



# ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

*'Working for and with the people and communities of Abergavenny'*

*Revision December 2020*

## **Abergavenny Town Council Strategy & Action Plan**

Abergavenny Town Council is committed to improving the town for all residents living in the five town wards yet understands that Abergavenny and its facilities serve a much wider catchment area. Abergavenny is also a tourism destination with thousands of visitors a year coming to the town. It is in this context that the Council has considered its priorities for the future.

The Town Council has a very clear mission which is “*Working for and with the people and communities of Abergavenny*”

The Council is required by law to prepare an annual report showing how the Council is contributing to the objectives in the Monmouthshire Public Services Board Well-being Plan.

These are:

- Give Children and Young People the Best Possible Start in Life from birth through to early adulthood. This would cover schooling, finding a job or training, having a healthy and active lifestyle and having places to play.
- Address the Challenges of Demographic Change. The area has an increasing proportion of the population classed as older people which means that the services that the Council provides must cater for this age group. Older people have a lot to offer the town and often play a vital role in their communities and have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience.
- Communities and Business to be part of an economically thriving and well connected county. Connecting people and businesses digitally or through a good transport network is crucial to a thriving economy.
- Protect and Enhance Our Natural Environment and Minimise the Impact of Climate Change. This objective is about looking after and improving our natural environment which also contributes to the economy through tourism, agriculture, forestry and much more. Natural resources are vital to our everyday lives.

### **Identifying Our Priorities**

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This document sets out immediate priorities and actions for the Council which will include some existing activities as well as some new ones. There will also be some activities which the Town Council will not continue. The Council has also taken the opportunity to look at how it operates and has identified some actions to make it a more effective, efficient and responsive Town Council.

### **What do we want to do over the coming years?**

Below are the priority areas identified by the Town Council to explore and take forward over the coming years. This does not mean the Council will stop doing all the things it does now ~~with the list of activities shown in the action plan.~~

#### Children & Young People

The young people in the town are our future. We need to *continue* ~~understand whether the Town Council, to working in partnership with other organisations~~ to do more to improve the opportunities for young people *not just through the provision of activities and facilities but also through making available services. By supporting local organisations that support mental health, the Town Council can ensure young people with emerging mental health issues have access to and are offered appropriate support. The coronavirus pandemic has contributed to a growing number of young people suffering from anxiety and isolation; feelings that can benefit from early intervention support.* We have already made a start by talking ~~working with~~ to schools and agencies *involved* with young people to find out more about the issues *and we will, but we need to* take this area of work forward in a co-ordinated way.

*As 16 year olds will have the vote in the elections in 2022, the Town Council will forge strong links with King Henry VIII School to increase the understanding of the local democratic process and the role of local councils.*

#### Challenges of Demographic Change

Good relationships between older and younger groups creates a stronger more together town. The population of Abergavenny is an ageing population. A priority for the Town Council is to ensure there is provision and support for the older generation and to seek innovative ways to bring different generations together. *The coronavirus pandemic has contributed to a growing number of adults suffering from anxiety, loneliness and depression. By supporting and promoting local organisations that support mental health, the Town Council can ensure that appropriate support is available locally. We have*

*a role to play in making representation during the preparation of the Local Development Plan to ensure that planning policies take account of the needs of an ageing population. We will seek local views to enable us to articulate the views of residents.*

### Environment and Climate Change

*Abergavenny is fortunate to have some fantastic greenspaces within the town and more can be done to enhance these spaces for nature and for people. The Town Council considers it has a role to bring people together to promote greater partnership working and support for such endeavours such as the delivery of MCC's Green Infrastructure Strategy. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on the Town Council to protect, enhance and promote biodiversity and we welcome this duty and will continue to seek innovative ways to fulfil our duty recognising that we do not own or manage land. We will increase engagement with local environmental groups to improve the sustainability of their organisations so they can continue to protect and enhance biodiversity. We recognise that everyone has a part to play in tackling the climate emergency and as a Town Council we will continue to consider the impact of our own practices as well as working with others to tackle climate change.*

