

MAESTEG TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an **EXTRAORDINARY HYBRID** meeting of the **Council** held remotely via Microsoft Teams and at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Talbot Street, Maesteg, on **Tuesday, 14th May 2024**.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS:

IN PERSON:

R Martin (Mayor)

F Abedalkarim, P Davies, P Jenkins, C Knight, A LeGeyt, R Lewis, R Penhale-Thomas, M Rowlands, G Thomas, G Williams and I Williams

ONLINE:

AR Davies and C Davies

APOLOGIES:

R Collins, and L Thomas

NO APOLOGIES:

A James

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: None declared

Prior to the meeting starting Dr A Cotter-Roberts had split members into 4 groups in the Chamber and requested that members sit in their groups. Those online were requested to use the online chat to discuss some of the questions that will be raised during the meeting.

Members were split into the following groups and asked to sit accordingly:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Online
CK	ALG	FA	PJ	ARD
RL	MR	IW	RM	CD
RP-T	GT		PD	
GW				

600. TO RECEIVE GRASSHOPPER COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor welcomed Dr A Cotter-Roberts from Grasshopper and R Morton from BCBC REACH team.

Members were asked if it was ok to take some photographs during the meeting, there were no objections.

Prior to the meeting members were provided with the following from Grasshopper:

Project Background

As part of the ‘Resilient Communities’ programme via Reach, Bridgend County Borough Council have initiated a project entitled ‘Maesteg Town Council Strategy and Action Plan’. This project aims to consult with Maesteg Town Council and the local community to understand the current activities of the council and the future

ambitions of the community. This will enable the development of a five-year strategic plan.

Grasshopper Communications has been selected to facilitate this project. We are a small company based in Cardiff, and we help organisations to connect with people and to partner with their communities to transform where they work and live. Our aim is to work with communities to deliver better projects and lasting social value. We plan to deliver the project through the following stages:

- Engaging with Maesteg Town Council and Clerks to understand their aims for the community as well as outline current opportunities, ideas and initiatives.
- Produce a desktop study which reviews comparative local plans and strategies in other areas and recent strategies of BCBC (Bridgend County Borough Council).
- Conduct an evidence search and review of recent studies and surveys relevant to the Llynfi Valley area (for example, the Valleys Regeneration Strategy survey carried out on behalf of BCBC).
- Undertake an extensive public consultation which will help establish local priorities, primarily focused on delivering representation of residents of the four wards that are covered by Maesteg Town Council: Caerau, Maesteg East, Maesteg West and Nantyffyllon.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders, including businesses, charities, and community groups on their projects and priorities, and understand opportunities and scope for effective ways of working with Maesteg Town Council.
- The reporting stage will involve a presentation of our findings to BCBC and Maesteg Town Council for feedback which will then be incorporated into the final report.

Engagement Meeting with Maesteg Town Council

We have scheduled a meeting with the Councillors of Maesteg Town Council to take place at 6.30pm on Tuesday 14th May 2024. This meeting will be held in-person at Maesteg Town Council Offices.

We are holding this meeting to gain an understanding of the Councillors' aims for the local community and any current opportunities, ideas and initiatives that may form part of the strategy and action plan for Maesteg Town Council. This will help to inform us during our consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders. We understand that budgetary pressures and constraints are a significant and growing issue, and that now is the time for effective engagement with the community to understand their priorities.

The goal of this project is to deliver a strategic action plan which is pro-active and meets the priorities of the local community. We welcome all feedback and perspectives on what this may look like.

Dr A Cotter-Roberts, proceeded to present a PowerPoint presentation (slides to be emailed to all members) and advised of the following:

Project Overview

This project aims to consult with the Council Members and Clerks and the local community to better understand the range of our current activities and aspirations and the future ambitions of the community.

The goal of this project is to deliver a strategic action plan which is pro-active and meets the priorities of the local community.

Support and Funding

The BCBC Reach Resilient Communities Project is an SPF-funded initiative, designed to support local communities to undertake local resilience planning.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. This study is under the measure W12: Investment in community engagement schemes to support community involvement in decision making in local regeneration.

We are very pleased to support Maesteg Town Council and their initiative to engage their community more in setting an agenda for the future of the area.

Project Timeline

Milestone	Date
Engagement Meeting with MTC	14 th May 2024
Desktop Study	April – May 2024
Stakeholder Engagement	12 th June 2024
Community Consultation	30 th June 2024
Draft Report	October 2024
Presentation of Findings	November 2024
Final Report	December 2024

Support & Funding

It was explained that BCBC REACH are funding this initiative via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). It was re-iterated that MTC will not be contributing to this process, however the plan will be used as a guide by MTC.

Engagement Meeting with Maesteg Town Council and Clerks

The purpose of this meeting is to understand your aims for the community, as well as outline current opportunities, ideas, and initiatives that may form part of the strategy and action plan for Maesteg Town Council.

We welcome all feedback and perspectives on what this may look like.

Members raised the following questions:

- Regarding the timing are these set or are they flexible as MTC meet to discuss precept and budget in December in preparation for sending BCBC our precept requirement for the following financial year.

These deadlines are not fixed as we hope to get the reports ready by October, however we must have dated timelines to work towards.

- Will the final report be in the public domain?

