

MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
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**Minutes of the
 Extraordinary Full Council Meeting
 Held on Thursday 20th May 2021 at 7.00pm
 Undertaken Via BT Telephone Conference Call**

Present:

<p>Cllr E Bryn Cllr A Dewhurst Cllr Jackson-Graham Cllr J Lucas Cllr J Treharne</p>	<p>Cllr T Christopher (Deputy Mayor) Cllr M Feakins (Mayor) Cllr R Jupp Cllr R Roden Cllr S White</p>
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P Morgan (Town Clerk & RFO)
C Williams (Administrative Officer)

R Hoggins (Monmouthshire County Council)
M Lewis (Monmouthshire County Council)
T Thomas (Monmouthshire County Council)

S McCabe-Finlayson (Chair of Monmouth Chamber of Commerce)
D Evans (Secretary of Monmouth Chamber of Commerce)

One Member of the public and press

301.	<p>To receive apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Blair, Breeze, Gunter, Jones and Smith. No apology was received from Cllr Legg.</p>
302.	<p>To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda. No declarations of interest were declared.</p>
303.	<p>Public Participation <i>To receive questions from members of the public for a maximum of 10 minutes.</i></p> <p>There were no requests to speak from members of the public.</p>
304.	<p>Levelling Up Fund Bid To receive a briefing from Monmouthshire County Council officers regarding the Levelling Up Fund bid for projects in Monmouth, with questions and answers to follow.</p> <p>Monmouthshire County Council representatives provided detail on the Levelling Up Fund recently announced by the UK Government.</p>

The purpose of the fund is to potentially support projects in the UK up to a value of £20million per constituency. Unlike other grant schemes this initiative is administered from Westminster and bids are likely to have a better chance of success if supported by the local MP. Grants provided under this initiative must be spent by March 2025. Constituencies had been assigned a priority categorization from one to three, with priority applied in that order. Monmouthshire has been assigned as category three. However, County Council representatives are optimistic of being awarded a grant, especially if a bid is submitted for the first tranche (which has a bid submission deadline of 18th June 2021).

Consultancy company ARUP (which has a wealth of experience in putting together such bids) has been appointed to assist with the Monmouthshire bid which is currently expected to comprise of three Monmouth projects (which our MP David Davies supports):

- Developing the future use of the Shire Hall (looking to make it a significant visitor centre with the Museum/Nelson collection included) and subsequent follow-up work on use of the Market Hall (with ideas being put forward which include an indoor market, agile working space and starter unit provision).
- Redesign/redevelopment of Monnow Street and revisiting the study that was undertaken around 2015 for a visitor centre at Blestium Street.
- Adopting a more holistic approach in respect of active travel, with Welsh Government funding augmented by Levelling Up Fund investment.

Work has already previously been undertaken on these projects and it is considered that this places us in a strong bid position. ARUP are preparing an early assessment of the proposed bid projects to confirm which elements would form the most competitive submission.

As the bid deadline is 18th June 2021, with a huge amount of work to be undertaken in a very short period, there is insufficient time for proper consultation. However, it was advised that if the bid is successful then community engagement and consultation for these projects will be essential.

Town Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions which led to the following points of clarification:

- The pedestrian/cycle bridge project may be included if it is deemed to help form a strong bid. If not, it would likely be mentioned as part of a holistic approach and active travel funding sought.
- More detailed information on the proposed use(s) of the Market Hall is not yet available, with this work still very much at the concept stage.
- Coach parking and toilet facilities were included in the previous Blestium Street development plans.
- A Place Plan would be a very useful tool.
- It was not known when the outcome of the first tranche bids would be announced.

Town Councillors confirmed their full support for the bid and looked forward to working closely with the County Council and the community to ensure the success of this fantastic opportunity.

	<p><i>It was resolved (at 19:56) to suspend Standing Orders to allow Monmouth Chamber of Commerce representatives to speak at the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>The Chair of Monmouth Chamber of Commerce affirmed that in particular, the Monnow Bridge area would greatly benefit from investment. They asked whether they would be invited to get involved and it was confirmed that wider consultation would be necessary if the Monmouth bid was successful in the initial stage. The Chair of Monmouth Chamber of Commerce concluded by expressing support for the bid.</i></p> <p><i>It was resolved (at 19:58) to reinstate Standing Orders at the meeting.</i></p> <p>The meeting Chair thanked the Monmouthshire County Council and Chamber of Commerce representatives and offered the Town Council's future assistance in facilitating meetings in respect of the bid should it be deemed beneficial.</p>
<p>305.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next scheduled remote meeting will be the Annual Meeting of Council on Monday 24th May 2021 at 6:00pm.</p>

The meeting ended at 20:01.