

Minutes of a Special Meeting of
HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL
held on
22nd JANUARY 2018

PRESENT: Chair: Councillor Alan Diskin

Councillors: Janet Axworthy, Gillian Brockley, Helen Brown, Clive Carver, Glenys Diskin, Lowri Earith, George Hardcastle, Dave Mackie, Wendy Mallin, Helen Meredith, Dan Preece, Emma Preece, Darren Sterry and Ralph Small.

Officers: Mrs S G Jones, Clerk & Financial Officer

427/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joyce Angell, Ve Amos, Cheryl Carver, Kevin Jones and Ryan O’Gorman,

428/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor Dave Mackie declared an interest in relation to support to the Welsh Border Community Transport and in accordance with Standing Order No. 88 did not take any part in the discussion.

429/17 2018-19 BUDGET PROPOSALS AND PRECEPT:

Copies of the draft budget proposals for 2018-19 and the Council Tax Precept had previously been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. Councillor Helen Meredith advised the Committee that the Finance Sub-Group, as agreed at the Council meeting on 15th January, had met to review the budget proposals as over the last few years the Council’s reserves had continued to reduce.

The sub-group had examined the budget line by line and had identified where efficiencies could be made in order to set a more balanced budget for the forthcoming year.

The Chair specifically referred Members to a number of key proposals as follows:

- Member expenses – the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had reviewed payments to Members of Community and Town Councils and the Panel had determined that mandatory payments must be made to Members. The payments included an amount of £150 per Member per year for costs incurred in respect of telephone usage, information technology, consumables etc.
- The Panel had also recognised some specific roles, for example a committee chair, and had determined that Councils must make a payment for a minimum of one senior role and a maximum of five senior roles. Members collectively agreed that they did not wish to claim any such payments.
- Community Transport – this organisation had introduced a delayed increase until 1st October 2017 of 0.50 per journey. The total contribution requested for 2018-19 amounted to £3,810. Members were advised that the accounts for this organisation looked extremely healthy and due to the pressures on the Council's own budget this year the Council agreed not to provide any financial support this year.
- Yellow lines outside of schools – although this is a function of the County Council members had been concerned about the health and safety of children during busy school periods. Councillor Helen Brown had proposed that the Community Council set aside approximately £2,000 per primary/junior school to enable the priority provision of yellow lines. Some members felt that this was not necessary at all schools, due to other issues, and that the Community Council should not be funding a provision that should be a function of the County Council. However, it was agreed to provide a provision for Penarlag School.

The Chair said that other matters included inflationary costs to premises and a 2% pay rise had been factored into the budget. The unions had been negotiating for a 2% rise for most officers but that some officers on lower incomes could receive up to 16%. The Council's Lengthsman was due to retire in October and would be replaced full-time.

The budget proposals included a Council Tax Precept for 2018-19 of £246,902. The Council Tax charge for an average Band "D" property would be £39.02 which represented an increase of £1.82 (4.89%).

The Chair had also received requests to consider financial contributions from Connah's Quay Town Council for the Connah's Quay Swimming Pool and from OWL Watch.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:

- i) That each member writes to the Clerk to indicate that they would not accept any payments as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales;

- ii) The request from Welsh Border Community Transport should not be agreed to for this financial year;
- iii) That a provision to provide yellow lines outside Penarlag School be included;
- iv) That the Chairman's Fund be reduced from £500 to £150.
- v) That the provision of £2,000 for Christmas Lighting be reduced to £1,500 and £500 be reinstated for the Community Library, if requested, and subject to the usual financial checks;
- vi) That a budget should not be included for the Council's Community in Bloom scheme and that the whole project be reviewed as previously agreed by Council;
- vii) That the request from Connah's Quay Town Council should not be acceded to and that the Clerk ascertain if other local Town and Community Councils have been asked for financial contributions;
- viii) That OWL watch be requested to complete a grant application form for consideration at the March Finance Committee;
- ix) the budget proposals for 2018-19 financial year be approved and amended as recorded; and
- x) the Council Tax precept be set at 4% and not 5% as previously recommended. The Council Tax charge for an average Band 'D' property would be £38.69 which represents an increase of £1.49.