



## THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

### NOTES OF THE MEETING ON CIVIC AND AMENITY ISSUES, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Chepstow Society: Simon Maddison (Civic & Amenity Officer}, Guy Hamilton (Secretary), and about 18 other members of the Society  
Councillors: Cllr. Alan Braund (CTC), Cllr. Chris Wall (Tidenham PC)  
Ian Russell (Transition Chepstow)

Apologies were received from: Cllr. Jez Becker (MCC/CTC), Cllr. Caroline Duchet (CTC),  
Cllr. Christopher Edwards (MCC), Mark Hand (MCC), Lucy Allen (CTC)

1. Simon Maddison chaired the meeting. Concern was expressed that only one town councillor was present, and no representatives of the county council. Cllr Braund was thanked for his attendance.
2. The High Street and town centre
  - There was further discussion over the closure of the High Street to traffic, the diversity of opinions over the issue, and the uncertainty over future plans. It was said that MCC had agreed to extending the trial period for a further 18 months, but there had been no discussion over this with the town council, and some town councillors were opposed to the extension.
  - Members also expressed continuing concerns over the inadequate signage in the town over the scheme and associated diversions. Some members suggested that footfall in the town centre was still low.
  - It was agreed that the Society write to the town council, to suggest that they survey town centre businesses on their views on the closure, and whether it should be extended.
3. Wider transport issues
  - It was noted that, at the last meeting in June, it was reported that the Chepstow Transport Study (WELTAG) would be reporting “shortly”, but this was still awaited and it was unclear when it would be published. The Burns Commission report on relieving M4 traffic was also still awaited. The meeting discussed various long-standing suggestions, including the need for a bypass, and a possible new motorway junction at Hayes Gate.
  - Ian Russell drew attention to the transport plan prepared by Transition Chepstow, which he said was work in progress. He said that the group was still pursuing the Wales Government over improvements needed at the High Beech (Larkfield) roundabout. Continuing concerns over air pollution were also raised.
  - It was agreed that the Society write to Mark Hand to ask for clarification of the timetables for publishing the various transport studies, consultation arrangements, and how they would be integrated into a transport strategy for the town.
4. Planning reports and strategies
  - Guy reported that the Society had responded to MCC on the Replacement LDP Strategy, and it now seemed that our concerns about the high level of housing proposed were shared by the Wales Government. The town council had not responded on the RLDP Strategy.

- There would be an update on the Future Chepstow place plan at a session on 19 October, at which the Society would be represented.
  - MCC had suggested taking an integrated approach to Chepstow town centre, via a funding bid to promote it as an “arts town”, but it was not clear how or when this would be progressed.
5. Bulwark
- Simon reported that a planning application had now been submitted for the demolition of the Severn Bridge Social Club, and its replacement by a new Lidl supermarket. It was not clear what would happen on the site of the existing Lidl store.
  - Various concerns were expressed about the poor state of the Bulwark shopping area, both in terms of its appearance and the range of stores.
6. Wales Coast Path
- Simon showed a number of recent photographs of the Coast Path in the Thornwell and Bulwark areas, highlighting the destruction of trees, general lack of maintenance, litter and graffiti in adjoining areas, and the potential for improving the path by creating viewpoints over the river.
  - Particular concern was expressed over the destruction of established trees in the Warren Slade area at Thornwell. This appeared to have been done without consultation. It was agreed that Simon contact the MCC tree officer to express our deep concern.
  - There was also concern over the former Beaufort quarry site, at the southern end of the shipyard site, which could be turned into an attractive feature. The current intentions of the site’s developers were not clear.
  - It was understood that responsibility for maintaining and improving the path rested primarily with MCC, and it was agreed that the Society express our concerns to both the town and county councils.
7. Reinstatement of footways
- Simon showed photographs of some inadequate restoration of pavements in the town centre, where good quality stone had been replaced by cheap and poor quality tarmac or concrete after work by utility companies. He commented that there appeared to be no effective process for inspecting repair work or ensuring proper restitution.
  - Cllr Braund commented that MCC had been made aware of the concerns, but that funding was a problem.
  - It was agreed that Simon write to Mark Hand, to again emphasise the Society’s concerns.
8. Future arrangements
- It was agreed that the Society's monthly civic and amenities reports should also be circulated to all town councillors.
  - No date was fixed for the next meeting because of uncertainties over consultation timetables, but this would probably be held in December or January, via Zoom, and invitations would be sent out in due course.