

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the remote Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th August 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors: Mr P Butterworth (Chair), Mrs L Brown, Mr K Dunn, Mr A Williamson, Mrs H Adams.

Also in attendance:

Mrs H Counsell (Clerk to the Council)

The Chair welcomed all to the virtual meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

Cllrs I Martin and J McKenna also Cllr E Nigogosian (Leave of Absence). Council reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mrs E Chapman. Clerk to ask Democratic Services to advertise the vacancy thus created in the Shirenewton ward. It was noted that a replacement Footpaths Officer would need to be appointed.

2. To receive the monthly police report.

None received.

3. Minute 4165 - To confirm the minutes of the virtual meeting held on the 5th July 2021 as a true record.

Subject to one minor amendment, the minutes were confirmed as a true record.

4. Minute 4166 - To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in listed business.

Cty Cllr L Brown - Agenda Item 6, Planning Matters - member of Mon CC's Planning Committee. Agenda Item 7.2, Finance - Earlswood Valley/Hope Chapels (Occasional Minister).

Cllr J McKenna - Although unable to attend the meeting, Councillor McKenna declared by email her personal and pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6.1 - Bushes Farm, Earlswood, being related to the applicant, co-owner of the property and Director of Bushes Farm Ltd. Councillor McKenna willingly declared her interest and has either not attended, or been invited later to Council meetings when business relating to this property has been discussed.

It was agreed to update all Councillors Declarations of Interest and post them on the website.

5. Minute 4167 - Issues raised by members of the public

- status of C67.11 (Ref:10529978 Green Lane), and recording of other footpaths in the community. Mon CC Footpaths Officer confirmed the status as a public highway and was pursuing changing the current incorrect signage with the Highways Dept.

- cutting of grass at Mynyddbach village green. Clerk reported this had been done.

- recycling collection issues – taken up by a resident with Mon CC Environmental Health Dept.

- request from resident for information on Declarations of Interest. To be treated as a Freedom of Information request – see Minute 4166 above.

6. Minute 4168 - To consider planning matters.

6.1) To note Planning Inspectorate appeal decision APP/E6840/A/21/3274383, Bushes Farm, Earlswood.

Council noted that the Planning Inspectorate had dismissed the appeal.

6.2) DM/2021/01154 Hillside House, Usk Road, Earlswood

Relocation of existing hedge to improve site access visibility and hard surface to existing track.

Council noted that currently, visibility is restricted when looking north-west from the access, owing to the position of the existing hedge and slight bend in the road and vehicles must edge out over the edge of the road (speed limit 60 mph) to gain sufficient visibility. The proposal increases visibility from 60 m to 90 m along the road to the south and from 20m to 60m north. A public footpath runs from the access along the track and uphill past Ridge House Stables. There is no corresponding footpath on the other side of the road so there is no necessity for pedestrians to cross the road at this point.

The access track is currently two hard surface strips with grass in between and the new surface will emulate the existing concrete finish. The changes will not obstruct the footpath.

The application statement contains comprehensive detail on the timing, preservation and re-establishment of the hedge and the profuse varieties of flora it contains.

Recommendation: No objection, subject to conditions for hedge re-establishment and monitoring. Voting: 4 for (Unanimous).

6.3) DM/2021/01199 Brookacre, Earlswood

Demolition of conservatory & construction of rear single storey extension, raise roof over hall, garage conversion & extension & change of use to class C3; dwelling house.

Councillors were aware that Brookacre currently comprises a two storey building looking like a house with an annexe and double garage.

The proposal is to replace the conservatory with a proper lounge some 8.5x6m. The single storey annex sits a fraction below the first floor of the main building and access is upstairs from the hall with no direct access from the first floor of the main building. As no first floor plan is supplied it is speculation whether it is proposed to build an access above the hall. The garage is to be converted to a cinema room / garden studio and there will be an additional single storey building some 6x7m providing a further bedroom and ensuite (for the manager?). This would involve a change of use of the garage to C3 which is as use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by (a) a single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household or (b) not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided.

The site is at the foot of the forest, down the hill from West End and is well screened from the road. The new build will be rendered and tiled to match the existing buildings.

Recommendation: No objection, however Council recommended conditions on noise reduction for the converted garage and exterior lighting restrictions. Voting: 4 for (Unanimous).

6.4) Notice of Public Path Diversion Order No's 34 (Part) and 30 (Part), Shirenewton.

The Chair explained the background and reasons for the diversion, also that the diverted path needs to meet with the steps onto the recreation field. The applicant is to bear all costs.

