

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the
Extraordinary Full Council Meeting
held on Monday 22nd March 2021 at 6.00pm
held via BT Telephone Conference Call**

Present:

Cllr C Blair	Cllr E Bryn (arrived late)
Cllr T Christopher (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr A Dewhurst
Cllr M Feakins (Mayor)	Cllr J Gunter
Cllr Jackson-Graham (arrived late)	Cllr S Jones
Cllr R Jupp (left early)	Cllr J Lucas (arrived late)
Cllr R Roden (arrived late)	Cllr R Smith
Cllr J Treharne	Cllr S White

D. McNeill (Locum Clerk)
C Williams (Administrative Officer)
2 Members of the public and press

200.	To receive apologies for absence. An apology was received and accepted from Cllr K Breeze. No apology was received from Cllr A Legg.
201.	By-election It was noted that a Notice of Uncontested Election was issued by MCC as only one nomination was received by them by the deadline. Mr Simon Jones was duly elected and has signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office so may participate in Council business.
202.	To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda. There were none.
203.	Public Participation <i>To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 minutes. (During this time of remote meetings any members of public who wish to speak/ask a question must email their request in by the Friday prior to the meeting).</i> <i>Cllr K Jackson-Graham entered the meeting.</i> Four members of the public were registered to speak but only two were in attendance. Both speakers raised concerns about the proposals for allotments on the Vauxhall Fields (Item 11 on the agenda) including whether the private landowner and the Army had been contacted about providing access across their land; how many existing allotment plots were currently lying idle; which committee previously debated this and referred it to Council; concern about the proposed car parking spaces, how many cars

	<p>would be parking and how could this justify the loss of public amenity space?</p> <p><i>Cllr E Bryn entered the meeting.</i></p> <p>Cllr Feakins responded advising that at this stage it is a proposal to consider the provision of further allotments in Monmouth with Vauxhall Fields as a proposed location. It already has access, there is sufficient space to locate them without significant impact on the amenity space and the option to ‘tuck them away’ on higher ground so they don’t have a visual impact on the amenity land or are at risk of flooding. There are potentially seven spare allotment spaces at Chippenham Mead but with 53 on the waiting list and 35 people interested in the 16 allotments to be provided by the Kingswood Gate development. Any Councillor can propose a motion at any time for Full Council, it does not first have to go to a committee. Any discussion about car parking would be further down the road and, if both MTC and MCC are willing to consider the proposals, there would be a full public consultation.</p>
	<p><i>It was resolved to bring the following item forward on the agenda.</i></p>
<p>204.</p>	<p>Allotments</p> <p>The following motion from Councillor Feakins was considered:</p> <p>“MTC to consider providing or ask MCC to provide additional garden allotments at Vauxhall and other locations for the benefit of the Town Residents in recognition of the Climate Change Emergency, the need to increase bio-diversity, to implement the wellbeing act including to promote a healthy lifestyle, and to reduce food miles.”</p> <p>Cllr Feakins introduced this item and referred members to a google image in the pack and a plan showing the land known as Vauxhall Fields owned by MCC. Whatever proposals may be considered must be subject to consultation with the wider community given the prominence of the site and the value it is held in by the community as amenity land. The proposed location of the allotments would be visually shielded from the town and Osbaston and would be sufficiently high enough to avoid flooding. The proposed site could accommodate up to 100 allotments although at this stage the number of allotments would be based on demand. There are other options which could also be considered, including community gardens, ‘incredible edibles’ or others. There was an opportunity to work in partnership with MCC.</p> <p>Councillors commented that they supported the provision of more allotments but some felt that Vauxhall Fields was not the best location because of the additional traffic and the preference for allotments closer to where people lived to reduce the need to drive to them. Some Councillors also felt there was a need to investigate the management and utilisation of existing allotments to better understand the current situation at the Two Rivers meadow allotment site.</p> <p>Cllr Feakins responded to these comments by reiterating that he was only proposing to engage with MCC at this stage, that traffic movements would have to be considered, that major consideration would need to be given to the current informal amenity use of Vauxhall Fields, that driving to allotments is something most people would be willing to do, that it would be a challenge to find alternative potential sites, that Vauxhall Fields is central to the town and is therefore a central site for a community garden which could also involve the schools (and would be easily accessible for them), that it could be</p>

