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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of North Monmouthshire Area Committee held at Goytre Village Hall and Social Club, Newtown Road, Penperlleni, Pontypool, NP4 0AW. Wednesday, 20th March, 2019 at 1.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillors: M. Groucutt, R. Harris, P. Jordan, M. Lane, M. Powell, J. Pratt and T. Thomas

Abergavenny Town Council: Councillor P. Simcock
Llanelly Community Council: Councillor G. Nelmes

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matthew Lewis	Interim Performance, Evaluation and Programme Development Lead for MonLife
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. M. Roberts	-	Gwent Angling Society
Mr. G. Morgan	-	Transport for Wales
Mr. S. Hadley	-	Network Rail
Mr. D. Crutcher	-	Network Rail
Mr. A. Michie	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. P. Johns	-	Team Abergavenny
Mr. H. Candler	-	Team Abergavenny and Clerk to Llanover Town Council
Ms. J. Lee	-	Town Clerk, Abergavenny Town Council
Mr. R. Cole	-	Abergavenny Civic Society

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors: G. Howard, D. Jones, S.B. Jones, S. Jones, K. Williams, S. Woodhouse
Councillors O. Dodd and G. Thomas
Owen Wilce - Community and Partnership Development Lead

1. Mark of Respect

Before commencing the meeting we stood in silence as a mark of respect for the victims of the terror attack that occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

3. Public Open Forum

There were no issues raised by the members of the public present at the meeting.

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4. The Town Fishery

We received a verbal update by Mark Roberts, Secretary of Gwent Angling Society, speaking on behalf of Gwent Angling Society, Merthyr Angling Alliance and Isca Angling Club regarding the new management arrangements for Abergavenny Town Waters. The management has been let to a new consortium led by the Gwent Angling Society.

In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Between them, 30 miles of rivers were being managed by the clubs.
- Environmental conditions were changing and the new management was committed to ensuring that fish stocks were maintained.
- The new management was active in working with Welsh Government and other bodies to encourage support for angling.
- Programmes are being established with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Angling Trust.
- Angling can help individuals with mental health issues.
- Young people are being encouraged to take up angling via schools, scouts and cadets.
- With regard to the Town Waters, a set of rules has been established whereby, for the first two years, a system of capture and release will be operated with a view to maintaining stock levels.
- The new management is working with Bug Life, an entomology study group.
- The cost of fishing the waters is being kept as low as possible to encourage more people to take up angling.

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

- On other waters that the club manages a voluntary access agreement held with Coleg Gwent regarding canoe use of the waters.
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW) considers that it would not be appropriate to introduce wild salmon into the local river.
- Juniors (under 17) may fish for free but must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Fishing skills are taught on Sundays for juniors.
- Education is the key to ensuring that caught fish need to be returned to the river.
- Barbless hooks are used to minimise distress to the caught fish.

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- There are currently 70 people on the waiting list to join Gwent Angling Society.
- An open day is held annually to encourage people to take up angling. An open day is being held on 8th June 2019.

We noted the verbal update.

5. Abergavenny Railway Station Footbridge

We received a presentation by representatives of Transport for Wales and Network Rail regarding Abergavenny Railway Station Footbridge. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- An application has been submitted to Welsh Government under the Access for All Scheme for improvements to be made to the Abergavenny Railway Station. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by April 2019.
- It was acknowledged that a signalling issue remained at Abergavenny Railway Station. It was intended that this matter would be addressed alongside the matter relating to the footbridge.
- In the meantime, Network Rail has an arrangement in place for people who require help in accessing the footbridge. Booking office staff or a train guard are available to provide this support, if required. However, it was noted that problems have occurred when staff change over their duties as there have been periods where there are no staff available. Network Rail stated that this matter would be reported to the Station Manager.
- An underpass is not being considered as it is expensive to construct and can become an area for antisocial behaviour to occur.
- Transport for Wales is working with local authorities across Wales to promote sustainable transport.
- Welsh Government has passed legislation, namely, Active Travel and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, to encourage walking and cycling.
- With regard to concern raised in respect of the layby alongside the A465 that is being used by the public who are then walking to the station, this matter would be investigated by Transport for Wales who will raise this matter with Highways at Welsh Government.

We noted the presentation.

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:

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- Frogmore Street redevelopment.
- The Town Hall.
- King Henry VIII School re-provision.
- The Local Development Plan.
- Gwent Police and lack of community consultation.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Plans of the proposed internal development of the Town Hall had been available to view.
- The kiosks were no longer being built.
- With regard to the bus stop alongside Tesco, it was noted that the Head of Operations was in negotiations with the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA).
- Abergavenny Town Council had written to Welsh Government regarding the bus stop. It was noted that Welsh Government had asked Monmouthshire County Council to submit this letter as part of its proposals to Welsh Government in respect of this matter.
- Concern was expressed that since the closure of Abergavenny Police Station, there had been issues regarding lack of communication between the police and residents. Therefore, some residents were feeling vulnerable to crime.
- In response to a question raised regarding the future of King Henry VIII School, it was noted that the Chief Officer for Children and Young People would provide details of the timeframe for the re-development of the school in due course and there will be an opportunity for the local community to become engaged in the process.
- It was considered that Abergavenny needed to become a more sustainable area rather than a dormitory for commuters to Cardiff and Bristol. It was noted that a seminar was being held at County Hall, Usk on Tuesday 26th March 2019 regarding the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The Chair of the Area Committee stated that she would speak to the City Deal Programme Director, Kellie Beirne, at the seminar to discuss this matter further.

We resolved:

- (i) that an invitation be extended to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent to attend the next Area Committee meeting to discuss the closure of Abergavenny Police Station which has left the public feeling vulnerable to crime;

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- (ii) that an invitation be extended to the Chief Officer for Children and Young People to attend the next Area Committee meeting to discuss the proposed new King Henry VIII School and how it will work with the local community.

7. Abergavenny Town Council Plan

The Clerk to Abergavenny Town Council informed the Area Committee that the Town Council had agreed to establish a sub-group to further consider the strategy and action plan document.

The Area Committee will receive a further update on progress at the next meeting in May 2019.

It was noted that the Llanelly Community Council plan would be completed shortly and would be presented to the Area Committee at a future meeting.

We noted the updates.

8. North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee

We received a report by the North Monmouthshire Liaison Committee in which the Area Committee received an update in respect of the following:

- Training on local plan preparation.
- Dog waste.
- Future of the sector.
- Training.
- Floral planters.

In doing so, the Area Committee thanked the clerk to Abergavenny Town Council for obtaining a training grant from Welsh Government.

We noted the report.

9. Monmouthshire's Wellbeing Plan and Active Citizenship

The Area Committee resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting in May 2019, as the officer due to present the update was unavoidable detained and was unable to attend the meeting.

10. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the North Monmouthshire Area Committee dated 30th January 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

11. Monmouthshire Scrutiny Work Programme

We received and noted the Scrutiny Work Programme.

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12. Forward Planner for Cabinet and Council Business

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

13. North Monmouthshire Area Committee Future Work Programme

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

- Invite the Chief Officer for Children and Young People to attend a future meeting of the Area Committee to discuss the proposed new King Henry VIII School and how it will work with the local community.
- Invite the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent to a future meeting of the Area Committee to discuss the closure of Abergavenny Police Station which has left the public feeling vulnerable to crime.

14. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th May 2019 at 1.00pm.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm.