

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Monday 13 May 2019 at 7.00pm
at Shirenewton Recreation Hall.

Present:

Councillors:

Mr P Butterworth, Mr I Martin, Mr K Morton, Mrs B Price,
Mrs J Smith-Haddon, Mrs J McKenna,

Also in attendance:

Mrs H Counsell (Clerk to the Council)

The Council reluctantly accepted the resignation of Councillor Ben Allen, the Chair of the Council. He was sent thanks for his commitment to both the Council and the community and members wished him well for the future. Clerk to notify Democratic Services, Mon CC.

2. Apologies for absence: B Allen, Cllr L Brown.

3. Outgoing Chair's Report – 2018/19

As I end this year's term as Chair for Shirenewton Community Council I give a brief report of community council activity for the year 2018/19. It has been a privilege and pleasure to represent the Council and our community and I wish to record my considerable gratitude to the team of community councilors who give their time, expertise and community knowledge to the benefit of residents. It would be invidious to single out individuals as each make their unique contribution to the community.

Community Survey

As I write this report the Community Survey has been completed and will be hand delivered or posted to every household in the near future. The Councillors opinion is that the views of the Community will prove invaluable in assisting us in setting our budget and targeting the limited funds we have toward those areas that mean the most to the Community which we serve. To that end I would request that time be given to completing the survey and returning them so that we have an accurate idea of your wishes.

Planning

Although there are fewer planning applications this year there remain some that are more contentious than others. It is never easy to balance the housing needs of a community with the preservation of the rural area in which we live. We always welcome the views on both sides although we must ultimately base our response on the information we have before us in the light of material planning considerations. I feel I should also state that ours are recommendations only. The ultimate decision is made by Monmouthshire County Council and not by our Community Council although ours is the first opportunity for interested parties to air their views.

Playgrounds & Public Spaces

With a pot of money available we are continuing to invest in new playground equipment, refurbishing and replacing benches, planters and replacing fencing around community property. The Quakers' burial ground has received some much needed attention in the last year with the walls being returned to a very presentable condition from their previously very dilapidated state. These are in addition to the on-going responsibilities of grass cutting and the emptying of bins etc.

Conclusion

Going forward I believe it is vital that we continue to engage with individuals living within our boundaries and to pursue recruiting new Councillors living within areas for which we currently do not have representation. I believe that the efforts of the Community council have had a positive impact on the local community and that

further opportunities will arise through successful filling of existing vacancies. Most particularly, I do extend my heartfelt thanks to our efficient and diligent Community Council Clerk, Hilary for her assistance, guidance and unfailing support to me during this year.

Minute 3809 - Election of Chair for 2019/2020

The Clerk requested nominations for the post of Chair - Councillor P Butterworth was nominated by Cllr Smith-Haddon, seconded by Cllr B Price and unanimously elected as Chair for the forthcoming year. He thanked Councillors for their confidence in him and accepted the proposal. Cllr Butterworth duly signed the Chair's Declaration of Office and took the chair.

Minute 3810 - Election of Vice Chair for 2019/2020

Cllr Jane Smith-Haddon was nominated as Vice Chair by Cllr Bryn Price, seconded by Cllr Jayne McKenna, and unanimously elected.

Council noted that there are currently two vacancies on the Council, both in the Shirenewton ward. One for a co-opted member and one to be newly advertised by Mon CC. Council agreed to continue to advertise the posts

Minute 3811: Matters arising from the minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting.

The minutes had been agreed as a true record at the meeting held on 6th June 2018, there were no matters arising and the minutes were duly signed by the Chair.

Minute 3812 - Appointment of Representatives for 2019/2020

One Voice Wales Area Meetings (2) – Cllr J McKenna (one vacancy)

Shirenewton Recreation Association (2) – Cllr B Price (one vacancy)

Planning applications – Cllrs I Martin, K Morton and P Butterworth, plus a ward Councillor.

Mon CC Cluster Meetings (2) – Cllr I Martin (one vacancy)

CADW joint meetings (2) – Cllrs K Morton and B Price

Lower Wye Area Committee (2) - Cllrs I Martin and J McKenna

Footpaths Officer (1) - Cllr K Morton

Minute 3813 - To approve the annual Financial Investment Strategy as contained in Financial Regulations (Accounting and Audit).

Council noted the requirement to record an annual financial investment strategy. Having made an assessment of sums available to invest, the Clerk recommended that no long term investments should be made in view of the relatively small amount of money that the Community Council holds. The guidance states that priority should be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. Taking this into consideration, the Clerk proposed that the current arrangement of banking with the majority of funds in an account attracting interest and a cheque account with a minimum balance be continued.

Minute 3814 - To approve the Annual Governance Statement.

We acknowledge as members of the Council our responsibility for ensuring that there are effective accounting records, management of risk and systems of internal control. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place and reviewed according to current guidelines. Financial records and Council procedures are subject to both internal and external audit annually, with the external audit report being made available to the public via the Council website, www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk. We believe the insurance cover to be adequate and sufficient. We confirm as accurate, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the Council's accounting statement for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Minute 3815 - To receive the quarterly financial report (Jan – March 2019), adopt the Statement of Accounts for 2018/2019, receive the Internal Audit Report and approve the Annual Return to external auditors.

Council reviewed and approved the quarterly budget report and noted that the reserves had reduced during the year as recommended by the Internal Auditor in 2018. Cllr J Smith-Haddon, being neither Chair nor a bank signatory, verified and signed the quarterly budget report, relevant bank statements and the detailed list of payments made at each meeting during the quarter. The Clerk confirmed that the current bank mandate was in the process of being updated to contain five signatories.

Council resolved to adopt the Statement of Accounts for 2018/2019 as presented by the Clerk.

The Internal Audit Report for 2018/19 was received and approved, the report contained no recommendations for action in 2019/20. Council agreed to continue with the services of Mr P Brabon ACIB, of 'Newton Lodge', Shirenewton as Internal Auditor.

Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return of external auditors were approved and the form countersigned by the Chair.

Council noted that no external audit action plan had been required for the 2017/18 audit.

Minute 3816: To review payments made by Standing Order.

Council resolved to continue with the current payments made by Standing Order, also to continue with the two bank accounts currently held at HSBC Ltd, Chepstow Branch.

Minute 3817: To adopt the recently reviewed Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Council resolved to adopt the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as reviewed in April 2019.

Minute 3819: To approve the Asset Register

Council approved and resolved to adopt the Asset Register as reviewed in April 2019.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40 pm.