

## **ABERGAVENTNY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13 September 2017 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny**

Present: Cllr D Simcock, (Mayor)

Cllrs M Groucutt, R Harris, M Hickman, S Head, G Jones, T Konieczny, N Tatam, Mrs P Simcock, F Morgan, L Van de Vyver, T Thomas.

In attendance: The Acting Town Clerk, and 3 representatives of Abergavenny, Town of Sanctuary.

The Mayor welcomed Mr H Iles, Mr Hussam Allahham and Ms Lindsay Knight who had asked to speak to the Council about support for the Town of Sanctuary status for Abergavenny. Presently there are four Syrian families in Abergavenny and their children are attending local schools and being very well received. The families have found Abergavenny to be very supportive which is not always the case in other nearby communities. There are still things to improve but they have had a good start. Mr Allahham is a support worker for the families and he confirmed that the strong communities in Abergavenny had been very welcoming. It is not easy to start a new life in a different area and they do need support in learning language and many other areas. The families feel much safer here.

Ms Knight explained that the Town of Sanctuary movement is a national movement with about 70 towns and cities now involved. Support from the town Council would be welcomed, and the Council were asked to consider a motion before them for adoption. The Mayor formally opened the Council Meeting at this point.

2058. Cllr Groucutt was very pleased to move the motion that” We support the vision of Abergavenny being a Town of Sanctuary: welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries. We are committed to taking practical steps to welcome and include people seeking sanctuary in our activities and are actively seeking ways of supporting them wherever we can, working with the Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary group and the wider community to develop further ideas for how we can turn this pledge into practical action”

The motion was seconded by Cllr Tatam and on being put to the vote was unanimously carried.

It was agreed that this is just a start and the Council wishes to be kept informed of future meetings of the group. Their names will be added to the e-mail list.

The three representatives then left the meeting.

2059. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ms S Dodd, Mrs T Davies and Mrs M Harris.

2060. There were no declarations of interest.

2061. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 August were received and adopted as a correct record subject to a correction to minute 2054 e) to read “was not moving” instead of “had not been moved”.

2062. Matters arising.

Cllr Tatam asked why Mr Roberts had been employed to help with Civic Functions when there are two people already involved. It was explained that for the occasions where he had been involved there was a need for additional help.

Cllr Groucutt was asked if he had responded to Cllr Tatam`s enquiries and he confirmed that he had. He recommended that Cllr Tatam speak to the County Ward Member about progress.

2063. The Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 9 August were received and adopted as a correct record.

2064. The Minutes of the Finance Committee were received and adopted as a correct record. The Committee Chairman explained the recommendations of the Committee which were all agreed.

Various queries about overspending on General Grants and the cost of the Freedom Parade were discussed and it was agreed to ask Finance Committee to address the solutions at its next meeting.

2065. Review of Standing Orders.

The Acting Town Clerk explained that it was good practice to review Standing Orders each year. It had been the practice in the past to put it on the February Council Agenda and to incorporate any changes in the revised Standing Orders at the Annual Meeting in May. It was agreed to adjust the Standing Orders to include that all members could be signatories rather than the present four, and to put Standing Orders on the November Agenda to start the process of review.

2066. Finance Report

a) The following accounts were authorised:

Staff salary	1415.66
Staff salary	330.75
HMRC tax and NI	532.73
Greater Gwent Pension Fund	518.37
N B Smith Summer Concert	400.00
Abergavenny Chronicle advert	48.00
Generation Hire and Sale Cycling Grant	1857.85
Rich Uk Photocopying costs	93.98
Cablenews Library Papers	57.04
Vision ICT Fee for gov.uk site	66.00
Merlin Waste dog waste collection	508.50
One Voice Wales conference fee	90.00
SLCC Enterprises job advert	210.00
P Johns expenses ink cartridges	58.49
Point 13 Media Chronicle	240.00
Point 13 Media Argus	765.60
Point 13 Media jobsgopublic	690.00
Merlin Waste dog bins	406.80
P Simcock Civic Sunday items	49.47

b) The Month 5 Reports were received. It was agreed that there is a need to review reserves and budget figures over the last three or four years would be needed to understand why the reserves were as they are. The next Finance Committee would start the Budget Process.

c) The Acting Town Clerk reported that the Annual Audit had been completed and the accounts were satisfactory with no comments from the auditor.

