

ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17 June 2015 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Abergavenny.

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, R P Jordan, Ms S Dodd, P Woodley and N Tatam.

In attendance: The Town Clerk and Mr M Prys Williams for the first item.

Before the meeting started the Mayor invited Cllr C Woodhouse to make an announcement.

Cllr Woodhouse told members that a former Mayor of Abergavenny, Mr R Smith had died recently. The funeral will be on Friday week at 10:45 am in St Mary's and as is customary Past Mayors would be asked to wear their medals if they attend. He asked that members stand in silence as a mark of respect.

The Mayor then invited Mr M Prys Williams to address members about the War Memorial. Mr Williams updated members on progress. Three options had been explored and it had narrowed down to two, as the option of moving it to a new site had been discounted for a number of reasons, including security. The remaining two options were to stabilise it on its existing site or to move it some ten yards up Frogmore Street to approximately where the flower tub sits. A new base would be needed on the new site. This would have the advantage of allowing a parade to circulate the Memorial without intruding onto the main trunk road. Cllr Tatam asked what response there had been to the two options as there had also been a suggestion that bus bays could be created in the space made available if it is moved forward, thereby removing buses from Frogmore Street. A site meeting with senior County Council representatives would be held shortly.

1704. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Prosser. Cllrs M Harris and P Woodley were likely to arrive late.

1705. Declarations of interest would be made as and when necessary.

1706. The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 May 2015 were received and adopted as a correct record.

1707. Matters arising.

It was noted that Cllrs Prosser and Woodley had been added to the Finance Committee.

No Police report had been received before this meeting.

Cllr C Woodhouse reported on a meeting with County Councillor R Greenland concerning the TIC. Cllr Greenland had been impressed with the joint arrangements in place for operating the TIC and

considered the model offered a useful approach for other areas. The Tithe Barn staff are working with the TIC staff to make things work well, and Abergavenny Ambassadors were assisting as well. The footfall was the best for years in Abergavenny and the number of vacant shops was at a 7 year low.

Cllr Tatam reported that he had followed advice to move his request for information up to higher officers but with no effect. Cllr Edwards had also followed it up and he had no response either. He noted that Councillors at County had clear guidelines within which they should deal with correspondence but it did not seem to apply to officers. He and Cllr Harris would try to get a debate at County Council.

1708. The following Committee Minutes were received and adopted as correct records:

- a) Planning Committee held on 13 May 2015.
- b) Projects Committee held on 21 May 2015
- c) Finance Committee held on 27 May 2015.

1709. Matters arising:

Finance Committee. Cllr Edwards felt that we need a more rigorous approach to how we deal with service provision in future. We should not just agree to provide funding to the County.

Also, in the Internal Auditor's Report he felt that we should be mindful of the need to distribute catering supply to a number of different suppliers during the year.

Cllr C Woodhouse considered that so far the Council had been quite prudent in its dealings with the County Council. We are waiting to see the bigger picture before agreeing to take on any more services.

(Cllr Woodley arrived at this point)

It is believed that a Community Governance Review is slowing things up at present. The Council has accumulated reserves to help in due course.

The recommendations of the Finance Committee were approved as follows:

1. The Town Shield given to the junior footballers to present in Beaupreau be endorsed.
2. The Internal Auditor be engaged for a further year following a satisfactory review of his activities during the year.
3. The Internal Auditor's Report be received and adopted.
4. Referring to Standing Order 38.5, NR and CA Bailey be confirmed as supplier for the civic functions supplies and C Binley be confirmed as the small jobs contractor for the year.
5. The Clerk be authorised to buy 6 new hanging baskets to comply with Trunk Road Agency requirements.
6. The Specification for Christmas Lights supply be agreed with an option to extend it for a further year if necessary.

1710. Earlier Finance Committee.

Cllr Mrs S Woodhouse went on to say that at a Finance Committee held earlier this evening some other issues had been considered as follows:

Grant for Black Mountain Jazz. A grant of £2500 had been requested, including provision of staging in the Market Hall. It had been decided to recommend that £2000 be offered and that if possible existing staging held in the building be used. This was agreed.

A request for £500 for a grant for materials to spray-paint the hoardings around the Market Site with pictures done by young artists was received and it had been recommended for approval, subject to submission of invoices. This was agreed.

A quotation for putting up bunting in the Town had been received in the sum of £1600 approximately. It was agreed to recommend this to Council as the Carnival was not happening this year and this helps to brighten up the town. This was agreed.

Dates for the Sunday afternoon concerts were notified. Arrangements are now needed to provide publicity.

Cllr C Woodhouse asked Council to authorise that the Abergavenny – Ostringen Twinning Association should proceed with arrangements for the forthcoming German visit to Abergavenny in September. This was agreed.

