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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Severnside Area Committee held
at Innovation House Magor - Room 6 Innovation House Magor on Wednesday, 20th July,
2016 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillors: A. Easson, D. Evans (Chair) J. Higginson, J. Marshall
and F. Taylor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Judith Langdon	Whole Place Officer
Deb Hill-Howells	Head of Community Led Delivery
Paula Harris	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Aaron Reeks	Caldicot Town Team
Phil Stevens	Caldicot Town Council

1. Election of Vice Chair

County Councillor J. Higginson was elected as Vice-Chair of the committee.

2. Apologies for Absence

We received apologies from County Councillor J. Crook.

3. Declarations of Interest

Item 6 - County Councillor J. Marshall declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest during the discussion as an employee of Asda.

Item 7 - County Councillor J. Marshall declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest during the discussion as he has friends who attend Bethany Church, he was also married there.

4. Confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

5. Public Open Forum

There were no members of the public at the meeting.

6. Town Team Update

Linkage

The last update received from either Landlord or MCC was on July 4th 2016, the email stated that over the next two weeks, documentation should be finalized and that they were acutely aware of the need to press on with the project. Aaron Weeks has emailed all parties asking for an update, but hadn't received a response at time of the meeting.

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Caldicot Goes Pop!

With long delays due to a leak in the unit where the pop up shop is being held, the Town Team announced that the official launch of the project will be on Tuesday August 9th 2016. All Members will receive a formal invitation over the next week, the launch will be a chance to talk in more detail about the project, what our expected outcomes are and what can be done in tandem with the project to stop the decline of the town centre.

Store 21

Store 21 has recently put up closing down signs. This is not a local movement, the company have been in trouble for the last 6 years, to varying degrees. The company have until 11th August to determine, with administrators whether the company would continue, Aaron Weeks was pleased to say that as of yesterday they have entered into a CVA, Company Voluntary Agreement, however this is not without issue and will see significant retail shops closing across the country. The Town Team are not aware yet of any decisions regarding the Caldicot store, but are keeping up to date on news coming from the company. That being said, after a long chat with the landlord last week, he is making steps to communicate directly with other companies who have previously registered interest in Caldicot. He has also confirmed that Caldicot Town Team will be involved with and taking part in any talks that takes place, as he feels that the redevelopment plans could be a key point in bringing in more national brands.

Urban Design Project

After taking a break from this project, due to other commitments, the Town Team have scheduled a meeting for 1pm today to look at moving the project forward, Members were invited to attend. Town Team will be focusing on the two phases the public most wanted to see, which also fits with their surveys carried out in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Landlords have been invited to the meeting, however are unable to attend. Town Team will reschedule a following meeting to take place during August/very early September. Work will continue in the background during this time.

Clean Up

The clean-up of the town has already commenced, all weeds have been removed. Town Team are talking with landlords about implementing new schemes to deal with pigeon roosting and we have recently received quotations from Gumdrops Bins to run a trial on chewing gum litter in the town. Recently Town Team have sent letters to all businesses that have external pillars, but not canopies, to gain interest and install hanging baskets throughout the town, which will be kept planted through Caldicot Community Farm (Fat Pigeon Farm) and maintained by businesses.

Events - 999 Day

Sunday 10th July saw the Town Team organise the first 999 day in Caldicot Castle, it was a free event, which saw Gwent police, South Wales fire and rescue, Blood Bikes, Welsh Ambulance Service and others take part in. The event saw approx. 3,500 attendees throughout the day, much more than anticipated. The Town Team are pleased to have already booked in next year's event which will take part on the 9th July 2017.

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Events - Family Fun Day

On Friday August 5th, the Town Team will be holding a Family Fun day in the town centre, there will be some unique entertainment, which includes the return of the land train, donkey rides and even a water dunk tank. Aaron Weeks gave flyers to Members, which he asked to distribute to groups/members. Town Team have requested and approved a car park closure for the day of the 5th August, parking will be available in the Woodstock way car park, as well as Asda and Waitrose.

7. Area Grants

The remaining grant money (£965) from last year was allocated to Bethany Church as agreed in the Severnside Area Committee Meeting June 2016.

The Head of Community Led Delivery informed the Committee that prior to the next round of grants she will be finalising details and once done intends to take the information to the Democratic Services Committee. The intention is for the forms to be available in September/October 2016.

Members commented that smaller groups without retail potential should get priority and that the grant allocation should reflect Severnside as a whole.

8. Whole Place Update

We received an update from the Whole Place Officer regarding the various groups the Whole Place team had recently supported including Severnside Trust, Dell Park, colleagues in the Hubs and the policy team who recently created the Made Open website. We were also told about preparatory work taking place to support refugees soon moving to the area.

We were told that the recent cluster meeting had proved positive with decisions being made soon. It was felt that everyone involved were keen to improve communication and had a common shared vision, with the project considered to be a long term piece of work.

A Member raised concerns that there was a wider issue, in regard to the Precept, with 35% being drawn from Council Tax. The Member stressed the importance of engaging with the community at this point to ensure there is sufficient dialogue taking place so that residents have the chance to understand where their money is going and voice their priorities as public service planning is vital.

The Head of Community advised the committee that Town Team need to access Section 106 monies to implement their business plan with will be taken to full Council to be approved and asked if the Severnside Area Committee would be willing to scrutinise the spending. Members of the committee welcomed this.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 19th October 2016 at 10am - Venue T.B.C.

Members commented that they would like to see more members of the public at the meeting and various ideas were mentioned to raise the profile of the meeting. The venue of the meeting will be decided closer to the time of the meeting.

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The meeting ended at 11.30 am