

Usk Town Council

The Sessions House, Maryport Street Usk NP15 1AD

Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting by Usk Town Council (UTC) held in Sessions House and via Zoom on Monday 10th February 2025 at 6.00pm

Present

Cllr D. Harrison, Cllr G Howells, Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin, County Cllr T Kear, Cllr D Richards, Cllr K. Peacock – remotely via Zoom, RFO D. Nash, Clerk A. Morgan

20.9 To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr B. Thomas

21.0 Public Open Forum

(15 minutes at the discretion of the mayor.) Members of the public are invited to address the Council in relation to items on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 5 minutes unless directed by the Chair. A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

A member of the public noted that it is difficult to hear all discussions and asked if a sound system could be set up for future meetings. Chair responded that we would consider it.

21.1 To disclose personal and pecuniary interest in items of business listed below None

21.2 County Councillors participation

County Cllr T. Kear

Blocked drains:

MCC has such a long list for the whole county that there is no time frame agreed. MCC have only 2 vacators in operation and for the whole county and one operative is off sick. Operations are reactive at this current time. Cabinet also mentioned impact of climate change and farm management which has led to lots of issues around the countryside.

Road Maintenance:

The replanned resurfacing of the road from the Three Salmons junction to the Iron Bridge has been delayed since before 2020. MCC are not able to give an answer due to proposed work on the Chain Bridge.

The condition of the road at Three Salmons junction and lack of white lines have been reported several times. Cllr T. Kear will continue to raise the issue of safety in crossing the road at the Three Salmons junction. Cllr M. Howells reported that work had been done on the potholes.

County Cllr M. Howells

MCC Budget Consultation:

Session available Usk Hub 2-5pm on Wednesday 19th February

Fostering Team:

1st Wednesday of each month 12-2pm at Usk Hub for anyone interested in finding out more about fostering.

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Signage:

Trefynwy sign A449 was misspelt and has been replaced.

Welsh Blood Service:

81 donations were made which equates to 243 adults or 486 babies' lives saved at the blood donation session at Usk Memorial Hall on Friday 31st of January.

11 first time donors attended and 4 people signed up for the bone marrow registry.

Potholes:

The Three Salmons junction, one outside Plas Mawr, which seems to be recurring problem, and outside the Prison.

Two knocked-down barriers and broken eco-drains in the South Carpark have been reported.

Bollards outside the White Hare have been made save but not replaced. White Hare have offered to supply CCTV cameras to monitor the situation.

20mph:

The first 12-month report shows that casualties have been reduced by 28% and the £34 million cost of implementation was recouped within 6 months. Welsh Government project that annual savings of over £100 million will be made from this initiative.

Mill Lane:

Dŵr Cymru will be continuing their work at the pump station until June 2025, involving deliveries which may lead to some road closures.

21.3 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13th January 2025

Approved with following amendments:

18.8 Carl Touhig was misspelt

19.2 Quantum's cost is £2165+VAT (reduced by £250)

21.4 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 13th January 2025

19.0 Cllr T. Kear raised again the issue of publishing the Cost Centre Reports and asked for clarification on what is available to the public in terms of financial documents.

Cllr A, Ivin and Clerk outlined the following are to be published on the website:

- Minutes from Finance Committee meetings which outline any additional expenditure that needs agreement from the Council
- Annual Statements
- End of Year Reports
- Auditor's Report

Cllr T. Kear had previously requested specifically if full accounts, budgets and cash balances will be made available. The clerk has previously been in correspondence with One Voice Wales (OVW), SLCC and read NALC recommendations and has provided required documentation online for the public. Clerk stated that since taking office has made Finance Minutes available which has not been done previously and aims to be as transparent as possible. Cllr A. Ivin said council would welcome questions from the residents of the town. Residents should approach Town Council and Clerk with queries rather than approaching County Cllr T. Kear.

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Cllr A. Ivin reported that 22/23 audit is available. The 23/24 audit is due to be approved and will be published with the annual statement. When asked about Christmas Light expenditure she outlined that this is in the previous Finance minutes and is available online.

