

**Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting by Usk Town Council (UTC) held in Sessions House and via  
Zoom on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.00pm**

**MINUTES**

**Present**

Chair: Cllr K. Peacock

Cllr D. Harrison, Cllr G Howells, Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin, County Cllr T Kear, Cllr D Richards, RFO D. Nash, Clerk A. Morgan

**23.2 To accept apologies for absence.**

Cllr B. Thomas

**23.3 Public Open Forum**

**(15 minutes at the discretion of the mayor.)**

**Chair declared:**

***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.***

***Please note that only those elected members of Usk Town Council are permitted to speak during the meeting. An exception of this is if an agenda item requires a report from an invited person at their dedicated time.***

Questions/Statements from the public:

- 1) Will the Council be continuing taking care of the clock in the square? Previously there was talk of an annual service charge. Has the council taken this on?
- 2) Concern about the state of the town near No 49 café opposite the Co-operative. There are bins left outside all the time in an area where public enter Bridge St. This used to be an attractive area, now it's an eyesore. Should owner be storing them there or on own property?
- 3) The state of the pavements through the town are appalling; they are unsafe. There are trip hazards, uneven surfaces and loose areas. Resident said they are poor throughout the whole town apart from Ladyhill where they were resurfaced. A pavement study should be undertaken.

**23.4 To disclose personal and pecuniary interest in items of business listed below**

Cllr D Richards declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 25.1

**23.5 County Councillors participation**

County Cllr T. Kear

- 1) Resurfacing of Three Salmons junction

This should have been done pre-covid. Arising from discussions with officers and cabinet members, the latest report is that the resurfacing of the road is going to be linked to the repairs of the Chain Bridge. Chain Bridge will need closure for repairs during financial year

26/27. Traffic will be diverted through Usk so the road will need to accommodate the traffic. A commitment of funding has been assured for financial year 25/26 to resurface the road. Prior to that, patching will continue. Also, halfway to Llancayo, outside the 20mph limit, the road is of a poor standard, this will be raised as a concern by Cllr Kear. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the Financial year 25/26, from July, work will take place on the Salmons junction.

2) Usk Police Station

Police and Crime Commissioner Board will recommence its Estate's Review once the new Commissioner has revealed her plan and priorities at the end of the month. The future of Usk Police Station will come under discussion once the Estate's Committee recommences.

3) Civic Society Annual Awards

Award to the Friends of Usk.

UTC have been involved with the repairs to the Twyn Square Clock

Award to The Kings Road at Usk Castle for work undertaken by the Champions and Rosie and Henry Humphries.

County Cllr M. Howells

1) Transport Forum

The work on Monmouth Road with regard to extra drainage should commence on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

2) A449 exit junction Northbound

Update from SUTRA concluded that the existing signage is aimed to prevent confusion. There have been no recorded accidents in the last five years. There will be an engineer sent to investigate the cats' eyes and their efficiency.

3) Usk Lego Club

Following a successful launch during half term, this will continue to run at the Hub every Wednesday afternoon after school. This is funded by the Roger Edwards Education Trust.

4) North Street Carpark Drains

These have been cleared by an outside contractor funded by MCC.

**23.6 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025**  
**Approved**

**23.7 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

Cllr A Ivin: Agenda item 22.8 relating to Green Corridors.

Update following conversation with Jane Clark (MCC) revealed that 20 projects have been passed and will be timetabled by Grounds Maintenance. The Arboretum work has started. The issue of poor lighting in the carpark was raised and that lower branches could be investigated. Work is on course for the end of March. The first large tree by the cycle store is blocking light resulting in a pitch-black pedestrianised area.

**23.8 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee**

Water Damage:

Following heavy rain, there was an excessive amount of water in through ceiling in Room 4 - found flooded on Monday 24.02.25. Carpet soaked, damage to computer screens and paperwork. A dehumidifier was hired for 5 days and heaters were used consistently to aid drying. Drains and roof will be inspected by Brian Jones.

### Events:

Civic Society Bayeux Tapestry talk took place on 19<sup>th</sup> February

HMP Student Awards held on 14<sup>th</sup> February

Library booked for a funeral wake 13<sup>th</sup> March

HMP Staff Awards to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March

Evening of Recognition 22<sup>nd</sup> March

2 prospective Wedding bookings for Summer '26, couples made aware that all arrangements other than hire of the Sessions House to be made by themselves

### Decorating:

Aimey is coordinating with HMP to get a date and timeframe for preparation, plastering and painting

## **23.9a To respond to financial enquiries**

Cllr K. Peacock

We have received advice from One Voice Wales regarding ongoing enquiries from the public and County Councillor T. Kear about the publication and sharing of financial information.

