

Minutes of the meeting of Montgomery Town Council held on **Thursday 28th September 2023 at 7.15pm**

This meeting was recorded

Present in person:

Cllr Beaven, Cllr Andrew, Cllr Lewis, Cllr Humphreys, Cllr Lock, Cllr Weston, Cllr Stephenson

Present online:

In attendance:

Helen Royall (Town Clerk)

1.	Apologies	
	Cllr Kibble, Cllr Harper, Cllr Jones, Cllr Taylor	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	None	
3.	Break for the public	
	<p>Bruce Lawson attended the meeting to discuss the moto-cross events that have been happening at Hemdomen.</p> <p>The Following is a Verbatim report</p> <p>“Chris Wells of Hendomen and Bruce Lawson were both advised that David Cooke, motocross organiser, following his success against Lord Hague at Castle Caereinion as featured in last week’s County Times, is proposing to run as many motocross events as he can, perhaps as many as twenty, near Sutton Lane starting in November.</p> <p>Unlike Castle Caereinion Motocross Track which as I understand is run by a charity, the Hendomen events are being run as a business. Mr Cooke admitted this to me on 25th September and told Mr Wells he is involved in five sites as a business including organising the events at Castle Caereinion, some of which are visible on You Tube.</p> <p>There could be as many as 18 meetings per annum or even more on two tracks with consequent extra noise, sometimes for five or six hours at each meeting. Councillor Kibble can confirm its intrusiveness into Montgomery as well as Hendomen. There have been occasions when there were as many as 50 bikes racing at Sutton Lane. The riders are charged as much as £40 per day. This is business which is being run without any regard to residents.</p> <p>Mr Lawson suggested that there be a petition for all Montgomery and Hendomen residents to sign if they wish. The magistrates decided that as several Castle Caereinion residents supported the racing there, the number of events were sharply increased to 18 per annum. He suggested that this petition would mean that the support of the local community was not there for the event unlike at Castle Caereinion. They are also following up on some legal angles”.</p> <p>The council could not debate the support due to the item not being on the agenda; however the council agreed to add this to next month’s agenda for discussion.</p>	

4.	Chairpersons Announcements	
	<p>Cllr Beaven welcomed the council back after the summer break. Congratulations to Councillor Lewis re his successful book launch. Cllr Beaven asked the council to consider on a future agenda the use of the Mayoress's chain. Historically if there was a male consort the Mayoress's chain remained in the bank. However she suggested that the Council considers whether this part of the regalia could be utilised for the Deputy for formal situations. There is a broader aspect to consider, and that is insurance and security, but this needs careful consideration by Council and a minuted response to the suggestion for future reference.</p> <p>On Councils behalf, but with their consent Cllr Beaven wrote to Dr Anne Welton and the family on hearing of the sad passing of Dr John. Cllr Beaven also expressed personal condolences to past Mayor Mike Mills, on the recent death of his father.</p> <p>Praise and thanks was given to Montgomery Show and Carnival Committee Committees for the splendid efforts, this year and to Sue Blower as Show president on her successful year.</p> <p>Negotiations with the Trust have been fruitful in reinstating the Council chamber for meetings. From November onwards the council will return to the upper hall and forego the market area.</p> <p>Cllr Beaven was saddened to learn that Mark Cadwallader will stand down as Chair of MCBPT at the forthcoming AGM, and she expressed my private thanks for his efforts in securing the lease. MTC will of course do likewise when this becomes 'official' at a later date.</p> <p>It was emphasised that communications to and from MTC must be generated and routed back to the Town Clerk, and that decisions made by committees must be brought to full Council for ratification. Individual Council members must not compose documents on Councils behalf.</p> <p>Reports from Committees should be circulated with documents for the monthly MTC Council meetings, and verbal reports should only be given if proposals require additional explanation.</p> <p>Lastly Cllr Beaven reminded Council of the code of conduct for behaviour at meetings and urge members to recall that brevity is the best policy especially in the light of the evening's agenda, and we should aim to conclude in a timely manner.</p>	
5.	Minutes of the last meetings	
	<p>Small grammatical change to item 4.</p> <p><i>RESOLVED: The minutes of the Ordinary Business Meeting 27th July 2023 are approved and signed as a correct record.</i></p>	
6.	Information from the minutes	
	<p>Item 6 (Item 6) This document needs to be brought to the next meeting to be signed. Assets committee needs to run through the items in the filing cabinet and to retain items. Documents could be scanned in and saved digitally. Another round of sifting needs to take place before the scanning happens.</p> <p>Item 7 There has been an update and the information from Barcud is now going into the Crier. There have been some communications from members of the public in regards to the allocation which have been replied to by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Item 14 Letter has yet to appear from the community group. This has been chased by the Town Clerk.</p>	
7.	Report from County Councillor	
	Solar farm	

A while ago a pre-application for a field of solar PV panels was put forward for the field adjacent to the substation on the Forden Road. This was not progressed to full application but a different application has now appeared from the same landowner, but this time in a field just to the north of Gaer farm, between Caerhowel and Forden.

