



# *Usk Town Council*

The Sessions House, Maryport Street Usk NP15 1AD

## **Minutes of an Annual Meeting of Usk Town Council held remotely on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 6.00pm.**

**Present:** Cllr A. Leathwood, Cllr Mrs. C. Wilkinson C. Cllr Strong, Cllr M Evans, Cllr R Galletley, Cllr S. Williams, Cllr A Watkins, Cllr M Howells, Cllr G Roderick., Cllr H. Graz, Cllr A. Ivin  
Town Clerk Mrs. T Huxley, Mrs. D Richards

### **1.1 Chair's Announcements**

#### **a) To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr McGowan

### **1.2 Election of Mayor for 2021/2022**

**Resolved:** Mayor Elect Cllr Glenn Roderick was installed as Chairman for 2021/2022

#### **a) Mayor to sign DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

**Resolved:** Cllr Glenn Roderick signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor.

### **1.3 Election of Deputy Mayor 2021/2022**

**Resolved:** Cllr Steve Williams was installed as Deputy Chairman 2020/2021

### **1.4 To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.**

Cllr Galletley declared an interest in the appointment of the Town Constables.

### **1.5 Retiring Chairman's report Cllr Mrs. C. Wilkinson**

*"I have found the writing of this report to be very difficult. Difficult to capture the anxieties, pressure, sadness and the optimism and hope of the past year.*

*In pre Covid years the Mayors' report was full of anecdotes about formal Civic occasions, joyful public engagements, festivals and fundraising events all memorable and easy to describe with enthusiasm.*

*This year has been memorable but for very different reasons.*

*I agreed to stay on as Mayor for a further term in what was initially thought to be a caretaker role. This was going to be a quiet year, an easy year, just ticking over until Covid was eradicated. How wrong we were!!*

*As a Council we have mastered Zoom (well almost) and as a Mayor I have attended 54 Zoom meetings and 21 Team meetings with outside agencies. I have lost count of the number of e mails, telephone discussions and site meetings with County Councillors and MCC officers.*

*Initially there was the fury around a possible one-way system being introduced, as part of Covid measures. It was a plan we opposed from the start but resulted in much of the flack being aimed at us and the creation of a cottage industry making protest signs. The introduction of the traffic lights was the most acceptable option when it was apparent that MCC were intent on introducing measures*



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*in line with Welsh Government guidelines. That too of course, resulted in criticism and constant complaints from businesses and motorists.*

*My sincere thanks go to the SLOBS team (Single Lane On Bridge Street) comprising Cllrs Williams, Howells, Tracey, and Diane who along with myself smoothed ruffled feathers, organised pull ins for 'drop offs' supervised deliveries, replaced barriers that had been moved and kept in constant touch with Highways to suggest improvements to the system, and arranged site visits to offer first-hand advice. I think I can honestly say, we took much of the fire intended for MCC and the group are to be congratulated for diffusing many difficult situations that could have escalated.*

*Further to our credit we provided and funded the new toilet block by the Play Park and part funded the Post Office, in its new premises, to ensure its survival. When we were faced with the threat of losing our Road Sweeper, we agreed to fund his salary to ensure we retained his services. All of the Town Council's work and responsibilities have continued without interruption and to the usual high standard thanks to our staff team.*

*We still await the resurfacing of the Memorial Hall car park, double yellow lines on Castle Parade and 20 mph speed limit throughout the town, all promised and constantly chased up but no action so far. The Usk Master Plan is still on the table, but discussions have yet to re commence.*

*In September we were faced with the closure of the Recycling centre. Despite a report to the Public Services Committee, a petition and letters of protest delivered to every household in the town, signed and returned in their hundreds, all our efforts fell on deaf ears. Thanks go particularly to the SURF group, a collaboration of Council members and residents and to Cllrs. McGowan and Ivin who prepared and delivered our arguments to MCC very eloquently. We now seek to find a way of re using the site for the benefit of the town and through Cllr. Graz have prepared a business plan for consideration.*

*There have been a few engagements during the year. In November, a simple ceremony to mark Remembrance Day held at the Cenotaph with representatives from the uniformed services, the Royal British Legion and the Town Council. It comprised a short service the playing of the last post and reveille and laying of wreaths.*

*In early December with no Reindeer parade Father Christmas took to a vintage tractor and trailer to drive around the town. It was a spontaneous event, no advanced publicity just word of mouth as Father Christmas and his elves set out on their journey. This simple event gave joy to so many people, children and adults alike.*

*On New Years' Eve we said our goodbyes to Cllr. Jill Jeremiah as her funeral cortege stopped at the entrance to the Sessions House for a minute's silence. I was honoured to attend her funeral representing the Council she had served for over 30 years.*



