

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Thursday 6th August 2020 at 7.00 pm
at the recreation field, Shirenewton

Present:

Councillors: Mr P Butterworth (Chair), Mr I Martin, Dr J Grose, and following agenda item (2) Councillors K Dunn, E Chapman and E Wixcey.

Also in attendance:

Mrs H Counsell (Clerk to the Council)

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, particularly three applicants for co-option into the Shirenewton ward and thanked all present for their attendance.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Councillors L Brown and J McKenna.

2. To ratify the appointment of four co-opted Councillors, also the resignation of Cllr McKenna from the Mynyddbach ward and her co-option to the Earlswood ward, and the advertisement of the vacancy thus created in the Mynyddbach ward.

One applicant for co-option to the Earlswood ward had withdrawn and following interviews held on Tuesday 14th July 2020, Councillors had ratified the co-option of three new Councillors for the Shirenewton ward prior to this meeting. Cllrs Dunn, Chapman and Wixcey all handed signed Declarations of Acceptance of Office, Declarations of Interest and Councillor Privacy Notices to the Clerk.

Council further received the resignation of Cllr McKenna from the Mynyddbach ward and approved her appointment to the current co-opted vacancy in the Earlswood ward, thus creating a vacancy in to be advertised in the Mynyddbach ward, as well as a further co-opted vacancy in the Earlswood ward. Clerk to inform Democratic Services, Mon CC.

3. Issues raised by members of the public

- highways issues in the community – Clerk had contacted Head of Highways on 13.7.20 with no response, P Keeble out of office until 10.8.20, Clerk to pursue.

- responses to information on the LDP candidate sites – consultation has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will revisit in September/October once consultation period recommences.

4. To receive the monthly police report.

Crime - 29/07 – Burglary in the Shirenewton area – shed break.

Public Safety – A few calls from people being scammed over the phone across South Monmouthshire. The police cannot stress enough the importance of not giving personal information over the phone. If you have any concerns regarding your bank account being hacked, or money supposedly being removed from your account. Hang up the call and ring your bank directly for advice. Never given information to someone who rings you out of the blue. For more advice please contact our cyber Team at cybercrimeunit@gwent.pnn.police.uk or check the Action Fraud website at www.actionfraud.police.uk or ring them on 0300 123 2040 if you think you have been scammed.

Operations – The police continued with high visibly patrols in the Wentwood area every weekend for off road bikes. If you see any please get any Index Numbers and descriptions, if they are arriving in vans/trailers or just coming from local areas.

Anti-Social Behaviour

A lot of the Anti-social Behaviour calls have been Covid-19 related and the police were warning, educating and issuing fixed penalties where appropriate, as well as off road bikes in the Wentwood Area.

5. Minute 3982 - To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in listed business.

There was none.

6. Minute 3983 - To confirm and sign minutes of the virtual meeting held on 6 July 2020.

These minutes were confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

7. Minute 3984 - To consider planning matters.

1. DM/2020/00712 Field 2140, Weyloed Lane, Mynyddbach

Enlarge field entrance.

Council noted that Weyloed Lane is a residential road in Mynyddbach which exits onto the main B4235 just above and on the opposite side of the road from the Carpenters Arms. The B road has a series of bends and is subject to a 40 mph speed limit, it is marked with double white lines and the road is used by all manner of traffic including bicycles and motorcycles. Visibility for vehicles pulling out of Weyloed Lane is already compromised.

The application site is the banked field adjacent to Weyloed Lane and the main road. The applicant seeks consent to replace a pre-existing 2m (2.5m?) farm gate close to the road edge with a 3.6m gate set back 10m from the road with a hard standing opening to 5m at the roadside intended to allow a vehicle and trailer to pull off the road, and to include a further area of hard standing to allow the vehicle to turn around on site so as to exit forwards. Little existing use has been made of the field in recent times and the development has already commenced.

