

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Hope Community Council held at
the Community Centre, Heulwen Close, Hope on
Wednesday 3 February 2016.**

Present:

Councillor PR Pemberton (Chairman) and Councillors Mrs C Cunnah, Mrs SL Davies, P Evans, Mrs L Griffiths, B Hughes, A Parry, EA Parsonage, IR Sumpter,
Also present Mr AF Rushton, Clerk and Financial Officer

233. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Shone, P Smith, Mrs A Williams and Mrs MD Williams.

234. Chairman's Announcements.

(i) The Chairman reminded Councillors that his Civic Service would be held at Hope Parish Church on Sunday 13 March at 11.00am and hoped that as many Councillors as possible would attend.

(ii) The Clerk referred to minute 180 of the Council meeting held on 2 December 2015 concerning retirement gratuity for the current Clerk and Financial Officer and reported that he had now received legal advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks that as the Council in minute no. 284 of the meeting dated 2 March 2005 had clearly intended to vary the Clerk's contract to pay a retirement gratuity in accordance with the local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996 payment of the gratuity was still appropriate. The Clerk advised that in accordance with the calculation criteria the gratuity would be in the order of £2000 to £2500. The precise amount would be calculated nearer to the date of retirement for final approval by the Council.

Resolved:

that the above report be received and approved.

235. Minutes of Council.

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6 January 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed, by the Chairman.

236. Visitors to Meeting.

The Clerk reported that representatives of Flintshire County Council would be attending the next meeting to discuss public transport matters.

237. Matters Arising.

PCSO Andrea Ellis attended the meeting to update Councillors on police activity within the community over the over the last month answering Councillors questions as appropriate. There had been a number of incidents which were being investigated pursued. The issue of speeding

traffic on Hawarden Road Abermorddu would be looked at. The PCSO was also asked if there had been any reports of anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the red telephone box on Hawarden Road Abermorddu to which she responded in the negative.

238. Minutes of Committees.

Resolved:

that the minutes of the following standing committees be approved and adopted and confirmed as a correct record.

- (i) Planning and Highways – 6 January 2016.
- (ii) Leisure and Environment – 6 January 2016.
- (iii) Finance – 6 January 2016.

239. Vacancy for Councillor.

The Clerk reported that following the resignation of Councillor Mrs LJ Lucy it was now necessary to advertise the vacancy. This would be advertised for 14 days during which ten electors would have the opportunity to call for an election (a copy of that notice being forwarded to the local returning officer). In the event of an election not being requested the Council must then fill the vacancy by co-option. This required a further notice inviting expressions of interest in being co-opted (certain qualifications apply) the Council setting the date by which such expressions of interest should be submitted.

Resolved:

that the above report be noted and appropriate action taken.

240. Post of Clerk and Financial Officer - Recruitment.

Resolved:

- (i) that delegated powers be granted to the interviewing and short listing panel of 5 Councillors agreed at the last meeting to enable an appointment to be made following interviews for the above post.
- (ii) that a one month overlap be agreed so that the new Clerk can work in tandem with the existing postholder during the month of April 2016.

241. Work Place Pensions.

The Council was asked to consider offering the new Clerk of the Council the opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Council would be required under the Pensions Act 2008 to offer the new employee a work place pension. Appropriate provision had been included in the budget for 2016/2017. The figure of £2000 was an estimate as an initial actuary fee would depend on whether the Council joined forces with neighbouring community councils and the Council's contribution to the scheme would depend on the age and gender of the employee.

Resolved:

that approval be granted to offering the new Clerk of the Council when appointed the opportunity of joining the Local Government Pension Scheme.

242. Community Asset Transfers.

(i) Hope Library.

Councillor Mrs C Cunnah had requested this item following her attendance at recent meetings to discuss the possible community asset transfer (CAT) of Hope library. There had been two recent meetings attended by the Friends of Hope Library (FHL) representatives of Castell Alun High School the local County Councillor and Councillor Cunnah from this Council and representatives from Flintshire County Council. The current proposal was that the School would assume responsibility for the library and its general running costs and make the library available for a total of 9 hours per week for the local community. This would amount to 3 hours per day on Mondays Tuesdays and Wednesdays during school hours only and during term time only. The library was currently open for 11 hours per week which included evenings.

