

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 30TH NOVEMBER 2022 AT 6:58PM VIA MS TEAMS & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENTNY.

Present: Cllr T Konieczny (Chair)
Cllr M Barnes
Cllr P Bowyer
Cllr K Eldridge
Cllr C Holland
Cllr G Jones
Cllr D Simcock

Absent without apologies

None

In attendance:

S Rosser (Town Clerk)
T Ward-Jackson - Keep Wales Tidy
A Ash, H Trevor-Davies, M Hodges – Keep Abergavenny Tidy

No public session.

No public in attendance.

E 114/22	Receive and approve apologies for absence Apologies were received from Cllrs George, Wright and Strong, and it was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.
E 115/22	Receive Declarations of Interest Cllr Jones is a member of KAT. Cllr Eldridge attends their litter picks. Cllr Barnes is affiliated with FotE Crickhowell and Abergavenny.
E 116/22	To receive and approve the minutes from the last meeting on 26th October 2022. Cllr Holland proposed that Councillors accept the minutes of the last meeting as a true record, seconded by Cllr Bowyer. All Councillors resolved to accept.
E 117/22	To receive a presentation and follow-up stakeholder meeting request from Keep Abergavenny Tidy (KAT). Cllr Konieczny thanked the group for attending along with T Ward-Jackson from KWT. M Hodges thanked ATC for the invite to present an update on their intervention projects. He started by saying that when he last spoke to ATC some months ago, it was to update ATC on the litter survey and how much had been

gathered. There was then a stakeholder meeting in June 2022 which was organised by H Trevor Davies and A Ash from KAT, and from that two outcomes were established. Cross Street litter free zone at the entrance to the town where many takeaways are located, and Park Ward. Following the June meeting, baseline studies were conducted, and 6 businesses signed up. A new bin was installed near Gateway dental surgery at the traffic lights. It was a real opportunity for partner engagement between KAT, KWT, MCC and ATC. By end of December there will be survey results to show what improvements have been made and the effect these have had. Some businesses were put off joining the initiative by the requirements on the Caru Cymru/KWT litter free zone sign up page. KAT were also unaware of the Town Team's remit to collect litter in the same area.

TW-J said interventions in key hot spot areas under the Caru Cymru initiative shows how trials in the areas that have had businesses sign up would show how effective they have been and the difference they have made. Litter free zones are pledges which schools and businesses can sign up for.

AA spoke about the why – a 6 month time scale was decided upon, and KAT worked on research to see what reduced litter drops as they had a desire to do what worked. They are a reserve army of labourers. Planned the June 22 meeting with MCC, Gwent Police, ATC, KAT and KWT. Trial interventions were decided upon – 2 hot spot areas in Park Ward – 1 at the Hereford Rd corner with Park Avenue focusing on the area around the shop; second at the alleyway between Park Avenue and Ysguborwen. The intervention plan would be a citizen science project. ALLEYWAY: meeting 11/07/22 with KAT, KWT, and ATC to scope the area and identify why people drop litter there. 1. Hedges were overgrown and there was no clear information on who owned what and had responsibility for these. 2. Broken barb wire fencing with litter thrown behind it, again no clear idea who owned this. 3. No litter bin within easy reach. Pre-intervention measures done, as a bin was then installed by MCC. 2 surveys done before, then a follow up after 4 weeks. 15 bags of rubbish were taken from behind the barbed wire fence. Found that lots of local residents and MCC litter pick the area regularly. Surveys to measure success could therefore not be accurate because of this. Broken fence and hedge ownership has only just been established by MCC. Learning from this – no set intervention plan at the start, never had a partners meeting, KAT kept trying to organise this but it never happened. MCC couldn't go to the meeting arranged on 10th Oct at ACE. ATC let KAT down. Partners need to all pull together for it to work. We need an intervention and need to measure it logically. Make sure we have ground rules for firm commitments and communications are established, for the good of the town, county and country.