### Communities and Businesses are Economically Thriving and Well Connected

*The Town Council currently delivers many services or financially supports services which contribute to this objective. These are Abergavenny in Bloom, public toilets, Tourist Information Centre, street sweeping and provision and emptying of dog waste bins. ~~Further consideration of new areas of activity will take place in due course.~~ The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented. Now more than ever, agencies need to work together if Abergavenny is to buck the bleak economic forecasts. Abergavenny Town Council will play its part alongside business groups, other public sector organisations and local and national government.*

*We have a role to play in making representation during the preparation of the Local Development Plan to ensure that the LDP promotes local industry in Abergavenny so that there is a more appropriate balance between land allocated for housing and employment.*

### How should the Council change?

The Town Council has different roles. The Town Council can directly pay for something to happen, it can assist others to make things happen, it can promote different activities and it can act as the voice for the town in discussions with other organisations. All of these roles are important and are not mutually exclusive.

The Town Council already makes a big difference in the town but we *must continue to let* - at letting people know what we do and why and importantly we need to ask how we can improve. ~~In 2018/19, The Town Council prepares an Annual Report for the first time and this was~~ which is delivered to all households and *we will continue to do this. we set out what we had achieved in 2017/18.*

The Town Council is a small organisation and this is often a limiting factor in what can be achieved. The Town Council needs to be more creative in how it works in partnership with local organisations to achieve its aims.

How we make decisions ~~should be~~ has been reviewed. *New Committees have been put in place that can make decisions rather than making recommendations to the main Council. Sometimes an issue has to be considered by three different Committees before a decision is made,* This makes for ~~slow~~ quicker decision making. ~~As a public organisation making decisions on how to spend public funds, we need to ensure that decisions are made in an appropriate manner. We believe we can improve.~~ The public can attend *and speak at* Town Council meetings but rarely do so. A priority for the Town Council is to increase engagement between the Town Council and residents.

The Town Council offers small grants to a range of community organisations. ~~The Council will refine the eligibility criteria to target its resources in our priority areas: to increase opportunities for young people, reduce social isolation, have an economically thriving town and improve the environment. This will commence in 2019/20.~~ *The Town Council has also financially supports many of the town festivals.*

### **Town Council's Civic Role**

In addition to providing services in the Town, the Council has a Civic role. The Mayor attends many functions throughout the year representing the Town Council and also hosts a number of functions in the Town Hall. The Mayor and the Town Council play a major role in commemorations' such as Mons Day in May and Remembrance Sunday. At these ceremonies the Mayor is accompanied by the Mace Bearer.

Abergavenny is twinned with the towns of Beaupreau in France and Ostringen in Germany and the Town Council is involved in twinning visits arranged between these towns which occur on a yearly or bi-yearly basis.

### Timescales

*The action plans detail those actions that the Town Council will undertake in the short, medium and long term. Short term is within a year, medium term 2-3 years, long term 4-5 years.*

**Review December 2020**

| <b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE</b>  |   |  |                        |                        |                              |                                    |
|---|---|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Priorities</b>   | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Partners</b>  | <b>Lead Councillor</b> | <b>Timescale S/M/L</b> | <b>Cost</b>                  | <b>Latest Comments on progress</b> |
| Ensure young people with emerging mental health issues have access to and are offered appropriate services                        | <p>To <del>monitor find out what is currently provision provided</del> and identify any gaps</p> <p>To support the SHIFT project that provides emotional wellbeing support to young people aged 11+</p>                     | Schools, MCC Youth Services, ACE, Mind Monmouthshire     | Cllr T Davies          | S, M & L<br><br>S, M   | SHIFT<br>£5000 per annum     |                                    |
| Increase opportunities for young people to have a say in what happens in their town   | <p>Arrange regular meetings with schools</p> <p>To pilot participatory democracy project with KHS</p> <p>To establish a link with KHS to increase understanding in local democracy and what having the vote at 16 means</p> | Schools, MCC Youth Service GAVO, KHS                     | Cllr T Davies          | S<br><br>S<br><br>S-M  | £5000 for project identified |                                    |
| To improve understanding of whether youth provision in the town is appropriate & sufficient and take forward identified projects. | Continue discussions with MCC Youth Service and other agencies  | MCC Youth Service, ACE, Aber Community Centre, 7 Corners | Cllr T Davies          | S                      |                              |                                    |

