



Minutes of Full Town Council at 6:30pm on 29 July 2026 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Cllr IR Shillabeer – Mayor
Cllr P Strong – Deputy Mayor
Cllr M Mitchell – Assistant Deputy Mayor
Cllr B Barrett
Cllr J Harris (left meeting at 8:18pm)
Cllr RJ Higginson
Cllr A McIntyre
Cllr G McIntyre
Cllr M Peters
Cllr Rowberry
Cllr Owen
Cllr Cochrane

Also present: Alice Vaughan Locum Town Clerk
Gabby Thomas - Staff
County Councillor Strong

Members of the Public

1. Welcome and Mayors report

Confirmation of hybrid participation and reminder about the recording policy.
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting,

The mayor reported attending a school theatre production at Caldicot Comprehensive School and opening Archway Veterinary Shop/Surgery in the village. A sad announcement was made regarding the death of Sybil Powell, former mayor of Caldicot the funeral is at Langstone on 10 August at 12:00.

2. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies for absence from Cllr Lewis, Cllr Mayo, Cllr Jones Cllr Davies

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Peters – Agenda item 19 Personal / Non-prejudicial - Declaration of interest that he is part of RBL
Cllr Barrett – Agenda item 19 -Personal/ Non prejudicial – Declaration of interest that he knows the stone mason

4.Public Question Time and Participation

Public questions included a query about whether the clerk or councillors “run” the council. The mayor explained that the clerk is qualified and provides guidance, but policy decisions are made by elected councillors. Alice clarified that she is an employee of the council, can place items on the agenda and guide, but cannot make decisions.

5.Minutes

Approval of minutes

Minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 24 June 2026

After clarification, the council agreed to accept the main meeting minutes. Members resolved to approve the minutes.

The discussion highlighted recurring uncertainty about how exempt/confidential material should be presented, signed off and recorded.

Mayor signed 24 June 2026 minutes.

Committee Minutes

Minutes of the Personnel Committee 10 July 2026 noted and received.

6.Reports from Monmouthshire Councillors

Members received a report from the Monmouthshire Councillors on matters pertaining to Monmouthshire Council and those relevant to Caldicot Town Council. – Noted and Received

7.Report from Gwent Police

Members received a written report from Gwent Police on matters pertaining to Caldicot. – June and July report Noted and received – Clerk to put on website and Facebook

8.Code of Conduct Training

Noted that the group mandatory Code of Conduct training for Members will take place on Tuesday 4 August at 6:30-8:00pm at Caldicot Town Council building.

9.Outside Body and Committee Appointments

Members noted and approved previous appointments to outside bodies and Council committees that was omitted from Annual meeting minutes.

Monmouthshire County CAB (2) - Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Strong

One Voice Wales Area Committee (2) (Precedent Mayor/Deputy) Mayor Shillabeer and Cllr Strong.

One Voice Wales Larger Local Councils Committees (Precedent Mayor/ Deputy) Mayor Shillabeer

Emergency Contact Mon CC (Incumbent Clerk/Mayor) – Mayor Shillabeer, Cllr Strong and Cllr Mitchel, Deputy Clerk.

10.Terms of Reference

Deferred to September 2026 meeting as previously scheduled, this is for member to have more time to look at each terms of reference before the meeting

11.Election of Chair for each Standing Committee

Members elected a Chair for each Committee.

Finance Committee:

It was noted that the Finance Committee was effectively not currently active and could be revived later. The council agreed that, for now the finance would be chaired by the mayor as will in included in FTC and a chair could be elected later if the committee was formally resurrected.

Health and Safety Committee:

There was strong criticism from Cllr Barrett about the committee's past inactivity and the lack of confidence in its performance. The mayor defended the committee's importance and said he was determined to put things right. A vote was taken between two nominees: Mayor Shillabeer was elected as Chair of Health and Safety.

Grants Committee:

Cllr Rowberry was elected Chair of Grants Committee

12.Allowances for Standing Committee

It was agreed to maintain a chair and allowance for the committee structure in line with previous years.

The council confirmed that standing committee chair allowances would apply to Finance, Health and Safety and Personnel, with the understanding that only one allowance can be claimed by any one councillor even if chairing more than one committee. £500 per chair allowance.

13.Finance

i) To receive and note the update on the Council's VAT reclaim.

