

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 8TH JUNE 2022 AT 7PM ON MS TEAMS, & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENTNY.

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

Absent without apologies

Cllr M Powell

In attendance:

S Rosser - Town Clerk
N Watkins – ACE
K Waters – Food Festival
Y James – Abergavenny CAB

No public session

No public in attendance

PR 56/22	Receive and approve apologies for absence Cllrs Brocklesby, Callard, Groucutt and Nicholson sent their apologies, and it was resolved to accept their reasons for absence.
PR 57/22	Receive Declarations of Interest None received.
PR 58/22	To approve the minutes from 18th May 2022. Cllr T Konieczny proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr M Barnes, and all Councillors resolved to accept the minutes.
PR 59/22	To receive a verbal report from ACE in support of their renewal of the agreement with ATC.

	<p>Cllr Bowyer welcomed Norma Watkins from ACE to the meeting. NW spoke about how needs of people across the town have increased dramatically. ACE's mantra is to help anybody and everybody who comes through the door. NW handed out figures to show a snapshot of who uses the services and for what, amounting to around 4000 people a year. There has been a big increase in food requests. Often people come in with another pretext, and then drop into conversation about another issue. They aim to use funds from ATC to help children on the estate around ACE. Money has previously been used for play days, of which the last one held was very successful. The Christmas Grotto sees ACE give a £10 gift plus chocolates to every child, and a lot of the parents take the gift to keep until Christmas Day as this may be one of the only gifts they get.</p> <p>ACE has a great receptionist who is very empathic due to her background. Just today they had 27 people come in over 3 hours, each wanting help with different issues. Pre-half term NW saw a child walking to school in slippers as the parent couldn't afford new shoes. There is a far-reaching need now, lots come in asking for help. The 3 years of funding from ATC has been invaluable. ACE get £2500 which they spend on food and subscribing to Fare Share. Toiletries and household products are a struggle to get for some people.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes asked about a joint cooking project with ACT, but NW said this has now come to an end. ACE try to give out meals to people, so they get tinned or fresh fruit and veg alongside frozen or fresh meals.</p> <p>Cllr Simcock asked where the food they give out comes from. NW said they subscribe to Fare Share and get lots from Waitrose, and this gets delivered to them by ACT.</p> <p>Cllr George asked if someone come in for food, what work is done with them to help them not need to ask for help again, and what can be done to signpost more people to ACE. NW explained that the person asking for food is an opener, then ACE source help via the CAB and other agencies. Sometimes they refer people to the food bank. MCC also pay in along with housing associations. As for people using ACE, most discover ACE via word of mouth, and people have to trust the staff and volunteers at ACE before they use the services and open up.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny asked about what support ACE gets from other Community Councils and Social Landlords. NW listed a breakdown, MCC, MHA, both give £3k per year for 3 years. Llantilio Pertholey Community Council give £1k per year. Ace also apply for various grants.</p> <p>Cllr Strong said it was upsetting that NW felt ACE had to beg for assistance, and that it must be really tough. It's heart-breaking that working is no longer a route out of poverty, and asked if any more detailed statistics were collected from those using their services. NW said they are seeing a more even mix of social and private households coming in.</p> <p>Cllr Bowyer thanked Norma Watkins for her time and presentation this evening.</p>
PR 60/22	<p>To receive a presentation from Abergavenny Food Festival to renew the sponsorship agreement going forward.</p> <p>Cllr Bowyer welcomed Kim Waters to the meeting. KW told Councillors that 2019 was a tough year for the Food Festival and things were in quite a state. He was asked to take on the role of CEO in 2020 for a year, and he's still in</p>

post due to the pandemic and new challenges the FF has to overcome. 2020 festival was all online. 2021 festival, even up to a week before, looked very unsure as even the management team couldn't meet in person. Contingencies were made to ensure at least half of the team could manage the festival build up if any should get covid. The model and strategy was updated. Tickets are now all buy in advance, with limited numbers, and they can be purchased online or in person at EH Accountancy. Limiting numbers means that overcrowding will no longer be an issue. Conscious not to increase the ticket price as they want the festival to be inclusive. Last year sold out. They have very little planned on the streets around town now, so they concentrate on all other areas returning. Businesses are encouraged to take on the street element, and FF will collaborate and support where they can. FF are working to maintain a standard and the quality, which is very important. 180 stalls this year, compared to 120 last year. KW gave out copies of last year's magazine from the Festival for information. ATC has always been a great supporter. An agreement was done for 2021/22 for £10k support which is for the roof decorations in the Market Hall. Last year the theme was the river Usk, this year it is Agri-Forestry, looking at eco/agri-ecology, mixing forestry and animals.

