

Minutes of the ZOOM meeting of Montgomery Town Council held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.15 pm.

**This meeting was recorded.**

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 114 - Apologies** - Cllr D Jones – did not join via Zoom

**MINUTE 115 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**MEMBERS of the public were invited to speak.**

**MINUTE 116 - CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Andrew advised members to stand on lower steps and social distance at the Remembrance service on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

It was possible that the whole service would be live streamed for members of the public. A conversation was ongoing with the organisers to ensure those participating were happy with this idea.”

Stewards will be in place.

Montgomery Castle will be open again on 9<sup>th</sup> November

**MINUTE 117 – TOWN HALL**

- It was reported that market was running very well with people being mindful of restrictions in place.
- Following lockdown, extra traders will be considered using the rear lobby, plus one more on the lower floor.
- Kitchen has been included in Risk Assessment and cleaned. Traders are using the kitchen and leaving utensils. It was agreed to change lock on kitchen door and lock kitchen with immediate effect

**MINUTE 118 – LOCAL RESOLUTION**

Cllr Lewis wished to make a proposal –

*‘Notwithstanding approval of Cllr Mills’ proposals to engage a third party to address the interpersonal issues that have emerged on this Council as part of a local resolution process, this Council does not endorse nor condone the contents of a letter written by Cllr Mills in the October meeting pack. It also does not refer any single Councillor for referral to third party expertise, but refers this Council as a Body Corporate for whatever guidance and direction and support as may be necessary’*

**No vote was taken on this proposal.**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contents of the letter re Motions 1 and 2 agreed at the previous meeting had not been divulged to the public and both motions had been agreed unanimously by members of this council.</li> <li>2. A number of comments were made regarding the contents of the previous letter.</li> <li>3. Members were once again reminded that the proposal made at the October meeting was voted on and agreed unanimously.</li> <li>4. A third - party mediator has been contacted and is agreeable to taking this forward.</li> <li>5. Councillors requested that another person be contacted as agreed in October meeting for a comparison.</li> <li>6. All Councillors would be involved initially to give an understanding of what is involved in the mediation process, it would then be at the discretion of the mediator how they wish to proceed.</li> <li>7. Cost of an hourly rate had been provided, as it was not clear at the moment how long this process may take it was proposed to set a ceiling of ten hours maximum. No agreement.</li> <li>8. All members must learn to respect one another and learn lessons from this.</li> <li>9. Further investigation will be made as agreed in Octobers meeting. Final decision will be made at November 26<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. AGREED</li> </ol>	<p>TC</p> <p>TC</p>
<p><b>MINUTE 119 – PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION</b></p>	
<p>Cllr Lewis had put forward three proposals listed in order: -.</p>	
<p><b>Dog Bins –</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research regarding costs had been undertaken.</li> <li>• Comments. were made regarding costing extra bins for Caerhowel and emptying of extra bins by Powys CC.</li> <li>• Cllr Weston requested that bags and bins were considered as two separate items.</li> <li>• It was noted that the clerk had previously researched dispensers and bags, including biodegradable options</li> <li>• Consideration may be given to spreading the cost over two or three years. Costing should be considered for emptying extra bins. Town Clerk will check with Powys CC if extra bins could be included in their schedule.</li> </ul>	<p>TC</p>
<p><b>Telephone Box – Bishops Castle Road</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone Box cost is minimal to purchase but must consider connected costs.</li> <li>• Box will be left in situ for the time being and another location considered at a later date.</li> <li>• A future cost must be considered with regard to disconnection and removal, there may be hidden costs to also consider.</li> <li>• As this requires further investigation it was agreed to discuss at a following meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>OL</p>
<p><b>Town Survey –</b> Various ways of gaining people’s opinions were suggested i.e.- social media, talking to people face to face, website and paper surveys which</p>	

would be available in various outlets. Cllr Thomas offered her help expertise in this.

It was proposed an amount was put in the precept for these projects. AGREED

#### **MINUTE 120 – PRECEPT**

Town Clerk had produced the Precept showing predicted costs should the Town Council maintain the building 2021/2022, if MCBPT run the building and if COVID-19 continues, these were colour coded for ease of use.

- Prior to the discussion Cllr Kibble wished to thank the finance committee for producing the precept in this way giving the three options which made it very clear and easy to see.
- Town Clerk proceeded to go through the various points answering queries as they were raised. Councillors considered the budget and requested changes or additions.
- Various conversations took place with regard to items on the Precept
- A question was raised with regard to a bequest from a former resident, this was passed to MCBPT by executor.
- Final figures for the Precept will be resolved 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

#### **MINUTE 121 – COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

An e mail request was made by this committee to add the following paragraph to the Complaints Policy.

**Should a procedural dispute arise between individual members of Council or its paid employees, the completed complaint form and supporting documents should be sent to the Chair of the Complaints Committee.**

- Prior to the discussion members were advised this paragraph should not be accepted as it stands and requested this be discussed in more depth at the next meeting.
- Chairman of the Complaints Committee advised she would like this resolved now. It was a recommendation of the committee as there was no procedure in place to deal with this at a local level.
- Members were advised the present policy was a good document to deal with complaints raised by the public. Inclusion of Councillors and staff within this document was not suitable.
- A discussion took place providing views and comments on the proposal,
- Questions were raised whether a complaint had been made, Committee members advised an issue had been raised with the committee which would be considered objectively. This was a procedural not personal complaint. Committee were hopeful to resolve this complaint as an internal matter. Complainant has been asked to comply with this procedure.
- Members were asked to consider if they had a Declaration of Interest in this matter. No declarations were made.
- Members were advised that other protocols could be considered in the future.

