

Usk Town Council

The Sessions House, Maryport Street Usk NP15 1AD

Hybrid Meeting held in Sessions House and via Teams conferencing on Monday 9th March 2026 at 6.00pm

Minutes

Resident Jan Botting gave a talk to Council prior to meetingⁱ

Present

Chair: Cllr D. Richards,
Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin, Cllr D. Harrison, Cllr G. Howells, Cllr A. Snelgrove, Cllr K. Peacock,
County Cllr T. Kear,
RFO: Damian Nash,
Clerk: Angela Morgan.

23.9 To accept apologies for absence.

None

24.0 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.

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.

Question 1: Resident concerned that No49 has been removed from the agenda. There are pallets beside the bins and area is an eyesore. Hoping the council will encourage the owner to tidy up.

Response from Cllrs: MCC has written to the owner. The Land registry shows that MCC does not own the area. With the project development of the area this will also be addressed.

ACTION: Chair offered to send a letter to the owner.

Comment 1: Request for the Twinning signs to be added to the next agenda.

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

None

24.2 County Councillors participation

Co Cllr T. Kear

Post Office: Change of line management resulting in a better opportunity to make changes, therefore current staff are being trained to cover lunch hours. New shift pattern due to start in April.

Usk Bridge Update: No update following site visit. Awaiting date of next meeting. CCTV is reinstated at the old Police Station. MCC officers to go in and review the footage.

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Maryport St North Car Park Lighting: Dan Fordham and Porl Stone have had a site meeting and have come up with designs and wish to liaise with UTC to ensure there is no interference with project design for that area. MCC will cover the cost of the lighting.

Active Travel WelTAG Scheme: Burrium Gate through Castle St to the Square – A detailed design is being worked on with public consultation due to go ahead in April, funding decision should be made by then.

Flooding Officer involved, potentially to look at deep drains like those installed on Monmouth Rd. Concern from residents on Castle St that any changes may lead to flooding through their front doors. Water flows from a broken culvert down the old lane from the Castle, over the road and round the corner of Ty Basket and water has gone into front doors of houses.

MCC Budget: Budget passed and council tax raised by 5.95%. Cllr Kear and his group voted against the budget. If the budget had not passed, they had a series of negotiations planned to benefit the area; additional speed indication signs, a firm commitment to invest in a JCB machine and a better transaction between Town Teams and local councils.

Potholes: Cllr Kear has suggested a different approach is needed. An extra £2m has been put into Highways. MCC has agreed to his proposal and will review how the roads are repaired.

Co Cllr M. Howells

MCC Budget: Cllr Howells voted for the budget. The budget has had no cuts; £230m budget focusing on education, social care and neighbourhood services. It included extra funding of £1m on top of inflation for schools, £1m on top of inflation for social services and £7m on top of inflation for highways investment in footpaths and bridges. Libraries, Leisure Centres and Waste Services as normal, no cuts. The tax increase is equivalent to £2.08 a week or £108/yr for the average 'D' Band property. It's lower than recent years and helps safeguard services.

Usk Hub: has a new teenage space for Book Club on the first Monday of the month and Wednesdays for homework study – free snacks and drinks.

Suicide Awareness Training: councillors were advised that those in difficulty can visit [melo Cymru](http://melo.cymru) website or to call 111 and press 2 for an advisor.

Porthcarne St: to be closed this Wednesday, signs have been posted. Full closure 9am-5pm, there will be access to properties.

Recycling: Wales is 2nd in the world and Monmouthshire is 2nd in Wales. Recycling rate is 72.3%.

Police Walkabout: councillors joined Chris Watkins, Police Community Officer for a walk around the town and talking to residents. Police Surgery is held once a month in the hub.

BAE Systems Visit: four councillors visited to see their Regeneration Project plans to replace 18 old buildings with offices and laboratories to create extra jobs. HGV construction was questioned. Residents can visit to review the proposals by emailing defencesolutions@baesystems.com or view at County Hall.

Dog Fouling: New signs have been placed on Bridge St. Cllr Kear has requested one more to be added. Difficulty due to lack of lampposts.

More signs have also been posted at the Football Grounds beyond the Athletic Club.

