



Chepstow Town Council

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Chepstow Town Council held via Zoom remote meetings on Wednesday 24th February 2021 at 7.00pm

Present:

Chairman: Tom Kirton (Town Mayor)

Councillors: A Braund, H Beach, J Brews, C Duchet, Y Havard,
N Heywood, P Pavia, T Redhead, D Rooke, M Brady, A Watts

Apologies: J Becker, P Hobson

In Attendance: Lucy Allen (Town Clerk)
Karen Pearce (Administrative Officer)

101 Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda.

Cllr J Brews declared a prejudicial interest under **Item 106 Business Resilience Forum “Business Grant Funding”** as a business owner.

Cllr A Watts declared a prejudicial interest under **Item 106 Business Resilience Forum “Business Grant Funding”** as a business owner.

102. Mayoral Announcements

None.

103. Minutes

The minutes of the ordinary meeting of Full Council held on 27th January 2021 and the extraordinary meeting of Full Council held on 3rd February 2021 were confirmed and will be signed as a true record at the next available opportunity.

104. Matters Arising

Members received and noted the Clerk’s update on matters arising from the previous meeting.

105. Committees

a) Planning and Administration Committee

1. Received the minutes of the Planning and Administration Committee meeting held 27th January and the draft minutes of 10th February 2021.

2. Members received an update from the Place Plan Working Party in relation to the launch and consultation and received the newsletter and posters which will be sent to all residents and businesses in Chepstow. Members discussed whether both publications should be produced in Welsh.

Resolved:

To contact Monmouthshire County Council to take advice as to whether both publications and the “Future Chepstow” website need to be produced in Welsh.

b) Finance, Policy and Audit Committee

1. Received the draft minutes of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee meeting held on 10th February 2021.

2. Members considered the decision of the committee regarding financial support to Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice Bureau.

Resolved:

To ratify the decision of the committee (minute ref 34.) to send a letter of support to Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice Bureau with a pledge to support their financial inclusion project. The pledge is for a minimum of £5,000 to a maximum of £10,000. Funding from the Covid Emergency Fund (*Local Government Act 1972, s142 (2A)*).

106. Business Resilience Forum

Members received an update from the Business Resilience Forum:

An extension of the current Restrictions Business Fund Non Domestic (NDR) Grant to the end of March 2021. Businesses that previously received this grant in either December 2020 or January 2021 are eligible to receive a top up payment of either £3,000 or £5,000, there is no need to re-apply.

For businesses who are not registered for Business Rates in the County, support is available through the Restrictions Business Fund Discretionary Grant. This grant supports small businesses and sole traders that have been directly impacted by the extended restrictions. If businesses received a grant under the Discretionary Fund in December 2020 and January 2021, they will need to make a new application for this extended scheme, as no automatic payments will be made.

Chamber of Commerce and Tourism feedback, their main challenge is business survival; particularly retail on the high street. They have been working tirelessly since the pandemic started, looking after members and everyone else who has got in touch (as well as those who haven't via their Facebook page), with the ongoing support of MCC through the Business Resilience Forum.

Businesses in the town who need help, and are not currently in contact with the Chamber, should be encouraged to contact them. They have had almost 100% success rate of helping those who have been in contact. They have 2 outstanding cases that they are trying to do something for at the moment. Again - MCC have been supportive with these cases.

They have raised a few concerns about proposals regarding COVID enhancements – flexibility of street furniture, consultation with businesses and residents, which are being worked on by MCC.

Request for CTC to please move on with the investigation (agreed at mediation) promised well over 12 months ago.

107. Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales - Review of County Electoral Arrangements for Monmouthshire - Draft Proposals

Members discussed the proposals which identified a number of changes to Thornwell, Bulwark and Larkfield wards accommodating the number of electors per Councillor more evenly.

Resolved:

To agree the draft proposal and submit a response detailing these changes to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales.

108. Standing Orders

Members considered the Standing Orders recommended by the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee on 10th February 2021.

Resolved:

To adopt the Standing Orders recommended by the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee on 10th February 2021 subject to the following issues to be raised with One Voice Wales:

1. That the language be non-gender specific;
2. The removal of the reference to the European Community (p.19).

109. Financial Regulations

Members considered the Financial Regulations recommended by the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee on 10th February 2021.

Resolved:

Members agreed to adopt the Financial Regulations recommended by the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee on 10th February 2021.

110 Annual Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategy

Members considered the Annual Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategy.

Resolved:

To adopt the Annual Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategy recommended by the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee on 10th February 2021.

111. Repair Café Chepstow

Members considered the confidential report detailing the proposal to set up a Repair Café in Chepstow. Members also received an oral report on the meetings attended with the Circular Community Bid group and the support that will be provided by Benthycymru and Monmouthshire

County Council to set up the Repair Café in Chepstow. Members further considered the recommendations.

Resolved:

Members agreed to:

1. continue working with Monmouthshire County Council & Repair Café Wales to provide a repair café in Chepstow;
2. investigate whether the Town Council have a property within its portfolio which could be suitable but also review properties within Chepstow that have adequate nearby parking;
3. agree in principle the approximate costs for funding the Repair Café and for the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee to allocate funds, at their meeting in June, for this project.

112. NHS, Social care and frontline worker's day 5th July 2021

Members considered supporting the NHS, social care and frontline worker's day on Monday, 5th July 2021.

