

## **Monmouthshire County Council Budget Engagement 19/20**

Our engagement and communication brief was to produce a suite of communications to; provide information on the financial situation, share the proposed ideas and enable residents to share their views.

We created opportunities for communities to become informed so that they were able to participate and engage with us at a level appropriate for them. Our mechanisms allowed people to receive as much or as little information as they felt necessary.

### **Website**

A Budget 19/20 page was published [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020)

The page provided a comprehensive overview of the financial situation and links to the proposals from the cabinet reports. Cllr Murphy presentation along with list of public meetings for residents to attend.

### **Press release**

Issued to local media outlets, Wales wide and national media. The release contained information on some of the key proposals that would affect residents.

### **Online Survey**

A short online survey was available for residents to feedback thoughts on the proposals.

### **Public meetings**

#### **Area Forums**

It was agreed that Area Meetings which are attended by elected members and Town and Community Councils would be open to members of the public. The meetings were planned during daytime hours.

#### **Public Budget Meetings**

When planning the budget engagement it was decided that there would be no evening meetings – the decision was made due to a decline in attendance at public meetings in recent years. (Not a single person attended a public meeting at County Hall, Usk in January 2018).

However when information was shared on social media some residents commented that daytime meetings were not accessible to those who work or have commitments during the day. Subsequently two meetings were arranged to take place at King Henry VIII and Chepstow Hub 6.30pm – 7.30pm.

## **Targeted meetings**

### **Access for All**

Access for All is a meeting for people with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, older people and interested organisations. The meeting is chaired and coordinated by Tony Crowhurst and provides information and advice to vulnerable residents.

Monmouthshire Budget Engagement was one aspect of the meeting.

Cllr Phil Murphy, Cabinet Member for Finance provided a presentation which included a comprehensive overview of the budget pressures and savings.

Engagement was tailored to provide relevant and appropriate information for the relevant groups and individuals. Julie Boothroyd Chief Officer for Social Care and Health and Eve Parkinson Head of Adults provided information and talked about issues that affect the group.

### **Young Peoples Budget Session**

Engaging with young people is essential. To engage effectively we aim to go to existing events to talk to young people about things that will affect them.

Members of the Engagement and Communication Team visited the Monmouthshire Sports Leaders Conference on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January. 85 young people from all four secondary schools aged 11-14 from across Monmouthshire gathered at Caldicot Leisure Centre for the conference, delivered by The Monmouthshire Sports Development Team.

### **Twitter and Facebook**

The council's social media channels were used to share information about the range of opportunities residents could find out more and get involved in the budget engagement.

### **Short You Tube clip**

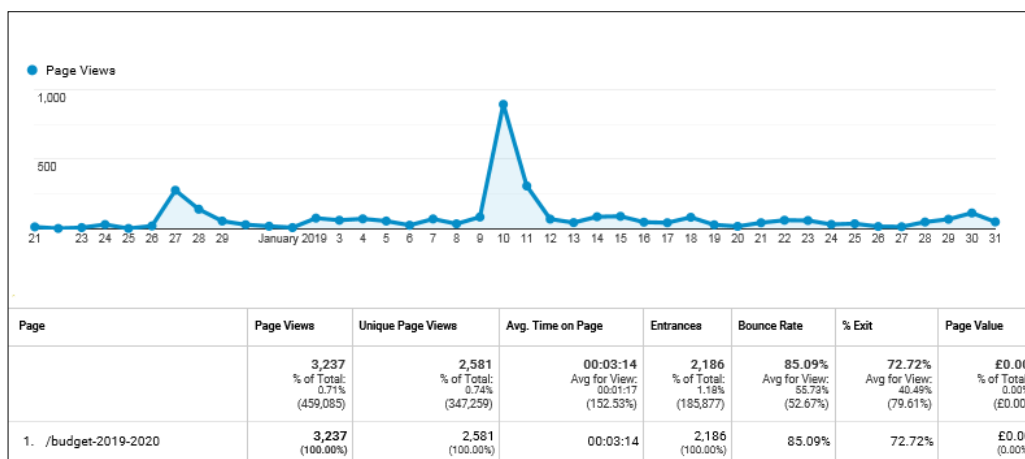
Cllr Phil Murphy filmed a face to camera clip which explained to residents the impact of the budget situation and answered some of the important queries that have emerged from residents. The clip was well received and was shared on social media, available on You Tube and embedded in to the budget page of the website.