Care and Repair Cymru: This was a great success, next is on 19th April

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24.3 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th February 2026

- **Item 22.5** – £250,000 for the redevelopment of the toilet block, 0% from Transforming Towns and 50% from Pride of Place (UK Govt initiative)
Cllr A. Ivin requested that the plans are circulated to councillors – these are online on MCC Cabinet Papers

24.4 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 9th February 2026

- Air Quality Management being revoked. There was a comment that UTC support the revocation of the Air Quality – send response to Cllr Howells
- Planning change to old chapel application for change of use. The new use has been advertised, and the company is offering open days. Concern of noise to residents. MCC has taken on complaint that the planning process follows its usual route. Where there is use of something prior to planning permission being granted, MMC policy is that they don't take forward enforcement action until planning has been determined.

24.5 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee

Cllr K. Peacock

Asbestos: CASA reports that there is no trace, but some areas need encapsulation

Security: Triple G have done a thorough job and are quoting for security lighting to be updated.

Front Wall: awaiting the cost of repair.

24.6 To receive the monthly Finance report for February 2026

RFO Damian Nash/Cllr A. Ivin

Reconciled bank and payments without any issues.

Street Cleansing: Awaiting clarification points from MCC legal. Nothing received to date.

Councillor Remuneration: this has been agreed for 25/26

Risk Assessment Review was amended which will go for approval at the AGM.

Medium Term Corporate plan: adapted for UTC and circulated which was an internal audit request.

Usk Repair Café: have requested funding support – to go forward to next meeting

Insurance Quote: agreed for 26/27

Salmon Adoption: awaiting insurance quote

Website: 24/25 accounts published to website

District Nurse Parking: Situation remains the same with ABHB funding; Council may need to consider contributing funding of required paintwork and signage. MCC have agreed to allocate 2 spaces near the Drs' Surgery in Maryport St, Carpark; £500 is needed to fund the marking of the spaces and to set up the legality of rent from ABHB to MCC. Cllr A. Ivin has approached Natasha at the Grange to further discuss use of two spaces at the Grange carpark. The Grange will take the discussion to their committee. MCC have allocated double yellow lines outside the Grange to allow better access to their property. Cllr Kear has previously discussed this point with the Grange as there is an access gate from their property to the rear of REET building and referred to previous correspondence requesting discussions do not go through a third party.

Resolved to pay the £500 if there is no positive response from the Grange.

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24.7 To receive any Planning Applications:

DM/2023/00167

Proposed two storey extension to existing dwelling.

1 Baron Street, Usk, NP15 1AS

Recommended for approval

24.8 To receive an update on the Improvement for Usk

Consultation dates 15th/16th May at the Grange then at Sessions House for 2 weeks.

Usk Business Group have a meeting on Wednesday 13th May

Cllr M Howells asked for approval to post update on Facebook – Approved.

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

Usk in Bloom: new chairman to be Tony Kear. Committee would like to formally thank UTC for the offer of £750 funding to host the Wales in Bloom event. This is now being hosted by Talgarth. There is now an offer for Usk to host in 2027. Colours for the year have been posted electronically.

Usk Civic Society: Lecture: Tim Ryan - The History of the Severn River Ferries, 25th March 7.30pm at Sessions House.

Llanbadoc Community Council: looking for new councillor, request to share on social media agreed.

Country Market reopening on 18th March

Repair Café had its first event opened by the mayor. Over 30 repairs and a lovely atmosphere. UTC flag repaired. Next on 19th April. Thank you to Andy and Beck Hunt for organising.

UBSE: 18th March. Mayor invited to attend.

25.0 To receive a report from the Events Committee

St David's Day Concert: superb event, raised £400 for Mayor's Appeal. Mayor thanks Friends of Usk.

Mayor's Thank You Celebration: 20th March, invites have gone out to not-for-profit groups within the town to thank volunteers for the work they do.

Green Top Markets: Saturday 29th March in Twyn Square, bringing over 50 stalls.

Risca Male Voice Choir: organised by Tony Kear, a charitable musical event on 11th April, St Mary's Church. Also featuring Andrew Morton's 400WHAT! with Angela Morgan. Tickets available from Tony, Diane, Council Office and on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/risca-male-choir-with-drew-mortons-400-what-and-usks-angela-morgan-tickets-1984707049211?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>

Tourism: Spring promotion on Facebook, councillors encouraged to share widely.

