

Total Actual Expenditure 2017/18 was £290,287 including £400 from earmarked reserves.

Monmouth Town Council's Mission: The Values and Objectives

*Supporting a Monmouth, we all want to live in,
now and in the future.*

Principles outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 guide our decision making. This Act set about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and ensures that we think more about the long term, working better with people and communities.

Under the Act, the values we work with are detailed as follow:



Prevention

Acting to prevent problems developing or getting worse.

Applying the Well Being Goals to our core activities.



Integration



Collaboration

Working with other organisations or people in our community.

Incorporating people as diversely as possible in our mission.



Involvement



Long Term

Balancing our actions around short term needs in our community, whilst safeguarding the future needs of Monmouth

The Well-Being Goals


























Seven well-being goals demonstrate the kind of Wales we want, and provide a vision for the future of Monmouth that we can aspire to. As the local tier of Welsh Government, we are required by law to demonstrate how we are aligning our activity to the well-being goals detailed in the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

A Prosperous Monmouth (P)	Innovative, productive and low carbon town, recognising the limits of the global environment, whilst developing a skilled, well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and employment opportunities locally.
A Resilient Monmouth (R)	Maintains and enhances biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and supports social, economic resilience and can adapt to change.
A Healthier Monmouth (H)	Maximising residents' physical and mental well-being, promoting future health.
A More Equal Monmouth (E)	Fulfilling potential regardless of background and circumstance.
A Monmouth of Cohesive Communities (C)	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities within our town and surrounding community.
A Monmouth of Vibrant Culture and thriving Welsh Language (V)	Promoting and protecting culture, heritage, and the Welsh language, and encouraging sport, arts and recreation for all.
A Globally Responsible Monmouth (G)	Considering if the effect of our actions locally, affects the national and global well-being of our planet.

The Seven Well-Being Goals for Monmouth Town Council

































Over the last year we have begun to orientate our activity across the Town Council towards these goals, and we will need to implement the aims further in 2018/19.

Representation on Outside Bodies 2017/18

Group outside of Council	Representative(s)	Ways of Working
CCTV , Security Monitoring	Cllr F Cotton, Cllr M Feakins	 Long Term  Collaboration  Prevention
Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Cllr K Breeze Cllr J Lucas	 Long Term  Collaboration  Prevention
Chamber of Commerce and Trade	Cllr K Jackson Graham	 Long Term  Collaboration
Fairtrade	Cllr J Stephens	 Long Term  Collaboration  Prevention
World War 1 Armistice Commemorations	Cllr F Cotton Cllr J Gunter Cllr A Dewhurst	 Collaboration
School Governors : Osbaston Kymin View Overmonnow Haberdashers' Monmouth	Cllr A Dewhurst Cllr J Gunter TBC Cllr R Roden	 Prevention
One Voice Wales	Cllr F Cotton, Cllr A Dewhurst, Cllr M Feakins, Cllr K Jackson-Graham	 Collaboration
Monmouthshire County Council Cluster Working	Cllr F Cotton, Cllr K Jackson-Graham Cllr A Dewhurst, Cllr A Legg	 Collaboration
Flood Prevention Group	Cllr K Jackson Graham Cllr J Lucas	 Long Term  Collaboration  Prevention
Central Monmouthshire Area Committee-MCC	Cllr M Feakins, Cllr F Cotton, Cllr A Legg, Cllr C Blair, Cllr R Roden Cllr J Treharne	 Long Term  Collaboration
Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations	Cllr F Cotton	 Integration  Prevention
Monmouth Charity	Cllr R Roden	 Prevention Long Term  Collaboration
Comprehensive School Council	Cllr T Christopher Cllr R Caffell Cllr J Stephens	 Integration

If you feel that Monmouth Town Council would benefit from representation in your group or organisation, please contact our Clerk to discuss the nature of your work.