## 2067. Reports

### a) Team Abergavenny (Cllr Tatam)

Cllr Tatam noted that recent activity had focused on the Public Realm area with an open meeting at which the Environmental Theme Group had presented their proposals for Lion Street and Frogmore Street which had been well received. Further meetings would be arranged soon to keep the process going. It was mainly focused on the traffic orders needed to ensure a satisfactory outcome, and which would take time to put in place.

b) Reform of Data Protection Legislation. The Acting Town Clerk explained that there is new legislation coming up which will place added burdens on small organisations to ensure they comply with data protection requirements. It was agreed that we should approach the County Council for guidance on this. The Clerk also reminded members that they should be careful of personal data from others which they might hold on their e-mails, and that it would be good practice to make sure it is kept securely if there is a need to keep it, but if possible to delete it as soon as possible.

2068. There were no questions to County members.

## 2069. Members Reports

Cllr Groucutt had met with Team Abergavenny officers about the North Monmouthshire Plan. The meeting had been constructive and he was supportive of its publication. It had been suggested that a Town Councillor could be nominated to work with each Theme Group (5 of them), and he asked for support for this. This was agreed in principle with the nominations being delegated to the next Projects Committee.

He had also attended a Planning Committee to make representations to stop an increase in the size of commercial premises at Hereford Rd Garage, which had been unsuccessful. He had also attended a National Grid meeting with Cllr Tatam to hear about the renewal of the 400KV grid lines passing Abergavenny. The main impact does not fall on Abergavenny.

A copy of the Llanelly Community Clerk's notes are available if required.

Cllrs Harris and Hickman had nothing to report.

Cllr Konieczny reported he had met the Museums Manager concerning a complaint of Anti-Social behaviour in the Castle grounds. It had been agreed some time ago to increase the height of fences and to put anti-climbing paint on some walls. He would write to ask Cllr Mrs Maureen Powell why this had not been done.

Cllr Head had no report

Cllr Jones had attended the Syrian supper.

Cllr Tatam had attended the Skylark Concert, the Public Realm meeting and the Borough Band Concert which was excellent.

Cllr Mrs Simcock had attended the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee and had raised the issue of the need for a new bridge at the railway station. There was a consensus that this is a high priority item.

She also referred to the removal of the 45 Bus but Cllr Groucutt would raise this under Any Other Business.

She also noted that there was new legislation to improve the availability of taxis for disabled access needs.

She had also attended Papillon Arts, Wall to Wall Jazz, St Mary's Holywell Community, received a runner coming through Abergavenny on a Charity Run, public realm meeting, Agri-Urban pre-meeting, Skylark Concert and the Syrian Supper.

Cllrs Morgan and Van de Vyver had no reports.

Cllr Thomas reported that the Bailey Park Steering Group was making progress with its Lottery Bid. He had attended the opening of the new Museum exhibition, had met with PCSO Yung at Barclays Bank to raise awareness of scams, public realm and the Agri-

Urban Pre-meeting. There would be a need for councillors to help to move tables in the Council Chamber at 5pm tomorrow.

The Mayor had attended the same events as Cllr Mrs Simcock with the exception of the Holywell Community event and the Charity Runner.

2070. Any Other Business.

a) Cllr Hickman raised a question about the theme for the Abergavenny Arts and Literature Competition. It was suggested that the Myths and Legends theme be adopted as per the Junior Eisteddfod and this was agreed.

b) Cllr Groucutt noted that the 45 bus which serves the Lansdown Area was to be withdrawn by the operator on 22 October. At present it is not a subsidised service which is surprising, given the needs of the community it serves. Moves were under way to find a substitute operator, but there were some questions to be answered as to why it was not a supported service before any new operator is committed. There are still 6000 journeys a month on the service. Members fully supported moves to retain a service on this route.

c) Cllr Morgan asked why councillors were not offered tickets to the Food Festival, given that his company was when it gave up its parking spaces for the duration. It was explained that this used to happen but it was possible to construe it as an inducement to Councillors to grant public money to the Festival. This was noted. It was agreed to contact the Festival to find out why Mayor was not invited to the opening.

d) The notice that the Fair is in the Fairfield on Sunday for a week was noted.

e) It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the Mayor about the time and venue for the Council Christmas Dinner.

**There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8:55pm**