Ordinary Meeting Tuesday 26th March 2024 – County Hall, Usk Room – 1800 - 2000

MINUTES

1. **Attendance**

Colin Deakins, Jan Clarke, Jo Storey, Ann Bowyer

Meirion Howells, Tony Kear

Clerk: Jacob Richards-Powell

Member of public

2. **Apologies**

Jenny Carpenter, Julian Bowen-Sargent

Accepted.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Jo Storey declared an interest as she is a member of the Monkswood Women's Institute

4. **Chair's Remarks**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

5. **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was circulated prior to the meeting.

6. **Comments / Questions from the public**

A. Light at Usk Island car park is on 24 hours a day which is causing nuisance to residents. **Action: County Councillor to follow up on this.**

B. A report of non-compliance at the 'container site' in Usk. Resident on commercial site. **Action: County Councillor to follow up on this.**

C. Request for any update on potential housing being constructed on the 'container site' as it is a candidate site.

Tony Reported that all the candidate sites within Monmouthshire are being assessed by inspectors who will provide a report setting out which properties are and are not suitable. **Action: County Councillor to follow up on this.**

D. Comments made regarding an ongoing complaint between MOP and LCC were noted by The Clerk and Councillors.

7. **County Councillor Participation**

A: Meirion Howells Reported:

A road sign for Trostra Road is still being chased up for installation.
Hanley Court bus stop is going ahead – new sign and pull-in being established
New bus timetables are being rolled out across the county
There is a stray dog on the loose in Llanbadoc which has killed livestock.
A Just Giving page has been setup for Monkswood Cricket club following the fire that destroyed the pavilion and play equipment.
Usk Improvement Plan: Active Travel officer in attendance to look at improving local travel.

Tony is very keen for the active-travel plan to go ahead and for a new route to be established between Little Mill and Usk as there are many properties along the route that rely on local commuters; BAE, County Hall and Usk College. There's also a new park and ride train station at New Inn / Pontypool that could benefit enhanced travel routes from Usk.

Tony Kear Reported:

There are twenty Active Travel routes identified for the Usk area but neither Councillors have been formerly presented with the list and subsequent data.
Both Councillors are attending a meeting with Housing Officers to discuss the procedure for housing 'homeless and vulnerable' in MCC and how the candidates are selected. Neither Councillor are critical of the effects of the scheme but are critical of the procedure in which it operates.

8. **Approval of Meting Minutes**

Tuesday 27th February 2024 accepted.
Proposed by Ann Bowyer and seconded by Jo Storey
Finance & Procedure Meeting March 2024
Deferred until next meeting.

9. **Community**

a. Confirmation of new councillor

New Councillor was not present at the meeting but was co-opted at a Finance & Procedure meeting earlier in March.

b. Confirm receipt of 12x bird boxes

The Clerk has five of the bird boxes which are to be fitted at Twyn Y Cryn and the rest are being made up. **Action: Clerk to arrange putting up bird boxes**

c. Update on K6 telephone box listed status

An appeal was submitted to CADW to consider de-listing the telephone box. The appeal was refused. MCC Heritage Officers are now prepared to work with LCC to determine which types of 'restorative' works are best suited for the box. There are two routes, one is permissive by Heritage Officer and the other will result in planning applications.

Heritage Officer has supplied Clerk with options to explore and recommended companies to contact. **Action: Clerk to look into information provided by MCC**

10. Authorisation of payments

a. Merlin Environmental £109.2
Staff Salary March 2024 £568.40
HSBC Monthly Charge January £5.00
MCC Swing installation at Little Mill £6747.60
Merlin Environmental Outstanding Balance £358.80
Clerk's WFHA / Travel allowance for Q3-Q4 £75.60 / £78

Proposed by Ann Bowyer seconded by Jan Clarke

b. Discuss and agree waste bin collection contract with Merlin Environmental for 2024/2025

