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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Thursday, 20th July, 2023 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor Meirion Howells (Chairman)
County Councillor Su McConnel (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Peter Strong, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Amy Gullick	Local Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny
Ian Saunders	Chief Operating Officer, MonLife
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Steven Garratt, Christopher Edwards and David Jones and Jane McKenna for joining the meeting later.

1. Declarations of interest

Item 7a: County Councillor Richard John declared a personal interest pursuant to the Members Code of Conduct as he holds a part time role as public affairs consultant and a client is the Railway Industry Association.

2. Chair's Announcement

The Announcement was noted.

The Chair led tributes to Chief Officer, People and Governance, Matt Phillips, who leaves the authority today. The congratulated him on his new role and wished him well for his future career.

The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Group Leaders thanked Matt for his experience, support and guidance most notably during the pandemic.

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3. Presentation - Freedom of the Borough

In the presence of its representatives, the Chair of the Council granted the Freedom of Monmouthshire to the Royal British Legion. Expressing the Council's gratitude, he paid tribute to the outstanding contribution Royal British Legions officers and volunteers make to our communities, veterans and their families every day.

Armed Forces Champion, County Councillor Peter Strong, expressed the Council's pride in being able to support and promote the Armed Forces community in Monmouthshire.

Group Leaders echoed these sentiments.

The Leader of the Council presented the Freedom of the County scroll.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=95>

4. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22nd June 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

5. RECRUITMENT OF MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities presented the report reminding Council of the excellent work undertaken by the Local Access Forum to advise the authority, Natural Resources Wales and the Welsh Government on access developments in their area. The volunteer members were thanked for their work.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=2796>

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That a panel of three Members be permanently established and delegated authority was granted to interview and make decisions on the appointment of members to the Local Access Forum, subject on each occasion to ratification by Council.

6. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

The Chief Officer, People and Governance, presented the report to adopt the amendments proposed by the Standards Committee to the Constitution's gifts and hospitality policy for Councillors.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=3029>

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to approve the recommendation:

That Council approves the amendments and updated Constitution.

County Councillor Anthony Easson left the meeting at 14.51

7. Motions to Council

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8. Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor

Magor with Undy Walkway Station is a unique concept and has enjoyed cross group support from Monmouthshire Council, Welsh Government and UK Government.

Magor with Undy Walkway Station is one of the recommendations of Lord Burns and the South East Wales Transport Commission (SEWTC) and Monmouthshire Council is a key stakeholder in the Burns Delivery Board. On behalf of MAGOR (Magor Action Group on Rail), we call on this council to reconfirm their absolute commitment to the unique Walkway concept and to agree to write to TfW and Network Rail:

- 1. To confirm that the Walkway Concept is set in stone.*
- 2. To further lobby for Magor with Undy Walkway station to be recognised as a “quick win” for the Burns Delivery Unit, recognising Magor station has significant advantages in terms of deliverability with respect to engineering, cost and critically the climate emergency.*
- 3. To request early sight of the station designs prior to being released for public consultation in the autumn.*

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=3249>

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the motion.

County Councillor Richard John declared a personal interest and did not take part in the discussion.

County Councillor Alistair Neill left the meeting at 15.08

9. Members Questions

9.1. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities

Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on provision for the gypsy and traveller community in Monmouthshire?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=4291>

County Councillor Paul Pavia left the meeting at 15.13

10. From County Councillor Louise Brown to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Will the Cabinet Member for Education make a statement about the recent home to school transport 2024/25 consultation?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=4492>

County Councillor Jayne McKenna joined the meeting at 15.21

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11. **From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

Will the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment make a statement on the Council's policy position regarding the cutting of hedgerows and verges on C-roads and those adjacent to road junctions and crossings?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=5019>

12. **From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education**

Will the Cabinet Member for Education make a statement about the ongoing concerns at Caldicot School?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4QGeX2H00NE?feature=share&t=5553>

13. **Date of next meeting - 21st September 2023**

14. **To exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information**

Council resolved to exclude press and public from the meeting.

15. **Appointment of Chief Officer Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

Council resolved to appoint James Williams as Chief Officer Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

The meeting ended at 3.46 pm