Usk Town Council

The Sessions House, Maryport Street Usk NP15 1AD

Hybrid Meeting held in Sessions House and via Teams conferencing
on Monday 12th October 2026 at 6.00pm

MINUTES

Present

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

11.1 To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr M. Howells, Cllr A. Ivin

11.2 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.

No public present

11.3 To disclose personal and prejudicial interest in items of business listed below

None

11.4 County Councillors participation

Co Cllr T Kear

Usk Bridge – road signs to be relocated to allow increased visibility. Chair asked to be invited to next meeting at end of November.

Post Office – Additional funding has been obtained. % staff members have been trained and an extra day of opening has started on Wednesdays.

Car Park Lighting - £3000 +VAT for new lighting has been approved

Pothole Review – Presented to MCC in September and changes have been recommended for implementation:

- two new inspectors to be employed,

- the manual process of reporting on the My Mon App will become automated and assessed for prioritization
- Bobcat to be purchased for pothole replacement
- new filling compound called Viafix to be used

RLDP - Review has been completed. An interim report will be completed by Pedw.

Carparking Enforcement - a report of ticketing has been requested.

Speeding Loops – from Maryport St. to 1 mile bridge. Speed loops on Monmouth Road. Once data has been received and reviewed action can take place if needed.

Drains – reported from Monmouth Road down through Bridge St

Abergavenny Road – incremental changes to include a single white line and addition of incoming 30mph sign before the 20mph sign.

Co Cllr M. Howells

Tourism Grants: A reminder was given for the £10,000 Tourism Business Grant aimed at enhancing local accessibility (Deadline: 11 October).

School Meals: Free school meal allocations have officially been extended to eligible Year 7 and Year 8 students.

Park Toilet: The damaged and rotted door has been reported to the building cleaning department for immediate repair.

Overgrown Hedges: Enforcement notices were served to property owners at The Meadows regarding overgrown hedges; however, delays are expected for unoccupied buildings.

Surveys: Residents are strongly encouraged to participate in the general MCC Resident Survey and the Welsh Language Survey currently hosted on the main MCC website.

Festive Event Grants: MCC is offering community group grants of up to £500 to support local festive events.

Flooding Awareness: With wet weather increasing, residents are advised to review safety advice on MCC website.

11.5 To approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 14th September 2026

p.4 Item 9.6 should read pinch points reduced from 4 to 3

11.6 Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 14th September 2026

None

11.7 To receive a report from the Sessions House Management Committee

Awaiting on a reply form Heritage regarding materials to be used for plastering inside.

Cadw state that materials should be replaced like for like, though modern materials may work better.

Quotes for Cottage electrics. One quote included site visits and quotation time. Discussions had around quotes and other options, no decisions made.
Heating Engineers also ned to be investigated - current contractors have been unreliable
2 more quotes needed for a boiler.

11.8 To receive the monthly Finance report for <u>September 2026</u>

Minutes approved for 9th September
Guidance is being sought from the council's payroll manager for **Benefit in Kind**
Reconciliation: All payments and receipts were passed, and bank reconciliation to 30 September was finalized without issues.
Allotments: Collection of outstanding, non-paid allotment fees via Cllr D Richards
Mobile Provider: Following a review of local network coverage, the council mobile contract will migrate to EE (or an immediate subsidiary) due to superior regional reception.
Cottage Utilities: Total monthly gas and electric utility expenditures for the cottage averaged approximately £225.00
Lottery Update: Info provided to committee on how lottery prize fund works
External Annual Audit: The full external audit report passed with zero issues to address. The approved report will be uploaded to the official website and pinned to the town notice board.
Christmas Lighting: investigate whether we can contract for 1yr rather than 3 with current supplier
Community Funding: A total of £9,500 in payments for Usk in Bloom has successfully been processed and cleared over the weekend.
Town post office: awaiting an official invoice from MCC for the UTC contribution.
6 Monthly Forecast: Undertaken with details to be updated on spreadsheet
Room Hire Cancellations: a clause will be added to future invoices:

- Cancellations under 7 days' notice: 100% of the hire fee charged.
- Cancellations between 7 to 14 days' notice: 50% of the hire fee charged.
- Cancellations with over 14 days' notice: No charge.