Resolved:

To support the NHS, Social care and frontline worker's day on Monday, 5th July 2021 by purchasing and raising the official flag and for arranging for the ringing of the Church Bells at 8pm.

9.00pm Cllr Brews left the meeting.

113. Councillor Vacancy St Kingsmark Ward

Members received an update on the proposed dates for the Town Councillor vacancy in St Kingsmark Ward and noted that an election will be held on 1st April 2021.

114. Exploration of installing war memorial fencing around the town gun

Members considered whether to explore the costs and consents required for installing memorial fencing around the War Memorial Gun in time for the hundredth anniversary of the memorials installation next year 2022.

Resolved:

To investigate the possibility of commissioning a sculptural installation to encompass the War Memorial gun to enhance interpretation and minimise human physical contact so as to aid its preservation for future generations. If appropriate this work to be commissioned in time for the hundredth anniversary of the memorials installation in 2022.

115. Consultations

1. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Members considered the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales consultation on the new draft guidance on the Code of Conduct for members of County and Community/Town Councils.

Resolved:

To respond positively to the consultation and provide feedback that Members feel the document is

excellent.

2. Monmouthshire County Council – School places Caldicot

Members considered a response to Monmouthshire County Council’s consultation on the proposals to increase the number of Primary School places in Caldicot Town.

Resolved:

Not to submit a response to this consultation.

3. Monmouthshire County Council – Pelican Crossing Station Road / Beaufort Square

Members considered the consultation on the removal of the pelican crossing in Station Road / Beaufort Square as part of the works scheme at the junction of Beaufort Square with High Street to enhance connectivity between the High Street and St. Mary Street as part of the Councils local sustainable Covid works.

Resolved:

To respond to the consultation with the following concerns:

1. Concerns that the removal of the crossing will be extremely dangerous due to the speed that some vehicles enter Station Road; sight of traffic lights before the proposed raised table allows for a natural reduction in speed.
2. The proposed raised table is engineered to reduce traffic in the area but will push traffic elsewhere in Chepstow. This, along with the proposed closure of the Old Wye Bridge and access only for disabled badge holders and deliveries in the High Street, means that there is nowhere for traffic to flow apart from the A48 which, should a vehicle breakdown, brings the town to a standstill.
3. Concerns that these works are Monmouthshire County Councils way of pedestrianising the High Street without proper consultation.

Members requested that, should these works go ahead, as a minimum a Zebra crossing be deployed in its place.

116. High Street water drainage issues

Members considered correspondence received highlighting water drainage issues in the High Street.

Resolved:

A letter to be sent to Monmouthshire County Council requesting they review the correspondence and, whilst writing, highlight the Town Councils own concerns and suggest consideration be given to additional gullies and drainage, at intermittent intervals, to stop the speed and quantities of the water accumulating at the bottom of the hill.

Due to the time, 9.30pm, Members considered suspending Standing Order 11 “Duration of Meetings”.

Resolved:

To suspend standing orders and for the meeting to continue.

117. MIND Monmouthshire

Members received the quarterly update from Mind Monmouthshire Wellbeing Services from October – December 2020.

118. Finance

(a) Bank Reconciliation

Confirmed the reconciliation of the Council's Bank Accounts at 31st January 2021.

Payments	£601.42
Receipts	£43,909.81

(b) Accounts

Received and adopted the schedule of payments and receipts for the month of January 2021.

(c) Income and Expenditure

Received and adopted the Income and Expenditure account for the month of January 2021.

(d) Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2020

Members noted that the External Auditors have confirmed that on the basis of their review and in their opinion, the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

(e) Festival of Arts

Members received correspondence from the Chepstow Festival of Arts requesting that the Town Council consider the purchase of display boards.

Resolved:

To investigate the types of display boards available and to defer the financial decision until the grant application has been submitted for consideration at the next meeting of the Full Council on 24th March 2021.

(f) Review of the Remuneration Framework for Community and Town Councils

Members considered correspondence from the Remuneration Framework for Community and Town Councils regarding participation in the review of the framework.

Resolved:

To agree to participate in the review of the remuneration framework for Community and Town Councils.

119. Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies

B4245 meeting (which runs from St. Pierre to Magor) – a report will be available at the next meeting on 24th March 2021.

120. Matters relating to the public and urgent information exchange

Community Fridge - Members received an update on the community fridge project and were advised that a suitable venue was currently being investigated. Furthermore, to agenda a discussion around the Community Fridge at the next meeting on 24th March 2021.

One Voice Wales Larger Councils Conference - A number of items for information were discussed at the conference including:

1. Legislation currently being considered to extend remote zoom meetings after 1st May 2021.
2. A review will be carried out by the Remuneration Panel for Wales on tax paid on Councillor remuneration
3. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act had received Royal Assent meaning a number of changes for Town and Community Councils from May 2022 including the Power of Wellbeing being replaced by the General Power of Competence.
4. A report into the benefits of home working and the effects on the environment and well-being of staff is due to be carried out in the future.

121. Correspondence

Members received and considered the correspondence list in the schedule.

122. Items for next meeting

1. Community Fridge project
2. How can we promote local council elections to all age groups within the community?

123. Date of next meeting

To confirm that the next ordinary meeting will be held on **Wednesday 24th March 2021** at 7pm via Zoom online meetings.

CLOSE: This completed the business of the meeting at 21:50 p.m.

SIGNED CHAIR PERSON: _____ **DATE:** _____