

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 27TH JULY 2022 AT 7PM VIA MS TEAMS & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENTNY.

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

Absent without apologies

Cllr Holland

In attendance:

S Rosser (Town Clerk)
Friends of the Earth Abergavenny and Crickhowell group

No public session.

No public in attendance.

E 77/22	Receive and approve apologies for absence Apologies were received from Cllr Wright and it was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.
E 78/22	Receive Declarations of Interest None received.
E 79/22	To receive and approve the minutes from the last meeting on 29th June 2022. Proposed Cllr Bowyer, seconded by Cllr Barnes, all approved.
E 80/22	To receive a presentation from the Friends of the Earth Abergavenny and Crickhowell group. Cllr Konieczny welcomed Karen, Sally and Barry from Friends of the Earth Abergavenny and Crickhowell group. Karen took the Councillors through the Simple Steps presentation. It talks about accessible and achievable aspirations. Ditch the disposables. Use your patch of earth. Eat green. Get cosy. Be water wise. Get active. Buy less new stuff. Move your money. If many people do something it is better than many doing nothing at all. The letter received by ATC from Friends of the Earth and the presentation shared this evening will be

	<p>circulated to all ATC counsellors. Councillor Bowyer thanked them for the presentation and asked if this was aimed at individuals then things like shifting money to a more ethical bank would be simple but what can ATC do? Karen said it is about how money is invested as lots goes into fossil fuels. With an ethical savings or bank account you could move everything from a current account or isa or pension. You simply need to ask your bank. You can look at the website Switch It where they will list all known banks with a scale from one to five with one being not ethical and five being ethical. Counsellor Barnes offered a point of information that Barclays are the worst. MCC bank with them and the leader of MCC has been informed and is looking into this.</p> <p>The group asked if ATC could signpost Friends of the Earth to other places such as schools, leisure centres, etc. Sally said they're hoping to get support from ATC to provide the presentation to more groups. They have a website but would like organisations to display the logo of simple steps and be recognised for this and to get the message out there. Cllr Jones spoke about how ATC also bank with Barclays but they have a Gateway Credit Union account as well. ATC have policies on things like single use plastic procurement and thinks it would be good for ATC to facilitate getting the message across to other groups. Cllr Konieczny said there are no meetings in August the next ATC meetings will be in September. We can look at creating a meeting in October with all interested stakeholders. Friends of the Earth are happy to liaise with ATC and other groups to work out a way forward. This can be put on the agenda to set this up to invite appropriate stakeholders. All Cllrs agreed for this to be put on the September agenda.</p>
E 81/22	<p>To receive and note an update from the Town Clerk.</p> <p>The Town Clerks report was received and noted. Cllr Konieczny expressed that the judge for Wales in Bloom was impressed with the town in general and gave pointers regarding seeing how interventions of plantings have increased biodiversity and insect life and to include this in the portfolio.</p> <p>Keep Abergavenny Tidy have looked at areas and forensically identified strategies that will work in the aim of using them throughout the town. Much of this will be a behavioural change over the long haul but we will start somewhere.</p> <p>Cllr Barnes said he is interested in the business side and how can he help. The town clerk will put the Grofield ward councillors in touch with Keep Abergavenny Tidy.</p> <p>Cllr Simcock asked if there's any evidence of damage to the trees with lights on them in St Johns Square. The town clerk responded there was not. MCC maintain the trees and they are happy with their condition. Just good to know the trees aren't damaged and that the lights fitted are slacked off year on year. The concerns of the local resident who brought this to ATC's attention is well meaning but misplaced. We will seek acknowledgement from MCC that they are healthy. Town clerk will ask MCC grounds to confirm this. Cllr Simcock asked ATC to convey these findings to the complainant.</p>
E 82/22	<p>To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications:</p> <p>DM/2022/01022 Cllr Simcock had not heard anything from Cantref residents regarding this planning application. Cllr Konieczny said looking at the application it</p>

