**ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD**

**31ST JANUARY 2024 AT 7PM VIA MS TEAMS &**

**IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM, TOWN HALL, ABERGAVENNY.**

**Present:** Cllr C Holland (Interim Chair)

Cllr M Barnes

Cllr P Bowyer

Cllr K Eldridge

Cllr G Jones

Cllr D Simcock

Cllr G Wilde

Cllr L Wright

**In attendance**: S Rosser – Principal Officer

J Shipley – Deputy Principal Officer

PC Thompson & CSO Bonnici - Gwent Police

Kim Waters – Welsh Rivers Union

Anthea Fairey – Friends of Castle Meadows

**Public in attendance:** None

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| E01/24 | **Receive and approve apologies for absence.**  Apologies received from Cllr George and the reasons for absence were accepted. |
| E02/24 | **Receive Declarations of Interest**  Deputy Principal Officer Jay Shipley is a member of the committee for Friends of Castle Meadows so will not be present for the discussion on the grant application submitted for discussion this evening. |
| E03/24 | **To receive and approve the minutes from the last meeting on 20th December 2023.**  Cllr Bowyer proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record, seconded by Cllr Jones. All Councillors resolved to accept this proposal. |
| E04/24 | **To receive an update from the Abergavenny Neighbourhood Team at Gwent Police**  Crime Prevention outreach: meet the public sessions plus give away of UV marker pens and bells for hand-bags. Well received by the public. Car seized in Fairfield Carpark (Section 59) anti-social behaviour.  Shoplifting on the rise Police have offered local shopkeepers CCTV support. Begging is a concern as there seem to be groups working together. Reports of begging as part of ‘modern day slavery’. Reports of homeless person using the bus-station disabled toilet. Police responded. Pub-watch where there are licencing concerns, Landlords to adhere to licencing conditions or lose licence. XL-Bullies: Dogs must be registered; owners must have dogs muzzled in public settings. Police appreciate the opportunity to report to and work with ATC. |
| E05/24 | **To receive a presentation from Kim Waters from Welsh Rivers Union**. <https://wru.org.uk/>  Presented a well-reasoned account of the poor state of River Health. Pollution has caused the demise of protected species of fish and invertebrates. Welsh Rivers Union is a lobby group working to hold democratic institutions with the authority to act to clean up our rivers to account, eg The Environment Agency, for the health of our rivers. Welsh Water is one of the worst polluters; Natural Resources Wales should be invited to attend a meeting of Abergavenny Town Council to account for lack of action. Of 9 Welsh Rivers the Usk has the highest phosphate pollution in Wales. Getting people to engage with their local river eg Citizen Science projects, and report data on river monitoring, could help raise awareness of these issues. Re: supporting data, recommended web sites: [How healthy are our rivers? | The Rivers Trust](https://theriverstrust.org/about-us/news/how-healthy-are-our-rivers) ‘Top of the Poops’  [Top of the Poops (top-of-the-poops.org)](https://top-of-the-poops.org/) and a Government Document: The Health of Rivers: Environmental Principles [Water quality in rivers - Environmental Audit Committee (parliament.uk)](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmenvaud/74/report.html) UK Government. |
| E06/24 | **To receive a grant application from Friends of Castle Meadows**  Presentation from Anthea Fairey, Chair of Friends of Castle Meadows, received and noted. The Citizen Science water sampling kit was demonstrated to the councillors. This complemented the presentation from the previous speaker and followed by a grant request for additional kit to make the water sampling in the Usk safer. |
| E07/24 | **To receive a report on Abergavenny in Bloom and Wales in Bloom**  Report received and noted.  Sarah Price has agreed to present the awards in September when the town host the National Wales in Bloom Awards. |
| E08/24 | **To receive a report on the town entry signage for Abergavenny**  Discussion initiated on style/colour of signage and information, do we include Gold Winners Wales in Bloom; Twinned Towns, etc. Principal Officer to contact Highways to explore process of updating 3 signs at entrances to Abergavenny. Consultation project for formal report at the next Environment Committee. |
| E09/24 | **To receive and note the Principal Officer’s update**  Report received and noted. Principal Officer to write on behalf of this Committee and the Town Council to thank Keep Abergavenny Tidy and in particular Mike Hodges for their hard work getting the Business Community to sign up for a Litter Free Zone. |
| E10/24 | **To receive and note the Service Delivery update**  Report received and noted. |
| E11/24 | **Finance**:   1. **Receive an update on the Environment Budget headings**.   Cllr G Jones proposed the report be accepted, seconded by Cllr G Wilde. All Councillors resolved to accept the proposal of the report being a true and accurate record.  b**) To consider the grant application from Friends of Castle Meadows**. (Duty to seek to maintain and enhance the bio-diversity in the proper exercise of the Council’s functions - Environment Act Wales 2016) Proposed to approve the grant funding application by Cllr G Wilde, seconded by Cllr Bowyer, and all councillors resolved to accept the proposal. |
| E12/24 | **To consider and make recommendations regarding the following planning applications**  DM/2023/01746  No objections received. Recommend approval.  DM/2024/00060  No objections received. Recommend approval. |
| E13/24 | **To review and update on relevant items on the Strategy and Action Plan** (priorities 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,14,15,21,23,26,31)  No update – move update reports to ‘Awayday’ meeting. |
| E14/24 | **Report from Town Councillors attendance at external bodies relevant to this Committee:**   * Abergavenny and District Tourist Association: Cllr Simcock * CCTV user group: Cllrs George & Jones meeting due 13th February 2024 and ATC SLA agreement for this provision is up for review. * Friends of Linda Vista Gardens: Cllrs Wright & Simcock * Friends of Bailey Park: Cllrs Eldridge & Bowyer * Friends of Castle Meadows: Cllrs Simcock & Wright * Monmouthshire CC Planning Committee: Cllr George * Y Fenni Business Community: Cllrs Eldridge & Nicholson |
| E15/24 | **Report from County Councillors on matters affecting Abergavenny relevant to this Committee**  That the Active Travel Planning proposals were being considered by MCC’s Planning Committee 6th February 2024 and that Cllr Wright was to speak at the Planning Meeting. |
| E16/24 | **Items for consideration at the next meeting Wednesday 28th February 2024**   1. Town signs: Consultation project for formal report from Principal Officer 2. Request for CEO of Natural Resources Wales to be invited to be invited to address Council on the issues surrounding the River Usk 3. Report back from Planning Committee on the decision around Active Travel on Castle Meadows. |

**MEETING CLOSED AT 20:47pm**

**APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD**

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