

MAGOR WITH UNDY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Magor with Undy Community Council held remotely on Thursday 19th August 2021 at approximately 7.40pm

COUNCILLORS: Cllr N Baicher (*left approx. 8.30pm*),, Cllr S Bailey, Cllr M Bisi, Cllr G Cook (Chair), Cllr J Crook, Cllr C Hopkins, Cllr D James, Cllr P Kirkham, Cllr K Plow, Cllr S Raggett, Cllr F Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE: Beverly Cawley – Clerk,

APOLOGIES: Cllrs J Wilson & Cllr A Zagozda (received late)

Min
2021/22

82 Chair's Announcements

Councillors advised that the meeting was being recorded

82.1 To receive apologies for absence from Councillors

Apologies received as above

82.2 To receive any update and feedback on Chair's attendance at outside events/functions

Chair advised that he had attempted to attend the Monmouthshire CAB virtual meeting, the host had not let him in to join the virtual meeting, which may have been down to him arriving late.

83 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda – Forms to be completed

83.1 To receive any declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Cllr James – WAO Consideration Report – A major contributor

84 Office Accommodation

84.1 To receive and consider a business case in respect of moving the Community Council Office to rented premises – off Magor Square. (*attached*)

Members discussed at some length the business case presented together with the reasons for moving the office and other options available. Cllr Raggett suggested that the agenda item be deferred until other options, such as a modular office at the MUGA court site adjacent to the replacement changing rooms and storage were looked into in more detail and could be compared with the current proposal. Members considered the current access to the Police Station, and whilst access in to the building/reception/interview room is DDA compliant, it did not make allowances for the Council offering employment to someone with disability or mobility issues due to the office being on the first floor. Cllr Bisi, went through the business case raising several issues, supporting many of the points but indicating that some of the points lacked clarity or substance and challenging some of the facts/statements within the case. Mention was made of comparing the costs with those of other T&CC offices throughout Wales. The fact that the current office is situated quite centrally between the two villages was discussed, as well as the fact that many Community Councils work well without an office. Some members were expecting the interaction and

footfall from members of the public to increase dramatically due to the new office being more central within the shopping/hub of the villages. Reference was made to the number of residents that call in to other local Town Councils (Caldicot & Chepstow) who had dedicated Council buildings sited within or just off the Town centre – where no more than 1 or 2 members of the public visited on a weekly basis. Concerns were raised that residents had not been consulted or canvassed properly on this proposal. A member asked for clarification and a breakdown of some of the cost listed in the business case and where the figures had been taken from. A member asked about welfare facilities in particular mains water and toilet facilities – confirmed both outside - and whether a minimum of 11 cubic metres per person was available in the work area – It was confirmed the space available was 15.2 feet square (did not know size in cubic metres). - and whether a ‘change of use’ planning application would be required. A member raised the issue of a floor plan in order to visualise the office space and layout. A member wished to view the property and suggested that the Clerk should be allowed to view too. A member asked whether the vacancy created by the resignation of the Administration Assistant was to be filled to assist in any increase work created by more interaction with the public, and whether the cost needed to be factored in to the business case. Members discussed other pro’s, con’s and concerns and a vote was taken: 6 in Favour, 5 against.

Resolved: That this Council approve the Business Case to move the Community Council Office to premises off Magor Square.

- 84.2 **To consider any actions required in the implementation of Council’s decision to take on the lease of the Hayloft for the purposes of use as council office accommodation, subject to the approval of the business case.**

No items were considered under the agenda item

Cllr Baicher left the meeting at approximately 8.30pm

- 84.3 **That Council note the detailed content of the motion already agreed by Council on the 12th July 2021 (attached) without amendment and further agree, with immediate effect to create a budget heading for Office Accommodation for the 2021/22 year by virement of unspent and available amounts as specified in financial regulations and agree any necessary expenditure.**

Councillors asked the Clerk to identify whether there was sufficient underspend within the Council’s current financial year. The clerk reminded members that they needed to take in consideration an increase in costs for dog waste bin maintenance of £2835 and other committed amounts. The clerk confirmed that there was £8110 available within the cemetery survey budget, £2500 unspent money set aside for a Speeding Reduction Programme, £4965 in Car Park Improvements, approximately 5 months of unpaid Admin Assist salary and on-costs of approximately £8000 and approximately £4200 remaining in the Emergency Fund for out of budget projects.