The final report will be given to MTC first and then will be made available for the public.

- Who will agree to the final report will this be MTC or BCBC as there may be a difference of opinion between the 2 authorities and MTC may not be able to action all the findings? There will be unlikely a clash, however MTC are proactive.

The report will lay with BCBC, however it will be a feasible plan for both MTC and BCBC. BCBC are funding this on behalf of MTC.

- Is this part of the review of T&CC's

No, the boundary review is separate from this consultation.

- Regarding funding, we don't know what services BCBC will / will not be providing in the future. We can't give an outline vision as we haven't consulted with the public, this member was struggling to see what priorities the public want.

This is the purpose of this consultation as we need an initial assessment to find out whether it should be realistic, however we can't provide costings for this.

- MTC can only base costs on what we have already agreed within our precept. As this is being funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) via BCBC is there further funding available?

Need to be careful that any consultation with the public does not raise false hopes.

MTC have never consulted before, and this will give MTC a working document as we will see some of the priorities local residents will have.

This is a one idea 2-way conversation, many residents lose sight as to which section of local government are responsible for what e.g. BCBC responsible for potholes. This will provide a good foundation for partnership working and match funding opportunities.

- Are you prepared for lots of complaints about potholes etc and the need to educate the residents on what MTC can / cannot do?

We will be calculating all the feedback and do not include any profanities. The report will place MTC in better stead for further UKSPF and other grants. The UKSPF current grants end in March 2025, to submit any application it is good practice to have a 5-year business/action plan.

Dr A Cotter-Roberts advised that there will be 8 questions for members to discuss in their groups and each question will be given a time limit of 5 minutes for members to discuss and write down their thoughts. It was requested that at the top of each page the question number and group participants are noted for these responses to be collated and analysed.

Members were asked the following questions:

- Q1 What current initiatives or projects are in place that you wish to continue?
- Q2 Are there any previous MTC projects that you'd like to revisit?
- Q3 Are there any projects/initiatives that you do not want to explore?
- Q4 What ideas do you have for Maesteg for the next 5 years?
- Q5 How open do you want the consultation to be? Should we focus on specific themes or ideas during the consultation?
- Q6 Are there any particular stakeholders that you want to engage with in this process?
- Q7 What challenges are you likely to face implementing projects?
- Q8 Is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

Each response to each question will be reviewed by Grasshopper at a late date, however the following was raised:

- How do you frame the survey in context to MTC?

There will be a limited response options, however there will be some open text questions.

- Will there be an opportunity for MTC to include a newsletter with the consultation to explain MTC budget?

Context information is good and could be provided as we will also be using QR codes to direct the residents.

- Can we also ask if residents would be happy to pay more on their council tax if more services are available? Currently band D property pays:

BCBC	Police and Crime Commissioner	Maesteg Town Council	TOTAL
£1,834.41	£352.67	£62.95	£2,250.03

See the following for full details:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/jgchwits/budget-overview-leaflet-2024-25-english.pdf>

This is currently not within the remit of the consultation, however, we can draft this on condition that BCBC are happy to include.

- Maesteg residents are known for giving honest responses, however we need to make sure that there is a management of expectations, MTC need to be as open as possible for ideas. MTC need to look into other grant funding available to add to the current and future budgets.

- Can you advise where consultation events will be taking place?

At the fun run an family fun day we will be having a gazebo with staff completing surveys that will be accessible in person, in Welsh, mural boards with post it notes etc. There will also be an online survey both before and after

- Would you also be able to an in person consultation in the market square or outside Tesco as there are many out of area people attending the fun run and we would need the responses to be from Maesteg residents.

There will be a stakeholder meeting (venue to be arranged) all consultations will include a demographic question. It is welcomed that at the stakeholder event attendees can respond on behalf of their organisation and personal views. We can explore another in-person event, however the budget of the consultation may not include this.

- Some valid comments made this evening, the outcomes of the consultation needs to be achievable, affordable and sustainable. MTC doesn't have an unlimited amount of resources and we need to be confident that the cost to deliver a service does not outweigh the benefit of the service.

Once the final report is agreed we can add what powers MTC have.

- BCBC seem to be spending a fair amount on this consultation, would there be an option for MTC to add to this in order to get maximum number of residents to complete the consultation? This could be achieved by paying for an additional face to face day / door-to-door leaflet drop etc?

It can get quite expensive to do a door-to-door in person surveys and telephone consultations, however we can get costs for a door-to-door leaflet survey as an option.

A member wished to discuss their vision for the area, it was agreed that this would be emailed to Grasshopper and placed onto the agenda of a full council.

Dr A Cotter-Roberts collected all the sheets from the 4 groups in the Chamber and will use these to produce the survey consultation. The online chat will also be included in this process.

The Mayor and members thanked Dr A Cotter-Roberts and R Morton for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- Presentation slides to be emailed to all members.
- Cllr F Abedalkarim & Cllr P Jenkins’s documents to be emailed to Grasshopper and BCBC REACH teams.
- Cllr P Jenkins document to be added to the agenda of June Full Council meeting.

Minutes emailed to all Councillors to Read on 15th May 2024

Minutes accepted at a HYBRID meeting of the Council held on 4th June 2024

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Mayor