Clerk presented a verbal update on the VAT claim. She reported that Councillor McIntyre's name had been removed from the VAT account after speaking to HMRC. The council has reclaimed £32,298.50 for the period from 1 April 2025 to March 2026. A discrepancy remained concerning the January–March 2025 VAT return:

HMRC showed the return as submitted and reclaimed, Edge Finance did not show it correctly, the amount involved was about £11,000 and the matter was still being checked to ensure the money had returned to the bank account. Members also noted there may be a small penalty still outstanding, with an estimated figure £200.50.

- ii) Town Team Grant - To consider the direct payment of an invoice that was already pre-paid accordance with the grant conditions.

As per the minutes of FTC 24 June 2026, only one invoice had been paid directly to MCC for the grant. Members approved for the deposit already paid by Town Team to be reimbursed to them directly £139.50 (Town Team had to pay the deposit quickly before the grant was awarded to ensure the castle grounds was booked for the event)

14. Health & Safety Annual Report

Members considered the Annual Health & Safety Report provided by Citation.

A major section of the meeting dealt with the annual health and safety report and Citation inspection issues. Mayor Shillabeer presented the report, noting:

no immediate non-compliances but 13 high, 18 medium, and 6 low non-compliances remaining.

Actions already taken included: removing tape from a button outside the building, confirming fire extinguishers were up to date, checking and recording testing of the alarms and logging fire safety documentation in the office.

Outstanding issues included: missing records for electrical safety work, wedging open doors, emergency lighting checks that should be logged regularly, boiler certification confirmation, ladder inspection and registration and broader recordkeeping/documentation gaps. The discussion became urgent when it emerged that the building might not be insured at that moment with the non-compliances.

Cllr Harris reported that the Clerk has sent an email stating that the insurance broker had said they need a minuted plan approved by full council asap to be sent to the insurance provider. Cllr Barrett stressed that if the building was not insured, staff and public should not be in the building. Mayor Shillabeer said he believed the building was safe to use for the time being, but that the door required replacement and other issues needed rapid attention.

The council debated whether to wait until September or create an urgent action plan immediately.

The council agreed an action plan with timescales:

- high-priority issues: 12 weeks,
- medium: 20 weeks,
- and the lower-priority items; 26 weeks

It was noted that the Health and Safety Committee meeting scheduled for 6 August 2026 could help progress matters and extend on the action plan. The council agreed to proceed quickly so the minutes and action plan could be sent to the insurance broker within the required timeframe.

15. Policy Review

Members reviewed and considered the following Council policies:

- i) Health & Safety Policy – created by Citation Adopted and Approved
- ii) Internal Control Policy – Adopted and Approved – Statement of internal control to be brought back to AM May 2027
- iii) Dog Friendly Policy – Adopted and Approved - Discussion focused on reasonable adjustments, allergies, phobias etc. It was clarified that the policy was intended for the council building and the community garden, not other premises such as the cemetery.

16. Town Council Flag

The council considered replacement of council flags, which were reported as frayed or in poor condition at several locations, including the council building, King George V Playing Field and the cemetery.

Cllr Barrett submitted a report for purchasing four higher-quality hand-sewn flags for a total of £439.00 + VAT, with the intention that they would last longer. The council also discussed earlier cheaper options. Delivery time was estimated at about 20 working days. There was also discussion of how long flags should be flown at half-mast after a death and whether a formal policy should standardise that practice.

Approved to purchase the higher quality flags at £439.00 as the budget for flags is currently only £100 – the other £339 to be vired from General Reserves.

17. Recommendations from the CAWG Working Group with regards to Remembrance 2026

Cllr Strong reported for the Commemoration Anniversary Working Group regarding Remembrance 2026.

The service arrangements were clarified: the parade will form up at Jubilee Way, there will be no morning service at the Cross, the morning service will be at the church, with speakers outside if needed, and the usual 4pm sunset service at the Cross will remain.

The main decision concerned road closure / diversion signage. Because demand for signs across the county is high, the working group recommended that the council buy its own stock rather than rely entirely on MCC. Councillors discussed borrowing signs from workplaces or MCC depots, but Peter emphasised the risk of shortages and the number of signs needed for Remembrance Sunday.

Estimated costs were discussed: road closed signs around £50 each, cones around £10 each, with a rough budget estimate reaching around £1,500. A formal proposal was passed to give delegated authority to the mayor, chair of the working group, and the clerk to spend up to £1,500 on the listed signs.

