

**Minutes of the Lower Wye Area Committee held at
The Old Station, Tintern
on Wednesday 10th September 2014 at 10:00am**

PRESENT: County Councillor: A. Webb (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D.L.S. Dovey, G.L. Down, R. Greenland, P.S. Farley and P. Murphy.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs D. McCarty	-	Whole Place Officer
Ms R. Rawlings	-	Whole Place Officer
Mr J. Sterry	-	Manager, The Old Station, Tintern
Mrs S. King	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs S. Dovey	-	Chepstow Town Council
Mr J. Harris	-	Local resident
Mr B. Howells	-	St Arvans Community Council
Mrs S. Squires	-	Local resident
Mr N. Vincent	-	Local resident

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and we noted the following questions:

a) Mr J. Harris, Local Resident, addressed the committee:

- We were advised that a question had been raised at an earlier area committee, which related to Caerwent, and no response had been received.

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In response, we noted that the relevant officer would be contacted so that a response could be provided.

b) Mr N. Vincent, resident of Mynyddbach, addressed the committee as follows:

- Monmouthshire County Council were commended for the increased cyclists that had been encouraged into the area. However, concerns were expressed regarding the number of motorcyclists on the B4235.
- Clarification was requested regarding the responsibility of police and local authority in terms of reducing speed limits and managing vehicles on similar roads.

In response, we noted the following points:

- The local member agreed that this was a very real problem regarding speed and noise. The area would benefit from speed to be restricted to 40mph through the area.
- Members would raise concerns through the CSAT group.
- It was recognised that the problems occurred in a number of rural areas and speed reductions would be welcomed.
- We requested that a highways officer could be invited to the next meeting, so that information regarding the issue could be provided.
- It was recognised that the police had been contacted regarding the issue.
- The Whole Place Officer confirmed that the issue could be included for discussion at CSAT on 18th September.

The Chairman advised that responses would be sought in relation to issues raised at previous public open forums.

The Old Station, Tintern

The Chair introduced Mr J. Sterry, Manager of the Old Station, Tintern and we were provided with a brief overview of successes at The Old Station, Tintern, as follows:

- There had been a significant number of visitors to the site and it had become a local community aspect.
- Awards had been received, however, further attractions were required on site to support the number of visitors that attended e.g. zip wire.
- The site had been included within an article within a national newspaper, as a result of The Old Station being recommended by a visitor.
- Staff had contributed to raising funds.
- We were advised that a department management plan was in place.

Members commended the team at the site and recognised the significant work that had been undertaken.

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4. URGENT ITEM - PETITION

The Chairman agreed to receive a report, which reported and updated members of the Lower Wye Area Committee on the receipt of a petition which requested that Monmouthshire County Council reduced the speed limit on the A48 through the village of Crick.

We noted the report.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

We resolved to confirm the minutes of Lower Wye Area Committee held on Wednesday 11th June 2014 as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

6. UPDATE ON AREA ISSUES

We welcomed the Whole Place Officers and were provided with an update on issues as follows:

Capital Monies

A member raised a query regarding a paragraph within the report which related to Capital Monies:

'This year the area capital monies have been reduced from £15,000 to £5,000. Members will be aware that this money can only be used for capital schemes and not revenue. To make sure that the money is spent appropriately on capital projects that enhance the environment or benefit the local community we will be using this money to support the work of the whole place plans in order to pump prime some of the projects.'

We were advised that the money was part of area management budgets and was used as a grant system in some areas. However, it would be difficult to administer a grant system with no dedicated support officer in place. It was suggested that funds could be allocated through the Whole Place Plan so that community groups would still benefit.

The committee were completely opposed with the proposed allocation of monies and expressed significant concern that it would not be available for local groups.

The Cabinet Member clarified that the Whole Place Plan enabled decision making within communities and the monies would enable this.

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We recognised the important link between local members and communities and felt that the area committee should be responsible for allocating monies. However, we noted that there was not an officer in place to administer a grant system.

It was highlighted that one meeting for the 2014/15 financial year remained for Area Committees and if no applications were received then the monies would be lost.

Whole Place

We were advised that the role of the Area Services Officer had been deleted. A new team of Whole Place officers are currently being formed to lead and support the Whole Place initiative in Monmouthshire. Officers will still be working in the areas but there will be no one officer assigned to a specific place. All whole place officers will be working where projects need support and guidance throughout the county to help build sustainable resilient communities and continuous work will be generated through delivery of the Whole Place agenda.

Whole Place initiatives were taking place throughout the UK, the approach in Monmouthshire related to behaviour and culture of collaborative working, which was not a 'one size fits all' approach.

The Whole Place Plan had commenced in Severnside and Bryn y Cwm, it had increased productivity and levied for potential investment. Local innovative ideas had been welcomed.

During discussion we noted the following points:

- The Whole Place process was evolving and would evolve as it was developed. However, each area would have a plan specific to its own needs.
- There had been good response received from the public and various interest groups, particularly in Severnside.
- Whole Place had introduced the opportunity for collaborative working, community cohesion and improved economies.
- The committee felt that they would benefit from further information about the meaning of Whole Place within the Lower Wye area. Some concerns were expressed that the plan would be focused on the town and not rural areas.
- Community led plans needed to be an integral part of the project and would be welcomed as a starting point for whole place to be developed.
- We recognised the limited resource available, in terms of Whole Place Officers.
- We thanked the officer for the report and updates, we welcomed further information, in due course, regarding how Whole Place would be developed.

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7. WORK PROGRAMME

We received and noted the Lower Wye area committee work programme.

During discussion we noted the following points:

- Information required regarding success of Chepstow Leisure Centre attendance
- An update was requested regarding Chepstow cluster and the deficit position.
- We were provided with an Air Quality update, which advised that there would be a decision from Welsh Government regarding Hardwick Hill by the end of the year.
- We agreed that items would be deleted from the work programme: housing benefit, partnerships.

8. TIMING OF MEETINGS AND DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

We noted future meetings as follows:

- 11th February 2015 – 10.00am
- 29th April 2015 – 10.00am

The meeting closed at 12:00noon