25.1 To discuss Solar Farm implications

PEDW – Planning Environmental Development Wales have refused for the company to exclude matters such as traffic management, agricultural waste, ecology and air quality. Two things excluded are contaminated land and fluvial flood risk. Three highways from affected local authorities will be making potential decisions towards HGV movements. C Cllr Kear attended public meeting on behalf of UTC and Llanbadoc CC.

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25.2 To receive an update on the proposed pump track

Cllr M. Howells

This is a charitable organisation led by 7 trustees, working with 4 track design tenderers, committee will choose a design for the area near the Usk Arboretum. The £150,000 project is funded by Sports Wales, crowd funding and local contributions. An Ecology Study carried out led to removal of several trees that were a potential safety hazard; survey was shared and endorsed by MCC tree officer. Landscape planning will include native tree replacements.

25.3 Allotment update

One new tenant in place. Rents are due on 1st April.

25.4 To discuss future projects in the town

Co-op Walkway: all information has gone to MCC and the Tree Officer and Green Infrastructure Officer are included, Usk in Bloom will also be included in the discussions and site meetings have taken place. Dave Hodson has been asked to quote for the area, to create a more user-friendly and plant friendly space under the tree cover. Query over the area being included in the Robert Limbick's design. Lighting issue to be included in the project development.

ACTION: clerk to forward designs to Chair of UiB, Tony Kear.

Pook Lane: no update.

Owain Glyndwr Field: suggestion to extend the path around the edge of the field.

MCC works: cleared path by the vets.

ACTION: Cllr M. Howells to check on progress.

25.5 Adoption of the Giant Salmon

Insurance: replacement to be insured, no need to do the workshops again. On NRW land and permission was granted

RESOLVED: adopt the Giant Salmon Mosaic and add to UTC's asset list.

25.6 Street cleansing (~~to be held in committee~~)

Awaiting legal responses from MCC

25.7 Town Bins

Correspondence from a resident regarding the removal of the bin outside the British Legion. The remaining bin on Newmarket St is now overflowing and dog wate is being left on the floor. Cllr M. Howells has shared alternative locations with Cllrs as to where the bin could be reinstated.

Suggestion to add a dog waste bin outside the Legion. This will incur more annual costs.

RESOLVED: Cllrs agreed on new location on the widest part of the pavement nr Ynys Hafod.

ACTION: Cllr Howells to contact Sue Parkinson.

25.8 Committees

Clerk has been in discussion with One Voice Wales over meetings and committees.

Recommendation is that Committees need to be a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 5 members.

Reports from sub-committees must be full at Full Council to ensure all members are aware and that a mandate is reached for decisions.

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RESOLVED: all councillors to stay on all sub-committees

Advice that a Planning Meeting is not needed before Full Council and that decisions are made in the Hybrid Meeting. A Planning Committee can convene mid-month where necessary to discuss planning applications where the date of comment submissions are due before the next full council meeting.

RESOLVED: Planning meetings to remain as they are. Applications with mid-month closure dates to be viewed and commented over WhatsApp, any objections and a meeting will be called.

Advice that we adopt both Staffing and Appeals Committees which must have different members. These will convene as required.

ACTION: Emergency, Staffing and Appeals Committees to be added to the AGM agenda

25.9 Update from the Emergency Procedures meeting

No update

26.0 Mayoral Chains

Chains need repair and adding to if we continue to keep the same chains. Fattorini's have said that it's not their work. Advice to retire the chain once it's full and display the badges in a frame.

Suggestion to use the current links to make a new chain, retaining the heritage and the main medallion. Mayor to use consort's chain for the main medallion on her visit to Graben-Neudorf.

ACTION: jewellers to be approached for advice and quotes.

26.1 Matters of Information

Gardener – Mike Alan has retired.

RESOLVED: new gardener to be sought at around the same cost.

26.2 Correspondence

- Police Report: theft of 5 chainsaws from a locked container; suspicious vehicle with people wearing face coverings; RTA on Abergavenny Rd; Anti-social youths moved on.
- Letter from resident regarding bins in Newmarket St. (Item 25.7)

Date of next meeting: Monday 13th April 2026 6.00pm



Town Clerk

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Jan Botting – Presentation to Councillors

The presentation covered two linked offers of community support: a Health Companion Drop-in service and involvement with the Music for Memories charity. The core message was that both initiatives aim to help residents who struggle with medical understanding or who are living with dementia, memory issues, or isolation.