The FHL were investigating the feasibility of providing additional cover for say one evening per week by means of volunteers and the mobile library will stop in Hope once a month. There was the possibility of a start up grant of £2000 from the County Council as part of the CAT. The FHL had asked if the Community Council would support the CAT and possibly make a financial contribution towards operating costs.

Councillor Cunnah in response to various questions explained that the detailed proposals of any agreement were still to be negotiated and finalised. It was stated at the council meeting that the cost of staffing the library during the school holiday periods had been estimated at £1200. The question was also asked whether the £2000 start up grant could go towards staffing during the school holidays.

The local County Councillor for Hope was given an opportunity to comment and in so doing expressed his extreme disappointment that an agreement which he believed had been made for more extensive opening hours for the library now appeared to have been reversed, although he would continue to pursue this.

Resolved:

that the Council supports in principle the objectives of the Friends of Hope Library and Castell Alun High School in seeking the Community asset Transfer of Hope library, the matter of financial support being the subject of further consideration.

(ii) Hope Recycling Centre.

The Chairman reported that he had recently spoken with Mr Brian McManus who had indicated that as a result of the fall in prices of recycled materials he was no longer interested in operating the recycling centre in Hope. The Council was now asked what action it wished to take.

Councillors noted the situation but conceded that the likelihood of a community asset transfer

of such a facility based on volunteers would not be feasible. Councillors noted the comments made by both County Councillors present and expressed their disappointment that Flintshire County Council were not prepared to retain this facility.

Resolved:

that the above report be received and noted.

243. Draft Bill on Local Government Reform.

The Clerk drew attention to the copies of information/summary notes which had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting. The main proposals for reform had been outlined at the previous meeting of the Council (see minute 211).

Resolved:

that the above information be noted.

244. Review of Internal Audit.

The Council was required to review the effectiveness of the internal audit by reference to the internal audit plan submitted by JDH Business Services Ltd a copy having been circulated to all Councillors with the agenda for the meeting.

The plan set out the expected standards, how those standards were to be met and the evidence required to meet those standards. The Clerk summarised the more specific elements of the plan and responded to Councillors questions as appropriate.

Resolved:

that the above internal audit plan be approved and that JDH Business Services be appointed as the Council's internal auditor for 2015/2016.

245. Year End Statement.

This item had been included on the agenda to enable discussion on whether to produce a year end statement. The Clerk reminded Councillors that when preparing the advertisement for the new Clerk he had proposed an increase in the hours for the post which had been rejected. This additional duty together with other ongoing additional duties including community asset transfers would clearly add to an ever increasing work load.

Resolved:

that arrangements be made for the preparation each year of a year end statement.

246. Meetings with the Public.

This item had been included on the agenda to enable discussion on whether to convene meetings with the public. The Clerk commented that from experience when public meetings had been called in the past they had been poorly attended unless there had been a particular issue of concern at the time. Some time ago, North Wales Police had also started holding regular public meetings at Heulwen Close Community Centre which similarly had been poorly attended and discontinued.

Resolved:

that meetings with the public be only convened in the case of particular issues of local concern.

247. Invite County Councillors to a future Meeting.

Councillors indicated that they would always welcome the attendance of the County Councillors particularly where they were able to keep the Community Council informed of County Council issues affecting the locality.

248. Abermorddu Christmas Lights.

Councillor Sumpter reported on the general deterioration of the Christmas lights which had been used for Hawarden Road Abermorddu over recent years and suggested that alternative forms of seasonal decoration should be explored. This could include illuminated Christmas trees in gardens or seeking support from local businesses. It was agreed that Councillor Sumpter take a lead in this reporting back to Council in due course.

249. Future Agenda Items.

Future agenda items were agreed as follows:
Community Asset Transfer Hope Library.
Items to raise with County highways representative.