Chair stressed the point that releasing personal information such as salaries and business rentals would be in breach of GDPR.

ACTION on this matter will include further consultations with OVW and a response to queries from Cllr T. Kear and Mr A Leathwood.

21.5 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee

- **PAT testing**
done this month
- **Oak tree**
Morris' have been and have removed dead wood
- **Events**
Usk Primary School spent a day here using the courtroom for a debate.
March 22nd – Mayor's Evening of Recognition
- **Room Hire**
Increase of charges will be discussed at the next Sessions House meeting
- **Electrics**
Waiting for Rob Morgan to replace the Water Heater in old kitchen
Courtroom wall light, wiring and switch need replacing
- **Mesh covers for roof**
Roy Watkins to fix in better weather

21.6 To receive the monthly Finance report for January 2025

No payments were made outside the normal monthly running costs or not previously agreed. All payments are being made by BACS and Direct Debit.

The Rialtas and Bank statements reconcile aside from the known differences of the £14.68 adjustment from year end.

Agreed Payments: Payment to Newport Bus £103.31 –though Cllr M. Howells to have further discussions with MCC that they pay the bill as they had required the traffic management to keep the buses running which didn't then have that result.

Audit work for 23/24 is ongoing and expected to resolve in February 25.

The Draft Budget of 25/26 was discussed and recommended a Precept rise of 7.73% which gives a Precept for the year of £186,500.

Discussed contribution towards Defib battery for Usk CiW Primary and how we arrange purchase.

New Item 21.6a Budget 25/26 & Precept 25/26

Finance recommended 7.73% increase giving a precept of £186,500.

Cllr K. Peacock thanked Cllr A. Ivin and RFO Damian Nash for their work in preparing the Budget.

County Cllr T. Kear wants to know where that money is being spent. Chair reiterated that the Clerk to find out if the Budget should be published as agreed earlier in the meeting.

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Cllr D. Richards made the point that the figures had been discussed, worked through and agreed by all councillors and the budget had not been set by individuals. Cllr A. Ivin thanked the other councillors.

ACTION: Precept to be submitted online by Clerk to MCC 11.02.25

21.7 To receive any Planning Applications

a) DM/2024/01540 13.12.2024

Discharge of condition 3 (Precautionary non-licenced method statement for bats) for planning decision DM/2023/01447. The Three Salmons Hotel, 1 Porthycarne Street **APPROVED**

b) DM/2025/00103 28.01.2025

Discharge of condition 7 relating to planning DM/2018/01995: Construction transport management plan. The Willows Garden Centre **APPROVED**

21.8 To receive an update on the Masterplan for Usk

Cllr M. Howells Report:

Usk & Woodside Improvement Plan February 2025

Usk Town Council is continuing to make good progress in shaping the future of Usk and Woodside, working closely with Monmouthshire County Council and Llanbadoc Community Council. Meeting bi-monthly, we have developed a clear and ambitious vision for the area, with a seven-point action plan in place to drive positive change:

1. Enhancing Twyn Square – Creating a more welcoming and pedestrian-friendly space.
2. Revitalising Bridge Street – Improving the public realm to enhance its charm and accessibility.
3. Better Public Transport Links – Exploring additional routes to New Inn train station, the Grange Hospital, and Abergavenny.
4. Active Travel Improvements – Expanding and upgrading existing routes, including inclusive cycling proposals.
5. A Smarter Parking Strategy – Developing a town-wide approach to parking that works for everyone.
6. Traffic Data & Modelling – Using the latest insights to make informed decisions.
7. Green Corridor Projects – Transforming key locations like ARW Arboretum, Maryport Street North Car Park, Usk Hub, and Usk Island Park into greener, more attractive spaces.

To bring this vision to life, Roberts Limbrick Architects have been appointed to develop the initial designs for Twyn Square and bridge street, laying the groundwork for a future Welsh Government funding application for detailed design and construction.

