

ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2016 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny

Present: Cllr Mrs M Powell, (Mayor)

Cllrs C Woodhouse, R Harris, Mrs M Harris, M J Hickman, S Horrell, Miss M Toombs, D Edwards, Mrs S Woodhouse, Ms S Dodd, J L Prosser, D Simcock and N Tatam

In attendance: The Town Clerk

1788. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M Beecham and P Jordan.

1789. There were no declarations of interest.

1790. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2016 were received and adopted as a correct record.

1791. Matters arising.

Arising from the Police Inspector's report, it was agreed to write to him to express on-going concern about parking on the A40 Trunk Road outside the hospital. We should urge that this dangerous situation is dealt with quickly.

Cllr Prosser will also follow it up as a member of the Health Board stakeholder group.

In relation to public toilets on page 4, it was confirmed that work will be carried out on the Brewery Yard toilets shortly to overcome shortcomings arising from the original construction.

No progress was known for new Market Stalls yet.

1792. The following minutes were received and adopted as a correct record:

- a) Planning Committee held on 13 January 2016.
- b) Sub-committee to consider the hours of the new Town Clerk on 20 January 2016..
- c) Projects Committee held on 28 January 2016.
- d) Finance Committee held on 3 February 2016.

1793. Matters arising.

Arising from this committee the following decisions were agreed:

A grant of £960 be made to Home-Start Monmouthshire.

A new black and white photocopier on a three year lease be agreed subject to satisfactory connectivity with the office computer.

A further rise in the precept of £5 per annum for a Band D property be made, creating a precept of £280084 for 2016/17.

A proposal that £45,000 be set aside to fund Public Toilets in Abergavenny for the coming year, which had arisen from a discussion between Cllr Prosser and Mr Hoggins, was debated at some length. It was felt that we would need a written agreement, that we should know what else may need support. We should wait to see that after 10 March before making a final decision.

On being out to a recorded vote the proposal had Cllrs Mrs M Powell, J L Prosser, Ms S Dodd, Mrs S Woodhouse, M J Hickman and C Woodhouse in favour and Cllrs N Tatam, D Simcock, Miss M Toombs, D Edwards, S Horrell, Mrs M Harris and R Harris voting against. The motion was lost by 7 votes to 6.

On another matter, Cllr Edwards proposed that the Council should no longer serve alcohol in the Mayor's Parlour or at functions. He reminded members that the County Council had stopped doing so about 5 years ago. He felt this would save a significant sum from the Civic

Functions budget. Again, there was considerable discussion on this point. There were some members who supported this and others who opposed it. A proposal by Cllr Edwards to reduce the Civic Functions Budget by £1500 and to stop providing alcohol at the rate-payers' expense was seconded by Cllr Tatam.

An amendment by Cllr Prosser that it be left to the discretion of the incumbent Mayor and the budget remains unchanged was seconded by Cllr Mrs S Woodhouse and a recorded vote was requested.

Cllrs C Woodhouse, Mrs M Powell, D Simcock, J L Prosser, Ms S Dodd, Mrs S Woodhouse, S Horrell, M J Hickman and Mrs M Harris voted for the amendment and Cllrs N Tatam, D Edwards and Miss M Toombs voted against and Cllr R Harris abstained. The amendment was therefore carried and became the substantive motion and on being put to the vote was carried by the same margin.

A proposal to set the Precept for 2016/17 at £280,084 was put by Cllr Mrs S Woodhouse and seconded. After some debate and several members declaring their opposition to the increase, the motion was carried.

The recommendation to consider whether to support County Services will be taken after 10 March when the County have considered their position for 2016/17.

Cllr Edwards' suggestion to add a further stone to the Gorsedd Circle in Swan Meadow and possibly a similar stone in Castle Meadows to mark the site of the Eisteddfod as legacies of the Eisteddfod was noted. He will continue to work on it.

1794. Finance Report.

a) The following payments were duly authorised:

G M James	salary	£206.38
HMRC tax and NI		£633.52
Monmouthshire CC	CCTV	£3200.00
Gwent Theatre in Education	grant	£2000.00
Cablenews Library	papers	£47.00
City Illuminations	Christmas Lights	£26,400.00
Merlin Waste	dog bins	£406.80
Viking Direct	stationery	£71.60
NR & CA Bailey	Civic functions	£123.59
One Voice Wales	subscription	£1442.00
D L Edwards	stationery/stamps	£24.43
P Johns	expenses	£15.89

b) The monthly reports for Month 10 were considered. The Clerk brought to members attention the amendments and updates needed following the Auditor's visit and these were approved.

c) A grant application from Abergavenny and District Tourist Association for £1500 was considered. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs S Woodhouse and seconded by Cllr Edwards that it be approved, and it was unanimously supported.