## Time line of engagement

- 19.12.18 Monmouthshire Budget Consultation begins
- 20.12.18 Monmouthshire Budget Engagement launch - Press release issued to local and Wales wide media
- 20.12.18 Website updated including links to the budget proposals and survey
- 24.12.18 Press release shared on Face book and Twitter
- 07.01.19 Press release and social media update - rearranged date for Access for All Meeting.
- 11.01.19 Press release and social media - Area Committee Meetings
- 18.01.19 Cllr Phil Murphy Budget 19/20 You Tube film shared on social media and website.
- 22.01.19 Public meetings arranged and publicised due to feedback from public for evening meetings. Press release issued, website updated and share on social media
- 23.01.19 Lower Wye Area Committee 10.00am – Chepstow Leisure Centre
- 23.01.19 Severnside Area Committee 1.00pm – Innovation House Magor
- 25.01.19 Access for All 10.30am – 12.30pm The Usk Memorial Hall
- 29.01.19 Public Meeting King Henry VIII School 6.30pm – 7.30pm
- 30.01.19 Central Mon Area Committee 10.30am Monmouthshire County Council – County Hall, Usk
- 30.01.19 North Monmouthshire Area Committee 1.00pm Abergavenny Town Hall.
- 30.01.19 Young People Budget session at Caldicot Leisure Centre
- 30.01.19 Public Meeting Chepstow Hub 6.30pm – 7.30pm
- 31.01.19 Monmouthshire Budget Consultation ends

## Website

3,337 people visited our web page [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020)



## Survey Feedback

86 responses to the online survey

Q 1. How do you feel about our proposals?

- 1% (1) Strongly agree with the proposals
- 15% (13) Agree with the proposals
- 34% (29) Disagree with the proposals
- 36% (31) Strongly disagree with the proposals
- 14% ( 11) Not sure

We asked for residents to share their thoughts on the proposals. All substantive points coming forward were consistent with feedback received in other scrutiny and budget engagement events and have been duly considered. Detailed responses have been also provided to Chief Officers and Department Heads responsible for implementing budget proposals and the full list of responses to the survey are available on our website via:

[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020)

## Social Media

The two most popular social media channels are Facebook and Twitter. To promote the budget engagement many posts were shared on both channels. Our residents tend to use facebook as a platform to share their views with Twitter being used by less people to comment.

Facebook lends itself to open conversations between residents and allows the council to feedback. Twitter was used to share similar messages, residents used Facebook to share their views. It can provide an indication as to how many people have looked at the post, how many times it has been shared and the comments that have arisen from the post. The following information has been taken from comments from Facebook posts.

**Post 1.**

24.12.18 - Press release

3,206 people reached

14 Interactions (number of likes, comments or shares)

**Comments**

**Car Parking**

'Charge to park at Usk . Everywhere else has parking charges so why not Usk?'

**Engagement**

'No engagement event in Caldicot?'

**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Dewi Jones [?] · 24 December 2018 · 🌐 Like Page ...

Monmouthshire County Council budget engagement revealed  
<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/.../monmouthshire-county-cou...>

MONMOUTHSHIRE.GOV.UK  
**Monmouthshire County Council budget engagement revealed - Monmouthshire**

Get more likes, comments and shares  
Boost this post for £23 to reach up to 34,000 people.

3,206 People reached      303 Engagements      **Boost Post**

**Performance for your post**

**3,206** People Reached

**14** Likes, Comments & Shares ⓘ

3 Likes	3 On Post	0 On Shares
9 Comments	9 On Post	0 On Shares
2 Shares	2 On Post	0 On Shares

**289** Post Clicks

0 Photo views	141 Link clicks ⓘ	148 Other Clicks ⓘ
---------------	-------------------	--------------------

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

2 Hide Post	1 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

## Post 2

### 11.01.19 – Area Committee press release

4,560 people reached

34 interactions (number of likes,





Comments or shares)

## Comment

### Engagement

Can't you take into consideration we want to attend but actually have jobs! The times are no good for us.


Post Details


**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Rhian Cook [?] · 11 January at 18:00 ·   Like Page 

Monmouthshire Budget 19/20 <https://bit.ly/2Rmcc1K>

We would like you to attend our Area Committee meetings to find out more about the proposals including waste and recycling ( as publicised recently in the local press) these are public meetings and will enable you find out more and have your say.

