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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held Remote Meeting on Thursday, 13th May, 2021 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor M. Feakins (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: C. Edwards, P. Clarke, D. Batrouni, J. Becker, D. Blakebrough, L. Brown, A. Davies, L. Dymock, A. Easson, R. Edwards, D. Evans, P. A. Fox, R. J. W. Greenland, M. Groucutt, L. Guppy, R. Harris, J. Higginson, G. Howard, S. Howarth, R. John, D. Jones, L. Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, S. B. Jones, P. Jordan, M. Lane, P. Murphy, P. Pavia, M. Powell, J. Pratt, R. Roden, V. Smith, B. Strong, F. Taylor, T. Thomas, J. Treharne, J. Watkins, K. Williams and S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Chief Officer People and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Joe Skidmore	Communities and Partnership Development Lead

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors A. Watts

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. To elect a Chairman of the County Council for the Civic Year 2021/22

Council observed a minute silence in respect of the passing of Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip and all those affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Congratulations were offered to Councillor Peter Fox and Councillor Laura Jones on their Senedd appointments.

The Leader addressed Council and, on behalf of the Council, thanked County Councillor Woodhouse for her second year in office, and reflected on the work and achievements of the Chairman. Liberal Democrat and Independent Group Leaders echoed the sentiments of the Leader.

The Chair and Vice-Chair thanked Council and colleagues for their support.

It was proposed by County Councillor P. Fox, and duly seconded by County Councillor P. Murphy, that County Councillor M. Feakins be elected as Chairman of Monmouthshire County Council for the Civic Year 2021/22. Upon being put to the vote it was agreed to elect County Councillor Feakins as Chairman. County Councillor M. Feakins made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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Councillor Feakins thanked Council and introduced Bishop Cherry Vann as his Chaplain.

3. To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the Civic Year 2021/22

It was moved by County Councillor P. Jones and seconded by County Councillor J. Pratt that County Councillor A. Webb be appointed as Vice Chairman of the County Council for the Civic Year 2021/22.

Upon being put to the vote it was resolved that County Councillor A. Webb be appointed as Vice Chairman. County Councillor Webb made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for their support.

4. Public Questions

None.

5. Receipt of petitions

No petitions presented.

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

As out-going Leader, County Councillor P. Fox moved that County Councillor R. John be elected as Leader of the Council. This was duly seconded by County Councillor S. Jones.

There were no further nominations and upon being put to the vote it was resolved that County Councillor R. John be elected as Leader of the Council for the Civic Year 2021/2022.

Councillor John thanked Council for their support and advised the following appointments to Cabinet:

County Councillor Sara Jones, Economy and Deputy Leader
County Councillor Bob Greenland, Governance and Strategic Planning, and Deputy Leader
County Councillor Paul Pavia, Education
County Councillor Penny Jones, Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
County Councillor Lisa Dymock, Community Wellbeing and Social Justice
County Councillor Jane Pratt, Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services
County Councillor Phil Murphy, Resources

Councillor John assured Council that this team would be doing everything they can to continue delivering on the promises in the manifesto, encapsulated in MCC Corporate Plan and condensed into the 'plan on a page'.

7. Representation of Political Groups

The report was presented for Council to review the representation of different political groups on the bodies to which the Council makes appointments.

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

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That the Council decides to accept the report (and appendices) as a review under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and to initially allocate ordinary committees with the numbers as indicated below as a fair representation:

Committee	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Ind Gp	Ind
Select (x 5) (9)	26	9	3	6	1
Licensing & Regulatory (12)	7	3	1	1	0
Planning (16)	9	3	1	2	1
Democratic Services (12)	7	3	1	1	0
Governance & Audit (11) note – this excludes 1 lay	7	2	1	1	0
Aggregate Entitlement (96)	56	20	7	11	2

That the 2 Planning Committee seats allocated to the Independent Group continue to be filled by representatives of the Conservative and Labour Groups only with the permission of the Independent Group Leader

8. Appointments to Committees

The Leader presented the report to appoint committees together with their membership and terms of reference. In doing so he moved that Group Leaders email Democratic Services to confirm their appointments to each committee and we move to receiving nominations for the Chair of Democratic Services Committee.

County Councillor Howarth proposed County Councillor David Jones as Chair of Democratic Services Committee, seconded by County Councillor Blakebrough.

County Councillor Batrouni proposed County Councillor David Evans as Chair of Democratic Services Committee, seconded by County Councillor Thomas.