Advance Billing: All room hire invoices will now be raised and processed well in advance of the booking date. Discretionary exemptions will remain in place for local charities.
Usk in Bloom Funding: this should now have been received in 2 payments.
Co Cllr T Kear thanked UTC on behalf of UiB for the grant funding.

11.9 To receive any Planning Applications:

DM/2026/00934: Ynys Hafod 20 New Market Street Usk Monmouthshire NP15 1AT
Reinstatement of attic ceilings and walls following their unauthorised removal
<u>Council recommended approval</u>

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12.0 To receive an update on the Improvement for Usk

Clock Tower: Following public consultations, architects Robert Limbrick agreed to center the clock tower within Twyn Square. The existing concrete plinth will be removed and replaced with cobbles. Due to underground utilities and tree roots, the entire clock tower assembly must shift approximately 2 meters to the left or right toward The Castle Inn.

Infrastructure Scope: The revised plan features a wider pedestrian pavement and the removal of one pinch point on Bridge Street (corrected from two).

Funding & Timeline: Detailed design and engineering assessments will cost approximately £200,000, which will map out all utilities and drainage networks over the next 18 months. Capital project funding will be formally sought from the Welsh Government's 2027–2028 budget cycle to ensure a shovel-ready project when tenders open.

Contractual Dispute: Councillor A. Ivin has previously raised concerns that roughly 30% (£11,213 to £13,700) of the engineering costings under the original RIBA Stage 3 brief were removed by officers to lower the entry price. The officers clarified that the engineering parameters were intentionally scaled back from the tender, but Robert Limbrick had completed significant extra-contractual work out of scope.

RESOLVED: The council voted not to pursue further contractual queries or audit the invoice line-by-line, noting that the project parameters have already been finalized by public consultation and approved to move into the detailed design stage.

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

Silver Screen: screening of 'The Two Christophers', Friday, 30th October at the Memorial Hall.

Save the River Usk: Supported by over 160 MPs, the campaign group will visit the Senedd this Wednesday at 11:30 AM.

RSPCA Safety campaign: RSPCA calling to minimize firework noise distress for domestic and wild animals.

Usk Together for the Climate: A National Emergency Briefing will be hosted in the Sessions House this Thursday at 7:15 PM. Additionally, a "Looking Back" historical exhibition will run from 9th to 14th November at the Hub, showcasing changes in Usk over the last 50 years.

Civic Society: lecture on Stonehenge is scheduled for Wednesday, 21st October at 7:30 PM.

Anti-Racism Roadshow: The Monmouthshire Anti-Racism "Show Racism the Red Card" event will take place at Sessions House on Tuesday, 10 November.

Twinning Meeting: no updates

12.2 To receive a report from the Events Committee

Cllr D. Richards

Committee met on the 30th of September.

Recent Events Review: all big successes for Usk Open Gardens, Teddy Bear's Picnic, Choral Festival, MCC Dog Fouling, Alfred Russel Wallace Day and Walk, Duck Race, Singing Clubs from a

Concert, Lines and Pop-Up Pub on the River, the Usk Agriculture Show and Session House Open Doors with Cadw The Usktoberfest, which took place last weekend

Upcoming Events: John Frost play postponed until next year. Green Tops Market on the 31st October, Twyn Square. We discussed the current events in the town by access to the calendar. Screening of the National Emergency Briefing was discussed. Ian Williams' Flanders and Swann concert on 31st October at Sessions House, 'Is There a Joker in the House?' on 5th Dec in the Memorial Hall; tickets available online.

Christmas: Sessions House will host the Country Market, Jane Hathaway Leukaemia Fund, and possibly some other charity stores.

