

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 9th June 2025 at 6.00pm

MINUTES

Present

Chair: Cllr D. Richards,

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

RFO: D. Nash,

Clerk: A. Morgan.

Chair welcomed everyone for attending and extended thanks to the public gallery.

3.6 To accept apologies for absence.

None

3.7 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.

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

None

3.9 County Councillors participation

County Cllr Kear

Monmouth Road: Resurfacing will be completed this week. Road closures will be 3rd,4th and 7th July 9.30am-3.30pm. With 7th July as estimated finish date. There will be delays but access for residents. The request that one side of the road was done at a time was rejected as deemed unsafe.

The requested for a dropped kerb was also rejected due to insufficient size of pavement.

Speeding concerns here; plans with GoSafe have been suspended until work is done. The GoSafe van will need to gather data as the investigation needs to be statistically driven.

Resurfacing Porthycarne Street / Abergavenny Road:

This is scheduled for Autumn 2025 and will go up to the end of the wooded area.

Following a GAIST survey Chepstow Road will also be looked at. A town pavement survey has also been carried out.

Usk Bridge Damage: This has now been rebuilt, the current traffic lights will be removed soon.

ACTION: Cllrs Kear & M Howells will request traffic lights are removed as soon as possible.

UTAG project: The meeting with Ken Skates has been rescheduled for 10th July

Bus Stop: Christian Schmidt has agreed that this will be on the schedule.

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Usk School Crossing: A driver has misread the road and crashed into the fencing at the traffic lights. This is the 3rd time this has happened. MCC has been asked that this is reviewed, where the road narrows and the liens are not clear. Cllr Kear has requested a site meeting.

County Cllr M Howells

Railway Bridge: this will be closed for 6 weeks for gas works to be done. Further work may be required once investigations are underway.

Prison Community Liaison Committee: This will meet on 30th June with a suggested walk around.

Dog Fouling: Sue Parkinson is going to visit Pook Lane again.

4.0 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 12th May 2025

Approved

Please note that Cllr Harrison left the room for **Agenda item 1.8**

4.1 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 12th May 2025

Bins outside No49 – no licence issued; it's not something that MCC do

ACTION: Cllr M Howells to contact MCC to ask if permission has been given for them to leave the bins on the pathway.

Cllr T Kear informed UTC that MCC Heritage are currently in discussion with No49 regarding the work they are undertaking in removing the tree in the wall.

4.2 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee

Cllr K Peacock was appointed Chair of the Sessions House Management Committee.

Safety Checks

Awaiting a quote to fix the window in the back corridor.

Drainage and Soakaway has been sorted. It remains to be seen if the fix has worked as there haven't been any heavy downpours since.

Events

- **5th June 4.30-6.30pm** Surgery at Sessions House
- **9th, 16th & 23rd June** Royal Countryside Fund
- **19th June** Visit from French exchange Cardiff/ Nantes.
- **20th June** HMPPS Student Awards in Courtroom.
- **21st June** Wedding
- **22nd June 3pm** Civic Service
- **28th June** Usk Open Gardens - Sessions Tours

4.2a To propose utility charges for offices

Proposal to reintroduce charging for utilities. 60% is UTC's responsibility and 40% is occupied by the tenants with costs per square metre. GAVO office needs remeasuring before percentages are allocated.

APPROVED

4.2b To approve hot desk charge for temporary applicant

Application from a visiting relative of Drew Morton to use a space for Hot Desking. Cllr M Howells investigated rates with range from £15 to £25 a day.

APPROVED £20 a day

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4.3 To receive the monthly Finance report for May 2025

Cllr A Ivin was appointed Chair of the Finance Committee

Monthly expenditure for May and April was looked through and everything was budgeted or had been reported to committee.

