

Due to guidance in respect of COVID19 the meeting was held remotely.

Present: Cllr. Jenny Carpenter, Cllr Paula Clarke, Cllr Judith Hopkins, Cllr Jo Storey, Cllr. Peter Sutherland and County Cllr. Val Smith.

1. Public Meeting:

Cllr Colin Deakin was present to observe the meeting. No issues had been raised with the clerk by members of the public.

2. Sign the attendance book:

It was not possible to sign the attendance book as the meeting was held remotely.

3. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Clarke and Cllr Helen May-Moebus who were unwell, and Cllr Ann Bowyer who was away from home.

4. Declaration of interest from members:

Cllr Hopkins had previously declared an interest in agenda item 11.b.1 as the contractor carrying out the work is a close family member. Cllr Carpenter declared an interest in agenda item 8b as a close family member is a Director of The Gwent Anglers Limited.

5. Adoption of Minutes:

The Chair proposed the minutes of LCC Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 1st December 2021 be approved, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to sign minutes at earliest opportunity, clerk to publish on website.**

The Chair proposed the minutes of LCC Extraordinary Meeting held on Thursday 16th December 2021 be approved, seconded by Cllr Hopkins, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to sign minutes at earliest opportunity, clerk to publish on website.**

6. Clerk's Report

The clerk's report for January had been circulated prior to the meeting for councillors' consideration.

The following updates were received:

Consultation on Planning Legislation and Policy for Second Homes and Short-term Holiday Lets – having revisited the questionnaire the Chair found councillors' responses did not easily sit within the questions asked. Further work would be needed before the response is submitted.

ACTION: Chair to sign report at earliest opportunity.

7. Discussion with County Councillor

County Councillor Smith reminded councillors that free Carbon Awareness training is available. Cllr Smith felt that the Usk Improvement Plan was not progressing positively, the area is considered a rural area and Cllr Smith believes it should remain a rural area.

Cllr Smith reported concern from residents regarding the A472 and the way Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) interpret the regulations.

Cllr Deakins asked Cllr Smith about additional development sites in the area, Cllr Smith responded that Welsh Government have said no additional development sites are required. Concerns were expressed with regard to the need for affordable housing.

8. Matters arising from recent correspondence / new business.

a. Police report for November

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was duly noted.

b. **Correspondence from The Gwent Anglers Limited**

Further to a meeting between the Chair and Mr Kerby, a Director of The Gwent Angler's Limited, they had written confirming their concerns regarding the public's use of the Usk riverbanks and riverbed, which they own, and their understanding that the Council was planning to erect warning signs in and around Llanbadoc Island. Cllr Storey asked whether any liability would fall on the Council if an accident resulted from swimming in the river. Cllr Smith believed permission would be required to erect signs.

The Chair informed councillors that the letter did not reflect the conversation that took place. The Chair will arrange to meet Mr Kirby again to clarify the situation. **ACTION: Chair to arrange meeting.**

c. **Consultation on The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021: Draft Statutory Guidance for Community and Town Councils**

The Chair suggested that the report on the Annual Plan be used to satisfy one of the requirements. The Training Plan is to be completed by November 2022 and will need to be finalised and agreed by the new Council following the election. There were no further comments from councillors.

d. **Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Consultation on the Dates Upon Which Community Councils Should Receive Precept Payments**

The Chair proposed the Council continue with the current arrangement of three equal instalments at the end of April, August and December, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: Clerk to respond.**

9. **Planning**

a. **MCC Planning Committee Meeting**

Cllr Peter Clarke was not present to report.

b. **Planning Applications**

- i. **Planning Application DM/2021/01966** – the application relating to Holly Cottage, 1 Prospect Cottages, Dowlais Brook to Woodside Trading Estate, Llanbadoc, Usk, was for retrospective consent for demolition and replacement of existing conservatory. Councillors raised no objections to the application. The Chair proposed the application be recommended for approval, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to submit response.**

c. **MCC enforcement cases (confidential)**

Circulated to full council on 2nd December 2021 and duly noted.

10. **Finance**

a. **Approval of the Pink Paper for January and Authorisation of Payments**

The clerk informed councillors Merlin Environmental Services became VAT registered from 1st December 2021, the December invoice was therefore £4.77 more than anticipated. The additional amount was approved for payment by the Chair and clerk in accordance with Financial Regulations.

