

CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Town Council held at 18:30 p.m. on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Cllr M Mitchell – Chair
Cllr J Bond
Cllr W Conniff
Cllr J Davies
Cllr A Easson
Cllr R Grumbach
Cllr RJ Higginson
Cllr A Lewis
Cllr A Mayo
Cllr G Owen
Cllr IR Shillabeer
Cllr P Strong
Cllr R Wilsher

Also present: L Gillespie – Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
M Tredwin – Town Clerk
L Wallington – Administrator
Inspector E Sowery – Gwent Police
Member from Caldicot Citizen's Advice Bureau
Members of the Public x3

151/2024 Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

152/2024 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies of absence from Cllr F Rowberry and Cllr C Cochrane.

153/2024 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

154/2024 Public Question Time and Participation

Members received the following questions:

- A question was raised regarding the planters on the entrances to Caldicot at Deepweir and Cherry Tree. Members noted the unsatisfactory condition however, they advised that it is currently the Winter period and the plants are dormant. Members informed that the planters had previously been stolen when in excellent condition.
- A question was raised regarding the Heras fencing surrounding the Christmas tree at The Cross. Members advised that in a previous year, a member of the public attempted to climb the tree and therefore the fencing had been installed due to health and safety concerns.

155/2024 Report from Gwent Police

It was suggested that Item 7) Report from Gwent Police be moved forward due to time constraints.

RESOLVED to approve to move Item 7) Report from Gwent Police forward.

Members noted the following points from Gwent Police:

- Gwent Police provide a verbal update on crime statistics within Caldicot.

- Members were informed of the increase in the number of shop thefts reported. Members noted that Gwent Police are possibly conducting a shoplifting operation in due course.
- Members were informed of the increase in seizing illegal vehicles due to being uninsured and untaxed.
- Members noted that recent speed checks have been conducted on Newport Road, with the average speed being twenty-three miles per hour.
- Members were informed of the recent seizure of a large consignment of cannabis in Chepstow. Although not in Caldicot, it may have some relevance and a small impact to Caldicot. Members noted that this is an ongoing matter and is currently going through the court process.
- Members were informed of the typical increase in anti-social behaviour due to the time of year (Halloween, Bonfire Night), however, the number of reports have remained the same as previous years. Caldicot Town Council were thanked for the support involved in creating an aversion event for the youth.
- A Member raised a question regarding Gwent Police urged residents to report all incidents to Gwent Police on 101 and emphasised the importance of stating the location of the incident as accurate details in the database will facilitate statistics for the comparison of trends.
- A Member raised a concern regarding dangerous parking near The Cross. Members were informed that PCSOs are not able to issue parking tickets with the exception of the vehicle causing an obstruction. Inspector E Sowery will speak to PCSOs to ask that they discourage people from parking at The Cross, where possible.
- A Member raised a question regarding aversion activities for the youth. Members were informed that reports of crime in Caldicot have decreased and so consequently funding may decrease and be re-allocated elsewhere.
- A Member raised a question regarding the disparity of crime around Cas Troggy. Members were informed that Gwent Police had consulted with the reports and only two incidents had been reported in the last six months. Gwent Police emphasised the importance of accurately stating the location of incidents.
- A resident police drop-in surgery was held at Asda recently which was well received. Further surgeries have been planned with the next session being held at Aldi on Monday 2nd December 2024. Caldicot Town Council commended Gwent Police and thanked them for their work.
- A Member requested for annual statistics to be presented in a graph format. Members were informed that the system used to generate the police report is not user friendly and would take valuable time to create. Town Council agreed. Gwent Police informed Members that crime statistics are available online at www.police.uk.

Members **RESOLVED** to add link to the Caldicot Town Council website.

156/2024 To Receive a Presentation From the Community Advice Bureau Team Regarding Their Plans for 2025-2026

It was suggested that Item 8) To Receive a Presentation From the Community Advice Bureau Team Regarding Their Plans for 2025-2026 be moved forward due to time constraints.

