

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of North Monmouthshire Area Committee held
at Gilwern Community Centre, Common Road, Gilwern, NP7 0DS on Wednesday, 25th
September, 2019 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillors: R. Harris, S.B. Jones, P. Jordan, M. Lane,
M. Powell, J. Pratt, T. Thomas and S. Woodhouse

Abergavenny Town Council: Councillor T. Konieczny
Llanelly Community Council: Councillor G. Nelmes
Llanover Community Council: Councillor G. Thomas

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matthew Gatehouse Head of Policy and Governance
Richard Williams Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. P. John - Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler - Team Abergavenny and Llanover Community Council
Mr. N. Tatam - Abergavenny Town Council
Ms. J. Lee - Clerk, Abergavenny Town Council

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: M. Groucutt, G. Howard, D. Jones, S. Jones and K. Williams
Councillor O. Dodd

1. Election of Chair

We elected County Councillor G. Powell as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

We appointed County Councillor J. Pratt as Vice-Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised.

4. Public Open Forum

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

Abergavenny in Bloom

A representative from Abergavenny Town Council informed the Area Committee that the current contractor who undertakes watering of the plants within Abergavenny Town is required to bring water from Usk, as there are no water outlets available within the town.

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The Head of Policy and Governance informed the Area Committee that he would liaise with the Estates Department and with Abergavenny Town Council with a view to identifying an appropriate water outlet, going forward.

5. Superfast Cymru 2 - Monmouthshire County Council Update

We received an update report regarding Superfast Cymru 2 within Monmouthshire.

In doing so, it was noted that:

- There was still poor broadband connectivity within some rural areas of the County.
- In the interim, grants are available via Welsh Government's Access Broadband Cymru Scheme for individuals to fund, or part fund, the installation costs of new broadband connections to their homes or businesses.

We resolved that the Cabinet Member be asked to provide the Area Committee with the number of people who have applied for this grant within Monmouthshire.

6. Progress report by Team Abergavenny

We received a report by Team Abergavenny on progress to date. In doing so, an update was received in respect of:

- The Public Realm and Traffic Management.
- The Town Hall.
- King Henry VIII new school.
- Local Development Plan.
- Aldi Store.
- Car Parking.
- Event Planning.
- Future Public Realm Involvement.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Welsh Government has not yet agreed a solution to the bus stop required in Park Road by Tesco. Though this is a Welsh Government matter, Monmouthshire County Council's Highways Group Engineer was meeting with Welsh Government representatives. The Cabinet Member responsible for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services would liaise with Highways officers and the Welsh Government with a view to addressing this matter.
- Concern was expressed regarding the no left turn sign at the Baker Street end of Princes Street, as it prevents access to Frogmore Street for vehicles and, in practice, the sign is being ignored. It was noted that local views vary regarding

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the need for the sign. A Member of the Area Committee stated that she had asked to meet the Highways Safety Manager to discuss this matter further.

- The Licensing Department needs to ensure that it is managing the use of street space in Frogmore Street.
- Bus sizes could be an issue on the Tredegar to Abergavenny route, as the larger bus from Tredegar is changed to a smaller bus when it reaches Brynmawr, resulting in there being occasions where there is a lack of seats available after it leaves Brynmawr. It was noted that Stagecoach is waiting until the roadworks in that area have been completed before it addresses this issue.
- The re-development of the town hall is behind schedule due to a delay to the mezzanine piling. The library will have more books available and have a larger floor space. Automated bibliotheca machines will be available on both floors of the building to cater for the return of library books. Friends of Abergavenny Library has met with the developers and provided input into the development.
- The proposed Aldi store is at the pre-application stage. Abergavenny Town Council had been critical of the original design of the store and it was hoped that the developer would consider the recommendations made by the Town Council in respect of the proposed development.
- There is a problem with the traffic lights controlling the Fairfield Car Park exit. The Cabinet Member responsible for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services stated that she had contacted the Highways Department regarding this matter and was awaiting a response.

We resolved that an update on progress in respect of the refurbishment of the Abergavenny Hub be provided at the next Area Committee meeting.

7. Monmouthshire Well-being Plan

We received an update on the latest developments of the Well-being Plan approved by Monmouthshire Public Service Board.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Concern was expressed that on average, every year 20 children leave King Henry VIII School as not being in education, employment or training and there was a need to address this matter holistically across various bodies.
- It was identified that there were youth opportunities available. However, some children could not access them due to a cost implication. There needs to be mechanisms in place to allow these children free access to the youth opportunities being provided.

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- More and more grandparents are providing childcare to allow both parents to work. The Youth Service should be encouraged to engage with these children and provide appropriate activities for them.
- Abergavenny does not have a youth centre within the town.
- Concern was expressed that the Brecon Beacons National Park could do more to engage with its residents regarding affordable housing provision.
- The County Council needs to ensure more affordable housing is provided within the County.
- The Local Development Plan is continuing to progress technology led solutions.
- Town Councils want to be involved in the Public Service Board (PSB) structure.

We noted the report.

8. Update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse regarding progress in respect of the Strategic Transport Group / Abergavenny Railway Station

We received a verbal update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse regarding progress in respect of the Strategic Transport Group and Abergavenny Railway Station.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Over the next five years, Abergavenny Railway Station will receive funding to improve accessibility providing a disability designed railway station which will also be dementia friendly.
- The Area Committee was informed that it had been suggested that the Strategic Transport Group should consider reconfiguring its meetings providing more emphasis on sub groups to deal with area issues.
- Abergavenny Town Council asked County Councillor Woodhouse to keep the Town Council updated regarding Strategic Transport Group matters.

The Area Committee asked County Councillor Woodhouse to raise the following issues at the next Strategic Transport Group meeting:

- That Network Rail provides a definitive timescale of the re-development of Abergavenny Railway Station.
- That the Strategic Transport Group considers establishing a sub group for the north of the County.
- That the dualling of the A465 be considered at future Strategic Transport Group meetings.

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We noted the verbal update.

9. To discuss Monmouthshire County Council's Street Trading Policy - Request by County Councillor S. Woodhouse

County Councillor S. Woodhouse informed the Area Committee that on 24th August 2019 a mobile catering unit had been operating from St John's Square which had had an effect on local businesses.

It was noted that this matter would be further discussed at the next Licensing and Regulatory Committee meeting and that the Council's Street Trading Policy would be discussed at a meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee.

It was also noted that fighting had occurred outside the Kings Arms Public House during the Abergavenny Food Festival on 21st September 2019 and that the Licensing Department would be notified of this poor behaviour.

10. Update by North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee

We received the report by the North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee. In doing so, it was noted that:

- Abergavenny Town Council placed third in its class at the Wales in Bloom Ceremony held on 13th September 2019.
- Llanelly Community Council's community led plan was nearing approval. A copy would be available to view in due course.

11. Confirmation of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee dated 15th May 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

In doing so, it was noted that with regard to the light aircraft crash onto the A40, a report from the Air Accident Authority was awaited.

12. Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme

We received and noted the Scrutiny Work Programme.

13. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business

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

14. North Monmouthshire Area Committee Work Programme

We received and noted the North Monmouthshire Area Committee future work programme. In doing so, the following items were added:

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- To receive an update on progress regarding the redevelopment of Abergavenny Hub.
- To receive an overview of the support that Mind Monmouthshire provides for the local community.

15. Next Meeting

Wednesday 20th November 2019 at 1.00pm.

The meeting ended at 2.47 pm.