

MAGOR WITH UNDY TOWN COUNCIL

Tel: 01633 882 842

e-mail admin@magorundy.org.uk

web: www.magorundy.org.uk

Minutes of the Extra - Ordinary Meeting of Magor with Undy Town Council held at Undy Church Hall and remotely on Monday 17th July 2023 at 7pm

COUNCILLORS:

Mayor Cllr Carole Hopkins
Deputy Mayor Cllr Frances Taylor,
Cllr Donna James
Cllr Mike James
Cllr Penny Kirkham

IN ATTENDANCE: William Lewis – Clerk to Council

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: Nil

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Catherine Baker	Cllr Paul Cawley	Cllr Amanda Graham
Cllr Neeta Baicher		

This meeting was originally scheduled to be held remotely but as a consequence of a large public response with comments and concerns posted on Magor and Undy Community Face Book Page, together with direct contact made to Mon CC Ward Councillors and members of the Town Council in respect of Agenda Item 6 (Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Provision) it was determined that the communities of Magor and Undy would benefit from the meeting being held at a public venue and the offer of remote access via Zoom Conference Calling.

The proposed workshop to discuss review of the Council policies of, General Risk Assessment, The Effectiveness of Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures prior to formal commencement of this extra-ordinary meeting could not be proceeded with consequent to the priority given to Agenda item 6 which was brought forward to commencement of the meeting.

55 GYPSY TRAVELLER PITCH PROVISION. - Langley Close /Dancing Hill/Knollbury

55.1 To note that Monmouthshire CC have scheduled a People Scrutiny Committee meeting for 10:00 am Wednesday 19th July 2023 to debate proposed parcels of land for Gypsy Travellers at Langley Close, Dancing Hill and Knollbury.

This item listed at 6 on the Agenda was brought forward to the commencement of the meeting.

Mayor Hopkins opened the meeting addressing all in attendance both in person and by remote access. Mayor Hopkins announced that the meeting had been convened so as to inform the communities of the matter of parcels of land at Langley Close and Dancing Hill formerly designated as amenity land within Magor and Undy which was to be discussed by a Peoples Scrutiny Meeting at Monmouth County Hall on 19th July 2023 to assess suitability for Gypsy & Traveller pitches.

Mayor Hopkins informed the attendees that Cllr Frances Taylor would be providing an overview of the proposals and the representation to be made by the Town Council after which the floor would be open to questions from attendees who were also requested to remain respectful at all times.

Mon CC Ward Councillor/Town Councillor Frances Taylor presented a detailed overview of the matters to be discussed at the Peoples Scrutiny Meeting on 19th July 2023, a history of the two parcels of land at Langley Close and Dancing Hill, that these proposals were departing from previous resolutions that these parcels of land had been designated for development of amenity space to be enjoyed by the communities of Magor with Undy and that the Town Council shall be preparing their representations to address the People Scrutiny Meeting and supporting the view that neither parcels of land satisfy all the criteria for suitability of provision of Gypsy & Traveller Pitches.

Questions and Comments were invited from attendees (in person and online) and valuable contributions were received.

Ward Councillor John Crook was also present at the meeting and when invited by Town Council addressed the attendees and answered questions and queries about the scheduled Peoples Scrutiny Meeting of the 19th July 2023.

Questions and answers concluded at 20:40 hrs and members of the public that were in attendance both in person and remotely left the meeting.

Council then attended to Agenda items 1 to 5 prior to discussion and debate in respect of Agenda item 6 and at **2100hrs agreed that Standing Orders shall be suspended** in order to conclude the remaining business.

It was resolved:

To prepare representation that both parcels of land at Langley Close and Dancing Hill were unsuitable for the proposed use as Gypsy & Traveller Pitches and that the process under which these areas had been identified was inconsistent and seriously flawed.

That representations shall be made at the Peoples Scrutiny Meeting on 19th July 2023 by Cllr Penny Kirkham on behalf of Magor with Undy Town Council. (Copy included at Appendix A) and Ward Councillor Cllr Frances Taylor (Copy included at Appendix B).

56 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

56.1 To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

Apologies were received as above.

57 CORRESPONDENCE

57.1 To note that correspondence for Meeting Agenda had been sent and received.

Receipt of correspondence was duly noted.

58 GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

58.1 To note the current General Risk Assessment Policy.

58.2 To receive and agree to replace the current Risk Policy with the amended Risk Policy as discussed and recommended during the workshop.

It was resolved:

To defer item to a future meeting.

59 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

59.1 To note the current Effectiveness of Internal Audit Policy.

59.2 To receive and agree to replace the current Effectiveness of Internal Audit Policy with the amended Effectiveness of Internal Audit Policy as discussed and recommended during the workshop.

