

**Minutes of the Lower Wye Area Committee held at
The Wye Valley Room, Chepstow Leisure Centre
on Wednesday 11th February 2015 at 10:00am**

PRESENT: County Councillor: A. Webb (Chairman)

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr P. Keeble	-	Traffic and Network Manager
Ms. H. Dymond	-	Leisure Centre Manager, Chepstow
Mrs D. McCarty	-	Whole Place Officer
Mrs S. King	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs S. Dovey	-	Chepstow Town Council
Mrs B. Moore	-	Shirenewton Community Council
Mr Chapman	-	Local resident
Mrs Chapman	-	Local resident

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors R.J.W. Greenland, P.A.D. Hobson and A.C. Watts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were noted under the appropriate agenda item.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

- a) Mr and Mrs Chapman, Local Residents, addressed the committee:
 - Issues had occurred since Newhouse roundabout changes had occurred, traffic queues had increased. The South Wales Trunk Road Agency had been contacted. The residents had lobbied Monmouthshire County Council for support and were aware that the highway was responsibility of Welsh Government.

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

In response, we noted the following points:

- Officers had raised the issue with Welsh Government. A future meeting would be held where this issue would be discussed. It was expected that the highway would be monitored by Welsh Government for a period of time.
- Some members had welcomed the changes, however, it was recognised that the changes had an effect, particularly during times of day where levels of traffic increased.
- The committee acknowledged that there were a number of parties involved in the matter, such as Severn crossing, Welsh Government and English agencies, with an aspect of Monmouthshire County Council.
- We resolved that the officer would write to the Welsh Government so that concerns of the committee were expressed.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

We resolved to confirm the minutes of Lower Wye Area Committee held on Wednesday 10th September 2014 as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

Capital Monies

Page 3/4 End of paragraph Add:

'Members declined that it should go to the Whole Place fund and should be retained by the area committee. We resolved that the area committee should be responsible for allocating funds.'

During discussion of the minutes, the following issues were raised:

- Significant concerns were expressed that a Community Councillor had been told that their application could not be submitted. The committee requested an explanation regarding why this had been the case.
- In response, we noted that it was anticipated that a community governance review would be undertaken by the Head of Strategic Partnerships. However, Members strongly conveyed that the fund should be available to be allocated by the area committee and believed it was not acceptable that a refusal had been made during the administrative process.
- A member confirmed that the appropriate officers would be contacted in order for the issue to be clarified.

5. UPDATE FROM THE TRAFFIC AND NETWORK MANAGER

We received a report from the Traffic and Network Manager, which related to concerns about motorcycles on the B4235. Concerns had been raised by residents at a previous meeting regarding the anti-social behaviour of motorcyclists and the

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request for Gwent Police and Monmouthshire County Council, for action to be taken and the current situation improved.

Officers confirmed that they had been working closely with Gwent Police in relation to incident data, through Gwent Police use of the OWL system. The issues raised had been discussed, along with subsequent possible actions.

The committee were invited to ask questions and we noted the following points:

- We thanked the officer for the report presented and welcomed information regarding the date of the meeting, with Gwent Police, where issues would be discussed.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the speed travelled on the road and noise. We noted that the speed on the B4598 had been reduced which had resulted in better quality with reduced number of fatalities.
- It was suggested that the issue of speed on the B4235 could be considered by a member group.
- The committee recognised that speed awareness on highways was a significant issue, particularly in rural areas. Members supported that the speed limit should be reduced.
- We noted that the motorcycle action group had contributed to previous discussions regarding speed issues.
- The committee agreed that wider issues surrounded speed on roads, which included an element of education as well as enforcement.
- Members were informed that the member of the public, who had originally raised the issue, had been continually updated. However, the local member would be notified in the first instance.
- The case had to be demonstrated for speed limits to be reduced, this included that roads were suitable and that vehicles had already used highways at a slower speed. The speed on the B4598 had been reduced to 50mph which had significantly curtailed from the original. The current assessment was based on national view of national speed limit.