Cllr Konieczny: A lot of what has been said is incredibly cogent in planning. If we'd known the difficulties MCC would have establishing ownership we'd be able to plan more efficiently, and it straddles two wards, Park and Lansdown. Huge amount of work done by MCC Estates and Legal Teams.

Cllr Simcock: Have boundaries now been established? AA said properties either side of the alleyway have ownership. Even the property owners were not aware themselves.

H T-D said in June the partnership seemed a good idea so is it still worthwhile? Cllr Konieczny responded that it wasn't clear to stakeholders what all the roles and capabilities were to get data and permissions which would have made instructing agencies like the Town Team to not cut hedges or litter pick in areas

	<p>on certain days or weeks easier. TW-J: The response to the issue raised on the hedge was fast paced initially, so it's hard to draw conclusions from this.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes: meetings for all parties is very difficult to organise to get people together. AA said only 4 agencies were involved, just reactive actions were not coordinated, so lessons need to be learned. Better communication is key. It takes time to establish boundaries.</p> <p>H T-D said with 2071 bags of litter collected so far since March 2019, should KAT raise the bar to reduce litter in areas around the town? Would ATC commit to the citizen science on this?</p> <p>Cllr Jones said there were lots of new litter bins, and ATC pay for 38 dog bins. He used to be cynical on the amounts spent on these and Abergavenny In Bloom, and would like to see coordination between all parties going forward.</p> <p>AA said it's not a case of doing more, its more about doing what works.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny said all of this is really important but the methodology and what we collectively are going to do would be better.</p> <p>AA said that endless emails went to ATC with no response so how do we communicate?</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny said that in August when some of those were received is a month where Council doesn't operate, but training is underway and the draft Strategy and Action plan is in the process of being established which includes working with KAT. There has been a huge amount of work undertaken by ATC.</p> <p>A proposal was brought forward by KAT to hold another Stakeholder meeting in January 2023. Regeneration work utilising the Transforming Towns fund will hopefully look at the approaches to town both at Cross Street and Brecon Road. Environment Committee is prepared to work with KAT and KWT going forward (expressed by way of a show of hands form all councillors present). Meeting to be arranged with MCC officers (Sue Parkinson and Carl Touhig), Gwent Police, ATC, KWT and the town team, in January 2023.</p>
E 118/22	<p>To receive and discuss proposed ATC responses for the draft PSPO from MCC</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny advised Councillors that two responses to the PSPO had been circulated, written by Cllrs Jones and himself. Cllr Jones said they are not entirely dissimilar. Recommendations to make Castle Meadows exempt due to the Animal Welfare Act statutory obligations the meadows fulfil. Cllr Jones advises against a county-wide PSPO. Fixed penalty notice for not having the means of disposal (proof of dog bag) would be carried out by Enforcement Officers but those at MCC are not currently trained in this type of enforcement.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny looked at Bailey Park, Lower Meadow and Belgrave Park. There is mixed activity at these locations. Marked sports pitches under the pre-consultation showed the majority being in favour of these areas being out of bounds for dogs, also school grounds and children's playgrounds. The PSPO can be site specific, and not blanket, unless its something like 'dogs will be banned from all marked sports pitches'. Cllr Jones agreed. Castle Meadows however, when the Eisteddfod was hosted there some years ago, said it was one of the most contaminated sites with dog fouling – the worst ever. The Meadows is great for dog exercise but owners need to be held accountable to pick up after their dogs.</p>

