

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 13TH APRIL 2022 AT 7PM ON MS TEAMS, & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENTNY.

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

Absent without apologies

Cllr L Van De Vyver

In attendance:

S Rosser (Town Clerk)
Caroline Lewis – Abergavenny Community Trust

No public session

No public in attendance

PR 32/22	Receive and approve apologies for absence Cllrs Davies and Jones sent apologies and it was resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
PR 33/22	Receive Declarations of Interest Cllr R Harris – PR41/22 – sits on MCC Planning Committee so will not participate in discussions or votes on planning consultation responses from ATC. Cllr P Simcock – PR 39/22 - due to involvement at Melville Centre for the Arts, will abstain from discussions on point 6 in Town Clerk's update.
PR 34/22	To approve the minutes from 9th March 2022. Minutes proposed as a true record by Cllr T Konieczny, seconded by Cllr N Tatam, all approved.

PR 35/22

To receive a presentation from Caroline Lewis of Abergavenny Community Trust on an application for £1000 grant towards their summer playscheme.

Cllr M Groucutt welcomed Caroline Lewis from Abergavenny Community Trust to the meeting. Caroline, along with Simon Burch, are joint Chairs of the Trust at Abergavenny Community Centre. Caroline explained that over the last 3 years, usual work had gone into abeyance, where their income of £55k had reduced to £18k, and in this financial year they forecast an increase back up to £36k. They manage to balance the books using funds from Covid grants, Government money, donations, and along with the funding from ATC, they are budgeting for around a £12k loss even with this assistance, all of which keeps the core business going – 2.5FTE staff in place to run the centre. In the last year, ACT have sought out and received lots of grants for many activities. Lots of work with vulnerable elderly people, bringing them back in. Always looking for new funding to keep going. With ratifying the agreement with ATC and making progress with this money they can run the building and keep the staff. It has been slow to get volunteers back in. In the interim, the boiler broke, which they managed to find funds to fix, which goes towards their aim to become Carbon Neutral.

Cllr Groucutt agreed that ATC are happy to ratify and enter the new agreement with ACT, but wants to address one thing: the measurables were brought up to date in the agreement, and one is to deliver a summer playscheme. ATC feel the money pledged in the agreement is to cover that already.

CL explained they seek lots of sources of funding, and ATCs allows them to cover day to day costs of cooking, cleaning, managing accounts, staff, and still need to seek additional £12k for the core business. It takes £16k to keep the building ticking over. A lot of activities are ‘village hall’ bookings – people come in and pay to use the building. ACT are working on longer term commitments to that. Staff work on managing these as well as food provision and facility management. In their list of deliverables, promoting citizenship, working with children and young people – all this is done ourselves, or we have to pay people to do this. The summer scheme would see professional play workers from Everyday Play - freelance skilled workers – provide forest school workshops and indoor activities. This can’t be delivered by current staff. We are seeking funding to deliver a very specific project.

Cllr M Groucutt informed CL that he and the Town Clerk had met and discussed the application, and where Audit will look at our agreements, they will pick up on these measurables, and see this request – ATC have showed commitment to make ACT work, and there are a wide variety of ways to seek funds to balance the books. ATC give sums to MCC for summer play schemes so could we facilitate a meeting for MCC and ACT to look at delivering such a scheme? If there are alternative schemes where we can make a positive contribution not already listed in the deliverables, whilst looking at other funding streams.

Cllr MA Brocklesby raised a point of clarification: looking at the application, who are the target groups, as we know there is a deep and worrying gap for disadvantaged vulnerable homes? This could help develop skills in those that fell behind during Covid. The catchment for ACT is diverse, so clarify how families who need this will benefit, with the extra needs that children have post-Covid.

Cllr T Konieczny raised a point of clarification: in support of the agreement, and it is our aim of the cooperation agreement to work together – for us to do that, we need to sign and agree what we give money for. It doesn't preclude ACT making small grant applications as long as its not in the remit of the agreement already covered, if measurables are in place. In the 1st lockdown, towards the end of the last agreement, ATC did give £1k for the scheme, so it is important to clarify regarding the support being asked for.

CL: in putting together the deliverables, it's ACT saying these are what we are hoping to deliver.

Cllr P Simcock; In relation to additional requirements for children, you started earlier talking about the elderly and their vulnerabilities, maybe similarly you could be explicit on the needs of this group also? For the play scheme, Youth Services at MCC may be of assistance.

CL: older people are coming in for existing activities which current staff already deliver. We need to stress the vulnerabilities of groups post-covid for this. The application was put together swiftly, so maybe we can revise this, talk to MCC whilst looking at other pots of funding.

Cllr R Harris: What you want to do is commendable. Have you approached the other local community councils – Llanfoist Fawr and Llantilio Pertholey – as children accessing this scheme will also come from their catchments?

