

## ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7:00PM ON MS TEAMS & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENNY

**Present:** Cllr T Konieczny (Chair)  
Cllr A Wilde (Vice Chair)  
Cllr P Bowyer  
Cllr M Barnes  
Cllr S Burch  
Cllr B Callard  
Cllr K Eldridge  
Cllr M Groucutt  
Cllr C Holland  
Cllr G Jones  
Cllr B Nicholson  
Cllr M Powell  
Cllr D Simcock  
Cllr L Wright

#### **Absent without apologies**

None.

#### **In attendance:**

S Rosser - Town Clerk  
Ieuan Best and Adam Greenwood – Owen Davies Consultancy

Public in attendance: L. McCarthy – Press,  
P. Simcock  
C. Woodhouse

Public session 6:45pm: C Woodhouse in his capacity as representative of the Ostringen Twinning Society came to speak to ATC about the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning between the two towns. He wishes to know if ATC would like to visit Ostringen and host a return visit? Over the years 500+ children have been on exchanges with sports clubs, rambler groups, and KHS. The twinning group are keen to show off Abergavenny and all the improvements that have happened since their last visit. It has a financial implication, and traditionally a core £3k budget was kept by for such things – Beaupreau twinning society carry out a similar function. It usually breaks down to around £1k+ for expenses, a function hosted by the Mayor, a gift exchange (£250+). Would it be the wish of ATC to take part and offer an invite? They are keen to visit around the time of the Food Festival. An exchange is cheaper, people can pay their own fairs, and there would just be the need to purchase a gift.

Cllr Konieczny thanked Mr Woodhouse for speaking to ATC. Abergavenny Town Council are proud to host twinning counterparts and would provide a civic reception if they decide to visit. The twinning budget now sits under Civic Events for this reason. In addition, all groups can apply for a grant towards arrangements. There is great value in the cultural tradition of twinning although we are no longer within the EU. Helpful to know if Ostringen have any definitive plans on when they may be visiting – if around the time of the Food Festival in 2023 or 2024? In 2024 ATC are hosting Wales In

Bloom awards the week before the Food Festival in September so we would be stretched. This year we have Britain In Bloom in July/August to prepare and organise.

Mr Woodhouse said a council delegation would be made up of around 10 – 15 people, plus partners.

Cllr Konieczny said ATC would be happy to assist with a civic reception, so please do keep us in the loop with developments of any plans.

Mr Woodhouse left the meeting at 6:57pm.

FC01/23	<p><b>Receive and approve apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Cllrs Brocklesby and George sent apologies, and it was resolved to accept their reasons for absence.</p>
FC02/23	<p><b>Receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllrs Powell and Callard declared an interest in the planning applications for consideration as they sit on MCC Planning Committee, so will not take part in any votes relating to these items.</p> <p>Cllr S Burch declared an interest in the Active Travel planning application as this falls under her remit as a Cabinet Member so would take no part in a vote on this particular item.</p>
FC03/23	<p><b>To approve the minutes from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.</b></p> <p>Cllr Barnes pointed out he had joined the meeting remotely but was down as being absent. This was agreed to be amended. No other amendments or corrections required. Cllr Bowyer proposed accepting the minutes as a true record once the amendment to add Cllr Barnes as present had been made, seconded by Cllr Holland, and it was resolved by all Councillors present to accept this.</p>
FC04/23	<p><b>To receive and approve minutes from the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 18th January 2023.</b></p> <p>Cllr Simcock proposed the minutes from the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting were a true and accurate record, seconded by Cllr Bowyer. It was resolved by all Councillors present to accept this.</p>
FC05/23	<p><b>To receive an update on Smart Towns project from Owen Davies Consultancy, from Ieuan Best and Adam Greenwood.</b></p> <p>IB went through a recap on the Smart Towns Project – WG pilot project with 3yr funding to engage with technology to address issues – Abergavenny is one of the first places to have a Digital Place Plan. Within the plan recommendations taken forward will be taken forward through a smart town Wales umbrella of WG. Emerging priorities – detailing projects for funding. (1) Abergavenny In Bloom – enhance the green infrastructure to monitor moisture levels and plant health in planters to help reduce frequency of watering. (2) Congestion and impact on A-roads with types of traffic, volume and air quality.</p> <p>Cllr Jones asked if MCC and WG are paying to instal the hardware and if ATC then get data? IB said the Miraki data units had been installed to monitor footfall</p>

and stay times by MCC. The Gateway Infrastructure to support these sensors are yet to be fitted by MCC.