Some of the dates that were issued before Christmas have changed, so please take a look at the dates and venues below: ... [See more](#)




MONMOUTHSHIRE.GOV.UK 

**Council's area committees to discuss budget and speed management - Monmouthshire**



#### Performance for your post

**4,560** People Reached

**34** Likes, Comments & Shares 

<b>17</b> Likes	<b>6</b> On Post	<b>11</b> On Shares
<b>6</b> Comments	<b>2</b> On Post	<b>4</b> On Shares
<b>11</b> Shares	<b>11</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

**241** Post Clicks

<b>0</b> Photo views	<b>47</b> Link clicks 	<b>194</b> Other Clicks 
-------------------------	--	--

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

<b>2</b> Hide Post	<b>0</b> Hide All Posts
<b>0</b> Report as Spam	<b>0</b> Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

### Post 3

#### 18. 01.19 Public Meetings

5,549 people reached

34 interactions (number of likes,  
Comments or shares)

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the official page of Monmouthshire. The post is published by Rhian Cook on 18 January at 15:38. The text of the post states that Cllr Phil Murphy has taken time to share information about the Monmouthshire Budget 19/20 proposals. It includes a link to an online survey and details of two local meetings: Lower Wye Area Committee on 23rd January at 10:00am at Chepstow Leisure Centre, and Sevenside Area Committee on 23rd January at 1:00pm at Innovation House Magor. A video player is embedded in the post, showing Cllr Phil Murphy speaking. The video title is 'Monmouthshire Budget 19/20 proposals.' and it has a duration of 08:29. To the right of the post, a 'Performance for your post' section provides the following statistics: 5,549 People Reached, 2,018 3-second video views, and 54 Reactions, comments & shares. A breakdown of these interactions is shown in a table:

Reaction	On Post	On Shares
Like	12	9
Angry	1	0
Comments	18	0
Shares	14	0

Additional statistics include 472 Post Clicks (31 Clicks to Play, 32 Link clicks, 409 Other Clicks) and a 'NEGATIVE FEEDBACK' section with 1 Hide Post, 0 Hide All Posts, 0 Report as Spam, and 0 Unlike Page.

### Comments

#### Services

'Can I please ask why NEWPORT and Torfaen residents don't pay the same monetary value as Chepstow /Monmouthshire as they have more local service available to them?'

#### Funding

'Why is there a shortfall from The Assembly? Couldn't they just have a little less gold-plated toilet paper? Is this because we will receive less funding from the EU as a result of Brexit? why does no one stand up and say that Wales was a net beneficiary of EU funding?'

#### Engagement

There are some serious changes being proposed here. Please put on some meetings so that working people can attend - in the evenings.

'I will complete the survey do but think face to face would have been more effective.'

'I agree. The majority of council tax payers are at work when these meetings are being held. I would like to have the opportunity to attend one of these'



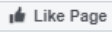

## Post 4

### 22.01.19 Public Meetings

5,198 people reached

13 interactions (number of likes,  
Comments or shares)



Post Details

**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Rhian Cook [?] · 22 January at 18:00 ·   

Monmouthshire County Council will be holding two public evening meetings to enable residents to find out more about the budget proposals for 2019/20. The meetings are addition to the four Area Committee meetings and Access for All meeting.

Residents are welcomed to attend King Henry VIII School on Tuesday 29th January 6.30pm – 7.30pm and Chepstow Hub on Wednesday 30th January 6.30pm – 7.30pm.


<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/.../council-plans-evening-me.....>  
See more



otos/.../2278550625512696/?type=3...



#### Performance for your post

**5,198** People Reached

**13** Likes, Comments & Shares 

<b>5</b> Likes	<b>2</b> On Post	<b>3</b> On Shares
<b>0</b> Comments	<b>0</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares
<b>8</b> Shares	<b>8</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

**669** Post Clicks

<b>111</b> Photo views	<b>16</b> Link clicks 	<b>542</b> Other Clicks 
---------------------------	--	--

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

<b>1</b> Hide Post	<b>0</b> Hide All Posts
<b>0</b> Report as Spam	<b>0</b> Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts






## Post 4

### 25.01.19 Access for All meeting

2,184 people reached

3 interactions (number of likes,  
Comments or shares)

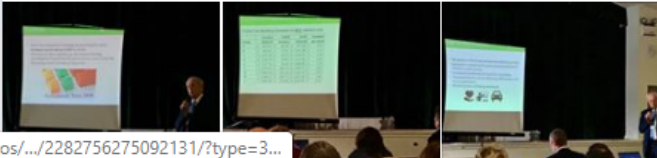

**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Rhian Cook [?] · 25 January at 10:53 · 

Like Page 

Monmouthshire Budget 19/20

We are at the Access for All meeting today, Cllr Phil Murphy is talking about Monmouthshire Budget 19/20.

