

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE HELD AT COUNCIL
CHAMBER - NEUADD MALDWYN, WELSHPOOL, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2017**

PRESENT: County Councillor J R Jones (Chair)

County Councillors M Barnes, G Breeze, D E Davies, A W Davies, H Hulme, A Jenner, D Jones-Poston, E A Jones, E Jones, G Jones, M J Jones, D R Jones, F H Jump, K Lewis, G Morgan, N Morrison, P C Pritchard, G Pugh, K M Roberts-Jones, L Roberts, D Rowlands, D Selby, R G Thomas, E Vaughan and J M Williams

In attendance:

Councillor M Weale - Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Regeneration and Planning, Jenni Thomas - Regeneration Manager, Nathan Davies - War Memorials Officer, Richard Glover-Davies – GloverSure, Heather Ransom and Dave Watkins, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were accepted from County Councillors M. Alexander, L. Corfield, B. Davies, P. Davies, L. George, S. Hayes and P. Lewis.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 6th September 2017 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations received in relation to matters to be discussed on the agenda for today's meeting.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on:

- a. **Queen's Baton Relay** – having attended the Queen's Baton Relay at Welshpool
- b. **Llys Glan Yr Afon** – having attended the opening of the site which would provide housing and care for the elderly in Newtown
- c. **Coffee Mornings** – having attended a number of coffee morning in order to support local causes including the Newtown League of Friends
- d. **Urdd Eisteddfod 2018** – the 2018 Urdd Eisteddfod would be held in Powys in 2018. Plans are well underway and there would be publicity
- e. **Newtown Community Day** - having attended a local community day
- f. **Archives and Information Management** – having attended the opening of the Powys archives and information management unit (the unit being based in Llandrindod Wells)
- g. **Civic Services** – having had the privilege to officiate at a number of civic service ceremonies
- h. **Womens Institute Annual General Meeting** - having attended a local WI AGM
- i. **Newtown Rally** – having visited the Welsh Rally during the Newtown stage

- j. **Anti-Poverty Social Research Group** – the Chair is also the Anti-Poverty Champion. The work of the anti-poverty group would re-commence shortly. The group would visit Machynlleth in December in order to view agencies who support those in hardship situations
- k. **Future Fit** – members were encouraged to contribute to consultations being run in relation to Future fit (the programme which will provide the emergency and urgent care estate for the Shrewsbury and Telford NHS area)
- l. **Ladywell House, Newtown** – the next meeting may be held in Ladywell House, Newtown in order that members can view the site and learn for plans for it. There would be an update in relation to plans to the next meeting

5.	REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS (10.15 - 11.15)
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, Cabinet Portfolio Holders. Councillor Martin Weale – Regeneration and Planning attended for this item of business. Martin introduced Jenni Thomas, Regeneration Manager and Nathan Davies, War Memorials Officer. During discussion particular reference was made to:

Powys War Memorials Project:

- a. **War Memorial Project** – communities have access to a time limited grant which is administered by the Authority. Communities can apply for funding to support projects which recognise conflicts with a focus on WWI and refurbishing war memorials. We are currently in year two of the four year grant period. Where memorials recognise more than one conflict they would also be considered for funding. The fund is being allocated on a first come first serve basis
- b. **Montgomeryshire Applications** – there had been a noticeable lack of applications from the Montgomeryshire area
- c. **Funding/Application Process** - up to £5k could be awarded to refurbish WWI war memorials, 10% of the grant award would need to be matched by the local community. The application process had been kept simple and there's an emphasis on processing applications quickly
- d. **Community Engagement and Events** – funding could also be accessed to support community events which recognise the forces i.e. an area had applied to support a local walk of historical interest which links to the forces. Local cadet squads may be able to access funding
- e. **Social Media/Website Projects** – funding could also be obtained to support activities to provide information via. social media and/or to operate websites which recognise the services

Tourism:

- a. **Value** – in 2015 the value of tourism to the Powys local economy was in the region of £720 million (the second largest value to Powys after farming)
- b. **Branding** – branding Powys is very important in order to provide an identity