	<p>possible to provide allotments at Vauxhall Fields without compromising the amenity space.</p> <p>It was resolved that Cllr Feakins be authorised to approach Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of the Town Council to discuss future possibilities for the provision of additional garden allotments at Vauxhall Fields and other locations and to report back to Full Council with a view of a wider public consultation thereafter.</p> <p>A named vote was requested:</p> <p>For – Cllrs Christopher, Feakins, Roden, Smith, Treharne, White, Jones (7) Against – Cllrs Blair, Bryn, Dewhurst, Jupp, Jackson-Graham (5) Abstentions – Cllr Gunter (1)</p> <p>The motion was therefore carried.</p> <p><i>Cllr J Lucas entered the meeting</i></p>
<p>205.</p>	<p>Minutes for Approval</p> <p>To approve Full Council Minutes for the remote meeting held on 22/02/2021. It was noted that the meeting started at 7pm not 6pm and the signed minutes would reflect this.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the Full Council Minutes for the remote meeting held on 22/02/2021 as a correct record with the above amendment.</p>
<p>206.</p>	<p>One Voice Wales</p> <p>To note the 6% increase in annual membership fee to £1,827 and to determine whether to renew membership with One Voice Wales.</p> <p>It was noted that no information has been provided in the documentation to justify the increase and that, although the service provided is valuable, an explanation should have been provided.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the subscription for the financial year 2021/22 but for the Clerk to ask for a breakdown of costs and an explanation and justification for the increase.</p>
<p>207.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) Payments: To approve the accounts for payment for the period 01/03/2021 to date and any late payments.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the accounts for payment for the period 01/03/2021 to date and any late payments.</p> <p>b) To note the Budget Details, Income & Expenditure Acct, Nominal Ledger Payments and Purchase Order Acct for Month 12.</p> <p>It was resolved to note the Budget Details, Income & Expenditure Acct, Nominal Ledger Payments and Purchase Order Acct for Month 12.</p>

- c) Internal Controls
To consider the recommendation by the Finance & Policy Committee to approve the Risk Management Policy.
- It was **resolved** to accept the recommendation by the Finance & Policy Committee to approve the Risk Management Policy.
- d) Internet Banking
To consider and agree to commence the process for Internet Banking and to agree the appointment of up to 4 signatories for online authorisation of payments.
- It was **resolved** to commence the process for Internet Banking and to appoint Cllrs M Feakins, R Roden, R Smith and K Jackson-Graham as signatories for online authorisation of payments.
- Cllr Christopher noted that he would no longer be able to act as a signatory for the Council's accounts as he was unable to do online banking. He was thanked for the many years that he has had oversight of the Council's accounts and been a signatory to the accounts.

208. Committee Structure and Working Groups Review

To approve recommendations from the Task and Finish Group.

The Locum Clerk explained the detail of the proposals within the report and highlighted the key items for decisions. The Officers were thanked for the work they had put in and for the quality of the report.

- a) To approve the proposed name for the new committee

It was **resolved** to agree the name of 'People and Places' for the new committee.

- b) To approve committee membership from 1st April 2021 for the new committee

It was **resolved** to appoint all councillors as members of the new committee with any councillor who does not wish to be a member able to resign.

- c) To review and approve proposals for reducing workloads of committees including officer delegations.

It was **resolved**

- i) to approve setting up a task & finish group, supported by Officers, to consider suggested options and where appropriate, prepare draft policies and procedures for approval by Finance & Policy.
- ii) that items that are on every agenda for an update even when there is nothing to report be transferred to an action summary, which itself is regularly reported to committee(s). When a matter requires a decision, it can be added as a specific agenda item.
- iii) that consideration be given by the task and finish group to other ways in which co-ordination with third parties and further partnership agreements can be used

to reduce the new committee workload.

Subject to approval of the above

- d) To approve and adopt a discharge of functions document setting out committee and officer delegations. It was noted that MCC have not adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy, so any reference this was removed from the document.

It was **resolved** to adopt the scheme of delegation with the amendment to specify a recommendation of eight members for the Planning Committee.

- e) To review standing orders to reflect the above changes.

It was **resolved**

- i) that guidelines for selection of committees to be approved at the next meeting of Full Council and to retain sections A & B of s27 in SO's in the meantime.
- ii) to remove references to non-councillors with voting rights from Standing Orders at 3 s iii) & iv)
- iii) that with the above further amendments, the revised Standing Orders be adopted.
- f) To review financial regulations to reflect the above changes. The Locum Clerk advised that an additional paragraph was proposed to be added as recommended by One Voice Wales to ensure the appropriate treatment of capital receipts for income from the sale of an asset to the value of £10,000 or more.

It was **resolved** to adopt Financial Regulations with the proposed amendments.

209. Community Partnership Agreements

- a) Monmouth Savoy Trust (LGA 1972 s145, power to provide entertainments)
- i) To consider a draft partnership agreement for a 3-year partnership with the Monmouth SavoyTrust (MST) including an annual financial commitment of £15,000.

It was **resolved** to approve the draft partnership agreement for a 3-year partnership with the Monmouth SavoyTrust (MST) including an annual financial commitment of £15,000 having removed reference to MTC's involvement on the board of trustees, to be paid from general reserves.

- ii) To consider proposals for a process to manage free youth passes for all Monmouth Town primary school children aged between 5 and 11 years old for one Saturday a month at the Savoy Theatre.

Cllr Feakins advised that he had sought three prices and proposes: purchasing 1100 bio PVC cards with signature strips; allocating an additional amount for design costs (these costs are known); to use a

different colour for each year; to provide blank cards to the schools to hand out in class with each child writing their own names on the cards; to issue paper cards as soon as possible to cover the summer months until the start of the next academic year. He advised that all primary schools in Monmouth support the proposals and that a great deal of thought had been given to setting up a system that is simple for the schools and the Savoy Theatre to administer whilst also not being cost prohibitive to the Council. A number of options for design of the cards were discussed including involving the children.