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

That the committees be appointed together with their membership as set out in the report

That Council appoints County Councillor David Evans as the Chair of Democratic Services Committee

9. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Leader presented the report to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies.

The Leader advised the following changes:

Oldbury Power Station Stakeholder Group – Councillor M. Feakins
Natural Resources Wales Advisory Group – Councillor J. Treharne
Wye Valley AONB – Councillors Edwards and Feakins
Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Wales – Councillor L. Dymock
Scrutiny Champion – Councillor A. Webb
Living Levels Partnership Board – Councillors Dymock and Pratt

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ABUHB Stakeholder Reference Group – Councillor C. Edwards
EAS – Councillor P. Pavia
Yprentis – Councillor S. Jones
Pratts Charity – Councillor P. Murphy
Armed Forces Champion – Councillor L. Dymock.

It was agreed that Councillor J. Higginson remains on Joint Council for Wales.

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

That the Council make appointments to the outside bodies set out in the schedule, with the exception of joint committees listed in Category B, which are Cabinet appointments

10. Freedom of the Borough - Royal British Legion (RBL)

Council received the report to seek a decision on whether the Council admit as Honorary Freeman of the County the Royal British Legion in recognition of their 100th Year Anniversary on 15th May 2021 and to honour the charitable work of the organisation supporting ex-service men and women and their families. This will give public recognition to the recipient as an expression of high esteem in which they are held by Monmouthshire County Council and the people of the County on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion.

Under Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 a Council can grant the Freedom of the Borough to "persons of distinction and persons who have, in the opinion of the authority, rendered eminent services to place place or area". In order to grant the Freedom of the Borough, a resolution must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose.

County Councillor Laura Jones declared, with enormous pleasure that, as her last act as Armed Forces Champion, she was able to recognise the Royal British Legion, on behalf of Council. For 100 years the Royal British Legion has been a symbol of hope for the British Armed Forces Community. As a Council who is keen to support our servicemen, women and families in any which way we can we are thankful for the key role played by the Royal British Legion in supporting our Armed Forces Community and championing remembrance today.

County Council would like to honour the work of the Royal British Legion, the centenary of the highly respected organisation, by offering the Freedom of the Borough.

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

Council are asked to recommend the following: In pursuance of Section 249 (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council confers upon the Royal British Legion in 2021, the Freedom of the County of Monmouthshire

11. Members Questions

12. From County Councillor M. Groucutt to County Councillor R. Greenland

The two Inspire programmes – Inspire to Achieve and Inspire to Work – both seek to support young people who have complex home backgrounds, and who are among our most vulnerable and challenging. The programmes are currently funded by the European Union and matched funding from the county council. The present funding period expires in December 2022 and, although talks are underway to prepare a bid under the Shared Prosperity Fund, there is currently nothing definite in place to continue the current provision. Even if alternatives to the

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current programmes are agreed, there might be a potential gap in funding. This would mean that the current, very experienced team who deliver the programmes in our four secondary schools, face an uncertain future, as do the schemes themselves.

Can the cabinet member for enterprise give assurances that the county council will do all within its powers to ensure that equivalent funding is made available once the current EU funding stream ends, including the provision of any short-term support to plug a gap should a new funding stream not be agreed by the time the current provision ends?

The Cabinet Member for Economy thanked Councillor Groucutt and responded:

In terms of the gap in funding and what we are going to try and do to ensure we have sustainability of these projects going forward, the match funding is around £300,000, being the figure we are working towards. We have been identifying ways to try and ensure that gap is filled, with work going on for the last 12 months. We are carrying out local evaluations of the projects themselves and looking how we can learn best practice, working with stakeholders and partners and other areas we can streamline collaborative working. We are working with the 10 local authorities across the Cardiff Capital Region to develop new delivery models, and looking at exploring funding opportunities. We are putting forward part of a regional bid for community renewal funding.

To ensure we are successful in ensuring these programmes continue we need to ensure that all levels of government work together.

As a supplementary Councillor Groucutt suggested that the hopes for maintaining the provision is based on the shared prosperity fund, and was concerned that we may not replace like with like. He sought assurance that, if possible, the projects would continue as closely as they operate at present.

The Cabinet Member explained the experience of the team that deliver the fantastic support across the employability programmes, and provided assurance that all would be done to deliver and continue the programmes as they currently are.

13. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 11th March 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2021 were accepted and approved.

14. To exclude press and public

It was resolved that Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

15. URGENT BUDGET DECISION - ASSET DISPOSAL COSTS

Council resolved to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm

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