In this location it would be fairly hidden and I believe not visible from Montgomery. In my opinion this is a relatively sensible location for a solar PV array, so I have indicated that I have no objection to this application now.

Buses during the water main replacement

I have only just had information from Tanat Valley regarding their suggested alterations during the road closures for the water main replacement, but at present this would involve the T12 not coming to Montgomery at all during the period October – December. Instead it would divert via Caerhowel and Forden. I have raised this with the council transport officer Sarah Leyland-Morgan, and said this is not acceptable as it leaves people that do not have access to a car with no transport to Newtown and Welshpool. Sarah has said that she will liaise with the bus companies to come up with a solution.

Bus signs

I have been promised that proper bus stop signs are going to be installed at those stops where there is currently no indication that it is a bus stop (end of Gaol Road, Forden Road and opposite the fire station). The one on Forden Road will be moved slightly further out, just beyond the entrance to the vet, so that it better serves the new estate.

20mph

The main feedback I have had regarding the 20mph limit was from people that were outside the new limits wishing that the 20mph zone extended further. I have not had any feedback complaining about the new limits (though I am aware there is much complaint nationally on social media).

Houses on Forden Road

My understanding is that the bungalows and the one 4-bed house on the new estate will be allocated using the standard homes in Powys rules, meaning that they could be allocated to families without a local connection. The bungalows have specific disability features that will be offered to priority applications needing those features, and I understand that they have all already been allocated.

The remaining houses will be given greater local priority, and will only be offered to families without local connection if there are no appropriate applications from families with a local connection. These have not been allocated yet and the route for people that wish to be considered is still to apply via the homes in Powys website. Barcud are putting information about this in the Crier that will be circulated at the start of October.

Moto cross

I am aware that the organisers of the moto cross events that happened on Sutton Farm last year are intending to hold more events this winter. I had a number of complaints last year about the noise.

Apparently this is not a planning issue, events of this type are allowed under permitted development, as long as there are no more than 14 in any calendar year.

Environmental Health can investigate if they receive complaints from the public. Dan Stykuc is the appropriate environmental health officer and is aware of the issue.

There will be people both in favour of and opposed to these events, I feel it would be useful for us to gauge the community reaction to these events, especially those living closest to the site, so that the town council can decide whether to intervene or not. I am in the process myself of gauging reaction in Hendomen and Caerhowel (via a request for views inserted in a newsletter) and will feed back when I have information to report.

ECO retrofit funding

There is considerable activity within the council and by commercial installers to roll out retrofit measures funded by the ECO grant (this is funded by a levy on the big energy suppliers). I have spoken to many people about this, some with good experience and some with bad experience. The main challenge seems to be that there is a long list of installers that are competing for the work, but it is very hard to identify which are the good installers and which are the bad ones. I am in conversation with the council housing officers about this with the aim of conducting a satisfaction survey with those that have gone through the system, which can then be used by potential clients to help in the selection of installers. The scheme is extremely beneficial for those that do qualify and I am encouraging people to take advantage of it, but I am very happy for people to discuss it with me first so that I can provide some guidance.

Abermule bulking station

The bulk transfer station at Abermule is at last operational, the long delay was due to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary fire safety certification from NRW which has now been obtained. The site is purely used as a way of aggregating the waste gathered from the kerbside collections such that it can be transported elsewhere for processing.

Recruitment of sufficient staff into the waste team is still an issue and this is still leading to some failures to collect from the kerbside on the proper dates. When I am notified by residents, the team are fairly good at collecting from addresses where a particular problem has been reported.