We thanked the officer for the report presented.

6. CHEPSTOW LEISURE CENTRE SERVICE UPDATE

We received an update from the Leisure Centre Manager, which updated the committee on the service provided at Chepstow.

During discussion we noted the following points:

- Direct Debit numbers had increased, following recent promotions events that had been publicised. Figures had increased significantly compared to the same time in 2013/14.
- Attendance at fitness classes had increased and the leisure centre was regularly promoted throughout the year. Numbers had been monitored

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effectively and enquiry cards had been used, there was a more efficient sales process and increased direct debits.

- Chepstow pool programme was being developed, there would be a 50 week programme which would result in increased number of lessons being provided. Swimming lessons had increased and the pool was used by a number of primary schools as well as clubs and societies.
- The Leisure Centre facilities were used by a number of clubs and societies, this included, pool, dance studio, sports hall, sports pitch.
- Friday evenings were identified as quiet, however, facilities had been utilised for a number of special events.

Members were invited to comment:

- The committee welcomed the update and congratulated the officer as the recently appointed Manager of both Caldicot and Chepstow Leisure Centres.
- Members recognised the positive leadership aspects that had been introduced at the centre and commended the hard work of the team.
- Information was requested regarding whether the centres operated at net cost. In response, we were advised that management would work with budgets and each leisure centre would be operated for approximately £400k. It was expected to reduce costs and for income to be increased through fitness suite opportunities.
- There was a need to ensure that targets were met, specifically in relation to children's swimming lessons and GP referrals.
- The committee acknowledged and reflected upon the very sad loss of a team member who had recently passed away.
- Further work would be undertaken in relation to the most efficient and effective way for both Caldicot and Chepstow leisure centres to be operated.
- The swim schedule would be discussed with the Swimming Development Officer, to ensure that opportunities within timetables were maximised.

7. UPDATE FROM THE WHOLE PLACE OFFICER

We welcomed the Whole Place Officer and were provided with an update.

A Whole Place Plan had not yet started in the Lower Wye Area and it had been agreed that Bryn y Cwm and Severnside would be established prior to starting Central Mon and Lower Wye.

The initial process would involve a series of several meetings with groups who already existed. It was suggested that Bulwark may be considered separately due to the population.

There were significant benefits in areas where community led plans were already in place, however, the purpose of the plans were for gaps to be identified by communities and how these could be filled. Lessons would be learnt as a result of plans that had already been established in two areas.

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The Whole Place officers would have responsibility for overseeing the area plans but would also have responsibility for a strand of the plan e.g. business and education.

Members had walked around wards with officers and discussed ideas in relation to how areas could be affected. We were informed that issues would evolve as the process was developed.

The committee agreed that further information and knowledge was required regarding the Whole Place process. There was a need for members to be fully engaged and we requested that members were informed as early as possible.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

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

During discussion we noted the following points:

- Area Services Officer updates to be deleted.
- Whole Place updates (when appropriate) to be added.
- Vacant properties to be deleted.
- Chepstow rail interchange – we noted that network rail had released figures regarding the growth of Chepstow station usage. It was suggested that this item could be included on a future agenda.
- We noted that the issue would be covered by the Monmouthshire Strategic Transport group and a meeting would be held to address specific issues. The committee would be updated by the chair of the group.
- An update was requested regarding the vacant post of Transport Officer.
- The capital monies issue had to be clarified and the Cabinet member would speak to appropriate officers regarding unspent funding.
- Councillor Farley advised that he had been appointed by the committee as Domestic Abuse Champion, however, the structure had changed and further information would be submitted from the regional coordinator.
- We requested that an item was included on a future agenda, for the committee to be updated on Air Quality Management in Chepstow.

9. TIMING OF MEETINGS AND DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

We agreed the date of the next Lower Wye Area committee meeting at Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 11:30 am.