RESOLVED to approve to move Item 8) To Receive a Presentation From the Community Advice Bureau Team Regarding Their Plans for 2025-2026 forward.

Members received a presentation by the Citizen's Advice Bureau Officer regarding income and expenditure. CAB Officer thanked Caldicot Town Council for the grant funding they have received in previous years. CAB Officer informed Members that funding from other services have stayed the same, whilst funding from Monmouthshire County Council has reduced. Members were informed that the CAB building needs urgent maintenance and remedial works which CAB would have to finance, despite the building being owned by MCC, due to a clause in the rental lease. Members acknowledged that without funding, services cannot be maintained.

Caldicot Town Council thanked CAB their work. Members asked questions regarding CAB's budget projection and were informed that monies are estimated to expire in 2025. Members requested to observe the budget statistics. Members inquired regarding the statistics on the number of visits to the CAB per year. Members were informed that the average number of visits equalled approximately 2,800 people over twelve months. A Member, with a background in law, offered to meet with CAB and provide legal advice.

RESOLVED to note the presentation received.

Members **RESOLVED** to contact Monmouthshire County Council regarding the rental contract.

157/2024 Minutes

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

- i) Minutes of Full Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd October 2024
- ii) Minutes of 50 Years of Caldicot Working Group Meeting held on Friday 25th October 2024
- iii) Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held Wednesday 30th October 2024
- iv) Minutes of Planning and Resources Meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2024

Amendment: To include Cllr R Grumbach in attendance.

- v) Minutes of Personnel Committee Meeting held on 21st November 2024

Amendment: To include Cllr A Eason in attendance.

158/2024 Report from Monmouthshire Councillors

Members received a written report from County Cllr J Strong. County Cllr J Strong's report is appended to the minutes. Caldicot Town Council thanked Cllr J Strong for their report.

Members received the following updates:

- Members were informed that Monmouthshire County Council are proceeding with the proposed Active Travel Plan on Woodstock Way.

- Members noted that Monmouthshire County Council are hosting a Pension Credit Event on Tuesday 10th December Members were asked to promote the event to residents in their ward.
- Members were reminded that Monmouthshire County Council are hosting the Replacement Local Development Plan Consultation on Wednesday 4th December at Caldicot Town Council building between 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

The Chair accepted an additional urgent item from Cllr R Wilsher, as the Caldicot Town Council School Governor Representative for Durand Primary School, in Mon CC Cllr M Stevens' absence. Members were informed of the hazardous drainage problems occurring at Durand Primary School.

RESOLVED to note the updates received.

RESOLVED for Cllr R Wilsher to contact Mon CC Cllrs to raise the concern at Mon CC on behalf of Mon CC Cllr M Stevens.

159/2024 CCTV Report

Members were informed that this item had been incorrectly added to the agenda.

Cllr A Easson left the meeting at 20:02 p.m.

160/2024 Schedule of Payments Report

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the attached Schedule of Payments report for the period of 15th October 2024 to 21st November 2024.

RESOLVED to approve the bank account balance period ending 31st October 2024 as per reconciliations.

161/2024 Dog Bins Report

Members considered the report and acknowledged that dog bins are provided to protect the public and residents. Members were concerned that Caldicot Town Council are paying for dog bins to be emptied on the Caldicot Castle grounds.

RESOLVED to delegate to officers, in consultation with Cllr F Rowberry and Cllr R Wilsher, agree the purchase of one additional bin and installation sites for two additional dog bins.

RESOLVED to approve the installation and the weekly collection costs for the two additional bins and the existing bins, at the new rate of £7.35 per bin per collection for 2025-26.

RESOLVED for Officers to determine if the dog bin collection payments should be recharged to Caldicot Castle.

162/2024 Cemetery Bench Application

RESOLVED to approve and delegate to Officers the installation of a memorial bench in Dewstow Cemetery in a style commensurate with those near to the intended location.

