

ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny.

Present: The Mayor, Cllr D Simcock,

Cllrs M Groucutt, M Hickman, S Head, G Jones, N Tatam, Ms S Dodd, Mrs T Davies, L Van de Vyver and T Thomas

In attendance: The Acting Town Clerk, Mr C Woodhouse for the Twinning item, MrsD Paterson for the Dog Fouling Item and Several members of the Accessibility at the Railway Station Group. The Press.

1. The Mayor invited Mr Woodhouse to tell members about the Twinning arrangements. He began by saying that it would be 50 years of twinning with Ostringen next year and significant celebrations are planned. It is the second longest twinning agreement in Wales behind Cardiff. It is intended that Abergavenny send a delegation to Ostringen in July next year and they will return in September during the Food Festival. Usually when we go we take a gift for Ostringen, but as yet there is no decision what that should be. We would need to provide a bus to collect them from the airport next September and possible Food Festival tickets for the delegates.

Mr Woodhouse suggested that the Mayor, Cllr Dodd and the Town Clerk might wish to draw up a programme for the visit in September.

He also pointed out that it is the 30th anniversary of twinning with Beaupreau this year, but he is not sure of what is planned there.

The Mayor thanked Mr Woodhouse for his presentation.

2. The Mayor then invited Mrs Paterson to speak to the Council on the dog fouling issue. She explained that before the elections Cllr Prosser had been the Town Council's representative on the County Council sponsored Give Dog Fouling The Red Card Group, but since then the Town Council is not represented. She was concerned to keep up the pressure on irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs, and she noted that it has an adverse effect on the way people see the town.

Cllr Mrs T Davies identified that she would be joining the Group at its next meeting and would report back to the Council. As a responsible dog owner she was keen to see improvements in the Town. The Council already provides a number of dog waste bins and pays for them to be emptied.

The Mayor thanked Mrs Paterson for her presentation.

3. The Mayor then invited the spokesperson for the Railway Access Group to speak. Mr England explained that the group had been formed to show the concerns of people in Abergavenny that the busy Railway Station was not well served and to put pressure on the authorities to get an accessible bridge and lifts installed. It is not just disabled people but older people, people with heavy luggage, people with push-chairs, cyclists and others who would benefit from this improvement. He asked that we should write to the Welsh Government Minister responsible.

Mrs J Barnes referred to correspondence going back some 15 years about this, and quoted from letters from MPs and AMs which had given assurances but had achieved nothing. The only way seems to be to sue them under the Disability Discrimination Act. It has reached the stage where disabled people have given up.

County Councillor Mrs M Powell said she was fully supportive of the group and would do her best to work with them. She would try to arrange a Friday meeting with MP and AM to give further publicity to it.

The Mayor thanked the group for their presentation and said the Council would debate the issue later in their agenda and would let them know of the outcome.

All members of the public left the room at this stage.

2071. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs P Simcock, F Morgan, Mrs M Harris, R Harris and T Konieczny.

2072. No declarations of interest were received.

2073. The Minutes of the Council Meeting Held on 13 September 2017 were received and adopted as a correct record.

2074. Matters arising. Cllr Groucutt was pleased to announce that the 45 bus route was now secure and would be provided by Anslow Travel. The petitions that had been raised were very helpful in persuading the transport officers at MCC of the importance of this service.

2075. The Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13 September were received and adopted as a correct record with no matters arising.

2076. The Minutes of the Projects Committee held on 28 September were received and adopted subject to minor amendment in the Homemakers Section to say "some" of their facilities at the workhouse were being replaced and further down to omit the word "new".

2077. The Minutes of the Town Clerk Advisory Committee were received and adopted as a correct record.

2078. Matters arising.

The question was raised whether the Committee should have the delegated power to appoint a New Town Clerk or whether the decision would need to be made by Council. It was acknowledged that as the Committee were the only ones who would see the candidates and would make a choice from them, it was not really helpful to ask the Council to blindly confirm their decision afterwards. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Groucutt and seconded that the Committee should have delegated powers to make the appointment.

2079. Finance Report

a) It was agreed to authorise the following payments:

Cllr Head questioned whether the names of recipients should be included rather than just post titles. It was acknowledged that this change should be made in future.

b) The Month 6 Financial Reports were received and noted. The Acting Clerk pointed out that the adjustments to overspent headings had not yet been made but a report would be made to the next Finance Committee on 1 November recommending ways to deal with these.

2080. Reports

a) Notes from Team Abergavenny and Public Realm meetings were received. Members were told that the 5 year plan would be published next week and the Public Realm proposals would be affected by the Capita Report which is expected next week.

b) Notes from the North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee were received and noted.

c) Notes of the May meeting of the Give Dog Fouling the Red Card Group were noted. Cllr Davies would try to attend the next meeting on 2 November.

It was agreed to ask Gwent Police and MCC how many prosecutions for dog fouling had been taken during the last few years.

d) Accessibility at the Railway Station. The Clerk had prepared a draft letter to go to the authorities which he read out. It was acknowledged that it had been overtaken by events and that a redraft was needed. Cllr Groucutt would discuss this with the Clerk tomorrow.

Cllr Groucutt proposed the following motion:

Abergavenny Town Council congratulates and supports the efforts of local people campaigning for full access to the platforms of Abergavenny railway station. It believes that it is a disgrace that in 2017 people with a physical disability, parents with young children in pushchairs, the elderly or passengers with heavy luggage do not yet have this. This Council calls upon Network Rail and Arriva Trains to expedite such full access as a matter of urgency. It calls on those responsible to ensure that sufficient funding is set aside to expedite the ability of all passengers to access all parts of the station as a matter of the highest priority.

DRAFT MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

This motion was seconded by Cllr Van de Vyver and carried unanimously.

2081. Questions to County Councillors.

Cllr Head asked if the County Council will be asked to approve a similar motion. Cllr Groucutt agreed to ask them to do so. Cllr Thomas said that the petition should be presented to the County Council in due course to strengthen the case.

2082. Members Reports.