The advice we received and will be adhering to is as follows:

1. Budgets – it is good practice to share and publish the budget and we have been advised to do so. We will shortly be publishing a simplified graphic and explanation of projected expenditure for 2025/2026. This anonymises personal information to seek to ensure data compliance.
2. Cost Centre Reports/Income & Costs – Bank account details are private to the council and do not need to be shared.  
Any costs not budgeted for are shown on the Finance minutes each month.
3. Full Accounts – these can be referred to in the End of Year Audits which we are now publishing. The accounts for 2023/24 are due to be published this week following the internal auditor report referred to later in this meeting.

## **23.9b To receive the monthly Finance report for February 2025**

Cllr A. Ivin

Thanks to Kay, UTC have received £1166.00 from Cadw and there is still more to claim.

Thanks to Meirion, MCC have agreed to pay for the claim from Newport Bus due to closure of Bridge St at Christmas.

The 25/26 requests for Precept have been submitted to MCC as required.

There were no non-budgeted payments.

On receiving the end of year auditor's report, the £14.68 adjustment from year end can be adjusted to £0.00 for the end of this month.

UTC agreed approved a budget of £200 towards tidying the allotments which is anticipated to be one day's work for one person, this is intended to be spent by year end.

An increase in fidelity insurance, as recommended by the internal auditor, was discussed and quotes will be obtained.

Chair thanked Alison and Damian for their work.

## **23.9c Internal Audit Report 2023-2024**

Cllr A. Ivin

Many of the recommendations have been implemented for 2024/25; we've been on a constant path of improvement this year. We are expecting a better report for this year.

The 2023/24 report picked up several anomalies which were discussed by Finance Committee.

UTC need to complete the Annual Statement. This will be submitted by the end of this week as time period has already been extended.

### Annual Return

The Auditors Report will be published online along with UTC comments on what steps have been taken to improve historic practices.

Audited accounts for 2023/24 will be published online along with the Annual Governance Statement which UTC will be self-reporting against several items which have not been complied with.

RFO has circulated these reports to councillors.

In the Self Report the points UTC are saying NO to are:

- Effective financial management for 2023/24
- Maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and renewed effectiveness
- Carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and taking appropriate steps to manage those risks including an introduction of internal controls and external insurance cover where required
- Considered whether any litigation liabilities or commitments occurring either before or after the year end have a financial impact on the council and have included them in the accounting statement

In the Self Report the points UTC are saying YES to are:

- Compliance with laws
- Reasonable opportunity for exercise of electors' rights
- Maintained an adequate and effective system of the internal audit
- Taken actions from previous audits

Submitted to council: **APPROVED**

This year 2024/25, UTC have moved to the proper accounts and expenditure receipts basis. For the accruals there is now a debtor control in place; these adjustments are a positive step forward.

### **24.0 To receive any Planning Applications:**

**DM/2025/00207|LBC – Coop, 51 Bridge St.**

New gas cooler, DA pack and AC units to the rear yard, replacing existing plant. Timber shop fronts to be repaired and redecorated to match existing. New ventilation New external LED lighting. New boxing out to the base of the timber canopy columns to the main entrance as there is significant damage. New internal finishes including flooring, ceilings and fire-boarding works.

**APPROVED**

### **24.1 To receive an update on the Masterplan for Usk**

Cllr M. Howells

Steering Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> March – request for availability via zoom

**ACTION:** Clerk to send invite

Traffic Modelling 26<sup>th</sup> March

### **24.2 To receive MCC's countywide forthcoming parking review**

Cllr T. Kear

Dan Fordham is now in charge of this process. There have been delays but they're expecting the Consultant Report to be available late May/June - recommendations with consultations to follow.

MCC will ensure there are opportunities for town councils and business groups to be involved in the consultation process.

Chair asked if we should have our own meeting.

**ACTION:** Request a meeting with Dan Fordham

### **24.3 To receive a report from the Groups/Organizations within the Town**

Cllr M. Howells

- On 13th February, 102 students from the University of West England came around the town to look at. Ideas for sustainability. They were looking at buildings and areas and how they might be improved. UTC have been invited to the review of their findings in Bristol on 13th April.
- Save the River Usk – Angela Jones was awarded the Gwent High Sheriff Community Award.
- Usk Country Market reopens on 20th of March, 10am to 12pm after winter closure.

