

Minutes



Council

Date: 27 September 2022

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Reeks, S Cocks, E Stowell-Corten, Harris, A Screen, James, T Harvey, Howells, P Bright, A Pimm, D Batrouni, Jenkins, P Drewett, Davies, Adan, M Pimm, C Baker-Westhead, Reynolds, Howells, A Sterry, Jones, Horton, J Cleverly, P Cockeram, D Davies, M Al-Nuaimi, M Evans, D Fouweather, D Harvey, D Mayer, R Mogford, J Mudd, M Spencer, K Thomas, C Townsend, T Watkins, K Whitehead, J Clarke, Y Forsey, P Hourahine, J Hughes, J Jordan, L Lacey, S Marshall, A Morris, Hussain and B Perkins

1. Preliminaries

A two minute's silence was observed for the late Queen Elizabeth II.

1.i Apologies

The Presiding Member reported that apologies had been received from the following members: Councillors Perkins, Routley, Kellaway, Peterson and Linton.

1.ii Declarations of Interest

None received.

1.iii Presiding Member's Announcements

The Presiding Member informed Council colleagues that in less than two weeks we will welcome the return of the Newport Food Festival. On Saturday 8 October, our city centre streets will once again become a hive of activity and tasty treats.

There will be plenty of food stalls as traders showcase the best in food and drink from across the city and the wider region.

The newly refurbished Newport Market will also play host to local chefs putting on special demonstrations throughout the day. Plus, there will be a full programme of activities for all the family. All members are invited to attend to show their support for the event and I hope to see you there.

The Presiding Member also reminded members that Remembrance Sunday was soon upon us and hoped that members could attend this.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of 19 July 2022 were accepted as a true record.

3. **Appointments**

Councillor James moved the appointments set out in the report, as agreed by the Business Managers, subject to the additional appointments set out below.

Resolved: That the appointments set out in the report to Council be agreed, together with the following additional appointments.

Governing Body Appointments

| Governing Body | No of Vacancies / Re-appointments | Nominations Received |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Llanwern High School | Reappointment | Mark Spencer |
| St Julians School | Reappointment | Deborah Davies |
| St Julians School | Reappointment | Tracy McKim |
| St Julians School | Reappointment | Phillip Hourahine |
| Glan Usk Primary School | Replacement | Paul Bright |
| Pillgwenlly Primary School | Replacement | Saeed Adan |

Outside Bodies

Pill Millennium Centre Trust: Councillor D Jenkins to replace Councillor S Adan.

4. **Police Issues**

The Presiding Member welcomed Chief Inspector John Davies, who provided council members with an update on police issues within East, West and Central Newport.

The Presiding Member then invited the Leader to put questions to Chief Insp Davies.

The Leader mentioned that councillors from the West of Newport commented that there appeared to be more regular engagement with councillors and Police in Newport East. The Leader asked if this could be addressed in order to establish regular engagement with councillors in the West of Newport. The Chief Inspector would look into this request for the Leader and also advised that the Police were looking into providing context to issues occurring in all wards to all members on what was going on within all areas of Newport by way of a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter.

The Leader also referred to the introduction of 20mph zones within Newport and the concerns around enforcement plans and asked if it would be possible for the Police to meet with Councillors to provide an information session, which could in turn be fed-back to constituents who regularly contact their ward members regarding this issue. The Chief Insp would look into this for the Leader.

Finally, it was wonderful to see events within Newport up and running after two years, including the Pill Carnival, the Big Splash and Newport's Inaugural Pride Event. The Leader therefore wanted to congratulate the Chief Inspector and colleagues on their positive policing of all these events within the community, they had really engaged with the public and the Leader wanted this to be fed back to Chief Inspector Davies' colleagues. The Chief Inspector thanked the Leader for her kind comments and would feedback to his colleagues.

Questions to the Police raised by Councillors:

- Councillor Fouweather referred to the consultation process for 20mph where no one from Gwent Police commented. This had a massive implication for Police and resources and many people were not staying to the speed limit. Could the Chief Inspector therefore find out why there were no comments from Gwent Police on the consultation and feedback to

the Council. The Chief Insp would look into this and also advised that the majority of the enforcement was carried out by 'Go Safe' Wales.

