

# *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 Teams on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 6.00pm**

### **MINUTES**

#### Present

Chair: Cllr D. Richards,

Cllr D. Harrison, Cllr G Howells, Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin, Cllr K. Peacock,

RFO: D. Nash,

Clerk: A. Morgan.

Newly appointed Mayor Cllr Diane Richards opened the meeting with thanks to recently resigned Cllr Ben Thomas for his work and commitment to Usk Town Council

#### **1.1 To accept apologies for absence.**

None

#### **1.2 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.

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.

Resident T Watkins gave thanks and congratulations to Usk town councillors and Diane Richards, for the lovely VE Day celebrations on the afternoon and evening of 8<sup>th</sup> May. He said how much it was enjoyed by all and how grateful he was to all involved.

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

Cllr D Harrison declared an interest in planning application – item 1.8

#### **1.3 County Councillors participation**

County Cllr Kear

**Monmouth Road:** The south side is complete. There is an undefined delay with resurfacing due to issues with British Telecom. The camber has been adjusted so that the water runs into the drains. An enquiry has been made about adding a dropped kerb, this was not in the original designs and may be too late to be incorporated.

##### **Resurfacing Porthycarne Street / Abergavenny Road:**

No further update on date of start of works but council will be fully informed ahead of works as to the temporary traffic arrangements that will be put into place.

**Usk Bridge Damage:** There has been no response regarding repair of damage to Usk Bridge.

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**UTAG project:** On site meeting with Ken Skates MS still to be rescheduled. No further updates.

**Bus Stop:** The removed damaged bus stop, opposite the entrance to Lady Hill, has not yet been installed. Yellow bus stop road paint also needs to be refreshed.

## County Cllr M Howells

**Assisted Living Seminar:** Alert watches and Alexa shows are available to residents so that technology can assist with independent living. The Assisted Tech Team will support residents by installing gadgets for £40 a month. Responsive dogs and cats are also available.

**ACTION:** Cllr M. Howells to submit information to 'The Diary' to inform Usk residents.

**Air Quality:** The latest air quality survey can be found on the Council's website:

<http://www.usktown.org/Reports and Surveys 18915.aspx>

As the levels have been below the Welsh Govt requirement required 40 µg for 7 years, the order will be revoked as there is no longer a need to record it. Recordings of Nitrogen Dioxide will continue along Bridge St to monitor any changes. The results are less than half from the original recording - 49 µg in 2007 and an average of 20.7 µg in 2014.

**Broken Manhole Cover:** Burrium Gate, Welsh Water are going to make good.

**Highways:** to complete yellow lines and blips as close to 19<sup>th</sup> May as possible.

**Severn Bridge Closure: (M48)** Bridge will be closed for any vehicles over 7.5 tonnes from 28<sup>th</sup> May and will be closed for 18 months to 5 years whilst work is done.

## **1.4 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Approved

## **1.5 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

\* Bins outside 49 – **ACTION** Clerk to contact MCC Waste and Recycling to see if 49 hold a licence for the bins

\* Room hire charges have been sent to all organisations that rent the courtroom and library. Responses received and charges accepted. Some groups have also indicated that they do not require refreshments.

\* Cllr Howells visited One Stop and the bins have been removed from the pavement outside.

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

**Update on Room 4** – leak following heavy rain caused carpet to become flooded. A dehumidifier was hired for a week. Men have been to investigate soakaway and to place cowls over the downpipes on the roof. A new soakaway solution will be provided this week.

Rotten window frames Roy Watkins has assessed the work needed to repair the in the rear walkway. Further quotes will need to be obtained.

**The Mayor's Presentation Evening** took place on 6<sup>th</sup> May. Cheques of £600.00 were received by representatives of the mayors' chosen charities.

**VE Day** was a huge success.

## **1.6 To receive the monthly Finance report for April 2025**

Accounts were finalised on 16<sup>th</sup> May and will feed into the Annual Report.

VAT return has been submitted for 2024/25 - £15,203.00

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Allotment, tenant and room hire invoices have all been raised for April 24.

Waiting for a response re VAT consultant costs from the work done by Centurian last year; that needs clarification with Carl Tuhig.

Invoices needing to be discussed at next finance meeting: SitGroup, Festive Lighting and Usk Primary School Defibrillator costs.

Rialtas will be moving to the cloud soon once end of year is complete.

The Asset Register is complete. Risk Register has been updated in terms of the financial aspect other points around non-finance items will be raised at the next finance meeting.

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

**DM/2025/00570**

Proposed ground and first floor extension to side of property

**47 Priory Gardens Usk Monmouthshire NP15 1BB**

**APPROVED**

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

County Cllr M Howells

The meeting planned for 10<sup>th</sup> May will formalise the response from UTC. A draft report has been prepared ahead by MCC of the meeting. It's a complete summary of traffic modelling, time scales and plans for discussion around the buses, in order to move the project forward.

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

County Cllr M Howells

It's been a while since the review and Cllr Howells will raise this at the next meeting with Cllr Griffiths (MCC).

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

County Cllr M Howells

**Usk together for the Climate** have engaged with 3 university students who will present their reports of what a sustainable Usk will look like in 2050.

County Cllr T Kear

**Usk Civic Society** are currently without a Chair, so Tony is filling in.

Alfred Russel Wallace Day is planning to go ahead.