1795. Correspondence.

a) A letter from One Voice Wales about renewing membership was received

b) The papers of the Larger Local Councils Committee were received.

c) Grass Roots Magazine was received.

d) An e-mail about Councillors going to Beaupreau in August was noted and will be dealt with at the AGM of the Twinning Association. Cllr Prosser indicated that he intended to go.

e) The Minutes of the CCTV Committee were received and noted.. Cllr Mrs Harris asked if we can let the Control Centre know of any events coming up during this year.

f) A petition from Nick Ramsay AM was noted.

1796. Reports

a) Team Abergavenny Minutes for January 2016 were received. Cllr C Woodhouse noted that it was important to develop closer links with Team Abergavenny and they would be asked to report regularly to the Town Council.

He also asked if at the next Projects Committee a full range of those interested in the Eisteddfod could be invited to attend. The Clerk would find out how much bunting we should consider getting and a cost for that meeting. After some discussion it was agreed to call the next Projects Committee on 8 March at 7pm and to invite all interested groups in the Eisteddfod to come.

b) The Minutes of the North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee held on 26 January were received and noted.

c) The Risk Assessment Report was received and considered, together with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. It was agreed to receive the report and no amendments were proposed.

1797. Agenda Items.

a) Appointment of a New Town Clerk

Cllr C Woodhouse re-iterated the proposals in his report which had been considered by the sub-committee, that the Clerk's hours be reduced to 22 per week and some changes to working practices be introduced to assist with that.

There was then a substantial debate with members expressing support for the proposals and some expressing concerns about them. Several members felt that with unknown changes on the horizon it was not a good time to be doing this, and that evidence from other Monmouthshire Towns had been ignored.

Cllr C Woodhouse proposed that the Clerk's hours be reduced to 22 for the new Clerk, seconded by Cllr Dodd.

Cllr Mrs Harris proposed an amendment that the hours and salary should remain the same, seconded by Cllr Tatam.

On being put to a recorded vote Cllrs N Tatam, D Simcock, D Edwards, Miss M Toombs, R Harris and Mrs M Harris voted for the amendment and Cllrs Mrs M Powell, J Prosser, Ms S Dodd, Mrs S Woodhouse, S Horrell, M Hickman and C Woodhouse voted against. The amendment was therefore lost.

Cllr Woodhouse's proposal to reduce hours to 22 was put to the vote and Cllrs Mrs M Powell, J Prosser, Ms S Dodd, Mrs S Woodhouse, S Horrell, M Hickman and C Woodhouse voted for it and Cllrs N Tatam, D Simcock, D Edwards, Miss M Toombs, Mrs M Harris and R Harris voted against it. The motion was therefore carried.

The programme for the appointment and the timetable were agreed in principle subject to all the dates being put back a week.

The Short-listing and Appointments Committee would be Cllrs D Edwards, D Simcock, Mrs M Powell, C Woodhouse, and S Dodd.

Cllr Prosser moved suspension of Standing Orders for 15 minutes to complete the business of the meeting. This was carried.

b) Election of Mayor

Cllr S Dodd proposed Cllr C Woodhouse to be Mayor for the coming year, seconded by Cllr Prosser. He felt we needed experience in the coming year and Cllr Woodhouse had a great deal of experience at local and County level.

Cllr R Harris proposed Cllr D Simcock, seconded by Cllr Mrs M Harris. He had considerable local government experience and was involved with several young people's projects.

On being put to a confidential vote, Cllr Woodhouse was duly elected. He thanked the Council for their confidence in him.

It was agreed to defer other matters on the agenda until the next meeting.

1798. Other Business.

Cllr Edwards questioned whether Cllr Beecham was likely to attend any more meetings. He had only attended one since his selection, and this did not seem to be appropriate. He asked the majority group to resolve the problem.

Cllr C Woodhouse also asked if a letter of thanks could go to Mr Ian Brain and his team regarding their work on the Public Realm work in Abergavenny. This was agreed.

The Meeting ended at 9:20 pm, and the Mayor invited Councillors to the Parlour after the Planning Committee had been completed.