163/2024 Christmas Office Closure Report

RESOLVED to approve the closure of the Caldicot Town Council offices from 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday 24th December until Thursday 2nd January 2025, unless any rooms are booked for community functions of which arrangements will be made for the opening of the building.

164/2024 Date of Next Meetings

Members **RESOLVED** to note that the date of the next meeting of Full Town Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 29th January 2025.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the date of the next meeting of Finance Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 18th December 2024.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the date of the next Planning and Resources Meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 10th December 2024.

165/2024 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

166/2024 Agenda Item 14 Payment Authorisations Report

RESOLVED to move the item into confidential session.

Members **RESOLVED** to defer the Citizen’s Advice Payment until further information had been received.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Street Cleaning SLA.

167/2024 Agenda Item 15 Staffing Payment Update

RESOLVED to move the item into confidential session.

RESOLVED to approve.

Meeting ended at 20:44 p.m.

Signed Date

Mayor

Report from Monmouthshire Councillors

County Councillor Jackie Strong

Report to Caldicot Town Council Nov 2024

1. RDLP consultation

On 24th October MCC agreed that the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), which includes a major development east of Caldicot, would go out to public consultation. The consultation started on 4th November for 6 weeks. Caldicot will have a drop in Consultation on 5th December.

This plan is led by the need for affordable homes to attract younger people to work in our local businesses and public services. Currently many cannot afford to buy or rent here. The population of Monmouthshire is growing older. We have fewer school age children, fewer working people and a 26% increase in the over 65s. This RLDP is designed to reverse this trend by allowing more of our young people to stay in the county.

Under the plan, at least 50% of new homes built will be affordable, with social rent and shared ownership schemes. Each of the proposed new homes will be net zero carbon, meaning they will generate as much energy as they use.

2. Cost of living sessions

The council have recognised that anyone can fall behind with bills and get into debt. In order to support local residents the MCC Community Development team held a number of events across Monmouthshire to offer support and advice in relation to cost of living challenges.

The final one was on 12th November at Caldicot Library. The sessions gave residents the chance to make contact with a range of organisations including CAB, DWP and the local Foodbank.

3. Safe Street trial (Castle Park School)

Castle Park School was chosen as one of four schools in the county to be chosen for a 'school street' trial. As part of the trial children are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school. The scheme includes restricting access to roads near the school. The trial will last a year.

Caldicot Post Office reopens

As part of a partnership between MCC, Monmouthshire Housing Association and the Post Office we saw the reopening of Caldicot Post Office in a vacant shop in the town centre. Local Councillors have been campaigning for the reopening of the Post Office since its closure over a year ago.

Reducing anti-social behaviour : Operation Lumley

A joint initiative between MCC, Gwent Police securing Home Office funding has enabled increased police and security patrols, and secured additional funding for the youth service to offer more outreach sessions.

The newly refurbished zone has also extended its hours to offer additional drop-in sessions for local young people.

Older Person's Champion

In my role as Older Person's Champion I have been talking to local groups about MCC aim to become an age friendly County. On International Day of Older People on 1st October I celebrated with St Mary's Community Group. The aim of the day was to celebrate the vital part older people play. The group has been meeting at St Mary's Church hall for a number of years and is a great example of the way volunteers come together to offer vital support to other local residents.

County Councillor Jackie Strong

November 2024

CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Planning & Resources held at 18:30 p.m. on Tuesday 10th December 2024 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Cllr M Mitchell – Chair
Cllr F Rowberry – Deputy Chair
Cllr C Cochrane
Cllr W Conniff
Cllr J Davies
Cllr A Easson
Cllr R Grumbach
Cllr RJ Higginson
Cllr A Lewis
Cllr A Mayo
Cllr G Owen
Cllr IR Shillabeer
Cllr R Wilsher
Cllr J Woodfield

Also present: L Gillespie – Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
M Tredwin – Town Clerk
L Wallington – Administrator

PR26/2024 Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PR27/2024 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies of absence from Cllr J Bond and Cllr P Strong.

