

Minutes of Abergavenny Transition Town meeting:

13 October 2016

Location: Abergavenny Community centre: Park Street: Time 7.15pm

Attendance: Stephen Harris, Dick Cole, Ron Prince, Paul Clifford, Mary-Ann Swanson, Jane Llewellyn Dixon, Patrick Hannay (Chair) Simon Bilsborough,

The following decisions flowed from a discussion of the paper submitted by the Chair, '*ATT : A Twelve month retro-spective*' which was circulated to both the ATT wider network and the core ATT google group with requests to comment.

Only two comments were received!

1. Engagement with current Planning applications

This has consumed too much of members time both researching and discussing in meetings. The resistance has been mostly symbolic rather than effective. The focus should be instead at Strategic level planning and engagement with the thinking underpinning the next Local Development Plan revision. PH to request MCC officer input/briefing on this process and timetable at a future meeting.

(Action PH)

2.Housing; a rethink:

- Despite ATT's earlier decisions (following Housing Association's presentations on affordable housing) to not engage with housing issues, we decided to overturn that.
- We need to engage vigorously at a strategic level, of the up and coming revisions to the LDP (Local Development Plan) and in the light of the knowledge that MCC will fall short of housing targets set by WG.
- We should secure as public information a confirmation of all MCC owned land in the Bryn Y Cwm area as possible targets for alternative methods of housing delivery. **(Action PH)**

- We should support the notion of proper planned settlements rather than developer-led single fragmented sites with no overall infrastructure planning.
- Through the national ATT network we should trawl for examples of successful other models of low-cost housing delivery.(**Action PC**) We would assemble those along with examples like Bedzed in Merton (**SH**) and organise a lobby of key MCC housing officers and County Councillor. We should invite Ed Green of the Welsh School of Architecture to that lobby, who has been exploring affordable housing solutions for WG. Steve Harris (**SH**) to front this initiative with support from **PH**. *All ATT members to seek to suggest other real life examples of radical delivery for Affordable homes as models to follow.*

3. Growing with the Flows project.

Having not secured BL monies, a portion of members of *Team Abergavenny* would be invited to a briefing on the project by PH and those groups connected with that bid, to seek adoption of key ideas and integration into five year plan. Maybe include key councillor for wards along the Gavenny and Castle Meadows to join presentation. (**Action PH**)

4. Food issues

- ATT members with knowledge/contacts on local food production and distribution should join a mapping team of these issues under the rubric of the EU Agri-Urban Projects currently fronted by Councillor John Prosserand MCC RDP officer Deserie Mansfield. ATT is represented on this project but we need a much wider team of volunteers to conduct the mapping of local food sourcing and distribution. Volunteers please. PH to liase with Pamela Mason/Jeff Davies/Elaine Blanchard and others. (**ACTION PH**)
- ATT should develop a local campaign for a dramatic reduction in the purchasing of plastic bottles of water. Most effective focus of campaign to be developed: see also para below on Waste.(**ACTION M-A S**)

- A small group are going to investigate Stroud's Community Supported Agriculture project.
- Through IE/Community Orchard contacts with the Community Land Advisory Service(CLAS) which is part of Federation of City Farms and Community gardens ATT might set up an event with CLAS taking a leading role – if there is sufficient volunteer interest in ATT. Those interested contact Jeff Davies/ Jane Llewellyn Dixon.
- ATT will be putting in an objection to the current Morrison's supermarket application on basis of threat to existing local food traders in Market Hall (consultation with traders ongoing by JG) and all aspects relevant to site planning under the Active Travel Act. We shall also be pointing out poor embodied energy credentials of poorly chosen materials.

5. Waste

Although a remit of ATT,very little done on this over last few years on this. No-one leading.

Two possible foci: a) campaign to reduce consumption thus **less** waste:
 b) Highlight publicly certain aspects of existing waste in locality

While it has to be recognised that Monmouthshire is doing well in the league tables re recycling/ avoiding going to land-fill see:

<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/151126-local-authority-municipal-waste-management-april-june-2015-en.pdf>

<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/recycling-satisfaction-survey>

the challenge is over-consumption for the majority (known as endless growth in capitalism).Recycling is only a comfort blanket that covers over excess consumption. E.g.Should there be so much plastic packaging around vegetables?

So:-

a) *Reduce consumption*: ATT to take up Chepstow TT example of running *Bring and Take* events (no money changes hands) based at Abergavenny Community

centre. Was run successfully by Phil Powell of Chepstow TT. Contact him to check processes / problems and promotion and set up first event. **(Action M-AS)**

b) *Highlight excess consumption*: All ATT members to be asked to photograph conspicuous waste examples on visits to Waste Transfer Station (particularly of furniture.) PH to arrange blog on *AbergavennyNow* website to post photos and raise awareness/questions. **(Action all ATT members)**

c) SB/PH to invite Community Homemakers rep and also a worker on Waste Transfer Station (who lives in Abergavenny) to attend ATT discussion of experience as worker on the job at Llanfoist. Also invite rep from MCC Waste team as suggested by DC.

d) John Lewis recent national report, 35% up on people buying water containers which they fill with water from the tap to avoid purchasing plastic bottles of water. We should raise with Waitrose management at Llanfoist why they still sell plastic bottles of water. Possibly mount campaign at steps entrance to Waitrose off roundabout with cooperation of Welsh Water (who had hundreds of their containers given out at Eisteddfod) **(Action M-A S)**

6. More action by more members or increasing the membership

- Accepted that ATT in great danger (or maybe simply a reality of context) of talking to ourselves, a very small, not increasing community, doing small but significant (to us) things on the margin. The centre remains untouched.
- *Flat Pack launch* stage 2 (ATT as host only) would test whether there was an appetite for direct action on Town Council through elections and then give lead through Council (Town council elections next May). Flat-Pack Meetings *Saturday 19th November at 2.30pm* for those who work in the week, the other is on *Monday evening 21st November 7.00pm*: Both meetings will be held at the Abergavenny Community centre, Park Street,
- Any ATT events promotions should follow the very good model of the 2015 'Well Being Fair' in the Market Hall; lots of entertainment being

performed by a young generations, parents accompany, alongside all the stalls of things we want to encourage participation in.

- Need to follow up Youth Eco Council at KHS although schools seem impenetrable to galvanise participation.
- Recognised that Friends of Castle Meadows had good links with schools. Community Orchard and IE should build on that. Talk to Anthea Fairey (**Action JLD**)
- Some appetite among those present at meeting for direct action/campaigning. Some ideas in notes above.
- Once MCC start off-loading public assets (with austerity cuts) then issues of numbers and legal status of volunteers will come to the foreground.

**Next meeting: Thursday November 10th Abergavenny Community Centre
7.15pm**