The following response was made to Mon CC -

Council noted that the line of the steps onto the recreation field on the definitive map is not the same as the present location of the steps, it was suggested by MCC that the steps, when they were installed, were installed in the wrong location. That anomaly should be resolved

when the new steps are installed. Otherwise the Council had no objection. (Voting: 4 for – unanimous).

7. Minute 4169 Finance –

7.1 – Council had received a letter of explanation for the increase in costs from Merlin Waste the specialist dog waste bin emptying service, and approved the additional costs from April 2021 for the emptying of 7 bins, rather than 5. Mon CC had also advised of a meeting to be being arranged for September for all Town and Community Councils to discuss the current provision and any improvements required.

Council further approved the replacement of uncashed cheque 101637 issued in June 2021 for £30 to Planning Aid Wales. Clerk to advise the bank to stop the original cheque.

7.2 - to approve a list of expenditure

Expenditure (by Standing Order)

Clerk's salary/allowances -	July 2021	£678.40
Clerk's Pension (Council & Clerk's contribution) -	July 2021	£250.99
(Includes £58.33 towards £700 pa LGPS pension deficit)		

Payments

Payee	Reason for expenditure	Amount £	Vat £	Total	Cheque No.
Caerwent Historic Trust	Grant application	£250		£250	101647
Shirenewton PCC	Grant applications x 2	£780		£780	101648
Shirenewton Recreation Assoc'n	Grant application	£300		£300	101649
Shirenewton Local History Society	Grant application	£250		£250	101650
Earlswood Hall	Grant application	£100		£100	101651
Earlswood Valley/ Hope Chapels	Grant application	£120		£120	101652
Mon County CAB	Grant application	£100		£100	101653
Shirenewton WI	Grant application	£100		£100	101654
Mrs H Counsell	Expenses – July 2021	28.60		28.60	101655
Merlin Waste Invoice No: 4630	Bin emptying – July (price increase)	67.08		67.08	101656
Mr J Hughes Invoice No: 031	Repairs to play area gate/ Earlswood noticeboard	40.00		40.00	101657
Planning Aid Wales	Replacement cheque for 101637, not received.	30.00		30.00	101658
Shirenewton Local History Society	Annual subscription 2021/22	25.00		25.00	101659

Council resolved to approve all payments as listed.

7.3 - quarterly financial report (April – June 2021) – the report was received and approved. Being neither Chair nor a bank signatory, Cllr K Dunn will sign the report, bank statements and all relevant paperwork relating to the report.

Late item: Grant application from St Peters Church, Newchurch - Councillors considered the request and agreed to check on whether the location of the church is within the boundary.

8. Minute 4170 – Shirenewton play area – to discuss further updating of play equipment.

Following a site visit on 2 July 2021, information on costs had been received from J Wassall at Mon CC. Council resolved to install a bank of three swings (Kompan KSW92011 £3,590) but request one cradle seat instead of two standard seats and rotate the installation. This would entail the removal of the current cradle swings and relocation of the climbing frame by one metre to allow for fall distance. Removal and installation costs to amount to approximately £2,030. Costs amounting to between £5,600 - £6,000. (Voting: 5 for – unanimous). This will use up the bulk of the 2021/22 budget for the upgrade of the play area.

Council agreed to consult with the school on items of equipment for the far end of the play area. Cllr Adams advised that the school had undertaken a recent project on playgrounds and the facilities they would like to see in the community. Cllr K Dunn (school governor) to follow this up in September.

9. Minute 4171 – To discuss maintenance of war memorial.

During the recent cleaning of the war memorial, a crack in the top section had come to light, which may have been caused and repaired when the top fell off in the 1970's. It was agreed that a specialist company should be asked to inspect the condition of the memorial. Clerk to contact Damsells of Bream, Lydney, Glos.

10. Minute 4172 - To discuss walking and recording community footpaths.

No volunteers came forward from members to become the Footpaths Officer. Several felt they had not lived in the area long enough to have the local knowledge required. Council was aware that any unrecorded footpaths in the community need to be registered by 2026 or could be lost forever. There needs to be a lead contact in place. An offer of help had been received from a resident at Clearview. The definitive footpaths map is on the Mon CC website access@monmouthshire.gov.uk Clerk to seek out further local volunteers.

Information received from Mon CC Countryside Access Manager of a Paths to Wellbeing Project organised by Ramblers Cymru to promote access to green spaces, with activities such as tree planting, wildflower sowing and wildlife activity days. 18 communities across Wales to be selected for development, including free training for volunteers.

11. Minute 4173 - Update on the emptying of dog waste bins.

See minute 4169 - 1.1 above.