It was proposed to reappoint John Henry of JDH business services as our internal auditor for 24/25. Section 137 donations proposals of £200 pounds each to the Save the River Usk Festival (postponed due to weather) and to the 110 years celebration of Gwent Women's Institute supporting their Event in Usk on July 12th and £100 to Gwent Young Farmers and the county-wide event for Armed Forces Day in

4.3a To approve charitable donations to organisations

APPROVED: £200 to WI, £200 to Save the River, £100 to Gwent Young Farmers, £100 to Armed Forces Day

4.3b To appoint an internal auditor

APPROVED John Henry to be appointed as Internal Auditor

ACTION: RFO to begin the process with John Henry

4.5 To receive any Planning Applications:

DM/2025/00601 The Knoll Monmouth Road Usk Monmouthshire NP15 1SF

Replacement of existing rear single-story garage and utility room for housing of hydrotherapy pool, and link to proposed new Oak frame garage and garden store.

APPROVED

Proposed Path Order – Usk Athletic Club

Proposal to move the footpath from the Pitch to behind the tennis courts.

UTC raised a query with Gavin Pugh, MCC Rights of Way Officer, about the prospect of the path being used by cyclists with the proposed Pump Track development. Mr Pugh made it clear that the plan is for a pedestrian right of way only. The pump track would have to apply for a cycle order.

Planning meeting voted for the order with 2 Cllrs declaring an interested and not voting, 1 councillor absent from the meeting. Motion was passed with a majority.

APPROVED

Cllr A Ivin wished to make some comments about her 2 objections even though it would not change the vote;

- 1) The footpath is 1.45m at present, Mr. Pugh's cover letter refers to 3m, but the draft order refers to 2m. Having spoken with Mr. Pugh, he has said it will be increased to 3m, so it would have to double in size from what it is now.

It's been mentioned that a cycleway in that position is essential for the pump track to go ahead; that the pump track has three available routes of access to it, one being down the river, one being down the continuation of Maryport St (which has already been discussed several times in terms of the danger there and active travel), so the safest route is the third route which is the route behind the tennis courts. Cllr Ivin foresees sequential applications being made, first to move the footpath and then pump track access later, and there will be an application to allow cycling on that pedestrian route. Due to physical constraints there, you won't have enough space to have shared use. Cllr Ivin is not in favour of shared spaces.

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Chair stated that this is an issue for pump track in the future and MCC should investigate safer access points for the pump track.

- 2) The footpath of the cricket field has been in use for a very long time when people have been straying and perambulating around the cricket field and a better outcome for the town would be that pedestrians stay on the cricket field and the cyclists go down the new path behind the tennis court.

4.6 To receive an update on the Improvement for Usk

County Cllr M Howells

Traffic Modelling Review

Meeting held last week with the approach to resume design and development of Twyn Square and Bridge St while maintaining traffic flows, prioritising pedestrian experiences between accessibility and placemaking. Retaining the bus access to Twyn square with a parallel exploration of alternative and additional stopping point options. Roberts Limbrick has been requested to resume design works. Dan and Clare will be having a meeting at the end of the month.

Shared Prosperity Fund

Cllrs were requested if they were interested in responding to this offer. Cllr Ivin is having trouble with time lag on emails.

Agreed that Cllr Howells would share an expression of interest.

ACTION: forward information to Cllr T Kear

4.7 To receive MCC's countywide forthcoming parking review

County Cllr M Howells

Parking charges to remain as they are. No changes will be made according to the draft report.

Cllrs reported that the traffic enforcers have been in town issuing charges. Cllr Kear has spoken with Paul Griffiths about the ineffectuality of the lines without enforcement and has sent photographs of the new lines to Dan Fordham who has assured him that enforcement will recommence.

4.8 To receive a report from the Groups/Organisations within the Town

County Cllr M Howells

Save the River Usk River Festival

Postponed due to weather until 14th September 2025.

Usk Together for the Climate

Himalayan Balsam Bashing party along the brook that leads down to Ty Melyn, along the Abergavenny Rd, took place on 8th June.