CL: My feeling is to take this back and look at it again, plus look at routes into MCC, speaking to Mike Moran. ATC have offered some good suggestions.

Cllr N Tatam: With inflation at 7%, and utilities going up, the £10k from us isn't going to go far. ACT came to us for capital funding for solar panels, and they went and raised the funds from other sources as ATC delayed their response to this whilst other funding was sought.

Cllr T Konieczny: point of information: Jeremy Gass had written to ATC re: accessing full funding elsewhere for the project and expressed thanks to ATC for encouraging this. At the time it was deferred, as the solar panels on the roof may not have been allowed, so we didn't close the door, but subsequently funding was found.

Cllr R Harris: In 3 weeks, ATC won't exist as it stands now. If new ATC can look at this afresh, and ACT can approach MCC and the Welsh Church Fund which may be worth speaking to for advice and funding.

CL: We recently secured funding from Moondance to give a few more hours for staff, plus 2 people to assist with running the centre for everyday activities. We need a professional fundraising person to go forward with future grant applications. Rotary and Round Table have both given funding. Each month we have a list of grants we apply for. We are always happy to receive information on new funding. We can ratify and sign our agreement with ATC, which has been delayed due to illness and covid. Looking at this project, there is some mileage with the vulnerability and disadvantaged people it can help.

Cllr M Groucutt: Mike Moran will already be developing schemes for the summer in Monmouthshire, so worth approaching to discuss this with him. There is a willingness to make this succeed, and ATC will do their best to facilitate meetings and connection to others who could assist. There is a huge need for disadvantaged children in this area, and we wish you well with the project.

PR 36/22

To receive a written request from Lucie Parkin of Abergavenny Writing Festival to roll over the sponsorship funding from 2021 allocation to 2022 festival.

A written request had been received by the Town Clerk from Lucie Parkin regarding the 3 year sponsorship of the Writing Festival. In 2019, it was agreed to support this with £1k per year for 3 years. Both 2019 and 2020's festival took place and utilised this funding. In 2021, due to Covid, the event was all online, so the funding was not requested. Instead, Lucie assumed this could roll over to this year's festival, which has just taken place 7th – 9th April 2022.

Cllr T Konieczny: with a 3 year agreement, I have no problem with the rolling this funding over. Whenever we give grant funding we expect it to be requested in good time and not retrospectively. Clarification is needed on what is delivered by the festival and how it meets our wellbeing objectives. In future, this need to be on a more professional footing. We can't explain what the money has been spent on, and what aspects they needed the £1k for. The festival is a great idea, but we need to smarten up going forward.

Cllr R Harris: As the festival has already happened can we leave this to go to the next council? Or can ATC pay the funds on receipt of a report on this year's festival, to justify us giving this retrospectively. If the report is unsatisfactory, we can relook at it.

Cllr P Simcock: The Melville and Lucie had to keep postponing events month to month through Covid, which had been challenging. Records are kept, particularly at the Melville, and can give a full account. The festival delivered 3 children's workshops on one day and they were high quality events. It should be easy to get this information.

Cllr T Konieczny: Agree with Cllr P Simcock, it's a two way street. Despite differences and logistics, it's not clear what ATC's relationship with the Writing Festival is. This is an important festival, and it would be good to be involved.

Cllr M Groucutt: to sum up – we're requesting a report for this year, to tie in with our action plan, and we want to propose having a rep from ATC as an observer at their meetings in future. Proposed by Cllr R Harris, seconded by Cllr M Harris.

Cllr MA Brocklesby: point of order – what about the rollover request? Are we happy to pay this? Maybe they can come in and deliver the report to us?

Cllr S Burch: its bizarre they have requested the only a week before the event, is there a reason they requested this so late? In response, the Town Clerk clarified the request had been received in plenty of time, but due to having to investigate and check through to see if any rollover had been previously agreed as with all other sponsorship requests in 2020/21, when none was found for the Writing Festival, it was the month leading up to the event. Lucie has been very active at the events meetings being held online by ATC informing people about what was planned across the whole town.

Cllr R Harris proposed a motion to request a report from the writing Festival, and for them to allow a rep from ATC as an observer on their board meetings.

Cllr T Konieczny proposed an amendment to the first clause, to accept the rollover request for the £1k.

All in favour of the above motion and amendment. Write to congratulate on the success of the festival.