The clerk reported the HSBC had introduced a maintenance charge of £5 per month on charitable bank accounts.

The January pink paper was circulated prior to the meeting for councillors' consideration. The Chair moved to approve the following payments:

	£'s
Clerks Salary and Allowances - January	462.77
HMRC PAYE - January	63.80
NEST (EE's & ER's Pension Contributions) - January	64.68
Merlin Environmental Services – Inv 4833 January	28.60
HSBC – Bank Charges January	5.00

The payments were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to sign paper at earliest opportunity, Clerk to make payments.**

Balance of current account £9,349.58 balance of deposit account £9,050.03.

b. **Quarterly Report on Bank Reconciliations**

Item deferred to February.

c. **Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report for the 9th Months Ended 31st December 2021**

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. No issues were raised by Councillors. The Chair proposed the report be accepted seconded by Cllr Carpenter, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to publish on website.**

d. **Cyber Security Insurance**

Item deferred to February.

e. **Update in Respect of Zurich Insurance Cover**

Email confirmation had been received from Zurich Insurance that “The council’s public liability insurance will cover any instances of negligence that results in a third party getting injured. This extends to any land and woodlands that the council is responsible for”. Negligence would need to be proved and the claims team have the final say on any claims to be accepted.

f. **Renewal of Monmouthshire County Council Grounds Maintenance Contract 2022/23**

The continuation of contract notice received from MCC referred to Llanbadoc and Gwehelog Fawr Community Council so had not been circulated. The clerk confirmed with Nigel Leaworthy the amount for Llanbadoc Community Council (LCC) for 2022/23 was £580.61 excluding vat. Cllr Carpenter asked whether Glascoed was included, and whether cuts were weekly or fortnightly.

Goetre Fawr Community Council had been notified of the following costs for 2022/23 in respect of Little Mill:

- Grounds Maintenance £426.68 excluding vat.
- Playground Inspection £160.05 excluding vat.
- Extra Street Cleaning £1,250.00 excluding vat.

The clerk was awaiting a revised letter from MCC based on the figures stated above. It was suggested that as MCC required a response before the next meeting, if councillors were happy to accept the figures stated, when the letter was received the Chair confirm the figures were correct and approve the response be submitted. This was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: Chair to confirm approval, clerk to submit response.**

g. **Draft Budget 2022/23**

The clerk/RFO explained the detail of the budget calculation. The following amendments were suggested:

- LCC Grounds Maintenance budget be reduced from £750 to £581, based on actual cost of £566.45 in 2021/22 and cost notified for 2022/23. Cllr Carpenter believed the budget of £750 allowed for hedge cutting costs. A budget of £200 had been provided for this in 2022/23 as agreed by the Finance and Procedures group.
- The Little Mill budgets for Grounds Maintenance, Playground Inspection and Extra Street Cleaning be set in line with the MCC costs advised for 2022/23, £427, £160 and £1,250 respectively.

This would result in a required precept of £27,752.

The Chair asked for an update on an independent playground inspection of the Little Mill playground. RoSPA Playsafety Ltd had been approached for an estimate, awaiting a response. Cllr Deakins shared the report of the latest inspection carried out by the Goetre Fawr clerk. Cllr Hopkins commented on the qualifications needed to conduct an inspection. Cllr Hopkins suggested HAGS as another provider for inspections.

Cllr Hopkins raised the issue of DDA regarding the trampoline being considered for Little Mill. Cllr Deakins stated it was unlikely to go ahead as expenditure required on other issues had taken precedence. Cllr Hopkins queried the figure of £10,000 that had been earmarked for the new trampoline as the reserves showed a figure of only around £4,000 to be transferred for Little Mill.

The Chair expressed concern not all councillors were present to offer their comments on the proposed budget for 2022/23, and about approving the budget before an independent inspection had been carried out on the Little Mill playground. Calling an extraordinary meeting once an inspection report was available was considered, the timescale for this was not viable. Cllr Carpenter proposed the budget be approved and a precept requirement of £27,752 be submitted, seconded by the Chair, all in agreement.