It was resolved:

To defer item to a future meeting.

60 INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES

60.1 To note the current Internal Control Policy.

60.2 To receive and agree to replace the current Internal Control Policy with the amended Internal Control Policy as discussed and recommended during the workshop.

It was resolved:

To defer item to a future meeting.

MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 2145 HRS

APPENDIX A

Report by Penny Kirkham, Magor with Undy Town Councillor

On Monday 17/07/23 MUTC held a public meeting and the outcome was a unanimous rejection of the Langley Close and Dancing Hill sites as being suitable for the G&T community for some of the reasons I would like to outline today:

The G&T community themselves have stated neither site is suitable – so why are they are being considered?

The recommendation for today's Committee to take this to consultation is at odds with Council's own stated intentions eg. Page 103 of the document before you today, states that "G&T households themselves are key stakeholders" It goes on "It's important that households want to live on potential pitches provided by the Council"

However the G&T community say that these sites are not suitable, so why are they still being considered?

In addition, at the Meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee in July 2022 it was stated "we don't want a situation where we arbitrarily choose a site and tell the family ... The important thing for us is to listen and respond accordingly".

The G&T community have said these sites are not suitable, so together with us must be thinking "are you listening and responding accordingly?"

There are perceived inconsistencies in the evaluation document (RAG)

Is there a scientific basis for scoring or weighting RAG? There needs to be transparency and fairness in the assessment of each site to determine suitability.

Without sharing access to the scoring or weighting means, it appears there are inconsistencies in the comparative categorisation of Red, Amber and Green. For example:

Green Infrastructure (GI) comments ...

Why is Langley Close categorised as GREEN when Highways state access is achievable off St. Brides Rd but will result in considerable loss of the existing boundary hedge? (Yet similarly due to loss of hedge at Garthi Close and Rocklea Open Spaces both are RED)

Another example is the

Travelling Ahead feedback in the RAG ...

Why is only Dancing Hill categorised as RED when the same issues are stated for Langley Close? I.e. negatives: both close to existing homes, both close to M4 (with consequent noise and pollution); and positives: both are larger sites and so some flexibility.

Why are they categorised differently What is the criteria?

There are more examples like this that I could share should you require them.

NOT INCLUDED DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS BUT SAID WOULD SHARE WITH MCC

Ecology comments ... Langley Close mentions identified as priority grassland during Monmouthshire LDP (2010), although surveys would need to be carried out it's classed as AMBER when Garthi, Rocklea and Dancing Hill are all RED.

Community feedback in the RAG ... all 5 sites have almost identical comments but only one (Rocklea Open Space, Mitchel Troy) is categorised as RED. One in Magor (Langley Close) is AMBER and the other (DANCING HILL) GREEN; however they are the same examples/feedback from the community so why a different treatment in the RAG?

Ecology... why are SINCS (sites of importance for nature conservation) within 500m given same AMBER categorisation as those within 200m (Langley Close) and 100m (Dancing Hill)

Why isn't privately owned land being considered?

The findings of the GTAA ([Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessments](#)) process suggest an aspiration within much of the Gypsy Traveller community for private site provision in Monmouthshire. (*From the [MCC GTAA 2020-2025 \(13.0.2\)](#)*)

Why aren't a wider range of sites being considered ie. privately owned land?

What kind of dialogue is Council having with landowners in Monmouthshire?

Is Council working with and supporting G&T households to identify private sites to address the identified unmet need?

Finally Noise Pollution

MUTC believes that due to the proximity to the M4, the Langley Close & Dancing Hill sites would fall into TAN 11 Category C (or worse) where planning permission would not normally be granted.

If these sites would not normally be suitable for residential development Why are they being considered as suitable for the G&T community?

In summary, and for the reasons stated today, MUTC do not believe either Langley Close or Dancing Hill are suitable to be recommended to be put forward.

Due to overrunning the 3 minutes we were asked to keep to the following item was dropped but again can send to MCC to go with papers for Cabinet if able?

Residents stated a perceived/apparent disproportionate number of G&T sites in the local area.

- Blackwall Lane is within 2 miles from where I'm sat at the moment,
- Minnetts Lane, Rogiet is 2 miles in the other direction.
- And Crick is a further 3 miles east.

3 sites within 5 miles of Magor with Undy.

APPENDIX B
REPORT BY COUNTY COUNCILLOR FRANCES TAYLOR

Gypsy Traveller Pitch Identification

I wish to reject the proposals for Gypsy Traveller Pitch Provision in both Langley Close and Dancing Hill for the following reasons.

