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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, 25th July, 2018 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillor: M. Powell (Chair)

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

Abergavenny Town Council: Councillor P. Simcock
Llantilio Pertholey Community Council: Councillor M. Skinner

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Owen Wilce	Community and Partnership Development Lead
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. J. Mapps	-	Costain Public Liaison Officer
Mrs. M. Pearse	-	Abergavenny Community Trust
Mrs. F. Edmonds	-	Abergavenny Community Trust
Ms. J. Lee	-	Clerk, Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. A. Michie	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. N. Tatam	-	Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. A. Edwards	-	Llanelly Community Council

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: S. Howarth, D. Jones and K. Williams
Councillors G. Nelmes and G. Thomas

1. Election of Chair

We elected County Councillor M. Powell as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

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

3. Jenny Barnes

We stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Jenny Barnes, as the Chair had informed the Committee that Jenny had recently passed away.

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Jenny had attended the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee for many years as a representative of CAIR. The Committee expressed its condolences. Jenny will be sorely missed.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised by Members.

5. Public Open Forum

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

Litter bins on trunk road laybays

The Clerk to Llanely Community Council informed the Area Committee that there was a lack of litter bins being provided on trunk road laybays resulting in these areas becoming havens for litter. The Clerk asked if the Committee would consider inviting a representative from the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) to discuss this matter at a future Area Committee meeting.

We resolved that an invitation be extended to the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) inviting a representative to attend a future Area Committee meeting to discuss this matter further.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee dated 16th May 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

7. Presentation by Costain regarding the Heads of the Valleys Dualling - Gilwern to Brynmawr

We received a presentation by the Public Liaison Officer for Costain regarding progress in respect of the Heads of the Valleys Dualling – Gilwern to Brynmawr.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Costain uses social media as a way of communicating with the public providing updates and videos of progress to date.
- In response to some lorries not adhering to road signs and therefore travelling along unsuitable routes, Costain was aware of this issue and were working with the Highways Department with a view to addressing the matter.
- Concern was expressed regarding vehicles speeding as they exit the main road via the slip road into Gilwern. It was noted that a safety audit, independent of Costain, was being undertaken to establish what might be done to address this matter.

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- It is anticipated that the Heads of the Valleys Dualling work will be completed by the end of 2019 with completed sections being opened earlier.
- In response to a question regarding compensation to residents for 'wear and tear' it was noted that condition surveys have been agreed and legal matters will be undertaken with the local Authority, if required.
- Costain has liaised with local businesses regarding the need to use the alternative route. However, it was noted that there are still a minority who refuse to use the alternative route.
- Road closures tend to occur about once a month in order to install bridges.
- Costain operates a drop in session for the public every Wednesday afternoon.
- Concern was expressed that representatives of Welsh Government have not attended any of the local liaison meetings with the public. The Costain Public Liaison Officer would forward the concerns to Welsh Government.

We thanked the Public Liaison Officer for providing the Area Committee with a presentation regarding an update on the Heads of the Valleys Dualling – Gilwen to Brynmawr.

8. Community Boundary Review

The Local Democracy Manager informed the Committee that Monmouthshire County Council has approved the review of town / community council boundaries within Monmouthshire and all information relevant to the process has been sent to the town / community council clerks. The information has been forwarded to the Boundary Commission who will hold its own consultation into the proposals as an independent body, which councils can respond to directly.

The Local Democracy Manager informed the Committee that if there are any boundary issues that have been overlooked, Members should respond to the Boundary Commission directly once it publishes details of its consultation process.

9. Engagement with Voluntary Sector Organisations - Presentation by Marion Pearse of Abergavenny Community Centre

We received a presentation by Marion Pearse of Abergavenny Community Centre. In doing so, we were provided with information regarding the Community Centre:

- Abergavenny Community Centre is willing to work in partnership with the local Authority.
- The Centre has a 25 year lease.

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- The Centre became a registered charity this year. The Centre is looking to obtain grant funding.
- Three new trustees have been recruited in addition to the existing three trustees.
- By the end of the year, it is anticipated that governance will be strengthened and the number of trustees increased to eight in total.
- 1892 people visited the centre averaging in the region of 600 people per month, providing support to all within the community.
- An application for funding has been submitted in the sum of £435,000. If granted, this will help towards making a positive difference to working families in Abergavenny.
- The Centre is also looking to obtain public / private sector funding in order to continue to support local people.
- The building is old and is costly to run equating to around £30,000 per annum to keep the Centre open and to pay staff.
- The Centre is mentoring other community champions in the area.
- The Centre had received a £10,000 donation which went towards the refurbishment of the kitchen bringing it up to commercial standards. Food is a fundamental part of the Centre.
- A lunch is held at the Centre every Wednesday feeding 25 people.
- The Centre has a minibus enabling it to undertake some outreach work.
- The aim of the Centre is to grow social connections and local ties.
- Support is also received from the Church.
- Section 106 funding has been received allowing for a purpose built internal ramp to be installed at the Centre.
- The Area Committee was welcome to visit the Centre.

Having received the presentation, the Area Committee expressed its support for the work being undertaken at Abergavenny Community Centre and thanked Marion Pearse and her staff for the work and support that they are providing to the local community.