A group attended the UWE presentation showcasing their project of Sustainable Usk 2050. Their project showed eco-friendly, adaptability for flooding and housing, green transport, a resilient infrastructure with local source of food, walkways over the river embracing that the river floods and where it would be allowed to do this with an additional southern bridge. It has been requested that the students bring it down in the autumn to give presentation councillors and residents.

Usk Civic Society

The Giant Salmon Project is progressing, awaiting the design for the mount for the mosaic to be approved; this has been admitted to NRW for their approval.

Twinning

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There is a planned visit for Graben-Neudorf residents from 11th to 14th September 2025. Schedule for the visit will be planned at the next meeting on 25th June.

Usk in Bloom

Cllr Kear gave a formal thank you from the trustees for the grant from UTC. All planting is now done. Usk in Bloom judging date not yet set.

Usk Open Gardens

28th to 29th June. Nigel Leaworthy has been requested to provide support from MCC, tidying up the town prior to the event.

Usk Business Shops and Events

They have requested details on how they may get involved with the organising of the Christmas on Bridge St event.

UBSE are disappointed that the group are disappointed that UTC are not able to support a summer event. Cllr A Ivin confirmed that UTC proposed to support one event or 50:50 2 events, as per budget.

In response, Cllr Kear reiterated the disappointment from the group due to struggling businesses and closure of businesses in the town and that the footfall and publicity that events generated are beneficial to the town.

ACTION: Christmas event added to UTC Events

4.9 To receive a report from the Events Committee

County Cllr M Howells

Cllr M Howells appointed chair and Cllr G Howells appointed Deputy Chair

VE Day Event

This was a very successful day which raised £505.00 for the Usk Food Kitchen. ITV Wales News provided live coverage of the event. A video of the event can be viewed on YouTube

Forthcoming Events

- Sat 21st June 12pm to 10pm Lines Pop-up Pub by the River, Conigar Walk
- Sat & Sun 28th & 29th June – Usk Open Gardens
- Friday 4th July 7pm - Duck Race Usk, Athletic Club
- Saturday 5th July - Alfred Russel Wallace Day, Sessions House 10am
- Friday 11th July 11am – 1pm Teddy Bear's Picnic, Usk Castle
- Saturday 11th October 10-4pm Green Top Markets, Autumn Fayre, Twyn Square

Christmas on Bridge St

Discussions have begun around road closure.

Usk Town Events Calendar

This is now live and available to organisations to add to by filling in a Form available from Cllr M Howells.

This will be linked to UTC website – Events Calendar. Chair thanked Cllr M Howells for setting this up.

Nature Mural

UTC have been approached by Danielle Farrington to create a nature mural on the old railway bridge. Discussions around this have been postponed until gas works on the bridge have been completed.

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Bench on Monmouth Road

Discussion have begun about the possibility of setting up a bench in memory of Rosie Humphries. This is also in response to a resident's request for a bench on Monmouth Road.

Cllr Kear has approached Tom Humphries with the suggestion. There may be a small amount of funds available from Active Travel.

Sessions Visit for French/Cardiff Exchange

There will be 2 groups of visitors to the Sessions House and Usk Rural Life Museum 19th June 2-4pm. Councillors asked for their availability to help.

Next Meeting: 26th June 9am, Cllr Kear was invited to attend

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

Cllr M Howells has spoken to Emma Bevan, an artisan crafter, hoping to hold craft fayres there.

Chair is going to approach the shopfitters to ensure that they clean up before UTC take on the lease.

5.1 To receive an update on the proposed pump track

Chair requested a schedule of actions for the development of the track.

County Cllr M Howells

UPT Committee are awaiting the results of the preliminary ecological report to see if any further ecological studies, if any, are required prior to planning application.

REET will reimburse the setting up for the lease, enough funding is available for this to go ahead.

Cllr Ivin asked for clarification about access to the track. Cllr M Howells said this would be explored and does not anticipate a great deal of people using it any one time. Looking at Gilwern, as an example, a few families use it at weekends and parents with toddlers in the week. Cllr G Howells asked why so much money being invested in it if it wasn't going to be well used. Cllr M Howells explained that pump tracks provide a gateway to cycling. Every child in Usk will have the opportunity to use it and learn to ride there; British Cycling and Sports Wales are encouraging them for communities all over the country.