Thanks to the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns fund, along with contributions from MCC and UTC, funding has been secured for the initial design work on Twyn Square and Bridge Street. Additional end-of-year funding has also allowed for ANPR traffic modelling, providing valuable data to inform the project.

The overarching goal for Twyn Square and Bridge Street is to create a safer, more attractive environment for all, prioritising pedestrians and vulnerable road users. These improvements will not

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only enhance the town's character but also encourage greater footfall, providing a boost to local businesses.

Roberts Limbrick expects to share the initial designs with the public for feedback once the traffic modelling is fully worked through. This is an exciting time for Usk, as we look to transform spaces that have remained largely unchanged since the 1970s. With collaboration, careful planning, and community input, we are moving towards a brighter, more vibrant future for all.

Next Meeting: 12.03.25

Meeting Wed 19th 1pm planned for traffic review to include parking. Report and modelling back from MCC will be presented to councillors.

Response from Dan Fordham "As previously discussed and advised the Town Council, my intention is to present a single report which will include a response to the bus stop proposals and offer recommendations based on the traffic report".

Councillors discussed how it would be helpful to have more of a discussion over these issues before decisions are made. Dan Fordham will be presenting a report on the car parking position.

Cllr T. Kear will take these points back to MCC. There will also be an opportunity to make these points in the forthcoming meeting.

Only one councillor is available for the meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Claire Sullivan to explore alternative dates.

ACTION: Cllr A. Ivin to forward the report from Dan Fordham to councillors

21.9 To receive MCC's countywide forthcoming parking review

No further news.

Cllr T. Kear expressed his disappointed that we have not been consulted before the presentation of the report.

22.1 To receive a report from the Groups/Organizations within the Town

On Thursday 13th February, 102 UWE students will be visiting Usk to explore ideas to support sustainable design and environmental improvements. The visit is supported by UTC and is in collaborations with UTFTC. It's a project part of their course and we hope to have access to their research and ideas.

Civic Society, Bayeux Tapestry Talk by Ian Williams in the Courtroom on Wednesday 19th February at 7.30pm.

22.2 To receive a report from the Events Committee

Usk Singing Group's Come and Sing event raised £217 and Christmas Carolling raised £184 for the Mayor's Appeal.

Saturday 22nd March - New Year's Honor's List Evening of Recognition evening will be hosted by the mayor to congratulate Sir Gerald Davies, Rob Denman OBE and Usk in Bloom for their achievements.

Saturday 22nd March - Usk Twinning event - Back to the 70's Disco in the Memorial Hall

Saturday 29th March - Live Music event with 400WHAT! at the Three Salmons Hotel for the Mayor's Appeal. Tickets available from Sessions House, Hub and Salmons.

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8th May – planning is underway for a VE80 Day on the Owain Glyndwr field. We are hoping the scouts will be involved with the lighting of the Beacon at 9.30pm.

British Legion Wednesday 12th February.

Saturday 5th July – UCS are planning an Alfred Russel Wallace Day

Saturday 7th June Save the River Usk Group led by Angela Jones are holding a River Festival.

James Morgan at Lines Taproom has requested that he runs a pop-up pub on the riverbank on a bank holiday. The land is owned by MCC, so James will have to apply directly to them for permission and a TENS licence and a safety advisory group permit.

Committee discussed future closure of Bridge St for August Bank Holiday and Christmas. UBSE supports these proposals and want to offer help to develop these events as they will have a significant impact on trade.

Green Top events hope to hold a Spring and Autumn Fayre on Twyn Square. Proposed dates are Saturday 29th March and Sept/Oct. There was a request for a Christmas date too, but committee felt there would be too many road closures. Cllr T. Kear will share this with UBSE.

Nominations for Community Awards was decided to be left until next meeting when Kay will be present.

Next Events meeting: 26th February

22.3 To discuss the use of the former Usk Household Recycling Centre (UHRC)

Cllr A. Ivin has had no response from Nick Keyse with regards to renewing the licence which expired 1st December 2024.

Cllr M. Howells has had a response from Gareth John, Circular Economy Officer on how the site may be utilised.

Clerk commented that without a licence we can't proceed with anything.