**Cllr Jeremy Brignell-Thorp
September 2023**

8.	Highways		
	Good feedback was received that the Powys County Council Street sweeper has been through the town which had cleared some problems with footpaths and roads. No other issues to report.		
9.	Finance		
a.	Transactions and current financial position		
	EXPENDITURE		
	SALARY		£ 594.40
	SALARY		£ 508.82
	HMRC	HMRC	£ 171.20
	Hafren	Public toilet water	£ 329.84
	David Beddoes	Tan-y-mur Honorarium	£ 500.00
	Susan Blower	Town Crier	£ 150.00
	Helen Royall	800 yrs celebration	£ 370.00
	CADW	Play at Castle	£ 360.00

	Powis Estates	Playground Repairs/Rent	£	26.00	
	MCBPT	Town Hall rental (THT)	£	1,000.00	
	Gaskells	Waste	£	44.89	
	Guild Membership	Town Crier	£	30.00	
	Grey Matter	Microsoft Licence	£	260.64	
	Helen Royall	800 yrs celebration	£	79.20	
	<p>Nothing of not to report. Discussion around the allocation of the reserves was had. This had been discussed with options at previous council meetings which included paying back into the load to reduce the term, a high interest savings account or using for identified project. It was discussed that an appropriate use of the current reserves would be to support the development of the play park at Tan y Mur. Further discussions and information on the play park is in the minutes Item 12a</p> <p>Proposed: The reserves identified by the RFO and Finance Committee be allocated to support the installation of the Tan y Mur Play Area in addition to budgeted amounts for 2023, fundraising from Friends of Montgomery Play Park and Grants.</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Weston Seconded: Cllr Beaven</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Motion passed</p> <p>In next year's precept it was suggested by Finance Committee that the play parks are split out in the budget lines to ensure expenditure and income is accurately recorded. The allocation of funds for Gaol Road was also discussed for this year and next year. There is an allocation of budget for repairs and new equipment and last year an amount was earmarked for Gaol Road equipment.</p> <p>Proposed: That costs were gained for the replacement of some of the equipment at Gaol Road in this financial year with a focus on the swing set using the amount allocated in the budget and earmarked</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Lewis Seconded: Cllr Stephenson</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Motion passed</p>				
	<p>Council was reminded that we only have a small number of free meetings at the Town Hall and if in person meetings are needed it would be better to book the Institute. Council was encouraged where possible to use online meetings to ensure that meetings happen in a timely fashion and as may members can attend. It was acknowledged that some members do not have access to the internet so there is still a need for in person meetings.</p>				
	<p>Discussed the amount of contribution the MPBT pays to the council for some of the management fees including the insurance, toilet supplies and contribution towards water. Last year the council provided a breakdown of contributions which presented the MPBT with a total. They have asked just for a contribution rather than a breakdown of the separate areas.</p>				

	<p>Discussions were had around what would be a fair recharge amount and council agreed that they only wanted to charge that was fair, due to the fact that</p> <p>Proposed: To ask the MCBPT to contribute £1450 toward supporting the running of the town hall including contributions towards insurance</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Lewis Seconded: Cllr Stephenson</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Motion Passed</p>	
b.	Play at the Castle	
	<p>Thanks were given to Mike Mills who had arranged the play at the castle and a final income of £923.04. It was acknowledged that the income from the play would not be coming to the council next year, however the council would like to support the play if they can.</p>	
c.	Approval of Honorariums	
	<p>The council precepted two Honorariums to individuals in the town. £500 to D. Beddoes for the maintenance of the Tan y Mur car park and £150 to the Town Crier towards travel and expenses. Council was asked to approve this expenditure.</p> <p>Proposed: To approve the honorariums as in the precept for the Tan y Mur carpark and Town Crier</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Lewis Seconded: Cllr Weston</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Motion Passed</p>	
10.	Planning	
a	23/1214/TEL – response from council for approval	
	<p>Proposed response drafted by planning committee was reviewed. No comments on the approach and wording council were happy for the response to be sent to the Powys County Council.</p>	
11.	Tourism	
a	800 years at the Castle	
	<p>No updates. Reminder of council to attend if possible and hoping for the dry weather. A large amount of work had gone into the event and the council thanks the Tourism committee and also Cllr Kibble for organisation.</p>	
b	Christmas Lights and Event	
	<p>A member of the public attended the meeting on behalf of the Friends of Montgomery School to discuss the events associated with the Christmas lights including Santa and mince pie and mulled wine.</p> <p>The 2nd of December is booked for the Christmas lights switch on. The Saturday preceding is</p>	