Cllr Barnes asked how it differentiates if someone makes repeat visits. IB explained footfall data is collected via Bluetooth data on internet devices. We'd know visit numbers this way.

Cllr Callard asked about privacy issues when collecting data. IB said this is all fully GDPR compliant – MAC address is scrambled and can't be traced back – no way to find definitive data of individuals. It is all picked up on passive function of smart phones.

Cllr Eldridge asked as it is fairly new tech, how do we know what data to collect and analyse? IB explained a benchmark for data will be set with footfall metrics – accuracy and error ratio lower than current – population density not so – more how a town centre is used traffic in and out, can help with funding for events.

Cllr Nicholson asked about tourism and how tech may allow us to see the percentage of tourists and if they are returning etc? IB said that in Cardigan they use 1<sup>st</sup> time visitor data as their benchmark. Pinpoint proportion – how successful they are in attracting people to town, and break it down from there. Creates a valuable insight.

Cllr Barnes asked about the mechanism for who and how the data is accessed, analysed and used. IB explained data use is where the value lies – part of this will be where ATC come in.

Cllr Konieczny explained Cardigan had individual businesses that can access the data, to see footfall. Their town app is interactive – enables visitors to access town Wi-Fi via their Gateway. It is a conduit for information coming in. Opportunity for ATC to lead and facilitate and bring in stakeholders to use this data. Tech is going to give data far more instantly. Cllr Barnes asked if anyone look at it? IB responded that partly it would be in ATC's hands, and MCC would put in the infrastructure – set up a working group, create a newsletter to circulate data, provide a live link to the dashboard which could show data around CO2 monitoring in Cafes to show when to facilitate air circulation etc.

Cllr Burch asked if it is limited to just the town centre – tourism extends to outer areas of the town and we would like to monitor how many people access areas like the Sugarloaf, Deri, Castle Meadows etc. Can it be real time data – so if it flagged 30 people gathering in the town centre at 2am for instance can it then create a notification for certain agencies? IB explained that a bakery in Llandeilo use this data responsively with footfall in town to know when to bake more cakes – it could be used to monitor the spaces in car parks. It is a sensor driven scheme. You can add more as part of the evolution of the design – tech consultants being brought in by Smart Town Wales funding and transforming towns funding which may be useful.

Cllr Konieczny confirmed it has a huge potential to improve the viability of the town – the infrastructure will be there to use, and TAC welcome the expertise of IB and AG along with expertise and advise from Cllr Clive Davies at Ceredigion CBC.

Cllr Simcock asked if there are plans for this to be used elsewhere? IB said Cardigan had gone far with it, and Abergavenny would be first in Monmouthshire. All towns will have this eventually. Good to see how data can be used and tailored. Lots of applications, modernise services by doing things differently. Cllr Powell said lots of tourists go further afield than just Abergavenny so it would be good to show outer areas, not just focussing on the town centre.