Health Companion Drop-in:

Jan Botting explained that many people leave GP or hospital appointments without really understanding what they've been told. As they put it, "people... don't understand medicine and human bodies and illness" and often come away unsure about diagnoses, test results, or terminology.

Jan emphasised several boundaries:

- She would not be acting as a doctor: "I can't diagnose. I can't treat."
- Instead, she would act as a translator of medical information, helping people understand what their clinician has already said.
- The service would be informal, confidential, and non-clinical, with "no notes kept" and discussions limited to general explanations rather than personal medical advice.

Examples included explaining what a condition actually is (e.g., someone repeatedly hospitalised with pneumonia who "still didn't actually realize it was a lung infection").

The speaker invited councillors to refer residents who might benefit, noting that the current drop-in had "very little take-up so far" and might need a different format. They asked that their contact details not be shared publicly, but that councillors could contact them directly.

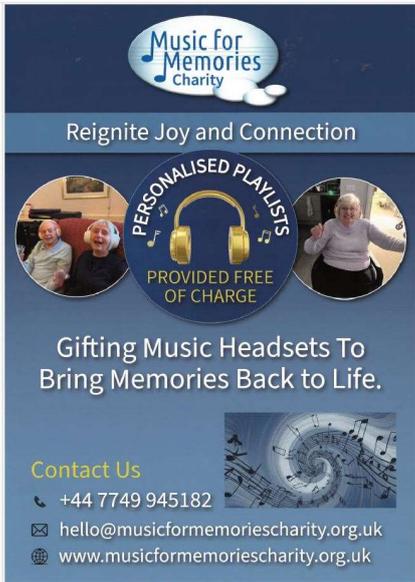
Music for Memories: How the Charity Works

The second part introduced Music for Memories, described as "a great charity... helping people mostly with dementia or memory problems or isolation."

Key points:

- Volunteers meet with the person (and often their carers) to build a personalised playlist of 40–50 favourite songs, often from their teenage years or other meaningful periods.
- The music is loaded onto an SD card and played through headphones or a small speaker.
- The speaker described powerful emotional responses: "people sit there, and they just... good, nice people happy."
- The programme is based in the Forest of Dean but expanding into Monmouthshire, with local grants and a private benefactor supporting it.
- They are covering the Monmouth area and may expand further depending on demand.

Councillors were encouraged to think of residents who might benefit.



Music for Memories Charity

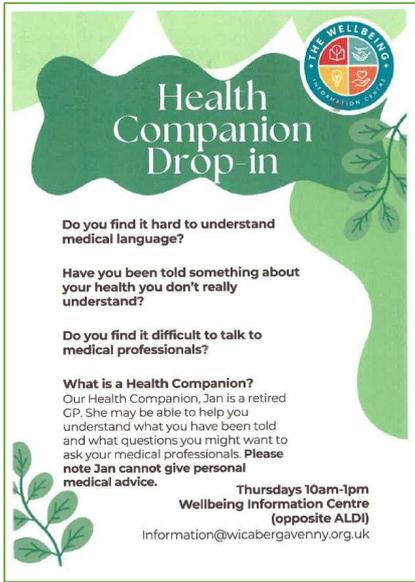
Reignite Joy and Connection

PERSONALISED PLAYLISTS
PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE

Gifting Music Headsets To Bring Memories Back to Life.

Contact Us

- +44 7749 945182
- hello@musicformemoriescharity.org.uk
- www.musicformemoriescharity.org.uk



THE WELLBEING INFORMATION CENTRE

Health Companion Drop-in

Do you find it hard to understand medical language?

Have you been told something about your health you don't really understand?

Do you find it difficult to talk to medical professionals?

What is a Health Companion?
Our Health Companion, Jan is a retired GP. She may be able to help you understand what you have been told and what questions you might want to ask your medical professionals. **Please note Jan cannot give personal medical advice.**

Thursdays 10am-1pm
Wellbeing Information Centre
(opposite ALDI)
information@wicabergavenny.org.uk