

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 24th October, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Su McConnel (Chair)
County Councillor Peter Strong (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Peter Davies	Acting Chief Executive
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Craig O'Connor	Head of Placemaking
Taylor Watts	Licensing Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Alistair Neill, Maria Stevens and Sue Riley

1. Declarations of interest

County Councillor Tony Kear declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6a as he is a trustee of Little Mill Village Hall charity which operates a firework event as its main fundraiser.

2. Chair's Announcement

The Chair wished to note this meeting as the last day in a very distinguished 6 years of service by Chief Officer of Communities and Place, Frances O'Brien. Members thanked Frances and wished her well in her new appointment.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2024

Council resolved to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on 19th September 2024.

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In doing so County Councillor Catrin Maby highlighted a correction at item 17, para 2

*As a supplementary County Councillor Bromfield welcomed further information, particularly around Public Health Wales. The Cabinet Member was asked to update Members **regularly**, to which she agreed. County Councillor Maby also agreed to email an update on the issue around bacteria and swimming.*

4. Public Questions

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=635rwVQqnpzE8mZp&t=836

The Chair welcomed David Cummings, Chair of the Gateway to Wales Action Group to present the following questions to in relation to the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan:

1. Monmouthshire has set permissible Nitrogen Dioxide levels at four times the levels recommended by the World Health Organisation. Why has MCC chosen a site, close to A40, to build houses where the extra emissions from cars will further break those WHO levels and create more PM 2.5 particulates?
2. The catchment area in which HA4 is located already has phosphate levels exceeding the maximum permitted. Why has MCC chosen a site where run off will increase those levels and further pollute the Wye above where the drinking water for our town is extracted?
3. Site HA4 is primarily Grade 2 prime agricultural land. MCC is bound to use the lowest grade agricultural land first. Why has it not chosen a site with poorer quality agricultural land?
4. This site is close to the Wye Valley AONB and is the Gateway to Wales. Why have MCC chosen a site that, if developed, despoils and changes a view that has not changed for visitors since the Wye Tour of 1782?
5. We ask what assessment has been undertaken of the impact of the additional traffic exiting this site either for access to work via the A40 or into the town?
6. In view of the many issues with site HA4 should not an alternative site be chosen for Monmouth, such as CS0274 off Wonastow Road, which has far fewer issues? Can the council agree to consider this option during the Deposit Plan consultation process?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Deputy Leader, thanked Mr. Cummings for the questions and provided a response.

1. Environment officers monitor air quality across the County. The evidence is that this site has permissible air quality levels according to nationally set standards. The evidence has not led to this area being an air quality management area. Nevertheless, because of the strong points made at the Scrutiny Committee, the Deputy Leader has asked that further testing of this site takes place during the public consultation period.
2. In terms of issues relating to water quality, the Monmouth Treatment Works are benefitting from investment in strategic treatment work improvements. This work is being undertaken now and once completed it will remove high levels of phosphates. All the new developments in Monmouthshire will require a sustainable drainage system to ensure there is no increased runoff as a consequence of the development.
3. With regards to agricultural land, in Monmouth the debate has been whether the future development should focus on the proposed Leesbrook site or the Wonastow site. The Leesbrook site has a marginally lower agricultural quality and that will be considered during the public consultation.

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4. In terms of the position of the site, the proposed development site at Leesbrook is on a smaller scale than that agreed by the Council in 2020. The proposal has drawn further back from the hillside and provides a green corridor and a landscape buffer. The proposed development was thought to be seen as an extension of the existing settlement.
5. The site promoter has submitted transport strategies and statements to evidence the impact of the development on the local area. A strategic transport assessment has been conducted by Transport for Wales and this does not indicate significant impact consequential on the development itself.
6. Our assessment is that on balance Leesbrook has advantages over Wonastow but if during public consultation evidence emerges that there is a preference and more evidence which would favour Wonastow then that evidence will be given detailed consideration.

5. Reports to Council:

6. Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan

The report was presented to seek Council's endorsement of the Deposit Plan to commence statutory consultation/engagement with communities and key stakeholders, and to seek Council's agreement of the RLDP Revised Delivery Agreement to submit to Welsh Government for approval.

Upon being put to a recorded vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

To endorse the Deposit RLDP to commence statutory consultation/engagement with communities and key stakeholders.

To agree the revised Delivery Agreement for the RLDP for submission to Welsh Government for approval

For:	21
Against:	20
Abstain:	1

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NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD		X	
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN			X
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK		X	
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. Jones		X	
Councillor P. Jones		X	
Councillor T KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
Councillor P MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL - APOLOGIES			
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
Councillor M POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY - APOLOGIES			
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS - APOLOGIES			
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

7. Statement of Gambling Policy and Proposals for Casinos

The report was presented for Members to consider the Council's existing resolution to not permit casinos within the County of Monmouthshire.

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Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

To refuse any casino applications made under the Gambling Act 2005 and stated within the Authority's Gambling Policy.

To adopt the 'Statement of Gambling Policy 2025' for Monmouthshire County Council, provided in Appendix A (changes highlighted in red)

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=J_sFxks8WPzqibTX&t=14577

8. Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2023/24

The Cabinet Member presented the 2023/24 annual report of the Council's Standards Committee.

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

That Council notes the Annual Report of the Standards Committee

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=VNFmFJC1gNIUR2w8&t=14817

9. Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report

The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose being for Member to:

- Evaluate the progress of Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2023 / 2024 highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2024 - 2025.
- Inform Members about the effectiveness of safeguarding in Monmouthshire and the work that is in progress to support the Council's aims in protecting children and adults at risk from harm and abuse.
- To inform Members about the progress made towards meeting the standards in the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy approved by Council in July 2017, amended July 2022 and November 2023.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

To receive and endorse the Annual Safeguarding Report 2023/24.

That Council tasks the Chief Officer of Social Care, Safeguarding and Health to maintain focus on the priority actions as set out in the Whole Authority Action Plan (appendix 4).

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=d_bt0q5vCK7p6Z0E&t=15045

10. Annual Director's Report 2023 / 2024, Social Care, Safeguarding and Health

The Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health presented the Annual Report 2023/24.

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

To receive and endorse the Annual Director's Report 2023/24.

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That Council tasks the Chief Officer of Social Care, Safeguarding and Health to maintain focus on the priority actions as set out in Section 9 of the report.

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=z6LY0XwRJDxJt8gW&t=15735

11. **Motions to Council:**

12. **Submitted by County Councillor Meirion Howells**

Upon recommencement the following County Councillors were recorded as leaving the meeting:

Fay Bromfield; Louise Brown; Rachel Buckler; Jan Butler; Tomos Davies; Christopher Edwards; Steven Garratt; Richard John; Penny Jones; Tony Kear; Malcolm Lane; Jane Lucas; Jayne McKenna; Phil Murphy; Paul Pavia; Maureen Powell; Frances Taylor; Ann Webb.

County Councillor Meirion Howells presented the motion:

Council notes the RSPCA's Bang Out of Order campaign which highlights how pets, horses and livestock are affected by fireworks, many of them hurting themselves in reaction to the noise and flashes. Therefore, Council resolves:

- To actively promote a public awareness campaign via the Council's social media channels about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
- To write to the Welsh Government urging them to utilise any levers at their disposal to mitigate any negative impacts on animals and vulnerable people of the hosting of fireworks displays.
- To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

Seconded by County Councillor Emma Bryn.

Upon being put to a recorded vote the motion was carried.

For: 24
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=GLZdhx7mG97fY71W&t=18453

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NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD			
Councillor L BROWN			
Councillor E BRYN	X		
Councillor R BUCKLER			
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER			
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES			
Councillor L DYMOCK	X		
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS			
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth	X		
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN			
Councillor D. W. H. Jones	X		
Councillor P. Jones			
Councillor T KEAR			
Councillor M LANE			
Councillor J LUCAS			
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNELL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA			
Councillor P MURPHY			
Councillor A NEILL - APOLOGIES			
Councillor P PAVIA			
Councillor M POWELL			
Councillor S RILEY - APOLOGIES			
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS - APOLOGIES			
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR			
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB			
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

13. Submitted by County Councillor Howells

County Councillor Lisa Dymock left the meeting at 19:46pm

County Councillor Meirion Howells presented the motion:

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This Council supports the campaign to devolve management of the Crown Estate and its assets in Wales to the Welsh Government and that the funds raised be used to support the social needs of the Welsh people.

Council calls upon the Leader to write to the Welsh Government outlining our support to help persuade the UK Government to devolve the Crown Estate as a matter of urgency.

Upon being put to a recorded vote the motion was carried.

For:	22
Against:	1
Abstain:	0

https://www.youtube.com/live/Uu0L_icjpik?si=3mPZ0DLoaQVedM8R&t=19968

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NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD			
Councillor L BROWN			
Councillor E BRYN	X		
Councillor R BUCKLER			
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER			
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES			
Councillor L DYMOCK			
Councillor A EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS			
Councillor S GARRATT			
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth		x	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN			
Councillor D. W. H. Jones	X		
Councillor P. Jones			
Councillor T KEAR			
Councillor M LANE			
Councillor J LUCAS			
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNELL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA			
Councillor P MURPHY			
Councillor A NEILL - APOLOGIES			
Councillor P PAVIA			
Councillor M POWELL			
Councillor S RILEY - APOLOGIES			
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS - APOLOGIES			
Councillor J STRONG	X		
Councillor P STRONG	X		
Councillor F TAYLOR			
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB			
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

14. Date of next meeting - 12th December 2024

Noted.

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The meeting ended at 8.00 pm