	<p>Cllr Nicholson asked who would facilitate tech for other towns – can the working group learn as a whole with other towns in Monmouthshire/ IB said Crickhowell in Powys are looking for partnership with lots of other opportunities for cross county working.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny thanked IB and AG for the information and presentation, and the opportunity to discuss the incentives for the town. We'd be happy to share knowledge with other towns.</p>
FC06/23	<p><b>To consider and approve the calendar of meeting dates May 2023 – April 2024.</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk's recommendation for 23/23 was accepted and recommended for approval – proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Bowyer, and resolved to be accepted by all Councillors present.</p> <p>Town Clerk requested Councillors consider altering the date of the April Policy and Resources/Full Council meeting as it falls directly after the Easter bank holiday weekend and many may be on holiday at this time. Cllr Groucutt recommended moving to the 19<sup>th</sup> April, seconded by Cllr Simcock, and it was resolved by all Councillors present to accept this change of meeting date.</p>
FC07/23	<p><b>To consider the following planning applications:</b></p> <p>DM/2022/00793 Change of use from class from F1(a) to C3(a). The widening of the vehicular access on Pen Y Pound and the addition of a new garden gate on Park Crescent. Development Of Residential Dwelling At Former Mulberry House, Pen Y Pound, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire: Tk: this has come to us for a third time. 1<sup>st</sup> was refused as too close to the junction, 2<sup>nd</sup> they moved the gate which we approved. This 3<sup>rd</sup> application shows wall and gate on Park Crescent but the pedestrian gate is to be widened on Penypound – MCC Highways have already lodged a significant objection to this. Splay is not good, inappropriate to stop on Penypound to access the gate. Recommend endorsing MCC Highways response. Cllr Groucutt said he was objecting as a ward member – the Penypound junction access is too close to traffic lights and has three schools on this very busy and dangerous section of road – another vehicular access makes no sense.</p> <p>DM/2023/00164 Listed Building Consent Heritage In it's current state, there are a number of rear windows and doors to the property that are white uPVC. The proposal seeks to replace these with new timber sash windows and heritage style doors. 6 Pen Y Pound, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5UD: recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2023/00143 Vacation of premises and removal of external ATM, signage and marketing and associated making good. Hsbc, 2 - 3 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5AF: Recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2022/01831 Improvements to the existing pedestrian and cycle connectivity across Castle Meadows by providing Active Travel compliant routes. Including the upgrade of existing routes, access points and the replacement of the existing footbridge over the River Gavenny. Land At Castle Meadows Abergavenny</p>

	<p>Monmouthshire: Cllr Jones said there has been lots of varying public views and comments, lots in favour of the Active Travel Scheme, works alongside the 20mph zones. Some concerns over the effect it will have on the unique site and environment. Good that ATC facilitated a stakeholder meeting. As a planning app, it is comprehensive – note on aesthetics and materials. Cllr Groucutt said the pedestrian and cycleways for the 3-19 school will enable children to walk or cycle to KHS as Llanfoist Bridge is not suitable to cycle over in heavy traffic. Cllr Wright echoed Cllrs Jones and Groucutt’ s comments, good to see new bridge for cyclists and walkers. Opposes tarmac as the surface for the scheme. Supports in principle but would like a porous surface for the paths.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes said he thought the point on safety could go further and include a zebra crossing on Tudor Street to enable everyone to traverse town safely. He commented that there was an idea to look at a resin or gravel surface for the paths. Lastly, MCC promised environmental improvements, but no mention of these are included? Cllr Konieczny pointed out that there is extensive environmental and biodiversity input detailed for the area. He congratulated MCC for undertaking the consultation and was proud to facilitate the stakeholder meeting. Ample opportunity to make views known. Sad to see bad press on the scheme. Some groups were involved prior to the pre-app being made public and it was sad to see negative views being shared. It has been handled exceedingly well by MCC. ATC take on the expressed views and are fully committed to Active Travel.</p> <p>Cllr Jones proposed ATC approve the application and include comments on supporting active travel and a resin porous surface instead of tarmac for the paths. This was seconded by Cllr Holland. All Councillors able to participate resolved to support recommending approval.</p> <p>DM/2023/00027 Demolition of existing garage and construction on new two storey family house. 10 Belmont Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5HN: TK: We see this application at 5yr intervals. They are asking to renew the application for a third time. ATC, ATT and Civic Society all objected in 2018, recommending refusal. But it was approved twice by MCC and has still not been developed. Recommend same reasoning and refuse again. It is a conundrum why MCC approved it twice as the design does not fit in with this area. All agreed to recommend refusal.</p> <p>DM/2023/00104 Retrospective application for demolition of existing dilapidated joinery workshop within existing joinery manufacturers premises and reinstatement of replacement joinery workshop in same location. United Joinery Ltd, Rear Of 21 Nevill Street, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5AA: Recommend approval.</p>
FC08/23	<p><b>To receive reports from Councillors attendance at external bodies which are relevant to Full Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Armed Forces Champion: Cllr M Powell &amp; Cllr T Konieczny:</b> MP: RBL road closures for the parade and other arrangements for November are underway.</li> <li>• <b>Governor of Cantref School: Cllr B Callard:</b> received new curriculum presentation from MCC.</li> </ul>

