**ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 17TH MAY 2023 AT 7:00PM ON MS TEAMS & IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM,**

**TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENNY**

**Present:** Cllr P Bowyer (Chair)

Cllr M Barnes (Vice Chair)

Cllr B Callard

Cllr K Eldridge

Cllr M Groucutt

Cllr C Holland

Cllr G Jones

Cllr T Konieczny

Cllr M Powell

Cllr D Simcock

Cllr A Wilde

Cllr G Wilde

**Absent without apologies**

Cllr L Wright

**In attendance**:

S Rosser - Town Clerk

V Mills – Contemporancient Theatre

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| PR58/23 | **Receive and approve apologies for absence.**  Apologies were received from Cllrs Brocklesby, Burch, and Nicholson, and it was resolved by all Cllrs present to accept their reasons for absence. |
| PR59/23 | **Receive Declarations of Interest**  No declarations of interest were received for items on this agenda. |
| PR60/23 | **To approve the minutes from 19th April 2023.**  Cllr Callard proposed accepting the minutes as a true record, and this was seconded by Cllr Jones. All Councillors resolved to accept these as accurate and they were signed by Cllr Bowyer. |
| PR61/23 | **To elect 8 Councillors to sit on Environment Committee. (Chair: Cllr Konieczny, Vice Chair: Cllr Holland, elected at AGM 10th May 2023).**  Cllr G Wilde was nominated by Cllr G Jones to join Cllrs Barnes, Bowyer, Eldridge, George, Jones, Simcock and Wright on the Environment Committee, seconded by Cllr Barnes, and unanimously approved and accepted by all Councillors. |
| PR62/23 | **To elect 8 Councillors People and Communities Committee (Chair: Cllr Jones, Vice Chair Cllr Eldridge, elected at AGM 10th May 2023).**  Cllr G Wilde was nominated by Cllr Simcock to join Cllrs Barnes, George, Burch, Nicholson, Powell, Simcock, and A Wilde on the People and Communities Committee, seconded by Cllr Barnes. Unanimously approved and accepted by all Councillors. |
| PR63/23 | **To receive a £1000 grant application from Contemporancient Theatre.**  Cllr Bowyer welcomed V Mills to the meeting. V Mills explained about the Sanctuary project depicting the historical story of sanctuary at Plas Gunter Mansion. Working to raise awareness, interest and knowledge of Plas Gunter and also the works of Town of Sanctuary – they have been working with Syrian musicians for this project. Performing during Refugee Week 19th – 24th June. Performances 21st, 23rd and 24th June in the Borough Theatre. Looking for support by the way of funding for a matinee performance for students in Yr7 at KHS in conjunction with the RE and History departments to bring 187 students to see the production without any cost to the students.  Cllr Bowyer thanked V Mills for this application for £1000 towards the matinee performance, the subject resonates with the Council. V Mills left the meeting.  Cllr Simcock asked if this is the second application for funds. Town Clerk said £2500 was given to the group in the last financial year towards development costs. Cllr Callard commented on the symmetry with being a town of refuge. Cllr Simcock said it will be good to enable children to experience live theatre. Cllr Jones commented that V Mills has supported online events meetings which highlighted how much is on in town on the 24th June. This supports our values as Town of Sanctuary, and we should support it. Cllr Konieczny proposed we accept this in principle with the proviso to engage other partners – not that we can’t afford it, but added value bringing 3rd sector to these activities. Paves a way going forward so if bigger projects are presented, we can show co-support, inclusivity, and enables support for more things. Good exercise to allow other groups to show support.  Cllr Bowyer asked if Councillors wish to propose agreeing in principle to awarding £1000 and to seek co-supporters – proposed by Cllr Konieczny, seconded by Cllr Holland, unanimously carried by all Councillors to accept and approve this proposal. |
| PR64/23 | **To receive a draft cooperation agreement Food Festival.