

MOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Mold Town Council held virtually on-line over video conferencing 6pm Wednesday 26th January, 2022.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Sarah Taylor (Mayor), Haydn Jones (Deputy Mayor), Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Teresa Carberry, Geoff Collett, Bryan Grew, Robin Guest, Karen Hodgkinson, Brian Lloyd, Tim Maunders, Andrea Mearns, Anthony Parry and Gareth Williams.

Officers: Ian Jones, Town Clerk and Finance Officer, Jane Evans, Events and Community Engagement Officer and Jo Douglass, Business and Regeneration Officer

Visitors: Mr Mark Davies, CCLA (Churches, Charities & Local Authorities) Relationship Manager, Local Government.
Three members of the public.

101. APOLOGIES: Councillor Trevor Arnold

ABSENT: None

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Teresa Carberry, (as Trustee of the Daniel Owen Community Association) declared an interest in Agenda item 7 – Vacancy West Ward, Committee vacancies and vacancy of Outside Body (Daniel Owen Community Association).

103. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor provided an update to the engagements listed within the agenda to include the well-attended Business and Traders meeting on the 18th January and thanked fellow Councillors for their support at the meeting.

104. INVESTMENTS STRATEGY

Members received an overview from Mr. Mark Davies, CCLA (Churches, Charities & Local Authorities) Relationship Manager, Local Government on the options available for potential investment of the Council's investments. Mr Davies clarified that he was not in a position to advise but could only provide details of the two funds they managed which was a Public Sector Deposit Fund (low risk, easy access, low yield cash fund) and a Property Fund (longer term fund with risk factor).

It was recognised that all deposit schemes were paying very little in interest and the five-year option, as discussed, was deemed unsuitable as if the monies were required urgently there was a significant penalty for withdrawal.

6.10pm Councillor Tim Maunders joined the meeting.

RESOLVED: That this item will be placed on the next Budget Sub-Group agenda to review options available for the Town Council's investments.

The Mayor thanked Mr Davies for attending the meeting and providing a very useful overview of managed funds.

6.15pm Mr Mark Davies left the meeting.

105. STREETSCENE UPDATE

The Town Clerk provided Members with a verbal report on the latest position following a meeting held on the 22nd December with the Mayor, the Town Clerk, the Head of Streetscene together with the Area Co-ordinator, Flintshire County Council.

It was reported that Flintshire County Council had established a working party on the options available at the bus station. Revised plans were being drawn up for coach parking entering east-bound or west-bound. The preference was arrival west-bound as this would allow passengers to alight on the same side of the carriageway as the public toilets. Plans would be shared with the bus operators together with consultation on the proposed traffic orders. The consultation would also be shared with Mold Town Council, once available for feedback. Also, tenders were currently out for the installation of Electric charging points, after a delay with the initial company awarded the contract withdrew. Resurfacing of New Street car park was cost prohibitive and therefore options for surface dressing were also being investigated.

The Mayor added that communications were improved between the Town council and Streetscene with the Town Council now being better informed. It was also noted that directional signage was now in place at New Street car park to inform people that the toilets were located at the bus station. However, it was felt that more could be done in the form of directions or maps for those not aware of the location of the bus station or the toilets at the Daniel Owen Centre. Members then discussed the provision of toilet facilities in the town and the impact of the increased usage at the Daniel Owen Centre. Concerns were also raised over the maintenance of the Bus station and its current state over lack of cleansing.

RESOLVED:

- i) The information in the verbal update was noted;
- ii) The Town Clerk would circulate plans and updates from the Head of Streetscene once available; and
- iii) The Head of Streetscene together with the Area Co-ordinator be invited to the next Council meeting in February.

106. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That:

- a) The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th November 2021 be received and formally approved as a correct record;
- b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22nd November and 20th December be received and noted. (with the

amendment that Cllr Andrea Mearns was not in attendance at the December meeting)

107. VACANCY – WEST WARD, MOLD

The Town Clerk provided an overview to Members in terms of the options available regarding the current vacancy on the West Ward; to either co-opt through advertising or leave the vacancy open for the time being given that the full elections were in May 2022. Members discussed the options and, given that if a co-option occurred, then at most the new Member would only be able to attend two meetings prior to the full elections in May. It was proposed and seconded that the position and all committee and outside body positions (Daniel Owen Community Association) remain unfilled until the election in May.

RESOLVED: That the Member vacancy on the West Ward, and all other resulting vacancies remain unfilled until the new Council meets following May's election.

108. JOINT REPORT OF THE BUSINESS & REGENERATION/EVENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS

Council received the previously circulated report from the Business and Regeneration Officer and Events and Community Engagement Officer.

Members enquired about the progress of the installation of the defibrillators following the agreement to purchase 5 new Zoll defibrillators at the last meeting; and the current status as to which defibrillators were operational and which were offline. Members supported a new defibrillator at the Mold Alexandra Football Club in light of the recent instances of cardiac arrests at sports grounds. The Events and Community Engagement Officer informed Members that she was working with a representative from the Welsh Ambulance Service with a view that all defibrillators be registered with The Circuit system held by the Welsh Ambulance Service. This information would be provided to members of the public when dialling 999 in an emergency in order to locate the nearest defibrillator. She would also bring a report to the next meeting outlining the current position of all the defibrillators in Mold.

Members were asked to consider the request the request to agree to the installation of a sensor on the Bailey Hill Centre being the highest point in town for maximum coverage of the SMART town installation process. This had been agreed earlier by the Bailey Hill Steering Group.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the report be received and noted;
- ii) a new defibrillator be located at the Mold Alexandra Football Club;
- iii) the Events and Community Engagement Officer reports on the current status of all the Defibrillators in Mold at the next Council meeting; and
- iv) the installation of a sensor at the Bailey Hill Centre (as part of the SMART town pilot) be approved.

109. BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING 2022/23

Members considered the previously circulated budget report as approved by the Budget Sub-Group on 9th December, 2021 which detailed the estimates for the current year, the probable expenditure for the year together with estimates for the next financial year 2022/23. Members noted that the report included the third quarterly review of the current year's accounts with details of income and expenditure, third quarter income and the bank / cash reconciliation as at 31st December 2021.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Budget Sub-Group had considered the proposed income and expenditure and carefully considered the detail of the proposed budget. When asked about another freeze on the precept, the Town Clerk explained that given that there was a zero increase on last year's precept the likely expenditure within the next year could mean another hike on Council Tax next year especially with inflation rising at 5.5% and energy bills and other supplies rocketing in price.

The Budget Sub Group had indeed recognised that there was likely to be a significant rise in Council Tax by Flintshire County Council but that any further freeze on the Town Council's precept would be untenable given the rising costs in many areas including staffing, NI and fuel, therefore, a sensible approach would be a smaller than inflation rise an increase in the precept for the Town Council.

The Budget Sub Group considered that the draft budget was sensible, prudent and not too ambitious given current conditions, it therefore concluded that an increase of 3% (£1.88 increase per Band D dwelling per year) would be the best outcome this year.

Some Members expressed the concern that any additional financial burden on Council Taxpayers would be difficult to fund given the rising cost of living and the possibility of an increase in Council Tax by Flintshire County Council and the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. It was also pointed out that the proposed 3% increase would actually cost the average Band D Council Tax payer £1.88 per annum and given there had been no increase in the last financial year it would represent a 94p per annum rise over the two year period.

7.10pm Councillor Gareth Williams left the meeting.

Members discussed the Budget Sub Group's recommendation of a 3% increase in the precept.

A motion was proposed and seconded that there should be no increase in precept, and that the voting on this motion be recorded.

Council voted as follows:

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Haydn Bateman	Councillor Sarah Taylor
Councillor Geoff Collett	Councillor Haydn Jones
Councillor Robin Guest	Councillor Chris Bithell
Councillor Karen Hodgkinson	Councillor Teresa Carberry
Councillor Brian Lloyd	Councillor Bryan Grew
Councillor Anthony Parry	Councillor Tim Maunders
	Councillor Andrea Mearns

Thus the motion was lost.

An amendment motion was proposed and seconded supporting Budget Sub Group's recommendation - to increase the precept by 3%.