|  |  |                                     |               |   |   |  |
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|  | <p><i>To assist with the skate park extension project</i></p> <p><i>Support the provision of new Youth Service space</i></p> <p><i>To resurface the hard courts area at Bailey Park</i></p> <p><i>To promote with partners the desirability of undertaking an audit of youth provision</i></p> | GAVO, MCC Partnerships, MCC Grounds |               | <p>S-M</p> <p>S-M</p> <p>S</p> <p>M</p> | <p>£35,000 hard court resurfacing</p>                                   |  |
| <p>To provide engaging and stimulating <i>summer holidays activities for young people</i> and free healthy meals</p> | <p>To fund MCC to provide the summer playscheme</p> <p><del>To investigate how to</del> provide free healthy meals during the playscheme</p> <p><i>To support MCC Youth Service in the delivery of a programme of summer activities</i></p>  | MCC                                 | Cllr T Davies | S - M                                   | <p>£12,000 summer playscheme</p> <p>£5,000 Youth Service activities</p> |  |



|   |  |                                   |                             |                                   |   |  |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><i>To promote events for children and young people</i></p> | <p><i>To arrange free events for children and young people; one event in north Abergavenny.</i></p> <p><i>To encourage town festivals to have activities for children and young people</i></p> | <p><i>Festival organisers</i></p> | <p><i>Cllr T Davies</i></p> | <p><i>S</i></p> <p><i>S-M</i></p> | <p><i>£1000 for Town Council events</i></p> |  |
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| CHALLENGES OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE                                |   |                                   |                 |                 |              |  |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Priority  | Action  | Partners                          | Lead Councillor | Timescale S/M/L | Cost         | Comments on progress                                 |
| Public service provision accommodates the needs of older people | <p>To consider older people in service delivery options such as improvements to the toilets</p> <p><i>To implement a Community Toilet Scheme at the top of Frogmore Street in light of closure of WHL toilets</i></p> <p><i>Increasing understanding of the issues facing older people</i></p> <p><i>To monitor planning applications for any development proposals that may give rise to mobility issues</i></p> | MCC<br>Older people groups        | Cllr T Davies   | S, M, L         | £1000 a year |  |
| Community based organisations provide                           | <del>To understand current provision and identify any</del>   | MCC<br>Mardy Park Resource Centre | Cllr T Davies   | S               |              | There have been few activities due to Covid. Outside |

|  |   |   |                      |                              |  |  |
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| <p>activities that seek to reduce social isolation</p> | <p><del>gaps</del> <i>To continue to work with organisations that support older people</i></p> <p><i>To increase the number and range of activities through direct funding of service providers</i></p> <p><i>To take part in the MCC Community Support Network to ensure that support is available to all.</i></p> | <p>Abergavenny Community Centre<br/>ACE<br/>Bridges Community Centre<br/>Community Groups</p> |                      | <p>S-M</p> <p>S</p>          |  | <p>gardening groups are operational and encourage new members.</p> |
| <p>Improve intergenerational interaction</p>           | <p>To pilot an 'adopt a garden' scheme</p> <p><i>To assess need and demand for allotments</i></p> <p><i>To continue to support activities and festivals that promote intergenerational interaction</i></p>  | <p>MCC</p> <p>Allotment Society<br/>Llantilio Pertholey CC</p>                                | <p>Cllr T Davies</p> | <p>S</p> <p>S-M</p> <p>S</p> |  |  |