**Usk in Bloom** have planted up ready to put out the displays.

Usk Business Group will be meeting this Wednesday and will be discussing the Christmas on Bridge St event. There seems to be little enthusiasm for a Summer Back Holiday event due to funding.

Cllr Kear will report formerly to UTC on decisions made at the meeting.

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

**VE day** was a wonderful day and a real success. A big thank you to Diane Gwyn and the team who catered for up to 60 people. Donations given - £505.00 for the Usk Food Kitchen.

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**Save the River Usk River Festival** will be on the Island Park, 7<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm. This is a family friendly event with no alcohol. There will be wildlife and environmental stalls. Request for support was discussed; this will go forward to the next finance meeting. **ACTION:** clerk to reply to Angela Jones.

**Usk Open Gardens** 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June. Sessions House will be open to the public on the Saturday 10am – 4pm. Councillors will share a 2hr shift to show visitors around.

**ARW Day** Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July are yet to decide on the format of the day. Meeting planned for 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Green Tops Market Autumn Fayre** – 11<sup>th</sup> October 10am-4pm, Twyn Square.

**Digital Information Board** – Cllr Howells asked if it could be swiped so residents can flip through the advertisements. Cllr D Harrison to investigate it.

**Usk Brass Band** have a VE day concert on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May at the Memorial Hall, 2-4pm.

**Little Mill Centenary Hall** Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May Risca Male Voice choir 7pm will be leading a charity concert with guest Tenor Gareth Morris.

**Blaenavon and Shrewsbury Male Voice Choirs** will sing in the Memorial Hall, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm.

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

The Co-op will have use of it until the refurbishments of the store are finished in July. Licence will then return to UTC for a year.

Robert Hamar will still have access to the skips.

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

Thank you to the Mayor for the £600 charitable donation. An ecologist is due to be employed to provide a preliminary ecological assessment which will aid the planning application.

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

This will be completed before the end of the month but should be around 19<sup>th</sup> May.

**ACTION:** Cllr M Howells to ask about enforcement of illegal parking.

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

Cllr M Howells has agreed to liaise with Ben over the progress of the project.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact Ben to discuss ways forward.

## **2.7 Active Travel update**

County Cllr M Howells

UTC met with a consultant transport planner from Amey, Lily Stringer. She is working on a business case of footway improvements from Burrium Gate to Twyn Square. They are working on a more pedestrian friendly environment.

## **2.8 Street cleansing and bin emptying**

To be discussed in committee.

## **2.9 Allotment update**

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Six plots have been allocated to new tenants. The contract needs to be finalised for them to sign. A few more plots are free for allocation. If these are not taken up by people on the waiting list, they will be advertised on social media for all residents.

The reconciliation of accounts will be done at the end of the month to check all payments have been.

**ACTION:** Cllr A Ivin to review the allotment licence

## **3.0 Telephone Boxes**

There's no clear proposal how they will be maintained. It needs to be established if once the telephones are removed, BT will lock the boxes.

**ACTION:** Clerk to investigate what happens to the maintenance of the boxes once BT has removed the phones.

## **3.1 Sooty Fox/Usk Eats Requests**

Jake from Sooty Fox has a venue for his box for the season

Usk Eats is no longer trading.

## **3.2 Update on surgeries**

**Board at the Hub** needs updating with the new Mayor information and notice of next meeting.

**Parking in Newmarket St** – resident concerned about the extra parking that this the Royal redevelopment will generate as it will have hotel rooms. British Legion are using the triangle for picnic benches but there are seldom people using it. Highways will comment on the Royal application and planning will be available for public.

There was also concern that there is parking set aside for an Air B&B on the corner of New Market St/Old Market St that belongs to MCC.

**Solar Power** Ian Williams was concerned that MCC were not considering Shop Local and look to independent businesses. Ian was advised to make a contact MCC so he can address full council.

**Cost Centre Report** Alec Leathwood requested this at surgery. UTC have been advised by One Voice Wales that they are not required to produce it; UTC would need to produce a redacted report. RFO Damian Nash will be producing a budget summary which will be available soon.

**Bridge St Crossing (North)** A request has been made for a crossing at the Three Salmons end of the street. This is being assessed as part of the Improvement Plan.

**WhatsApp Group** has been created for councillors to keep things separate from other council business.

Diane and Alison (Gwyn in reserve) will attend the next surgery – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> 4.30pm

## **3.3 Councillor Vacancy**

Advert is out from MCC – closing 22<sup>nd</sup> May

It has been shared on DIB, website, noticeboard and at the Community Hub

## **3.4 Matters of Information**

**Churches Fire** – quotation for annual service

**ACTION:** Clerk to investigate other options to compare prices.

## **3.5 Correspondence**

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**Police Update:** Chair read out report. Report is available on Facebook @usktowncouncil

**Seating Request:** Letter from a resident for a bench on Monmouth Road. Also, the bench plinth at the end of the churchyard needs repair.

**ACTION:** Clerk to respond to the resident and then forward letter to MCC Active Travel and Nigel Leaworthy.

Comment from Cllr A. Ivin that matters raised can often lead to lengthy discussions that take council away from the agenda. She proposed that matters are raised and then it can be decided how and when they can be discussed further.

Council went into committee to discuss Item 2.8.

Before leaving the meeting, County Cllr T Kear requested that UTC respond to Nigel Leaworthy about this matter.



**Town Clerk**

**Date of next meeting:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 6.00pm