PR28/2024 Declarations of Interest

Cllr A Easson declared a personal non-prejudicial interest relating to Item 6) Planning, as a member of the Monmouthshire County Council Planning Committee.

PR29/2024 Public Question Time and Participation

There were no questions received from members of the public.

PR30/2024 Minutes

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

- i) Minutes of Planning & Resources Meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2024

PR31/2024 Planning

i) Planning Applications for Consideration:

- **DM/2024/01365:** Proposed temporary use/development of land for open storage/self-storage, means of access, means of enclosure, landscaping and ancillary developments or works. Existing Car Park At The Junction Of Symondsciffe Way And Caldicot Road.

Members noted the comments made on the Monmouthshire County Council Planning Portal and raised concerns regarding rainfall water and run off.

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend** support to **defer** the application, pending the receipt of the SUDS report and the distribution of such report to Members.
Proposed by Cllr J Woodfield and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.

- **DM/2024/01362:** Installation of an air source heat pump unit to reduce the dwelling's carbon footprint by 70%. 2 Court House Close, Castle Lea, Caldicot, NP26 4GZ

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend** support of the **approval** of application **DM/2024/01362**.

Proposed by Cllr RJ Higginson, seconded by Cllr R Grumbach.

- **DM/2024/01396:** Proposed development of an outbuilding into a self contained granny apartment. Consisting of kitchen, lounge, bedroom, bathroom and store. 33 Budden Crescent, Caldicot, NP26 4PP

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend** support of the **approval** of application **DM/2024/01396**.

Proposed by Cllr C Cochrane, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

- **DM/2024/01457:** Change of use of building to Veterinary Centre with associated offices and works. 23 - 25 Newport Road, Caldicot, NP26 4BG

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend** support of the **approval** of application **DM/2024/01457**.

Proposed by Cllr R Grumbach, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

- **DM/2024/01279:** Construction of side facing dormer. 119 Castle Lea Caldicot, NP26 4PL

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend** support of the **approval** of application **DM/2024/01279**.

Proposed by Cllr F Rowberry, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

ii) **MCC Approved Planning Applications:**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the following approved planning applications:

- **DM/2024/01145:** Single storey rear and side extension with internal alterations. 207 Elan Way, Caldicot, NP26 4QB
- **DM/2024/01094:** Demolition of the existing porch and replaced with a larger single storey front extension. 29 Castle Lodge Crescent, Caldicot, NP26 4JL

PR32/2024 Pathway for the Cil-Y-Coed Community Garden

The Deputy Clerk provided an update to Members regarding the Community Garden Project. Members were provided with the options to continue with the use of gravel or use Conipave RA.

Members were informed that Conipave RA is a porous material and qualifies as a Sustainable Urban Drainage Solution (SUDS). Members were advised that edging is not required. Members were concerned regarding the durability of the Conipave RA without a border and considered the installation of an edging border to protect the material from breakages. Members raised concerns regarding accessibility and the environmental impact of using Conipave RA. Members were informed that Conipave RA includes recycled components.

Members were informed that gravel would be packed down with gravel dust layered on top and bordered, similar to the work completed at the Sandy Lane allotments. Members noted that although the pathway at the Sandy Lane allotments is outstanding, it is difficult to compare the durability as the traffic of use will be considerably more in the Community Garden. Members were uncertain about the durability of gravel with high use of traffic.

Members held a vote on the proposal of the use of Conipave RA with edging for the Cil-Y-Coed Community Garden. Twelve Members voted for, two Members voted against.