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| <i>To promote events for older people</i>            | <i>To arrange free events of interest to older people</i>  |  |                 | S | £1000 a year   |  |
| <i>To support services that support older people</i> | <i>To continue financial support to Mind Monmouthshire</i> |  | Cllr M Groucutt | S | £10,000 a year |  |
|  | <i>To continue financial support to Citizens Advice</i>    |  |                 | S | £12,000 a year |  |

| PROTECT & ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT   |   |   |                  |                            |               |                      |
|---|---|---|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Priority  | Action  | Partners  | Lead Councillor  | Timescale S/M/L            | Cost          | Comments on progress |
| Reduce the use of single-use plastic  | <p><i>To promote the Refill Scheme</i></p> <p><i>To continue to review Town Council's use of single use plastic and reduce</i></p> <p><i>Install an outdoor drinking fountain</i></p> | <p>Refill Cymru<br/>Plastic Free Abergavenny<br/>Town centre businesses<br/>Schools</p> | Cllr T Konieczny | <p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>S</p> | £1000 approx. |                      |
| To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future <i>including multi-year funding</i>          | <p><i>To work with MCC to increase the number of volunteers active in Friends of groups</i></p> <p><i>To agree multi-year funding arrangements where appropriate</i></p>              | <p>Voluntary Environmental Groups<br/>MCC<br/>KWT<br/>GAVO</p>                          | Cllr T Konieczny | <p>S-M</p> <p>S-M</p>      |               |                      |
| <del>To encourage the use of pollinator planting in Council funded planting schemes</del> <i>enhance biodiversity</i> | To direct council contractors to increase pollinator friendly planting  | Bee friendly Monmouthshire  | Cllr T Konieczny | S-M                        |               |                      |

|  |   |  |                                |                         |   |  |
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|  | <p><i>To green the public estate</i></p> <p><i>To install bird boxes</i></p> <p><i>To improve the Gavenny corridor</i></p>  | <p>Monmouthshire CC</p>  |                                | <p>S, M, L</p> <p>L</p> | <p><i>Funding obtained from Heritage Fund grant for greening public estate and bird boxes</i></p> |  |
| <p><i>To promote biodiversity</i></p>  | <p><i>Produce a leaflet (paper and electronic) of a walk joining up the different greenspaces in the town and promoting their biodiversity</i></p> <p><i>Interpretation panels at Castle Meadows and for new planting</i></p> | <p><i>Environmental groups</i></p> <p><i>Friends of Castle Meadows</i></p> | <p><i>Cllr T Konieczny</i></p> | <p>S</p> <p>S</p>       | <p><i>Funding obtained from Heritage Fund grant for a leaflet and interpretation panels</i></p>   |  |
| <p>To improve the maintenance and enhancement of Bailey Park, and Linda Vista Gardens and Castle Meadows</p> | <p>To include enhanced work investigate the feasibility of establishing a team to maintenance of these greenspaces on Town Crew work schedule</p>   | <p>MCC, voluntary organisations, MCC GI Team</p>                           | <p>Cllr T Konieczny</p>        | <p>M</p>                |   |  |

|   |  |         |                |                                    |              |  |
|---|--|---------|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--|
|   | <i>To improve the heritage (natural and built) of these areas</i>  |         |                | S – M                              |              |  |
| Contribute to the MCC Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and resulting projects | To engage with MCC on the GI strategy  | MCC NRW | Cllr Konieczny | L                                  |              |  |
| To reduce the incidences of dog fouling in the town                             | <p>To provide dog waste bins throughout the town</p> <p>To promote the ‘give dog fouling the red card’ campaign</p> <p>To lobby MCC to bring in Public Space Protection Orders in particular areas where dog fouling is a particular issue <i>and to increase enforcement of existing byelaws eg dogs to be on a lead in Bailey Park</i></p> | MCC     | Cllr T Davies  | <p>S,M,L</p> <p>S,M,L</p> <p>S</p> | £7000 a year |  |