Cllr Jones asked what the FF are paying staff this year. KW said they always pay weekend staff the legal minimum wage for under 23yrs. They have around 120 people employed of the weekend. The rest is a core team of 6 who oversee things until the month before the festival, then they bring in more local people for that month. Litter pickers and stewards are then employed for the weekend, and this works well as people are more likely to turn up if they are being paid, rather than relying on volunteers.

Cllr Barnes asked about what other help the FF receives. KW is asking ATC for £10k per year for 2 years again from ATC. WG give help, not sure what they will be getting this year. They had £5k from the food directorate. They have sponsors like MCC, Bordeaux Wines, Alun Griffiths, Schrodgers, - all of these are listed in the magazine. ATC have been a great support for many years, and the support enables Bettina reeves to design and create the roof decorations every year. KW would like ATC to have input in the magazine by way of a community issues narrative.

Cllr Eldridge asked if the new changes of the festival offer better value for money. KW thinks more sov- lots of events were previously only accessed with the purchase of additional tickets, like the 'Dome' debates – things like food poverty food cost, sustainability will be on this year, with chefs on all stages plus a new stage yet to be named – all of this is now included in the main ticket price. Under 16s will be free.

Cllr Konieczny was pleased to see that last year's festival regained its Welsh flavour. Good to see festival influence the food agenda, and look at the cost of living crisis. Had discussions with Daniel Morton around storytelling about food and how to integrate this into a fundraiser for the food bank. KW said there is a book stall which will be selling on cookery books to raise funds for the food bank, as its good to link up with them. Elaine Blanchard is also looking at the food waste story at the community centre.

Cllr Wilde asked for clarification on how the FF meshes with local traders and businesses. KW said whatever events are going on, there are lots of ways to sponsor and support in various ways. FF try to engage with them all in a

	<p>variety of ways, and they are always open to discussion around ideas they may have, and how to link it to food (eg; giving a bottle of wine with every pair of boots sold to include a shoe shop in the festival, or a travel agent offering food and drink from a region or country they are offering holidays to). The word Festival is very important, and Abergavenny has a good thing going. Cllr Bowyer thanked Kim for attending and for his presentation.</p>
PR 61/22	<p>To receive an online presentation from Abergavenny Branch of Monmouthshire Citizens Advice Bureau on renewing their Cooperation Agreement with ATC.</p> <p>Cllr Bowyer welcomed Yvonne James from Abergavenny CAB to the meeting via MS Teams. Yvonne had sent in reports in advance of the meeting for councillors to read through and highlighted there is a real benefits issue as they have double of the amount of people coming in regarding tis compared to last year, and it is getting worse. Big issue is debt and financial capability. People come in with more than 1 issue all of which take longer to deal with. Energy advice: 20 hours given to one client to help fix their issue. General Advice Service is run by volunteers, and lot shave now gone. 76 has dropped to 42. This affects the ability to deliver services. Abergavenny has retained most volunteers. Some volunteers now want t dup in for one off events rather than commit long term. Project Workers – they are funded by WG and other funding streams. Taking hours on client issues. Appointment slots are getting longer. Used to be straight-forward, now asking things like how to cook food that they've been given by the food bank, and what's the cheapest way to do this? DWP queries take a lot of time. Tribunal and appeal support puts additional stress on clients and volunteers. General Advice is supported by Community Councils and MCC, but MCC's funding has dropped by over £20k, as did the support from Monmouth Town Council (since started back up). Sometimes they can access funding for specific project funding.</p> <p>Cllr Simcock asked how much MCC used to support CAB with before the drop? YJ said it has gone form £76k to £54k over 7 years.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny raised a point of info: ATC – all Town and Community Councils have a statutory power to provide this service as it doesn't come under s137 of the LGA.</p> <p>Cllr Eldridge asked if CAB could only apply to T&CCs or funding or are there rules around this? YJ explained there are rules around funs for core services and salaries, more is available for specific project work with measurable outcomes. ATC funds go toward core services which are very thinly stretched.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes said if the workload is expanding and work goes up, how much and how long can CAB cope with the increase? YJ said CAB are grateful for any and all support they receive. More would always be welcome. A 3year agreement gives security. With regard to coping: staff don't get paid overtime, just core hours. The need is so great they just do it. Handling this okay at the moment. There is no intention to cut any services. Increase to outreach is not happening as fast as they'd like.</p> <p>Clr Bowyer expressed appreciation for all that CAB do, and that ATC will look very seriously at the new agreement. YJ left the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny proposed that we bring a report to next P&R Committee</p>