General

- **Process**

The assessments of each of the identified sites are arbitrary as best. This view is supported by Travelling Ahead. The site descriptions are subjective and do not lend themselves to objective scrutiny. It seems to me that the descriptions of each site are not consistent with one another. In some cases features such as access or designations such as amenity space do not appear to have received equitable treatment and reportage.

A member workshop was used to “filter out” sites, where members were asked for their views. Members will not necessarily have the local knowledge necessary to fully appraise sites. Equally, member workshops are in my experience used as a means of providing members with information, training and knowledge and seeking member feedback. They are not decision-making forums and this does not accord with my understanding of the constitution.

A site visit to those areas still under consideration has been arranged, however this is post- the member seminar.

My understanding of the wishes of those Gypsy and Traveller Families who have been consulted is that none of the current land identified was found suitable. Families wished to see small individual family pitches which are not in close proximity to the settled community.

Specific

- **Deficit in Outdoor Space**

Magor with Undy has a significant deficit in outdoor space. I raised particular concern about the Langley Close site. Over the past 7 years I have been at pains to get the council to firstly identify Council owned sites in Magor with Undy which could be considered in particular for outdoor formal sport provision. I have been working with officers and local sport groups to persuade the Council to allocate land for recreation and outdoor sport. In the end, there were only 3 flat, drained sizeable sites in the Council’s ownership in Magor with Undy, which were thought to be possible for consideration. Langley close was one of the sites. I visited the site with the Council’s Community Infrastructure Co-ordinator when we were considering options. I have been working with Magor Rugby club to make a change of use application on one of the other identified sites at Knollbury, the Rose Cottage site. The Rose Cottage site was selected in preference only because it is larger, though less flat and engineering works will be necessary. It is my firm belief that as there are no other identified flat, drained land in council ownership which is large enough for outdoor recreation and formal sport provision, the Langley close site should not be lost to any other uses – whatever they might be.

I have also been approached by Undy AFC as they are saturated and cannot take other young players without further pitch allocation. Yet Undy AFC has growing demand in new player interest from our expanding local population. Undy is fortunate to have a well-engaged & enthusiastic volunteer capacity, and also a good governance structure. Undy AFC has achieved FAW’s platinum accreditation for the club, which is the highest level possible for a grassroots club. The club has 350 junior players, male & female, making Undy one of the biggest clubs in the region. There are 7 senior teams, including 2 women’s teams. The age range of players at the club is 2 to over 60, and the club would love to be able to do more, but are now limited by pitch space. Undy is doing great things with the ongoing growth of female football, but still only have room for 4 girls’

teams, when the mixed/boys teams are currently numbering 15 - they still have some way to go. Undy also other local community sporting groups, but again these are limited due to capacity.

The Town Council MUGA (formerly tennis courts) is saturated and council has considered (and applied for via Mike Moran) funding for further court provision to meet the needs and desires of the community.

The Ashley Godfrey open spaces report from 2008, prepared as a support document for the current LDP – and below is the surplus/deficiency table of provision. The slight inaccuracy of this relates to allotments - only the Greenmoor Lane and Sycamore Terrace allotments were included and there are allotments in Undy which will bring us closer to sufficiency in pure standard per 1000 population terms. However, at the time of writing, the Town Council has 52 people on a waiting list for an allotment.

Typology	Current level of provision (hectares per 1000 people)	Current level of provision (hectares)	Standard per 1000 population (hectares)	Open space required to meet standard (hectares)	Surplus or deficiency (hectares)
Public open space	0.37	2.25	0.4	2.44	0.19 (deficiency)
Outdoor sport	0.64	3.92	1.6	9.75	5.83 (deficiency)
Natural and semi-natural green space	2.72	16.58	2.0	12.18	4.40 (surplus)
Equipped play spaces	0.09	0.57	0.3	1.82	1.25 (deficiency)
Informal play spaces	0.37	2.25	0.5	3.05	0.80 (deficiency)
Allotments	0.07	0.40	0.25	1.52	1.12 (deficiency)

There is a current deficiency (December 2008) of 5.83 hectares (14.41 acres) of Outdoor Sports provision when the standard of 1.6 hectares per 1000 population is applied. Current provision amounts to 3.92 hectares compared to a requirement of 9.75 hectares. When these figures were compiled, the population of Magor with Undy was 6,092. As the LDP sites in Magor with Undy did not begin to come forward in respect of completions until 2020 and therefore it is unlikely that much of the new housing was reflected in the new Census.