PR 37/22	<p>To receive and approve the One Voice Wales membership renewal and receive their report for 2022/23.</p> <p>Cllr T Konieczny proposed to approve the renewal and accept the report, seconded by Cllr N Tatam. Approved by all councillors. Cllr M Groucutt thanked Cllr N Tatam for his representation on the board at OVW.</p>
PR 38/22	<p>To receive a report on joining the Guild of Macebearers for the Platinum Jubilee Year.</p> <p>Cllr F Morgan had been discussing with the Macebearer about the knowledge needed for the role, and they had identified this organisation which would be helpful to both him and the new Clerk. It is a modest cost of £35 for one year. Cllr Morgan proposed based on the Town Clerk's report joining for one year. Seconded by Cllr T Konieczny, and unanimously supported by all councillors.</p>
PR 39/22	<p>To receive and approve an update from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Report received and noted.</p> <p>3. Community in Kindness sponsorship for £1800 – all in favour.</p> <p>4. Last meeting of Service Delivery Sub-Committee due to be held 4th May, the day before the elections. Agreed to cancel meeting.</p> <p>7. Insurance renewal: 5 yr agreement covers period of new council, with lower premium, already allocated in the budget. Cllr M Groucutt proposed to accept this, seconded by Cllr MA Brocklesby. Cllr N Tatam asked if we are fully covered for increases due to inflation, for all the liabilities that we have? Cllr R Harris said if each year when the renewal comes around, ATC looked at this to ensure anything extraordinary was covered, as this would be incumbent of any council to check this. Cllr T Konieczny reminded Councillors the response was need by 25th May 2022, so we could leave this to the next Council to make the decision. Its due diligence to review annually, but we can agree to the 5 year offer and save some money. New ATC will be reminded the premium is due and should be reviewed. Cllr M Groucutt said Zurich will point out if cover is not sufficient.</p> <p>Proposal from Cllr T Konieczny: Instruct Town Clerk to take up offer of 5 year programme, seconded by Cllr M Harris. All in favour.</p> <p>6. Cllr T Konieczny: point of clarification: the £7k expenditure was not factored into the budget when agreed, so it either needs to be paid as a large grant, or agree to take this from General Reserves. At the time of agreeing this funding, it was not clarified where the funds were to come from. In approving this, we need to do so from another budget heading.</p> <p>Proposal from Cllr T Konieczny to pay this form general reserves, as ATC made a decision to fund this, so vire form there to pay for lighting. Seconded by Cllr R Harris. All approved. (Dec of interest – Cllr P Simcock – abstain)</p>
PR 40/22	<p>To receive and note recent payments made in Month 12, including all relevant income and expenditure reports, plus details on underspends and carry overs to General reserves.</p> <p>Cllr M Groucutt asked Councillors to note and approve the finance report. All</p>

	approved.
PR 41/22	<p>To consider the following planning applications:</p> <p>Cllr M Groucutt handed the meeting over to Cllr T Konieczny to take Councillors through the planning applications brought to this meeting due to the dates for responses being needed prior to the next Environment Committee Meeting:</p> <p>00427: Change to the original application. No material considerations for refusal, already approved by planning. Flat roof is less obtrusive. Straight forward approval.</p> <p>00443: Retrospective application: Pavement area taken up by permanent structure attached to the building. Cllr MA Brocklesby expressed concern over all the extensions to businesses on Frogmore Street. This is the most problematic as it is on a corner, affects the street scape, and is like an outdoor 'conservatory' – Objects to this application. Cllr T Thomas was concerned that WG funding was spent on opening up pedestrianisation and the building here has been done without planning. Cllr F Morgan stated that this is a licencing matter, to tackle the land grabbing along the high street. Planning app should never have been submitted. Cllr S Burch agreed, - this is unacceptable, its outside of MCC policy on street cafes, planters have to be of a certain design, chairs and tables have to be removeable. It is an ugly structure, and a land grab. The public street is enclosed and this shouldn't be allowed. Better to have an awning, not a shed – refuse application. Cllr D Simcock agreed with everyone – this shouldn't happen where a commercial company takes over the pavement, there is no access through it at all. Cllr N Tatam expressed the situation had been steadily getting out of control. Some of these structures are on castors and can be removed, then some 'forts' appeared, and now this 'shed'. It's a public space, it should be licenced for use for a certain period, not be given away. Point of clarification from Cllr R Harris: Its Highways land, so cannot be used without permission from MCC. Cllr T Konieczny: Ownership of land is not a planning consideration. MCC should undertake due diligence of the street trading in the town. Others in town are demountable. This is a permanent structure, and it obstructs the pavement. If granted, it will set a precedent for all shops to secure and block fronts so pedestrians can't get by. The café culture disadvantages those in mobility scooters, wheelchairs, or those with buggies. A modest frontage would be more acceptable. This is a physical blockage of the pavement. Cllr N Tatam explained the area was designed to be a 'square' for more uses, so licencing can request the area to be cleared as an event space. All in favour of recommending refusal of this application.</p> <p>00469: One complaint has been received about this so far, but the reasons stated are not material consideration for planning, see no reason to refuse. Cllr S Burch has looked at this and doesn't like the application, the side extension replacing the garage – it sets future precedent for others to do the same – is that regarded as good reason to refuse? Alters street scape from 2 houses, 2</p>