In response to concern raised by members that some children resident in Monmouth attend school outside the town, it is suggested that ward members could be provided with spare cards to issue in accordance with policy.

It was **resolved** to develop a policy for an application process for children resident in Monmouth attending schools outside the town to be applied for through their ward councillor, to be delegated to the People & Places Committee.

It was **resolved**

- a) To approve the process to manage free youth passes for all Monmouth Town primary school children aged between 5 and 11 years old for one Saturday a month at the Savoy Theatre
- b) to appoint the Plastic Card People company to print 1100 cards per year to a maximum cost of £360
- c) to budget £250 for the design and for its approval to be referred to the next meeting of the People & Places Committee
- d) to pay for the card design and printing from general reserves
- e) to print paper cards for issuing over the summer months.

*It was noted that the meeting had now been running for 2 ½ hours and that Standing Orders specify meetings should not run over 2 hours. It was (belatedly) **resolved** to suspend standing orders 3w to allow the business at hand to be transacted.*

Councillor Jupp left the meeting.

b) Citizens Advice Monmouth (LGA 1972 s142 (2A))

To consider a proposed 3-year partnership agreement with the Citizens Advice Monmouth and agree an annual financial commitment (sum to be agreed).

It was **resolved** to defer this item to the next meeting of Full Council owing to time constraints.

c) Mind Monmouthshire

	<p>To appoint a councillor to the Trustee Board of Mind Monmouthshire.</p> <p>It was resolved to appoint Cllr S Jones to the Trustee Board of Mind Monmouthshire in an observer role.</p>
210.	<p>Independent Review Panel for Wales</p> <p>To note and adopt the 2021 Annual Report including considering discretionary payments at Determinations 43, 45, 46, 47, 48 & 49.</p> <p>It was resolved to defer this item to the next meeting of Full Council owing to time constraints.</p>
211.	<p>Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021</p> <p>To note the key provisions in the summary document provided by One Voice Wales, in particular, the introduction of the General Power of Competence.</p> <p>It was resolved to defer this item to the next meeting of Full Council owing to time constraints.</p>
212.	<p>BT Conferencing Protocol</p> <p>To adopt a protocol for remote meetings using BT Conferencing.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the protocol for remote meetings using BT Conferencing.</p>
213.	<p>Committee Membership</p> <p>To approve a request to join the Planning Committee Cllr S Jones.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the request by Cllr S Jones to join the Planning Committee.</p>
214.	<p>Service Level Agreements</p> <p>To receive an update following the request for a rebate on the toilets SLA.</p> <p>It was noted that the SLA's have been charged at 50% of the usual rate for this financial year and that it has today been requested that the Agincourt St toilets be opened as soon as possible and preferably by this weekend.</p>
215.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next scheduled remote meeting will be held on Monday 26th April 2021 at 6:00pm.</p>
216.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To resolve to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, by the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, Section 1 (2), on the grounds of confidentiality.</p> <p>It was resolved to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, by the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, Section 1 (2), on the grounds of confidentiality.</p>

<p>217.</p>	<p>Monmouth Town Centre Enhancement Proposals</p> <p>To determine whether to extend the contract for the existing contractor for the maintenance of the new planting scheme as part of the temporary improvements to Monnow Street to be installed by Monmouth County Council, or to accept the price from MCC to maintain them at MTC’s cost, to be funded from General Reserves.</p> <p>It was noted that MCC had declined to quote as they couldn’t compete with the price quoted by our existing contractor and no longer has water bowsers for watering the plants. It was advised that the Rotary Community Champions had expressed an interest in helping to maintain the planters.</p> <p>It was resolved to support the new planting scheme by funding the maintenance of it by extending the contract with MTC’s existing contractor, The Willows Garden Centre, for up to £1,006 per month to be paid from general reserves and to liaise between the contractor and the Rotary community champions to see how they could support the maintenance of the scheme.</p> <p><i>This contract falls within 11.1 a) iv) of Financial Regulations (extension to an existing contract), meaning that three prices are not required.</i></p>
<p>218.</p>	<p>Appointment of Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer</p> <p>To consider recommendations from the interview panel for the appointment of a new Town Clerk/RFO.</p> <p>The interview panel reported on the six candidates invited to interview and explained their reasons for recommending Candidate 03.</p> <p>a) It was resolved to appoint ‘Candidate 03’ recommended by the interview panel to the role of Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer.</p> <p>b) It was resolved to give delegated authority to the interview/selection panel working with the Clerk to contact the successful candidate, negotiate a start date and negotiate the starting salary in accordance with the Job Description, of up to a maximum of mid-range through the scale and to report back to the next meeting of Full Council.</p> <p>c) It was resolved to appoint Ellis Whittam to do all follow up work – letter of appointment, contract, proof of right to work etc.</p>

The meeting ended at 21.08