



HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting

held on

14 JUNE 2021

PRESENT: Chair: Councillor Helen Brown

Councillors: Ve Amos, Joyce Angell, Janet Axworthy, Gillian Brockley, Bob Connah, Cheryl Carver, Clive Carver, George Hardcastle, Sarah Hinks, Dave Mackie, Dan Preece, Emma Preece, Ryan O’Gorman, Ralph Small, Darren Sterry, Sam Swash, Richard Taylor and Ant Turton.

Officers: Mrs S G Jones, Clerk & Financial Officer
Fran Griffiths, Admin Assistant

Also present: 4 members of the public and a representative from The Leader

01/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Lowri Earith (work commitment).

02/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor Bob Connah declared an interest in item 14.

Councillors Dave Mackie and Richard Taylor declared an interest in item 15(ii).

Councillors Helen Brown, Sarah Hinks, Dave Mackie, Ant Turton and Richard Taylor declared an interest in item 20.

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03/21 PRESENTATION:

Councillor Helen Brown welcomed Martin Gallagher to the meeting. Martin had been an inspirational speaker and a representative of the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller (G, R, T) community and had attended the meeting as June had been GRT Awareness month. He advised that he had moved from London to North Wales when he was a teenager, currently resided in Buckley and was studying as a PhD student with funding support from the Local Authority.

Martin outlined the difficulties his community faced when finding land and accessing permanent sites when few local authorities gave planning permission to house caravans, despite them receiving funding from the Welsh Government. Flintshire County Council had 143 caravan plots with nearly 2,000 required. He said that local councillors are reluctant to support planning applications due to a fear of backlash from their residents about a misunderstanding of this community. He went on to say that occasionally a group from the GRT community would arrive at a site and stay for a short period of time to attend a family event and then move on.

Members asked Martin to determine the correct terminology for addressing this community and had been advised that names such as Gypsy or Irish Traveller were acceptable although several other derogatory names were classed as offensive. If in doubt, the abbreviation GRT should be used.

Councillor Helen Brown thanked Martin for his informative presentation.

4/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous virtual meeting of the Council held on 10th May 2021 be approved as a correct record save and accept the following:

Minute number 163/20: Councillor Ralph Small had been elected as Vice Chair of the Council for 2021-22 and not Chairman.

Minute number 164/20: Councillor Sarah Hinks confirmed she had been in attendance at the meeting although had not been visible to other members due to technical issues.

Minute number 164/20: The Clerk and Financial Officer read out a statement from Councillor Gillian Brockley that had been received prior to the meeting in May about her absence in which she had said that she had felt extremely uncomfortable with the situation surrounding the abuse she had received from a particular Hawarden Community Councillor.

Councillor Richard Taylor commented that when he and other councillors had left the meeting in May, he had put a message in the chat to outline the reasons for their departure which included comments about malicious text messages. The Clerk and Financial Officer confirmed that chat messages are not read and do not form part of the formal meeting.

5/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

Councillor George Hardcastle expressed his disappointment that the four members of the council who did not express their intention to leave the meeting in May had not waited to hear his retiring comments having been Chair of Hawarden Community Council for the previous two years.

6/21 INTERNAL AUDIT:

A copy of the internal audit report for the year ending 31st March 2021 had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk and Financial Officer outlined the Internal Auditor's recommendations and mitigating actions required for the four minor issues around the annual risk assessment, joint maintenance agreement outstanding balance, fidelity insurance and charitable status.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to receive the 2020/21 Internal Audit report and note the follow up actions.

7/21 ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021:

The Annual Return had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk and Financial Officer sought Members' approval of the Annual Return together with approval of the governance statements prior to submission to the External Auditor.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve the Annual Return for submission to the External Auditor.

8/21 COUNCIL'S ANNUAL INSURANCE:

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve the Council's insurance for the financial year 2021/22 noting the three-year agreement.

9/21 RECORDING AND POSTING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS:

A comprehensive report had been circulated outlining a proposal to record and post council meetings in order for members of the community to participate remotely and review recordings in their own time. A discussion took place with members outlining both the benefits and concerns about the proposal. There was currently no legal requirement to record and post meetings although Welsh Government are actively encouraging transparency at this local government level. If it became mandatory, grants might be available for the appropriate software and technology to be purchased.

Several members commented that the public would be able to access the recordings at a convenient time to themselves and would understand what the council does for the community and it would allow for transparency on how decisions are made.

