



ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

'Working for and with the people and communities of Abergavenny'

April 2019



Abergavenny Town Council Strategy & Action Plan

Abergavenny Town Council is committed to improving the town for all residents living in the five town wards yet understands that Abergavenny and its facilities serve a much wider catchment area. Abergavenny is also a tourism destination with thousands of visitors a year coming to the town. It is in this context that the Council has considered its priorities for the future.

The Town Council has a very clear mission which is “*Working for and with the people and communities of Abergavenny*”

The Council is required by law to prepare an annual report showing how the Council is contributing to the objectives in the Monmouthshire Public Services Board Well-being Plan.

These are:

- Give Children and Young People the Best Possible Start in Life from birth through to early adulthood. This would cover schooling, finding a job or training, having a healthy and active lifestyle and having places to play.
- Address the Challenges of Demographic Change. The area has an increasing proportion of the population classed as older people which means that the services that the Council provides must cater for this age group. Older people have a lot to offer the town and often play a vital role in their communities and have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience.
- Communities and Business to be part of an economically thriving and well connected county. Connecting people and businesses digitally or through a good transport network is crucial to a thriving economy.
- Protect and Enhance Our Natural Environment and Minimise the Impact of Climate Change. This objective is about looking after and improving our natural environment which also contributes to the economy through tourism, agriculture, forestry and much more. Natural resources are vital to our everyday lives.



Identifying Our Priorities

This strategy is the first step for the Council in setting out its future priorities. The list of priorities is by no means exhaustive and readers should consider this a first attempt by the Council to identify where resources should be targeted. Further refinement of the Council's thinking will continue.

This document sets out immediate priorities and actions for the Council which will include some existing activities as well as some new ones. There will also be some activities which the Town Council will not continue. The Council has also taken the opportunity to look at how it operates and has identified some actions to make it a more effective, efficient and responsive Town Council.

What do we want to do over the coming years?

Below are the priority areas identified by the Town Council to explore and take forward over the coming years. This does not mean the Council will stop doing all the things it does now with the list of activities shown in the action plan.

Children & Young People

The young people in the town are our future. We need to understand whether the Town Council, working in partnership with other organisations, can do more to improve the opportunities for young people. We have already made a start by talking to schools and agencies working with young people to find out more about the issues, but we need to take this area of work forward in a co-ordinated way.

Challenges of Demographic Change

Good relationships between older and younger groups creates a stronger more together town. The population of Abergavenny is an ageing population. A priority for the Town Council is to ensure there is provision and support for the older generation and to seek innovative ways to bring different generations together.



Environment and Climate Change

Abergavenny is fortunate to have some fantastic greenspaces within the town and more can be done to enhance these spaces for nature and for people. The Town Council considers it has a role to bring people together to promote greater partnership working and support for such endeavours.

Communities and Businesses are Economically Thriving and Well Connected

The Town Council currently delivers many services or financially supports services which contribute to this objective. These are Abergavenny in Bloom, public toilets, Tourist Information Centre, street sweeping and provision and emptying of dog waste bins. Further consideration of new areas of activity will take place in due course.

How should the Council change?

The Town Council has different roles. The Town Council can directly pay for something to happen, it can assist others to make things happen, it can promote different activities and it can act as the voice for the town in discussions with other organisations. All of these roles are important and are not mutually exclusive.

The Town Council already makes a big difference in the town but we need to be better at letting people know what we do and why and importantly we need to ask how we can improve. In 2018/19, the Town Council prepared an Annual Report for the first time and this was delivered to all households and we set out what we had achieved in 2017/18.

The Town Council is a small organisation and this is often a limiting factor in what can be achieved. The Town Council needs to be more creative in how it works in partnership with local organisations to achieve its aims.

How we make decisions should be reviewed. Sometimes an issue has to be considered by three different Committees before a decision is made, this makes for slow decision making. As a public organisation making decisions on how to spend public funds,



we need to ensure that decisions are made in an appropriate manner. We believe we can improve. The public can attend Town Council meetings but rarely do so. A priority for the Town Council is to increase engagement between the Town Council and residents.

The Town Council offers small grants to a range of community organisations. The Council will refine the eligibility criteria to target its resources in our priority areas: to increase opportunities for young people, reduce social isolation, have an economically thriving town and improve the environment. This will commence in 2019/20.

Town Council's Civic Role

In addition to providing services in the Town, the Council has a Civic role. The Mayor attends many functions throughout the year representing the Town Council and also hosts a number of functions in the Town Hall. The Mayor and the Town Council play a major role in commemorations' such as Mons Day in May and Remembrance Sunday. At these ceremonies the Mayor is accompanied by the Mace Bearer.

Abergavenny is twinned with the towns of Beaupreau in France and Ostringen in Germany and the Town Council is involved in twinning visits arranged between these towns which occur on a yearly or bi-yearly basis.



