

# MAGOR WITH UNDY TOWN COUNCIL MAGOR GYDA CHYNGOR TREF UNDY

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## Extraordinary Meeting

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Magor with Undy Town Council held at Magor and Undy Community Hub and remotely on Zoom Conference Calling. at 1900hours on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

### COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE

Chair: Mayor - Cllr Carole Hopkins <i>In person</i>	Deputy Mayor Cllr Frances Taylor <i>In person</i>	Cllr Mike James <i>In person</i>	Cllr Donna James <i>In person</i>	Cllr Paul Cawley <i>In person</i>
Cllr Penny Kirkham <i>In person</i>	Cllr Victoria Hammett-Johnson <i>In person</i>	Cllr Mario Bisi <i>In person</i>	Cllr Catherine Baker <i>Remotely</i>	

**IN ATTENDANCE:** William Lewis – Clerk to Council  
Rachel Jones – Business Support & Projects Officer  
County Councillor Angela Sandles and County Councillor John Crook

**MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:** Thirteen persons who signed the attendance record and others who arrived after commencement of the meeting.

### APOLOGIES:

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14 Clerk's Announcement

14.1 At the direction of the 'Chair' Mayor Carole Hopkins, the Clerk announced to Council and members of the public in attendance that this extraordinary meeting had been convened with the primary purpose of responding to matters raised in regard to Monmouthshire County Council impending Public Space Protection Order and its impact upon Sycamore Playing Field and to consider if a report prepared by the Clerk should be agreed and published. The clerk outlined that the business to be considered at this meeting is to receive, discuss, and agree a response to the request made by the members of the public for Magor with Undy Town Council to commence proceedings to have the decision of Monmouthshire County Council to implement a PSPO, judicially reviewed.

The clerk also informed those present that the agenda made no provision for a public open forum as the Chair considered that council has afforded members of the public reasonable opportunity at the meeting of 13th May 2024 where Councillor Taylor (Chair of that meeting) allowed important contributions from members of the public, and the public open forum ran to over 40 minutes. Furthermore, Council later received written correspondence from members of the public relative to the same. Notably, it is not the general practice of this Council to include public open forum preceding extraordinary meetings. (During ordinary meetings, the time for public open forum ought not to

15 Chair's Announcements

- 15.1 To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors  
No apologies aside from Cllr Baker advising of delay to enable joining remotely.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Councillors to introduce themselves.

Cllr D James addressed the chair for clarification that there was to be no public forum having cited previous examples of extraordinary meetings where this was allowed and further commented upon the poor sound quality produced by the hybrid meeting equipment at the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 which meant that several Councillors had not heard the representations made by the public at that meeting. The public forum ended at 19:40h but the hybrid problems were not fully resolved until 20:31h. As such, Cllr James respectfully requested that members of the public be able to address the council. The chair unilaterally declined Cllr D James request without any possibility of comment or reply from Cllr James or any other Councillor.

(Interruptions and comments ensued from public attendees)

16 Correspondence

- 16.1 To note that any correspondence relative to this Meeting Agenda has been received by Council Members.  
Acknowledged and agreed by members

17 Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) / Sycamore Playing Fields

- 17.1 To receive a report consequent to concerns raised at ordinary meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in respect of the use of Sycamore Field in relation to use by members of the public and their dogs and agree upon any actions necessary.

Cllr James proposed that the clerk take members through the report line by line to enable a meaningful discussion in respect of the report. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Bisi. The proposal was clearly carried by show of hands. A recorded vote was requested by Cllrs D. James and M. Bisi, but no recording of the vote was made.

Cllr Taylor and the clerk proceeded to take council through the response.

During the detailing of the response, Councillors made a number of observations and contributions.

These can be summarised as follows:

Councillors acknowledged the matters of concern raised by residents at the meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024, regarding the proposed introduction of a Public Space Protection Order on Sycamore Field.

- Councillors acknowledge that Councillors who were online at that meeting may have missed much of the discussion due to poor sound quality but received follow-up emails from residents.
- Council appreciates that most dog owners are in the main responsible and clean up after their dog but that dog excrement can contain a variety of harmful bacteria which could have public health implications.
- That Council now has one full time member of staff and has recently employed a part time Business and Project Support Officer. Additionally, Council employs two part-time Village Wardens.
- That some members of the public along with some Councillors had found the signs on Sycamore Playing field regarding the requirement to keep dogs on a lead confusing and more consistency was required.

- Councillors questioned when the signs had been put up and on what authority as well as the question of whether or not this has been done in accordance with the Deed of Covenant for the fields.
- That Magor School confirm that the caretaker removes dog excrement from the fenced area of Sycamore playing field, each morning which is not recognised as fox excrement.
- Councillors discussed the County Council’s legal opinion regarding the Deed of covenant and the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and that MCC incorrectly reference Sycamore Playing Fields as the School Fields in the PSPO.
- Councillors discussed the work already underway to develop an alternative area for walking and exercising their dogs and the Chair promised that this was being done with utmost pace.

During the clerk’s address there were other comments and questions from Councillors querying details, and responses from other Council members. Furthermore, despite the confirmation that no public participation was going to be allowed by the Chair, some members of the public in attendance continued to interrupt the proceedings by speaking over the clerk and Councillors.

CLLr Cawley addressed the meeting with reference to the Neospora parasite in canines, this was met with an interruption from a member of the public, who was clearly angered and upset, who stood up and asked what relevance this was to the topic of discussions. The Chair advised the member of the public that they should stop shouting or leave the meeting referring to what his good lady would say at home. The chair then requested a return to civility. As the chair could not be heard, the clerk further requested that everyone should heed the chair’s request to return to order or leave the meeting.

It was resolved.

- Not to proceed with the request from residents to seek to judicially review the decision of Monmouthshire County Council’s decision to implement a Public Space Protection Order on Sycamore Playing Field from 1<sup>st</sup> June and to expedite the development of a dog walking/dog exercise area.
- To clarify with Monmouthshire County Council when the signs on Sycamore Playing Field in respect of dogs being required to be kept on a lead were introduced.
- To request that upon the introduction of the PSPO, all new signage introduced by Monmouthshire County Council should be clear and consistent.
- To seek an independent legal opinion to confirm that the Public Space Protection Order is consistent with the deed.

18 Youth Provision for Magor with Undy

18.1 To receive details of proposed youth provision and activities by Monmouthshire CC Youth Services and agree upon actions necessary.

The Chair invited County CLLr Angela Sandles to publicly address the Town Council on this item. Members discussed the proposals and costs supplied by Monmouthshire CC Youth Services in provided facilities for youth activities between the hours of 6pm and 9pm on each Tuesday commencing on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024

It was resolved.

To agree that Council will enter into an agreement with Monmouthshire CC Youth Services for provision of two youth workers for 3 hours each Tuesday commencing on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 for remainder of financial year at a cost of £11,732 which shall be sourced from Grants and Donations Budget. Power to spend: Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

19 Wales Audit – Fee for additional work 2018 /2019

19.1 To receive update in respect of fee for additional work (disputed) by Audit Wales relating to Council Audit 2018/19 and direction from RBS Rialtas to make provision for fee within end of year accounting 2023/24 and to agree any actions necessary.

It was resolved:

To agree that that the additional fee (disputed) in respect of Wales Audit 2018/19 is recorded in Council Financial Records.