

HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the MEETING of the STAFF AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 8 FEBRUARY 2010

PRESENT: Chair: Councillor Ralph Small
Vice-Chair: -

Councillors: As per Council Meeting

Officers: Mr R N Barnes, Clerk & Financial Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Yale and George Hardcastle.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 11 January 2010 be received as a true record and that they be signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

CCTV System outside MnS Store, Holywell Road, Ewloe

The Clerk confirmed that he had spoken to AGS Security Systems and that they had agreed to provide operating instruction to the Store's staff and also to reposition the camera so that it also took in the frontages of adjacent shops.

POLICE MATTERS:

The Chair welcomed PC Chris Monkeiwicz to the meeting and invited the Officer to address the Committee.

The Officer said that he had no matters which he wished to report to the Council but invited Members to raise any relevant matters with him.

Councillor Carver referred to reports he had received in connection with a smell of petrol/diesel in the Blackbrook stream. He said that this had been reported to the Environment Agency but he had been made aware that this could be associated with the illegal manufacture of drugs.

Councillor Kevin Jones reported his concern that teenagers were climbing the scaffolding outside the Money Supermarket.com premises and they were putting themselves in danger. Councillor Jones then referred to rowdy behaviour taking place in the vicinity of the Level Road Stores in the early hours of the morning. He said he was aware of this as it had been recorded on the Store's CCTV cameras.

Councillor Halford sought clarification concerning the North Wales Police Force's policy in connection with images of suspected criminals captured on CCTV footage. PC Monkeiwicz replied that any captured images are circulated around the Force area via email to ascertain whether any Officer is aware of the name of the individual concerned.

Councillor Amos referred to nuisance being caused to residents of Scot's Road and The Nook largely by youngsters using the connecting alleyway and throwing objects at the properties. Councillor Amos also referred to the apparent reduction in visible Policing in Mancot. PC Monkeiwicz explained that he and PCSO Gareth Price had now been put on opposite shifts and that this would improve the level of visible Policing in Mancot.

PC Monkeiwicz confirmed that he had noted all the matters raised.

The Chair thanked PC Monkeiwicz for his attendance at the meeting.

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS DRAFT PROPOSALS:

The Chair referred Members to the report attached to the agenda setting out the Local Boundary Commission for Wales Proposals in respect of its review of electoral arrangements for Flintshire.

The report explained that the Commission proposed a change to the arrangement of Electoral Divisions with a view to achieving a significant improvement in the level of electoral parity across Flintshire. The Commission had to have regard to the desirability of fixing boundaries which were or would remain easily identifiable and any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary.

The report further advised that the Minister had directed that there should be a minimum of 30 Councillors and a maximum of 75 Councillors in a County Council with a Councillor to electorate ratio of no lower than 1:1,750. At present Flintshire had 70 Councillors and a ratio of 1 Councillor to 1,650 electors. In addition any alteration to the existing arrangement should only be taken if such proposals were broadly supported by the electorate.

The review concentrated on the boundaries of County Councillors and did not relate to a change in boundaries of Community Councils. These were a matter for the principal Council to consider in the first instance. Community Wards however had been used as a basis for the proposed County Electoral Divisions.

In Flintshire's case the Commission recommended a Council size of 60 councillors with an average of 1,924 electors being represented by each Councillor. The Commission proposed to reduce the number of Electoral Divisions from 57 to 20 and would involve a change to all County Council Wards relating to the Hawarden Community Council area.

The draft proposals recommended that the Wards of Hawarden and Mancot be joined with Penyffordd and Higher Kinnerton to be represented by 4 Councillors instead of 6. The Commission contended that this would improve electoral parity and noted that the areas were linked by the A55.

The Commission proposed to amalgamate the existing Ewloe and Northop Hall Wards to be represented by 3 Councillors as at present.

The Aston Ward was proposed to amalgamate with Shotton East, Shotton Higher and Shotton West resulting in a reduction of 1 Councillor. The Commission noted that the divisions joined each other and were in a single developed area.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for his explanation and invited Councillors to put forward their views on these proposals. It was noted that the existing level of Councillors i.e. 70 was within the limit suggested by the Minister and that the current electorate to Member ratio of 1:1,650 whilst lower than that proposed by the Minister was closer to it than the 1:1,924 proposed.