22.4 To receive an update on the proposed pump track

Monmouthshire Housing invited the committee to County Hall in collaboration with MCC and GAVO, to showcase their project.

Thank you to all those that have contributed funding to make the contract possible. Further funding has been offered from Sports Wales, this means they have reached £150,000 as required for the p[roject to proceed. They are looking to raise further funds to provide accessible bikes and trikes for those with special needs to make use of the pump track.

Thanks go to Kerry and Tom from Morris' who transplanted three trees from the site to the arboretum free of charge.

The planning pre-application is proceeding as fast as possible with MCC who have waved their usual fees in support of the project. Thanks go to them and their Senior Planning Officer, Jo Draper. Jo Draper will get a written report back as quickly as possible.

Sports Wales are please with the progress and will transfer funds to Welsh Cycling who will hold it on behalf of Usk Pump Group and will release once planning is permitted.

A lease is needed for the site. Prescoed will provide subsoil which can be stored on the site once the lease is granted. The group have been supported by REET financially. A management plan needs to be developed that satisfies the Athletic Club, Rotary and REET. There has been an extension on funding as there have been planning delays.

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22.5 To receive an update on the proposed Traffic amendments in Usk

19th May 2025 – Restriction blips outside the One Stop, and opposite the school will result in instant fines,

New yellow lines outside the Memorial Hall, the turning by Mill St from Maryport St, the bend by the church on Four Ash St and on Four Ash St from Twyn Square to prevent pavement parking.

Cllr T. Kear has raised enforcement with the Cabinet member in charge of the whole review admitted that it is not working in Monmouthshire and the Car Parking Review will also include enforcement.

New Item 22.5a Active Travel – Maryport St/Mill Lane

Discussions around speeding and safety around entrance to town from the Llantrisant Road.

Add to next meeting.

ACTION: Cllr A. Ivin to contact Nick Tulp

22.6 To discuss UTC SH Lottery Briefing paper

Confusion over which category of fundraising UTC would fall into.

Cllr B. Thomas to clarify with Gatherwell.

22.7 To discuss the Welsh Government Allotment Grant

A reply from Nichols Keyse on receipt of the application asked whether these are proposed works or whether these have already been completed. The grant is issued in arrears which we were unaware of, so, in effect, if the works haven't been completed then we'd need them to be in the next 4 weeks in order to receive funding.

There will be an opportunity to reapply for 25/26 but given Usk TC was on this year's planned, Nick doesn't anticipate they will necessarily allow a reapplication for Usk if this year's allocation has not been completed.

Council agreed with the Clerk that generally grants are offered to complete a project, not issued in arrears. UTC have not budgeted for the expenditure so will not be able to do the work withing the next 4 weeks and even if they did we cannot guarantee the support funding would be forthcoming.

Cllr D. Richards said this has happened previously where allotment support was offered in arrears of spending.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Nick Keyse

Rents of Allotments – several plots have been unattended. Cllr D. Richards has written a letter for tenants that haven't paid last year and will allocate 6 available plots to those on the waiting list.

22.8 Matters of Information

Precept for the police is increasing by 7.95%

Question raised Green Corridors and the consultation following a necessary revision of the plan. No answer was given.

Correspondence

January Police Report

1 shoplifting offence, 1 vehicle offence

2 vehicle RCA Ladyhill – no injuries

Attempted theft of number plates in Blackbarn Lane

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2 occasions of shoplifting from Co-op

Invitation for UTC to meet Police and Crime Commissioner Jane Mudd to meet.

Licence 57 Bridge St - Jackie Williams - Nigel Webb

Noise objection from residents.

UTC discussed at length, the concerns of residents and the details of the applications and agreed not to support objections or support the application at this moment in time but to monitor the situation. Clarification of two different items, opening and noise.

Cllr A. Ivin asked if we could have a list of the licences of the premises in the town.

ACTION: Cllr T. Kear will contact Tudor Thomas to ask more.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Samantha Winn

Date of next meeting: Monday 10th March 2025 6.00pm



Town Clerk