

# ***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 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 6.00pm**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Present:**

Chair: Cllr K. Peacock

Cllr B. Thomas, Cllr G Howells, Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin, Cllr D Richards,

RFO D. Nash,

Clerk A. Morgan

#### **25.6 To accept apologies for absence:**

Cllr D. Harrison, County Cllr T Kear

#### **25.7 Public Open Forum**

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

Query regarding the bins outside No.47 Bridge Street in the walkway opposite the Co-operative.

**ACTION:** Clerk to make enquiries with MCC

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

**26.4** Cllr G Howells - Planning Item **DM/2025/00294**

**28.3** Cllrs Peacock, Thomas and M Howells – Proposed Path Changes – UAC/Usk Pump Track

#### **25.9 County Councillors participation**

County Cllr Kear (report via email)

**Monmouth Road:** I'm advised that the project is currently on target. They are almost complete with the drainage installation on the south side. They will be moving onto the north side drainage and kerbing/footway works next. They are still a few weeks away from resurfacing. A further update with specific dates for that will follow once further assessed.

**Resurfacing Porthycarne Street / Abergavenny Road:** Assessed as "Black" in the new colour coding of prioritisation as the road has deteriorated quicker than anticipated. Following a MCC public services committee meeting which I sit on, Carl Touhig has advised that the work (due in the summer) will stretch towards Llancayo - ball park as far as the wooded area (Ty-Melin). More details to follow

**General Highways:** MCC are borrowing £3.6m over 20 years to address the countywide issues. Not all will go on tarmac (designs / traffic control etc takes some funding). officers await the outcome of the network review (GAIST).

**Usk Bridge Damage:** CCTV footage collection has been delayed due to holiday absence and that the Police station is not currently being used.

**Usk Master Plan:** Thanks to Cllrs for responding to the WSP presentation. Dan Fordham is currently on Holiday. It's agreed the next full meeting will be on 14th May at which Dan will present his draft response report. I have requested we get a preview ahead of the meeting. Just to confirm (as a Chris Waterworth asked me) Roberts Limbrick are not

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commissioned to design any potential scheme opposite Usk Primary as it outside their remit.

Car parking review. No update available from Dan Fordham.

**Active Travel:** from Mill Lane to REET field Maryport street raid entrance. Initial discussions with Paul Sullivan show the road is, in places, too narrow to accommodate a required with pavement / road. A formal assessment is to be looked at on this aspect.

**UTAG project:** On site meeting with Ken Skates MS was postponed. Positive discussions with WG continue and with TFW. The C 1000 house planning application has been withdrawn and this MAY affect the project. Next meeting will be in Q3. Good to have strong political involvement with Natasha Asghar and Catherine Fookes.

**27 Mill Street:** MCC officers investigated, and no action is required.

**Usk in Bloom:** Over £500 raised at the recent quiz night at the Legion. Thanks to all who attended. The seasonal timetable is fully underway and published on our FB site.

**Bus Stop:** The removed damaged bus stop, opposite the entrance to Lady Hill, is now going to be replaced. I've asked for the yellow bus stop road paint to be refreshed.

County Cllr M Howells

**Road Resurfacing:** Outside the Three Salmons will take place between July and December '25 as part of the long term Chainbridge modification project with work to be completed on Chainbridge by April 2027. This is to allow lorry access to the Llancayo Industrial Estate.

**Monmouth Road Pavement and Drainage Works:** started 17<sup>th</sup> March and will be running for 12 weeks. A request has gone in for verge encroachment to be attended to.

## **26.0 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Approved

## **26.1 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Approved

## **26.2 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee**

Authorisation of PAT testing for GAVO equipment has been verified.

### **Sessions House Events:**

March 22<sup>nd</sup> – Mayor's Evening of Recognition

Letter of thanks received from Sir Gerald thanking the mayor for a wonderful evening.

April 18<sup>th</sup> – HMP Graduation of Officers

**Room Hire:** Council discussed new charges for Library and Courtroom Hire – hourly rate or fixed charge and removal of the boiler urn for refreshments to save on energy costs.