Councillor Halford said that she was unsure why the Minister wanted to achieve the figures set out in the report and commented that multi Member Wards often lead to a playing off on one Member against another. She also questioned how a Member could get to know his or her Ward when it was geographically so large. She also suggested that no consideration had been given to the actual level of work involved in different Wards siting that where there may be a large number of Council properties Members tended to have a heavier workload.

Councillor Glenys Diskin emphasised the requirement for Members to have a high level of local knowledge and suggested that this could not be achieved in Wards of the sizes proposed. Councillor Carver said that he was concerned that the Wards were geographically so large that they would be difficult for Members to cope with adequately and also that the cost of travelling around the Ward would be excessive. Councillor Mackie commented that some areas which were being merged were not having a reduction in the number of Councillors serving them and questioned the logic of this.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to advise the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales that Hawarden Community Council opposed its Draft Proposals on the following grounds:

- The existing number of County Councillors is currently within the range considered to be appropriate to manage the affairs of the County Council.
- The existing average of 1 County Councillor to 1,650 electors is closer to the target ratio than that proposed.
- Many of the proposed Electoral Wards will be geographically large, the effect of which would be to deter candidates from standing for election, increase their workload, increase the cost for Councillors to serve their Wards and reduce the value of local knowledge.

- The proposal will not meet the Commission's intention to fix boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable.
- The proposals appear both illogical and artificially arrived at on a basis of a contrived Councillor to elector ratio.

JOINT ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE:

The Chair referred members to the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Administration and Maintenance committee held on 21 January 2010 a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted

The Chair then referred Members to the Draft Service Level Agreements attached to the agenda and invited the Clerk to take Members through them.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the Joint arrangement had commenced in 1995 following local government reorganisation and had assured the retention of the maintenance and administration services previously enjoyed by the three participating Councils. He said that the arrangement had been formally agreed at that time and there was minuted evidence to confirm that.

It had however been raised as an item on the Broughton and Bretton Community Council 2008/2009 Audit that consideration should be given to the drawing up of a Service Level Agreement between the participating Councils in order that all can be fully aware of their responsibilities arising from it. He had therefore drawn up Service Level Agreements between Hawarden Community Council and Shotton Town Council in respect of the maintenance service provided by Hawarden Community Council and between Hawarden Community Council and Broughton and Bretton Community Council in respect of both the administrative service and the maintenance service. The Clerk then took Members through the various Service Level Agreements which set out the purpose of the agreements, its duration, a description of the service provided and arrangements for termination and payment. He said that Broughton and Bretton Community council and Shotton Town Council would individually consider the draft agreements and if satisfied with them would arrange to have a final version signed.

The Committee confirmed that so far as Hawarden Community Council was concerned it was satisfied that the Service Level Agreement was appropriate and reflected the services provided by the Council to the other two participating Councils

CLERK'S REPORT:

The following matters were reported:

- Outreach Citizens Advice Bureau – Buckley

The Clerk said that Councillors Ralph Small and Judith Hough had attended a meeting of the Buckley Town Council's General Purposes Committee on 21 January 2010 in connection with this matter. He then invited the Members to report on the outcome of

the meeting. Councillor Judith Hough confirmed that it was proposed that the Citizens Advice Bureau Outreach facility would locate at Buckley Town Hall with effect from 1 April 2010. She said that the anticipated cost of providing the service was £9,000 per annum and that a request had been made for the four adjoining Community Councils to jointly fund £1,000 and that the required contribution from Hawarden Community Council for this service would be £275. The Members explained the level of service which would be provided noting the useful location of the facility for residents living in the south of the Hawarden Community Council area.

It was noted that the sum of £300 had been included within the 2010/2011 budget for this purpose and the Committee thanked the Members for attending the meeting on the Council's behalf and confirmed support for the Council's participation in this joint scheme

- Seminar on Flintshire County Council's Waste Strategy and its Street Scene Service

The Council had been invited to send a representative to the Seminar which was to take place on 10 February 2010

- Volunteer Members – Community Health Councils

The Welsh Assembly Government was presently seeking volunteer members to serve on Community Health Councils. Any Member wishing to apply would need to make contact with the Welsh Assembly Government.

- Introduction to the Tidal Dee Flood Management Strategy

The Environment Agency was holding an event at Deeside Leisure Centre on Saturday 20 February to which any Member was invited to attend.

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the report be received.

MEMBERS' INFORMATION ITEMS:

There were none