Other members felt that the money required to purchase the appropriate software would be better utilised by improving the community, taking action against fly tippers, investing in play areas and tackling anti-social behaviour. Although it had been pointed out that the technology required for blended meetings (see minute 10/21) could be used for this purpose. A member argued against recording as he felt it would impact he and his family.

A member asked those councillors who sit on other local community/town councils if any of their meetings were recorded. None were currently being recorded but the subject would be considered at a future time.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was proposed that the meetings of Hawarden Community Council be recorded and posted on line and retained, in perpetuity. It had been pointed out that many Parish Councils in England already record meetings, some Community Councils in South Wales have started and our own Flintshire County Council record and post meetings.

In accordance with Standing Order number 47 a recorded vote had been requested, the results of which had been as follows:

COUNCILLOR	DECISION
Ve Amos	AGAINST
Joyce Angell	AGAINST
Janet Axworthy	AGAINST
Gillian Brockley	FOR
Helen Brown	AGAINST
Cheryl Carver	AGAINST
Clive Carver	AGAINST
Bob Connah	AGAINST
George Hardcastle	AGAINST
Sarah Hinks	FOR
Dave Mackie	AGAINST
Ryan O’Gorman	FOR
Dan Preece	FOR
Emma Preece	FOR
Ralph Small	AGAINST
Darren Sterry	AGAINST
Sam Swash	FOR
Richard Taylor	FOR
Ant Turton	AGAINST

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the proposal be not accepted.

10/21 FUTURE MEETINGS:

The Clerk and Financial Officer had sought member opinion on whether to return to face to face meetings or remain meeting virtually, due to the current situation with the Covid.19 pandemic and in line with social distancing measures. Following the introduction of new legislation, councils had been encouraged to ensure that if a council decided to meet face to face then provision should be made available for members, members of the public and the press to attend virtually.

A member pointed out that the technology researched for the previous Item re. Recording and Posting Meetings would be easily utilised to implement “blended” meetings.

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the council continue to meet virtually pending the latest government guidance and research into the appropriate equipment to enable hybrid meetings.

Note: Councillor Sam Swash abstained from the vote.

11/21 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Councillor Helen Brown said that she had attended the annual bursary interviews at Hawarden High School along with Councillors Ralph Small, Ant Turton and the Clerk and Financial Officer and five students would receive a bursary.

The review panel had also considered the nominations for the Community Volunteer Award Scheme and would present four members of the community with this award at their usual place of volunteering.

The Chair confirmed that her nominated charity this year would be the Deeside Hospital league of friends and that she would arrange community and sponsored events to raise money.

Councillor Darren Sterry, Chairman of Staffing and General Purposes presented the following items:

12/21 POLICE, HIGHWAYS AND LIGHTING MATTERS:

Members advised of the following issues to be forwarded to the appropriate authorities:

- An incident of vandalism at Mancot library which had been attended by the police. A further incident had occurred but no follow up contact. A local company had offered to install CCTV, free of charge, at the library which had been welcomed.
- Loose tarmac on the footpath near The Nook which had been reported to Streetscene.
- Motor bikes were still being rode anti-socially around the Mancot area with one bike impounded by North Wales Police the previous day.
- Incident of bullying inside and outside the Co-op in Ewloe when 6-7 youths had been bullying each other. The manager had spoken to the school and the Police had been advised.
- Speeding cars and bikes along The Highway.
- Arson attack near Vickers Close when an old motor home was set on fire.

6. Chair's signature _____

- Request to move the dog bin on the bollard at the entrance to Vickers Close to be made to FCC Streetscene.
- Two members had carried out a walk-about in Ewloe with the local Police Community Support Officer.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to report the incidents to the relevant authorities and to ask the newly appointed Police and Crime Commissioner to improve attendance of local Police Community Support Officers at Community Council meetings and invite him to a future meeting of the Community Council.

13/21 MEMBERS' INFORMATION ITEMS:

Some members had received requests from parents regarding the re-opening of the Vickers Close play area, complaints about the condition of the footpath access which had overgrown and a dog bin had been placed in the middle of the footpath.

The Clerk and Financial Officer reminded members that the Hawarden Estate had blocked off the tractor entrance with boulders to prevent any unauthorised encampments and since that time the council had been unable to access the site. There was also a fault on the gate that required repair. Following discussions with the maintenance team and the Estate Office a ride on mower would be purchased with the Estate Office contributing £400 towards this. The ride on mower would be suitable for other play areas such as Circular Drive, other open spaces and the council office garden.

