



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 Environment and Minimise the Impact of Climate Change. This objective is about looking after and improving our 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

This document sets out immediate priorities and actions for the Council which will include 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.

Children & Young People

The young people in the town are our future. We need to continue to work 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 services available. 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 from appropriate service providers. We have already made a start by working with schools and agencies involved with young people and we will 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. 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 inform people about what we do and why and importantly we should ask how we can improve. The Town Council prepares an Annual Report which is delivered to all households and we will continue to do this.

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

How we make decisions has been reviewed. New Committees have been put in place that can make decisions rather than making recommendations to the main Council. This makes for quicker decision making. 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 Town Council 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 details 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

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE						
Priorities	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale S/M/L	Cost	Latest Comments on progress
Ensure young people with emerging mental health issues have access to and are offered appropriate services	<p>To monitor current provision 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	<p>S, M & L</p> <p>S, M</p>	SHIFT £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	<p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>S-M</p>	£5000 for project identified	

<p>To improve understanding of whether youth provision in the town is appropriate & sufficient and take forward identified projects.</p>	<p>Continue discussions with MCC Youth Service and other agencies</p> <p>To assist with the skate park extension project</p> <p>Support the provision of new Youth Service space</p> <p>To resurface the hard courts area at Bailey Park</p> <p>To promote with partners the desirability of undertaking an audit of youth provision</p>	<p>MCC Youth Service, ACE, Aber Community Centre, 7 Corners GAVO, MCC Partnerships, MCC Grounds</p>	<p>Cllr T Davies</p>	<p>S</p> <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 summer holidays activities for young people and free healthy meals</p>	<p>To fund MCC to provide the summer playscheme</p> <p>To provide free healthy meals</p>	<p>MCC</p>	<p>Cllr T Davies</p>	<p>S - M</p>	<p>£12,000 summer playscheme</p>	

	<p>during the playscheme</p> <p>To support MCC Youth Service in the delivery of a programme of summer activities</p>				£5,000 Youth Service activities	
To promote events for children and young people	<p>To arrange free events for children and young people; one event in north Abergavenny.</p> <p>To encourage town festivals to have activities for children and young people</p>	Festival organisers	Cllr T Davies	S S-M	£1000 for Town Council events	

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>To implement a Community Toilet Scheme at the top of Frogmore Street in light of closure of WHL toilets</p> <p>Increasing understanding of the issues facing older people</p> <p>To monitor planning applications for any development proposals that may give rise to mobility issues</p>	MCC Older people groups	Cllr T Davies	S, M, L	£1000 a year	
Community based organisations provide	To continue to work with organisations	MCC Mardy Park Resource Centre	Cllr T Davies	S		

<p>activities that seek to reduce social isolation</p>	<p>that support older people</p> <p>To increase the number and range of activities through direct funding of service providers</p> <p>To take part in the MCC Community Support Network to ensure that support is available to all.</p>	<p>Abergavenny Community Centre ACE Bridges Community Centre Community Groups</p>		<p>S-M</p> <p>S</p>		
<p>Improve intergenerational interaction</p>	<p>To pilot an 'adopt a garden' scheme</p> <p>To assess need and demand for allotments</p> <p>To continue to support activities and festivals that promote intergenerational interaction</p>	<p>MCC</p> <p>Allotment Society Llantilio Pertholey CC</p>	<p>Cllr T Davies</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S-M</p> <p>S</p>		
<p>To promote events for older people</p>	<p>To arrange free events of interest to older people</p>			<p>S</p>	<p>£1000 a year</p>	

To support services that support older people	To continue financial support to Mind Monmouthshire To continue financial support to Citizens Advice		Cllr M Groucutt	S S	£10,000 a year £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	To promote the Refill Scheme	Refill Cymru Plastic Free Abergavenny Town centre businesses Schools	Cllr T Konieczny	S	£1000 approx.	
	To continue to review Town Council's use of single use plastic and reduce			S		
	Install an outdoor drinking fountain			S		
To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future including multi-year funding	To work with MCC to increase the number of volunteers active in Friends of groups	Voluntary Environmental Groups MCC KWT GAVO	Cllr T Konieczny	S-M		
	To agree multi-year funding arrangements where appropriate			S-M		
To enhance biodiversity	To direct council contractors to increase pollinator friendly planting	Bee friendly Monmouthshire	Cllr T Konieczny	S-M		
	To green the public estate	Monmouthshire CC		S, M, L		

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

				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 and to increase enforcement of existing byelaws eg dogs to be on a lead in Bailey Park</p>	MCC	Cllr T Davies	<p>S,M,L</p> <p>S,M,L</p> <p>S</p>	£7000 a year	

ECONOMICALLY THRIVING TOWN						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale S/M/L	Cost	Comments on progress
To have cleaner streets	To incorporate street cleaning arrangements into the Town Crew initiative To arrange a phased deep steam clean of town centre	MCC	Cllr T Konieczny	S-M S- M		
To improve the appearance of the town centre	To provide bright and colourful floral displays To provide Christmas Lighting To Design and print new flags and banners for the town centre		Cllr T Konieczny	S-L S-M S-M	£20,000 a year £22,500 a year	
To have public toilets which meet the needs of users.	To continue financially contributing to ensure that MCC	MCC Disability groups Baby/Toddler groups	Cllr T Konieczny	S-M		

	keep 3 blocks of toilets open					
To continue to work with town centre businesses and others to promote the town and what it has to offer	<p>Re-establish the Town Centre Action Group</p> <p>Support the continuation of the TIC</p> <p>Support Abergavenny & District Tourism Association</p>	<p>MCC, BBNPA Y Fenni Business Community, Tourist Information Centre, ADTA, Abergavenny Food Festival</p>	<p>Cllr T Konieczny</p>	<p>S-M</p> <p>S-M</p> <p>S-M</p>	<p>£10,000 a year</p> <p>£1,800 a year</p>	

A MORE RESPONSIVE TOWN COUNCIL						
Issue	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale S/M/L	Cost	Comments on progress
To improve communication	To maintain the Town Council Facebook page		Mayor	S/M/L		
	To regularly update the website			S/M/L		
	To issue regular press releases on Council activity			S		
	To prepare the Abergavenny Chronicle weekly column			S		
To improve decision making	To encourage voluntary groups can engage with the decision-making process		Mayor All councillors	Ongoing		

Issue	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments on progress
To encourage wider community engagement on Town Council activities	To identify innovative methods to capture community views		Mayor All Councillors	S/M/L		
To be more visible in the Town	To publicise Council activity through the placing of a crest or logo.		Mayor All Councillors	S/M/L		
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>To be the catalyst for the local organisations to have a voice on policies that impact on Abergavenny For the Town Council Clerk to be an active member of the PSB Programme Board representing</p>	MCC WG NRW ABHBT	Mayor All Councillors	S/M/L S/M/L S/M/L		

	<p>all Town Councils in Monmouthshire</p> <p>To input into the LDP review process</p>			S		
<p>To increase the knowledge base of Councillors</p>	<p>To offer training to Councillors</p> <p>To raise awareness of good practice within the sector and by topic</p>	OVW	<p>Mayor</p> <p>All Councillors</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p>		