It was also suggested that owned signs could later be loaned to community groups for road closures.

18. Council Notice Board Renovation

Cllr Davies offered, as a volunteer, to repaint and improve the council notice board using his own paint and materials, with a small reimbursement for paint. The council discussed whether the cemetery notice board could also be brought back into use, as it had apparently not been opened for years. The council accepted Cllr Davies offer to renovate the notice board.

19. Repair of Caldicot War memorial – Update

Update with regards to 'Quick wins' Placemaking funding – not applicable doesn't fall under quick wins.

Council considered approving a financial contribution towards the repair works to the Caldicot War Memorial, to support Monmouthshire County Council in undertaking the work. The council reviewed options for repairs to the Caldicott War Memorial. MCC had a lower quote, while a higher quote offered better quality and longer-lasting work. Cllr Strong explained that the higher-quality approach was more appropriate, with the difference to be met from an existing budget line originally set aside for VE Day and VJ Day commemorations. Difference between the quotes is £2,478.75. The council approved to fund the difference so MCC could proceed with the better quote. - £2478.78

Suspension of standing orders 3v to extend to meeting's conclusion

20. Interment of Archaeological Human Skeletal Remains

Members considered the report with regards to Re-Burial/Re-Interment of Archaeological Human Skeletal Remains within Dewstow Cemetery Caldicot.

A detailed discussion took place on a proposal to bury archaeological human remains currently stored in boxes by an archaeology company. Cllr Strong explained the remains came from a dig near the former St Andrew's Church at Ifton Manor Farm, uncovered around 30 years ago during house-building works. The remains comprised 31 boxes of bones, not complete skeletons or named individuals. The archaeology company and diocese wanted them buried appropriately. Dewstow Cemetery was identified as a suitable and respectful place, partly because of the historical parish connections to Ifton. The remains were estimated to require only about one grave's worth of space. The council discussed whether to waive burial fees, whether the archaeology company should pay all associated costs and how a memorial might be funded. Cllr Barrett raised the need to confirm the company's licence and legal authority before proceeding. The question of exclusive right of burial was also discussed. John Ball offered to waive his fee for the burial work, and the council agreed to proceed with burial, to waive the grave fee, and to refer memorial arrangements to the cemetery committee. The need for an appropriate memorial and careful marking of the burial site was strongly supported.

21. Recommendations for next/ future meetings

- Policy Reviews – ongoing
- Payment lists for each meeting will start in September as Clerk needs time to input every transaction for the current financial year to produce lists.
- Clerks Reports Monthly (at FTC end of Month) – start September
- Annual Report 2025/2026
- Standing order and Financial Regulations review – September meeting
- Insurance arrangements
- Street Cleaning teams (MCC)
- Finance meetings
- Tenders/ Contracts
- Bollard at King George V Playing Fields
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Part 1 Section 6 – Biodiversity Duty 2025 – report
- Video Conferencing equipment – Induction Loop System – improvements needed
- Flag policy
- Review of ex-employees' names on documents i.e bank statements

22. Dates of Next Meetings

Members are asked to note that the next meetings scheduled to be held on:

- 5 August 2026 – Personnel Committee
- 6 August 2026 – Health and Safety Committee
- 11 August 2026- Full Town Council Incorporating Planning and Recourses – if any planning applications received
- 8 September 2026 – Full Town Council Incorporating Planning and Recourses
- 11 September 2026 – Personnel Committee
- 14 September 2026 – Grants Committee
- 30 September 2026 - Full Town Council
- 23 September 2026 - Finance Committee
- 8 October 2026 – Health and Safety Committee
- November/ December – Finance Committee date to be confirmed for budget and precept

Working Groups dates

23. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RECOMMENDED That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw, due to the nature of the business about to be transacted which is considered to be prejudicial to the public interest.

COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

24. Staffing Matters

Members are asked to consider confidential staffing matters.

Recruitment and Employment Matters

Cllr Mitchell reported that the Personnel Committee had met the previous Friday and that minutes were not yet ready.

She gave a verbal update to avoid delaying matters until September.

The members were told that recruitment adverts were being prepared for:

Town Clerk /RFO and Deputy Clerk/RFO.

It was confirmed that: the roles would be advertised shortly, job specs would be emailed to councillors for comment, and the council could then approve the final versions.

Further details in exempt minutes.

Meeting Ended 10:00pm

Signed **Date**

Mayor/Chair