10. Abergavenny Town Council Town Strategy

We received an update report by Abergavenny Town Council regarding its Town Strategy.

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The Committee was informed that the aim will be to have a Strategy agreed in time for discussions on the budget for 2019/20 which commences in October / November 2018 and that a further update would be presented to the next Area Committee meeting on 26th September 2018.

11. Abergavenny Borough Theatre

We received an update regarding Abergavenny Borough Theatre following the Cabinet decision to accept the surrender of the lease, bringing the Management Agreement to an end, and returning ownership and control to the Authority. Cabinet will consider the report for approval later today.

We resolved to support the recommendations to Cabinet, as outlined:

- That Members consider the situation analysis and options appraisal and the proposal to recruit a fixed term, full time Theatre Manager, with supporting Front of House Supervisors, to be resourced from within the approved Medium Term Financial Plan, in order to put the Theatre on a more stable footing and determine the medium / longer term future for the Theatre.
- That Members consider the development of a formal Charter or Concordat with Acting for the Borough (A4B), the former Borough Theatre Management Committee.

12. Method for Evaluation of the Pilot

We received a report reminding the Committee of the criteria that will be used to evaluate the pilot arrangements which will come to an end in September 2018, whereby the Area Committee acts as the sole political structure to support joint working at a community level.

The Pilot will conclude in September 2018 and it is anticipated that evaluation will be presented to the Area Committee at its meeting in November 2018.

In the coming weeks, the Head of Policy and Governance will contact the Area Committee with a view to obtaining an informed evaluation of the pilot.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Area Committee is good for discussing local issues. However, there was a need to improve engagement with the public with a view to encouraging a better turn out at Area Committee Meetings. In response, the Chair informed the Committee that in previous years, the Area Committee meetings had met at various times throughout the day and in the evening and had visited venues around the Bryn y Cwm Area with very little change in the number of people attending these meetings.

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- Subject matter on the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee agenda tended to determine public attendance.
- Attendance by the community councils within the Bryn y Cwm area could be better. The Area Committee was considered to be a good forum for engaging with the community councils.
- The local press could help in advertising the Area Committee meeting.
- The Head of Policy and Governance informed the Area Committee that a sub group of the Democratic Services Committee was investigating new ways of engaging with the public and Area Committees could have a local role in this.

We resolved that, in the coming weeks, the Head of Policy and Governance will contact the Area Committee with a view to obtaining an informed evaluation of the pilot.

13. Update regarding the Wellbeing Plan

We received a verbal update by the Head of Policy and Governance regarding the Wellbeing Plan and objectives approved by Monmouthshire Public Services Board (PSB).

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Actions and steps have been allocated to partners within the PSB.
- The details of these steps will be developed over a period of time.
- Further updates will be presented to future meetings of the Area Committee.
- The PSB Select Committee provides scrutiny of the process being undertaken.
- In response to a question raised by Abergavenny Town Council, the Head of Policy and Governance stated that he would provide the Town Clerk and Councillor P. Simcock with information regarding the Themes identified at the PSB, as Abergavenny Town Council would like to become involved in the work being undertaken by the PSB.

We resolved that:

- (i) the Head of Policy and Governance would provide the Town Clerk and Councillor P. Simcock with information regarding the Themes identified at the PSB.**
- (ii) further updates be presented to future meetings of the Area Committee.**

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14. Progress report by Team Abergavenny

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

- Concern was expressed regarding the new bus stops in Abergavenny and it was considered that there should be appropriate bus stop provision for the town.
- Concern was expressed that car parking charges across the County needed to be in alignment. Since the Morrison's supermarket opened there has been a reduction in car parking revenue in the town, as parking at the supermarket is free. However, footfall in the town has increased as some shoppers to the supermarket are parking at the store and walking into the town.
- The Communities and Partnership Development Lead asked the Committee to complete a survey that would be forwarded to them following the Community Networking Event that was held on 5th July 2018 in Abergavenny in order to obtain feedback.

15. Update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse regarding progress in respect of the Strategic Transport Group

We received a verbal update by County Councillor S. Woodhouse and were informed that the Strategic Transport Group had not met since the last Area Committee meeting.

Members were asked to provide County Councillor Woodhouse with details of any issues that required the attention of the Strategic Transport Group and she would report them to the next meeting of the Group.

16. Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme

We received and noted the Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme.

In doing so, the Scrutiny Manager will be contacted with a view to adding an agenda item to the Work Programme entitled 'Street Scene'.

17. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business

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

18. 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:

Litter bins on trunk road laybays - Invite a representative from the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) to discuss this matter at a future Area Committee meeting.

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County Councillor J. Pratt raised an issue regarding the fatal accident that recently occurred on the Brynmawr to Blaenavon Road. She stated that the three Councils (Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Llanelli Community Council) needed to work together to address this matter. The Area Committee considered that this matter needed to be investigated at the appropriate committee, as a multi authority matter.

19. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Bryn y Cwm Area Committee will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Abergavenny (subject to availability) on Wednesday 26th September 2018 at 7.00pm.

The meeting ended at 12.06 pm.