Cllr T. Kear

Thanked UTC for their financial commitment to Usk in Bloom for the coming financial year.

### **24.4 To receive a report from the Events Committee**

Cllr M. Howells

St David's Concert by Usk Singing Club was successfully attended raising £188.63 for the Mayor's Appeal.

Upcoming Events:

- 15th March – Usk Young Farmers Club's performance of Cinderella at the Memorial hall
- 22nd March – Mayor's Evening of Recognition for recipients of the New Year's Honor's List and other achievers. Invited are Rob Denman HMP Usk, Sir Gerald Davies and Usk in Bloom volunteers.
- 22nd March – Usk Twinning Back to the 60's Disco
- 29th March - Green Tops Spring Fayre – Twyn Square
- 29th March – Mayor's Live Music Event at the Three Salmons, featuring Drew Morton's 400WHAT! band. Tickets are £10, available from The Sessions House, The Usk Community Hub and the Three Salmons Hotel. Councillors were encouraged to promote this event.
- 8th May – VE Day plans are in progress, led by the Legion. All interested parties have been invited to a meeting to discuss plan. There will be The Proclamation, a National Sing and Lighting of the Beacon. Sessions House to be the location with 1940's afternoon tea. Usk Brass Band and Singing Club to perform. Funding to be provided by the British Legion.
- 7th June – River Festival by Save the River Usk
- 28th – 29th June – Usk Open Gardens
- 5th July – Civic Society presenting an Alfred Russel Wallace Day
- 11th October – Green Tops Autumn Fayre – Twyn Square

Discussions about Bridge St road closure for Summer and Christmas events. UTC have budgeted for one road closure. Discussions around 50:50 share of financial and organisational support from both UTC and Usk Business Group. Discussions also around the importance of a Christmas event for the town and how this event should take priority.

Cllr T. Kear will take the proposals to UBSE and explain that the budget was set before a request was made for two events. Hours spent on time getting stallholders needs to be appreciated.

Nominations for Community Awards to be decided by the Mayor and will be discussed at next month's meeting.

BBC One's 'Below Zero', filmed in The Sessions House Courtroom, is currently available on iPlayer.

## **24.5 To discuss the use of the former Usk Household Recycling Centre (UHRC)**

Cllr A. Ivin

No response from Nick Keyse, MCC.

## **24.6 To receive an update on the proposed pump track**

Cllr M. Howells

The full £125,000 has been received from Sports Wales, an increase on the original £100,000 promised. The group are now raising extra funding for accessible bikes and trikes. Work is continuing with the leaseholder to confirm the lease, and pre-planning is due back from the planners.

## **24.7 To receive an update on the proposed Traffic amendments in Usk**

Cllr M. Howells

All comments have been responded to from the consultation. Implementation 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

## **24.8 To discuss UTC SH Lottery Briefing paper**

Nothing to report

## **24.9 Active Travel – Maryport St/Mill Lane**

Road from Cricket Club entrance to HMP Training Centre/REET field entrance – provide a safe walkway. Cllr T. Kear has a call outstanding regarding this with Nick Tulp and Paul Sullivan MCC.

## **25.0 Street cleansing and bin emptying**

Complaints from residents regarding overflowing bins outside the Co-op at weekends. This has been raised with Nigel Leaworthy MCC, there are no weekend collections. This applies over the whole of Monmouthshire.

Cllr D Richards spent time last weekend emptying the bins and replaced the orange bags.

Ground clearing around the Legion had been placed in the general waste bin.

Suggestions made whether to involve the Usk Litter Action Group.

Discussions raised over obtaining more bins, removing bins or installing recycling bins.

Recycling Bins outside the One Stop are not used properly.

Carl Tuhig (MCC) has advised against recycling bins as one wrongly placed item can contaminate the rest.

Pook Lane request from a resident for more signs and dog waste bins. This is Government land, HMP.

## **25.1 Allotment update**

Cllr D. Richards

UTC weren't successful with their Grant application to MCC for funding. UTC have allocated £200 for a clean-up of those plots that are not in a fit state to be allotted. Hardcore needs to be added to the entrance as cars can get grounded.

There is a waiting list and people on this list will be contacted regarding their desire and willingness to take on an empty plot.

Rents are due on 1<sup>st</sup> April, emails will be sent to current allotment holders asking for payment and intention to retain their plot. Also check on outstanding payments.

Contracts need to state that if a plot is relinquished it is left in a state of good repair.

Four or five plots need immediate attention.

