



Chepstow Town Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Chepstow Town Council held via Zoom remote meetings on Wednesday 16th February 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:

Chairman: Tom Kirton (Town Mayor)

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

In Attendance: Lucy Allen (Town Clerk)
Alison Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mark Hand (MH), Head of Service (Planning, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding)
Roger Hoggins (RH), Highway and Flood Management
Cllr Jane Pratt (JP), Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure
Cllr Sara Jones (SJ), Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Members of Public (22)

162. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda

Cllr A Watts declared a non-prejudicial interest as a County Councillor.

163. To Suspend Standing Orders

Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) – High Street road closure

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Members to enter into discussions with officers and Cabinet Members from MCC in relation to the extension of the High Street road closure.

See Appendix A below

Standing Orders were reinstated

164. Date of Next Meeting

Confirmed that the next Ordinary Meeting will be held on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 7.00pm via Zoom online meetings.

CLOSE: This completed the business of the meeting at 20:25

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

Appendix A

MH introduced himself and outlined the public consultation starting today until 15.3.22 to seek views of how the Town Centre is currently working and how the public would like it to work. The consultation is available online and paper copies are available in English and Welsh from Town Council office, MCC Hub (Library) and Tourist Information Centre.

A Company called ARAP has been commissioned to model traffic solutions and will be meeting with targeted stakeholders over the next month to discuss different options. A public consultation will follow on the options after the elections in May 2022.

MCC and Town Council are working on a Placemaking Plan for Chepstow, an overarching strategy for the town which will allow the joining up of projects.

MH outlined the statutory notification process currently ongoing, around the traffic order to keep the High Street closed for up to another 18 months. This is an experimental order, which during the first 6 months there is opportunity to feedback on it.

MH clarified the consultation process in order to implement a Traffic Order for permanent changes.

MH confirmed that consultations on the traffic modelling, stakeholder engagement and results of the public consultation will feed in to any decision made by MCC.

MH clarified, Item 7 of the experimental order and confirmed that consultation will take place before any decision is taken on the High Street and that a permanent closure will not automatically happen after 6 months.

Members expressed concerns with the level of engagement and non-implementation of ideas raised by Councillors who felt that MCC were not listening to them. JP highlighted engagement with Town Council and other stakeholders on the High Street closure since 8.5.20, to which all County Council members had been invited to attend.

MH reassured Members that disability groups will be consulted as one of the stakeholders in the town.

Concerns were expressed that traders in the town were not being consulted or listened to.

SJ advised that footfall is down 20% in High Streets nationally compared to 2-years ago and stated that the work being undertaken on the Chepstow Placemaking Plan will have a huge impact on the vision for the town centre in years to come. SJ also referred to MCC's Business Resilience Forum which meets monthly and is represented by businesses across the County, including Chepstow.

Members recognised challenges in Chepstow due its close proximity to Cribbs Causeway, car parking charges and traffic congestion. RH outlined discussions ongoing and a commitment from MCC and Gloucester County Council in relation to a Chepstow bypass.

An MCC car parking review is due to take place across Monmouthshire during Summer 2022. MH stated car parking provides a source of income to MCC to maintain the highways infrastructure network.

It was queried if the survey would give a true reflection of the High Street being closed due to there being no alternative route around the town for traffic. MH advised the High Street survey and the traffic modelling are based on the current situation.

Two separate issues, i.e. regeneration and use of the High Street are apparent and it was considered that commercially the High Street needed businesses which will attract visitors to the town.

It was considered that public transport to and from the town centre was inadequate.

'Pop up shops', bringing empty units into use in the short term were referred to and MH advised that under the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Fund, it was hoped that funding available during the pandemic will extend into next year and he would be happy to work with Town Council if the funding is extended.

The suggestions for an alternative flow of traffic through the High Street during peak times of the day will be presented to ARUP as part of the model traffic solutions and depending on the outcome of the first consultation, there could be scope to adjust the traffic order.

A reminder that the current survey is open until 15th March and available as follows:

Monmouthshire County Council:

- Website: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2022/02/share-your-views-on-chepstow-high-street-and-help-shape-future-plans/>
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/MonmouthshireCC
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MonmouthshireCC>

Chepstow Town Council:

- Website: <http://www.chepstow.co.uk/VirDir/CoreContents/News/Display.aspx?id=47382>
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Chepstow_Town_Council

Hard copies available from:

- MCC Hub, Chepstow Library, 9 Bank Street, Chepstow
- Chepstow Tourist Information Centre, Bridges Street, Chepstow
- Chepstow Town Council office, The Gatehouse, High Street, Chepstow