**Abergavenny in Bloom Volunteers’ Meeting**

**5th December 2024**

Attending:

Tony Konieczny – Chair of Abergavenny and District Civic Society, Chair of Abergavenny in Bloom 2025 by invitation of The Abergavenny Town Council; Sue Konieczny – (IYN) Sue’s Patch; Pauline Richards and Janice – (IYN) Park Crescent; ; Jay Shipley – Abergavenny Town Council, Friends of Castle Meadows, Abergavenny and District Civic Society (ADCS), KAT; Julie Miles and Jean (IYN) Railway Station Planters - Abergavenny I Fenni WI; Ange Sampson (IYN) 7 Corners; Helen Trevor-Davies KAT; Tom Ward-Jackson Keep Wales Tidy (KWT); Cllr Maurice Barnes-Abergavenny Town Council; Clive Bransom – Abergavenny and District Civic Society, Friends of Castle Meadows, Friends of Bailey Park; Liz Appleton (IYN) Library Square Gardens and Maggie Brownscane Library Square Gardens and KAT; Deb, George Beale, Ian and Judith Vicary – (IYN) Bailey Park; Cllr Phil Bowyer Abergavenny Town Council.

Apologies:

Anthea Fairey – Friends of Castle Meadows; Oliver Barton –(IYN) Friends of Linda Vista Gardens; Jo Nugent Angel Hotel; William & Harriet- The Chapel; Chris Jones – Neville Street; Benita Kelly – (IYN) Library Square Gardens; Nigel Leaworthy – MCC; Josie and Keri – Greenfinch; Sasha – Kings Arms; Nadia – Ambika; Cllr Anne Wilde – Chair of Abergavenny Town Council (ATC) Environment Committee.

Meeting opened with message of welcome and thanks from Tony Konieczny (TK) and introductions by volunteers attending. Apologies had been offered prior to the meeting.

A brief history of Abergavenny in Bloom since 2017 - high achievement, 4 years running achieving Gold Standard and in 2024 taking 1st place overall in the town category. 2023 representing Wales in Britain in Bloom – achieving Gold and beating 47 national finalists to take the Award for Sustainable Gardening.

Going forward, Abergavenny Town Council (ATC), whilst intrinsically involved with Abergavenny in Bloom and will continue for the present to support with funding, is looking to Abergavenny in Bloom to become a more independent body, reducing the administrative load on ATC. As a concept – to become a constituted body such as Greener Abergavenny; to bring more ideas forward; get businesses involved (Business Meeting in January to discuss Bloom) and recruit more volunteers and be able to seek grant funding. Volunteer hours represent a huge community commitment. Point from the floor: that going forward, steps are taken to bring groups together more often, including emissaries of businesses, to discuss priorities.

Abergavenny has once again been invited to represent Wales in Britain in Bloom – a high accolade. The meeting was asked to vote on whether to accept the invitation. This would mean judging in July for Wales in Bloom then 2-3 weeks later a second round of judging for Britain in Bloom. ATC has agreed to support the wishes of the meeting. The volunteer groups voted an overwhelming majority **YES** to accept the invitation. The general consensus was to consider building ‘Bloom’ as a more stand-alone organisation with a coalition between volunteer groups and businesses. TK to inform Wales in Bloom that Abergavenny will be honoured to represent Wales at Britain in Bloom.

Suggestions going forward:

Jay to send out the 2024 Judge’s Report to groups.

Volunteer age profile a concern – recruitment drive required to engage more people and try to future proof volunteer group activities. Ideas welcomed.

TK willing to apply for grant funding (eg £20K over two years from Awards for All) should Bloom becomes a constituted group.

KWT: Engagement with schools and litter free zones.

ADCS: grant application to purchase bulbs and plug plants to involve schools in ownership of environmental projects/civic pride in their town.