

MINUTES FOR 13th January 2025

1. Councillors Present -:

- a. Mathern: Cllr M Sidwell, Cllr J Harris
- b. Mounton: - Cllr D Carne
- c. Pwllmeyric: -. Cllr S Stevens, Cllr J McConnachie
- d. County Councillor Louise Brown

2. Councillors Apologies-:

- a. Mathern: - None
- b. Mounton: - None
- c. Pwllmeyric– Cllr Gareth Page

3. Members of the Public: -

None

4. Member of Police

None

61/24 PROCEDURAL ITEMS

i. Public Comment: -

None

ii. To receive police Report

There were four incidents around Mathern from 01/12/24 – 31/12/24, this involves different types of incidents. These were dealt with by NPT and Response officers from the Monmouthshire south area. There is one incident, we cannot show with the community council as they are too personal to discuss.

- 1. The first log was for a fire at ST PIERRE HOTEL AND COUNTRY CLUB, it was caused by a dishwasher. This incident was dealt by staff however they wanted to inform the police of the incident.

2. Second log was for incident again at the ST PIERRE HOTEL AND COUNTRY CLUB where stock was stolen from the golf club. Officers from response are still looking into the matter.
3. The third incident was for M48, where a vehicle hit a deer, this incident was dealt by response officers and the highway team.
4. The fourth incident was for a broken-down vehicle, this again was dealt by officers from response. They took the male back home and parked the vehicle in a safe location.

What we plan to do in January:

- Active patrols the area.
- Still conduct speed monitoring in the village.
- Attend the next council meeting (If possible).

Clerk to contact PCSO to request dates be added to future reports and filter items re St Pierre Golf Club

iii. Apologies

Cllr Gareth Page

iv. Declaration of pecuniary and personal interest

None

vi) Minutes of the previous meeting: -

- a. **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting 9th November 2024 and 9th December 2024 as true and accurate records. These were to be signed by Cllr M Sidwell To be placed on the Website.

62/24 Finance

- a. To consider approval of payments as per below. **All approved.**
- b. Monthly Bank Reconciliation authorisation – November/December **approved by Cllr D Carne.**

- c. Set 2025/2026 Precept – It was resolved to set the precept at £24240.00 any over spend to be used from reserves and Vat refund.
- d. It was unanimously resolved to approve New Model Standing Orders

Payments December/January

06 01 2025	Stock It Ltd	59.40
06 01 2025	Rent Mathern District Club	20.00
08 01 2025	Merlin Waste Ltd – Dog collection	93.60
13 01 2025	Telephone – internet	73.99
10 01 2025	Smart Pensions	146.44
10 01 2025	Merlin Waste	93.60
12 01 2025	Wales audit Office (Audit 2022/2023)	221.00
14 01 2025	Memorial Rose – Cllr D Harris	24.95

63/24 Responses to queries raised at previous meetings:

a) Update Welsh Water Meeting Re Mounton Brook

- Next Meeting to be held 21st January 2025 via teams.
- Clerk to get Cllr M Sidwell enrolled into this meeting.
- **Cllrs are very concerned that Waste is continuing to be discharged into the stream**
- **Cllrs noticed a strong smell from the pumping station behind the Church in Mathern.**
- Next meeting in January 2025

b) Digital Health Update from One Voice Wales

- Overall, Mathern Community Council demonstrates a high standard of digital maturity, and it ensures compliance with expectations as set out by legislation.
- Below are our recommendations for improvement:
 1. A “.llyw.cymru or a .gov.wales” domain name would ensure better credibility for the website and create better trust with the public.
 - Please see the below guidance on how to register for a gov.wales domain:

- [Policy for registering and running .llyw.cymru and .gov.wales domains \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)
- 2. There is a presence on social media, but if a bigger target audience is desired, the tips given above can be useful.

These items to be considered when a new Webpage is produced.

c) **Community plan 2025**

Following the December finance meeting Councillors are very keen to start working on an Emergency Plan and a Community engagement plan

Cllrs to meet on Monday 27th January to start work on this to investigate how groups can be contacted and start working on a plan.