- Councillor A Morris had noticed an increase of e-bicycles within Lliswerry and the city, who were also going faster than 20mph. These bicycles were purchase without the need of a licence, safety equipment, no knowledge of the Highway Code or insurance. There had been several near misses and the possibility of a fatality was high. What was the national position on this? The Chief Insp advised that the national position around e-bicycles was about how the Police dealt with them tactically. There were a number of different options that the Police were looking into but felt it inappropriate to address in a public forum at this point but close to a tactical outcome for seizing them. Part of the operation included targeting retailers, the majority of these e-bicycles were being manufactured abroad and not in the UK, therefore importing of these bicycles were being looked into. As the Police were close to addressing this, they would shortly see results on an outcome.
- Councillor Cleverly also mentioned the 20mph zones and how it was monitored, in particular with e-bicycles and scooters. Again, the Chief Insp also referred to his previous answer and was happy to make contact with Councillor Cleverly to understand the issues surrounding what was happening in Bettws.
- Councillor Hourahine thanked police for their swift handling of the hoax 'gun incident' earlier that day that occurred at St Julian's school, which resulted in the school closure. As this was an ongoing issue the Chief Inspector was confident that they would get to the facts of what happened in the coming days.
- Councillor Deborah Harvey mentioned that as the Ward Member for Alway, she had regular meetings with Inspector Cawley, praising him for his hard work and dedication within the community over the years and asked if her thanks could be passed on to him.
- Councillor Evans asked if the Police could elaborate on what police and partners including the Council, were doing to address the antisocial behaviour and intimidating beggars within the City Centre. The Chief Inspector advised that the Police was already heavily engaged with the local authority and third sector partners and adopted a problem orientated policing approach and extended an invite for Councillors that were interested to come along to a meeting to understand what it was all about. This was a complex issue which involved understanding the problem rather than approaching it like a 'bull at a gate' and was more than content that have the support of partners to address this issue.
- Councillor Corten understood the pressures that police were under and referred to Operation Bang and asked if there was anything that the Ringland ward councillors could do to help the policing teams within their area. The Chief Inspect thanked councillor Corten for her kind offer and was more than happy to include Ringland ward councillors in these meetings and would notify Inspector Cawley who was running the operation to involve them in the partnership work.
- Councillor Whitehead had heard that Newport was second biggest city in UK for drug problems and asked was this the case? The Chief Inspector advised Councillor Whitehead that this was not a statistic that he had heard.
- Councillor Drewett mentioned the large crowds that gathered on Ridgeway at Bonfire night last year and asked if this would be policed effectively. The Chief Inspector advised that a risk assessment to see which area was the biggest risk during that period would be carried out and would therefore let Councillor Drewett know if Ridgeway was the high-risk category.

- Cllr Mogford also referred to the 20mph speed limits and asked what resources the police had in place. The Chief Inspector advised that there was a dedicated road policing unit that dealt with the 'fatal five, which included speeding and 'Go Safe Wales. Those resources were targeted to those particular areas to address speed enforcement.
- Councillor Batrouni mentioned the common occurrence in Monmouthshire of 'cuckooing' where criminal gangs targeted vulnerable adults, taking over their homes and exploit them and their homes for criminal activity and asked was this a particular problem in Newport? The Chief Inspector advised that in terms of cuckooing, there was a robust approach in place specifically around areas where vulnerable people lived in certain wards. Secondly Councillor Batrouni asked what was the Police's relationship with Newport City Homes (NCH); particularly relating to the previous issue as well as generally. The Chief Inspector mentioned that the relationship with NCH was also very good, giving an example of issues in any given area with people being housed. The Police along with NCH would look into housing policies to avoid increasing saturation to avoid people with certain issues living in certain areas. NCH were also involved with the Police's hate crime partnership and played a very big part in Anti-Social Behavioural management.

Councillor Saeed Adan asked was there a targeted response time to answer 101 and other non-emergency calls. The Chief Insp replied that there were targeted times around 999 and 101 calls. 101 calls were considerably longer, and users of the number could wait longer using this service. The Police were not happy with performance at the moment. The weather over the summer had impacted on this and demand for police service was higher than usual. There was a lot of work carried out ensuring people were able to report non-emergencies without using telephone such as social media angles, email and the website. It was nicer to speak to a person but unfortunately, that was where police were at the moment.

5. **Notice of Motion of Condolence**

The Presiding Member advised councillors that, by agreement between the political groups, this was the last item on the agenda, and any replies to questions for Leader or Cabinet Members would be provided in writing .

The Leader proposed the following motion to Council:

This Council expresses its deep sadness at the death of Her Majesty the Queen and offers its sincere condolences to His Majesty the King and other members of the Royal Family. We recognise Her Majesty's enduring commitment to public service and duty, including her support for many Welsh charities and organisations, and her lifelong association with Wales and its people.

Councillor M Evans seconded the motion.

The Leader reserved her right to speak at the end. The Presiding Member invited Councillor Evans to speak:

The last few weeks had been an emotional rollercoaster from shock, grief and disbelief to feelings of proudness and hope, about the way the Nation and the city paid tribute to a much loved and respected lady. Even the staunchest of Republicans cannot deny her complete devotion to public service.