Footpath 17 crosses the main road at that point and runs through the field. The position of the footpath is at variance with the applicant's plan and we await clarification from MCC of the official route. The applicant will need a footpath diversion order if the correct route is obstructed by the development, and the application will need to be advertised locally.

Six neighbours have opposed the application principally on the grounds that road safety is compromised. One neighbour further comments that the entrance to the field currently functions with 2.5 metre farm gate, that it is no different to any other field entrance in size terms, that to move a little further back would cause no issue but it would seem that to request a 5m gate only implies another function is required for the location, that the applicant managed to get an extremely large caterpillar digger in to the area and commence a large area of development and has moved rocks and broken areas of trees which have preservation orders on them.

Councillors recognised that the proposal to allow vehicles to pull off the road and rejoin in a forward facing direction may not be a sufficient highway safety consideration, to outweigh the potential for an increase in vehicle movements. There is further lack of clarity on the footpath route and trees on the site safeguarded by preservation orders.

The recommendation is for refusal on the grounds that :

1. the application does not address the road safety concerns of the neighbours , therefore

a Highways report should be sought.

2. the official route of the footpath has not yet been fully defined but on any view the route is crossed by the proposed works and there are no proposals as to how the footpath is to be accommodated. The observations of the Footpaths Officer should be sought

3. the applicant has failed to show that there are no relevant tree preservation orders.

4. the hedgerows that were removed for construction of the access have not been restored. The observations of the Tree Officer should be sought on points 3 & 4.

(Voting: Refusal 6 - unanimous).

2. DM/2020/00881 Bushes Farm, Chapel Road, Earlswood

Modification or Removal of Condition - Removal of condition 1 from planning consent 2314 (Date of Decision: 01/09/1975):- Occupation of the proposed bungalow shall be limited to a person employed or last employed wholly or mainly locally in agriculture as defined in Section 290(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, or a dependent of such person residing with him.

Council noted that the site consists of a dilapidated 3 bed bungalow (approx 100sqm) left unoccupied for some 11 years. The application asserts that the property has been on the market for over a year and interest has come from buyers who in the main cannot satisfy the agricultural occupation condition (AOC) and the two who could, did not make an offer. The applicant has not been able to secure a loan to renovate the bungalow because of the lack of a market for AOC properties.

There are a number of planning policies and requirements to be satisfied for MCC to discharge the AOC. There is now an enlarged definition of agriculture to include rural enterprise but no buyers have come forward who would satisfy this.

The vast majority of the land around the bungalow is designated as a site of importance for nature conservation (SINC), identified as such due to its biodiversity value and rare neutral and marshy grassland habitats. This means the land cannot be used for crops and only very limited grazing so any AOC occupier would have to work elsewhere in the locality.

Affordable housing is an alternative but MCC has to consider AOC. The applicant states that local (ie across Monmouthshire) established social housing landlords were approached but none have shown interest largely because of the unsuitability of the property to conversion to affordable housing standards and the high cost of renovation.

Councillors were aware that the 1975 planning consent with the AOC was an exception to MCC's policy not to permit residential building in the countryside because the need for an agricultural worker outweighed the rural impact. Given that the applicant has demonstrated there is no agricultural or rural enterprise need, the logic is that the bungalow should be removed and the land restored to its original state, and therefore be compliant with the SINC.

There are a couple of barns next door, also owned by the applicant, which have consent for conversion to a residence. This council objected to that application as the proposal was bigger than the original footprint; the barn is in an isolated position with poor access; the path to it would be inadequate and any upgrade may have privacy issues with the neighbouring properties (ie the bungalow the subject of this application and the old farmhouse which also has consent for refurbishment and enlargement). Councillors were further concerned at the loss of habitat for bats and barn owls and, as much vegetation would need to be removed, the potential loss of local flora and fauna. Another important concern was the detrimental impact on local infrastructure that every additional dwelling brings.