Core Working Groups of the Town Council 2017/18

Working Group/Committee	Task	Members	Ways of Working
Coach Parking / Environment	Locate 2 further coach parking bays in the town.	Councillors MCC officers Chamber of Commerce Shire Hall	 Collaboration  Integration  Prevention
Active Travel / Environment	Facilitate active travel in Monmouth for a sustainable future	Councillors, MCC officer' Residents.	 Collaboration  Prevention  Involvement  Long Term
Pedestrian Bridge/ Environment	Consider active travel bridge across river Wye to ensure safe routes for school children cyclists and pedestrians	Councillors, MCC officers, Chamber of Commerce, Vision 2020, Residents.	 Collaboration  Involvement  Integration  Long Term
Town Amenities / Environment	Manages our town's floral displays, Christmas lights, street decoration, public toilets.	Councillors, Residents.	 Collaboration  Involvement
Town Field and Footpath /Environment	Fields in Trust and footpath management and considers sustainable management	Councillors, Residents.	 Integration  Long Term
Litter Group/ Environment	Raises public awareness of environmental Monmouth, includes litter picking, dog waste bins collection and general waste collection	Councillors, MCC Officers, Residents.	 Prevention  Integration  Long Term
Hereford Rd Car Parking/ Environment	Monitoring problems of vehicle parking	Councillors, Residents.	 Prevention  Collaboration  Involvement
Public Realm /Full Council	Regeneration of the area of Agincourt square	Councillors, Residents, MCC Officers, Community.	 Collaboration  Integration  Long Term
Viability of Market Hall /Finance and Policy	Consideration of new premises for the town council	Councillors.	 Collaboration  Long Term
Tourism /Community	Promoting Monmouth as a tourist destination	Councillors, MCC Officers, Community.	 Collaboration  Integration  Involvement  Long Term
Cemetery /Environment	Feasibility in the re-opening of the Cemetery	Councillors.	 Collaboration  Long Term

The Planning Committee

This committee meets every two weeks and considers local planning applications. We offer recommendations to the County Planning Committee, and make representations in person at the planning site, or in County Hall for some applications. The Town Council continues to actively promote the views and interests of Monmouth to national, regional and county level Government on a host of consultative matters.

Some Key Activities in 2017/18

- We have considered over 100 planning applications, responding as a stakeholder to Monmouthshire County Council.
- As a committee we have scrutinised the recommendations given by our Active Travel working group, and then submitted their report on the Integrated Network Travel Map for Monmouth.
- We have developed the Town Council Pre-Application Public Consultation Process, which will enable us to consider how best to qualify and quantify our response to developers in a knowledgeable and consistent way.
- We consulted on proposals for the Hadnock Road Spa and Power Station Development, The Dixon Road Retail Proposal and both Troy House and Troy Yard residential dwelling consultations.
- The committee gave a response to the 'Third Lane' on A40 alterations, and have continued to lobby Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council in regard to long term commitment to major improvements on the A40.
- Councillors have attended training events on the Pre-application process, community infrastructure levy, and Place Planning.



Planning Committee on The Dixon Road Retail Proposal

We are strongly committed to the participation of residents and stakeholders in the planning decisions that affect them, and are keen to establish further links with stakeholders in our community. **If you wish to be added to our stakeholder list, please contact the office.**

The Environment Committee

This committee meets every six weeks, and considers environmental, recreational and economic impacts on Monmouth. Community safety, supporting commerce, and town centre enhancement are key areas of work.

Some Key Activities in 2017/18

- Town Maintenance has been a continued priority for the committee, ensuring that our assets, such as benches, bins and signs are renewed or maintained for the town.
- Additional street cleaning to supplement the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) provision, including bin emptying and manual/vehicular street cleaning, to support how our town looks.
- Two new zebra crossings have been commissioned following the good work of the Active Travel group, in collaboration with MCC.
- A feasibility study is under way at MCC that is considering two further coach parking bays in the centre of town, following the research and planning by our own coach parking working group.
- New pennants and banners were erected this year, and new Christmas lights were purchased following the work of the Town Amenities working group.



Litter Group Competition Winner with the Town Mayor

- An increase in community litter-picking has been supported by our Litter Group. The Group is a partnership between the Town Council, MCC officers, and residents, and this year has achieved a national One Voice Wales Higher Commendation award. It has continued to focus on promoting recycling and is keenly working on the Plastic Free Monmouth project with other groups, as we enter 2018/19.
- We have taken the Agincourt Square public toilets on as an asset this year from MCC, ensuring public access to toilets in the centre of our town. Due diligence on the transfer of

the Blestium Street toilets will complete shortly, and it is hoped that we will add this provision to our services in 2018/19.

- Agincourt Square has been the focus of the Public Realm group, a collaboration between MCC, MTC, and community organisations. We have considered proposals that support the regeneration of the Square, enhancing the historical centre of the town, whilst managing the necessary traffic flow through the area.
- A focus group has been looking at the possibility of a pedestrian bridge to cross the Wye, to support active travel around Monmouth. This has progressed to the point of survey, and we look forward to finding out how our community feel about the proposed bridge.



The Wye Bridge, Monmouth

Focus on Active Travel for the Environment Committee

This year, the Environment Committee's Active Travel working group has been very productive. The aim of the group is to improve and encourage travel by foot, cycle, buggy, wheelchair, scooter and walking assistance methods across Monmouth. The provision of safe and practical routes in which students can walk to and from school has been a priority, and the working group provided comments and feedback to the Planning Committee on the Integrated Network Map, identifying six routes that require improvement or development. The report has been submitted to Welsh Government for consideration and consequently, an additional working group has been established that will shortly commence on a feasibility study of an Active Travel Bridge across the Wye.