Some of us here had been fortunate to have been Mayor of our City, while others would have that opportunity. A great honour privilege and, it had to be said, a very rewarding but demanding year.

I cannot even imagine doing this, on a much larger scale for over 70 years, but the Queen did it right up until the day before she died, at the age of 96 years.

I never met her, but was one of the few remaining Councillors here, to attend the dinner at the Newport Centre when she came to celebrate city status in 2002. The streets were packed with well-wishers, and it was a day I would never forget.

On another occasion I attended a church service in Ebbw Vale to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee. Sitting opposite her, she had an immense presence despite her small stature, and her smile lit up the room.

We would all have heard about or seen some truly vile posts on social media, from a mindless minority, and sadly Newport was no exception. But the overwhelming strength of feeling has been to unite the city, the country and the nation, like we are doing here today.

As we come to terms with the Queen's passing, perhaps the greatest tribute we could all make, is to emulate her great dedication and service to the people we represent, from Ringland to Ridgeway, and work hard to better our city.

The Queen was a much loved, stoic, duty-bound and respected Queen of the ages, a symbol of stability and resilience. She was a Monarch and a Matriarch and would be truly missed. But she left behind a monumental legacy after 70 historical years in reign. May our beloved Queen rest in peace and God save the King.

Councillors Lacey, Marshall, Councillor Fouweather, Drewett, Cocks, Spencer, R Howells, D Davies, D Harvey and Morris all spoke in support of the motion, along with expressing their admiration for the Queen during her 70 years reign. Highlighting her great strides for peace in Ireland, her recent Platinum Jubilee and the events surrounding this in Newport, her role in a male dominated world and her work for the Commonwealth. Councillors also shared their stories of meeting the Queen, her legacy and their respect.

The Presiding Member invited the Leader to make her closing statement.

Councillor Mudd thanked the Presiding Member and all colleagues that spoke in support of the motion as well as speaking on behalf of their constituents.

The Leader wanted to express her thanks on behalf of all elected members to our teams within the Council that made all the necessary procedural operations to ensure that everything ran smoothly and effortlessly during this period. Within the Council, following the death of the Queen, there was a lot of organisation carried out in the background, as it all happened very quickly. The Leader paid particular tribute to the Mayor and Councillor J Hughes for their reading of the Proclamation in the Council Chambers.

Listening to the reflections by council colleagues, made the Leader reflect on all the celebrations that took place earlier in the year to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Many Councillors would have been involved in those activities and the Leader highlighted one of those in particular, which was the planting of the trees for the Jubilee campaign and many of our schools would have these trees planted as well as in public spaces. These were truly a lasting legacy and fitting memorial to our Majesty the Queen and may they live on to provide a living memorial for the future. As human beings we all knew the agony of grief and loss and our thoughts were very much with the Royal Family at this sad time, but thoughts were also with the citizens and families in Newport, dealing with grief and loss at this time.

Finally, the Presiding Member also agreed with the sentiments of his colleagues and the motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The Presiding Member thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

6. **Written Responses to Cabinet Member Questions**

Written Questions from Council – 19 July 2022

Item 5: 2021/22 Treasury Management year-end report

Supplementary Question Raised in Council by Councillor Routley:

Councillor Routley referred to page 52, section 9 in the report where it stated that no investments supported Russian Institutes directly not being supported directly and therefore asked were there any investments that were indirectly supporting Russian Institutes.

Councillor Routley observed that under other debt activity, capital finances were raised for Glan Usk School and the Southern Distributor Road. The statement of accounts showed a liability of £39M to pay the operator and therefore asked could the finances be broken down between the School and the SDR.

The Head of Finance response:

INVESTMENTS

In theory, the nature of global money markets is such that you can never be 100% that any investments won't have an impact upon Russian interests, particularly where state sponsored subterfuge is employed. This is because transactions beget other transactions with other organisations and it is impossible to vet every link in that considerably long chain, before needing to start again vetting other transactions the following day given the recurrent churn in money market transactions. The industry standard is to ensure that your immediate transaction doesn't have any obvious Russian ties, and an expectation that others carry out that similar diligence on their transactions.

Our investments at 31st March were all with other Councils, other UK based public sector concerns, the Government public sector investment/borrowing platform (DMO), a pooled fund specifically for local authorities and our call account with Santander. Notwithstanding what I've said above, on that basis in terms of our position at 31 March (and since then), we're confident that investments had no links to Russian activities.