Emergency Plan items to consider power outage/flooding/cold weather. Set up point of contacts

Community engagement – what groups would like to see in a plan – easy communication Channels. To produce a questionnaire to be forwarded to all residents in our 3 villages.

d) **Quotes for sign clearance only one received by due date 06 12 2024**

- Although 3 quotes had been requested – Only one had been received. From Joe of J D Window cleaning – Total £800 for this yearly then should we require yearly £600.00.
- Clerk to contact Contractor to ask for the works to be completed in March and invoice to be submitted before 31 03 2025.

c) **Wales V E Day 8th May 2025**

- **Clerk email 12 11 2024 to Zoe re RINGING OUT IN CELEBRATION - 6.30PM: 8 05 2025.** Placing date in diary.

- **Below over view of items to consider**

Clerk to contact to advise the ringing of church bells throughout our ward have always been such important part of our national and international occasions, celebrating and marking unique moments in history, so it is only fitting we are encouraging all Cathedrals and Churches of all denominations throughout Wales, Scotland, Northern

Ireland, England, Channels Islands and the Isle of Man, to ring their bells in celebration of what was achieved on 8th May 1945, at 6.30pm on 8th May next year.

- **VE DAY 80 GUIDE TO TAKING PART:**

The Guide outlines some of the various activities we are encouraging you and your community to take part in, mainly the lighting of Beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace at 9.30pm, with the flames from both representing the 'light of peace' that emerged from the dreadful darkness of war all those years ago, which cost so many millions of lives achieving it, (military and civilian), as well as encouraging our great Nation to eat of Fish and Chips as part of this event that day, in our collective 'tribute' to the amazing and brave Fisherman that still fished the seas having to constantly avoid the mines laid around our shores, and the selfless farmers and Land Girls that ploughed to fields keeping the Nation fed, not knowing if loved ones would ever return. (Fish and Chips was one of our Nations established foods that was not rationed by Prime Minister Winston Churchill).

- **RINGING OUT IN CELEBRATION - 6.30PM:**

As I am sure you will agree with me when I say, the ringing of church bells throughout our world have always been such important part of our national and international occasions, celebrating and marking unique moments in history, so it is only fitting we are encouraging all Cathedrals and Churches of all denominations throughout Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Channels Islands and the Isle of Man, to ring their bells in celebration of what was achieved on 8th May 1945, at 6.30pm on 8th May next year.

- **I VOW TO THEE MY COUNTRY - 9.30PM:**

We are encouraging all those taking part, and indeed, the whole of the Nation to stop, and collectively sing this amazing, uplifting and meaningful hymn. (Please see attached).

This will be the first time in history that individuals, choirs and communities will have the unique opportunity to come together **at this one special moment in time - 9.30pm**, and collectively sing this wonderful British Hymn for such an occasion, so will bound to attract amazing worldwide interest from, local, regional, national and all international aspects of the

media, especially as we all know, Wales "leads the world in song", with its wonderful choirs and the overall love of music.

Cllrs to meet to discuss this further on Monday 27th January 2025 at 7 pm in the small room of the Village Hall. Cllr report back to full council meeting on 10th February 2025

d) Noticeboard in Mounton Village

- Cllr David Carne to discuss with residents if they would be happy with a free-standing noticeboard beside the bench in Mounton

64/24 HIGHWAYS/FOOTPATHS

a. Response MCC re saplings A48

- No reply Clerk to chase.

b. New items

- Mud on road lower Mathern from Palace Farm entrance
- Large amounts of lorries entering Palace Farm
- Speed sign Mathern Lane collapsed near pull in top of Athletic Club group
- Wires hanging – Smoothstones Mounton (picture attached)
- New sign required Mounton Roundabout – letters worn

65/24 COUNCILLORS REPORTS/CLERK REPORTS

a) **One Voice Wales – Meeting 9th January 2025 7pm**

Cllr M Sidwell attended

b) Defibrillator checks

- All checked and working.
- Cllr D Carne to investigate if a free defibrillator could be obtained would
- Mounton church are happy for this to be fitted to the outside wall of the church.

c) County Councillor Brown Report as attached

65/24 COUNCILLORS REPORTS/CLERK REPORTS

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DECEMBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025

County Councillor Brown advised:

Place Scrutiny Committee on the 7th of November 2024

The Place Committee covered a public forum with representations about a proposed RLDP site in Monmouth in relation to the traffic and water quality issues there. There was also a report on the importance of tourism for the Monmouthshire economy with 15% employed in this area.

