

Minutes of the ZOOM meeting of Montgomery Town Council held on Thursday 24th September 2020 at 7.15 pm.

Present: Cllr's H Andrew (Chairman) J Kibble (Deputy Chairman)
M Mills, L Weaver, C Thomas, C Weston, O Lewis, W Beaven, G Stephenson.
R Harper

MINUTE 71 - Apologies - Cllr D Jones – did not join via Zoom

MINUTE 72 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MEMBERS of the public were invited to speak.

Two members of the public gave a report on the 20's plenty initiative. Two residents from Hendomen explained their position on a planning application which had been discussed in August's Council Meeting. Observations had been made to Planning Department by the Council.

MINUTE 73 - CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Cllr Andrew welcomed Rob Harper a new Councillor
- Cllr Andrew also made members aware of the passing of Mrs Lloyd who was Montgomery's oldest resident at 106 and Jimmy Sexton who had been Town Clerk in 1990's.
- Cllr Andrew advised that August he had made a comment regarding unfriendly and sometimes aggressive e mails. Unfortunately, he felt that he had to remind Councillors again regarding this.

MINUTE 74 - MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

'MINUTES- They are intended to be formal records of official acts and decisions, not reports, still less verbatim reports, of the speeches made by councillors. Minutes should, therefore, be as short as is consistent with clarity and accuracy, and the arguments used in discussion need be recorded only if the decision cannot be clearly expressed in any other way. Short simple minutes are less likely to be defamatory than long reports.'

Cllr Lewis made some observations on the Chairman's comments stating (Town Clerk was requested to minute this comment) 'there were systemic failures of governance on this council and frankly meetings need to be better chaired and the clerk has to do a far better job of recording the minutes and decisions. Cllr Lewis was monitoring two councillors' negative behaviours because he was not comfortable with them.

Cllr Lewis advised the minutes regarding The Brades were libellous and requested that Cllr Thomas statement was removed.

Cllr Lewis advised his comments re The Brades had not been considered. Town Clerk reminded Cllr Lewis that because of the quality of the sound and the speed of his comments she had requested him to forward his comments. Cllrs Andrew and Weston confirmed this. A proposal was made by Cllr Lewis that council accept a neutral statement that respects the privacy of both Councillors and does not open up the Council and Clerk and everything else to, you know, to potentially legal issues. RESOLVED by a majority vote to accept the proposal. Cllr Thomas abstained as that minutes related to her and she wished it to be recorded. Cllr Mills also abstained

Cllr Thomas advised that it was for the Clerk and Chairman to agree the minutes prior to the meeting.

Minute 68 - August meeting The Brades will be amended to show that Cllr Thomas made a statement and Cllr Lewis replied to that statement.

Following agreement of the amendments. Minutes of the meeting 6th August 2020 were agreed by members following corrections. Chairman unable to sign the minutes at this time.

MINUTE 75 - MATTER ARISING

Cllr's Kibble and Beaven have a meeting with Powys CC to discuss The Brades. Councillors suggested various subjects regarding the Brades for discussion at that meeting.

MINUTE 76 - REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

- Cllr Hayes advised he was sorry to hear of the passing of Jimmy Sexton who had been Town Clerk in Montgomery.
- Two applications for outline planning in Hendomen had been made one in 2017 and the other in 2018 which had been granted. Cllr Hayes advised there may be scope for pressure and that he had requested this application be passed to Powys CC Planning Committee.
- A motion had been passed in July regarding climate change but votes had been incorrectly received. A revised motion which was more comprehensive and commits the council to endeavour to be carbon neutral by 2030 and seek the support of Welsh Government to reach that position.
- Cllr Hayes recommended to write to the Strategic Director of the Environment Powys CC to offer Montgomery as a pilot for the reduction of speed in small urban community in Powys.
- Cllr Thomas advised it seemed difficult to find some information on the Planning Portal. Cllr Hayes advised he would send an e mail regarding this.
- Cllr Lewis commented positively on the new signage on Chirbury Road and New Road
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MINUTE 77 – HIGHWAYS