	<p>If the orders are properly circulated and communicated via the press and media outlets it may get taken seriously. In North Wales, they use flags to signify dog exclusion zones on beaches where £1000 fines are enforced.</p> <p>Cllr Bowyer suggested we marry the two proposals and then check if we are happy to submit – both Cllr Barnes and Simcock agreed. Cllr Simcock spoke to Enforcement Officers recently and they aren't aware that they will be looking after this PSPO. Cllr Eldridge asked about communication to residents to make sure they know they have to have the means of disposal on them when out with a dog. Cllr Konieczny said MCC have steered a 'Give Dog Fouling The Red Card' campaign which we have posters and signs up in various locations as well as online. Maybe we'll need something like 'Park Ambassadors' to talk to users of these areas to make them aware. Cllr Bowyer said playing fields might be difficult to enforce as signs don't always grab people's attention.</p> <p>Cllr Jones proposed we combine both drafts and add that more publicity would be needed. This was supported by Cllr Bowyer and the Councillors present resolved to accept this proposal.</p>
E 119/22	<p>To receive a verbal report from Cllr Barnes – Environment Fair / Harvest Festival.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes reminded Councillors of the presentation on Simple Steps given to them by Friends of the Earth group for Abergavenny and Crickhowell some months ago. ATC have struggled with resources to support this. Here are points to raise: 1) Ditch Disposables – considered this in the Strategy and Action Plan. 2) Using the Earth as best we can – allotments? There has been a site highlighted that may be suitable towards the Hardwick Roundabout that may work to for this purpose. 3) Change Banks – those that support fossil fuel extraction – Barclays is one of the worst. MCC also bank with them. Need to consider moving to a more progressive bank. 4) Use the voice of the Town Council – idea of holding an environment fair or harvest festival which used to be held regularly and was successful. Want to see if it can be resurrected. Include tackling environmental issues and poverty reduction. Businesses, community groups and others with an interest in tackling environmental issues to be invited to sign up to follow the Simple Steps principles. A Community Fair in the Market Hall in April where ATC could take a lead. Help and support people engaging with the Simple Steps principles. If ATC in principle could agree and work with MCC and community groups, they could set up a steering group: ATC, MCC, YFBC, FotE, ATT, Climate Action Group. Look to see what other towns are doing. Report back to Town Clerk on interest in supporting this.</p> <p>Cllr Jones said it's an excellent idea, ready to be explored. April may be a bit ambitious. Sounds like the fair is something that could be resurrected.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny asked what this kind of thing may cost? Hiring the Market Hall is around £500 minimum for a couple of hours. Also need to think about staffing it and publicity. Need a budget of around £2k? Some of this may be covered by sponsorship. Would any other stakeholders be interested in contributing? We don't have capacity currently with no deputy clerk in post. Already putting large amount of work onto the Town Clerk in the next few months so maybe a festival later in the year might be more realistic. Cllr Barnes said if it was held in the week, costs may be lower as the building is already open, plus we could involve more young people/schools. Sponsorship could be raised by charging for the stalls.</p>

	<p>Advertising – MCC officer Hazel Clatworthy may be able to cover this. Time is short for April. Events meeting in January 2023 could help to establish a time to hold the event. Once a deputy clerk is on board, it could be a good way to encourage engagement with the community groups.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny asked Cllr Barens if he can provide a comprehensive list of stakeholders to be contacted about this, and how they may want to get involved. Cllr Bowyer has reservations as not clear which groups would be interested in this. Relying on others to come in. No problem boycotting Barclays. Poverty is a major problem and this may not be the best platform for this. Maybe creating a list of contacts will help to see if implementation is possible. Cllr Konieczny said lessons can be learned from KAT engagement. Clear outcomes are needed as there is no point embarking on it without clear focus. Give consideration for later in the year. Research objectives on this. Cllr Jones said if clear objectives and raising environmental credentials to promote this more will need more planning. Look to bring an update to Environment Committee in February 2023 on what clear defined objectives on what we want to achieve.</p>
E 120/22	<p>To receive and note an update from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Report received and accepted. Cllr Konieczny said it would be good to invite MCC officer Jane Clarke to talk about the green and blue corridors in all wards, and look to encourage more to participate in the FiT project – a real opportunity for intergenerational project. ATC were asked at last In Bloom judging to include reporting on how the biodiversity is improving in areas. Cllr Eldridge is already recording photos of all planters throughout the year to assist with the portfolio. Wales in Bloom would like Abergavenny In Bloom to be a nomination for Britain in Bloom 2023. 3 are submitted from Wales. It's a tremendous honour and commitment. May well be a catalyst to get businesses on board. Explain the value to businesses as it will put us on a national stage which encourages more people to visit. No idea of financial implications yet. It's a one off – so may generate sponsorship or we may consider spending from reserves. Cllr Konieczny proposes to invite John Woods from Wales In Bloom to talk to the various stakeholders and community groups about the nomination further. Seconded by Cllr Bowyer, all councillors in favour.</p> <p>Cllr Jones said we had good engagement from businesses around Christmas so this would be good to get further involvement. Nervous on spending from Reserves.</p> <p>Cllr Eldridge said he is sure that Abergavenny Rotary would be happy to get involved in this. Already identifying areas to photograph to create a year-round record. Resilient planting will be needed for it to be a good presentation. Cllr Konieczny said until we talk to Walks in Bloom about support, we won't know what finances may be available, but win or not, it's worth entering for the publicity the town will receive from this.</p>
E 121/22	<p>To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications:</p> <p>DM/2022/00478 Recommend approval.</p>

