

## ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 AT 7PM ON MS TEAMS

**Present:** Cllr M Groucutt (Chair)  
Cllr T Konieczny  
Cllr M Harris  
Cllr R Harris  
Cllr G Jones  
Cllr T Thomas  
Cllr M A Brocklesby  
Cllr S Burch  
Cllr N Tatam  
Cllr T Davies  
Cllr F Morgan  
Cllr M Hickman  
Cllr P Simcock  
Cllr D Simcock

#### **Absent without apologies**

None.

#### **In attendance:**

S Rosser (Town Clerk)  
C Bowie – Monmouthshire MIND

No public session

No public in attendance

PR 01/22	<b>Receive and approve apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received from Cllr L Van de Vyver, and it was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.
PR 02/22	<b>Receive Declarations of Interest</b>  Cllr P Simcock declared an interest in PR04/22 as she is a volunteer at the Melville Centre for the Arts which are hosting sessions for Monmouthshire MIND.  Cllr MA Brocklesby declared an interest in PR04/22 as she volunteers for Monmouthshire MIND.
PR 03/22	<b>To approve the minutes from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</b>

	<p>Cllr Groucutt asked Councillors to approve the minutes of the last meeting, recommended by Cllr T Konieczny and seconded by Cllr G Jones. All approved. Matters arising from the minutes: Cllr C Holland from Llanwenarth Citra was to be invited to this meeting, Cllr M Hickman had met with Cllr Holland and at that time Cllr Holland had not received an invitation. The Clerk responded that Cllr Holland was unable to make this evening's meeting and hopes to join one of the February meetings.</p>
<p>PR 04/22</p>	<p><b>To receive a presentation from Chris Bowie from Monmouthshire MIND.</b></p> <p>Cllr M Groucutt welcomed Chris Bowie from Monmouthshire MIND to the meeting. Chris Bowie thanked ATC for the funding support over the last 2 years. She talked ATC through a PowerPoint presentation outlining the projects they have been offering, with insights to social prescribing and wellbeing, zoom rooms offering talks on subjects such as life after lockdown, understanding anxiety, confidence building, and dealing with anger. Chris also touched on the Walk and Talk sessions (one-hour walks offering an open talking session), and face to face work with 'My Generation' for the 50+, dealing with social isolation. Cllr Groucutt thanked Chris for the presentation and opened the floor to questions. Cllr S Burch said it was an interesting presentation and was surprised by the wide breadth of services being provided to those not traditionally making use of MIND. Chris responded that only 10% are traditional service users, already known to mental health services, and 90% are one-off interactions, accessing wellbeing or active monitoring. There is still a lot of mental health stigma.</p> <p>Cllr T Konieczny asked what Monmouthshire MIND's plans are going forward? The initial SLA between ATC and Monmouthshire MIND was for 2 years. What time scales are MIND looking for in the renewed agreement? Chris spoke about the 4 Gwent MIND branches exploring becoming MIND in Gwent, however any funding from ATC would be restricted funds, only being spent in the NP7 postcode area. No funding support is ever too long, but a 5-year term may cause complacency, and not encourage the organisation to look to the horizon for new opportunities. However, 3 years will fly by. Cllr Konieczny is mindful of the successes Monmouthshire MIND have achieved so it helps ATC support Monmouthshire MIND on their direction of travel by understanding this.</p> <p>Cllr D Simcock thanked Chris for the excellent presentation, and asked if there were any figures available regarding the take-up on referrals to other services? Chris reported that of 1590 referrals to Monmouthshire MIND since March 2021, 821 received referrals on to other 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations. Introductions to other organisations are only made to trusted service providers.</p> <p>Cllr M Harris thanked Chris for the excellent presentation, stating she thought she understood what MIND did, but is stunned at how much they really do. The money is so well channelled in Social Prescribing. Its an astronomical number of people being dealt with by such a small organisation. The Zoom Room sounds really effective as well as the Walk and Talk. Cllr Harris requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to be able to share with people to show what is being achieved. Chris agreed to send on the presentation via the Clerk. Cllr G Jones found the presentation really interesting, and to hear the stigma that still surrounds mental health being talked about – being from an age group that is statistically more likely to die from suicide than a road traffic accident is a</p>

