



**MINUTES OF THE NEWENT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 9th October 2023, room G4, NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL, NEWENT,
7.25 pm**

Councillors Present:

Cllr Sara Hulbert (Chairman)
Cllr Juli Escritt
Cllr Julia Gooch
Cllr Joshua Robertson
Cllr Kay Selwyn
Cllr Linda Morris
Cllr Gill Moseley
Cllr Samuel Letchford

Also Present:

Town Clerk and 2 Members of the Public.

PUBLIC TIME

A member of the public made a statement regarding the public consultation Newent Town Council are currently undertaking.

1. Two note apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Eddie wood and Cllr Allan Hedley.

2. Declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

The following councillor's made a declaration of interest on the following items on the agenda.

Cllr Julia Gooch declared an interest on item 6

3. To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 25th September 2023.

The Council resolved that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meetings and were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. To consider and approve a Co-option application for one of the 3 vacancies.

4.1 To agree the co-option of Trevor Beckwith onto Newent Town Council.

The Council by unanimous decision agreed to the Co-option of Trevor Beckwith onto Newent Town Council.

5. To discuss and approve the options available to fund Newent Recreation Ground Trusts identified deficit and a contingency to enable the New community Building To be completed.

The Chairman read out the following statement before the item was deliberated.

As many of you may know the real conception of the recreation ground community build was as far back as 2018, several holdups and stalls have emerged along the way- including covid 19 and lapsed planning. This meant that the contract for the community building on the recreation wasn't signed until the end of April 2023, and several of the council you see before you now were not elected until May 2023.

Even before signing the contract, the previous recreation ground trust committee had identified a c£20k deficit. By the end of May 2023, the new trust/council of today identified other issues inc the Proposed funding (in addition to the 106 monies) had not undergone legal review.

Part of the original identified funds to pay for the build had been offered as a loan from one community group. However, it was clear from the charity commission paperwork that if the trust had no means of repaying, then they could not take any loan, and thus the deficit grew to c£60k. The trust has also been offered a donation from one community group, this offer is currently under further consultation with a legal team and the charity commission. Without this donation the deficit would increase to c£80k. Because the trust cannot repay any loan without council help, we were advised that the council could take out a loan. The deficit grew to c£100k when we discovered that there was no contingency budget and a very limited budget for furniture, hearing loops and the things that could make the building a great space for our community, now and in the future.

This has all taken some significant time to manage, and we have as a trust and council, openly discussed in meetings and shared as much information as we were able to at the time. Most of us inherited this project. Most were not part of the original council or recreation ground trust committee that started this project which in itself has been difficult to navigate, however we have all been behind the build, and completing the community building for Newent, as a whole, is the most beneficial outcome. And we really appreciate the support we have received. For clarity the building contract price has not increased

since signing the contract in April 2023. And the building is due to be completed in line with the schedule. We thank the builders for their continued great work.

Following the statement, a discussion took place regarding the financial position the Trust are in, a way to move forward with the project and to overcome the shortfall.

The council agreed by unanimous decision to fund a bridging loan to the Trust for September and October agreed payments in relation to the new community build, and to Publish the Chairs statement.

Cllr Julia Gooch left the meeting at this juncture.

6. Finance

6.1 to approve the accounts to be paid.

A list of payments was sent to the Members prior to the meeting.
The Council approved the accounts as per the payment list for October 2023.

Cllr Julia Gooch re-joined the meeting.

7. To agree for Newent Town Council to setup and run a monthly Farmers Market on one Saturday of every Month.

The Council by unanimous decision agreed to set up and run a monthly market on one Saturday of every month.

8. To elect the Vice Chairman (Deputy Mayor) of the Council and to receive the Vice Chairman (Deputy Mayor) Declaration of Acceptance of Office

By unanimous decision The Council agreed to defer the item to the next meeting.

9. Nominations to Committees

Cllr Juli Escritt left the meeting for a short length of time.

9.1 To review and appoint Members to serve on Planning and Environment Committee and to review and appoint the committee Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Council agreed that the serving Committee remain the same but to investigate merging the planning committee into full Council

9.2 To review and appoint Members to serve on Finance and Staffing Committee and To review and appoint the committee Chairman and vice chairman.

The Council agreed that the serving Committee remain the same and that the Chair of the Committee reviews the terms of reference and reports back to a future meeting.

9.3 To review and appoint Members to serve on Christmas Light Committee and to review and appoint the committee Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Council agreed that the serving Committee remain the same and that the Chair of the Committee reviews the terms of reference and reports back to a future meeting.

10. To Discuss and agree to form a Regeneration Working Group made up of Councillors and Co-opted Members

The Council agreed to form a regeneration working group made up of all Councillors and co-opted members of the public that reports back to full council.

11. Date of Next Meeting:

23rd October 2023 at 7:30 PM or soonest after the previous meeting. To be held at G4, Newent Community School, Newent.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Signed:..... Dated