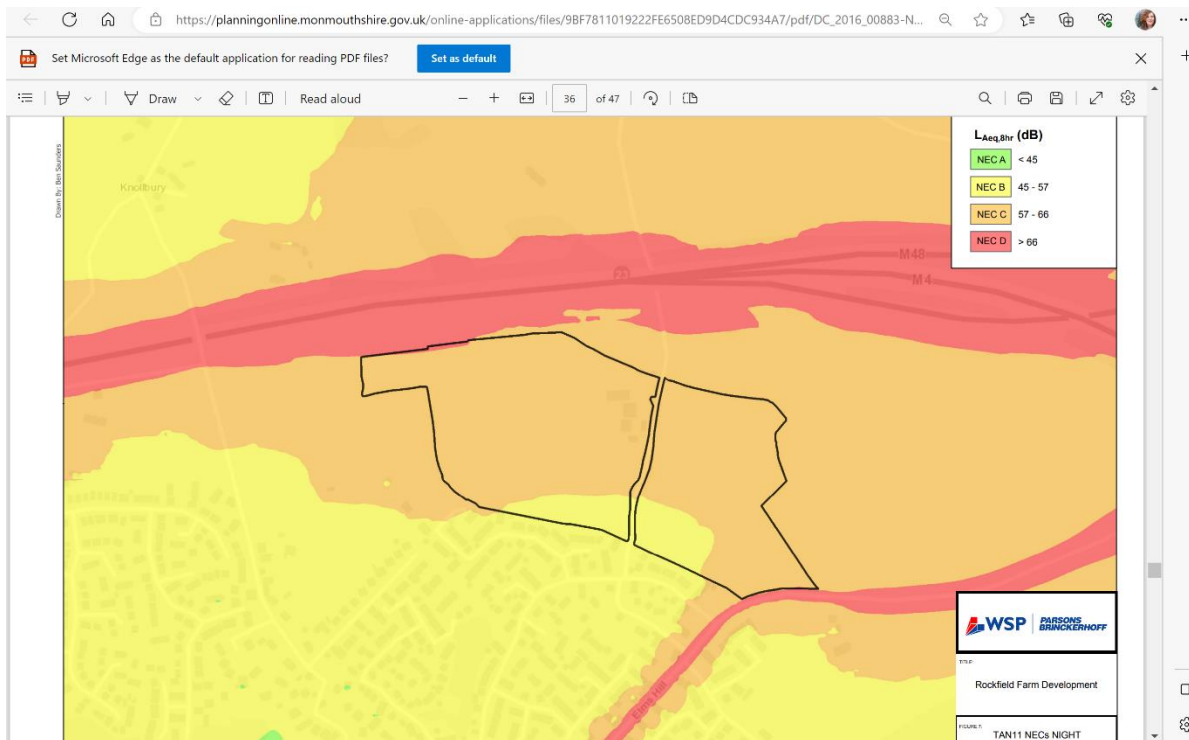
The Rose Cottage site measures 4.52 hectares so, if and when this site is brought into use for outdoor sports provision, it will reduce the deficit to 1.31 hectares. The Langley Close site measures 2.34 hectares and ought to be retained for open space and in particular outdoor sport. As above Undy AFC are saturated and require more space at the present time. However, there are further residential candidate sites in the LDP and consideration must be given to population growth.

There are further reasons why neither Langley Close or Dancing Hill are suitable for residential development as below.

- Noise Pollution

Both the site at Langley Close and those at Dancing Hill are immediately adjacent to the M4. Noise pollution is a key concern and going back to the noise studies for Rockfield Farm for comparison, I anticipate they are similar if not worse. You will note that most of Rockfield Farm fall into NEC category C (TAN 11).

NEC C - Planning permission should not normally be granted. Where it is considered that permission should be granted, for example because there are no alternative quieter sites available, conditions should be imposed to ensure a commensurate level of protection against noise.



Below are night time noise levels from a study conducted for the Rockfield Farm Masterplan in 2016.

As above, planning permission ought generally not be granted and one can only assume

that traffic levels have grown and the matter worsened. One anticipates that this pattern is replicated at Dancing Hill and if not worse at Langley close where the M4 is raised and there are on and off slips. Noise assessments would be required.

- Pollution and Contamination

It is noted that the Dancing Hill site is a potential Landfill site. Additionally, it is true to say that many sites alongside the M4 are potentially contaminated with unregulated tipping carried out during construction works during the 1960's. Both sites would need appropriate testing.

- Designated Amenity Space

Dancing Hill and part of Langley Close are both Designated Amenity Space. We have already lost sections of designated amenity space due to the Rockfield Farm development.

- Green Infrastructure

Very little has been made of the Green Infrastructure at Langley close but it forms part of an important green corridor with mature native species. This is not a reason but just to draw out the inconsistencies in site descriptions.