The recommendation was for refusal for the following reasons :

- The 1975 planning consent was an exception to policy to permit accommodation for an

agricultural worker and the applicant has shown there is no need for such accommodation nor for a rural enterprise and there is no viable affordable housing.

- The two adjoining sites already have residential planning consent and allowing and additional dwelling would create overdevelopment to Bushes Farm.

- In the event that MCC removes the AOC, it should be replaced with a requirement that occupation be restricted to inhabitants with a strong local connection.

Voting: Refusal 6 (unanimous).

8. Minute 3985 – Finance

To approve the following payments:

Expenditure (by Standing Order)

Clerk's salary/allowances -	July 2020	£659.02
Clerk's Pension (Council & Clerk's contribution) -	July 2020	£236.95
(Includes £58.33 towards £700 pa LGPS pension deficit)		

Payments

Payee	Reason for expenditure	Amount £	Vat £	Total	Cheque No.
Shirenewton church PCC	Annual grant	750.00		750.00	101576
Shirenewton Recreation Assoc.	“ “	400.00		400.00	101577
Shirenewton Local History Society	“ “	100.00		100.00	101578
Earlswood Valley/ Hope chapels	“ “	120.00		120.00	101579
St Peters church, Newchurch	“ “	200.00		200.00	101580
Shirenewton Playgroup	“ “	300.00		300.00	101582
Mon County CAB	“ “	100.00		100.00	101581
Shirenewton Toddlers	“ “	95.00		95.00	101583
ShaMBLE Illumination Project	“ “	130.00		130.00	101584
Mrs H Counsell	Expenses – July 2020	55.25		55.25	101585
Mon CC Inv. 70165561	Purchase of 5000 dog waste bags	31.85	6.37	38.22	101586
Caldicot Joinery	Repair of squeeze belly gates at war memorial	328.00	65.60	393.60	101587
Merlin Waste Invoice 4194	Bin emptying - June	39.00	0	39.00	101588

Council approved all payments as listed.

Chair signed the updated bank mandate to include Cllr McKenna on the list of signatories.

9. Minute 3986 - To receive information from the Clerk on online banking.

Clerk unable to arrange a meeting with Business Banking staff at HSBC, Chepstow as none operate from there. Unable to get through on dedicated phone line, waiting up to 30 minutes at a time with no response. Will leave until end of year when current pandemic eases further.

10. Minute 3987 – To consider a response to the Boundary Commission consultation regarding electoral arrangements for Monmouthshire (closing date 28.9.20).

The Chair explained the background of this consultation and it was agreed to check for further information from Cllr Brown. As there was minimal change to the Shirenewton community boundary, the initial feeling was that no response was required.

11. Minute 3988 – Reports from the County Councillor and the Clerk

County Councillor Louise Brown advised the following:

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Garden Waste Collection

A booking system for the Household Refuse Sites is still in place in order to manage the requirement for social distancing but the requirement for this to be just those with hazardous waste has been removed: Household Waste Recycling Information on booking a slot:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/household-waste-recycling-centres/>

Monmouthshire County Council Revised Local Development Plan

The consultation on the preferred strategy has been postponed due to Covid 19, it is expected that a report will go to the County Council in September 2020 with a new delivery timetable to be agreed with the Welsh Government: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-current-consultations/>

County Council

The County Council on the 16 July 2020, covered various reports including an update on the Climate Emergency, the section 151 financial report and the Electoral Review consultation (the boundaries for County Councillor ward areas). The report can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MIId=4220>

Cabinet

Cabinet on the 29 July 2020, considered financial reports on the problems of the financial impact of Covid 19 and also on a digital plan to improve Broadband infrastructure: The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MIId=4206>

Articles by Monmouthshire County Council

Digital Infrastructure improvement steps:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2020/07/councillors-pleased-to-acknowledge-significant-steps-forward-in-improving-digital-connectivity/>

Council concerns about underfunded pay award for teachers:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2020/07/council-cabinet-voices-concerns-over-unfunded-pay-award-for-teachers/>

Active Travel Consultation

MCC is currently consulting about active travel which is about improving walking and cycling routes. Unfortunately, the law in this area specifies densely populated areas such as towns and cities. So would apply to towns such as Chepstow and Caldicot.