	<p>is an impressive retrofit and extension to move towards a net zero building. Would welcome if all extensions built to this standard. All councillors approved. Proposed by Cllr Barnes, seconded Cllr Simcock. ATC asked the town clerk to send a note to say impressed with the net zero build.</p> <p>DM/2022/21250 TPO. This falls in Llanwenarth Citra and it's the same as the removal of trees in Bailey Park. These were planted along time ago and are not native species. They have been there 30 years. Removing all will be an improvement and a chance to re-introduce native species. Proposed to approve by Cllr Simcock, seconded by Cllr Barnes, all approved.</p> <p>DM/2022/01010 Grofield ward, this falls in a conservation area. Proposed extension doesn't materially alter the building and it is well hidden. Proposed approval by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Eldridge, all approve. Routine application. Proposed approval by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Simcock all approve.</p>
E 83/22	<p>To receive and note the Service Delivery update.</p> <p>At Waterside there had been rubbish and potholes that were causing issue. The rubbish has now been sorted and thanks received from the resident. An issue on Park Crescent with regard to damage to verges by parking vehicles has not yet received an update from Monmouthshire County Council so the road surface issues at Waterside and potholes also on Park Crescent are to be chased up. The parking issue was sent to enforcement at MCC.</p> <p>Nigel Leaworthy had reported that he was leaving in place the dogs on leads signs at Bailey Park as no new signs can be put up as this cannot be enforced. MCC environmental team suggested taking the signs down but they will not be removed at this time. Cllr Barnes said could it be suggested that a dog area be installed in Bailey Park and would it be reasonable to request a fenced dog area. County Cllr Thomas had said there was no money to do this but can ATC do anything further? An exercise field for dogs could reduce the issues by 80 to 90% if you could point out a specific area in the park for them. Cllr Konieczny asked if Cllr Barnes had written to Cllr Thomas about this. Cllr Barnes has already done this but has been told the MCC have money problems and it would need more work. Cllr Konieczny suggested we should go back and ask them to look at this again or provide solutions rather than just abandoning the bylaw. Find an alternative to keep everyone happy. Cllr Jones proposed formally writing as a committee to see if it can be explored. Proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Barnes. Cllr Konieczny said as a way forward we could get Park ward Cllrs to meet with Cllr Thomas to assess the area on site and ask the town clerk to invite all to meet as soon as possible along with any other interested parties. Cllr Strong asked if Cllr Thomas was the correct county councillor to approach. He recognised that he is representative of the ward in question but suggested it may be better to approach the relevant cabinet member. Cllr Burch or Cllr Maby would possibly be the better Councillors to ask. Cllr Strong suggested amending the proposal - could it be sent to Cllr Burch copying in Cllr Thomas. Proposal for town clerk to formally write on behalf of committee to see if a fenced in dog area or exercise field can be explored. Proposed by Cllr Strong, seconded by Cllr Jones, all approved.</p>

	<p>A 40 bus stop. Cllr Simcock asked if we could invite Paul Keeble and Mark Hand to discuss the rationale behind this proposal? Cllr Barnes said the promobility group want to be included in any future discussions. Cllr Konieczny proposed inviting Paul Keeble and Mark Hand to Abergavenny Town Council and to then decide if a public stakeholder meeting would be appropriate after that. This was seconded by Cllr Jones and approved by all present. Councillors discussed the report and if it is felt there is a need to involve wider community ATC can invite all concerned and who will be affected by the changes at a later date.</p> <p>Cllr Simcock asked if we could put signs up to show the toilets are open in Bailey Park for the summer. Cllr Barnes asked if ATC had considered the finances for the toilet provision has circulated from MCC regarding the three blocks in town which ATC contribute towards as finances were mainly for labour. Could we investigate doing this ourselves for more cost effective manner? Cllr Konieczny offered a point of information. This has been discussed fully by the previous ATC who looked at all options including buying and taking on the toilet blocks ourselves. The legal advice received was to not buy the toilets and to allow MCC to continue and ATC to pay towards this. It was not cost effective. He thanked Cllr Barnes for the comments but suggested not revisiting this.</p>
E 84/22	<p>To receive and approve a Finance update on the Environment Budget headings.</p> <p>Cllr Bowyer proposed accepting the financial report, this was seconded by Cllr George. All councillors approved.</p>
E 85/22	<p>Report from Town Councillors attendance at external bodies relevant to this Committee:</p> <p>Cllr Konieczny reminded all councillors that they are observers on the groups listed on the agenda. If councillors attend it is requested that they please circulate a report for all councillors to digest. Cllr Eldridge said the Y Fenni business community had raised that they want ATC councillors to join meetings but only as and when they need ATC input. Cllr Konieczny said these organisations will have internal meetings that they may not want ATC present at, so in general councillors would attend as an observer then bring back anything for us to be aware of.</p>
E 86/22	<p>Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee.</p> <p>No reports received.</p>
E 87/22	<p>Items for consideration at the next meeting 28th September 2022.</p> <p>Rivers response and Friends of the Earth simple steps meeting.</p>

Meeting ended at 8:31pm.

APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIR DATE