

**Minutes of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee meeting
held at The Sessions House, Usk.
on Wednesday 16th September 2015 at 2.00 p.m.**

PRESENT: County Councillor S. White (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, P. Jones, R.J.C. Hayward,
V.E. Smith and A.M. Wintle.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D. Hill-Howells	-	Head of Community Led Delivery
I. Saunders	-	Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture
B. Winstanley	-	Estates Manager
Mrs. N. Perry	-	Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.R. Clarke, A. Webb, L. Hackett Pain, B. Strong and R. Edwards.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee meeting dated 10th June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. PORTAL ROAD DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Estates Manager attended the meeting in order to inform Members of the current position with the Portal Road Development. In doing so we noted the following points:

- The disposal of the 1st phase of the site has been agreed with Whitbread for the construction of a Premier Inn.
- The applicant was granted planning permission for the construction of a 60 bed hotel with associated car parking and access road.
- A condition of the planning permission being granted was that Slow Worms identified on site were translocated to the agreed Link Road Site and the Dormice Mitigation Strategy was implemented.

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- MCC Grounds Maintenance and Countryside Teams were undertaking the necessary preparation of the translocation site in accordance with the Section 106 agreement.
- The aim of the construction team would be to complete the hotel and access road by Spring 2016, weather dependant.
- The remainder of the site, Phase two, would be put on the market, with the requirement for the provision of five coach parking spaces to be included as a condition of the sale.
- The Estates Manager questioned the need for the coach parking as it may hinder the marketing of the site and asked if it was still required. The Committee reaffirmed the need for coach parking. The coach parking would need to be self-managed via signage etc, there is no revenue budget included for inspection or enforcement of the site.
- There were positive signs that there were interested parties in the market place.

6. COMMUNITY HUBS

The Head of Community Led Delivery updated Members on the current situation with the Community Hubs. In doing so the following points were noted:

- A Manager had been appointed to the North County Community Hub.
- The Usk Hub, including the library and One Stop Shop services was now open and receiving positive feedback.
- Monmouth Hub would be relocating to Rolls Hall, with a front pedestal desk to provide OSS services. The library would be closed on Saturday 26th September to facilitate the relocation work.
- There was no progress to report regarding Abergavenny.
- It was confirmed that there would not be any cut backs on the welfare services for staff with the relocation of the Monmouth Hub.
- Usk Hub opening hours were currently under review.
- In terms of the launch of the Monmouth Hub there was no specific launch date.

Member raised the following issues:

Communication was disappointing in general. Publications could be on display around the market hall. We heard that Officers would provide further updates on the marketing and social media campaign, should they be required.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time members of the public may need to wait to receive information, and if timings were monitored. We were advised that people were being encouraged to serve themselves where possible, but there was a system in place to monitor timings.

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Following a query regarding different opening hours for different services we heard that Hubs were providing an integrated service, delivered by the same people and therefore, would provide one set of opening times. Staff were undertaking training in order to provide an efficient service in all areas.

We were informed that the alterations for the Usk Hub had been within budget and delivered on time.

New names for the Hubs were yet to be decided, and suggestions were welcomed.

7. EFFECTS OF THE VELOTHON

The Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture provided a brief update on the Velothon, explaining that there would be a seminar for Members on Tuesday 22nd September 2015 to provide further information.

Feedback had shown that the Velothon had been a great event, bringing many people into the region. Welsh Government had signed a 4 year contract to deliver 4 velothons. Chief Executive proposals would need to be adhered to before agreeing to the next event.

Following a debrief, the complaints heard in Monmouthshire had been echoed across South East Wales, and shortcomings had been identified as:

- Earlier finalisation of routes
- Integrated response from agencies
- Defined spectator areas
- Sabotage issues

We heard that 20,000 cyclists had already signed up for 2016, an 8,000 increase on 2015. The date may be moved to earlier in the year to facilitate professional cyclists.

It was agreed, going forward, the following should be in place:

- Declaration of route and road closures
- Compensatory agreements
- Guarantees of impact on communities
- Assurance that there would be no cost to MCC

8. PINCH POINTS ON MONNOW STREET

Members received an email update from the Highways Senior Engineer regarding the Monnow Street pinch point trial.

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We were informed that the trial was due to start in October 2015, and would be carried out for a month, in order to provide safer facilities for pedestrians.

The footways on Monnow Street between Agincourt Square and St. John Street would be widened, thus creating a narrower carriageway wide enough to accommodate one vehicle.

The trial would commence following resurfacing works in the town and would be monitored by council officers before recommending whether the arrangement would be made permanent.

Members expressed appreciation for the update but were disappointed not to be able to speak to the relevant officers in person.

Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing cutbacks within the council and the effect on the capacity of the Highways department.

Members referred to the lack of response to queries from the Highways Department and requested that officers respond in accordance with Council guidelines.

9. MONMOUTH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Chair informed the Committee of an email update received from the 21st Century Schools Manager. The following points were highlighted:

- The enabling works are due to commence in October 2015. The enabling works will include forming contractor's compounds, and installation of temporary buildings.
- The main contractor will leaflet all the surrounding houses to introduce themselves and give a brief outline of what they will be doing. A contact for queries will be identified within the contractor's organisation. The school will not be the point of contact.
- In February 2016 the school will decant into the temporary buildings, and the site will be fenced off ready for demolition of the old buildings.
- The buildings will be dismantled on site and building material will be crushed as hardcore for the new building. Other materials will be taken off site and recycled.
- The pool is due to close at the end of 2015 and will require decommissioning.
- Phase 2 demolition will include buildings of a larger nature but will not take place for another 2 years.
- Holding areas are to be established to ensure there will not be a large queue of vehicles.
- There will be cleaning bays on site to make sure mud is not transferred onto main roads and pathways.

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10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following suggestions were made for future agenda items:

- Safety issues of Usk Bridge – invite the Transport and Planning Policy Officer
- Air quality in Usk
- Traffic issues at Wye Bridge, Monmouthshire County Council
- Monmouth School update – request 21st Century Schools Manager attend
- Policer officer be invited to respond to questions
- Feedback on Hubs
- Update from the Whole Place Officer

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

We noted the next meeting of the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee will be held on Wednesday 27th January 2016 at 2.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 3.15 pm.