12. Minute 4174 - Management and maintenance of rural bus shelters.

Questionnaire received from Mon CC on rural bus shelters in the county – Clerk to respond.

13. Minute 4175 - Update on Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Cllr Williamson reported that he had met with the newly appointed Local Places for Nature Officer at One Voice Wales, who provided some useful information and may be able to help source funding for suggestions for the hard track project, such as a water fountain, bog garden, pond, orchard. Cllr Williamson to re-issue the draft LBAP for gaps to be filled by Councillors in order to complete the Plan.

14. Minute 4176 - Update on hard path project.

Estimation of costs received from GroundRich via Mike Moran of Mon CC, as follows –

Installation of hard path with raised path in wet corner - £34,316. Costs increase to £53,872 if a boardwalk is installed in the wet corner.

Council now needs to work on the design features to be included in the project. It was agreed to hold an informal meeting in September (date to be agreed by the Chair and including a representative from the Recreation Association) to discuss options and costings, before putting the project before residents.

15. Minute 4177 - To receive reports from County Councillor and Clerk.

County Councillor Brown advised:

RLDP- Revised Local Development Plan

As an update on the July 2021 County Councillor report in the Shirenewton community council minutes.

The RLDP consultation on the preferred strategy ends on the **31st of August 2021.**

The overall aim of the [Preferred Strategy](#) is to:

- Identify key issues, challenges and opportunities for the County
- Develop a Vision and set of Objectives for the RLDP that respond to the key issues, challenges and opportunities
- Set out the preferred level of growth (housing and employment) and broad spatial distribution of this growth
- Set out the Strategic Policies that will deliver/implement the Strategy.

In order to assist in the completion of a response, the MCC Planning policy have linked the paragraphs and pages in the questions to the longer preferred strategy document.

The preferred strategy consultation can be found here:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/plan-preparation/preferred-strategy/>

The relevant pages and paragraphs with reference to the preferred strategy document to answer the consultation questions can be found here:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/PS-Questions-for-database-consultation.pdf>

The link for the preferred strategy document can be found here.

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/07/Preferred-Strategy-June-2021.pdf>

To respond, you can either register online to complete a response or download the question form to complete and send to planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk. You can answer as many of the questions as you have the time and opportunity to do so.

Adults Select Committee on the 27th of July 2021

The Adults Select Committee considered performance monitoring and the outline of the Chief Officer for Social Services report, the full report going to the County Council meeting in September and can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=4651>

Children and Young People Select Committee on the 26th of July 2021

The committee considered budget financial reports and performance monitoring. There has been an increase in looked after children. The school budgets have generally improved due to Covid grants being obtained but there may still be some underlying structural staffing issues which have been put on hold due to the pandemic and the committee reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=4952>

County Council on the 22 July 2021

The County Council received a report on the Leisure centres with improvements for Abergavenny Leisure Centre and some minor upgrades for Chepstow Leisure Centre. It also included a question from Cllr Edwards on Chepstow School, the reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=4726>

Chepstow School

From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Paul Pavia, Cabinet Member for Education

Could the Cabinet Member for Education inform council of progress with the 21st Century Schools programme, and what steps are being taken to ensure that Chepstow School will be placed in the next phase?

Answer:

Can I thank Cllr Edwards for his question.

In October 2017, the Cabinet then committed to replacing Chepstow School as part of the Band C funding for 21st Century Schools Programme. I can assure him that this new Cabinet is absolutely dedicated to that commitment.

While the initial focus is of course on the development of Abergavenny within the Band B investment stream, we will be undertaking important preparation with Chepstow Comprehensive School to ensure we are all ready to bid for Band C investment when that window opens and that we can react quickly to make that in-principal business case submission.

So, from September, the 21st Century Schools Team will be strengthened with the appointment of a full-time experienced Educationalist, Tim Bird.

Tim was the former Deputy Head at Monmouth Comprehensive School and was a key lead with us in developing the new school there. So, we will really benefit from that experience and expertise. Tim will work with Chepstow School and cluster primary schools to develop the education brief for Band C through stakeholder engagement and workshops. We will ensure that local members are engaged in this work when it begins.

Supplementary:

Whilst acknowledging the need for a replacement school, within the last 3 years the Council has spent in excess of £1m to enhance the current facilities at Chepstow School, this work has included recladding and remodelling works, improving the lighting in the school to make it more energy efficient, as well as a £200k investment into IT facilities and infrastructure.

During this summer holiday, we will be resurfacing the access road into and through the site, decorating classrooms and shared common spaces, as well as continuing the energy efficiency work in the school and the leisure centre in line with the Council's carbon commitment.

