

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 25TH MAY 2022 7PM VIA MS TEAMS & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENTNY.

Present: Cllr T Konieczny (Chair)
Cllr M Strong (Vice Chair)
Cllr D Simcock
Cllr K Eldridge
Cllr J George
Cllr P Bowyer
Cllr L Wright
Cllr M Barnes
Cllr G Jones

Absent without apologies

None.

In attendance:

S Rosser (Town Clerk)

No public session.

No public in attendance.

E 53/22	Receive and approve apologies for absence Apologies were received from Cllr C Holland and it was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.
E 54/22	Receive Declarations of Interest Cllr G Jones – Sits on Steering Committee of Keep Abergavenny Tidy who are giving a presentation to ATC this evening. Cllr M Barnes is also a volunteer with the group.
E 55/22	To receive and approve the minutes from the last meeting on 27th April 2022. Cllr Simcock moved to accept the minutes, and this was seconded by Cllr Jones. Councillors all voted to accept the minutes as a true record of the last meeting held 27 th April 2022, and these were then signed by Cllr Konieczny.
E 56/22	To receive a presentation from Keep Abergavenny Tidy. Cllr Konieczny welcomed Mike Hodges from Keep Abergavenny Tidy to the meeting. Mike circulated paper reports to Councillors present. KAT relaunched in 2019 with a group of 20-30 people, and now they are up to over 70

volunteers. They record the levels of litter collected in Abergavenny and Llanfoist, with the rolling total since March 2019 at 1600+ bags to date. Monthly community picks are held the first Tuesday every month, and they have a huge number of individual pickers that carry out picks around the town. A record is kept of where is 'picked' as each collection is recorded online via 'Epicollect' as advised by Keep Wales Tidy. The site enables photographic evidence to be uploaded, plus the locations of the picks. This helps to collate most frequently picked litter and commonly reported litter hot spots. Reports used to be submitted to local Police to highlight hotspots and then the local business club try and get some meaningful engagement. This now goes to MCC and ATC in recent months and KAT are now seeing major issues being tackled.

KAT Steering Group now has Sue Parkinson on board from MCC who passes on information. Actions have started over the last few months. Kat now have monthly litter pick 'themes' – for instance face masks were one month's theme, and 119 were collected across town. They also target hot spot areas. The Alleyway between Penypound and Chapel Road, where over 18 bags of rubbish were collected, including builders waste.

In 2021 WG issued a consultation litter prevention strategy including dog fouling. Kat made a group submission in response to this. WG have not yet completed this exercise, but KWT have advised KAT that lots of what they submitted will be included in the findings.

KAT want to do as much as they can to keep Abergavenny as clean as they can. They have done surveys around brands and the association with litter frequency. Between November 2021 and February 2022 KAT asked volunteers who were willing to send in the types and brands of litter cropping up frequently. Top of the list was alcohol cans coke cans, and McDonalds litter. Data was collected form 9 volunteers. They didn't include smoking materials. KAT want to ask what we can do to prevent littering and ATC are a stakeholder in this. Submissions have gone in to MCC, and KAT have been visiting and emailing large chains and are starting to gather info back on the questions posed to them. KAT will gather the data and produce a report from this. They want to look at identifying litter hotspots and look at CCTV for these areas and follow this up with actions/prosecutions.

KAT are hosting a meeting on 22nd June with stakeholders including ATC, MCC, Police, and KWT. KAT have met with other litter groups around Monmouthshire to share best practice and attended the MCC Climate Action Day and gathered info from the public which will also be shared with ATC. Cllr Konieczny thanked Mike and KAT for their presentation and said that a previous campaign called 'Abergavenny Is Not An Ashtray' which was run in collaboration with the Civic Society, MCC< KWT and the ATC may be worth resurrecting. As part of the campaign, outlets who sold cigarettes and businesses with smoking areas were asked to give out small pouches for smokers to put their cigarette ends in so that they could take them home to dispose of. MH said that along with smoking detritus, vape boxes are now a big issue and are often found alongside drug paraphernalia.

Cllr Jones said the Refill Scheme was a great way of promoting the use of increasing the use of reusable bottles and discouraging people from using single use plastics – working alongside KAT will help with this.