Suggested rate of £15/hr with extra £5 for use of kitchen. Will coffee tea be included in use of kitchen? Change of charges to start 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025. **Approved**

**ACTION:** Clerk to notify all organisations and Businesses that regularly hire the spaces Discussions around charging a flat fee for events such as funerals or conferences with large gatherings Clerk suggested £100 / £150. Current wedding charges are £150 for extra room.

**ACTION:** Discuss at Tenancy Meeting

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**Tenancies:** Meeting set for Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 5.15pm to discuss future charges using quantity surveying data

**Heating:** Phoenix Aircon have been and serviced both sets of boilers for the Sessions House and the Cottage boiler.

**Electrics:** Rob Morgan has fixed a new heater in the 2<sup>nd</sup> kitchen, fixed flickering hall light and replaced light fittings in the Court Room. PAT testing for Room 7 has been completed.

## 26.3 To receive the monthly Finance report for March 2025

- CADW have confirmed our claim is now closed as we have recovered all of our entitlement.
- Energy contracts for October 2028 – March 2030 - had been signed and completed.
- Members received copies of the payments & receipts for the month No queries - all agreed.
- No payments were made outside the normal monthly running costs or not previously agreed.
- Payment of the water rates for the former recycling centre (from 2024) – £67.11
- The ingress of water had resulted in a cost for dehumidifier hire (expensed to Clerk) and a claim from the tenant for a new monitor (£139) and mouse (£95) - payment agreed based on exceptional circumstances.
- Approved a three-year insurance cover plan with Zurich at a discounted rate of £3,679.64 rather than an annual payment of £4,068.91. Fidelity insurance increased in line with internal audit.
- JDH Business Services Limited (Internal Auditor) had suggested that we apply for an extension for the 2024/25 internal audit as we were still working through legacy issues. AI had written to Wales Audit Office and obtained an extension to Sept 2025.
- it was agreed to move to a cloud-based Rialtas system which is a three year contract at an additional fee per annum of £338.

## 26.4 To receive any Planning Applications:

- a. **DM/2025/00294** Churchill Archeology's "Written Scheme of Historic Mitigation for Archeological Monitoring and Recording in relation to DM/2023/00877.  
**16 Church Street, Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 1AG** **APPROVED**
- b. **DM/2025/00156**  
32 Proposed alterations and extensions to existing 3 bed bungalow to create a dormer style raised roof bungalow, with 4 bedrooms and with front and rear extensions.  
**Castle Oak Usk Monmouthshire, NP15 1SG** **APPROVED**
- c. **DM/2024/00767**  
Replace staircase as they are too steep and uneven with new - Usk stairs has been in and can see no evidence of any original stairs  
2. Replace gas fire with a log burner no longer removing the plaster keeping it as it is. See attached photo regarding design. Removed fake box to see what's behind the only evidence is a red brick chimney.  
3. Update Kitchen see design plans.

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4. Update downstairs Bathroom see plan not to size.
5. Update upstairs bathroom see plan not to size see pipe in the floorboards. Original floorboard has been cut out.

**60 Maryport Street, Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 1AD**

**APPROVED**

## **26.5 To receive an update on the Improvement for Usk**

Cllr M Howells

Core funding is being reduced from £500,000 to £350,000. Projects have been reduced from 4 to 1. Quick Wins include dropped pavements that can be applied for. A pedestrian bridge was discussed in a feasibility study which would cost around £20,000. A pavement audit will be done throughout all major counts. Presentation from WSP on the Traffic modelling went ahead. UTC have responded to MCC officers with their thoughts.

Confirmation received that priorities raised will be discussed at the next Steering meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

UTC wish to request that MCC respond to their comments on the buses originally sent September 2024.

**ACTION:** clerk to contact Dan Fordham re buses

**ACTION:** request that MCC respond to UTC Traffic modelling letter prior to 29<sup>th</sup> April

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

No update

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

**Usk Together for the Climate:** UTFTC were invited to attend The University of West England, Bristol to see the presentations made by the 102 architectural students that visited Usk in March. Eleven designs were displayed. Two students from each group will bring their designs to Usk to display for the community.