PFI's

PFI – our transactions are with Morgan Vinci in respect of southern distributor link and Newport Schools Solutions Ltd in respect of Glan Usk school (the latter also being a bespoke subsidiary of the Vinci group). During 2021-22 we paid those companies £6.6m and £2.1m respectively.

Item 9: Questions to Cabinet Members

Supplementary Question raised by Councillor Mogford to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Assets re - Consultation with Residents Post 20 mph Zone

Councillor Mogford asked:

In terms of a local process post the 20 MPH speed limit, would there not be a consultation with residents?

Councillor Lacey responded:

Can I firstly direct you to the Members information pack provided by Welsh Government and distributed to all Members in July by Democratic Services, which seeks to provide information on all aspects of the 20mph default roll out across Wales including the public attitude survey and consultation on the reduction of the default speed limit undertaken by Welsh Government.

All local authorities in Wales are working to the guidance and criteria set by Welsh Government in identifying the roads that will both default to 20mph and remain 30mph.

Welsh Governments position is clear in that there will be no further public consultation on the roads that are defaulting to 20mph, as the criteria is set and will be applied consistently across Wales.

However, the roads that have been identified as remaining at 30mph (termed as exceptions) will be subject to the statutory traffic regulation order process. Therefore, all local authorities must and will follow the statutory process which includes the opportunity to comment or object during the consultation period.

Written Questions from Council – 27 September 2022

Item 7: Questions to Cabinet Member (item removed from Council Agenda following Notice of Motion of the Death of Queen Elizabeth II)

Question to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Assets: Resident Access to Public Transport

Councillor Howells asked:

Despite the recent amendments to bus services, there are no bus services serving Lysaght Village and the surrounding industrial areas on Sundays or after 7pm in the evenings. Can the Cabinet Member confirm she will review this provision with Newport Bus and seek to ensure all residents have fair access to public transport?

Councillor Lacey responded:

The bus network in Newport is predominantly a commercial one, and there is limited opportunity for the Council to direct services. There have been some amendments to bus services recently by Newport Bus and these have been predicated on serving the areas with the current highest patronage levels and from the fflecsi data they had which showed the areas where the buses were predominately being used on evenings and weekends.

There is also limited availability of bus drivers at this time to operate evening and Sunday service provision. We work closely with Newport Bus in their consideration of services and will be reviewing all services with Newport Bus over the coming months to see what changes we may be able to make to serve further areas that they are currently not able to serve in the evenings and Sundays.

We have no certainty of what funding will be available to the authority after the end of this financial year for funding local bus services but we will continue to work with Newport Bus to improve bus services in all areas within the funding pot that we will have available.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-diversity: Capital Investment in Parks

Councillor Howells asked:

In the budget for this year, £2.5 million was outlined for capital investment in our parks. To date, how much is committed and where?

Councillor Forsey responded:

The significant additional investment covers both play areas and cemeteries.

For cemeteries, investment will be destined to ensure that our sites are accessible and safe for visitors, whilst some repair works have already commenced most are currently in the process of being tendered.

For play areas, funding will be used to clear existing maintenance backlog over a 2-year period, to ensure they are safe and fit for use. Work will be prioritised based on results of the inspections.

The Leader and myself are keen to ensure the local community is involved in any replacement work taking place, and as such engagement officer is currently being recruited to ensure local children are properly involved.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-Diversity: Reducing Levels of Fly-Tipping

Councillor Howells asked:

In light of the recent report concerning the fly-tipping issues in Newport, what proactive steps does the Cabinet Member propose to do to reduce these levels and is one of those options being considered a review of the booking system at Newport Household recycling centre?

Councillor Forsey responded:

The increase in cases reported is just a consequence of the increased activity carried out by the Council teams to tackle fly-tipping. The cabinet invested in a second dedicated fly tipping response team, and there have been increased action and enforcement against fly-tipping - which has led to a higher frequency of incidents being proactively detected and reported.

We have also encouraged residents to report fly-tipping to us through our website and My Newport app which helps us to remove it faster.

As a result, the council has recorded the second highest number of successful prosecutions against fly-tippers in Wales during this period, whilst providing an average response time of under 1.5 days.

We will continue to take action against anyone caught fly-tipping in our city and work proactively with our partners to discourage this type of behaviour; this will include close work with the network of volunteers, partnership work with social registered landlords and other organisations and direct interventions and enforcement action.

There is no evidence to link the booking system at Newport Household recycling centre to an increase in fly-tipping.

The booking system has brought many benefits in a number of areas that traditionally posed a problem on site and that impacted on safety, performance and customer satisfaction. It was also resulted in improved recycling performance and the Council being awarded HWRC site of the year last year. A similar system is now used in most councils in Wales.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified