

CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Town Council held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday 29th January 2025 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Cllr M Mitchell – Chair
Cllr F Rowberry – Deputy Chair
Cllr J Bond – via Teams
Cllr C Cochrane
Cllr W Conniff
Cllr J Davies
Cllr A Easson
Cllr A Mayo
Cllr IR Shillabeer
Cllr P Strong
Cllr R Wilsher

Also present: M Tredwin – Town Clerk
L Wallington – Administration Officer
S Hayward – Gwent Police
Members of the Public x4 – x1 via Teams

179/2024-25 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

180/2024-25 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies of absence from Cllr R Grumbach, Cllr RJ Higginson, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr G Owen and Cllr J Woodfield.

181/2024-25 Declarations of Interest

Cllr P Strong declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 12 Grant Application From The Friends of Caldicot Library, as Chair of Friends of Caldicot Library.

182/2024-25 Public Question Time and Participation

Members received the following questions:

- A question was received regarding a planning application at 90 Newport Road. Members were informed that the planning application had been approved by Monmouthshire County Council despite the recommendation of refusal from Caldicot Town Council. Members acknowledged that there is an issue regarding rear access and right of way to the property. Members were notified that it is a matter for the resident, Enforcement Officials and Monmouthshire County Council Planning Committee. Members noted that Caldicot Town Council do not have any powers to act on the matter. Officers were thanked for their work.
- A question was received regarding Monmouthshire Citizen's Advice Bureau and funding and the reasoning that Caldicot Town Council give significantly more compared to other surrounding towns. Members were informed that the majority of clients that benefit are Caldicot residents and the CAB building is situated within Caldicot. Members acknowledged the importance of the building remaining open.
- A question was received regarding the difference in funding that Caldicot Bowls Club receive compared to Caldicot Town Football Club. Members acknowledged that Caldicot Bowls Club maintain certain parts of the Bowling Area using the funding from Caldicot Town Council. Members were informed that as trustees, Caldicot Town Council maintain the middle field of Caldicot Town Football Club. Members noted that Caldicot Town Football Club received a

£4,000.00 grant from Caldicot Town Council in the financial year 2024-25, as well as receiving a sponsored accessible bench from Caldicot Town Council.

183/2024-25 Report from Gwent Police

It was suggested that Item 8 Report from Gwent Police be moved forward due to time constraints.

RESOLVED to approve to move Item 8 Report from Gwent Police forward.

Proposed by Cllr F Rowberry, seconded by Cllr M Mitchell.

Members noted the following points from Gwent Police:

- Gwent Police provided a verbal update on crime statistics within Caldicot and provided clarification on the crime categories.
- Members were informed of the various operations that have been conducted recently, including Operation Lumley, stop and search and speed operations.
- Members were informed of the recent increase in reports of anti-social behaviour in December and January. It was noted that groups are congregating within Caldicot Town Centre, although there is no evidence of anti-social behaviour. Gwent Police urged residents to report all incidents to Gwent Police on 101 and emphasised the importance of accurately stating the location of the incident as it will enable more officers to be deployed.
- Members were informed of the recent shoplifting operation conducted by Gwent Police in Caldicot. Members were informed that the Neighbourhood Policing Team Cadets procured over £1,000 worth of items from various retail establishments within Caldicot and as a result, the retailers are improving their security measures.
- Members were informed of the recent operation regarding sales of age-restricted items conducted by Gwent Police in Caldicot. Members noted that certain retail establishments in Caldicot sold age-restricted items to minors. Gwent Police informed Members that Trading Standards are now involved.
- Members were informed that a lamppost had recently been damaged in Jubilee Way Car Park. CCTV evidence identified the persons responsible and consequently they have been charged.
- Members asked Gwent Police whether members of the public challenged the operatives that were part of the shoplifting operation. Members were informed that a few members of the public were reporting the incidents to the Police Officers.
- Members raised a concern regarding the streetlights not operating in the Aldi carpark. Members were informed that two cars collided recently in the carpark due to poor visibility. Members acknowledged that the car parking company are responsible for the operation of the streetlights in the carpark. Gwent Police informed Members that they will investigate the matter as an area of vulnerability.
- Members raised a concern regarding the high number of reports in Mill Lane, Norman Court and Oakley Way. Gwent Police will investigate the reasoning and report back to Caldicot Town Council.

- Members raised a query regarding the wording of one paragraph. Members noted the error in the December 2024 Police Report and acknowledged that it should state on the first page *“For November/December 24 Caldicot, as you can see Violence without injury is top of the list....”* instead of *“For November/December 24 Caldicot, as you can see Violence with injury is top of the list....”*
- Members thanked Gwent Police for their work.

Cllr P Strong left the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

184/2024-25 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the following minutes / notes and the recommendations contained therein:

- i) Minutes of Extra Ordinary Full Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2025
Proposed by Cllr A Easson, seconded by Cllr R Wilsher.
- ii) Notes of Allotments Working Group Meeting held on Friday 10th January 2025
Proposed by Cllr F Rowberry, seconded by Cllr W Conniff.

185/2024-25 Reports from Monmouthshire Councillors

Cllr J Strong informed Members of the error in the third sentence of the first paragraph of the report (appended to these minutes). Members noted that it should state *“2 pm”* instead of *“10 am”*. Members were invited to attend the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6th February 2025.

Cllr P Strong entered the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Members were informed that Monmouthshire County Council are presently holding a draft budget consultation at Caldicot Library and on their website until Saturday 22nd February 2025. Members emphasised the importance of providing feedback and submitting individual views.

Members thanked Cllr J Strong.

186/2024-25 Verbal Update from the Clerk

Clerk provided a verbal update and Members noted the following points:

- Questions were put forward to Monmouthshire County Council regarding the precept being delivered as one, instead of three stages.
- Consideration to be given to the necessity of meetings. Meetings consume a lot of Officer time. A Full Town Council meeting can take the week to prepare for, have and follow up on. Small meeting can use up to 10 hours per week of officer time. Numerous stages involved.
- Governor’s reports will return to the agenda in Feb, email will be sent to Members for their written report to be included in the agenda.
- Cost of posting expensive, members advised to come and collect agendas when ready.

Members thanked Officers for their work.

187/2024-25 Internal Auditors Report

Clerk provided clarification on all the points raised in the Internal Auditors report. Members were advised that a third bank signatory should be included in the financial regulations. Clerk informed

Members that certain stages and risks have been addressed and are no longer a concern. Members were advised that the allocation of grants needs to be strengthened and KPIs should be implemented into the process. Members were informed that the Council must receive three clear audits in order to attain general power of confidence, as well as two thirds of Members having been elected and a Clerk with CICLA.

Members **RESOLVED** to formally note the Internal Auditor's interim audit report and **RESOLVED** to approve the CEO's responses for 2024-2025.

Proposed by Cllr P Strong, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

188/2024-25 Place Making Steering Group Meeting Updates

Members were informed that consultants are submitting proposals which will be evaluated and finalised in due course. Members noted that Monmouthshire County Council are supporting Caldicot Town Council in this project. Members are consulting with stakeholders in Caldicot, taking into consideration that Caldicot Town Council do not own the buildings in the Town Centre.

Members were asked to submit Place Making concepts that will benefit and improve Caldicot. Members were informed that concepts will be collated and evaluated and were advised to contact residents to understand their desires and requirements. Concepts should be carefully considered with a pragmatic approach. Members were informed that proposals are to be submitted by Monday 10th February 2025.

Cllr A Easson left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve for Cllr P Strong and Cllr W Conniff to join the Place Making Steering Group.

Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

Cllr W Conniff left the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

189/2024-25 To Consider the Citizens Advice Request for Funding

Members noted that more information was requested from Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice Caldicot Branch following the discussion from the Full Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 27th November 2024.

