

ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2016 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny at 7pm.

Present: Cllr Mrs M Powell (Mayor)

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

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Inspector Huw Jones and Mr M Prys Williams

The Chronicle Reporter also attended.

The Mayor welcomed Mr Prys Williams who had come to update on the War Memorial.

He now had quotations for all elements of the work and he will now be applying to the appropriate sources for funding for the total project at £16,266. Cllr Prosser thanked him for the work he had put into this process. Messages had been left with the appropriate MCC officer to get permission to proceed. If VAT is an issue, then it would be best to speak to that officer about payments going through the County Council as they own the Monument. Cllr Prosser suggested that perhaps the Town Council might consider a grant as well.

Mr Prys Williams left at this point.

The Mayor then welcomed Inspector Huw Jones who had come to give members an update on what is happening in the area.

Overall, crime figures were down in the last period, but there are concerns about violent crimes in Grofield and Priory Wards. These are mainly on weekend nights after midnight and arise from people leaving The Auberge. There are temporary voluntary restrictions on their licence at present to not allow people in after 12 midnight.

Thefts in November/December were also down from 26 last year to 6 this year, which seems to register success for the business crime partnership.

Additional road markings for the 30 limit on Monmouth Rd will be installed by SWTRA

A low-level drug issue in Bailey Park had been dealt with in cooperation with the Friends of Bailey Park.

Parking on the A40 at Nevill Hall is a big problem.

There will continue to be a police premises in Abergavenny if the present station goes. They are looking at options.

Police officers are wearing cameras which can be switched on to record criminal acts.

Work is still proceeding to resolve the Fairfield car park cruising issues and this should be sorted

by February. After Friday's double fatal accident they will be trying an initiative to talk sense into the other cruisers. Other ideas are also being followed up to discourage them.

Members then asked a number of questions, concerning the issues raised.

The drugs issue in the park was low-level and young people. The violence was in the town centre after people were leaving the licensed premises. Police Estates are dealing with the Police Station issue. The Mayor's query about a sharp blade was clearly classed as an offensive weapon. She would provide information.

The Inspector was thanked for attending and he left at 7:45pm.

1777. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Beecham.

1778. Declarations of interest were received from Cllr Simcock concerning the Melville Theatre grant.

1779. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 December 2015 were received and adopted as a correct record subject to inclusion of Cllr Edwards' apologies.

1780. Matters arising

Cllr Edwards challenged Cllr Dodd's involvement on behalf of the Council with the BID process as her brother was an objector. She did not think that in present circumstances that was an issue.

1781. the following minutes were approved and adopted as a correct record

a) Planning Committee on 9 December. It was noted that the Hereford Rd application was now to be subject to an archaeological survey.

b) Finance Committee held on 6 January 2016.

The following recommendations of the Finance Committee were agreed:

A grant of £2000 be made to the Melville Theatre who had provided the information about planning and maintenance responsibility. It was agreed the money could be spent on decoration.

A grant of £2792 be made to Linda Vista Gardens for completion of maintenance works, with a proviso that efforts be made to get MCC to remove the dangerous trees. It was also suggested that redundant seats in the Town Centre could be moved to Linda Vista when they become available.

we should move towards once a year grant allocations by changing it to quarterly in the coming year, and notifying the public of the change.

The Council's Budget will be set at the February Finance and Council Meetings.

Budget reports for December were received.

It was agreed following the Mayor's inspection of the site, that an additional dog bin can be located at Beaupreau Place, and following another request to the Clerk, it was agreed to provide another bin on Pentre Road.

1782. Finance Report.

a) The following accounts were authorised for payment:

A4B Grant	£500
One Voice Wales Training	£35
Cablenews	£40.70
HMRC Tax and NI	£633.32
G M James salary	£206.58
Oxfam Window Competition	£150.00
Cuddle and Cwtch window comp	£75.00
Adela window comp	£75.00
Ricoh Uk copying	£70.29
Cablenews	£36.35
MCC Street Sweeping	£6750.00
Merlin Waste	£325.44
NR & CA Bailey civic functions	£74.92
Information Commissioner	£350.00
P Johns expenses	£30.16

b) The Finance Reports for December 2015 were received and noted. Cllr Dodd asked if the Window Competition had been authorised and this was confirmed. It was also noted that the Miscellaneous Income code will be reallocated to the appropriate codes shortly.

c) Tenders for Abergavenny in Bloom.

The Clerk asked members to agree to confirm a tender for the coming three years. Two Bids had been received, from our existing supplier, Willows Garden Centre and a National Company, Plantscape. The two quotes were The Willows £10989.60 and Plantscape £16111.32.

It was agreed that the quotation from The Willows be accepted and the two bidders duly notified.

1783. Correspondence.

The letter from Welsh Government concerning trunk roads was noted.

The request for funding from Big Skill was noted. Agreed to tell them that we are not making contributions to individual stands as we are supporting the Eisteddfod directly.

The request to support the Queen`s 90th birthday celebrations was considered. It was agreed to set up a beacon again and to ask the ATC to assist.

1784. Reports.

a) Team Abergavenny update - Public Realm.