According to Monmouthshire STEAM, in 2023, 2.29 million visitors came to Monmouthshire, spending 3.53m visitor days in the county, generating more than £329 million for the local economy, and supporting 3,462 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. (Monmouthshire 2023 STEAM full report & summary).

The reports for this committee can be found at the following link where the meeting can also be watched:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=303&MId=5828>

Performance and Overview Committee on the 19th of November 2024

The Performance and Overview Committee covered the subject of school exclusions, the Planning Service Annual Performance report and the Community and Corporate plan progress update.

In terms of school exclusions, the report shows that both fixed time and permanent exclusions have increased. For fixed term exclusions, 520 learners were excluded from Monmouthshire schools during the last academic year. Of these 59 were primary learners and 461 were secondary learners. Of the 22 PEX upheld at Pupil Disciplinary Committee

(PDC), six were for cumulative reasons. Three were for joint participation in a one-off criminal event which is unlikely to be repeated. On this basis there is a reasonable expectation that a significantly lower figure of upheld PEX should be a realistic goal for this academic year.

The Planning service annual performance stated that “ Enforcement performance improved for the measure relating to the percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days (rising from 65% to 83%) which is now rated ‘Good’, and the performance significantly improved in respect of the average time to take positive action which fell from 123 days to 91 days, also rated ‘Good’. We investigated 286 enforcement cases and served 13 notices.”

The report includes a blue sheet headed the value of planning for 2023/24. It mentions the number of completions being 291 units with 26% affordable but at the bottom refers to 2021/22 so it is not clear whether or not the figures relate to 2021/22 or 2023/4, in either case, it clearly illustrates that the amount of housing proposed in the RLDP is significantly out of line with the actual build rate.

There was a discussion in the meeting about the concerns about planning enforcement and the meeting can be watched at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=305&MId=5850>

People Scrutiny Committee on the 25th of November 2024

The above committee had a report on the Blue Badge scheme with a slide presentation providing information on it. 6043 badges were issued in 2022/23 which translates to about 6.5% of the Monmouthshire population.

The link to the committee report where the meeting can be watched is here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=304&MId=6311>

Performance and Overview Committee on the 3rd of December 2024

The Performance and Overview Committee will consider the Revenue budget for 2024/25 and the report proposes the following recommendations to Cabinet showing that the financial position of the Council is of concern:

“RECOMMENDATIONS (to Cabinet):

3.1 That Cabinet note the forecast revenue budget deficit of £4,353,000 which is a deterioration of £964,000 since the previous update.

3.2 That Cabinet note a forecast 80.1% delivery of the £10,940,000 budgeted service savings required for the year. This results in a shortfall in savings of £2,176,000 that is included in the above deficit.

3.3 That Cabinet note the budget recovery action of £1,019,000 drawn up by services that if delivered will reduce the forecast deficit to £3,334,000.

SUBJECT: 2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET – FINANCIAL UPDATE MEETING: PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DATE: 3rd December 2024 DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

3.4 That Cabinet note that the negotiation of national pay agreements for Local Government employees has concluded, and that the outcome is expected to be within budgeted allocations.

3.5 That Cabinet note the budgetary risks that are inbuilt into the forecast, namely; – The volatility of demand for high-cost services, particularly in Adults & Children’s Social Care and with Additional learning needs; – The risk of the increase in the rate of the employers contribution to the teacher’s pension scheme not being fully funded; – The potential impact upon the Council’s financial resilience from the forecast increase in the cumulative schools reserves deficit that is being carried on the Council’s balance sheet. – The risk of further non-delivery of the £10,940,000 of budgeted savings targets; – The trend of reducing debt recovery, particularly within Council tax where there is a significant increase in the number of discounts and exemptions awarded, and a slowing down in collection rates; – The severely limited reserve cover available to the Council.