The Three Salmons have been liaising with UBSE and have offered the car park. Performances from Monmouth Rock Choir and Usk Brass Band. Santa and 'Reindeers' will be there. Craft Renaissance are helping co-ordinate the stalls.

ACTION: clerk to provide list of requirements for event hosting following ESAG guidelines.

Timings: Event 10am-4pm, Road Closure 8am-5pm

Lottery: to be republicised at the Green Tops Market – leafleting

Mayor's Appeal: A special "Cider and Cheese" tasting event featuring fine cheeses from Marris's and local craft cider is scheduled for the evening of 30th October. Tickets are priced at £25.

Provisional date for Blaenavon Male Voice Choir is January 16th or 23rd.

Remembrance Day: The annual service will take place at the church at 10:00 AM on Remembrance Sunday, followed by the wreath-laying ceremony and a parade back through the arch by the Town Band.

Tourism Video: offer from Josie Harrison to make a film of the town. Josie will decide whether to film landscape or portrait. **RESOLVED**

Digital Noticeboard: bus timetable is up to date.

Church Events: council to offer a donation to the church to cover the heating of their events - to be discussed further at a later date.

12.3 To discuss Solar Farm updates

Site Visit on 14th October for public. The planning application, due to go to Pedw in December, currently lacks a construction management plan which includes the impact of HGVs going through Usk. There is an issue with the size of the transformer; it is so large that it won't get through the lane. Also, there is a dispute with Welsh Water.

12.4 To receive an update on the proposed pump track

A formal notification of planning has been submitted and served to Usk Athletic Club. Once ecology survey is complete, planning will be submitted.

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12.5 Allotment Update

Some plots need attending to before they are made available, Cllr Richards to attend to them. The abandoned shed has now been dismantled. Outstanding payments have been chased.
The issue taken in committee last time needs to be investigated further before response is given.
ACTION: Cllr Richards to speak to original complainant.
ACTION: New contracts to be issued in April once terms have been readdressed

12.6 To discuss future projects in the town

ACTION: Cllr A. Ivin has said she will contact
New watering system on the bridge to be investigated once the flowers have been taken down.
Co-Op walkway and Church entrances discussed.

12.7 Street Cleansing update

Contract is signed; UTC have informed MCC that the contract is to be adhered to
Advertisement for 2 employees is live.

12.8 Christmas Lighting

Price for 1 year on a 3yr contract = £3,031.86
Price for 1yr contract =£4,715.90
Since this quote, the lights we wanted and have been quoted for are now unavailable. The available options are 50% more expensive.
RESOLVED: agreed t sign 3yr contract a The Festive Lighting Company.

12.9 Sessions House Bookings –Invoices to be sent the month before.
Cllr D. Richards and Cllr G. Howells voted against cancelations being charged.
RESOLVED: cancellation clause to be added to the invoice.

13.0 Weddings Management

Booking form needs personalising and drone permission notice needs to be added with HMPS contact details. Confetti needs to be biodegradable.
RESOLVED: clerk to cover weekend weddings when available and to be paid for the extra hours.

13.1 School Transport

An extra 14 spaces have been put on service bus. A special scrutiny committee will meet on 5th November and all points will be addressed.
ACTION: Clerk to email scrutiny to request Council may present at their meeting

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13.2 Matters of Information

Warm Spaces: RESOLVED clerk to complete grant application

Monmouthshire Community Website: will save on double entry, Joe Skidmore to give presentation to UTC; date to be arranged.

Community Support Officer: John Crandon has visited, liaison with church, community, police and town council.

Any reports to 101 or PCSO, ask for a log number, it will be tracked

Men's Shed: pre-planning application has resulted in no need for planning just a certificate of authorisation

Remembrance Parade: Sunday 8th November, St Mary's 10.30am

13.3 Correspondence

None

Date of next meeting: Monday 9th November 2026 6.00pm

Town Clerk

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