If you would like to hear from Cllr Murphy come along: ... [See more](#)




os/.../2282756275092131/?type=3...

#### Performance for your post

---

**2,184** People Reached



---

**3** Likes, Comments & Shares 

<b>1</b> Likes	<b>1</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares
<b>0</b> Comments	<b>0</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares
<b>2</b> Shares	<b>2</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

---

**107** Post Clicks

<b>50</b> Photo views	<b>6</b> Link clicks 	<b>51</b> Other Clicks 
--------------------------	---	---

---

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

<b>0</b> Hide Post	<b>0</b> Hide All Posts
<b>0</b> Report as Spam	<b>0</b> Unlike Page

---

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

**Post 5**

**25.01.19 Access for All meeting – Julie Boothroyd presentation**

3,543 people reached

14 interactions (number of likes,  
Comments or shares)

**Monmouthshire**

Published by Abigail Davies Barton [?] · 25 January at 11:36 · 🌐

👍 Like Page    ⋮

Julie Boothroyd, Chief Officer for Social Care and Health and Eve Parkinson Head of Adult Services have been talking about how Social Care transformation is working for residents of Monmouthshire.

If you would like to find out more come along to:

King Henry VIII School on Tuesday 29th January 6.30pm – 7.30pm or  
Chepstow Hub on Wednesday 30th January 6.30pm – 7.30pm.

Can't make it? Have your say on Budget 19/20 take a look at the short film and complete the survey via our website:  
<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020>

**Performance for your post**

---

**3,543** People Reached

---

**26** Reactions, comments & shares 📊

<b>14</b> 👍 Like	<b>7</b> On post	<b>7</b> On shares
<b>1</b> ❤️ Love	<b>1</b> On post	<b>0</b> On shares
<b>4</b> Comments	<b>0</b> On Post	<b>4</b> On Shares
<b>7</b> Shares	<b>7</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

---

**329** Post Clicks

<b>137</b> Photo views	<b>13</b> Link clicks 📄	<b>179</b> Other Clicks 📄
---------------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------

---

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

<b>1</b> Hide Post	<b>0</b> Hide All Posts
<b>0</b> Report as Spam	<b>0</b> Unlike Page

---

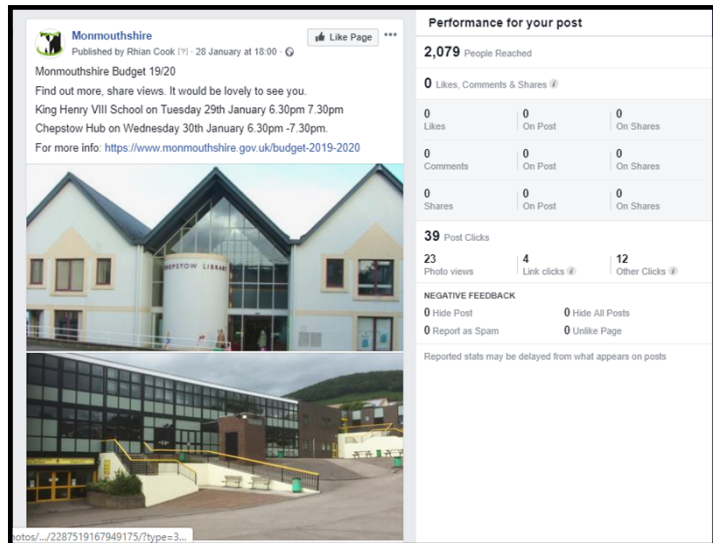
Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

## Post 6

### Public Meeting publicity

2,079 people reached

0 interactions (number of likes, Comments or shares)