3.6 That Cabinet note the forecast increase in the deficit on cumulative schools reserves as outlined in Appendix 3 of this report of £4,887,000. This would result in school balances ending the financial year in a deficit of £5,791,000, with twenty (59%) of thirty-four schools forecast to be in a deficit balance.

3.7 That Cabinet note that schools which are forecasting to end the 2024/25 financial year in a deficit balance have brought forward brought forward recovery plans outlining the proposed actions to address their budget shortfalls.

3.8 That Cabinet note a forecast Capital budget underspend of £93,000, alongside an indication of slippage in capital schemes of £9,298,000. The minor underspend is related to the Crick Road care home scheme and due to being financed by specific borrowing and does not subsequently represent a usable surplus budget.”

The report also covers Secondary school leadership funding and per pupil funding for Monmouth, King Henry and Chepstow schools with a consultation proposed on it. It is recognised that Chepstow school has the lowest number of pupils and therefore will see a reduction in funding, however there will be a transition period over 2 years to ensure a transition. The number of pupils in each school are: • Monmouth 1376 • Caldicot 1145 • Chepstow 665 • KHS VIII 3 – 19 1209. The numbers for Chepstow being lower because of not covering 3 to 19 years.

The full reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=305&MId=6307>

Cabinet on the 4th of December 2024

The Cabinet report included a report on the former Mounton House School Chepstow

The purpose of the report was to declare surplus the site of the Former Mouton House School, Chepstow, by the Learning Skills and Economy portfolio for transfer to Landlord Services, this excludes the Pupil Referral Unit premises using the renovated 2 previous staff houses and area of land for it. The link to the report can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=5755>

Place Scrutiny Committee on the 5th of December 2024

The Place Committee covered the following report:

Water Quality and Sewage Infrastructure

To invite Welsh Water to discuss water quality concerns and sewage concerns, particularly related to the Monmouth and Shirenewton area.

The Welsh Water slides can be found at the above link in the Supplementary agenda under the Pwllmeyric heading but relate to the main sewerage pipe which covers most of the Shirenewton ward area, the following points were made:

- A slide on the investigations and investment including £482,00 invested over a 6-year period and £100,000 of additional lining work programmed.
- In relation to the Deposit LDP consultation the response was on the basis of “ No detriment to the wastewater network and requirement of HMA or surface water removal agreements.”

Comment: The response from Welsh Water was very disappointing and the County Councillor argued that instead that there should be a moratorium on any development until the main sewerage pipe was either properly repaired or replaced, which so far despite years of trying, Welsh Water had not managed to do so.

The link to the meeting which can be watched on you tube can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=303&MId=5829>

County Council on the 12th of December 2024

The County Council on the above date included a presentation from local secondary schools in Monmouth on their deforestation project and Monmouthshire agreed to be a deforestation free council. The Hillsborough Charter for families bereaved through public tragedy was approved by the Council. There were motions on Storm Bert and supporting the Farmers great concerns on the removal of the Agricultural Property Relief and not to kill off family farms, together with a number of questions raised by members. Unfortunately, the administration sought to weaken the wording of the motions put forward.

The link to the meeting can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/g5735/Agenda%20frontsheet%2012th-Dec-2024%2014.00%20County%20Council.pdf?T=0>

Financial support for flooded homes of Monmouthshire residents-

Welsh Government Grant Scheme following the Recent Storms.

If your home has been flooded by Storm Bert or Storm Darragh, Local Councils are administering the Emergency Assistance Scheme on behalf of the Welsh Government. This financial support provides £500 for households with insurance or £1,000 for households that are not insured. To apply you need to complete a short application form with your council tax reference number. The details can be found in the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/g5735/Agenda%20frontsheet%2012th-Dec-2024%2014.00%20County%20Council.pdf?T=0>

Review of Senedd Constituencies.

The Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru has published its revised proposals report in relation to changing the boundaries so that 32 Parliamentary constituencies in Wales are reduced to 16 with the pairing of local authorities. Monmouthshire will be paired with Torfaen. The Commission proposes the single name of **Mynwy Torfaen**. The press reports indicate that it is expected that the names will be monolingual except if unacceptable to the Commission. Apparently, Torfaen is already a Welsh name and is the same as the County Council name. I have responded to the consultation asking for it to be bilingual. The 4 week Consultation itself took place over the Christmas new year period making it difficult for people to respond from the 17 December 2024 to the 13th of January 2025. The Report has been published and can be viewed on their [website](#), and representations sent to consultations@dbcc.gov.wales or through the consultation portal at :

<https://senedd2026.reviews.wales/>. Each new constituency will be represented by 6 members of Senedd with elections every 4 years. The changes for the Senedd elections in 2026 are based on the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024. Please follow my X account Louise Brown @CLouiseBrown82 where I have tweeted on this subject.

d. Cllrs Training Booked

- **Training Booked for Cllr J McConnachie**

- 14/01/2025 Tuesday. Code of Conduct - Module 9
- 21/01/2025 Tuesday. The Council Meeting - Module 5
- 18/03/2025 Tuesday. The Council - Module 1
- 20/03/2025 Thursday. The Councillor - Module 2
- All 6.30-8.00pm

66/24 PLANNING APPLICATIONS –

Plus, any applications received after Agenda is issued.

- i. New applications –
- ii. Decisions and Appeals –
- iii. Enforcement -

67/24 CORRESPONDENCE AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

13 11 2024 Invoice OVW Training David Carne - £20.00
13 11 2024 Certificate from above training
15 11 2024 Invoice Rent Village Hall £40.00
16 11 2024 Police report
19 11 2024 Highways registered 22025150 22025362 2205402 22025427 22026415 22026586
19 11 2024 Invoice SLCC Membership 144.00
20 11 2024 Invoice annual cutting Mounton Village £160.00
20 11 2024 MCC update of emergency contact list
22 11 2024 Email re procurement Digital Health Check – Cler completed
22 11 2024 November Clerks Salary approved
25 11 2024 Gladson unable to quote for Notice boards Mounton as bespoke
26 11 2024 OVW Training Dates
27 11 2024 MCC Dog Bins costings – Mathern C C decision to purchase no more December 9th
2024
25 11 2024 PVW Guidance re cloud storage
01 12 2024 Police Report November
01 12 2024 Invoice Merlin Waste £93.60 Paid D D
01 12 2024 Invoice Stock It 59.40 Paid D D
02 12 2024 RLDP report sent – Cllr M Sidwell circulated to all Cllrs
03 12 2024 Apologies Finance meeting D Carne
04 12 2024 Quote for notice boards Earth anchors
04 12 2024 County Cllr L Brown copy of RLDP form circulated to all
04 12 2024 MCC Consultation dm/2024/01426
06 12 2024 OVW Response re Digital Health report
09 12 2024 Return Mathern Risk assessment form from Cllr M Sidwell
09 12 2024 County Cllrs Report December
13 12 2024 OVW Training Dates
16 12 2024 Circuit update re defibs
17 12 2024 Review Senedd – O V W
18 12 2024 OVW Agendas meeting 09 01 2025 7pm
20 12 2024 MCC Precept letter
20 12 2024 MCC Precept letter re frequency of payments
21 12 2024 Approval Salary Cllr M Sidwell
02 01 2025 Invoice Stock It £59.40
02 01 2025 Invoice Rent Mathern District Club
02 01 2025 Training Dates confirmed Cllr J McConnachie
04 01 2025 Invoice Merlin Waste £93.60

68/24 OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Community Resilience Plan – Climate Emergency**

See Item 63/24 Item c

- **Website Updates -**

These were completed by James Andrson
Minutes to be updated November and December 2024

- **Councillor vacancy Mathern Ward**

No applications received

69/24 PROJECTS AWAITING COMPLETION

- A. Work re Risk assessment 2023/2024 Benches/telephone box/ War Memorial fence. **To be completed before end of 31 03 2025**

Next meeting: Meeting Monday 10th February 2025

Meeting ended at 8.15

Signed

Dated