**  Draft agreement noted by all Councillors. Cllr Powell asked if we get sight of accounts? Town Clerk said full figures were delivered at public meeting week previously, notes yet to be circulated. Cllr Jones said they mentioned a £400k turnover. They hold £15 - £17K in reserves. Uncomfortable with the amount being asked for. Much stronger standing for them, should be a sliding scale downwards. Cllr G Wilde asked why there is an increase in scale? Town Clerk explained the Food Festival’s costs are going up every year. Cllr Eldridge asked how much this generates for the local economy, and what it’s dynamic reach is – do we put a small amount in but get a bigger impact? How much does it generate for the town itself? Cllr Barnes said ours is a tiny amount in their budget, when you look at somewhere like the CAB with huge waiting lists with rises of figures needing assistance by 20% every quarter. Who needs the money most? No need to increase the amount. Agrees with continuing the contribution. Cllr Konieczny said there is an understanding that CAB needs increased support and we’ve done this with lots of agreements. We are in a position to do this due to rising inflation and costs. We were in budget end of last financial year with a small amount going back into reserves. Budget setting will give us a chance to increase support. The Town Council can afford the increase suggested and we can look at increases elsewhere. Cllr Callard asked what happens if we don’t pay it at all? The people of Abergavenny -is it the best use of their money? What it does for the town, does it serve the people who live here? £10k per year for three years is a lot. Not sold on this proposal. Cllr Konieczny responded that if we don’t pay it, we have no roof decorations in the Market Hall. They are a huge attraction year-round. Individual residents might not see it, but local hospitality, tourism and suppliers all benefit. We get return visits and we have the lowest shop vacancy rate in this area. Compared to elsewhere, we have a significant advantage – it brands us as a destination. All these festivals add to the richness and culture of the town. Cllr Callard responded that he understands the Food Festival is great, just queries the amount needed, and that we could find a balance. Cllr Jones said its important to support. We have a good relationship with the Festival. Proposal to alter clause 4.1 to £10k per year from 23/24 and for the 3 years of the agreement. Seconded by Cllr Powell. Cllrs Groucutt and Konieczny against this proposal, all other Councillors voted to accept the amendment.  Proposal to accept agreement as amended by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Barnes, unanimously carried and resolved to be accepted by all Councillors. |
| PR65/23 | **Finance: to receive Month 1 report.**  Town Clerk apologised to Councillors that due to a technical issue the reports have not been able to be produced in time for this meeting – a technical upgrade has been carried out, after a glitch occurred when submitting the Q4 vat return at year end. As of today this has been resolved. Cllr Bowyer asked the Town Clerk to circulate Month 1 reports as soon as they area available. |
| PR66/23 | **To receive, note and approve the Audit Solutions Ltd report for 22/23.**  Cllr Bowyer said the report was long and complicated, and is difficult to discuss. Proposes that the Chairs and Clerk go through the report and compile a response, then bring this back to Councillors. Cllr Barnes formally raised concerns that the Town Council are still banking with Barclays, who have a terrible reputation supporting fossil fuels. Fed up we continue to support them. Audit says not to invest in one bank. Nationwide and Lloyds have now made changes. Make steps for reserves to move into a more sustainable and ethical bank. Cllr Groucutt commented that whilst he agrees entirely, it seems inappropriate without it on the agenda as an item – it’s a major step and needs proper investigation. Evidence for the changes. Cllr Eldridge also commented we should be careful when making such a move, but follow the sustainable guidance. Cllr Bowyer said this is a major proposal which needs to go to a separate agenda item. As we have already proposed for Chairs and the Clerk to look at this and come back with a response to the report. Proposal put forward again by Cllr Eldridge, seconded by Cllr Jones, unanimously approved and resolved to be accepted by all Councillors. Cllr Bowyer asked all Councillors to forward comments for inclusion in the response to the Town Clerk as soon as possible. Cllr Barnes thanked all for their hard work that goes into the audit process. |
| PR67/23 | **To receive updates from Councillors on the ATC Action Plan.**  Cllr Barnes reported that he has engaged with the Pro Mobility group, who meet monthly. They are achieving lots with good responses and actions form MCC officers. Thanks to MCC for being more receptive.  Cllr Konieczny reported on Abergavenny in Bloom: Through William Griffiths at Th Angel the Town Council was able to write to the CEOs of the multiples and we’ve had a number of positive responses. We can use this to support smaller businesses taking on hanging baskets. Businesses are more involved. Gradual change and a goo step forward. Bus Station repairs hopefully will be carried out by Griffiths Construction, and they will build in seating around the three raised beds. BBC’s The One Show has been in contact to report on Britain in Bloom so videos have ben sent across for use. Did have significant vandalism to planters when the fair was in town but repairs are ongoing.  Cllr Powell reported the planning application for the LBC for the bridge at the train station has been passed.  Cllr Bowyer thanked everyone for their updates. |