PhD researcher has produced a website on all things Usk

Planning students will visit Usk to visualise how Usk will look in 2050.

**Usk Civic Society:** Awaiting the Flood Risk Activity permit before proceeding further with the Giant Salmon project on Conigar Walk. A lovely evening was had with a presentation to Jerney and Mike Champion. A talk by Max Moebus about the history of trains is available online.

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

**Recent events:** St David's Day concert raised £188.00 for The Mayor's Appeal. Green Top Market's Spring Fayre survey showed the majority of respondents were in favour of it. A successful live music event by Drew Morten's Band 400WHAT? raised £620 for Mayor's Appeal.

### **Forthcoming Events:**

7<sup>th</sup> June – Usk River Festival – Usk Island

21<sup>st</sup> June – Lines Brewery – Pop-up Pub by the River

28-29<sup>th</sup> June – Usk Open Gardens

5<sup>th</sup> July – Alfred Russell Wallace Day by Civic Society

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## **VE DAY 80 Events**

All events to be held at Sessions House

Museum to loan artefacts for the Sessions to display.

Raising of the flag at 9am by pupils from Usk Primary

Afternoon Tea with sandwiches and cakes and music – WI keen to help and Guides/Brownies to serve. Bar by the British Legion

Entertainment: Usk Brass Band, Usk Singing Club and The Buskuleles with dancers.

Hopefully events can happen outside and inside.

6.30pm Proclamation and peeling of the bells, Usk Castle to fire the canon.

9.00pm National Sing along

9.30pm Lighting of the Beacon - Scouts

British Legion to sell enamel badges for the Poppy Appeal. Bunting from RBL and the school to create decorated bunting to be attached between the pennants.

School may also provide work and artefacts they have developed from their latest WWII project.

Chair requested all councillors to be around to help.

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

Still no response from Nick Keyse

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

Preparing for a preliminary ecological appraisal of the area.

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

Yellow lines still scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> May.

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

The website is ready. UTC needs to agree the Communication Marketing Strategy. This will be aligned with the Lottery.

**ACTION:** Clerk to distribute this to councillors for approval.

## **27.3 Active Travel update**

Cllrs M Howells and A. Ivin walked around the town with MCC Active Travel Officers. Funding is extremely tight, but they have engaged in conversation with Highways to see what they could achieve for Usk. Cllr A. Ivin felt that even though safety issues were raised, and MCC agreed there were dangers they were unable to offer financial support.

**ACTION:** Clerk to request a response for their findings

Four Ash St – hedge on bend is overhanging the pavement and causing visual obstruction (opposite rear access to the church)

**ACTION:** Clerk to message MCC

## **27.4 Street cleansing and bin emptying**

Chair has talked to the MCC weekend operative at Maryport St Carpark when she saw him emptying the bins. He works for Anthony Berrington and services the toilets on weekends.

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We believe this is the first time he has done this, possibly off the back of an email to Nigel Leaworthy from the clerk about weekend emptying.

Robert has been asked to empty the bins last thing on a Friday.

**ACTION:** Clerk to email Anthony Berrington to thank them and to request possibility of also emptying the three bins on Twyn Square.

One Stop bins are taking up pavement space and not actually recycling the contents. Bags of bottles are also being left. One lady has fallen due to having to step off the pavement. Dropped kerb and camber makes it difficult for wheelchairs and buggies.

**ACTION:** Chair to visit new manager.

Discussions were had over future street cleaning services.

**ACTION:** Clerk to find out services offered by MCC and then research alternatives and costs.

## **27.5 Allotment update**

Russell has trimmed to the plots ready for reassignment. Seven plots are available, and Cllr D Richards has sent emails out to those at the top of the waiting list.

£50 left could be used for black plastic to cover unleased plots.

A shed has become available which can be repurposed as the communal shed.

RFO has sent invoices to most tenants.