	<p>Cllr Konieczny will be attending the meeting on 22nd June, and thanked KAT for their presentation and reports which will be shared with Councillors, and any questions raised can then be sent to KAT via the Town Clerk.</p>
<p>E 57/22</p>	<p>To receive and note an update from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Town Clerk’s report was received and noted.</p> <p>Planning Aid Wales training portal: Cllr Konieczny stated the last ATC had only two Councillors that took up the training, so it is strongly advised that all ATC Councillors do this. You can do the training in 20 modules or in one sitting of just over two hours. There is a self-assessment, and you get a certificate upon completion. It covers basic planning law, material considerations, what is a planning matter and what isn’t. If you have never had any planning training this is very worthwhile. Cllr Jones said he had undertaken a workshop on planning, so was it still worthwhile recapping for other Councillors what Planning Aid Wales do? Cllr Konieczny explained that there are professional bodies that ATC belong to: Society of Local Community Councils (SLCC), One Voice Wales (OVW, and then Planning Aid Wales. They are a parallel organisation to OVW and are an independent purely planning training portal for local authorities across the board. They offer Town and Community council training, pre-app consultation training. ATC buy into training services. They are well established and used universally by TCCs. The training is very comprehensive and easy to follow. As we now must publish training achievements so the public can see we make decisions from a point of knowledge.</p> <p>BBNPA: phosphate concerns lead to proposed LDA being halted as felt plan in place would not be fit for purpose as can’t address phosphate levels in the River Usk. This is in contrast to MCC who proposed 7500 new houses and 10k jobs etc, which is 18% of the Wales 2040 Strategy and Action Plan. 18% form 6% of the national population. This is still ongoing. NRW have a moratorium on new developments until phosphate issues can be fixed. ATC applaud BBNPA for halting their plans. Despite this, MCC pressing on even after facing criticism from WG Chief Planner. ATC responded to the RLDP and it is on the website to view. Cllr Barnes asked if the RLDP is still open to discussion. Cllr Konieczny responded that with a new administration at MCC the new RLDP will become a pressing issue as will discussions on alterations to this.</p>
<p>E 58/22</p>	<p>To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications:</p> <p>DM/2022/00692: Sits in Grofield Ward, Cllr Jones had conducted a site visit as it is down a side lane at the industrial estate. The building was converted to a dwelling some time ago but hasn’t been lived in for a while. Biodiversity is addressed in the plans; access isn’t great but not a material consideration. Cllr Wright also agreed. Its not a listed building, and its unoccupied so this will bring it back into use which increases the housing stock in town. Recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2022/00636: Modern house in a conservation area. Rear property alterations. No objections. No material considerations. Recommend approval.</p>

	<p>Phosphates: concerns for NRW to make planning constraints; if 20 – 30 houses apply for extensions, which are referred to NRW for comment, each coming back with no objection to extra toilets or ensembles. However, a developer wouldn't be allowed to build 20-30 homes without phosphate capture and additional drainage demands being met. Piecemeal doesn't address the phosphate issues and unfortunately planning issues NRW imposed are not effective. Serious issue happening under the radar.</p>
<p>E 59/22</p>	<p>To consider and make recommendations on the Consultation on Proposed Traffic Regulation, Speed Limits and Parking Regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment Order Number 4) 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1878 DPPP 54 Ross Road Abergavenny: Approve. • 1881 Mount Street, Abergavenny: Recommend extending double yellow lines a further 3m into the street for safety. • 1882 North Street, Abergavenny: Recommend extending the double yellow lines a further 3m into the street for safety. <p>Cllr Simcock suggested that the proposed double yellow lines didn't go far enough as these roads join the A40 out to Brecon/Crickhowell. The lines are to stop parking on the two junctions, so should they extend further? Cllr Wright said if we extend further this will affect residents with no off-road parking in that area. Cllr George said could we be more specific and put a distance on the extension of the lines? Cllr Konieczny agreed we should prescribe a distance in our recommendation. Cllr Jones said he was familiar with both roads and that 3m would protect and safeguard the junctions. Cllr Simcock moved the proposal to recommend the double yellow lines be extended by 3m into each road from the junctions. Cllr Jones seconded the motion. All Councillors approved the proposal for 1881 and 1882.</p>
<p>E 60/22</p>	<p>To receive and note the Service Delivery update.</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report on Service Delivery was received and noted. Cllr Konieczny spoke on the Toilet SLA and how ATC had been working on this for over 3 years. The first issue is that it is not a statutory requirement to provide things like street cleansing or public toilets. Current situation stands that MCC will only provide one public toilet block in each of the main towns, without support like it has from ATC. The block at White Horse Lane has been closed for 2 ½ years, as it needed investment to improve it and make it fit for purpose. MCC didn't want to invest in it so it was decided to close the block, particularly as there were issues with Antisocial behaviour and drug dealing at WHL. Police had also raised concerns about this, as there were no resources for CCTV in this area. There was pressure to close them even though it was one of the most used toilet blocks in the town. There had been a flurry of requests in the last 24 hours to re-open WHL as part of concerted action, but ATC don't own them. 2 years ago, MCC proposed that ATC take them over and legal advice was sought. As a result of the legal advice, it was recommended not to touch the proposed deal from MCC as there was a clause</p>