ACTION PLAN

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE						
Priorities	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Ensure young people have access to and are offered appropriate counselling services	To find out what is currently provided and identify any gaps	Schools, MCC Youth Services, ACE	TBC		TBC	
Increase opportunities for young people to have a say in what happens in their town?	Arrange regular meetings with schools	Schools, MCC Youth Service GAVO	TBC			
Understand whether youth provision in the town appropriate & sufficient	Have further discussions with MCC Youth Service and other agencies	MCC Youth Service, ACE, Aber Community Centre, 7 Corners GAVO	TBC	2019-20		Considering summer 2019 activities
To provide engaging and stimulating play opportunities during the summer holidays and free healthy meals	To fund MCC to provide the summer playscheme To investigate how to provide free healthy meals during the playscheme	MCC	TBC	Summer 2019	£12,000	



CHALLENGES OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Public service provision accommodates the needs of older people	To consider older people in service delivery options such as improvements to the toilets	MCC Older people groups	TBC	Ongoing		
Community based organisations provide activities that seek to reduce social isolation	To understand current provision and identify any gaps	MCC Mardy Park Resource Centre Abergavenny Community Centre ACE Bridges Community Centre Community Groups	TBC	Ongoing		ATC support to ACC for activities that reduce social isolation
Improve intergenerational interaction	To pilot an 'adopt a garden' scheme	MCC Allotment Society	MCC			



PROTECT & ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Reduce the use of single-use plastic	Launch a Refill Scheme To review Town Council's use of single use plastic and reduce	Refill Cymru Plastic Free Abergavenny Town centre businesses Schools	TBC	Ongoing	Minimal	Launched 1 st December 2018 Writing Festival, Food Festival and Arts Festival to feature Refill Abergavenny in their programmes
To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future	To work with MCC to increase the number of volunteers active in Friends of groups	Voluntary Environmental Groups MCC KWT GAVO	TBC	Ongoing		
To encourage the use of pollinator planting in Council funded planting schemes	To direct council contractors to increase pollinator friendly planting	Bee friendly Monmouthshire	TBC	In time for Spring 2019 planting	No additional costs	
To improve the maintenance and enhancement of Bailey Park and Linda Vista Gardens	To investigate the feasibility of establishing a team to maintain these greenspaces together with	MCC, voluntary organisations	TBC	Discussions with MCC early 2019/20		



	undertaking other town based work					
Contribute to the MCC Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy and resulting projects	To engage with MCC on the GI strategy	MCC NRW	Cllr Konieczny	Ongoing	Minimal	
To reduce the incidences of dog fouling in the town	<p>To provide dog waste bins throughout the town</p> <p>To promote the 'give dog fouling the red card' campaign</p> <p>To lobby MCC to bring in Public Space Protection Orders in particular areas where dog fouling is a particular issue</p>	MCC	Cllr T Davies			



ECONOMICALLY THRIVING TOWN						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
To have cleaner streets	To review current arrangements which pays MCC to clean the streets	MCC	TBC	Ongoing		
To have public toilets which meet the needs of users.	To agree a modernisation programme for three blocks of public toilets in the town	MCC Disability groups Baby/Toddler groups	TBC	Ongoing	TBC	
To continue to work with town centre businesses and others to promote the town and what it has to offer	Set up a Town Centre Forum Support the continuation of the TIC Support Abergavenny & District Tourism Association	MCC, BBNPA Y Fenni Business Community, Tourist Information Centre, ADTA, Abergavenny Food Festival	TBC	2019/20	TBC	



A MORE RESPONSIVE TOWN COUNCIL						
Issue	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
To improve communication	<p>To set up a Facebook page and Twitter account</p> <p>To redesign the website to be more user friendly and informative</p> <p>To issue regular press releases on Council activity</p>	MCC	Mayor	Ongoing	£3000 for website redesign	<p>Social Media Policy agreed</p> <p>Include in 2019/20 budget</p> <p>Training for Town Clerk</p>
To improve decision making	<p>To revisit the committee structure and powers of the committees.</p> <p>To identify ways that voluntary groups can engage with the decision-making process</p>		Mayor All councillors	<p>2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		



Issue	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
To encourage wider community engagement on Town Council activities	To identify methods to capture community views		Mayor All Councillors			
To be more visible in the Town	To improve visibility of the office To publicise Council activity through the placing of a crest or notice. To hold a number of Committee meetings in town venues rather than in the Town Hall.		Mayor All Councillors	End 2019 Ongoing Summer 2019 & ongoing		Town Clerk office refurbishment will provide direct access to the Council The Town Hall refurbishment provides a opportunity to meet in different venues
To engage with and influence policymakers across a wide range of issues	To build good working relationships with a range of policy makers To respond to relevant consultations	MCC WG NRW ABHBT	Mayor All Councillors	Ongoing		



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