



HAWARDEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting

held on

10th January 2022

PRESENT: Chair: Councillor Helen Brown

Councillors: Ve Amos, Joyce Angell, Janet Axworthy, Gillian Brockley, Cheryl Carver, Clive Carver, George Hardcastle, Sarah Hinks, Dave Mackie, Darren Sterry, Ralph Small, Sam Swash, Richard Taylor and Ant Turton

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

Also present: Four members of the public

125/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bob Connah (medical), Ryan O’Gorman (medical), Emma Preece (illness) and Dan Preece (caring responsibility)

126/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

There were none.

127/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous hybrid meeting of the Council held on 13th December 2021 be approved as a correct record.

128/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

There were none.

129/21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021:

The Welsh Government had launched a consultation on the new Act with 9 questions to be completed by Town and Community Councils. The Clerk and Financial Officer verbally shared her response to the questions and said that she would complete the survey and send a draft to members for comments. The deadline for the consultation was 17 March 2022.

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the Clerk and Financial Officer submit a draft response to members for comment.

130/21 ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN 2022:

The Clerk and Financial Officer had circulated a copy of the council's Action Plan for comments. A member expressed their concern over noisy fireworks and asked whether the council could support quiet fireworks and include this within the plan. Another member commented that the football fields should be referred to as the "playing fields" and suggested that Wepre Park be added to the plan due to the boundary implications.

IT WAS RESOLVED: (i) to receive and approve the plan with the comments above and to review the plan every six months and (ii) to write to the local AM and MP to request that they encourage the use of silent fireworks at organised events and private parties.

131/21 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Councillor Helen Brown wished to offer her congratulations to Councillor Ralph Small who had this month celebrated 30 years of working as a Community Councillor; Members commended this achievement.

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

132/21 POLICE, HIGHWAYS AND LIGHTING MATTERS:

The Clerk and Financial Officer advised that Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Adelina Olaru had intended to attend the meeting but had been called away.

Members raised the following issues:

- Councillor Sam Swash had attended a meeting with Councillors Ralph Small and Bob Connah and John Griffiths, Highways Supervisor, Flintshire County Council about the concerns at the lack of street lighting on Moor Lane and horses crossing the road in the dark.
- Several Christmas lights had not been working and five appeared to be missing; the Clerk and Financial Officer advised that due to health and safety concerns it had been difficult to erect some of the lights this year.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to receive and note the updates.

133/21 MEMBERS' INFORMATION ITEMS:

There were none.

Councillor Joyce Angell, Chair of Planning, presented the following items:

134/21 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.

- (b) 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.
- (c) That the planning decisions be noted.

A member said that the planning application for Mansfield, Cottage Lane had been refused last year and requested that the Clerk and Financial Officer write to Planning Department, Flintshire County Council to register the council's objection to the application on the grounds that the size of the plot and the access area had been too small.

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

135/21 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the list of payments in the sum of £28,813.01 for January be approved.

136/21 CLERK AND FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT:

The Clerk and Financial Officer reported on the following:

- i) that the cost to the Council for the joint maintenance agreement for January had been £12,666.45.
- ii) the Council had received £94,437.00 for its' third and final precept payment.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to note the updates.

137/21 BANK RECONCILIATION:

IT WAS RESOLVED: that due to the bank statements not having been received, the bank reconciliation for the period ending 31st December be submitted to the February council meeting.

138/21 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION:

Members had received a report to consider a 1% reduction in the current Band D Council Tax charge due to the rise in inflation costs, energy prices, national insurance and cuts to the uplift in Universal Credit.

A lengthy discussion took place with members supporting the proposal in principle but the Chairman of Finance outlined that the council's reserves were not particularly high when taking into account the staff costs and the council's assets. Members agreed that further lobbying should be undertaken with the principal council to help reduce the cost of the council tax.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to reduce the Council Tax precept by -2% for one year only. The Clerk and Financial Officer said that this reduction would impact on the council in the sum of approximately £13k which would need to be taken from the Council's reserves.

In accordance with Standing Order number 47, Councillor George Hardcastle requested that a recorded vote be taken. The vote was recorded as follows:

COUNCILLOR	DECISION
Ve Amos	For
Joyce Angell	Against
Janet Axworthy	Against
Gillian Brockley	For
Helen Brown	For
Cheryl Carver	Against
Clive Carver	Against

George Hardcastle	For
Sarah Hinks	For
Dave Mackie	Against
Ralph Small	For
Darren Sterry	For
Sam Swash	For
Richard Taylor	For
Ant Turton	For

IT WAS RESOLVED: that the Council Tax precept on a Band D property be reduced by -2% for one year only.

139/21 DRAFT BUDGET 2022-23 AND PRECEPT:

The council considered the draft budget proposals prepared by the Finance Working Group. The precept had been agreed during the previous agenda item.

IT WAS RESOLVED: to agree to the budget proposals outlined as follows:

- inflationary increases at 3%;
- energy prices at 30%;
- Salaries at 2% (noting pending pay award for 2021/22);
- National insurance contributions for employer and employee to increase by 1.25%;
- Pension contributions at 21.8%;
- Mandatory member allowances to increase to £3,650;
- New van provision of £25,000 to be taken from the council's reserves with consideration being included in the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) for longer term investments;
- Cost of the local government elections to be part-funded from reserves and included in the MTFP as above;
- £2,500 be set aside for the painting of the remaining two tennis courts and the professional cleaning of all four courts;
- Precept as agreed earlier at -2%; and
- Ear-marked reserves be set aside for play area improvements at £80,000 and new Christmas lighting at £10,000.

140/21 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN:

IT WAS RESOLVED: to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan as proposed to be reviewed following year-end close down in May/June of each year.

141/21 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1060:

It was resolved: to deter this item as no update had been received for the following item.

142/21 NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE AT EWLOE:

No update had been received.