The notes of the meeting were received with approval and the proposed developments duly supported.

b) Proposals for the Appointment of a New Town Clerk

Cllr C Woodhouse introduced his report. He felt that in these austere times we should look at every opportunity to save money and the appointment of a new Town Clerk was such an opportunity. He expressed annoyance about comments he and other members had received from a member of the public, which he considered were ill-informed.

He had considered the position as at present with MCC and the indication that they will not put the Council Tax up by as much as last year, which is likely to put more pressure on local councils. He was proposing a reduction in hours for the new clerk and a cross-party committee to make the appointment after they had researched the way others work to be sure they have the best approach. This was seconded by Cllr Jordan. The subject was then opened for discussion, and the following points were made:

- why have an Assistant when we are reducing the Clerk`s hours?
- the Assistant is very productive and we may get help from the One Stop Shop
- was this discussed with the existing clerk? The communication from the member of the public made sense. How can you do this without consulting the existing clerk. Councillors do not know all of what goes on in the office.
- two posts gives better cover in the event of absence.
- following Welsh Government Elections there may be change - it is not easy to reduce but it is easy to increase hours. We don`t know what will happen in the future.
- why make changes if the future is so uncertain? It is illogical.
- fixed term contracts are available.

- do the arrangements via a committee.

- it may not be possible to use the One Stop Shop. That may get closed It is not certain that they have any spare capacity. The suggested approach seems to cut the responsibility of the Clerk and inflate the role of The Mayor. There is no detail of how the Council will support local services- it looks as if it will become a figure head only

-not keen to decide tonight as more information is needed. We need Model Terms and Conditions and the duties of other Clerks.

An Amendment was proposed by Cllr Prosser that the matter be deferred for further information to be gathered. This was seconded by Cllr Tatam.

It was noted that the clock is ticking and progress needs to be made

Cllr Edwards proposed a second amendment to set up a politically balanced committee tonight to consider further information and to report back quickly. Cllr Tatam withdrew his support for Cllr Prosser's amendment and supported this one. Cllr Prosser then withdrew the first amendment. Cllr Tatam asked for a recorded vote.

The vote on the amendment was carried by 8 votes to 6 with Cllrs Edwards, Tatam, R Harris, M Harris, M Toombs, D Simcock, S Horrell and M Hickman voting in favour with Cllrs C Woodhouse, S Woodhouse, S Dodd, P Jordan, J L Prosser and The Mayor against.

This became the substantive motion and on being put to the meeting was carried by 10 votes in favour to 4 against.

It was agreed that Cllrs C Woodhouse, S Dodd and M Powell with N Tatam and D Simcock would comprise the committee and The Mayor and Clerk would liaise to set the date as soon as possible.

c) North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee notes were received and noted. the Clerk was asked to get a printed copy of Mr Hoggins' latest information as it was too large to print off at home.

1785. Agenda Items.

Freedom of Abergavenny

The Clerk had circulated the Freedom Document from MCC which clearly showed the existing Freedom to the Royal Welsh covered all towns in Monmouthshire. It was agreed that a new Document endorsing the arrangement as it applied to Abergavenny would be produced to be presented on the day. The Clerk would contact the British Legion about the arrangements.

1786. Questions to County Councillors.

Cllr Tatam noted that during the Christmas Food Festival one of the urinals in the Brewery Yard toilets was blocked and covered over. He questioned why this would be allowed to happen at such a

prestigious time. Cllr Prosser noted the problem and asked via the Press that any toilet problems be reported to him so that he can personally pursue them.

A question about the quality of the Market Stalls was also raised. The Clerk noted that he understood that MCC are looking at possibly replacing the stalls which have been there for many years.. It was agreed to write to Estates to encourage this to happen.

Cllr Toombs noted that building service provided by MCC were poor, as exemplified recently when her school needed a broken pane of glass fixing.. It was suggested that she could go through the One Stop Shop, or the school could take on a handyman to carry out such work.

1787. Members Reports

Cllr Tatam had attended public realm meeting and Team Abergavenny.

Cllr Simcock had attended public realm meeting and Transition Town.

Cllr Prosser had attended public realm meeting.

Cllr Dodd had attended public realm meeting.

Cllr S Woodhouse had attended KHS former pupils reception and Carnival Committee which had discussed a possible Party at the Castle in the Summer.

Cllr Edwards had attended a public realm meeting.

Cllr Hickman had attended public realm and Carnival meetings

Cllr Mrs Harris had attended public realm and governors meetings

Cllr R Harris had attended public realm and Carnival Committees.

Cllr C Woodhouse had attended KHS Former pupils and Carnival Committees

The Mayor had attended Flower Arranging evening, Borough Band Christmas Concert, Food Festival Parade, four Carol Concerts at St Mary's , Coffee and Cakes for Library and OSS Staff, Gwent Music Youth Brass Band, KHS Awards evening, KHS Former Pupils reception and the Carnival Meeting.

1787. Other Business.

a) Cllr C Woodhouse presented greetings from Ostringen and its Mayor. They will be celebrating 50 years of Twinning in 2018 and would like to invite the Town Council and the Borough Band to their May Festival. They would then come to our Food Festival with their Band. It was agreed to start correspondence on this very soon.

b) The Clerk noted that in August Beaupreau are celebrating 30 years of twinning with Munsingen and we are invited to send a party to this event. The correspondence would be passed to the Twinning Secretary.

The Meeting ended at 9pm