- Cllr Lewis commented on the new signage on Chirbury Road and New Road

MINUTE 78 – FINANCE

August		
BACS	Holldary Rural Services Playground	288.00
	AHGTC – Town Crier	35.00
	MWT – Subscription	90.00
	Andrew Evans – Grass Cutting	234.00
	Ditto – July	702.00
	E-on Electric – Toilets	85.42
	Salary	669.20
	HMRC	39.80
	G Smith – Expenses	60.51
	Jennie Godwin-Allotments	32.11
D/D	BT – Internet	105.84
	Positive Energy	57.75
	Ditto	13.32
September	HMRC	39.60
	Salary	669.40
	G Smith -Expenses	112.60
	Wales Audit 17/18	225.75
	Hafren Dyfrdwy – Water Toilets	109.45
	Ditto – Town Hall	127.68
	Gaskells – Waste July	28.55
	Ditto – August	28.55
	Andrew Evans – Grass Cutting	234.00
	Smith of Derby -Clock	285.60
	R H Bunner	34.92
	SLCC – Virtual National Conference	30.00
D/D	E On Electricity-Toilet	24.46
	BT	70.08
	Powys CC - Business Rates	977.25
	Service Charge	18.00

Resolved to accept invoices for payment.

- **Councillors Payments** – Cllr Stephenson felt Councillors should receive payments for expenses. Cllr Thomas advised this payment had been agreed by the Remuneration Panel and Councillors should not feel they can't claim it. Town Clerk advised these payments are subject to tax and members would have to be on a PAYE system.
- Cllr Lewis questioned the accumulation of these payments if they were not claimed by Councillors. Cllr Weston explained that although the amount is precepted it is then paid back by Councillors who do not wish to receive it.
- **RESOLVED** - Councillors must sign to accept the payment

<p>20.25 hours break for 5 minutes 20.33 meeting commences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashflow statement had been forwarded to Councillors and Cllr Mills talked members through various details, he also advised that Business Rates now have to be paid in full and it was unlikely MCBPT would be taking over the Town Hall in the foreseeable future. The only possible income would be the Thursday market. • Cllr Thomas explained the reasons behind the confusion with Council Tax/Busines Rates due to a misunderstanding at Powys CC. Town Clerk had contacted Powys CC on a couple of occasions to request a rebate as the hall had been closed due to the pandemic, unfortunately, Powys CC advised this was not possible. • Cllr Lewis requested to minute ‘This is another symbolic example of systemic issues in governance’ the first I saw of the council tax issue was in the Town Hall minutes. Cllr Lewis was disappointed that e mails had not been shared with all Councillors prior to the meeting. • Cllr Thomas felt it was a little unfair it was classed as a matter of governance. This matter evolved after the August meeting. • Cllr Lewis requested to minute He thinks it unprofessional that Councillors did not have this shared with them that this council tax bill it transpires came in early August, what a month and a half ago. • Cllr Stephenson proposed that payment is not paid for one month. Cllr Thomas advised this could be a poor strategy and lead to court action. Cllr Lewis seconded the proposal. Town Clerk advised this could have legal implications and would need to take advice. • Cllr Lewis requested Cllr Hayes to voice his opinion Cllr Hayes advised the conduit for this matter was the duty of the Town Clerk it was not his duty to transact the business of the council that is why council employed a Town Clerk. Cllr Lewis wished to have included in the minutes that he had made this request to Cllr Hayes ‘to represent us as our conduit constitutionally with Powys CC I speak as a resident not just a councillor but also as a councillor with a basic expectation to raise the issue will also of course go via the Welsh Government via UK Government and our primary contact and liaison is the person we elect and we pay to represent us.’ Cllr Hayes advised following an e mail from Cllr Mills and the Town Clerk he had lengthy discussions with portfolio holder for finance and the officer who has responsibility for business rates and he reported back on those discussions to the Town Clerk. Secondly Cllr Lewis is in error I am not the representative of the Town Council to transact its business that is the conduit of the Town Clerk. It is the business of the Town Council to instruct the Town Clerk on whatever it wishes to do. • Cllr Mills thanked Cllr Hayes for his help on this matter. • Cllr Weston requested a short summary from the Town Clerk regarding this. 	<p>TC</p> <p>JK</p> <p>CT</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Thomas asked if other Councillors were aware of any other council owned buildings that will have been placed out of action during the pandemic. Cllr Mills advised research regarding this had been carried out over the last month. • Cllr Stephenson again asked Councillors to vote on his proposal 4 for 5 against 1 abstention. Business Rates payment will not be stopped. Action will be taken as per Finance Committee instructions 	
<p>MINUTE 79 – PLANNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Kibble proposed that Planning Committee comments be sent to residents of Hendome. AGREED • Residents were now concerned about a deviation to the original planning application along with other comments received for the August meeting. • A strong LDP was now and it is clear in LDP that Hendomen is a hamlet and not considered a place for further development. It is likely the only plans that would be considered would be affordable housing or sensitive infill. Residents and Council would be able to make representations to the Committee if they so wished. • Cllr Kibble will check the plans to check how they deviate from the original on behalf of the Planning Committee. • Cllr Mills observed that residents did not appear to have been involved when considering the application. Cllr Thomas advised that in TOR they will always attempt to contact residents for their input. Residents had been contacted to join the meeting if they wished. • Cllr Kibble will pursue and write a letter to the Powys CC Planning Committee. 	<p>TC</p>
<p>MINUTE 80 – POLICIES</p> <p>Cllr Thomas proposed these policies should be left to October meeting as Councillors had not received them in sufficient time to view properly. Cllr Thomas also had an issue with one policy and will raise her concerns and suggestions via mail.</p> <p>AGREED agenda for October</p>	<p>TC</p>
<p>MINUTE 81 – TOWN HALL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paranormal Group Cllr Thomas felt as Paranormal Group would be more than the guidelines of six although the organizer had carried out risk assessments that it would not be possible to honor their booking at this time. 2. Market Councillors had various issues with opening and monitoring the flow and safety in the Town Hall. Issues were raised regarding costs involved in opening following issues raised in Finance. Cllr Mills advised a risk assessment had been completed and he felt risk could be managed. Other indoor markets were open and working. 	