Discussions took place on increasing rental fees, costs rose about 3 years ago from £17 to £20. Administration, water rates and hedge trimming costs need to be considered.

Comparison with other councils' charges: Chepstow and Monmouth £29.18, Caldicot £40 with concessions.

Proposal: increase charge to £25 per 5 perch - PASSED

All payments and invoices need to go through the accounts – [accounts@usktown.org](mailto:accounts@usktown.org)

## 25.2 Telephone Boxes

All are listed. Two in town have stickers to remove the phones, it states 'if you think it should stay contact your local authority'.

Another concern that has been raised by a resident is that removal of the box in Maryport St would leave a gap in the railings by Jane's Meadow.

Discussions around use of phone boxes, post phone removal – Usk in Bloom thanked UTC for considering their adoption of the boxes for flower displays. Locations and light are not ideal situations for plant growth. Other community groups to be approached to gather interest.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact MCC Heritage and BT to investigate retaining these.

## 25.3 Snooty Fox Request

Snooty Fox is a converted Horsebox serving hot drinks and other refreshments. The owner, Jake Malyn of the Market Garden Flower Co., Twyn Square has approached UTC with the wish to set up his box at the old recycling centre during the Summer Months to serve takeouts.

Councillors recalled that another similar local business, Usk Eats owned by Phil has asked to relaunch his business on the square for takeouts. There were concerns from councillors that it may retract from other businesses located in the square.

We are still awaiting a licence renewal for the old Recycling Business.

**ACTION:** Cllr A. Ivin to contact Phil

## 25.4 Matters of Information

### Council Surgeries

Proposal for Councillors to provide a morning drop-in session once a month on a Thursday 10.30 am - 12.30pm at the Hub and an early evening drop-in session at Sessions House once a month, 4.30 – 6.30pm. This will give resident the opportunity to meet their councillors, ask questions and raise concerns.

A Council noticeboard at the Community Hub is also an opportunity for the town to find out more about Usk Town Councillors. This noticeboard can hold photographs and minutes.

**ACTION:** Clerk to check appropriate dates.

## 25.5 Correspondence

### Pub by the River

Request from James Morgan (Lines) to put banners up to advertise Pub by the River.

He will need to apply for a TENS licence and approval from MCC we can give approval for him to use a vendors' pitch/hawkers' pitch.

Query over location of the vendors' pitches – Co-op, Legion and Square could have trading pitches

**ACTION:** Clerk to correspond with James

**ACTION:** Clerk to investigate trading licences

Usk Environmental Group requested that UTC approach the building firm that had access to Janes' Meadow to purchase a bag of stone dust and ask MCC for a 2<sup>nd</sup> bag of stone dust to maintain the path. Environmental Group will provide the labour.

Conclusion is that the Environmental Group needs to contact the building company/resident directly. Nigel Leaworthy MCC wants to know who the people are as they gave a commitment to restore the field to its original condition.

### Neighbourhood Policing Report:

*07/02/25 – A report has been received of a suspicious incident in Priory Gardens, where persons have tried to gain access to the caller's garden.*

*09/02/25 – A report has been received of a suspicious incident in Blestium Drive where the caller's CCTV has captured a male trying the handle on his vehicle.*

09/02/25 – A report has been received of a theft from a vehicle in Burrium Gate, where a handbag was stolen. Enquiries are ongoing.

23/02/25 – A report has been received of an attempt burglary to an empty property of Castle Street where marks have been located on the door.

26/02/25 – A report has been received of a suspicious male in the wooded area to the rear of Burrium Gate. Enquiries are ongoing.

We will hold a monthly surgery should anyone wish to come and speak to us, please see upcoming dates below:

21/04/25 - Usk Community Hub 10am – 12pm

12/05/25 - Usk Community Hub 10am – 12pm

30/06/25 - Usk Community Hub 10am – 12pm

21/07/25 - Usk Community Hub 10am – 12pm

Good Work:

Officers executed a warrant and made an arrest of a male for a large-scale theft and handling stolen good offences, items seized include leaf blowers, chainsaws and disc cutters. Investigations are still on-going. Please look out for the press release where items seized will be advertised for victims to claim

Invitation from The Police and Crime Commissioner

Cllr T. Kear extended an invitation from Jane Mudd, for her to meet with meet UTC.

UTC gladly accepted.

**ACTION:** Clerk to liaise and set up meeting

Clock Tower Plaque

A licence is required to attach the plaque

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact Heritage

**Date of next meeting: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 6.00pm**

Town Clerk  
  
Angela Morgan