

## ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 7PM VIA MS TEAMS

**Present:** Cllr T Konieczny (Chair)  
Cllr N Tatam  
Cllr M Harris  
Cllr R Harris  
Cllr S Burch  
Cllr T Davies  
Cllr G Jones  
Cllr D Simcock (late arrival)

#### **Absent without apologies**

None.

#### **In attendance:**

S Rosser (Town Clerk)

No public session.

E 21/21	<b>Receive and approve apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received from Cllrs L Van de Vyver, MA Brocklesby, & T Davies, and it was resolved to accept the reasons for absence.
E 22/21	<b>Receive Declarations of Interest</b>  Cllr R Harris – Takes no part in consideration or discussion of planning applications as sits on MCC Planning Committee. Also declared an interest in the discussion on the pre-planning application for King Henry VIII School as sits on the MCC 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Board.
E 23/21	<b>To receive and approve the minutes from the last meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021.</b>  Minutes Approved and to be signed when able to meet in person again. In terms of matters arising, E17/21 final paragraph: ideas for projects for the revised strategy and action plan – Cllr T Konieczny said that no communications had been received.
E 24/21	<b>To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications:</b>  DM/2021/01897 – noted 2 objections from local residents regarding deprivation of view and parking issues. Objections don't carry any material consideration. Falls in a ward covered by both Cllrs Konieczny and Hickman. It was noted that Cllr Hickman is referred to in objection but comments have not been

	<p>passed on to this committee for consideration as Cllr Hickman doesn't sit on this committee. Cllr S Burch agreed that objections have no planning merit but questioned if the proposals were considered too big for the site? Cllr Konieczny has looked at this in case it should warrant consideration, but on checks and balance the works will improve the whole property. Recommend approval.</p> <p>DM/2021/01906 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01893 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01724 – Noted that County Councillor M Powell has already commented on this application saying she has no objection. With the agreement of the Committee, Cllr T Konieczny will write to the Chair of the Planning Committee at MCC to seek clarification on whether this merits pre-determination if it reached MCC Planning for approval or comment as Cllr Powell sits on this committee.  DM/2021/01749 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01914 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01971 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01814 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/02010 – Recommend approval  DM/2021/01998 – Recommend approval</p>
E 25/21	<p><b>To consider the pre-planning application consultation notification received from Asbri Planning Ltd for King Henry VIII School redevelopment..</b></p> <p>Cllr T Konieczny commented that the date for submitting comments is 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – not giving a lot of time considering the festive season and restrictions to talk to people about this pre-planning application. The pre-application is likely to reflect what the finished article will look like and unlikely that any alterations will be made to this.</p> <p>Cllr M Harris said the short term of consultation has been commented on by governors at Deri View Primary School, very much reflecting that consultations have been very short. Having the date of 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 is not democratically in the spirit of gaining appropriate comments to feed in to the pre-planning consultation. Not only is the time period short but as commented on previously this is pitched across the festive season. Cllr T Konieczny wholeheartedly agreed, its important that the community are involved. The timescales are derisory considering the times we are in. With the Committee's approval, the Town Clerk will write to Asbri Planning to express ATC's disappointment and dismay at the timescales for such an important development for the town, negating the full democratic process, not just pushed through .There is a massive amount of material and documentation to go through as part of the pre-planning process which needs to be looked through and discussed, so we can give meaningful comments as part of the consultation. Committee unanimously agreed on comments to go back.</p>
E 26/21	<p><b>To receive and note an update from the Town Clerk.</b></p> <p>Report received and noted.</p>