<p>Rents collected would cover cleaning and a designated person who would monitor the market. Cllr Mills suggested trying this for one month.</p> <p>Councillors also were asked to consider the cost if fines were issued for non-compliance.</p> <p>Suggested to make ready with Sanitizer which would be available at both entrances and signs which would clearly mark a one - way system around the hall, face masks would also need to be worn.</p> <p>There have been six regular traders prior to lockdown and they would get priority.</p> <p>Proposed to retain the Thursday market outside for now and review again at October's meeting. - RESOLVED. 9 for 1 against.</p> <p>3. Council were reminded that it is now possible to obtain a QR code for the NHS 'app' which is now available.</p> <p>4. Cllr Weston asked if council tax was not due to be paid would it be cost effective to open, against if council tax had to be paid anyway. It was agreed to leave this for one month until a reply had been received. Decision should be made on worst case scenario as this is the highest level of risk.</p> <p>5. Cllr Weston proposed that Council ensure they are ready to open the Town Hall for at least the market from the date of the October meeting should it be determined at that point it should be able to proceed and that should include appropriate research in to track and trace and consideration on how that will be funded. Cllr Stephenson and you are instructing the Clerk to do that as it is the important point Oliver was making. Several Councillors seconded the proposal. AGREED</p> <p>6. Bollards</p> <p>Cllr Thomas questioned as this had been forwarded as an anonymous e mail had contact details been redacted by the Clerk. Answered by Town Clerk in the affirmative. These bollards had been designed to protect people walking and stop inconsiderate parking. Cllr Harper advised he had forwarded photos of a vehicle that had driven into a waste bin at the recycling site leaving litter scattered everywhere. More care is needed when driving.</p> <p>Cllr Weston requested this be considered in more detail when more meeting time is available and council is back to face to face meetings.</p> <p>Cllr Lewis requested that complainant is informed the bollards had been given permission by Planning and Highways. Originally the suggestion to have this pedestrian area was to stop vehicles parking and stopping access to the rear of the Town Hall. Councillors were reminded that this is a conservation and rules for that have to be followed.</p> <p>7. Finance Town Hall transfer</p> <p>Cllr Lewis required the whole cost of the transfer for the Town Hall not just 2019/2020. Cllr Lewis requested to see the loan agreement from the PLB given the huge escalation in the annual liability council have to precept for. Cllr Thomas advised there had been no other costs incurred apart from the last year and the Town Clerk has already passed those over to Councillors. Chairman reminded Councillors to keep order during the meeting. Cllr Lewis thought it amiss as this had come up</p>	<p>TC</p>
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seven years ago but he will accept the fact and wished a minute of that comment to go on record.