	<p>where they could buy the block back at any time for £1 for development as they would retain the freehold. ATC then sent a draft SLA to MCC for consideration. The £45k cost would be for two blocks as MCC have agreed to provide one block, and previously ATC were paying £60k for three of the four blocks to be opened and cleaned by MCC. Bailey Park toilets is a separate agreement. There is a growing issue around town which needs addressing. There are toilets for use in the Town Hall, in Morrisons, plus the three public blocks. There was an agreement with Auberge previously to allow the public to use their toilets as WHL were now closed but this has ceased. The WHL issue has never been satisfactorily been dealt with by MCC. Even destination signage which we brought to their attention is still up around town indicating they are open. Its distressing when people come across the block being closed when signs indicate facilities are still in place. Depending on MCC, there may be a glimmer of hope if they are willing to allow an organisation with suitable funds to take these on for a peppercorn rent, or to allow it to be sold with the freehold and be repurposed for use.</p> <p>Cllr Strong said this is an important issue across the town. People need facilities and understand there are issues and costs involved. Interested to see Auberge had an agreement to allow public to use their facilities, maybe this would be a cheaper way forward, if others may be interested? Better than the expense of an SLA with MCC? Cllr Konieczny said we are currently tied in to getting the SLA from MCC so the new administration may wish to review the facilities provided for towns and how it increases tourism levels. If we attract 30k people to town for a festival, with no facilities this presents issues for organisers. ATC want to work in partnership with MCC but it has been very slow and unsatisfactory. ATC are withholding payment until an SLA is in force. Cllr Barnes emphasised the importance of having facilities that end of town. Revised numerous times and today Abergavenny District and Tourism Association printed a guide with the WHL toilets still marked on it! The signposts are still in place. The actual lane is very dirty and a magnet for rubbish. It's a major issue. There are no toilets for the public that end of town. ATC should take this to the new administration at MCC to address the issue. Lots of people won't go into local establishments to use facilities. We have an obligation to do something. Investigate this further with MCC and the owners of Cybi Walk. Cllr Konieczny explained we have no statutory powers to do any more than make a request. MCC decided to close the WHL toilets, but the Town Clerk will forward the complaints received today to MCC. Peripheral services like grounds, street sweeping, and toilets have all been reduced because MCC need to meet other statutory duties. Cllr Wright offered to take up the issue with MCC, so the Town Clerk will forward the emails on to her for further investigation.</p>
E 61/22	<p>To receive and approve a Finance update on the Environment Budget headings.</p> <p>Verbal update form Town Clerk on finances. Year End has just been completed, so the new budget is now entered and months 1 and 2 are to be uploaded. Environment Committee oversee just under 50% of the budget. As previously explained, there are increases to Dog Waste collections, Toilet Provisions, and the amalgamation of street sweeping and Town Crew under</p>

	<p>one heading for the Town Team have all been inputted. Next meeting will have full breakdowns for scrutiny and approval.</p>
E 62/22	<p>To review the Strategy and Action Plan with a view to looking at priorities and items for including going forward.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny explained that the headings explain the obligations attached to each point in the plan. Lots of priorities, each heading having been achieved or being ongoing. Strategy and Action Plan is not set in stone, its an evolving document. In September, once Councillors feel more comfortable we can look at reviewing this at an Away Day, to create priorities for the tenure of ATC. It is useful for the budget setting with costs and delivery. Not expecting ideas this evening but we can look at issues. One heading – Economically Thriving Town – this could need looking at more closely with cost-of-living crisis. Build better links with the local business community. Smart Town presentation shows there is tech which we can work with MCC on. Town Clerk has contacted Cardigan CC to enquire about visiting to see how the tech works on the ground and understand the benefits. We can then be better informed, and it may come into the S&A plan for adopting smart tech in future. Apply all the creativity of Councillors to see what we can deliver. Its not aspirational, but a plan for what we can deliver. Climate Policy that was adopted may look simplified, but it is things we can deliver, not to make pledges on what we cannot deliver. It is very important to keep our feet on the ground, to know what we can do to tap into different initiatives. Sometimes we can join with MCC and others to find plans and projects. Have an active role in creating, making, and delivering on S&A plan.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes congratulated ATC on the improvements in the car parks. Asked about the water fountain proposal which was paused due to Covid restrictions. Had a meeting with Friends of the Earth who are looking to have a meeting with ATC on future plans, and he also hopes we can do more in future with the business community.</p> <p>Cllr Jones said it will be good to have an away day to make updates and amendments. Need to remove allocated Cllrs from last administration like Cllr T Davies who did an excellent job in the role.</p>
E 63/22	<p>Report from Town Councillors attendance at external bodies relevant to this Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Jones asked if the Town Clerk can send out a reminder to Councillors, so they know which bodies they are now representatives on with regard to the external bodies? Cllr Konieczny explained the role is one of an observer, at their meetings, and then to feed back to the relevant committee. This is the role the Council Representatives have. It will not be for Councillors to influence groups as we are only observers. In future there will be a template from the Town Clerk on the role of the representative and the expectations plus how to report back.</p>
E 64/22	<p>Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee.</p>

	Cllr Wright and Cllr Konieczny attended a tree planting ceremony today at Linda Vista Gardens which was to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.
E 65/22	<p>Items for consideration at the next meeting 29th June 2022.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny asked Councillors to email any suggestions for the next meeting to the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Cllr Jones asked that now Llanwenarth Citra is part of ATC, can we consider the planning application for the Brewery development? Cllr Konieczny said we will need to look to see if the consultation is still open and if so, bring it to Environment for consideration.</p>

Meeting ended at 8:54pm.

APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR **DATE**