Resolved: All present councillors happy to renew the contract under the terms provided. **Action: Clerk to respond to Merlin with signed contract**

c. Agree automated monthly payments to Merlin Environmental

Resolved: All present councillors happy for The Clerk to setup a monthly standing order for payments to be made to Merlin Environmental. **Action: Clerk to setup standing order**

d. Review grant request from Little Mill Village Hall

LMVHA has requested a grant from LCC for up to £5,000 to part fund the replacement of the external doors on the hall. Quotations were submitted to LCC from three firms however it is not clear which firm LCC are looking to go with. LCC are happy to consider the application but would like more information from LMVHA as to who they are looking to use as some quotations do not cover all the doors on the hall. Some Councillors would like to attend the hall to get a better impression of the work that would be carried out.

Deferred: Clerk to write to LMVHA and ask which quotation they are looking to proceed with.

e. Monkswood Women's Institute laptop grant application (£250)

Councillor Jo Storey explained that the Women's Institute needs a laptop for the benefit of carrying out the administrative management of the organisation. Councillor Storey took no further part in the discussion. **Resolved: Grant application approved. Action: Clerk to write to WI and arrange payment.**

Proposed by Colin Deakins and seconded by Jan Clarke

e. Review and discuss invoice received from Video Voice

Tony Kear was sent an outstanding invoice of £950 for email migration services previously provided to LCC. The invoice marked 'overdue' is the first invoice to be sent to LCC with no record of any previous correspondence to The Clerk.

Deferred: Present Councillors determined that further investigation of the invoice and the works is required before it can be determined whether the invoice can be paid.

F. Purchase of new laptop for LCC Clerk

The current laptop used by The Clerk is slow despite having a RAM upgrade. The Clerk requested approval to purchase a new laptop which would cost less than £500.

Resolved: Purchase of new laptop approved by Councillors.

Proposed by Ann Bowyer, Seconded by Jo Storey

11. Maintenance

a. Review and agree quotation from P&P Pest for Mole treatment at Little Mill play area

Resolved: The quotation of £125 + VAT was approved.

proposed by Ann Bowyer seconded by Colin Deakins

b. Review quotations for woodland tree works 2024

Deferred: Additional quotations are still to arrive. Councillor Bowyer suggested contacted Morris' Ground Maintenance of Usk. Clerk will contact the company.

e. Review and agree quotation for Tree Survey Works from Wotton Tree Consultancy

Resolved: The quotation of £1100 + VAT was approved

Proposed by Ann Bowyer seconded by Jo Storey

f. Review and agree Annual Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024/2025 from MCC

The Grounds Maintenance Contract has been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. £3427.42 inclusive of VAT

Resolved: The annual maintenance plan was approved.

Proposed by Ann Bowyer and seconded by Colin Deakins

G. Pathcare team permission stepping stones

The Pathcare Team has requested permission and the cost of materials to place stepping stones across the 'land drain' culvert at Lower Common Glascoed. The layout will be similar to that of the stepping-stones placed at Twyn Y Cryn which has improved access to the footpaths.

Resolved: Permission and cost of materials has been approved.

Proposed by Jo Storey and seconded by Ann Bowyer

H. Discuss encroachment of land at Lower Common Glascoed (unauthorised fences)

MCC has offered to remove the wire fencing which has been laid out around the perimeter of lower common. It is not known who has placed this fence, but it should not be there. There will be no charged occurred in the removal of this fence.

A wood panelled fence has been extended across land which forms part of Lower Common. Photographs of the fence have been taken by The Clerk and will be sent to Planning Enforcement along with a copy of the boundary plans that the Clerk has a record of.

12. External Reports

a. This section was deferred to allow time for planning to be discussed.

13. Planning

a. DM/2024/00334
    i. No Comments of refusal were made in relation to this application.

14. Date and Time of next meeting.

a. The next ordinary meeting will be held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 in the buffet room of Little Mill Village Hall at 1800.

The meeting closed at 1957