| PR68/23 | **To receive an update on the website redesign.**  Town Clerk reported that videos were now available for approval of the mill wheel and banner. Will need bio information from all Councillors to go with headshots. Cllr Bowyer has seen the draft pages, it gives a much more modern look for the Council. |
| PR69/23 | **To consider a response to MCC ESAG regarding ASB 6th – 12th May.**  Town Clerk updated Councillors on two major incidents reported in town across the stay of the fair. Cllr Konieczny reported that on the Wednesday evening the Civic Society beds at Fairfield car park, suffered damage to plants. Between 6pm – 8pm the fair has a family feel, but from 8pm onwards groups of teens gather unsupervised and with no stewarding on site no-one could stop things escalating. Given the fact that we as a Town Council have to comply with ESAG on maintaining levels of public safety, this needs closer scrutiny – maybe decreasing the hours of the fair. Incumbent on us to comment on behalf of residents. Cllr Jones agreed on looking at the hours, and said there has been a rise in ASB across the town for months. Local businesses are being smashed up, there are assaults in the parks, so it’s a wider issue – why is it happening? Lots of young people seem unhappy and angry. Cllr Barnes said it does appear to be 13-15yr olds, are there drugs involved? Can we look at the whole picture when we have our walk about on Monday evening. Cutting the hours of the fair may cause more aggravation. Its important for the Police to be there more regularly. Vandalism to plants and signs can be fixed. Police should be there more when the fair is in town. The youth are angry, and if we take this away, they’ll be angrier. Cllr Eldridge asked if we could request that ESAG look at Police or Security to be present? How do they know when there is going to be trouble. Young people will feel intimidated by the police. Cllr Bowyer visited the fair, and there were lots of Police present. They were being extremely abused, filmed, poked, and shouted at. Cllr Konieczny said increased security isn’t a panacea. AM Fest had issues where security were abused. That is a very well-run event. What is adequate level to preserve public safety, enough of a deterrent to show they won’t get away with anything. MCC can make it a requirement under licensing to mange the event so its enjoyable. Cllr Bowyer said there are lots of ideas floating about. Can we invite MCC Licencing and Police to meeting to get a consensus? Cllr Jones said the Police work so hard, they have a CSO off sick at present, so as we have a walk around on Monday we can discuss it then? Cllr Callard said it would be worth discussing with MCC Licencing. Not right for the Police to provide cover. Cllr Barnes said the Police don’t control the fair, but damage is outside if that. Good for them to have more presence outside the fair when it is in town. FoBP are worried about it happening again. Complex issue. Cllr Eldridge asked who we could invite from MCC? Cllr Jones proposed we invite Linda O’Gorman and Kris Williams form ESAG to our meeting once we have had our walk around on Monday. Note the Police have written to us and kept us updated on events. Cllr Powell asked if the people involved were local. Cllr Callard believes they were mainly from outside the area.  Proposal by Cllr Jones to invite ESAG reps from MCC to a Policy and Resources meeting once we have had our walk about with Police and ASB officers. Seconded by Cllr Barnes. Unanimously carried and approved by all Councillors. |
| PR70/23 | **To receive reports from Councillors attendance at external bodies which are relevant to this Committee:**  **• Abergavenny Eisteddfod – Cllrs Simcock and Jones -** no report.  **• Borough Theatre MCC / ATC Collaboration – Cllrs Groucutt and Konieczny -** no report.  **• Mind Monmouthshire - Cllrs G Wilde and Cllr A Wilde –** no meeting or report. |
| PR71/23 | **To consider items for the next meeting on 7th June 2023:**   * To invite Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader of MCC, and Paul Matthews, CEO of MCC, to the next Policy and Resources/Full Council meeting. * To follow up the Fair discussion |

**Meeting ended 8:21pm**

**APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD**

**CHAIR ………………………………… DATE ……………………………**