Council voted as follows:

FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Sarah Taylor	Councillor Haydn Bateman
Councillor Haydn Jones	Councillor Geoff Collett
Councillor Chris Bithell	Councillor Karen Hodgkinson
Councillor Teresa Carberry	Councillor Brian Lloyd
Councillor Bryan Grew	Councillor Anthony Parry
Councillor Robin Guest	
Councillor Tim Maunders	
Councillor Andrea Mearns	

RESOLVED: That;

- a) a precept of £289,290 be approved for the year 2022/2023 which reflects a 3% increase;
- b) the quarterly review of general expenditure, petty cash expenditure, income and the bank reconciliation as at 31st December 2021 be noted and approved;
- c) the Budget for 2022/2023 be approved as presented, noting that regular reviews would be undertaken; and
- d) consideration of a review of earmarked reserves be deferred until the new Council is elected later in 2022.

Councillor Robin Guest left meeting at 7.30pm

110. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Members considered the previously circulated applications for Financial Assistance, noting that there was £1,560 remaining within this budget header.

Applications were considered from the Box of Tricks Theatre Company and the Wales Air Ambulance Charity. It was noted that although Mold Town Council support local groups in Culture and Arts, the Box of Tricks Theatre Company was based in England and had other funders, therefore no proposal was made to donate to this organisation. The Wales Air Ambulance Charity was a vital service to life and limb and was therefore well supported by Members.

RESOLVED: That the Wales Air Ambulance Charity be granted £350.

111. NOTICE OF MOTION

(1) Councillor Maunders sought support for the Town Council to donate the Christmas float to Mold and Buckley Round Table as a result of not being able to insure the float.

RESOLVED: That the Christmas float be donated to Mold and Buckley Round Table.

(2) Councillor Carberry, supported by Councillors Hodgkinson and Jones sought that the Town Council works with and co-ordinates various agencies and groups in seeking professional expertise and advice on how to work with those exhibiting anti-social behaviour in the town in order to mitigate their behaviour and address the concerns of fears of many in the community.

RESOLVED: That:

(i) a sub-group be set up to work with and co-ordinate with the various agencies and agree and deliver an action plan to tackle the situation; and

(ii) The Town Clerk organise the sub group and request volunteers to sit on the sub-group with one Member from each Ward to include the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

112. CONSULTATION ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021: COMMUNITY AND TOWN COUNCILS STATUTORY GUIDANCE

Members considered the previously circulated consultation on the Local Government and elections (Wales) Act 2021: Community and Town Councils statutory guidance and the response required by the 17th March 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be authorised to draft a response and circulate to Members for comment prior to submission.

113. NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS

Members considered the previously circulated information regarding Planning decisions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

114. MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Mayor reminded Members that any nominations to attend the Queens Garden Party would need to be with the Town Clerk no later than the 5th February. The emphasis this year was announced as Councillors who have made a significant contribution to the community during the Covid pandemic.

115. ACCOUNTS / PAYMENTS

The Council considered the schedules previously circulated.

Month 8 Community Bank account CB1 £29,870.34

Month 9 Community Bank account CB1 £39,238.42

RESOLVED: That that the schedule of payments be approved.

116. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That members of the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due the confidential nature of the business.

117. MOLD TOWN HALL ACCOMMODATION

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update following a meeting with an Officer from the Valuation and Estates Division of Flintshire County Council in relation to the accommodation proposals for the forthcoming financial year and going forwards. It was noted that some provision had been made for accommodation requirements for the Town Council some time ago when this matter was previously discussed.

Written confirmation of valuation and other options had been received from Flintshire County Council and they had requested a quick response to these. Although not unexpected, Members expressed concern at the timing of this request, given that the budget had been set only today. It was recognised that the new Council formed in May would need to take the final decision given the magnitude of the implications both in terms of budget and settling on an accommodation plan for the future which would be acceptable to all.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the Town Clerk write to Flintshire County Council expressing concern at the timing and that an instant decision was out of the question;
- (ii) the Town Clerk set up a sub group to review options available; and
- iii) this item be placed on all future Town Council Agendas for updates.

The Meeting closed at 8.32pm

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MOLD TOWN COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

MOLD TOWN COUNCIL		DATE: 26 th January 2022
MEMBER	ITEM	MINUTE NO. REFERS
Councillor Teresa Carberry	7: Vacancy West Ward, and vacancy on outside Body	107

Mayor's signature: Date:

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