I can say to the Member, it is pleasing that the school is already reporting the benefits of energy efficiency work undertaken to date, particularly in reducing the energy costs of lighting. So, we are already realising the positive rewards of this investment.

Examples, of the energy efficiency works include installation of energy efficient lights, replacement boiler, installation of solar car port and EV charging points.

Clerk's Report

Hill View Cottage, Shirenewton (DM/2019/01614) – Enforcement case E19/130.

Amended planning application received for velux roof lights (rear to remain, front to be removed). Council had no objection to the proposal.

Mobile Post Office – mobile service now running following lockdown. Contacted the Manager at Caldicot PO and advised that the whole of the mobile service is being re-assessed. Will make contact when results are available. No news on 30.6.21. Devauden is still receiving the mobile service.

Footpath 320/30 – Earlswood Road to School – Council members met with Mon CC on 7.6.21 to look at footpath repairs and replaced boardwalks. Councillors suggested including a kickboard along both new boardwalks to make them safer for pedestrians. Upgrade of the pedestrian entrance to the Recreation field will be included in the repairs, also 'Footpath' signage at Earlswood Road end and replacement fencing and gate at the Tan House Court end of the path. All to take place in this financial year, probably late summer.

Bus shelter West End – resident informed Clerk that high winds had damaged the roof pine end and tiles. Mon CC inspected on 4.6.21 - advised on 1.7.21 there was a swallows nest in the shelter, work will be completed when the young have flown.

Damage at play area – the floor of the play house had been wilfully damaged with a gouge of woodwork dug out of it. (Not enough for a child to put its foot through). Reported to Mon CC with request to replace the flooring asap, which has been completed.

Reports to My Monmouthshire

8404131 - Chapel Road, Earlswood – potholes and erosion of road edges – done, requested a revisit 23.4.21.

8403404 – Argoed Road, Earlswood, potholes and erosion of road surface – done, requested a revisit 23.4.21.

8722853 – Under road drain at 'Montrose' – with supervisor.

9332742 - blocked culvert between Bushes Farm and Cherry Farm, Earlswood – under review. Both above reports taken up with Graham Hyde (Highways Area Supervisor (South)) on 30.6.21, responded that there is a very long list of drainage issues being dealt with asap.

8845210 – damaged Keep Left sign at Shirenewton centre – under review. Taken up with G Kinsella, Mon CC on 30.6.21, who has passed on to Street Lighting Team.

Reported missing finger post footpath sign at Tan House Court on 6.4.21

9925099 – Clearview signage reported 19.5.21

16. Minute 4178 - Items of local concern.

- 20 mph speed restrictions – there was some concern as to when the speed restrictions would come into force as Mon CC was reluctant to give a specific date. C Cllr Brown advised it would possibly be January 2022. The Chair was asked to contact M Hand at Mon CC to have this confirmed.
- Cllr Dunn (representative school governor and Honorary Consul for Japan in Wales) reported some good news - that the school had recently completed a project on Japan and the Olympics. He had judged the posters, awarded prizes and sent the posters to Team GB in Tokyo who had them on display there.

17. Minute 4179 - Correspondence – as circulated list.

Covid 19 arrangements during pandemic - Various information and guidelines during the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown and recent easing of restrictions to Tier Level 1 from the Welsh Government and One Voice Wales.

Monmouthshire County Council –

1. Replacement Local Development Plan

virtual consultation meeting on the Preferred Strategy stage at 6pm on 16th August 2021. Councils encouraged to attend. (Circulated 23.7.21). Chair to attend.

2. Notification of the consultation period on Public Spaces Protection Orders. As many local people, organisations and town and community councils as possible are encouraged to contribute their views. The consultation is live until 26th October.

Forresters Car Club – Notification of the Venta Silurum motor rally at Caerwent Training Area on Sunday 22 August 2021 from 7am – 5pm.

One Voice Wales -

Information on Operation London Bridge, in the event of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth the Second. (Circulated 7.7.21). To avoid copyright issues an electronic copy of a picture of HM to be requested from One Voice Wales for the council website when necessary.

Welsh Government Consultations

- Curriculum for Wales enabling Pathways guidance.

18. Minute 4180 - To agree the date of the next meeting as Monday 6th September at 7.00pm, this will be by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall if possible, or by a remote meeting if government coronavirus restrictions still apply.

Note: Future meetings – Welsh Government has a stipulation that if meetings are held face to face and either a Councillor or resident wishes to attend but is unable to remotely, then that meeting would be declared unlawful. Chair to identify and cost the equipment required to hold hybrid meetings.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.