



THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

NOTES OF THE MEETING ON CIVIC AND AMENITY ISSUES, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 3rd MARCH 2021

Present: Geoff Sumner (Chair), Keith James (Vice-Chair), Chris Penrose (Vice-President), Guy Hamilton (Secretary), and about 20 other members of the Society
Elected local authority members including Cllrs. Jez Becker (MCC/CTC), Alan Braund, Caroline Duchet, Ned Heywood, Tom Kirton, Paul Pavia, Dale Rooke (CTC), Patrick Molyneux (FoDDC)
Lucy Allen (CTC Town Clerk), Roger Hoggins (MCC Highways), Tim Melville (Transition Chepstow)

1. Geoff Sumner welcomed everyone, and apologised that he would need to leave the meeting early.

2. Guy Hamilton said that the Society hoped to keep its members informed of what was going on in the town, and to engage with decision makers including the Town Council. The first meeting in December had been very useful, and the Society now had a small group of members actively involved. The hope for this meeting was to have discussions on matters such as the closure of the High Street, transport issues, the emerging Chepstow Place Plan, and wider issues concerning development and the future of the town.

3. The High Street and town centre

The High Street had been closed to traffic because of the pandemic, and it was now intended to make further changes, to improve the town centre environment. Members raised concerns about whether this would inevitably lead to pedestrianisation, over which there were a wide range of opinions.

Cllr. Becker and Roger Hoggins stated that the measures were intended to be temporary rather than permanent, though the road closure order would remain in force until later in the year. A process of public consultation would take place before any measures were made permanent.

Other concerns were discussed, including the state of the bus station and the need for better signs, and improved public toilets; the Town Council's intention to provide stall spaces in Cormeilles Square; the replacement of stone paving slabs; and drainage and run-off in the High Street. Councillors stated that these issues either were being taken up, or would be taken up with the appropriate bodies, but that finances were always an issue.

4. Transport issues

Tim Melville said that Transition Chepstow were in touch with Wales Government officers over proposals to reconfigure the High Beech roundabout, but that progress so far had been disappointing. Cllr. Becker and Roger Hoggins said that discussions were also taking place on wider issues including the WELTAG study, on which a report was expected by the end of March, leading to further public consultation.

Various concerns were raised, including the threshold at which developers needed to contribute to infrastructure improvements. There was discussion of possible improvements to rail services; and suggested new roads including a slip road at Hayes Gate, and a third Severn crossing near Lydney

5. Chepstow Place Plan

Cllr. Rooke introduced the work on the Place Plan, which was now on the website www.futurechepstow.co.uk. He encouraged involvement in the process, which would continue over the next year. All residents would be consulted. It was anticipated that any decisions emerging from the process would input both into the Monmouthshire Local Plan, and the town council's own activities.

6. Development proposals

Members expressed concerns over the rate of future development around the town, including the ongoing Mabey site development, and the suggested development west of the town. It was noted that the Society had objected to the level of housing being assumed by the County Council in the RLDP. Cllr. Becker said that he hoped that the county council would take more account of the town's concerns.

7. Tourism in town

There was discussion on a range of matters, including past town council decisions, and its current activities on tourism initiatives.

8. Drill Hall

Chris Penrose said that the hall would not reopen for meetings until regulations changed. Cllr. Heywood said that discussions were continuing over the planned Community Asset Transfer to the town council.

9. Keith James thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 2nd June 2021 at 7 pm, via Zoom, and details would be circulated in advance.