The Active Travel working group benefits not only from MCC officers' advice and attendance, but also from a strong resident commitment. Expertise in the local community has been fundamental, and the group has clearly demonstrated that working in a collaborative way, enabling specialist knowledge in the community to be mobilised, has been a key element of the outcomes this year for the group.

The Community Affairs Committee

The Community Affairs Committee aims to support and strengthen community activities, participation and events within the town. This is achieved by awarding grants to community projects to support organisations that add value to the town, helping to encourage and support community events, developing new initiatives to increase community participation and volunteering.

Some highlights in 2017/18 include:

- Awards of up to £750 to small community projects including local drama groups, sports groups, the Women's Festival and local charities supporting social inclusion in the area.
- Awards of larger grants to community projects including the Monmouth Music Festival, the schools' Literary Festival, the Carnival and to Citizens Advice Bureau and Open Access Play Scheme, totalling £25,000.



Monmouth Carnival 2017

- Support local residents in their need for resolution of ongoing issues with the Monmouth Comprehensive School building works.
- Financially supporting Monmouth Museum's exhibition space and dementia café programme, ensuring a major tourism spot for the town is resourced to supply new exhibits. The Café project aims to support those suffering from dementia and associated conditions, and their carers in our community. The mobile 'scenes' that typically provide the background to the café are transferable between venues, with the help of the Museum team, that includes volunteers and students. The project won first prize in the national One Voice Wales awards in the Youth Project category, following the successful engagement of Monmouth Comprehensive School pupils who researched and planned the cafe as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. We want to offer our congratulations to all who have taken part in this project, and look forward to the series of Cafes for the community it will run this year.
- We worked collaboratively with Monmouth Rotarians and other community groups, to provide a Christmas Lantern Parade including running workshops to enable the community to make their lanterns for the night.

Focus on the Christmas Lantern Parade

Monmouth Lantern Parade was borne out of the desire to bring an inclusive Christmas event to Monmouth, and has been a fixture on the annual Christmas calendar for families for many years. Featuring The Monmouth Rotary's famous Father Christmas and sleigh, the event has always been produced in partnership with community groups in Monmouth.

The Town Council are keen to build on these annual events, to support trade and tourism in the town, and a new working group of both Town Councillors, Rotarians and volunteers, worked in partnership with the community to help build around this event. Using a budget from Monmouth Town Council, an event was devised whereby the community created lanterns to proudly display during an evening parade, whilst local musicians, singers and school groups performed. The overarching aim was to encourage active participation.

Volunteers and Town Councillors held workshops to teach group leaders and youth workers the process of making a pyramid lantern. These workshops enabled a cascade of creative skills throughout the community. Attendees left sessions equipped with expertise, instructions and materials, taking ownership to create lanterns in their own groups. Two additional public and three after-school workshops were hosted by the working group.



The Christmas Lantern Parade 2017, Drabble and Co. Photography

In total, 684 people attended the group leader workshops, with 110 at the public sessions and 81 at schools. Material was distributed to create over 700 lanterns. Social Media was alive with people sharing their lantern making experiences and ideas. Approximately 2000 people attended the Monmouth Christmas Lantern Parade on the 8th December 2017. The event was reported on local radio and press, and national Welsh television as well as many attendees posting on social media. The event has been awarded a Higher Commendation National One Voice Wales Award for tourism, and we would like to extend our thanks to everyone who helped to achieve this on behalf of the town.

The Finance and Policy Committee

The Finance and Policy committee monitors the budget and expenditure of the Town Council, and reviews/updates policy and regulation. The committee is responsible for ensuring the Council's spending objectives are met and that all financial procedures are being carried out in accordance with Financial Regulations. The committee works to bring Monmouth Town Council in-line with statutory requirements, ensuring the Council's business activities are reflected in, and covered by, adequate governing documentation.

Some Highlights in 2017-18:

- Approval of the 2016-17 accounts by the Council's internal and external auditors, confirmed effective operation.
- CCTV – worked with provider to better understand the operation of the CCTV system and terms of contract.
- Purchase of braille embossing and translating equipment to support blind and visually impaired individuals; recognising the need to present equality for all residents of Monmouth.
- Arranged a separate Mayor's bank account for transparent accounting of fundraising activities.
- Financial Regulations review completed.
- Staffing Sub Committee formed to make recommendations on officer and office controls to Finance and Policy Committee.
- Establishment of Sponsorship Policy.
- First Steps in General Data Protection Policy compliance.



Mace Bearer Mr John Blake (BEM), with former Mayors, celebrating his retirement after 53 years of service to Monmouth Town Council.