E 122/22	<p>To receive and note the Service Delivery update</p> <p>Report noted and received. Cllr Simcock said it was disappointing that the tender for the dog waste contract had been unsuccessful. Proposed we continue with current supplier. Seconded by Cllr Bowyer. Pointed out there is no clause for termination in the draft contract, nothing under 2.3 for penalty or remuneration if service stopped for any reason. Amend to reflect these. Cllr Barens asked if we can look to other providers to get comparisons of costs? Town Clerk reiterated the process only attracted one other tender from an alternative provider and their costs were £2 per bin more than the current provider. Maybe we can allow time to investigate this further with view to a renewal 12 months down the line.</p> <p>Abergavenny In Bloom – rainwater collection: Morgan’s Solicitors has been highlighted as a point which could be trialled by fitting water butts to the two down pipes on their building. We could also look at Gabb Square in the future. Look into this as a possible 1st step to making some watering easier and utilising rainwater capture in town.</p>
E 123/22	<p>To receive and approve a Finance update on the Environment Budget headings.</p> <p>4470 – check coding on sanitary bin invoices as this has been paid but does not show on this heading. 4456 – Bus station works will come from this. 4410 – Tourist Board contribution – waiting on report from BBNPA before paying 22/23 contribution.</p> <p>Cllr Holland proposed accepting the report as true and accurate, seconded by Cllr Bowyer. All Councillors resolved to accept the finance report.</p>
E 124/22	<p>Report from Town Councillors attendance at external bodies relevant to this Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abergavenny and District Tourist Association: Cllrs Konieczny & Simcock: Cllr Konieczny attended their AGM and spoke about Smart Towns visit to Cardigan and the Heritage Presentation. • Abergavenny Food Forum: Cllrs Nicholson & Konieczny • Abergavenny In Bloom: Cllrs Konieczny & Wright • CCTV user group: Cllrs George & Jones • Friends of Linda Vista Gardens: Cllrs Callard & Simcock • Friends of Bailey Park: Cllrs Eldridge & Barnes: Written report to be circulated, Cllr Barnes said they are doing well, lots of volunteers, and a new committee. Good finances and support from ATC, MHA, and PCC office. Moved picnic benches from Sensory Garden, and working with ATC on Abergavenny In Bloom – entering in their own right under Its Our Neighbourhood category. Expanding further around the park. Christmas Event 4th Dec in Pavilion. • Friends of Castle Meadows: Cllrs Simcock & Callard • Monmouthshire Cc Planning Committee: Cllr Konieczny • Y Fenni Business Community: Cllrs Barnes & Eldridge
E 125/22	<p>Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee.</p>

	None received.
E 126/22	Items for consideration at the next meeting Tuesday 20th December 2022: Email any items to Town Clerk.

Meeting ended at 8:53pm.

APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR **DATE**