Cllr Carpenter reminded councillors Welsh Government legislation in respect of the boundary review states leases will automatically transfer to the new Council responsible for the area they relate to. However, the Chair and Vice-Chair expressed concerns as to where liability would lie for playground equipment transferred, despite the “views” of One Voice Wales, and requested the caveat that when available, the inspection report be taken into account and any implications be considered. **ACTION: clerk to submit precept requirement.**

11. Reports from Advisory Groups

a. Procedural and Financial – Cllr J Carpenter, Cllr Peter Clarke, Cllr J Hopkins, Cllr J Storey, Cllr P Sutherland.

1. The Chair proposed the group meet to carry out the quarterly review of the Risk Assessment, and that another councillor join the group as Cllr Peter Clarke was unavailable. Cllr Carpenter suggested Cllr Deakins be invited to attend, and that the self-assessment toolkit be considered by the group.

b. Environment – Cllr A Bowyer, Cllr Paula Clarke, Cllr J Hopkins and Cllr P Sutherland.

Having declared an interest in the next agenda item Cllr Hopkins left the meeting at this point.

1. Llanbadoc Island Works

The Chair reported he had met with the contractor on site and confirmed all work quoted for had been satisfactorily completed. The contractor had submitted an invoice which the Chair proposed be approved for payment.

Cllr Carpenter had visited the site and reported that a sign had not been relocated as agreed and other signs detailed in the work specification had not been installed, along with wooden edging along the length of the brook and around the bend. It was agreed to defer payment until resolved. **ACTION: Chair to speak to contractor to resolve the issues raised.**

2. The Chair proposed the litter pick to be held on 30th January 2022 be carried out at Llanbadoc Island at 2pm, seconded by Cllr Paula Clarke, all in agreement. **ACTION: clerk to publish on website.**
3. The Chair conducted a site visit of Llanbadoc Island and reported some branches had come down but no imminent risks identified. Cllr Bowyer had also visited the site and made the same observations. The Chair proposed some smaller debris be cleared as part of the litter pick. Cllr Storey suggested animal habitats be created e.g. log piles.

Cllr Hopkins re-joined the meeting.

Cllr Carpenter enquired as to the response made to a Glascoed resident who contacted the Council following damage to their property by a tree adjacent to their property, believed to be on Council owned land. Cllr Hopkins has a copy of a plan which shows the tree is not on Council land and offered to visit the resident to share the information. Cllr Smith confirmed footpaths are MCC responsibility, saying LCC contributed to past improvements in their area but have no responsibility for the footpaths.

12. Reports from representatives on Other Bodies

a. Strong Communities

A briefing note from Ross Price had been circulated to all councillors following the meeting of the Strong Communities Select Committee held on 13th December. Cllr Smith said the meeting had been recorded and was available to view.

13. Option for Speed Reduction

The Chair raised the issue with Hazel Ilett for Strong Communities to consider. No response received yet. Cllr Carpenter clarified that Traffic Activated Speed Signs were in place in Llanbadoc and LCC are looking to install Speed Indicator Devices at both locations. The Chair confirmed the Council is looking at all available options. Cllr Smith asked if the impact on all residents along the A472 could be considered.

Cllr Deakins asked, as the funding is in the budget, why doesn't LCC ask MCC what they can provide for the funds available. The Chair replied that other alternatives may be available. Cllr Smith suggested contacting Cllr Pratt who has responsibility for highways. **ACTION: Chair to contact Cllr Pratt.**

14. Climate Change

Deferred to February meeting.

15. Training

- a. The Chair would like to update his Code of Conduct training and undertake Module 10 – Chairing skills.
Cllr Carpenter felt she had undertaken a number of the training modules.
The clerk advised Code of Conduct training should be renewed periodically, generally following an election.
The Chair suggested developing a portfolio of councillors' qualifications to facilitate best use of the skills available within the Council.
- b. As the training plan is required by November 2022 it was agreed it should be developed after the election.

16. Matters to be considered for the next agenda (at the discretion of the Chairman)

Quarterly Review of Annual Plan
Appointment of Internal Auditor
Review and adoption of appropriate Standing Orders, Internal Control, Financial Regulations and Council Policies
Management of the Council Facebook Page
Self-Assessment Toolkit
Date of the Annual Meeting and May Ordinary Meeting
Glascoed and Monkwood Noticeboards
Update of Bank Mandate

17. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2nd February 2022, 6.30pm to 8.30pm. There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.37pm.

Beverley Young
Clerk/RFO