Cllr W Conniff rejoined the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Members acknowledged that that statistics in the CAB report are for all of the four offices within Monmouthshire. Members considered the benefits that Caldicot residents receive. Members noted that Cllr M Mitchell and Cllr A Easson are Caldicot Town Council representatives for Monmouthshire County CAB and should be able to attend their meetings to observe their expenditure.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the requested £12,000.00 to be paid to Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice Bureau Caldicot.

Proposed by Cllr A Mayo, seconded by Cllr R Wilsher.

190/2024-25 Grant Application From the Friends of Caldicot Library

Cllr P Strong declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting.

Cllr P Strong left the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Members noted the error in point four of the report. The available balance should state “£7,082.10” instead of “£5,370.00”. Members considered the benefits to the Caldicot residents that do not have the means of access to newspapers.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the grant application from Friends of Caldicot Library and award £187.90, using the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19.
Proposed by Cllr W Conniff, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

Cllr P Strong entered the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

191/2024-25 Date of Next Meetings

Members **RESOLVED** to note that the dates of the following meetings:

- i) Personnel Committee Meeting to be scheduled for February.
- ii) Planning and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on Tuesday 11th February 2025.
- iii) Finance Committee Meeting to be held on Wednesday 19th February 2025.
- iv) Full Town Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday 26th February 2025.

Members agreed to temporarily suspend the meeting for a five-minute respite.

Meeting suspended at 8:28 p.m.

Meeting resumed at 8:33 p.m.

192/2024-25 Allotment Meeting Update

Members **RESOLVED** to move the item into exempt business.
Proposed by Cllr F Rowberry, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

193/2024-25 Staffing Matters

Members **RESOLVED** to move the item into exempt business.
Proposed by Cllr F Rowberry, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

194/2024-25 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED *By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following item on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.*

COUNCIL IN PRIVATE SESSION

195/2024-25 Agenda Item 14 – Allotments Meeting Update

Members considered the allotment report. Members noted that it would need to be obligatory for all Sandy Lane allotment holders to possess a key under health and safety and insurance grounds. Members noted the expense for a padlock and fifty-five keys.

Members acknowledged that a padlock cannot be placed without consent from all allotment plot holders, as this would deny access to the allotment plot holders and by doing so would be unlawful.

Members raised concerns regarding the constitution of a free key and that other allotment holders may contest if they learn that keys have been supplied free of charge.

Members raised health and safety concerns regarding what would happen if a person were to get locked in and did not have their key. Members noted that the office would not be contactable if this were to happen outside of office hours. Members raised concerns regarding whether a person may not have the means to contact an outside person. Members acknowledged the duty of care and health and safety implications of a keyed padlock being installed.

Members **RESOLVED** after due consideration that the introduction of a new keyed padlock for allotments is administratively and health and safety wise unacceptable and therefore reject the request for a lock.

Proposed by Cllr IR Shillabeer, seconded by Cllr A Mayo.

Members considered the plot immediately on the right-hand side of the entrance gates. Members acknowledged that it cannot be rented out due to its proximity, lack of sunlight and the incline of the ground.

Members **RESOLVED** to reject the quotation to extend the car park by 70m² at a cost of £850.00 and will reconsider the recommendation in the financial year 2025-26.

Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr W Conniff.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation of £500.00 for all thirteen vacant allotment plots to be rectified and returned to a manageable state.

Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr W Conniff.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve that should the plots not be cleared by the contractor by Friday 14th February 2025, the vacant allotment plots will be offered to those on the waiting list free of charge until 1st April 2025, on the condition that the new allotment plot holder clears the plot before 31st March 2025.

Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr W Conniff.

The Mayor declared Standing Orders at 9:00 p.m.

Members **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr P Strong, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

196/2024-25 Agenda Item 15 – Staffing Matters

Members were made aware of concerns regarding the current HR provider.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the payments to SLCC regarding the Locum Clerk.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the payment to Urban Recreation.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the verbal report from The Mayor regarding the resolutions from the Extra Ordinary Full Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th December 2024.

Meeting ended at 9:17 p.m.

Signed Date
Town Mayor