	<p>SLA for toilet provision in town: Cllr T Konieczny commented that this whole process has become a farce. It is a disgrace that we have allowed it to go on for so long. We get flack back from residents about the closure of White Horse Lane toilets and poor signage to direct people to alternative toilets. ATC have spent money on an agreement with the Auberge to provide a toilet provision which can only be made available if covid restrictions allow. MCC are not prepared to refurbish the White Horse Lane toilets so Cllr Konieczny proposed that we use our column in the Chronicle to explain to residents the situation with the toilets, that we don't own them, that we pay MCC for them to remain open, and that MCC would only want to provide one toilet block which would be the one at Brewery Yard. ATC pay for cleaning and opening of the three toilet blocks and have not been able to get an agreed SLA which is appalling. We wouldn't allow a private company to run so long providing a service we pay for without a SLA being in place. Roger Hoggins' attitude has been cavalier toward ATC on this. If we don't get a response by January 2022, as we have a budget to set and we don't know what MCC are going to be charging us for 2022/23 provision, ATC should submit a complaint to the CEO at MCC on this matter.</p> <p>Cllr R Harris said he was going to suggest the use of the Chronicle article to raise the issue in the public domain, and commented that the previous council from over 5 years ago were also unable to get any agreement from MCC on the toilet provision. MCC may be hoping to drag out this until after the next election to see if the next council will stump up more money for this provision. ATC shouldn't be constantly blamed for MCC's shortfalls.</p> <p>Carbon literacy training: This will be very useful going forward in terms of future development of the Strategy and Action Plan. Town Clerk to do the training 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>Cllr T Konieczny and Town Clerk are meeting with Sali Palmer LNP officer at MCC, and Hazel Clatworthy, MCC Sustainability Officer, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 regarding development of environmental strategy. After this meeting, it would be useful to take this and look at a remote meeting to include the voluntary groups such as Friends of Castle Meadows, Linda Vista Gardens, Bailey Park, and Keep Abergavenny Tidy, to look at a strategy to allow us to make a Local Places for Nature grant funding application in March 2022. This should enable us to have a clear picture on creating a really good space. It would be useful to enter in to discussions with Nigel Leaworthy and MCC Ecology Officer about Swan Meadow and Gavenny Meadow to be partners in what MCC are going to do to improve these environments for residents.</p>
E 27/21	<p><b>To consider and review the Strategy and Action Plan and discuss additional actions for inclusion in the action tables.</b></p> <p>Although in the minutes of the last meeting as of yet no suggestions have been brought forward. There will be the big project with the voluntary groups, and coming from that we can populate the actions into the revised plan. We need to look at resurrecting the Town Centre Partnership with input from James Woodcock at MCC as its important we develop a covid recovery strategy.</p>

	<p>There is money around for use in the town centres and we should be well coordinated and develop a strand on this subject.</p> <p>Cllr G Jones apologised for not submitting an email to confirm the suggestion made at the last meeting regarding Belgrave Park. Cllr T Konieczny said that the tree planting mentioned previously can certainly be looked at and how this is undertaken can be looked at in conjunction with MCC and the Local Places for Nature grant application.</p> <p>Cllr S Burch echoed this apology, she has a number of ideas but due to work pressures has not been able to put time into formulating these ideas in an email. Cllr Konieczny said it has been a tough time for us all, the confidence in our future has been hit with such uncertainty, living through this pandemic. Progress has been made just a little bit more difficult. Its always better to have these meetings face to face but with recent developments we cannot so it is what it is.</p>
E 28/21	<p><b>Report from Councillors attendance at external bodies relevant to this Committee.</b></p> <p>None received.</p>
E 29/21	<p><b>Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee.</b></p> <p>Although unable to comment on the pre-planning process, Cllr R Harris said the development at King Henry VIII School into a 3-19 school is the biggest development to hit the town in a long time.</p>
E 30/21	<p><b>Items for consideration at the next meeting 22nd December 2021:</b></p> <p>We should be in a position to think how we set up a meeting with the voluntary groups in town to make a Local Places for Nature grant application. Further guidance can be sought once we know the scope of public involvement.</p> <p>Under consideration: Submitting a complaint to MCC's CEO for the lack of a SLA for the toilet provision. Terrible indictment of the sister council and their inability to work with us on this matter. If they are permanently closing the White Horse Lane toilets then we also need to get them to look at changing the signage. Cllr D Simcock asked about why we are delaying writing to the CEO on the SLA; Cllr Konieczny referred back to the Town Clerk's update where Roger Hoggins has to still write his report on the closure of the White Horse Lane toilets and we still have no response to our draft SLA. Waiting until 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and then we will write to the CEO.</p> <p>With there being no further matters, Cllr Konieczny thanked everyone for their attendance, wished everyone to keep safe and well, and to have a Merry Christmas.</p>

**Meeting ended at 7:47pm.**

**APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD**

**CHAIRMAN** ..... **DATE** .....