- c. **Events** – the Authority has an events team. Hosting events can be very lucrative. It would be important to maximise publicity. There are national as well as local events held i.e. the tour of Britain and the Machynlleth comedy festival
- d. **Visit Wales/Cambrian Way (A470)** – historically funding has been provided to support activities along the Cambrian Way route which sits alongside the A470
- e. **Signage** – it was felt by members that the upkeep and maintenance of signage to direct to tourist attractions was important. Some members expressed concern regarding the general condition of signage in their areas. Members were encouraged to report issues to the Council
- f. **Rights of Way** – it was felt that maintaining areas used for walking and other leisure related activities would be important in order to attract visitors
- g. **Promotion** – Powys would work with communities to help publicise local attractions. It was felt by members that there should be a very active, targeted approach to supporting communities. There are local sites of interests i.e. castles that could be tourist attractions which, if promoted, could bring in more tourists to areas
- h. **Business Wales** – there are good links between the Authority and Business Wales
- i. **Visit Wales** – Visit Wales run themed annual programmes which are supported by funding and media coverage. This year the theme will be legends with links to the sea. Although Powys is landlocked there would be an opportunity to promote routes to the coast. Next year would favour Powys more, the theme would be discovery
- j. **Connecting Businesses** – members urged the Council to use its processes to help connect businesses i.e. bed and breakfasts with event organising
- k. **Clywedog Reservoir** – the local member questioned the decision of the local authority to close toilets at the reservoir. Visits to the reservoir are very popular and it is a tourist attraction. It's the view of the member that we should be promoting the area and encouraging visits rather than closing facilities which could have an impact on visiting. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the information and agreed that the Authority should do all that it could to promote visits and local economies. The member would welcome an update in relation to any support that could be offered
- l. **Areas of Distinctive Identity** – in order to bring funding into Powys and promote areas there had been a focus on the Brecon Beacons, Cambrian Mountains, Dyfi Biosphere, Lake Vyrnwy and Berwyn Mountains and the Offa's Country Corridor. It is accepted that other areas have a range of attractive qualities and tourist attractions
- m. **Working with Communities** – approaches to the Council regarding help in promoting and supporting areas to market are encouraged. Regeneration officers are on hand to help areas in this regard
- n. **Heritage Lotter Funds/Funding in General** – there are funds that could be accessed to support community activities. The local member for Llanfair Caereinion reported that the community had recently been successful in securing a lottery grant for £62k to support regeneration/tourist activities. It would be important for communities to be aware of potential funding streams and to be supported in applying
- o. **Welshpool Canal** – promoting the canal and developing the areas near to it could be very valuable to Welshpool town and neighbouring areas. The Portfolio Holder agreed to visit Welshpool to discuss options with the local County Councillors and Welshpool Town Council

Planning Function

- a. **Processing of Planning Applications** – since coming into post and being responsible for the planning function the portfolio holder had worked with officers to identify blockages and issues in relation to the planning process. There would be a focus on reviewing processes with a view to speedy consideration of applications
- b. **Local Development Plan** – it would be important to adopt the Powys LDP by 7th February 2018. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that up until the time of the submission and adoption the current practice of the operation of the Planning Committee in terms of considering applications would continue
- c. **Pre-planning Advice** – a member expressed concern with regard to the quality of pre-planning advice (a paid for service which generates income for the Council). The particular issue in this case relating to highways advice. The Portfolio Holder stressed the importance of providing good pre-planning advice and urged members to raise issues of concern direct with him (the member with the particular concerns would discuss the detail with the portfolio holder outside of the meeting)
- d. **Consultation with Community Councils (Amended Applications)** – a member requested that the position with regard to the requirement to consult with communities in relation to adjustments to plans be reviewed in order to introduce a requirement to re-consult or advise town and community councils on minor revisions so that comments could be made. The current practice seems to be that minor adjustments are accepted by officers without re-consulting
- e. **Local Liaison Meetings** – the Portfolio Holder would consider re-instating local planning liaison meetings. Local meetings had operated in the life of the previous Council, however, a decision was taken during that Council to cease. Resource and capacity could be an issue

Business Support

Due to technical difficulties a video presentation could not be shown. Members were informed that the Cabinet recognise the importance of supporting local business start-up and growth and that it is a key focus of the Cabinet vision. Members were encouraged to contact the Portfolio Holder and/or officers from the regeneration team in relation to business support matters.

6. LOCAL BUSINESS UPDATES (11.15 - 12.15)
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- i) **Hill Top Honey** – unfortunately the representative from Hill Top Honey could not attend today's meeting.
- ii) **GloverSure (Website, Marketing and Development)** – members welcomed Richard Glover-Davies to the meeting to explain how he had developed his local business which had been recognised as a success on a national level. Richard informed members that he was local and had started a web based marketing company which had gone from strength to strength. GloverSure has over 600 customers and offices in Welshpool, Chester and Aberystwyth. The company employs 18 members of staff. The range of activity has extended to the letting of business units and the development of local needs housing with a focus on selling locally without any ties to the area being placed on properties sold. In relation to the developments, the planning experience had identified lessons that Richard had shared with the Council and would share with the Portfolio Holder.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would be reviewing the restrictions imposed on planning applications as part of a review of the planning process. Members congratulated Richard on his success and praised his local focus.

