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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Severnside Area Committee held
at The Lab, Innovation House, Magor on Monday, 9th July, 2018 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: D. Evans, J. Watkins, J. Higginson, A. Easson,
F. Taylor, A.Davies and L.Dymock

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paula Harris	Democratic Services Officer
Paul Keeble	Group Engineer (Highways and Flood Management)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Jeff Cuthbert	Police Crime Commissioner
Superintendent Ian Roberts	Gwent Police
Deb Davies	Office of John Griffiths AM

1. Election of Chair

County Councillor David Evans was elected as Chair of the Committee.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

County Councillor Joanne Watkins was elected as Chair of the Committee.

3. Apologies

None received.

4. Declarations of Interest

None.

5. Confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 23rd April 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 23rd April 2018 were agreed by the committee and signed by the Chair.

County Councillor Frances Taylor expressed disappointed that the letter to businesses based on the local industrial estate requesting sensible driving practices has not been sent. In response Group Engineer Paul Keeble confirmed that he would draft a letter in the next 72 hours and ensure it was sent to local businesses.

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County Councillor Frances Taylor requested that the letter is also circulated to the committee members.

6. Public Open Forum

Members of the public attending the meeting wished on speak on item 7 - Traffic and Road Safety Issues in the Severnside Area.

7. Traffic and Road Safety Issues in the Severnside Area

The Chair welcomed guests and members of the public to the meeting.

Members of public were invited to speak, during which various concerns were raised and the following comments were made;

- Removal of tolls will have a huge impact, seems that everyone has their own agenda and we need joined up thinking
- Why is another survey needed? We need actions, not words
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety in Undy is not considered

In response Group Engineer Paul Keeble responded by explaining that funding had been sourced and that road safety is a current priority of the council. The results of the survey will be made available to the committee.

County Councillor Frances Taylor asked that the Officers of the Council address the concerns raised by residents and provide reassurance to residents that the Council are taking these concerns seriously.

Superintendent Ian Roberts of Gwent Police addressed the committee, explaining the criteria used by the police and partner agencies to address traffic issues and the options in place to combat them.

Police Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert advised the committee that the issues raised were operational issues for Gwent Police and explained his role in the process.

County Councillor Jim Higginson spoke of the need for more police resources in the Severnside Area and his desire for a more visible police presence in the towns.

Police Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert responded that police visibility is a priority everywhere and the force is currently recruiting for more officers. He went on to explain to the committee that the nature of crime has dramatically altered, with levels of cyber-crime increasing and that the keyword is balance, we must ensure we get this right.

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Local resident Trevor Harris raised the issue of the number of accidents and near misses which have taken place on and around the B4245 and asked why that there had been a dramatic cut in police visibility in the locality when villages have trebled in size.

Mr Harris spoke of the speeding, noise and environmental issues faced due to the increased traffic in the area and asked that action was taken immediately.

County Councillor Alan Davies spoke on behalf of his ward residents when commenting on road safety issues. He advised the committee that 75 percent of recent contact from residents related to road safety issues. He advised the committee of an Elected Member road safety task group who are currently working with partner agencies to attempt to resolve road safety on a countywide basis.

A representative of Magor & Undy CPP spoke of the need for better signage. County Councillor Lisa Dymock appreciated speed test results but spoke of resident's perceptions and the need for residents to get involved in a solution.

In response Superintendent Roberts spoke of local speed watch initiatives and the possibility of assisting groups with equipment. He spoke of the need for greater engagement with the community and the need for solutions.

Mr Trevor Harris asked if 20mph zones would be an option, especially in highly populated areas and around schools.

County Councillor Frances Taylor applauded the offer of resources being offered to local speed watch groups and highlighted the importance of signage. County Councillor Frances Taylor also spoke of the need to encourage mindfulness and the need for a change in the behaviour of people speeding.

Police Crime Commissioner Jeff Cuthbert agreed that education is better than enforcement, he offered to look into the cost of equipment.

The Chair thanked everyone for their comments and looks forward to an update at the next meeting.

8. Town Team

Financial Report

Accounts have been produced for the financial year April 2017 – March 2018.

Seating Plans

They have experienced a lot of delays with the project for new seating in the town centre, mainly due to our original contractor not being licenced to carry out the work there is a new contractor and they are currently working with SSE to remove the electrics in the town centre, whilst parts have been ordered to replace and renew the existing electrics in the town centre (some of the plugs are burnt out) to have them

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refitted into the ground, reducing the amount of street furniture in the ground, and have the new seating fitted in the meantime. Town Team are meeting with the contractor later today (9th July) to push this project forward and are hoping to see results and work completed over the next couple of months. Because of the replacement electric work needed, this pushes the cost well over the £30,000 originally budgeted, however funds will come from profits made through projects and events made over the last year, Town Team will not be asking for any further income from S106 funding.

Caldicot In Bloom

Hanging baskets in the town are now in situ, however when Town Team collected them Town Team had noticed that 20 baskets have either been stolen or have gone missing from the contractors yard, at a cost of almost £1,000. This has meant that they weren't able to put as many up as hoped this year, they are currently trying to establish exactly where these have gone, but will be replacing them for 2019.

The Caldicot sign down at Mitel has been completed, which looks fantastic, volunteers carried out all the digging and the planting and one of their volunteers kindly paid for the flowers for this from their own pocket.

Outside Funding/ Town Centre Map

Caldicot Town Team were awarded £5,000 from Waitrose recently, which is now being spent on the town centre maps, which was originally due to be paid for by Asda several years ago. The town centre maps will be located in Asda Car Park, at The Cross and one down at Caldicot Castle. Off the back of this they will also be creating thousands of pocket maps, which they hope will be distributed through high tourist sites such as The David Broome Event Centre and Caldicot Castle to help increase visibility and to improve the footfall within the town centre.

Events

As it is now into summer season, it is a busy time for the team with events, on Friday evening they held their first Street Food Feast of the year, with great success, with approx. 800 people attend this free event and had an evening of live music, food traders from around the world and a wide selection of alcohol.

Local businesses saw a boost in profits, with Clarkes butchers selling out of their chilli burgers, they had on offer and Bargain Booze took over an extra £1,000 in takings throughout the evening.

The next event is the Family Fun Day on Friday August 3rd, which is in its 4th year, with free entry, the 999 Emergency Services event, in its 3rd year is on Sunday 19th August at Caldicot Castle, with free entry for pedestrians. There is a small charge for car parking. These events are followed by a second Street Food Feast on Friday September 7th.

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Hoggin The Bridge

Hoggin The Bridge is shaping up to be an amazing event, with more live music, stalls and entertainment than ever before, the route has been changed to reduce congestion and the layout will be changed at the starting location to avoid queues. This year the ride ends at The David Broome Event Centre. They are also extending the event from just a Sunday to a whole weekend, with Live Music on the Saturday evening. They have secured and booked local band Rusty Shackle and The Bug Club to perform, tickets for the Saturday evening go on sale next weekend. Tickets for the Sunday are already available.

County Councillor Tony Easson voiced concerns to how the S106 monies were being used. A Reeks advised that he is meeting with MCC Assistant Head of Finance and will report back to the committee.

County Councillor Frances Taylor applauded Town Team for their hard work and commitment.

9. Area Grants

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Councillors spoke of their confusion regarding the area grants and asked that an officer provides clarity at a future meeting.

10. To confirm date and time of next meeting as 24th October 2018 at 10am - venue TBC

The meeting ended at 11.56

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