Members **RESOLVED** to note and approve the use of Conipave RA with edging for the Cil-Y-Coed Community Garden in line with the authority delegated to Officers at the Full Town Council meeting held on 25th September 2024. Members also **RESOLVED** to delegate powers to Officers regarding the edging, with a focus on environmental impact.
Proposed by Cllr A Lewis, seconded by Cllr C Cochrane.

PR33/2024 Date of Next Meeting

Members **RESOLVED** to note the date of the next meeting of Planning and Resources Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 14th January 2024.

Meeting ended at 19:14 p.m.

Signed Date

Chair

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

10.30 DECEMBER 17TH 2024

It was agreed that given that a request had been made for no officers to be present Cllr J Strong would take minutes supported by County Cllr P Strong.

PRESENT: Cllr's M Mitchell (Mayor), F. Rowberry (Deputy Mayor), A Mayo, R Shillabeer, J Bond, A Easson, G Owen, W Coniff, J Woodfield, R Grumbach, P Strong, R Wilsher.

Also Present County Councillor J Strong - Minuting.

161/2024 APOLOGIES: Cllr's J Davies, A Lewis

162/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None

163/2024 SPECIAL ITEM: Cllr Grumbach asked if town council radios could be used without cost during a community search for a missing person. **AGREED**

164/2024 PUBLIC SESSION: County Councillor Jackie Strong pointed out that a petition relating to problems with the pedestrian crossing at the Cross and related issues would be considered at the next meeting of MCC Place scrutiny committee. She asked for councillors' support e.g. by bringing photographic evidence to the meeting.

165/2024 MINUTES OF FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF 27 NOVEMBER 2024

Deferred until next meeting.

166/2024 STAFFING MATTERS

It was agreed to exclude press and public before taking item 6.

167/2024 DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

Full Town Council 6.30 Wednesday 29th January. Possibility of earlier meeting to agree budget.

168/2024 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that in light of the confidential business to be considered the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

The Mayor explained that given that a second independent minute taker had been requested she had asked County Councillor Jackie Strong to take minutes. Cllr J Bond initially objected to this proposal but subsequently withdrew the objection. It was agreed that Jackie Strong would take minutes.

169/2024 STAFFING MATTERS (Agenda Item 6)

i) For members to consider whether staff documents should be shared with all members of the council following a letter from non-members of the Personnel Committee to the Mayor.

The Mayor distributed a letter from Cllrs J Bond, R Grumbach, J Woodfield and R Wilsher. Another signatory withdrew his name and a sixth was absent from the meeting. Cllr Bond spoke for the four, making a number of requests in response to a Report from Cllr Bond. The Mayor responded having sought advice from One Voice Wales in relation to the original letter:

1. Job descriptions and roles could be legally shared with members.
2. The probation period was six months for all staff.
3. Full council can decide to share process for performance review and criteria for assessment with Full Council.
4. a, b, c. Details of training being carried out. It was legal to share these. It is not legal to share contracts. These can only be seen by Personnel Committee and Auditors. It could, however, be shared that contracts have been signed.

Cllr Bond, acting on behalf of the four councillors, gave some feedback on the performance of a staff member, including positive comments and areas for improvement. Cllrs A Easson and J Woodfield also raised areas of concern.

AGREED:

Point 1: Resolved that Full Council will have full sight of Job Descriptions (12 for 0 against)

Point 2: Resolved for all Cllrs to be made aware of probationary periods of staff (currently 6 months). (12 for 0 against)

Point 3: Resolved for Councillors to be informed of process on probationary periods and criteria for assessment (12 for 0 against)

Point 4a): **Resolved** that training records could be shared (11 for 1 against)

Point 4b): **Resolved** Fire safety etc can be shared (11 for 1 against)

Point 4c): **Resolved** COSHH and Manual handling can be shared (11 for 1 against)

Point 5: **Resolved** that if any councillor wishes to give feedback on staff performance, this should be given in writing to the Chair of the Personnel Committee who will report to the Full Council that feedback has been received and noted. Personnel Committee would consider if points from the feedback should be considered as part of any performance review. (11 for 1 against).