- Councillors were once again reminded that when this policy had been reviewed by the working group it was designed and agreed for members of the public.
- Further discussions ensued followed by: -

Proposed by Cllr Beaven

**Should a procedural dispute arise between individual members of Council or its paid employees, the completed complaint form and supporting documents should be sent to the Chair of the Complaints Committee.**

Cllr Thomas added an amendment to the proposal

**That this complaints procedure must not be about a member of staff because a complaint about a member of staff must go to that member of staff's line manager and the line manager must try to resolve it that's what the policy says in terms of disciplinary things for a member of staffs conduct behaviour or performance.**

**Amendment 4 for 5 against 1 Abstention**

Cllr Thomas wished to minute that council lay themselves open to a challenge if we start messing with staffing issues in a way that is separate from our procedures that we have already agreed, that are about staffing.

**Cllr Beaven Original Proposal 5 for 4 against 1 abstention – AGREED**

Councillors felt this had been a good discussion and fared well for the future.

#### **MINUTE 122 – PLANNING**

Planning committee had forwarded their findings regarding the pre planning for Forden Road that they wished council to endorse.

Comments were raised with regard to employment, this is not an employment site it is residential. Could add that construction site employ local people.

At Brades Meadow there was originally a plan for a play area.

Any maintenance should be agreed going forward.

This development will be owned by a housing association.

Cllr Kibble will add comments prior to sending the following reply: -

#### **General Comments on the proposal from Montgomery Town Council**

MTC welcomes the variety of housing types offered and that good provision has been made for those with limited mobility. Before the balance of types of dwelling are finalised MTC would need assurance that there is a clear evidence base for need for specific housing types given there are a number of empty properties on new developments in the town and Montgomery itself provides restricted employment opportunities. There is an obvious need for affordable homes and housing for older people and we would wish to see a full range of 'help to buy' schemes and a mix of the five types of identified affordable housing in Powys. Local knowledge and a sound evidence base are required to determine the most appropriate housing stock. Given the development on Brades Meadow over the last ten years has provided well for larger 3 and 4 bedroomed houses, this is particularly important. Incidentally the latest completed development of 10 houses adjacent to this proposal site is not shown on the location plan.

Although the site is categorised as residential use it is not designated for housing development in the Powys LDP. To avoid over-development of a small

JK

town with limited infrastructure and employment opportunity, MTC considers that this proposal would more than satisfactorily meet the housing needs of the town within the lifetime of this LDP and would favour this site over Verlon Fields which is less suitable for housing.

This is a sensitive site on a main approach to the town and the Conservation Area and within the setting of an important Scheduled Monument. MTC is pleased to note the planned tree planting and a layout that sets houses back from the Forden and New Roads thus softening the impact of a dense build environment. MTC would object to the removal of the boundary hedgerow especially if replaced with larch lap fencing. The essential rurality within the setting of the Castle Hill would be softened by maintaining the existing hedgerow for the whole site.

For similar reasons MTC would expect attention to be given to the building materials employed and detail of design. We note that the roofing material is not specified but would propose this is slate in keeping with the majority of the townscape and given the visibility from vantage points on Castle Hill.

MTC would commend the nearby Verlon Close development as a well-designed low-cost housing site absorbed into the townscape.

MTC would expect to see homes built to exemplary energy efficiency standards for both environmental and economic reasons. We would assume that new build will incorporate either ground or air source heat pumps, solar panels to all roofs alongside a high level of insulation. MTC will be interested to receive details of how such measures will be fully incorporated.

#### **Drainage**

There will need to be a comprehensive drainage plan for this site. MTC are aware of problems with drainage, particularly on the New Road side, and are also aware that other sites drain to this field.

#### **Highways**

This is a major area of concern as the proposed access road is both close to the exit/entrance to New Road and, due to the topography there are extremely poor visibility sight lines onto the Forden Road. The size of the development means we are potentially looking at some 50 - 60 additional vehicles accessing the site as well as trades and deliveries. This is a significant increase for the area, particularly given the current speed of traffic. The 30mph zone will need to be re-sited to begin on the north side of New Road.

A pavement will require construction from the access road to meet the existing pavement at Trefaldwyn Vets to enable residents to walk safely into town. We would also propose [provision of a bus stop and shelter to assist older residents and discourage car use for short journeys. Montgomery centre is some distance uphill from the site. As several properties are wheelchair accessible the pavement should be wide enough to safely accommodate a motorised wheelchair.

#### **Other**

MTC would suggest provision of a small children's play area in the design as the development is some distance from the nearest play provision.

MTC would be pleased to see confirmation of sufficient existing sewerage capacity at the Sarkly Lane site and also details of electricity supply capability.

MTC would not wish to see a sub-station at the site or in the vicinity.

Residents are aware of bats and Great Crested Newts near or on the site. A full ecological survey needs to be undertaken and suitable mitigation and protective

measures put in place. Proposed tree planting and retention of the hedgerow corridor have the potential to enhance biodiversity. MTC commends the inclusion of wildlife corridors around the periphery of the site. We assume the pond is also a wildlife area and that appropriate provision will be made for safety of children with respect to the feature.

Some of the larger wheelchair accessible properties do not actually appear to have full accessibility throughout the building. We recognise these are merely example dwellings but this does require clarification at planning stage.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed development at this stage. We shall, of course, submit a full response to any subsequent application when submitted to the LPA

Fairdene Agreed