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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Services Committee held
at Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD on Monday, 23rd January, 2023 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor David Jones (Chair)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Tomos Davies, Meirion Howells,
Penny Jones, Peter Strong, Armand Watts, Laura Wright, Jill Bond
and Rachel Buckler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Dawn Sadler	Organisational Learning Developer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Su McConnel and Maria Stevens

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record.

The Local Democracy Manager informed the committee that the survey issued around holding a seminar on the voting system had received around a 50% response and it seemed that there is a desire for the seminar to go ahead. A date for this would be confirmed in due course.

3. Members County Trip Discussion - Verbal

The Local Democracy Manager opened a discussion regarding an earlier plan to arrange a bus trip around the county to visit key sites. We welcomed Organisational Learning Developer; Dawn Sadler discuss plans for the tour. We heard that similar arrangement was in place for new employees as part of the induction programme and it was agreed this would be useful for Members.

Suggestions of areas to visit included:

- Care provisions
- Tourist Information Centres
- Shire Hall, Monmouth
- Museums and Hubs
- Monmouth Leisure Centre

We noted that any budgetary implications were covered under the 2022 induction programme.

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It was agreed that a suitable date and time be sought that would suit as many Members as possible, at which point locations to visit would be confirmed.

4. Timing of Meetings - Follow up

The Local Democracy Manager presented the report to agree methodology and questions for assessing members needs for the timing of full council meetings with a view to make a recommendation for full council later in the year.

Responses included:

- County Council meetings are better kept at 2pm, giving people an opportunity to work in the morning.
- A 5pm start could result in a very late finish.
- Provide a space in the survey for additional comments.
- Need to be as inclusive as possible.
- Add a question to determine if there are specific caring responsibilities.
- Use the opportunity to look at the length of meetings and speaking limits.

County Councillor Armand Watts left the meeting at 14:32pm

We noted that Full Council meetings are held every six weeks, with an opportunity to add an Extraordinary Meeting where necessary.

The Committee resolved to agree the recommendation and would welcome the outcomes at the next meeting:

To review and agree the process to ensure it will capture the information required for the committee to make an informed recommendation on the timing of Council meetings.

5. Members Information Poster

The Local Democracy Manager brought the information following discussion at the previous meeting. The photographic list of Councillors has been designed with the Communications Team. This will also be available in Welsh, and will be circulated to all staff, and sent to all hubs.

As per previous discussions there is still a desire to arrange a meet and greet session with Chief Officers, but this has not yet been arranged.

In terms of how to best communicate with the public, we heard that Communications Team are currently working on a Public Participation Strategy.

Suggestion was made that the poster should also reference roles held by non-Cabinet Members, such as group leaders, in the interest of parity.

The Committee resolved to accept the Members Information Poster.

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6. Date of next meeting - 20th March 2023

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

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