It was pointed out that all contracts were based on model contracts issued by One Voice Wales. The Mayor summarised:

*Job descriptions for all staff members could be circulated to all councillors.

*All probation periods were for six months.

*Clerk has begun CILCA training

*Deputy clerk has commenced FILCA training

*Admin Officer is due to commence ILCA training.

Questions were raised about responsibility for including items on the Full Council agenda.

Proposed by Cllr Easson, seconded by Cllr Owen: **Resolved** that the Clerk should consult with the Mayor over any members' items which he/she feels should **NOT** be included on the agenda and feedback to the member. (12 for 0 against.)

170/2024

6 (ii).- Members to consider a letter from a member of the council to the Mayor.

Copies of the letter were circulated to members.

It was agreed that points from the last two paragraphs of the letter (dealing with working practices such as TOIL, monitoring of emails over holiday periods) should be considered by the Personnel Committee. These paragraphs were asked to be withdrawn by Cllr Easson. He provided no reason for doing so

In regard to the concern expressed over staff relations, the Mayor discussed contents of a call she had conducted with One Voice Wales, giving information on how to proceed given that the issue had been raised by a third party rather than by a member of staff. The Mayor had on receipt of the letter had a brief conversation with the member of staff on whose behalf the letter had been written. The aspect raised was in relation to the working location and the member staff expressed no concerns. This was required in order to assess staff's wellbeing was being looked into.

COUNCILLOR BOND LEFT THE MEETING AT 12.15.

The Mayor explained the procedure following advice from One Voice Wales relating to third party complaints and asked the author of the letter if they had any evidence to support the complaint that related to the Equality Act 2010. The councillor declined to answer other than to say they had.

The Mayor explained the options open to the council:

1. External investigation. Costly and would seriously impair the work of the council while the investigation was going on.
2. Internal investigation conducted by a panel of three councillors.
3. To note the complaint and monitor the situation. Staff member to be invited to speak to the Staff Liaison Officer or another councillor of their choice.

The Mayor also read out a definition of bullying.

A discussion on the actions that were open to the Town Council then took place.

COUNCILLOR P. STRONG AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR J. STRONG LEFT THE MEETING AT 12.55 and a comfort break took place

COUNCILLOR P. STRONG RETURNED AT 13.03.

Proposed by Councillor P. Strong and seconded by Councillor A. Mayo, it was **Resolved** that **Option 3** be adopted with a report to the town council in January, at which point it would be decided if the issue should be escalated to **Option 2**. That, following the Annual Meeting, Staff Health and Wellbeing be made a standing item on Personnel Committee agendas. (10 for 1 against).

The meeting ended at 1.20.

CALDICOT TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Finance Committee held at 18:30 p.m. on Wednesday 18th December 2024 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Cllr W Conniff - Chair
Cllr RJ Higginson
Cllr M Mitchell
Cllr F Rowberry
Cllr IR Shillabeer
Cllr R Wilsher

Also present: Cllr J Bond - Observer
L Gillespie – Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Cllr R Grumbach - Observer
Cllr P Strong - Observer
M Tredwin – Town Clerk
L Wallington – Administrator
Cllr J Woodfield - Observer

F21/2024 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

F22/2024 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies of absence from Cllr A Easson and Cllr G Owen.

F23/2024 Declarations of Interest

Cllr P Strong declared a personal prejudicial interest in Item 6) Budget Setting Report - Armed Forces Sponsorship.

F24/2024 Public Question Time and Participation

There were no questions received from members of the public.

F25/2024 Minutes

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

- i) Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 30th October 2024
Proposed by Cllr RJ Higginson, seconded by Cllr IR Shillabeer.

F26/2024 Budget Setting Report

Clerk provided a presentation to Members for consideration and various points were raised regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each. Members considered the following aspects:

- **Room Hire and Charges**

Members **RESOLVED** to allow free room hire to volunteer and charity groups.
Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

Members **RESOLVED** to charge room hire to community groups that receive financial assistance.

Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

Members **RESOLVED** to allow at the discretion of the Officers if room hire is charged per hour or per set booking.

Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

Members **RESOLVED** to charge £15.00 for community groups and £30.00 for business organisations.

Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

- **Dewstow Cemetery**

Members noted that Dewstow Cemetery burial fees are significantly lower than other surrounding cemeteries. Members acknowledged that there is no financial difference between the charges of opening a single, double, and triple grave, despite more labour being involved. Members acknowledged that burials are a distressing process for relatives and friends.

Members **RESOLVED** to increase Opening New Double Grave by £100.00, Opening New Triple Grave by £200.00, and to increase all charges by 10.00%.

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

- **Allotments**

Members acknowledged that the Schedule of Fees for the KGVPF, Oakley Way and Sandy Lane allotments had already been set for 2025/26. Members considered the Allotment Schedule of Fees for 2026/27.

Members **RESOLVED** to increase all charges by 10.00%.

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

- **Projects**

- Investment in West End Area:

Members were informed that this would be a five-year project and that £50,000.00 would be allocated over the five-year period.

RESOLVED to approve the Investment in West End Area project proposal.

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

- KGVPF – Entrance and Compound:

RESOLVED to allocate £10,000.00 towards KGVPF.

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

- Benches in Town Centre:

RESOLVED to replace three benches in Caldicot Town Centre and replace the benches when required.

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

- Environmental Initiatives:

Members were informed that this would be a five-year project and that £50,000.00 would be allocated over the five-year period.

RESOLVED to approve Environmental Initiatives proposal.

Proposed by Cllr W Conniff, seconded by Cllr RJ Higginson.

- 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day:
Members were informed that £3,000.00 would be allocated to provide a service of remembrance.

RESOLVED to approve the 80th Anniversary of VE/VJ Day proposal.
Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

- Armed Forces Sponsorship:
Cllr P Strong declared a personal and prejudicial interest as the Monmouthshire County Council Armed Forces Champion. Cllr P Strong remained in the meeting to provide information to Members regarding the proposal.

Members were informed that Caldicot Castle had been selected to host the 2025 National Armed Forces Day in Wales. Members acknowledged that it is anticipated to be an immense event that will benefit Caldicot and the community, as the event will encourage a large amount of people to visit Caldicot.

RESOLVED to allocate £5,000.00 for the Armed Forces Sponsorship proposal.
Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr W Conniff.

- Baby Swings at Cas Troggi:
Members were informed that although Monmouthshire County Council manages Cas Troggi park, residents have asked Town Councillors to install baby swings. Members were advised that a considerable amount of money has already been spent by MCC. Members were informed that this would be a five-year project and that £1,000.00 would be allocated over the five-year period.

Members voted three for, two against and one abstained. **RESOLVED** to allocate £1,000.00 over the five-year period for the Baby Swings at Cas Troggi proposal.
Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr IR Shillabeer.

- Adopt Flower Beds Church Road:
Members were informed that the flower beds on Church Road, Caldicot were part of the Active Travel Plan by Monmouthshire County Council. Members suggested that MCC should be encouraged to rectify the appearance of Church Road.

Members **RESOLVED** to submit a Member's Item of Business Form to Full Town Council, regarding the flower beds on Church Road, Caldicot.
Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

- Zebra Crossing by KGVPF Gates and Resurfacing Pathway Rear Measure:
Members acknowledged that there is no safe place to cross by the KGVPF entrance. Members were informed that the footpath behind The Measure, Caldicot is uneven and unstable. Members noted that the footpath and zebra crossing is within Monmouthshire County Council's remit however, the land is part of trustee land. Members acknowledged that the footpath was a public footpath before the land became part of the trustee. Members were advised that MCC considered redeveloping the area as part of the Active Travel Plan and Placemaking Plan however, this will not be happening due to the Woodstock Way, Caldicot development.