Cllr Lewis went on to enquire regarding the reserves of the MCBPT which he had not had sight of. Also, that the loan had been miscalculated and mismanaged. Cllr Weaver advised that minute from 2017-2018 explain in detail how the loan was determined. Cllr Weston explained to Cllr Lewis regarding the loan payments which had been identified at the Precept meeting in 2019.

Brown Signs monies were used but not for transfer.

8. MCBPT

Trust will take over the Town Hall when it is in a position to do so.

Cllr Lewis Need to plan ahead for worst risks, town council have taken over a lot of costs connected with this transfer. Finance Committee have plans for this.

MINUTE 82 - TOURISM

1. Draft minutes had been made available to Councillors.
2. Cllr Kibble advised she had been contacted by Christmas Festival Committee as they wished to remove the old lights and replace with new lights. Powys CC have been contacted re pruning the tree previously, there will be a Cherry Picker available at that time which could be used to do some pruning. Christmas Lights are obtaining quotes to prune the tree and Cllr Kibble would like to gain permission from Powys CC for this.
3. Cllr Thomas requested some information on the video mentioned in the minutes.
4. A further film crew were in the area and Cllr Beavan suggested it would be protocol to inform the Council prior to doing this.

MINUTE 83 – 20's Plenty Campaign

1. Cllr Thomas proposed write to Posy's CC re the pilot scheme as suggested by Cllr Hayes to request that Montgomery be considered as a small town along with Handomen and Caerhowel and if more details of this could be provided. Cllr Hayes advised there was no template at the moment.
2. Cllr Lewis requested a working group to carry this forward similar to the playground group. Cllr Thomas suggested that council agree who should be on this group. Cllr Thomas offered to help with consultation but not to be permanently part of the group. Cllr Harper and Cllr Lewis also offered to be on the group.
3. Cllr Andrew advised they were looking for volunteers for the Speed Check should there be any interest.

MINUTE 84 – WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

Cllr Stephenson had provided two comprehensive reports for Councilors to view and this had been passed to Mr. Cusack for inclusion on the website. Want to target to 90% which would be an improvement. Cllr Stephenson will

send a link. Cllr Kibble thanked him for this concise document. Mr. Cusack will advise council prior to undertaking any work involving costs. The whole site needs to be complaint not just Town Council section.

MINUTE 85 – ASSETS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference were not presented. Cllr Kibble requested four Councilors be identified to work on any assets the council may have. Assets need gathering together in an orderly way. This will be a working group initially. Cllr Lewis again stated regarding mismanagement and also that he had spoken with Cllr Jones to suggest that he may like to be part of this group as he had knowledge and experience. Cllr Thomas suggested newer Councilors should work with more experienced Councilors on this, Cllr Stephenson commented that Cllr Jones should be able to use IT. Cllr's Jones, Lewis, Harper and Stephenson. Cllr Thomas reminded members that as a committee it will be serviced by the Town Clerk requiring agenda's and minutes plus it will place an extra burden on the Clerk. Proposed and Agreed this will be a working group for the time being with a view to becoming a committee in future.

MINUTE 86 – CORRESPONDENCE

None

MINUTE 87 – ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Safe Guarding (Policy)

Precept

Allotments

Policies

Procedural Issues (Zoom)

Cllr Thomas reminded Councillors remote training was now available and every Councillor should complete Code of Conduct within six months of joining Council as per Standing Orders.

RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS: Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (2) to resolve that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted

RESOLVED

‘In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960(2) the Town Council resolves that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.’

MINUTE 88 – STAFF SALARIES

Cllr Thomas advised Councillors that Local Government employees get a cost of living rise annually negotiated by National Association of Local Councils. This year the Town Clerks hourly sum is 37pence per hour this will be backdated to April 2020 and paid in October 2020. Council is required to pay this amount. **RESOLVED** to pay this hourly amount from April 2020.