

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 16th May, 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, Alistair Neill, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb, Meirion Howells

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Malcolm Lane

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. To elect a Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2024/25

The Chair of Council, County Councillor Meirion Howells opened the meeting and took the opportunity to thank Council for the opportunity of representing the Council and highlighted several functions attended during the year of office.

Group Leaders took the opportunity to address Council expressing thanks to County Councillor Howells for his year in office as Chair.

It was proposed by County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, and seconded by County Councillor Paul Griffiths, that County Councillor Su McConnel be elected as Chair of Monmouthshire County Council for the Civic Year 2024/25.

Upon being put to the vote it was agreed to elect County Councillor Su McConnel as Chair. County Councillor McConnel made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for their support. She thanked Council for the opportunity and introduced Roger Harris as her consort for the year in office.

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3. To appoint a Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2024/25

The Chair welcomed nominations for Vice-Chair of Council.

It was proposed by County Councillor Paul Griffiths and seconded by County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby that County Councillor Peter Strong be appointed as Vice Chair of the County Council for the Civic Year 2024/25.

Upon being put to the vote it was resolved that County Councillor Peter Strong be appointed as Vice Chair. County Councillor Strong made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. He thanked Council for their support and introduced County Councillor Jackie Strong as his consort for the year.

4. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2024

The minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 18th April 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

5. To elect a Leader of the County Council and to receive notification of Leader delegations (appointments to Cabinet)

County Councillor Maria Stevens nominated County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby as Leader of the Council for the year 2024/25. This was seconded by County Councillor John Crook.

There were no further nominations and upon being put to a vote County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby was appointed Leader.

Cabinet Appointments were announced as:

- County Councillor Paul Griffiths - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Sustainable Livelihoods.
- County Councillor Ben Callard – Cabinet Member for Resources.
- Councillor Martyn Groucutt – Cabinet Member for Education.
- County Councillor Ian Chandler – Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services. •
- County Councillor Catrin Maby – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.
- County Councillor Angela Sandles – Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=LOuBgZOm5S98U3&t=173>

6. Representation of Political Groups - Review

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report in order for Council to review the representation of different political groups on the bodies to which the Council makes appointments.

Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That the Council approves the report as a review under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to allocate ordinary committees with the numbers as indicated below representing political balance

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Committee	Welsh Labour	Welsh Conservatives	Independent Group	Green Independent Group
Scrutiny (x4) (9)	16	15	3	2
Licensing & Regulatory (12)	6	5	1	0
Planning (16)	8	6	1	1
Democratic Services (12)	6	4	1	1
Governance & Audit (8) (excluding lay members)	4	3	1	0
Aggregate Entitlement (84)	40	33	7	4

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=NWuxGGc-FKq3xBcx&t=1502>

7. Appointments to Committees

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report in order to appoint committees together with their membership and terms of reference in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That the committees be appointed together with their membership as set out in the report, and their terms of reference attached as appendices.

That Council appointed County Councillor David Jones as Chair of Democratic Services Committee.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=eslRRgcV-BrQFYqe&t=1605>

8. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Cabinet Members presented the report for Council to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies. 2

Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That Council notes the appointments made at its 2024 AGM for the term of Council and confirms or amends the appointments that require annual renewal as well as confirming appointments to new positions.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=N59UGO0kZoE33NqS&t=1777>

9. Standards Committee - Appointment of Independent Members

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report to appoint two independent members to the Council's Standards Committee.

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Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That Council appoints Andrew Blackmore and Ruth Price as Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=SchnosgAF8VmyD2S&t=2113>

10. Members Questions:

11. From County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Please can the cabinet member for education provide an update on the plans to extend ARW Primary and when will the S106 funding become available Public Document Pack from the Church Road Development?

The Cabinet Member responded that ARW Primary is not a Local Authority maintained school and is a voluntary aided school of the Church in Wales and therefore the buildings belong to the Monmouth Diocesan Trust. To ensure that the partnership is progressed appropriately, officers have met with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, the Diocesan Trust to discuss the Section 106 funding and MCC have been asked to take the project forward on their behalf.

It was confirmed that architects have been appointed to undertake a master plan of the site and to provide options to increase the capacity of the school and provide accommodation for a non-maintained nursery and wraparound childcare. This work will be completed within the next three months.

It was noted that whilst the Church Road Section 106 funding has been received, the Crick Road funding will be received as and when houses are sold in line with the Section 106 agreement.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=r1w7cNd3i0ao1y5b>

12. From County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Please can the cabinet member for climate change and environment provide me an update on when Crick Road (from the B4245 to Main Road Portskewett) be brought up to adequate and safe standard for road users?

The Cabinet Member apologised that the problem has not been resolved. It was explained that Crick Road is inspected every three months and any concerns regarding safety would be raised, but unfortunately resurfacing was not high on a list of resurfacing priorities at this time.

Additional funding has been set aside for highways to tackle small patching schemes.

The Cabinet Member resolved follow the issue up with officers.

In response County Councillor Dymock welcomed further conversations regarding the use of the Crick Road.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=NFv0Ch3wixhdCXog&t=2390>

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13. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader of the Council

What legal advice has the cabinet received since the last council meeting about the administration's tender for dairy products?

The Leader confirmed that legal advice had been sought and the advice received was that the Council has acted properly and lawfully. She referred to the motion passed at the last meeting of Full Council and the administration's intention to review the supply of milk and dairy products and to undertake a procurement separate from the All Wales Framework, with the objective of achieving greater local sustainability and decarbonisation.

As a supplementary, County Councillor John referred to mistakes made in the original tendering documents and asked what changes were expected to those tendering documents that would be shared with potential bidders for that contract.

The Leader reminded Council that the All Wales Framework for food procurement was coordinated by Caerphilly County Borough Council, and the tender had been generic and included all potential schools.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=taCJdZGtgnK121Wv&t=2580>

14. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

What discussions has the cabinet member had with local business groups about free parking in Monmouth?

The Cabinet Member explained that he met with business representatives of all towns on a regular basis. Challenges and opportunities had been discussed at the last meeting on 19th March 2024. At that meeting the Cabinet Member had announced that a review of parking charges across the County would be undertaken. There was no recollection of any specific proposal at that meeting for free parking in Monmouth.

As a supplementary County Councillor Lucas asked that the Cabinet Member attend a public meeting to address concerns directly, to which he agreed.

https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=5HEe8sB4f3N1ibk_&t=2848

15. From County Councillor Tomos Davies to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

To ask the Cabinet Member to confirm the total number of fly tipping cases recorded in the past year and the number of successful prosecutions.

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement responded that during the year 2023-24 there had been 633 incidences, taking an average of 4.8 days to clear. This figure includes the bigger, more difficult to reach incidences and those requiring specialist services. The usual response time is 1 day.

During this time period one fixed penalty notice had been issued and there are several ongoing investigations.

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A Member workshop is planned for the near future to discuss enforcement of fly-tipping, litter, and dog fouling.

As a supplement County Councillor Davies asked the Cabinet member to commit to investigating whether MCC might take more aggressive posture to deterring offenders and protect our public spaces. He also invited the Cabinet Member to look at neighbouring authorities for best practice.

The Cabinet Member welcomed involvement from all Members at the forthcoming workshop.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=pdLEIzBH-CRIOges&t=3180>

16. From County Councillor Tomos Davies to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

To ask the Cabinet Member to provide an update to the parents of the 17 children rejected a place at Gilwern Primary School of how the authority intends to support and accommodate these pupils.

The Cabinet Member for Education expressed sympathy for those unable to secure a first place school for their child.

He detailed that Gilwern Primary School is a 210 place school with 7 year groups. He explained that:

- 17 children have been unable to obtain places in the reception class.
- Of these 17 children, 7 are in the catchment area,
- 10 reside in the catchment areas of other schools within the Abergavenny cluster of schools.
- 4 of the 10 children have sibling links to the school but reside outside the catchment area and, in line with the school admissions policy, children within catchment have priority over those out of catchment but with sibling links.

Officers in the admissions team continue to support the 17 families and have identified places for each child at alternative schools.

For the 7 children residing in the catchment area, all 7 have been offered a place at an alternative preference declared on application form.

Of the four children with sibling links, 2 have been offered alternative preferences, and 2 have been offered places at King Henry viii 3-19 School.

For those out of catchment with no sibling links, of the remaining six applicants four have been offered placements at alternative preferences and 2 have been offered places at King Henry viii 3-19 School.

The Chair welcomed any further detail to be provided in writing.

As a supplementary County Council Davies asked if the Cabinet Member would fast track appeals to produce a timely resolution and closure for the families involved. He also asked if the Cabinet Member would meet with parents to discuss.

The Cabinet Member referred to data from the health board which shows this as an unusual year at the school, and the only year where there is a spike. He could not provide assurance

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regarding appeals as this was an independent process but assured that he would look to get the appeals panel assembled at the earliest possible time.

https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=2C_2Ab57q7MWw1ea&t=3440

17. From County Councillor Tomos Davies to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

To ask the Cabinet Member to provide an update on Monmouthshire County Council's offer to host the 2026 National Eisteddfod

The Cabinet Member recognised the success of the 2016 Eisteddfod and responded that, having expressed interest to the body that allocates the venues for the Eisteddfod events, we have been informed that we have not been successful in our expression of interest to host up to 2030. However, we have been informed that there is a strong possibility that we may be able to host an Urdd Eisteddfod early in the next decade. A final decision is likely to be made by the panel next year.

https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=2IXIKx6XzLM_nd5H&t=4077

18. Urgent question from County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the development of the new King Henry VIII School?

The Cabinet Member referred to the statement issued to all Councillors on 7th May 2024.

As a supplementary County Councillor Pavia asked what steps were being taken to ensure the additional delay will not adversely affect the quality of education attainment of pupils in both King Henry VIII and Ysgol Y Fin schools. What measures will be put in place to facilitate the smooth transition to the new and upgraded facilities?

The Cabinet Member explained that the contractors have increased staffing and there have been some minor changes to design to provide more cladding than bricks. The overall consequence is a five month delay to handover, expected date is 17th April 2025, ahead of the Easter holiday, and with no increase costs.

https://www.youtube.com/live/YrqGJZgQOOw?si=tBVafWlhk_kxjB2&t=4238

19. Next Meeting - 20th June 2024

Noted.

The meeting ended at 16:30