Link from MCC - <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2020/07/active-travel-consultation/>

Link on Explanatory notes for the Active Travel Law in Wales:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/7/notes/contents>

Clerk's Report:

Hill View Cottage, Shirenewton –Enforcement case open – E19/130. Non Material Amendment application for velux roof lights and slated canopies received 18.10.19. Community Council approved canopies but recommended refusal of velux rooflights at November 2019 meeting. Application refused by Mon CC.

Damaged planter at Blethyn Close - Mon CC agreed to remove and replace the damaged concrete planter at their own cost as it is on their land – reminder sent 28.5.19 and 25.7.19 and 23.9.19 and 25.10.19 – J Wassal, Mon CC to put on works schedule w/c 27.1.2020. Council agreed to ask residents if they would rather have a grit bin instead. Clerk to cost one.

Play area – Play area opened by Mon CC on 23.7.20 with COVID-19 signage. Clerk was given authority to arrange purchase/installation of equipment up to £5,400 from this year's budget. Clerk to arrange meeting with J Wassal, Mon CC to undertake annual inspection, also to consider replacement equipment and installation costs.

Installation of steps alongside The Spout – work completed.

Asset maintenance – work still ongoing on the repair of the squeeze belly gates at the war memorial, should be completed during August. Also further small set of railings to be installed at the Funeral Path to fill a gap in the railings.

Wooden planter at war memorial is rotten, purchase of replacement planter authorised at a maximum cost of £50 – to be made locally.

Mobile Post Office – mobile service no longer running in current COVID-19 lockdown.

Footpath 30 – Earlswood Road to Newton Manor – poor condition of top part of path reported to Mon CC Footpaths Officer on 16.3.20. Report No: 09961. Footpaths Officer agreed and will arrange repair. Checked 23.6.20 - not taken place as yet, reminded 23.7.20.

Replacement hedge at Mynders Farm – response from WG on 9.6.20, the work has been give an extension to September 2020 because of the current pandemic.

Wall at Tredegar Arms Car Park – concern expressed from local resident at the dangerous condition of the wall, the Community Council has a Land Registry map which proves ownership and has written to the TA twice drawing their attention to its need for repair, also to the owners, the EI Group plc at Solihull, with no response. Council agreed that the issue be passed on to the Highways Dept at Mon CC for progression.

12. Minute 3990 - Items of local concern –

- litter bin at Tan House overflowing,
- request for road sweeper through Shirenewton,
- rusted support holding road sign at Blacksmiths Lane,
- rusted support holding road sign at war memorial,
- rusted support holding 'Shirenewton' sign at Mounton Court,
- damaged grit bin at Mounton Court. Clerk to report all,
- ash die back affecting trees along Crick road – Clerk to check with Tree Officer at Mon CC.

13. Minute 3991 - To receive correspondence as per attached schedule.

Council noted receipt of the following correspondence:

Covid 19 arrangements during lockdown - Various information and guidelines on holding remote meetings, governance and the opening of play areas and community halls during the coronavirus outbreak from the Welsh Government and One Voice Wales.

27.7.20 - **Information from GAVO on a Comic Relief Emergency Fund** to provide direct

financial support to those local organisations who are providing vital help to those most affected by Covid 19. The maximum amount an organisation can apply for is £2,500. (Copy also forwarded to the MESH group).

Welsh Government Consultations

- Coal policy in Wales
- Enabling changes to Welsh tax legislation
- Managing the transition from Children's to Adults healthcare services
- Reducing single use plastic in Wales

14. Minute 3992 – The next meeting will be held on **Monday 7th September at 7.00pm** at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton if the lockdown is lifted and will start with the Annual Meeting, if not, the meeting will be by Councillors remote attendance.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 pm.