

11. Local Community Representation

Community Council

Shirenewton Community Council acts as an organisation that represents local views and feeds into Monmouthshire County Council, which in turn, relates to the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Community Council has 10 councillors (the current list of councillors is shown in Appendix 1) who represent the residents living in the wards of Shirenewton, Mynyddbach, Earlswood and Newchurch West. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month (except Bank Holidays, when it is then the second Monday) at the Recreation Hall at 7:30 pm. These are open meetings and members of the public are very welcome to attend to either raise issues or listen to proceedings.

The Council has a limited budget that is used to support local amenities eg the children's playground, notice boards etc. In addition, representation can be made by the community to seek limited financial assistance towards "one off" projects – the restoration of the church clock is a recent example of this.

All applications for Planning are brought before the Council, who are invited by the County Council to give their comments and observations from a local perspective. The County Council is the decision making body and the Community Council can only make recommendations.

A standard agenda item for the meetings is "matters of local concern". This is where councillors raise issues that have been brought to their attention by members of the public or are matters that they feel need discussion or action. It is usual practice for an officer from Gwent Police to attend for part of the meeting and bring to the attention of councillors any instances of crime in the area or share their general observations. This tends to be a two way process. The County Councillor for the Shirenewton Ward also attends all the meetings and acts as a link with MCC for all local issues.

Communications

A Community Council provides an opportunity for democracy to work at various levels if people wish to use the mechanisms in place. In the questionnaire residents were also asked for their views on the activities and performance of the Community Council, and on their awareness of its activities. Nearly all respondents knew the location of their Community notice board, and over 80% were also aware of the Church web site which has Community Council pages.