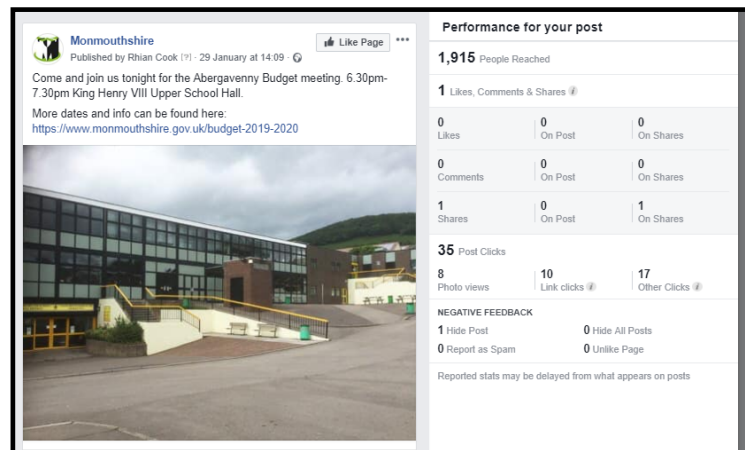
## Post 7

29.01.19

### Public Meeting publicity

1,915 people reached

0 interactions (number of likes, Comments or shares)



## Council Tax

'Still no working street lighting here in parts of Caerwent. We should re-examine the council tax we pay you and discount it based on the services you're being paid for and not providing.'

'A 5.95% increase in Council Tax over the next year is shameful. Every change you are making is to either reduce services or increase charges for residents. Pay awards for MCC employees don't seem to be affected, nor do additional payments into MCC' employee pensions.

We're have to do more with less, why aren't you? Almost every item in your report for 'efficiencies' has failed to bring in the desired results. Are you even trying?

**30.01.19**

Public Meeting publicity people reached

0 interactions (number of likes,

Comments or shares)

**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Rhian Cook [?] · 30 January at 13:25 · G

**Monmouthshire Budget 19/20**  
Find out more, share views. It would be lovely to see you. ... See more

**Performance for your post**  
1,857 People Reached

11 Likes, Comments & Shares

3 Likes	3 On Post	0 On Shares
7 Comments	1 On Post	6 On Shares
1 Shares	1 On Post	0 On Shares

58 Post Clicks

4 Photo views	7 Link clicks	47 Other Clicks
---------------	---------------	-----------------

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**  
1 Hide Post    0 Hide All Posts  
0 Report as Spam    0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

1,857 People reached    69 Engagements

Will McLean, Car Ly and Sarah Griffiths    1 Comment 1 share

**Post 9**

**30.01.19 Young People Budget Session, Caldicot Leisure Centre**

**2,357 people reached**

**14 interactions (number of likes, ccomments or shares)**

**Monmouthshire**  
Published by Rhian Cook [?] · 30 January at 14:57 · G

Today young people from across Monmouthshire got involved in the Monmouthshire Budget 19/20 engagement process. The session was informative and created debate and discussion around some of the proposals that will affect young people and their families. Thanks to all involved. For more info about our proposals go to: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2019-2020>

**Performance for your post**  
2,357 People Reached

14 Likes, Comments & Shares

7 Likes	7 On Post	0 On Shares
7 Comments	6 On Post	1 On Shares
0 Shares	0 On Post	0 On Shares

181 Post Clicks

91 Photo views	2 Link clicks	88 Other Clicks
----------------	---------------	-----------------

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**  
1 Hide Post    0 Hide All Posts  
0 Report as Spam    0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

'I suspect you are trying to blind residents with an overload of information.'

'I've looked at the budget presentation and tried to go through some of the 100s of pages of information. What I would like to see are the standard accounting details:

1. An income and expenditure sheet, so I can clearly see where the money comes from and what it is spent on.
2. In addition, a balance sheet would be useful, although accept that might be more difficult to put together. Is there a straightforward Income and Expenditure sheet?'

'Although, I do wish MCC would stop using jargon "Financial Pressures" - does that mean expected expenditure or something different?'

'The problem is MCC is getting less income, especially from the government block grant but prices from external suppliers are going up. And yes, it isn't a positive but it is more the fault of central government than anybody else.'

'This will affect all people, young and old alike. And we are the ones paying for reduced services at an increased cost. PR won't spin this into a positive.'