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

County Cllr M Howells

Yellow lines at One Stop and Cricket Club are completed.

Four Ash St needs to be done.

5.3 To discuss UTC SH Lottery Briefing paper

County Cllr M Howells

Awaiting contact from former councillor Ben Thomas

ACTION: Cllr M Howells to contact him.

5.4 Active Travel update

County Cllr M Howells

Neither County Councillors have any news.

5.5 Street cleansing and bin emptying

Carry over to next meeting.

Litter Pickers noticed that bins were full on the weekend.

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Robert is still emptying last thing on a Friday

ACTION: Clerk to check with Robert that he is still doing this.

5.6 Allotment update

County Cllr D Richards

All 6 empty plots have been reallocated

VOTE – Keep current Agreement for another year

APPROVED

The driveway gets worn away and Matt Hamar has been filling in gaps. Cllr T Kear suggested with the removal of material on Monmouth Road, it may be fortuitous that MCC would be able to help with the driveway. He will make enquiries to Amey.

5.7 Town Clock

No response from Heritage re planning for placement of plaque
Clock servicing by Smith of Derby also needs to be funded by MCC
Clerk has received no response regarding maintenance either.

ACTION: Clerk to forward information to Nick Keyse and Cllr T Kear who will follow up on this.

5.8 Telephone Boxes

Response received from BT is that they will lock them once telephony has been removed.

ACTION: Clerk to contact BT to ask about ongoing responsibilities; ownership, insurance and maintenance.

5.9 Update on Surgeries

3 people attended.

Reports/Queries:

1. A dead tree on Abergavenny Road opposite Ty Melyn.
2. A professional dog walker has been letting several dogs run free off leads on the REET field and dogs' mess not being collected.
3. Do the double yellow lines at the Lamb and Flag corner on Maryport St need to be so long?
Cllr M Howells explained that this has previously been investigated as a possibility to free up 2 extra parking spaces, but the lines are necessary because of the opposite junction to Priory Gardens.

ACTION: Cllr M Howells will follow up on the tree.

ACTION: Clerk to email REET about the complaint re dog-walking, CC Athletic Club.

6.0 Councillor vacancy

Application closes 27th June

Currently 3 interested. Councillors encouraged to share information about the vacancy.

Applications will only be circulated to councillors after the closing date.

A committee will be established to conduct interviews and will report back to the full council for the selection of a candidate.

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6.1 Matters of Information

Sessions House caretaker is not well and unable to carry out duties; Clerk and councillors to cover her duties. This will include opening and locking up. Duties also include cleaning toilets, hoovering after large events, setting up tables for bookings and arranging the refreshments.

6.3 Correspondence

- Thank you from former councillor Ben Thomas for the letter of thanks, it was much appreciated.
- Message from Alec Leathwood requesting the Cost Center Report, bins at No49, and details about the Town Clock plaque and maintenance. The clerk has responded, and actions are in place.
- Tim Southern has expressed concerns about the inaccessibility of NHS staff to the carpark at the back of the REET building across The Grange property. Cllr T Kear has spoken with all three parties and there is an interest in discussing a commercially acceptable plan. This will be a private arrangement and not a council matter.

ACTION: Clerk to respond to Tim Southern

- A resident has noted that Conigar path to the vets is overgrown with weeds; the Vets will cut back their side. Also, there is a broken fence. Photos have been supplied.
ACTION: Clerk has contacted Nigel Leaworthy.
- A Message from Geoff Punnett to say that the Usk and District PROBUS Club is no longer functioning. Since their Chairman, Prof Alan Young passed away, and no one was prepared to stand as Chairman, they have decided to close the Club

Date of next meeting: Monday 14th July 2025 6.00pm



Town Clerk