(Cllr Mrs Harris arrive at this point)

1711. Finance Report

a) The following payments wre authorised:

The Angel Hotel (Mayor`s Reception)	640.00
N Tatam (Travel expenses)	83.70
HMRC tax and NI	602.65
G M James salary	118.12
NR & CA Bailey (civic functions)	254.88
VIG Theatre grant	1000.00
Jem`s Catering (charity reception)	75.00
Award Picture Framing (Mayor`s portrait)	24.60
NR & CA Bailey (Civic functions)	258.30
Merlin Waste (dog bins)	406.80
P Johns Expenses for two months	154.57
Abergavenny TIC Grant	7500.00
Cablenews	79.50
Ricoh Uk photocopier charges	77.35

b) The Monthly Finance Reports were received.

c) It was agreed that the Mayor should be authorised to sign the Audit Return prior to sending a copy to the External Auditor.

1712. Correspondence.

The following items were considered:

1. Letter re Defibrillators. Noted

2. Event Safety Advisory Group Noted

3. Monmouthshire CAB letter It was agreed to ask to meet a CAB representative before deciding whether to appoint a representative and before paying this year's donation.

4. Tourism in Action Noted

5. Fforest Fawr Geopark News Noted

6. The BID Ballot. Cllr Dodd updated members on the present situation. Ballot papers had been issued the previous Friday. The closing date is mid July. There were concerns about some of the apparently arbitrary decisions being taken by the consultants, including taking some areas out of the BID zone, the levy percentage being higher for smaller businesses, and why the ballot could not be postponed to answer some of these questions. Several comments were made showing members' concern, and it was felt that businesses should be encouraged to vote and not simply discard their voting forms. Ultimately it was up to businesses to decide what is to happen.

7. Information concerning the renovation works in Monk Street and the time it would take was noted. It is unlikely the traffic control can be removed before November.

1713. Reports

a) Town Team Activities.

The reports were received. Cllr Woodhouse commented that it is important that the Town Council is kept in the picture as it is the democratically elected body for the Town. It was noted that TeamAbergavenny is planning to formally consult the Town Council as part of its going public programme, which is designed to clarify its role and to help people to understand its planned programme of activities. There was a discussion using the Town Hall as an example, as to whether the Town Council would be prepared to take on responsibility for the Town Hall if the County were to seek to dispose of it. This would be a high risk item and would need due diligence to be exercised if it were to happen. Cllr Edwards noted that this is an example of the risk assessment he had been talking about.

b) Representation on Cantref Governors. It was agreed that Mr P Wadsworth who had resigned as a Councillor should be asked to continue as a governor or the rest of his term, and that the County Governors Unit be so notified.

c) Vacancy for Councillor in Cantref Ward.

A date had been fixed for an election on 13 August. A timetable for the election was circulated to members and the full information pack would be circulated the following day.

This was noted.

1714. Matters for CSAT.

Cllr Mrs M Harris would become the representative on CSAT , and any matters should be directed to her.

1715. Questions for County Councillors.

Cllr Woodley noted that the Minister`s proposals for new local authorities had been published, showing that Monmouthshire would be merged with the other councils previously in Gwent. It was considered that this is by no means certain as there will be an Assembly Election between now and any legislation being tabled. It was agreed that the time is right to speak to County Council about control over local facilities.

Cllr C Woodhouse raised a concern about the access for disabled people or people with pushchairs at Abergavenny Station. What is happening about plans to install an accessible bridge?

It was agreed to ask the new Head of Planning for an answer and to consult CAIR about their views as well as writing to Welsh Government and the railway company.

Cllr Edwards told members that the primary school sports sessions would take place at King Henry VIII School on 25/26 June and 9?10 July from 10am until about 1:30 pm. Members would be very welcome to attend.

1716. Members Reports

Cllr C Woodhouse had attended School Governors, Foundation Governors, Nepalese Coffee morning, TIC Meeting and District Tourist Association.

Cllr Mrs M Harris had attended Governors meetings

Cllr M Hickman had attended his Charity Cheque reception, He also noted that he was pursuing a project to get Monmouthshire Regiment colours displayed in the Parlour.

Cllr S Horrell had attended the Coffee Morning and Town Team Meetings.

Cllr Miss Toombs had attended the Abergavenny in Need Charity meetings

Cllr Edwards had attended 2 Town Team meetings

Cllr Mrs Woodhouse had attended the Charity reception, SLCC Conference, Coffee morning

Cllr Ms Dodd had attended Governors, Bid meeting, Signs in Streets meeting, Cycling Meeting, Charity Coffee Morning.

Cllr Woodley had attended a Town Team Meeting

Cllt Tatam had attended the SLCC Conference and Town Team Meetings

The Mayor had attended VE Day memorial service and sing-song at Maindiff, AAODS Ball, Abergavenny Junior Hockey Awards, Medals at girls football competitions, Charity Reception, Young promoters event in Park Street, Steam Rally, Coffee morning, Area Scouts AGM, King Henry VIII Sports Day, Agincourt in the Castle, MCC Chairman`s Civic Service, Abergavenny

Theatre Group, Mayor of Usk Civic Service and Exhibition of Art Work at King Henry VIII.

1717. Any Other Business.

Concern was raised by several members about taxi drivers bad language and appearance and their verbal abuse of people who park in their allocated spaces. It was agreed to write to the Chair of the Licensing Committee to complain that there are too many taxis and about their appearance/behaviour.

The meeting ended at 8:45pm