Aims for 2018/19 and beyond

The Town Council Strategic Plan

Following on from the Town Council Away Day held in 2017, the newly formed Strategic Planning Committee aim to produce a Five Year Plan for the Council, that incorporates the demands of statutory legislation, builds on projects already in process, and more importantly headlines the aspirations of our community.

Well Being Plan

Under the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015, MTC has a statutory duty to prepare a Well-Being Plan that reflects and enhances the four key priorities identified in the Public Service Board's Well Being Plan published this year. We will be placing our Plan at the heart of the community, ensuring that the activities we produce and support under our plan reflect the concerns and priorities of Monmouth. The plan will aim to identify and connect issues, and enable our community to find common sense solutions for the longer term, placing sustainable development at the heart of our work.

Town and Community Council Partnership Working

The Cluster group was set up in 2014 and supported by Monmouthshire County Council it covers the wards of both the Town and local rural Community Councils in and around Monmouth. This group has recently reviewed its focus and applied for funding to support its role and function, with the objective of working together for more efficiency, and enabling our community to get involved with the Cluster work.

The Public Realm Group

The Agincourt Square area of Monmouth has been a focus of future development for some years. In the forthcoming year, the Town Council will work in partnership with the County Council, and local stakeholders to bid for some additional funding for this area's redevelopment. Further community consultation and planning exercises are planned, to ensure that our community has its say.

Grant Application

A review of Community Grant applications and delivery is planned, with a focus on providing annual contributions to community services, whilst ensuring that vital charitable community focussed work is enhanced through our grant scheme. The grant scheme will be complement the Town Council's statutory commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations.

The Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge over the River Wye

The next steps in the community survey for the proposed plans to create a safe and active way to cross the River Wye, which will unite the community of Wyesham and the rest of Monmouth. Next steps are the progression to a full feasibility study of the proposals, which will reflect public opinion and qualified expertise, and the identification of funding possibilities for the project.

Plastic Free Monmouth

Supporting our community to contribute to a plastic free environment and enabling our local organisations and groups to deliver their aspirations across the town. Providing funding to help vital promotion and understanding of the subject across all sectors of Monmouth.

Coach Parking and Tourism

Further work on the feasibility of developing tourist coach parking areas for our town. Currently two additional bays are under considerations at MCC, and more work is planned to support the marketing and use of the bays for coach tourism in the town.

Community Youth Projects

Consideration to be given to development of additional youth engagement projects to support the academic achievement of our children. Building on the success of the Museum's Memory Café project, we hope to further encourage young adults to invest time in community projects.

Governance

A comprehensive review of our Standing Orders, will frame the decision to manoeuvre the Council into a public facing and transparent organisations, highlighting the good work of Councillors and officers, but also considering new, progressive methods of communicating with our electorate.

Town Planning

We will be looking at the concept of Place Planning, and developing ideas on how to form a steering group, supported and legitimised by the Town Council, that would have the expertise and enthusiasm to plan a future for our Monmouth. Following in the footsteps of other Monmouthshire towns, the Plan would be based on ideals and practicalities outlined by the economic, environmental, cultural and geographical strengths, and the abundant potential of Monmouth.

Have your Say!

We welcome the opinion and advice from our community, and the names of all our Councillors and officers can be found at the start of the report. If you wish to contact or meet with a Councillor, requests can be made directly to the Town Clerk, who will redirect your enquiry to the correct representative.

Addressing Council during meetings held in public.

If you would like to speak to Councillors during a Council meeting, please contact the Town Clerk before the meeting to let us know.

Town Councillor Surgeries

On a rotating basis, Councillors will be available at the following venues and dates. You can bring any topic for their consideration, and know that the comment will be reported back to Committee for further discussion if required.

Ty Price Community Hall, St Thomas' Square, Monmouth – The Coffee morning, first Wednesday of the month, 10am-12am.

St Mary's Priory, Monmouth – The Coffee morning, first or second Saturday of the Month, 10-12am, unless otherwise notified.

Requesting attendance of the Mayor at your event

If you would like the Town Mayor to attend an event or meeting outside of Council, as request can be sent in to the Town Clerk's office by post, email, or telephone. Plenty of notice is advised, as the Mayor's diary is booked well in advance.

Forthcoming Events

Lantern Parade: Friday 7th December 2018

Civic Ceremony: Sunday 29th July 2018

Remembrance Week: Friday 2nd November to Sunday 11th November 2018

Feedback

We would like your comments on our Annual Report, and welcome thoughts by post or email addressed to our Town Clerk.

Please send comments to the Town Clerk at The Shire Hall, Agincourt Square, Monmouth NP25 3DY, or e-mail townclerk@monmouth.gov.uk