	<p>sobering thought, and the stigma of mental health in men is really prevalent. Having visited Llanarth Court, he fully understands the importance of this funding, and thanked Chris for the presentation.</p> <p>Cllr Groucutt thanked Chris for attending the meeting and hoped that she was able to see the level of support amongst Councillors from the questions being asked. Chris Bowie thanked ATC for their questions and left the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Groucutt referred to the report and recommendation to support the renewal of the agreement from April 2022, and to discuss the length of the new agreement. Cllr Groucutt will set up a meeting with Chris Bowie to see if the deliverables need to be altered and updated.</p> <p>Cllr T Konieczny suggested looking at the agreement like our Strategy and Action Plan, over a 5-year period, as an evolving document. It can be regularly reviewed, look at priorities and build a pro-active relationship with Monmouthshire MIND to regularly review this and secure a way forward to benefit the communities served and MIND. Cllr Groucutt asked if we can use the current agreement as a base then assess this going forward. Cllr Konieczny said it may be worth looking at these every 6 months to see how demands change. They may need to put resources into other areas to achieve the best results. Suggested to hold negotiations between ATC and MIND to renew the agreement and negotiate changes to the deliverables, on a regular basis. Chris herself has mentioned complacency so being innovative needs constant scrutiny. We are representatives of the community and should seek the best outcomes.</p> <p>Cllr S Burch agreed flexibility is needed as we don't know the needs or how these will evolve. Demands can change – in her own work she is seeing a tidal wave of financial stress in the community, so MIND could alter their work to adapt to current needs.</p> <p>Cllr D Simcock agreed it would be good on both sides to have reviews, maybe these should be annually. If something urgent occurred which would cause a change in the parameters, then MIND can always come to us with this. Cllr Groucutt reminded councillors the current agreement has an annual review built in where parties can walk away from the agreement.</p> <p>Cllr T Thomas proposed an annual review, and that Cllr Groucutt continues to attend meetings at MIND as an observer, with a 4 year term for the agreement. This was seconded by Cllr G Jones, followed by a unanimous decision by all Councillors to continue this support. Cllr Groucutt will take on board Cllr Konieczny's suggestion to meet with MIND to look at deliverables.</p>
PR 05/22	<p><b>To receive a report on the draft budget.</b></p> <p>Cllr Groucutt informed Councillors we have the MCC tax base figures including the numbers with Llanwenarth Citra joining Abergavenny as part of the Boundary review. We have focussed on a Band D property for working out the increase as this is usual practice.</p> <p>With the figures as stated in the report circulated, Band D will see an increase of £11.71, which equates to 23 pence a week. ATC have not put in an increase for 2 years, and we have achieved a lot without doing so, but now we can show where we need to make increases, and also where we will spend it. We are still behind Chepstow and Monmouth in respect of charges. ATC precept is small compared to that which MCC and the Police will add to this.</p>

