

HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of a **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE**
held on **30 JANUARY 2012**

PRESENT: Chair: Councillor David Mackie
Vice-Chair: Councillor Clive Carver

Members Present: Councillors Veronica Amos, Helen Brown, Cheryl Carver,
Alison Halford, David Hough, Judith Hough, Kevin Jones,
Ralph Small and Brian Williams.

Officers: R N Barnes, Clerk & Financial Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joyce Angell, Alan Diskin,
Glenys Diskin, George Hardcastle, Mike Jones and John Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

BUDGET/PRECEPT 2012/2013:

The Chair thanked the Clerk & Financial Officer for preparing the Council's
budget/precept for 2012/2013 and invited him to take the Committee through the report, a
copy of which had been attached to the agenda.

The Clerk said that the report set out the Council's expenditure proposals for 2012/2013 in
order that the Council could agree its budget and thereby its precept demand.

He advised that as could be seen from the budget and precept analysis the Council was
predicted to bring forward balances of £190,187 to 1 April 2012. However of this £20,000
was committed to the future improvement or replacement of Level Road Community
Centre. In total expenditure for the year was predicted to be £292,186 with an income of
£295,519.

The Clerk said that he had set out the Council's proposed budget for 2012/2013 based on
the Council's current spending pattern with a small inflationary element together with
provision for items which the Council had agreed it would wish to fund in 2012/2013.

Proposed expenditure in 2012/2013 was £367,169 which included the gross cost of the
Joint Services towards which an income of £90,286 would be received giving a net
expenditure figure of £276,833. This figure however allowed for the expenditure of the
£20,000 provision for the construction of a replacement Community Centre at Level Road
together with the full commitment of £16,000 included within the Holding Account. It was
however unlikely that either the contribution to Level Road Community Centre or the full
commitment of the provision within the Holding Account would be used. Therefore the
likely net expenditure figure in 2012/2013 would be £240,883.

Chair's Signature _____

The Clerk & Financial Officer briefly summarised the proposals as follows:

- Joint Services

A full explanation on spending proposals had been submitted to the Joint Services Committee on 19 January 2012 and had received its approval. This involved expenditure of £211,239 of which Hawarden Community Council's contribution would be £120,953.

- General

This budgetary heading was proposed to increase from a provision of £16,485 to £21,338, the reason for this being that the sum of £12,500 had been included for the May 2012 Council Elections. The Clerk said that this was the maximum cost which could be incurred if all seats were contested and it was likely therefore that savings could arise. He further said that the increase in the general budget would have been higher had it not been for the savings which the Council was now making on its insurance costs which had reduced by £7,300 following competitive tender.

- Section 137

Expenditure on Section 137 items was proposed to increase from £23,395 to £27,400 principally due to the Council's decision to allocate £5,000 for the improvement of its Christmas illuminations. There was however reduced provision for youth support which arose from non recurring High School bursary costs.

- Open Spaces

Expenditure on Open Spaces was proposed to be slightly reduced from the 2011/2012 budgetary level of £6,949 to £6,627. Expenditure in 2011/2012 would however be in excess of its budgetary provision of £6,949 as a result of the purchase of items of play equipment for Plough Lane and Mancot Lane which were not budgeted for and repairs to the glazing at Gladstone Playing Fields Pavilion. There would however be contributions towards these costs resulting from a successful match funding bid of £3,000 to Flintshire County Council and £1,580 from Zurich Insurance in respect of the re-glazing of the Pavilion.

- Highway Verges

Expenditure was proposed to stay at just over £22,000 although there had been some adjustments to various sub-headings to reflect spending patterns particularly with regard to CCTV.

- Public Lighting

The budget provision had been increased from £10,700 to £12,300 wholly due to increased energy costs. To slightly offset this, provision for replacement columns had been reduced from £3,000 to £2,000. The Clerk said that energy savings were hoped for either via the Government Procurement Scheme or Flintshire County Council which was now considering admitting Town & Community Councils to its energy contract subject to a re-charge.

Chair's Signature _____

- Allotments

The sum of £30,000 was included in the budget. This included the provision of £10,000 in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 which had not been called upon. At this point the Clerk gave an update on the current position with regard to the progression of the allotment site off Upper Aston Hall Lane.

- Holding Account

The level to be retained in the Holding Account was proposed to remain at £36,000, £20,000 of which related to Level Road Community Centre.

- Precept

The Committee was advised that the budget if agreed as set out would require a precept of £210,000 and the band D charge for the 2012/2013 financial year would be £34.53 an increase of 84p i.e. 2.49%.

The following matters were raised by Members:

Councillor Halford thanked the Clerk for the clarity of the report and presentation. Councillor Halford questioned the provision in the budget for Councillors expenses and also the number of allotment plots it was proposed to provide. The Clerk said that the provision for Councillors expenses related to expenses incurred by Members in representing the Council outside of its boundaries and covered such matters as travelling expenses and meals. With regard to the number of allotment plots which were proposed to be provided at the Upper Aston Hall Lane site the Clerk said that at present there some 45 people on the waiting list and that plots would be provided for all of those although they would not necessarily be full plots and would come in a variety of quarter, half and full plots.

Councillor Brown questioned whether the sum of £5,000 could be added to the budget for play equipment for the Plough Lane play area. She said that it was a busy site which was confirmed by it having the highest number of youngsters attending the Community's playschemes. The Clerk said that if Members didn't wish to increase the precept level to accommodate this it was possible that this sum of money might be found from savings within the provisions for elections which he had referred to in his report.

Councillor David Hough questioned whether the Council would incur charges for the supply of water to the allotment site. The Clerk said that if the Council decided not to proceed with the provision of a bore hole on site then there would be annual charges for the supply of water. These costs however would be met from income derived from the letting of plots and sheds.

Councillor Clive Carver referred to the Chair's allowance and the expenditure level showed within it which exceeded the current budget. The Clerk said this arose as a result of the Municipal year not coinciding with the financial year and an element of the previous Chair's allowance therefore occurring in the current financial year.

Chair's Signature _____

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Mackie referred Members back to the issue raised by Councillor Brown in respect of provision for funding for the Plough Lane play area and invited her to put forward a motion. Councillor Brown proposed that the Council should allocate £5,000 for the provision of additional play equipment at the Plough Lane play area to be funded from savings which arose from the May 2012 Elections. This was seconded by Councillor Judith Hough.

Councillor Kevin Jones voiced his opposition to the motion expressing a view that the matter should be considered once the elections had been concluded and consideration given to other possible expenditure. The Chair noted Councillor Jones's view and invited members firstly to vote on the proposal put forward by Councillor Brown and then by Councillor Jones. The motion put forward by Councillor Brown was carried by 7 votes to 3.

IT WAS RESOLVED:

(a) that Flintshire County Council be advised that Hawarden Community Council's Precept Demand for 2012/2013 was £210,000 resulting in an average band D Council Tax charge of £34.53 i.e. an increase of 84p (2.5%).

(b) that the Council allocate £5,000 towards additional play provision at Plough Lane play area subject to savings arising from the May 2012 Elections.

The Meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Chair's Signature _____