	<p>regarding funding allocated to each organisation and if there is scope to increase them. Cllr Barnes seconded this proposal, supported by all Councillors.</p> <p>Cllr Wright proposed to increase amount given to ACE, seconded by Cllr Jones.</p> <p>Resolved to bring full breakdowns and report to next P&R for scrutiny and approval.</p>
PR 62/22	<p>Finance reports inc. Months 1 & 2 to be received and approved.</p> <p>Due to year end processes being completed 20th May, followed by the Jubilee which took up more time with planning and implementation, there have been delays entering Months 1 & 2. Full reconciliations and reports will be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>Town Clerk will check on the £8k spend to Food Festival in 2021, as KW said that Food Festival had not yet submitted their claim to ATC for the £10k support from 2021.</p> <p>Cllr Strong asked about large sums being held in ne account – The Town Clerk explained this had been highlighted by the internal auditor previously and although guidelines on CCCL accounts which hold no more than £85k in each account have been given to the Town Clerk, time has not yet been available to properly sit down and consider this option at this time. Cllr Burch did say that ATC is likely to be on the threshold of what can be covered by FCS due to type of account we have but she will sit down and go through this with the Town Clerk in detail.</p> <p>Town Clerk asked Councillors to look at and make comment on the proposed monthly spread sheet to give details of our month-to-month regular expenditure for Councillors to approve regular payments, standing orders and direct debits. This is to enable payments to be approved in advance as per recommendation in the Internal Auditors Report.</p>
PR 63/22	<p>To receive and note an update from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report was received and noted.</p>
PR 64/22	<p>To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications:</p> <p>DM/2022/00724: No material considerations – recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2022/00593: No material considerations – recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2022/00793: Change of access: vehicular access onto Penypound not been used for decades. Large wooden doors onto street will be for pedestrian access instead. Knock down garage and wall to give access onto Park Street. Access and egress on junction of Old Hereford Road, towards Park Crescent – poor sight lines. Penypound – you can see more. Proposal is very</p>

	<p>problematic, and close to the junction. Cllr Burch would agree if the proposed access wasn't more problematic than the existing access. Highways see this as an improvement to the current access. Cllr Konieczny said historically access was at the rear but houses have now been built there. Welcome refusal if Highways would re-consider it as its unsafe on a blind corner. Accident waiting to happen. Cllr Simcock suggested the application was a better suggestion than the current provision onto Penypound. Can we refuse if Highways have already said they approve of it?</p> <p>Cllr George commented that both options were bad, the existing entrance was better for viewing the road, there is the school crossing to consider though. Cllr Konieczny proposed rejecting the app on the grounds that the entrance proposed is unsafe as unsighted, seconded by Cllr George.</p> <p>Cllr Jones agreed that Cllr Burch raised a good point, its slightly better but not appropriate. Can we amalgamate response to ask MCC to look at this again at what is safer?</p> <p>Cllr Strong suggested Highways look at this again to make sure it is a safe proposition.</p> <p>6 Councillors in favour of rejecting with notes and suggestions, 3 Councillors against rejecting the application.</p> <p>Town Clerk to respond to application as a rejection with notes and suggestions as discussed.</p>
PR 65/22	<p>To receive reports from Councillors attendance at external bodies which are relevant to this Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Jones has been contacted by his three external organisations (Eisteddfod, Mind Monmouthshire and Borough Theatre) but not attended any meetings as of yet.</p>
PR 66/22	<p>Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Burch said Cabinet are discussing allocation of funding for the cost of living crisis. Putting money into hands of individuals as well as organisations that can help. Meeting to invite Active Travel Proposals – conversations ongoing. KHS passed planning this afternoon.</p>
PR 67/22	<p>To consider items for the next meeting on 13th July 2022.</p> <p>Town Hall Clock – a meeting wit local horologist Rob Howells who looks after the Town Hall Clock brought to light that it is in desperate need of maintenance and repairs. Quote has been sent to MCC several times, both for maintenance and automation proposals. Town Clerk to bring report to next meeting on proposals.</p>

Meeting ended at 8:37pm

APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE