

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Bryn y Cwm Area Committee held  
at The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cross Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5HD on  
Wednesday, 16th May, 2018 at 1.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor S. Woodhouse (Vice-Chair)

County Councillors: M. Groucutt, G. Howard, S. Howarth,  
S.B. Jones, P. Jordan, M. Powell, J. Pratt, T. Thomas and  
K. Williams

Abergavenny Town Council: Councillor P. Simcock  
Llanover Community Council: Councillor G. Thomas

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Owen Wilce	Community and Partnership Development Lead
Ben Winstanley	Estates Manager
Christian Schmidt	Transport Planning and Policy Officer
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. K. Gass	-	Abergavenny Fairtrade Forum
Mr. S. Hadley	-	Network Rail
Ms. A. Brake	-	Befriending Monmouthshire
Mr. A. Michie	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler	-	Clerk to Llanover Community Council
Ms. J. Lee	-	Clerk to Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. R. Cole	-	Abergavenny and District Civic Society
Mr. P. Bowyer	-	Abergavenny Rail Access Campaign
Councillor D. Simcock	-	Abergavenny Town Council

## **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors D. Jones, S. Jones and M. Lane.  
Councillor G. Nelmes

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of Interest made.

### **2. Public Open Forum**

The Vice-Chair invited members of the public present to put questions to the Area Committee, or to raise issues of concern:

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### **Abergavenny Railway Access Campaign**

As this issue was already on the agenda for this meeting, this matter would be raised later in the meeting under the relevant agenda item.

### **3. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chair.

### **4. Update by Katrina Gass of the Fair Trade Forum regarding Fair Trade**

We received a presentation by Katrina Gass of the Fair Trade Forum regarding Fair Trade. Katrina Gass was supported by school children from Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Volunteers had established the Abergavenny Fair Trade Forum in 2007. It is made up of people from the local community, representatives from local churches and the Town Council.
- Abergavenny Fairtrade Forum is one of four Fairtrade groups in Monmouthshire and the County is a part of Fairtrade Wales, the first Fairtrade Nation.
- Fairtrade guarantees farmers in developing countries a fair price for their product that covers the price of production, no matter how low the world market price goes.
- By buying Fairtrade products we can make a difference to over 5 million people – farmers, workers and their families.
- 4500 licensed products carry the Fairtrade logo in the United Kingdom.
- The Fairtrade logo is the only international guarantee that producers have been paid a fair price for their products, have monitored protection for personal health and environmental safety and a premium to spend locally decided by the community.
- The logo is a waving person against a background of grass and sky.
- Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School has held Fairtrade coffee mornings, produced a Fairtrade display and sold Fairtrade goods.
- The school had won the Fairtrade song competition and performed it at the Wales Fairtrade Fair. Fairtrade is an active part of school life.
- Fairtrade Fortnight occurs at the end of February each year and the Wales Fairtrade Fair is held in the Market Hall every October.

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- Abergavenny Fairtrade Forum is a registered charity.
- Members of the Area Committee, Town and Community Councils and Officers of Monmouthshire County Council were encouraged to promote Fairtrade products within their respective organisations with a view to increasing consumer awareness and demand for Fairtrade products.

The Vice-Chair thanked Katrina Gass and the Children from Llantilio Pertholey Church in Wales Primary School for attending the meeting and providing the Area Committee with a presentation regarding the work of Abergavenny Fairtrade Forum.

#### **5. Abergavenny Railway Station Footbridge**

We received a verbal update by Samuel Hadley, Network Rail, regarding the footbridge at Abergavenny Railway Station. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Network Rail was aware of the issues raised by the Abergavenny Railway Access Campaign regarding the need for a DDA compliant footbridge at Abergavenny Railway Station and thanked those responsible for raising this issue.
- Network Rail has received funding for a five year period to maintain the amenities at the railway station. However, external funding is required in order to undertake any improvements to the railway station.
- A scheme to deliver access for all was established some years ago. However, signalling issues currently remain. Until funding has been established to undertake development work, the cost of fixing the signalling issues will not be known. However, it is anticipated that the signalling issues can be resolved.
- A date for funding provision has not yet been agreed. However, it is anticipated that this will be resolved in due course. In the meantime, Network Rail is preparing itself for when the funding is available. Abergavenny Railway Station is likely to be prominent on the list of works, though, this has yet to be confirmed.
- It was noted that Welsh Government is considering using the down platform as a turn back. If this happens, then the whole of Abergavenny Railway Station will need to be modernised and brought up to DDA compliance.
- Network Rail would continue to work with partners and the local community in respect of this matter.

Having received the verbal update, the following points were noted:

- When the ticket office is open, wheelchair users can be taken from one side of the station to the other with the aid of a Member of staff. However, when there are no staff available, wheelchair users are expected to go via taxi to another station.

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- It was considered that the railway station should have staff available to provide support for wheelchair users, as the current arrangement was not fit for purpose.
- The signalling at Abergavenny Railway Station is antiquated and requires upgrading. Currently, the cost of improving this issue is not known.
- The Department of Transport decides where funding should be allocated with regard to railway improvement schemes.
- A clear strategy is required, going forward.
- The parking issues at the railway station are still to be addressed. This matter cannot be progressed until a new franchise has been agreed.
- A strategy is required in order that quantified bids may be made.
- Five years ago Welsh Government had funded consultants to produce a report to develop the line. Drainage work was undertaken during this period.
- A 30 minute railway service from Abergavenny to Newport was required.

The Vice-Chair thanked the representative from Network Rail for providing the Area Committee with an update regarding the footbridge at Abergavenny Railway Station.

**We resolved that Network Rail be invited to provide a further update on progress in respect of this matter to the November 2018 Area Committee meeting.**

#### **6. Abergavenny launch of the Community Car Scheme**

We received a presentation by Amanda Brake of Befriending Monmouthshire regarding the Abergavenny launch of the Community Car Scheme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The Community Car Scheme for Abergavenny had only recently been launched.
- A similar scheme had been running successfully in Monmouth for two years.
- The scheme has been established to support vulnerable / isolated people and for people who might not have access to regular transport services.
- There is a need to recruit volunteer drivers and volunteer administrative staff to ensure that this service may be maintained.
- For the long term, funding will be required to maintain the service. Funding is in place until October 2018.

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Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The Bridges Community Car Scheme in Monmouth has been very successful.
- The Abergavenny Car Scheme needs to be promoted. Local councillors could help by promoting the scheme in their respective wards.
- The local press, present at the meeting, were also asked to promote the scheme.

The Vice-Chair thanked Amanda Brake for providing the Area Committee with a presentation in respect of this matter.

Owen Wilce, Community and Partnership Development Lead, informed the Area Committee that the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) was accepting nominations for the Volunteer Achievement Awards.

Posters were provided to the Area Committee promoting the event and Members were asked to erect the posters within their respective wards.

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# Volunteer Achievement Awards

In partnership with



We are looking for individuals or Groups in Gwent who deserve a huge Thank You as recognition for their volunteering & the difference they make in the community.

## Now accepting nominations:

- Young Volunteer
- Adult Volunteer
- Environmental Volunteer
- Trustee Volunteer
- Group Volunteers
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Personal Journey

To nominate, please visit [gavowales.org.uk/recognition](http://gavowales.org.uk/recognition)

Any questions, contact us on 01633 241550 or [volunteering@gavowales.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@gavowales.org.uk)

Closing date: Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018

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### **7. Abergavenny Hub Project Update**

We received an update of progress on the proposed Abergavenny Hub.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A tender exercise had been undertaken in July 2017 via Sell to Wales to appoint a design team to undertake the detailed designs and costings for the proposed hub within Abergavenny Town Hall. GWP Architecture Ltd. were subsequently appointed to lead and they have assembled a team of experts including Quantity Surveyors, mechanical and electrical engineers and acoustic specialists.
- They commenced work in September 2017 and since that time have been testing the initial design concepts in consultation with CADW and the County Council's Heritage Officer to produce the final designs and associated costs.
- Following these discussions amendments have had to be made to the original designs to accommodate heritage concerns. These largely relate to the proposed mezzanine, its design and how the space is created at first floor level. In particular, instead of the whole removal of the existing walls facing the market hall, these will now remain in situ, but punctured so that the space is still fully accessible.
- Accessibility to the building as a whole remains a key outcome and this will be met through the provision of a new lift situated at the front of the building, which will open on all floors including the theatre. The installation of the lift and the creation of the mezzanine require listed building consent.
- Another requirement of the brief was to review the existing utilities infrastructure to provide a more future proofed solution that maximised flexibility whilst minimising energy costs. The mechanical and electrical engineers have identified solutions that will be accommodated as part of the hub project.
- Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken on the proposed designs and, on the whole, this was positive. There are however, some proposed changes from Abergavenny Town Council and a separate meeting is being arranged to clarify these.
- The Design team is now working on the proposals for the proposed phasing of the works and the cost envelope. In the event that the Authority is successful in obtaining listed building consent and resolving stakeholder queries, a report will be submitted to County Council seeking approval to proceed with the project.
- At this stage the Authority is not in a position to confirm the length of the works and the impact on services. Officers are working with the design team to try and establish solutions that will enable the building to remain open during the works. However, staff might need to be re-located as the phases progress. This will

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become determined in the coming months as the designs and phasing are identified.

Having considered the report, the following points were noted:

- Surveys are being undertaken with investigations also being undertaken regarding the structural integrity of the building.
- There will be a need to engage with local people regarding this development.
- A key element will be to keep the building operational during the various phases of the development. Alternative access to the building will be available during this period.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### **8. Update regarding the Wellbeing Plan with reference to the Bryn y Cwm area**

We received an update on the Wellbeing Plan and objectives approved by Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The PSB has approved four well-being objectives that underpin a clear purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. The objectives are:
  - Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
  - Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.
  - Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
  - Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
- Under these objectives is a series of steps that will be taken. Each of these is effectively an area of work that will contribute to the overall objective. Each is led by a partner from the PSB who will assume responsibility for scoping the programme of work. The issues within the Well-being Plan are extremely complex, and in many cases, further work and detailed analysis will be needed before a decision on the precise nature of the action required can be developed. Many of the suggested steps are challenging and require fundamental changes to the way public services work together.
- A schedule of work will be established and will be presented to the PSB in July 2018.



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- There will be an opportunity for communities to become involved.
- A bid has been made to Gov Tech. Welsh Government has confirmed that Monmouthshire County Council has been successful in its bid. £1.25 million funding will be available to help solve the rural transport issues in Monmouthshire.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### **9. Progress report by Team Abergavenny**

We received Team Abergavenny's update report to date. In doing so, the following points were noted.

- The Area Committee should support the North Monmouthshire five year plan.
- A further meeting would be held in due course to discuss funding for Phase 3 of the Frogmore Street development.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

#### **10. Verbal update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse regarding progress in respect of the Strategic Transport Group**

We received a verbal update from the Vice-Chair regarding the progress being made at the Strategic Transport Group. In doing so, the following points were noted that arose at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018:

##### **Llanfoist Footbridge**

The Llanfoist footbridge has been delayed due to funding issues. It is anticipated that Welsh Government will shortly be announcing details of further funding for Active Travel Grants. The Area Committee will be informed of developments in due course.

##### **De-trunking of the A40 through Abergavenny**

- A trunk road through the town is unsuitable. Various sets of traffic lights cause traffic to back up through the town. Welsh Government needs to consider de-trunking the A40 through the town.
- However, it was considered that there was no simple solution to resolve this issue.
- Priory Ward is not suited to having heavy traffic flows. This area is being used as a 'rat run' with traffic often exceeding the speed limit.

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- The infrastructure within the town is not keeping pace with the proposed housing developments for Abergavenny. This matter needs to be looked at as part of the new Local Development Plan (LDP).
- There is a need to identify how much additional traffic is travelling through the town.

**We resolved that the Head of Operations would write to the Welsh Government Minister for Economy and Transport expressing the concerns of the Area Committee regarding the increased levels of traffic travelling through Abergavenny Town.**

### **11. Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme**

We received and noted the Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme.

### **12. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business**

We received and noted the forward planner for Cabinet and Council Business.

### **13. Bryn y Cwm Area Committee Future Work Programme**

We received the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee future work programme.

**We resolved that the following item be added to the work programme:**

- **Update regarding the Heads of the Valleys Dualling – Gilwern to Brynmawr.**

### **14. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny, on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at 1.00pm.

**The meeting ended at 3.05 pm.**