7. WELSH AMBULANCE TRUST (12.15 - 12.45)

Members welcomed Heather Ransom – Ambulance Operations Manager and Dave Watkins – Locality Manager to the meeting to provide an update in relation to the operation of the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust. During discussion particular reference was made to:

- a. **Local Engagement** – moving forward there would be a strong focus on local/community engagement. Heather would welcome communities engaging with the service in order to shape services around community needs as opposed to imposing services. Members were encouraged to share the presentation Heather presented to the meeting and to encourage communities to contact her direct to discuss local need. Heather would welcome visiting communities in order to engage better
- b. **Service Delivery** – the service had been reshaped nationally. There are five areas of service delivery that would deliver the care model (Help Me Choose, Answer My Call, Come to See Me, Give Me Treatment and Take Me To)
- c. **Paramedics** – there had been an upskill to paramedic positions in order that they are now able to discharge from care without the need to admit if the situation allows for it
- d. **Categories of Contacts** – when responding to a contact the situation information requested (albeit that it might seem a lengthy process to provide requested information at the time) would deliver the right response
- e. **Montgomeryshire Call Outs** - the true position is that there are two 'red' calls to the emergency service per day. Red calls are calls where there are immediate life threatening situations. The target response time for red calls is 8 minutes, there are some difficulties in Powys in meeting this target due to rurality. Amber calls are split into two categories (1 and 2), the majority of calls to the service in Powys are amber 1 calls. WAST performs well against the 19 minute amber 1 target time in attending situations (despite rumours to the contrary)
- f. **Cross Border** – there are good links across borders and there should be no impact on treatment due to which side of the border residents reside (while recognising policy differences apply). A memorandum of understanding applies and is adhered to which should not advantage or disadvantage any area or resident
- g. **Demand** – on average there are 60 calls on the service to date, the highest demand in Montgomeryshire is in the Newtown and Welshpool areas
- h. **Locality Based Schemes** – there would be a strong emphasis on community based schemes, ideas include community based ambassadors. It could be that communities identify locals to provide initial, emergency, lifesaving support to complement the service
- i. **Sharing of Information** – a member reported a situation where he had been late in being presented to a hospital whilst being transported by ambulance which had caused worry to waiting relatives. Notifications would be sent to inform of arrivals and new systems would improve the transfer of information, however, at times of need the emphasis would always be on treating as opposed to sending notifications

- j. **Defibrillators** – there had been a recent focus on siting defibrillators in communities and high profile campaigns. A member stated the importance of retaining local enthusiasm with regard to potential use
- k. **Ambulance Wait Times** – a member requested information in relation to the service and made specific reference to laybys being used to wait. Heather confirmed that all waits are monitored and that rest times allow for essential works to be undertaken/completed. Backfill arrangements whilst vehicles are on call or enroute are important. Information in relation to arrangements could be shared with the shire

Members welcomed the update and discussion and thanked representatives from WAST for attending.

8.	REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES
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Members welcomed the opportunity to receive reports from, and to put questions to, members serving on outside bodies.

- a. **Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Railway Liaison Committee** – members welcomed the update report from Councillor Michael Williams
- b. **Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Passengers' Association** – members welcomed the update report from Councillor Michael Williams

9.	CORRESPONDENCE
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There were no items of correspondence.

10.	ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES (12.50 - 1)
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Members considered a report entitled 'On Street Waiting Prohibitions, Four Crosses' and **RESOLVED** to:

- 1. Support the proposed waiting prohibitions on the county highways within Four Crosses as identified on the proposal plan
- 2. Authorise the local highway authority to commence the legal consultation procedures for the proposed traffic regulation order and, if no substantive objections are received, authorise the traffic engineer to implement the proposal

11.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
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It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 18th January 2018 and possibly at Ladywell House, Newtown.

A member expressed concern regarding moving to meet at Ladywell House given that the shire had had no involvement in discussions relating to the future operation of the facility. It was the member's opinion that a meeting to discuss Ladywell House should be held in Welshpool for shire input/engagement before a visit or further plans would be considered for the Ladywell site. The member also reported that he had been made aware that Cabinet would be considering a report in relation to the Ladywell site before Christmas. The member urged shire engagement before Cabinet consider options for the Ladywell site. In general terms, and with the shire meeting bi-monthly as opposed to monthly, planning so that there could be shire input into matters would be important.

**County Councillor J R Jones
(Chair)**