	<p>booked for a coffee morning which is to provide the butties for the people putting up the lights. It is a bit later than previous years to avoid other events and to save electricity due to switching on one week later.</p> <p>Some queries as the organisation of the coffee morning and if all the licences are in place. The Town Clerk is collecting the hand over documents from the previous organisation to understand what is in place for this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa’s grotto – this will manage by the friends of the school. Due to the time and queues from last year it was proposed that there were earlier slots before the light turn on for the younger children with a break for the switch on and then continue for older Children. This is not a money-making activity as it is a community event. • Query from the Friends as to what other entertainment is being provided apart from the mulled wine and the mince pies which is to be provided by the Friends of the School. • Question around the hire of the Town Hall. Previously the Friends of the School paid for the upper town hall and they were happy to do this again. The Town Council needs to pay for the hire of the lower hall as in previous years <p>To be carried forward to the next Tourism meeting for discussion</p>	
12.	Assets Committee	
a	Play Park	
	<p>Meeting was held with Sovereign the play provider on site. Final decisions were made as to the location of the play equipment. It was decided that the area should be treated as a play field with equipment spread throughout the area to allow for expansion in the future but also to segment the play throughout with younger and older play zones. It was explained that the movement of the roundabout had been removed from the scope as this was a large amount of money without any guarantees as to if it would work. The old play area would remain open for now as the council does not have the budget to close and make good this area, also there have been no decisions as to what this space would be in the future. It was decided to use the monies that could be used to provide some smaller play equipment and interventions and that we could look at an accessible roundabout in the future. All maintenance and warranties are included in the contract for 5 years.</p> <p>Benches are being procured currently. There was a suggestion of looking at tree planting.</p> <p>Work is starting on the 9th October and council have agreed they can use the car parking area and the water from the allotments.</p> <p>Concern raised by the RFO about not having received the three comparative quotes as discussed at the previous meetings and the processes not having been followed. The council accepts that in the eagerness to get the project moving and time constraints on a grant that the relevant documentation was promised but not seen. This lead to an appointment</p> <p>There are some key lessons learnt from how the Council has managed the procuring and the partnership working which should be applied in the future. If the council is entering into a similar arrangement in the future this needs to be formalised from the start with a clear understanding of how finances and procurement is to be managed. The Council needs to always adhere to the financial regulations if we are procuring items this is critical. We have identified issues with the process with the play park from a management and financial point of view. From this point forward any future projects should take these lessons learnt and apply this to future projects.</p>	

	Interpretation and dedication plaques were discussed, and this will be discussed with the Friends of Montgomery Play Park.	
13.	Town Hall	
a.	Changing updated MOU	
	The document is not legally binding and is quite long. Council would prefer to see a shorter version that is more concise. This needs to go to the Town Hall Committee to review the document which will bring the amendments back to the full council for approval.	
b.	Cleaning Update	
	This will be taken to staffing committee and brought back to council as a confidential matter. The Town Hall Trust has been raising concerns about cleaning and have arranged for some deep cleaning to be undertaken.	
13.	Monthly Surgery	
	No further progress at the moment in negotiation with the institute.	
14.	War Memorial Proposal	
	<p>Cllr Lewis presented a comprehensive paper addressing the maintenance of the interpretation board and signage at the war memorial which has fallen into disrepair and has out of date information.</p> <p>The paper outlined funding options and potential costs and outlined a proposal to contact other councils in Montgomeryshire to gain donations towards the replacement of this signage. It was also proposed that the Town Council could contribute towards the signage. There is a bank account for the memorial and any additional funds can be added into this for ongoing works that may be needed.</p> <p>Suggestion was made to hold a coffee morning next year by the assets committee to raise funds for this cause and for ongoing maintenance in general. In the lead up to the coffee morning it was suggested that a photo competition could be held with a prize on the coffee morning. Cllr Lock offered to assist the assets committee in the organising of the coffee morning.</p> <p>Proposed: To go forward with fundraising opportunities including sending letters to the other councils and organising a coffee morning which would fund the change to the signage with any surplus to be used for ongoing maintenance.</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Weston Seconded: Cllr Lock</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>Motion Passed</p> <p>Cllr Lewis to draft the letter and send this to the Town Clerk for distribution</p>	
15.	Communications from the meeting	
	Barcud and how to register for housing Coffee mornings	

16.	Items for the next agenda	
	Staffing under confidential items Death Notices Dogs at the Castle Christmas Festival Events Remembrance Events Motorcross at Hendomen Issues arising at the Old Gaol Maintenance of hornbeams Equipment for upstairs in the Town Hall Mayoress Chain	