	<p>Cllr Tatam said it was inadequate to receive only a few headline budget figures. Cllr Groucutt pointed out that the entire budget workbook had been presented at the December meeting and that this report was providing specific clarification on points raised.</p> <p>Cllr R Harris understood that Cllr Tatam was unhappy, suggesting in future if Cllr Tatam could let the Council know what is inadequate and maybe suggest how things can be improved. Cllr Tatam referred to previous years where Council would go through the budget line by line, yet all he has in front of him are totals.</p> <p>Cllr P Simcock stated that in view of Llanwenarth Citra coming into this as well it is a very reasonable precept in view of the increase.</p> <p>Cllr Hickman sought clarification that the proposed increase was 14%. Cllr Groucutt said that he preferred to look an actual figure rather than a percentage and this is what he had done, using Band D as the mid-range example. Cllr Hickman did not find this acceptable and said he would publicise that there was to be a 14% increase in the precept. Cllr P Simcock pointed out that it was only the Town Council precept increase that we were discussing, the whole of the council tax would not increase by 14% and the actual figure is not excessive.</p> <p>Cllr S Burch understands Cllr Hickman's objection to the rise, but citizens of Abergavenny are getting good value, and suggests Cllr Hickman looks at the MCC services that ATC now cover. Cllr Groucutt reminded Councillors that they should look at all they have achieved, and the many services ATC have stepped in to cover. The Town gets very good value for money. Those in Band H properties, the asset rich, are not hit so hard by austerity and they will pay more than those in a Band D property and will likely be happy to see this increase for the town.</p> <p>Cllr Groucutt recommended approval of the draft budget and that it be taken to Full Council for ratification. Recorded vote:  Approve: Cllrs Groucutt, P Simcock, D Simcock, T Davies, G Jones, R Harris, M Harris, S Burch, T Thomas T Konieczny.  Against: Cllrs F Morgan, N Tatam, M Hickman  (At the time of the vote, Cllr MA Brocklesby had had to leave the meeting).</p> <p>10 Approved, 3 Against – Carried.</p>
PR 06/22	<p><b>To receive and note recent payments made in Month 9 and approve virement proposals.</b></p> <p>Sharp-eyed Councillors had spotted an overspend in the Environment Budget and so Cllr T Konieczny and the Clerk had met to discuss and go over payments in detail to work out what virements were required to put this right. The Clerk detailed for Councillors that the £6080 income showing in the Environment Budget was the grant money which had come in for the Local Places for Nature grant application, so this needed to be vired to the Abergavenny In Bloom code where all invoices relating to work on this project had been paid out from. Whilst carrying out this work another item which should have been paid from the Implementation of the Action Plan budget, had also been paid out from the Abergavenny In Bloom code, so £480 is required to be vired from the Implementation of Action Plan code to Abergavenny In</p>

	<p>Bloom code.</p> <p>Cllr T Thomas recommended Councillors accept the proposals, and this was seconded by Cllr D Simcock. Unanimous vote of support for this to be carried out.</p>
PR 07/22	<p><b>Report from Councillors attendance at external bodies which are relevant to this Committee.</b></p> <p>Cllr M Groucutt met with representatives from the Borough Theatre and Melville Centre for the Arts regarding the collaboration between these as part of the stipulation of ATC’s funding agreement. The collaboration has been formalised with a letter of intent. Cllr Groucutt invited Cllr P Simcock to give an update on the collaboration.</p> <p>Cllr P Simcock told Councillors that the collaboration had started when both organisations took steps to apply for UK Cultural Recovery Funding for Youth Project. They looked at the nature of the application, and resources and spaces they could use and work in with the young people. They applied for funds in July 2021, and finally received this in January 2022. A project coordinator has been appointed and the collaboration on this project is 3-way between MCC, Borough Theatre and Melville. They are sharing resources, putting their heads together and have come out with winning results. They are now able to rope in a huge network of individuals. This money is part of pilot funding replacing former EU Cultural Fund. This has put Monmouthshire on the map and will get young people talking about their aspirations. Cllr Groucutt extended congratulations on the successful bid.</p> <p>Cllr T Thomas said the next meeting of the Abergavenny Eisteddfod Group is 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022, and they are likely to be looking for funding towards this year’s event.</p> <p>Cllr P Simcock had been working with Abergavenny Relief In Need, and 2 weeks ago had helped to support an individual over a very difficult weekend, where they were able to provide much needed support. It shows what ATC support funding can do as this was accessed via MIND.</p>
PR 08/22	<p><b>Items for consideration at the next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022.</b></p> <p>Councillors note the change of date to 16<sup>th</sup> February as Clerk is unavailable on the 9<sup>th</sup> February.</p>

**Meeting ended 8:17pm**

**APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD**

**CHAIRMAN ..... DATE .....**