Members **RESOLVED** to submit a Member's Item of Business Form to Full Town Council or Caldicot Placemaking Plan Working Group, regarding the resurfacing of the pathway at the rear of The Measure, Caldicot and a zebra crossing by KGVPF.
Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

- Emergency Access at Burns Crescent and the Development of a Playpark in the West End Ward of Caldicot:

RESOLVED that a sum of £10,000.00 would be allocated to the budget.

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

- Website:

Members were advised that the Caldicot Town Council website is not accessibility friendly and needs modernising. Members were informed that the proposed financial figure includes current expenditure for licenses.

Members **RESOLVED** to allocate £10,000.00 for the Caldicot Town Council website.

Proposed by Cllr R Wilsher, seconded by Cllr IR Shillabeer.

- Placemaking:

Members considered the financial input from Monmouthshire County Council and the Welsh Government.

Members **RESOLVED** to allocate £15,000.00 for Placemaking Plan.

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

- Warm Spaces:

Members were advised that there are grants available.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve Clerk's authorisation for Deputy Clerk to apply for warm space grants.

The Chair added an additional item at their discretion.

- Birbeck Park:

Members were informed that although Monmouthshire County Council manages Birbeck Park, a Member would like the park to be redeveloped as the park has not been updated for quite some time. Members were advised that Caldicot Town Council finance the cutting of the grass. Members discussed the redevelopment of Birbeck Park and considered the benefits to Caldicot residents.

Members **RESOLVED** to allocate £1,000.00 over the five-year period for Birbeck Park.

Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr R Wilsher.

- **Budget Proposal Options**

Members were provided with a list of four options and various points were raised regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each. Members were advised that financial reductions have been made where possible and further reductions will diminish the ability of Caldicot Town Council to deliver on services.

- Option One: Initial Proposal - £482,330

- No allowance for Projects
- Precept: £482,330
- No allowance for Projects
- Overall Precept Increase: £30,440
- Percentage Overall Increase: 6.74%
- Residents Increase: 6.66%
- Monthly Increase: £0.60

- Option Two: Increasing Initial Proposal to Cover Projects - £546,830
 - Precept Proposal: £482,330
 - Project Allowance: £64,500
 - Precept: £546,830
 - Overall Precept Increase: £94,940
 - Percentage Overall Increase: 21.01%
 - Residents Increase: 20.93%
 - Monthly Increase: £1.90
- Option Three: Initial Proposal to Cover Projects Using Unallocated Reserves - £490,830
 - Precept Proposal: £482,330
 - Project Allowance: £64,500
 - Unallocated Reserves: £56,000
 - Precept: £490,830
 - Overall Precept Increase: £38,940
 - Percentage Overall Increase: 8.61%
 - Residents Increase: 8.53%
 - Monthly Increase: £0.77
- Option Four: Initial Proposal to Cover Projects Using Unallocated Reserves, including Birbeck Park Project - £491,830
 - Precept Proposal: £482,330
 - Project Allowance: £65,500
 - Unallocated Reserves: £56,000
 - Precept: £491,830
 - Overall Precept Increase: £39,940
 - Percentage Overall Increase: 8.84%
 - Residents Increase: 8.76%
 - Monthly Increase: £0.79

Members **RESOLVED** to approve Budget Proposal Option Four with a precept of £491,830.
Proposed by Cllr M Mitchell, seconded by Cllr F Rowberry.

Members thanked Officers for their work.

F27/2024 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the scheduled Finance Committee Meeting on Wednesday 8th January 2025 had been cancelled. Members noted that an Extraordinary Full Town Council Meeting has been scheduled to be held on Wednesday 15th January 2025.

F28/2024 Exclusion of Public and Press

Confidential session not required as there were no further items discussed.

Meeting ended at 20:41 p.m.

Signed
Chair

Date