| <b>ECONOMICALLY THRIVING TOWN</b>   |   |   |                        |                                      |                                      |                             |
|---|---|---|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Priority</b>   | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Partners</b>                                 | <b>Lead Councillor</b> | <b>Timescale S/M/L</b>               | <b>Cost</b>                          | <b>Comments on progress</b> |
| To have cleaner streets   | To incorporate street cleaning arrangements into the Town Crew initiative<br><br><i>To arrange a phased deep steam clean of town centre</i>                             | MCC   | Cllr T Konieczny       | S-M<br><br>S- M                      |                                      |                             |
| To improve the appearance of the town centre  | <i>To provide bright and colourful floral displays</i><br><br><i>To provide Christmas Lighting</i><br><br>To Design and print new flags and banners for the town centre |   | Cllr T Konieczny       | S-L<br><br>S-M<br><br>S-M<br><br>S-M | £20,000 a year<br><br>£22,500 a year |                             |
| To have public toilets which meet the needs of users.   | <i>To continue financially contributing to ensure that MCC keep 3 blocks of toilets open</i>  | MCC<br>Disability groups<br>Baby/Toddler groups | Cllr T Konieczny       | S-M                                  |                                      |                             |
| To continue to work with town centre businesses and others to promote the town and what it has to offer | <i>Re-establish the Town Centre Action Group</i><br><br>Support the continuation of the TIC   | MCC,<br>BBNPA<br>Y Fenni Business Community,    | Cllr T Konieczny       | S-M<br><br>S-M                       | £10,000 a year                       |                             |



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|--|--|---|--|-----|---------------|--|
|  | Support Abergavenny & District Tourism Association | Tourist Information Centre, ADTA, Abergavenny Food Festival |  | S-M | £1,800 a year |  |
|--|--|---|--|-----|---------------|--|

| A MORE RESPONSIVE TOWN COUNCIL |  |          |                          |                 |      |                      |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|--------------------------|-----------------|------|----------------------|
| Issue                          | Action   | Partners | Lead Councillor          | Timescale S/M/L | Cost | Comments on progress |
| To improve communication       | <i>To maintain the Town Council Facebook page</i>  |          | Mayor                    | S/M/L           |      |                      |
|                                | <i>To regularly update the website</i>   |          |                          | S/M/L           |      |                      |
|                                | To issue regular press releases on Council activity  |          |                          | S               |      |                      |
|                                | <i>To prepare the Abergavenny Chronicle weekly column</i>                                    |          |                          | S               |      |                      |
| To improve decision making     | <del>To revisit the committee structure and powers of the committees.</del>                  |          | Mayor<br>All councillors | 2019            |      |                      |
|                                | To identify encourage ways that voluntary groups can engage with the decision-making process |          |                          | Ongoing         |      |                      |

| Issue   | Action   | Partners                  | Lead Councillor          | Timescale   | Cost | Comments on progress |
|---|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|------|----------------------|
| To encourage wider community engagement on Town Council activities      | To identify <i>innovative</i> methods to capture community views   |                           | Mayor<br>All Councillors |   |      |                      |
| To be more visible in the Town  | <p><del>To improve visibility of the office</del></p> <p>To publicise Council activity through the placing of a crest or logo.</p> <p><del>To hold a number of Committee meetings in town venues rather than in the Town Hall.</del></p> |                           | Mayor<br>All Councillors | <p>End 2019</p> <p>S/M/L</p> <p>Summer 2019 &amp; ongoing</p> |      |                      |
| To engage with and influence policymakers across a wide range of issues | <p>To build good working relationships with a range of policy makers</p> <p>To respond to relevant consultations</p> <p><i>To be the catalyst for the local organisations to have a voice on policies that impact on Abergavenny</i></p> | MCC<br>WG<br>NRW<br>ABHBT | Mayor<br>All Councillors | <p>S/M/L</p> <p>S/M/L</p> <p>S/M/L</p>                        |      |                      |

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|---|---|-----|-----------------------------|------------|--|--|
|   | <p><i>For the Town Council Clerk to be an active member of the PSB Programme Board representing all Town Councils in Monmouthshire</i></p> <p><i>To input into the LDP review process</i></p> |     |                             | S          |  |  |
| To increase the knowledge base of Councillors | <p><i>To offer training to Councillors</i></p> <p><i>To raise awareness of good practice within the sector and by topic</i></p>   | OVW | Mayor<br>All<br>Councillors | S<br><br>S |  |  |