Councillor George Hardcastle said that he would contact Streetscene to arrange replacement of the bollard and dog bin.

Councillor Joyce Angell, Chair of Planning, presented the following item.

14/21 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HEARING:

A member thanked Councillor Mackie for his comprehensive and detailed report, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting, following his attendance at the planning hearing meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to receive and note the report.

15/21 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS:

IT WAS RESOLVED:

(a) County Council Members:

It was noted that the participation of those Councillors who were also Members of the County Council, in both the debate and subsequent vote, was on the basis that the views expressed had been preliminary views taking account of the information made available to the Community Council.

The County Councillors reserved their final views on the applications until they were in full possession of all relevant arguments for and against.

- (a) That the County Planning Authority be advised of this Council's observations on the applications submitted to it for consideration, as per the attached schedule.
- (b) That the planning decisions be noted.

Councillor Ant Turton, Chair of Community and Environment, presented the following item.

16/21 BURSARY AWARDS:

The Chairman of Community and Environment reiterated that he had attended the interviews for the five students who had applied to Hawarden Community Council for a Bursary Award to support their further education. He said that they had been a pleasure to meet and a credit to themselves, their parents and the school. The students would receive £350 in the first year and £250 in years two and three.

Councillors Janet Axworthy, Cheryl Carver and Clive Carver had requested that their mandatory allowance be vired to support the Bursary Award Scheme to support these applications.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to note the approval of the five bursary awards.

17/21 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SCHEME:

The Chairman said that nominations had been received for four members of the public who had deserved award for recognition of their efforts in brownies, bowling, cricket and scouts. The awards would be presented by the Chair of the Council at their usual place of volunteering. The Hawarden Estate had kindly agreed to sponsor the scheme and provided meal vouchers for each recipient at the Glynne Arms, Hawarden.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to note the update.

18/21 NHS, SOCIAL CARE AND FRONTLINE WORKERS' DAY:

The Clerk and Financial Officer outlined that this national day of commemoration would be promoted on the Council's Facebook page and website and a banner purchased to be erected across the car park entrance. The day would be celebrated with a Covid secure, drop-in session at the council offices where a "cuppa and a biscuit" would be available from 11am until 3pm for all those eligible members.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to note the arrangements.

Councillor Helen Brown, presented the following item.

19/21 REQUESTS TO USE GLADSTONE PLAYING FIELDS:

Two requests had been received for the use of the Gladstone Playing Fields as follows:

Sharlands Fairground to attend on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th July 5.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m., Saturday 10th July 2.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. and Sunday 11th July 1.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Request to hold a dog show on a Sunday in August, 11.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. with a small number of stalls and an agility ring.

The Clerk and Financial Officer advised that Covid.19 risk assessments would need to be completed and the organisers would need to ensure they had the necessary indemnities and insurances in place. North Wales Police had also been advised.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve that both events can proceed to support the fair following the recent lack of trade and to provide something for the community to look forward to and enjoy, following the recent restrictions.

Councillor Dave Mackie, Chair of Finance, presented the following items:

20/21 MANDATORY MEMBER ALLOWANCE:

Councillors Joyce Angell and Helen Brown had requested that their mandatory member allowances be donated to Penarlag CP School (towards a defibrillator) and Hawarden Village School (to repair vandalised equipment) respectively.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve the requests for Councillors Helen Brown and Joyce Angell's mandatory allowance to be donated to the two schools as outlined.

21/21 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the list of payments in the sum of £29,590.46 for June be approved.

22/21 CLERK AND FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT:

The Clerk and Financial Officer advised that the cost to the council for the joint maintenance agreement for May amounted to £11,796 and for June amounted to £12,792.

She also confirmed receipt of a donation of £1,014.74 from Ewloe Senior Citizens' Bingo Club. They had had to terminate their bingo sessions due to Covid restrictions and lack of attendees and had requested that the community council receive this money and put it to good use within the community. Advice would need to be sought from the Charity Commission in relation to this donation.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to receive and approve the updates.

23/21 BANK RECONCILIATION:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the bank reconciliation for the period ending 31st May 2021 be received and noted.

24/21 FINANCIAL POLICIES:

The following policies had been presented to members for annual review:

Policy on income

Annual investment strategy

Financial Risk Assessment

Internal financial controls

The Council's Financial Risk Assessment had been updated to include mitigating measures to prevent supplier fraud, as advised by the Internal Auditor during the internal audit.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve the updated policies.

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