## **Email correspondence**

Residents were welcome to feedback via email [contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

A number of emails were received that focused on two specific areas:

- Engagement
- Blue Badges

## **Blue Badge Feedback**

Tony Crowhurst on behalf of The Disability Advice Project

At the recent Access for All meeting, it was intimated that the Council were considering charging for the use of car parking spaces designated for disabled people. Following the meeting, there has been some debate amongst those who use these spaces in Monmouthshire car parks. It is highly likely that the Council has received comments already. The purpose of this e-mail is to voice the comments and concerns of the Disability Advice Project.

We note the objectives of "Disabled Motoring UK". The 2 objectives relevant to this matter are

1] Blue badge holders should be able to park for up to 3 hours free of charge in off-street car parks

2] Car park managers must monitor the bays to ensure they are not used by non-badge holders.

The key point here relates to fairness from both sides. If the Council wishes to charge, then surely it must appreciate that it has duties to perform. These are not just the provision of bays, but an undertaking to police and maintain them adequately. We see no reason why disabled people should be asked to pay for parking if the Council

1] Does not police the use of the bays

2] Does not provide signage indicating the location of "disabled parking bays"

3] Does not layout the parking space design in accordance with best practice

4] Does not maintain the markings of the "disabled parking bays"

5] Does not provide above ground signage directly in line with the bays for use when snow or leaves cover the ground

6] Does not provide signage from the car parks specifically for the use of disabled people indicating appropriate routes to key destinations

Members of DAP have visited many car parks run by the County Council and have often felt that the Council has not "done its best" for disabled people. Examples would include

[A] the Caldicot town centre car park where the yellow ground painting scheme was virtually impossible to see and was not located as close as possible to the shops

[B] the Usk prison car park where the only "disabled parking bays" are located close to the children's playground with none close to the Memorial hall and with a car park surface that could cause trips and falls to even non-disabled people

[C] the Usk car park by the museum where the "disabled spaces" are in 3 locations with no signage to direct visitors

[D] the Chepstow library car park where no signage is provided to illustrate the most accessible route into town

[E] the Monmouth Shire Hall car park where the most obvious route into town would lead disabled people over cobblestones

[F] in all car parks, a lack of dismounting space to the rear of the of the bays for safe dismount from the rear of a car

So how can the Council even contemplate charging disabled people for parking in "disabled bays" when it is not prepared to honor its side of the bargain?

In discussion, it has been said that the Council may be thinking of allowing disabled people to park for free for the first hour. Notwithstanding the objective of "Disability Motoring UK" for a 3 hour free period, we would like to point out the problem with having only one hour free. It is a fact that disabled people will often take longer to carry out an activity. In particular, their speed of progress along pavements and through shops is significantly slower than non-disabled people. I am not thinking only of wheelchair users in this context. People with sight impairment, people with learning difficulties and mental health impairments, people with Ehlers-Danloss syndrome, people with prosthetics - they will all take longer to carry out their tasks around town than will non-disabled people. For these and many others such as many older people, an hour just flies by. If a period of time is being mooted, then surely it has to be at least 2 hours.

We know that many towns and cities across Britain now have charges for "disabled parking". We know that Monmouthshire is bottom of the pile for grants from the Welsh Government and wants to raise income just wherever and however it can. But we also know that many Councilors have stated their support for disabled people and are concerned over the quality of life for disabled people. We also know that, as a group, disabled people have the least amount of disposable income. We also know that a vibrant town is one which values diversity and encourages active involvement from the entire community. We know that disabled people are often accompanied by family members when coming to town. These family members bring with them greater spending power to sustain the local economy. Where, therefore, is the sense in putting up barriers to these members of society accessing the facilities of the County.

Apart from all that we have said above, there is the underlying message that the charging of the most disadvantaged in society gives to the rest of the world. One of a Council without a heart which only shows compassion when there is not a pound sign attached.

Tony Crowhurst on behalf of The Disability Advice Project

## **Engagement**

**The following emails look at resident's interest in the engagement process.**

'Please would you clarify the arrangements for engagement on the 2019/20 Budget Proposals?

Your web site page advertises the 25th January at 10:30 at the Memorial hall in Usk as

“a platform for people with disabilities, and older people to have their voices heard”

It’s also advertises the Area Committee meetings on 23rd and 30th January as

“To hear information based on the locality”

At which meeting will there be an opportunity for the general public to express views (not just hear information) on the proposals?

*A response was sent to the sender, clarifying the engagement process – providing clear information that all meetings the public was able to contribute and feedback on the budget information.*