Resolved: To set up a new budget heading on the RBS Finance system entitled ‘Office Accommodation’.

Resolved: To initially vire to the new ‘Office Accommodation’ budget heading £8000 from the salary budget and £1000 from the Emergency Fund budget.

- 84.4 **That Council commission legal advice in respect of the lease**
Members concurred the need to utilise legal advice in respect of the lease. The clerk would see if the Council's Insurance Company could provide any, but suggested that this would only be guidance and that probably Council need to consider something more local. Several suggestions were put forward to enable the clerk to make enquiries.
- Resolved:** That the Clerk make enquiries regarding guidance from the Insurers and seek recommendations regarding a local conveyancer of property rental leases.
- 84.5 **That Council consider whether any action is necessary in respect of the lone working policy**
The clerk had provided copies of the Council's 'Lone Working Policy' adopted June 2021 and the 'Lone Working Risk Assessment' drawn up in July 2021 by Ellis Whitham Employment Law Health & Safety section in conjunction with the clerk. The Chair would go through the 'Lone Working' Policy and Risk Assessment with the Clerk to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 84.6 **That Council review the risk assessment in respect of Health and Safety at work and consider any action necessary (attached)**
Cllr Crook had completed a Risk Control sheet, which needed to be converted onto a Risk Assessment document.
The Clerk advised that a Health Safety & Welfare in the Workplace Risk assessment would also need to be completed for the new office and facilities.
- 84.7 **That Council review the risk assessment in respect of Covid – 19 in the workplace in view of the Welsh Government move to alert level 0 as at 07/08/21 and consider any action necessary**
A Risk Control Assessment was available for the current office, together with a Covid-19 Policy, as provided by Ellis Whittam Employment Law Health & Safety section together with an Emergency Action Policy and Daily Cleaning Check list – all relating to Covid-19. These would need to be reviewed upon moving in to new premises.
- 85 **To Resolve - Exclusion of Press and Public - by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted**
The Chair noted the time (8.54pm) and members considered deferring the following items to another meeting. After discussion it was agreed to carry on. The Chair acknowledged that he would need to invoke Standing Order No 3.v to extend the meeting at 9am for a maximum of Half an hour – to 9.30pm.
- Resolved:** To exclude the Press and Public from discussion on the following items based on the fact that the WAO Draft Consideration Report is strictly confidential at this time.
- 86 **Wales Audit Office Draft Consideration Report – March 2020**
86.1 **To receive an update from the Clerk and former Chair Cllr Bailey about the process set out by the Wales Audit Office in respect of the Report and the process for agreeing the final report and its publication by WAO.**

The Chair acknowledged that Cllr Bailey (former Chair) and the Clerk had forwarded to all a written response and timeline of the WAO guidelines they had followed in handling receipt of the Draft Consideration Report from the Wales Audit Office.

Chair invoked Standing Order No 3.v to extend the meeting for a maximum of half an hour – to 9.30pm.

86.2 To consider the Draft Report findings and agree any actions

A member commented that generally we have put in place the majority of the recommendations. He accepted that as a Council we had made mistakes. A member also raised the fact that an actual discussion had not taken place on the report and Council had not made any decision on the report. A member noted that the report was a draft report and asked at what point Council should take any action – on the draft, which could change, or on the final report which would set out the final recommendations.

86.3 To consider the Draft Recommendations and agree any actions and prepare an action plan as necessary

Members looked at the recommendations made in the WAO draft consideration report, noting that although they had not been discussed, many of them had incidentally been put in place.

Cllr Raggett advised the Chair at 9.34pm that discussions had exceeded the extension period invoked under Standing Order No 3.v to extend to 9.30pm

Resolved: To draw up an action plan of the issues considered in respect of the draft recommendations and bring back to the 13th September meeting for further discussion on how to implement and monitor, and agree any actions necessary to prepare for the final report.

86.4 To agree how any action plan will be implemented and monitored

Item deferred

86.5 To agree any actions necessary to prepare for the final report

Item deferred

87 Meeting Dates

87.1 Extra-Ordinary – Monday 23rd August 2021 at 7pm

Not discussed

87.2 Ordinary Meeting – Monday 13th September, 2021 at 6pm

Not discussed

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.52PM

Signed: _____

Chair to the Council