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*Fundraising of course has been impossible this year with so many restrictions on numbers and venues, Last year I raised £4,000 and Ty-Hafen received a cheque for £2,000. My other charities agreed to the rest of the money being retained in the hope that I could add to it. In fact, that has been the case not through any fund-raising efforts on my part but to the transference of the Mayor's allowance into the pot. I am pleased to say that I can now present a cheque for £2,000 to The Friends of Chernobyl's Children and £600 to Usk Brass Band.*

*In conclusion we have all witnessed the generous spirit of so many people in this town with the formation of the Help and Support group and the free meal service provided by the ladies of the Catholic Church. There have also been so many examples of individual acts of kindness. Our hospitality venues have diversified and provided 'take a ways', and deliveries, so that we could all have the occasional treat even in lockdown.*

*Sadly, we have also had the downside, the Social media detractors whose one aim in life seems to be to trash anything and everything we do for this town. These are people who would never put themselves in the firing line or make any worthwhile contribution to their community. Thankfully, they are the minority.*

*This is a year none of us will ever forget, we have worked together as a cohesive team and are stronger for it. As restrictions relax there is the possibility that we will soon meet again face to face but personally I will miss the cries of 'can you hear me' and 'you're on mute' or the sound of violin practice in the background.*

*I cannot end without acknowledging the constant help and support I have had from Tracey and Diane, quite truthfully, they have kept me sane. To my Deputy Cllr Watkins and to all my fellow colleagues, thank you for putting your trust in me and always being there for help and advice."*

## **1.6 Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.**

**To note the Minutes of last Annual Meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were adopted at the Ordinary held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**

**Resolved:** These were noted

## **1.7 To review and formally adopt the model Code of Conduct.**

**Resolved:** The Code of Conduct was formally adopted by Full Council

## **1.8 To review and formally adopt Standing Orders for 2021/2022**

**Resolved:** The Standing Orders were formally adopted by Full Council

## **1.9 To review and adopt Financial Regulations.**

**Resolved:** The Financial Regulations was formally adopted by Full Council

## **2.0 To review and adopt the Annual Risk Assessment**

**Resolved:** This was reviewed & adopted by Full Council



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## **2.1 To review and adopt the following Council policies:**

- ❖ Freedom of Information
- ❖ General Privacy Notice
- ❖ Information & Data Protection Policy
- ❖ Press, Media & Publicity
- ❖ Safeguarding Policy
- ❖ Social Media Policy
- ❖ Complaints Policy

**Resolved:** All of the above were formally adopted by Full Council

## **2.2 Adoption of Income & Expenditure Report for 2021/2022 note S.137 Expenditure and Council Assets**

See attached the Financial Report for the period of April 2020 to March 2021

The following was reviewed by Full Council.

- Annual Return
- Internal Auditors Report
- Income and Expenditure
- Balance sheet
- Annual Governance Statement
- Council Assets
- Section 137 spending

It was reported Year End figures have been internally audited.

### **Resolved:**

- All of the above was approved and it was resolved to adopt the End of year Accounts for 2020/21
- The Annual Return was approved and that the Responsible Finance Officer along with the Chairman will sign the Annual Return for submission to External Auditor.

## **2.3 To note the independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Annual Report (RPWAR) 2021-2022 was adopted at the Ordinary Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 relating to Councillor Allowances – if councillors wish to forgo allowances, please submit in writing to the Clerk.**

### **Resolved:**

- The RPWAR was noted.
- Members will notify the Clerk in writing should they wish to forgo payment.

## **2.4 To review council's and staff subscriptions**

- **One Voice Wales**
- **Society of Local Council Clerks**

**Resolved:** The above subscriptions were approved by Full Council



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## **2.5 To confirm Insurance Cover Period from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**

**Resolved:** This was confirmed by Full Council

## **2.6 Proposals for appointments of members to committees and as representatives of local organizations.**

See attached.

## **2.7 Nominations for Town Constables.**

Cllr Leathwood proposed Robert Hamer and Shaun Galletley retain their positions as Town Constables for the coming year.

**Resolved:** All Cllrs were in favour. Cllr Galletley did not vote on this matter.

Robert Hamer and Sean Galletley will retain their positions as Town Constables for the coming year 2021/2022.

## **2.8 To Receive and adopt the Annual Report 2020/2021**

**Resolved:** To receive and adopt Annual Report 2020/2021

The Clerk advised that the Annual Report will be published on the Council's website.

Printed copies will be made available.

## **2.9 To determine the time and place of Ordinary Meetings of the Council up to and including the next Annual Meeting**

**Resolved:** Ordinary Meetings of the Council will be held at 6pm on the 2nd Monday of each month via Zoom links until further notice.

The Annual Meeting formally closed at 6.40pm