



THE CHEPSTOW SOCIETY

NOTES OF THE MEETING ON CIVIC AND AMENITY ISSUES, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 2nd FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Chepstow Society: Simon Maddison (Civic & Amenity Officer), Guy Hamilton (Secretary), and about 15 other members of the Society
Councillors: Cllr. Jez Becker (MCC/CTC), Cllr. Alan Braund (CTC),
Cllr. Caroline Duchet (CTC), Cllr. Tom Kirton (CTC), Cllr. Paul Pavia (MCC/CTC),
Cllr. Dale Rooke (CTC), Cllr. Chris Wall (Tidenham PC)
Mark Hand (MCC), Roger Hoggins (MCC), Lucy Allen (CTC)

Apologies were received from Cllr. Christopher Edwards (MCC), Tim Melville (Transition Chepstow)

1. Simon Maddison chaired the meeting, and welcomed all the participants, including all the town councillors and county council officers in attendance.
2. The High Street and town centre
 - Mark Hand (MCC) stated that the current temporary closure order for the High Street and Arch would continue in place for 18 months, but that there would be a consultation process over coming months as to whether it should be made permanent. This would include consultations with the town council and other stakeholders in February and March, and the transport consultants Arup would then undertake further engagement. The main period of public consultation was expected to take place over the summer, after the county council elections in May.
 - A zebra crossing for Station Road (between Superdrug and Coffee #1) would be installed during February.
 - There was discussion over the need for more free parking close to the town centre, to encourage residents and tourists to shop in the town. This was a matter for the county council, who were concerned about the revenue implications.
 - Concerns were also expressed over vacant premises, and the difficulties in persuading landlords to offer reduced or short-term leases to encourage traders. Reference was made to the Welsh Government's "Transforming Towns" funds, to encourage new initiatives, and to the arts festival which was supported by the town council.
3. Future Chepstow place plan and related activities
 - Cllr. Rooke reported that the consultation responses to the Future Chepstow "place plan" had been summarised and reported to the town council, which had agreed to prepare a list of practical projects to take forward, though many of the suggestions would be the responsibility of other bodies. Eventually, elements would form part of supplementary planning guidance, though this would not be done until further work on the "place making plan" had been undertaken.
 - Consultant Chris Jones had been appointed to work on incorporating some elements of the Future Chepstow consultation into wider work on a "place making plan", using funds available to the county council under the "Transforming Towns" budget. Cllr. Becker said that this would be discussed with the town council later in February. Public consultations would need to avoid the county council's six week "purdah" period before the local elections on 5th May.

4. Transport work and studies

- Consultations would take place on widening the current 20mph speed restrictions, initially to Welsh Street and Mounton Road but this could be widened further in the coming year in line with Welsh Government policies. Members expressed concerns over the placement of the 20mph signs on Bulwark Road, and over whether the reduced speed limit would be applied to the whole of the A48 including Hardwick Hill. The suggestion was made that more use could be made of vehicle activated speed signs, to encourage compliance with speed limits.
- Mark Hand said that the ongoing monitoring of the old Wye Bridge had identified a need for further repairs, which would lead to temporary closure.
- Particular concerns were raised over hold-ups caused by vehicles turning into the Larkfield trading area (Greggs / Subway), as well as at the Bulwark Road junction. Public meetings and the Transition Chepstow group had called for part-time traffic lights and better road markings at the High Beech roundabout, and discussions were continuing, but it was said that this was a matter for the Welsh Government. Cllr. Rooke said that the town council would continue to work with Transition Chepstow and the county council to get improvements, but progress was slow.
- There was discussion over the quality and size of speed bumps, including some that were too narrow to be effective, and some which were potentially damaging to smaller vehicles.
- Roger Hoggins said that consultations had now started on proposals for improvements in road access to Severn Tunnel Junction station, which could have traffic implications for the town.
- The Chepstow Transport Study, covering bypass and other options, was yet to move to its next stage. This was not a Welsh Government priority, but there would be continuing dialogue with the authorities on the England side of the river. Particular concerns were again expressed over the implications of future development in places like Beachley and Lydney on the road system through the town.

5. Wales Coast Path

- Members expressed continuing concerns over the state of the Wales Coast Path in Bulwark, and the difficulties in getting landowners to take action.

6. Future arrangements

- Cllr. Kirton thanked the Society for arranging these useful meetings, which he hoped would continue.
- No date was set for the next meeting, because of uncertainties over consultation arrangements.