**ACTION:** Clerk to create paper versions for Di to deliver to holders whose emails have bounced back

## **27.6 Telephone Boxes**

Suggestions received include use of Box for an Anaphylactic Kit or artwork.

Discussions around purchasing and them and the maintenance, responsibility and insurance of the boxes. No decisions made. Wait for more interest by 19<sup>th</sup> April.

**ACTION:** Meirion to find out how much the artist will charge for painting the boxes.

## **27.7 Snooty Fox/Usk Eats Requests**

**ACTION:** Alison to contact Phil at Usk Eats.

## **27.8 To discuss dogs on leads and Dog Bins**

Dog waste bins: Merlin empties 5 dog bins in Usk. Robert empties 2 on the Athletic club, 1 at the end of Mill St. Discussions around putting 1 at the end of Pook's Lane and asking Merlin to empty. Merlin empty weekly and UTC pay per bin. Both ATC bins to be removed. Reposition one in Mill St and one at end of Pook's Lane. UAC have proposed that they will [ay towards one bin collection. This hasn't been budgeted for so will be discussed at next Finance meeting.

**ACTION:** Clerk to prepare information and maps ahead of Finance meeting

Dog Fouling Awareness Day: Cllr M Howells and Cllr A Ivin spent a morning with MCC Environmental Health Officers walking routes in town. New signs have been added around town. There has been a change in the Public Space Protection Order – previously Owain Glyndwr Field was granted a dog area. In 2027 UTC can opt into it being a dog free area but, in the meantime, UTC can request dogs on leads. Environmental Health Officers are available to come and police the areas.

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There are also exclusion areas – all play parks and Island Football pitch.  
Further discussions needed.

## **27.9 To discuss Community Awards**

Cllr M Howells has put forward reasons for maintaining Community Awards:

- Recognising volunteers who give time and commitment to the community
- Acknowledging good deeds
- Strengthening a sense of unity and pride in the town
- Serving as an example of good citizenship
- Valuing contributions and inspiring others
- Honoring tradition

Last year they were not given, this year the mayor wishes not to nominate, and consensus supports non-annual awards. This can be raised annually and decided at the time.  
Suggestions towards project running in a competitive way.

## **28.0 Update on surgeries**

First surgery had one visitor.

## **28.1 To accept proposals for nominations for Chair 2025/2026**

Cllr G Howells nominated Cllr D Richards, Cllr D Richards accepted.

Cllr B Thomas nominated Cllr K Peacock, Cllr K Peacock declined.

Cllr M Howells is willing to stand if no-one else accepts

## **28.2 To accept proposals for nominations for Deputy Chair 2025/2026**

Cllr D Harrison to be consulted as to whether he wishes to continue in this role

Cllr K Peacock is happy to stand as Deputy Chair and Sessions House Chair

Cllr A Ivin will also consider the role.

## **28.3 Matters of Information**

Clerk reported on Biodiversity Action Plan writing and Reporting. UTC Biodiversity Report needs to be in every three years and is due December 25. Following SLCC training, Clerk suggested that UTC set up a Biodiversity subcommittee to get the Action Plan written.

### Public Path Diversion Order:

Gavin Pugh MCC requested a response from UTC to his new application.

Cllr A Ivin spoke against it due to security, walking behind the tennis courts and footballs get kicked at the fences. Young women have said that they walk to the river on the cricket side but would feel vulnerable being funnelled along the back of the fence. The cricket path provides a flat surface for elderly people and a circular route for walking, this helps physical well-being.

**Declared Interest:** Cllrs Peacock, Thomas and M Howells

**ACTION:** Clerk to report discussions had this evening to Gavin Pugh.

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## **28.4 Correspondence**

Sir Gerald and Cilla Davies have sent a lovely letter of thanks to Mayor Peacock for the Evening of Recognition.

Rob Denman has asked for a meeting with Cllr Peacock regarding a prison matter and Cllr Peacock extended the invite for other councillors to attend.

Mayor's Charity Presentation of Cheques - invitations have gone out to the charities and councillors are invited to attend on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 7pm.

**Date of next meeting:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 6.00pm



**Town Clerk**

DRAFT