

MAGOR WITH UNDY TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Extra - Ordinary Meeting of Magor with Undy Town Council held at Undy Church Hall and remotely on Friday 11th August 2023 at 09:00

COUNCILLORS:

Mayor Cllr Carole Hopkins
Deputy Mayor Cllr Frances Taylor,
Cllr Penny Kirkham
Cllr Paul Cawley

IN ATTENDANCE: William Lewis – Clerk to Council

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC: Nil

APOLOGIES:

Cllr D James	Cllr M James	Cllr N Baicher
Cllr A Graham		

61 Chair's Announcements

61.1 To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors

Apologies were received and noted as above.

61.2 Mayor Hopkins announced that this extra-ordinary meeting had been called to discuss what the Town Council could agree and action in respect of protecting all of the Amenity Land and Green Open Spaces in the communities of Magor with Undy Town Council. This has arisen consequent to a decision by Monmouthshire County Council to continue with a process of identifying two areas of Amenity Land and Green Open Spaces within the community for development.

62 Correspondence

62.1 To note that correspondence relative to matters on Meeting Agenda had been sent to Council Members

Receipt of correspondence received was agreed.

63 Protection of Designated Amenity Land

63.1 To consider and agree to determine a budget for the purposes of appointing, commissioning or seeking the opinion of professional services in respect of the protection of Town Council amenity land from development.

Councillor Taylor presented details of the steps and processes required to attend to this project outlining the need to seek professional services in respect of planning considerations and ecology studies for the Councils Amenity Land and Green Open Spaces and gave an overview of the likely costings of these studies and proposed that Council create a budget to cater for this need.

Councillor Cawley stated that he had made preliminary enquiries with a person who had previously conducted in a local ecology study who has agreed to attend the sites without charge and provide some feedback on his observations.

Council then discussed the existing budget for professional fees which was set at £4000 and that £3800 has been spent. The Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 provides Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) of £9000 for Professional Fees. The requirement to vire monies across from another budget heading was discussed. It was concluded that the most suitable budget from which to vire monies was the Service Level Agreement (SLA) where £58,000 was set aside in the Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 and as the work under the SLA was not commenced until the 7th August 2023 that there would be an underspend of more than £19,000 from that budget heading.

Councillor Taylor proposed that £15,000 from the SLA be vired across to the 'Professional Fees' budget together with the EMR of £9000 giving a total of £24,000 to cover fees associated with professional services to be sought and reports provided for the protection of Amenity Land and Green Open Spaces from development.

It was resolved:

- **Unanimous agreement was reached that a budget specific to this purpose should be created within the Council 'Professional Fees' budget heading.**
- **Unanimous agreement was reached in respect of the virement of £15,000 from SLA budget to Professional Fees budget/EMR of £9000 providing a total of £24,000 for the purpose of payments to professional services.**

- 63.2 In accordance with the Town Council Financial Regulations (11.1.a.ii) to agree that the Clerk in conjunction with and directed by The Mayor will develop an outline specification for the appointment of professional services or a suitable person.

Financial Regulations state:

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

i.

ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;

Councillor Taylor proposed that under the authority of the above regulation that The Clerk under direction of the Mayor shall seek a quotation from a Legal Service provider within the field of planning law to give opinion in respect of the process exercised by Monmouthshire County Council in their identification of areas of land for Gypsy & Traveller pitch provision and whether the validity of that process could be subject of challenge.

It was resolved:

The proposal made by Cllr Taylor was unanimously agreed and the Clerk shall as soon as practicable make preliminary enquiries to seek the assistance of a Legal Practitioner.

Councillor Taylor further proposed that in consideration of the candidate sites under LDP and the deadline of 30/09/23 for submission of sites to Mon CC that Council consult with a planning consultant/solicitor to receive a quote for the provision and submission of a report for the protection of those candidate sights from development.

It was resolved:

The proposal made by Cllr Taylor was unanimously agreed and the Clerk shall as soon as practicable expedite enquiries to seek the assistance of a Planning Consultant or Solicitor.

Meeting Concluded at 20.23