

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Hope Community Council held at
the Community Centre, Heulwen Close, Hope on
Wednesday 2 March 2016.**

Present:

Councillor PR Pemberton (Chairman) and Councillors Mrs C Cunnah, Mrs SL Davies, B Hughes, A Parry, EA Parsonage, C Shone, P Smith, IR Sumpter, Mrs A Williams and Mrs MD Williams.

Also present Mr AF Rushton, Clerk and Financial Officer

266. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Evans and Mrs L Griffiths.

267. 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.

268. Minutes of Council.

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 3 February 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed, by the Chairman.

269. Visitors to Meeting.

(i) Mr Mike Eastwood Streetscene Supervisor – Mr Eastwood attended the meeting to update Councillors on his activities in the area and to invite Councillors to notify him of any issues that required attention. Such issues included litter outside the Castle Inn Caergwrle, continuing parking on yellow lines outside the Spar shop Caergwrle, a dropping drain near the Caergwrle car Park High Street, various pot holes and nuisance caused by HGV's parking in the lay-by on Wrexham Road between Penyffordd and Hope. Mr Eastwood undertook to have these issues attended to.

(ii) Mr Steve Jones Chief Officer Streetscene Flintshire Council attended the meeting to discuss transportation issues. The purpose of his visit was to apprise the Community Council of the significant financial cuts over the next three years to subsidised bus services running through the whole of Flintshire. He explained that there were three types of bus service namely those which were fully commercially operated and received no subsidy from the County Council, those which were fully subsidised by the County and those in between which were partly subsidised by the County. Needless to say given the current financial climate it was the latter two which were being considered for financial cuts.

The intention however was to try and underpin those services under threat by supporting a community transport initiative which would be co-ordinated to take advantage of some grant funding combined with some voluntary input. Such initiatives had already been established in other parts of the UK and the feasibility of this within Flintshire was currently being explored.

Mr Jones advised that it was intended to convene some workshops during April for neighbouring community councils to explore the possibilities within an overall strategy proposed by the County Council. For example it could be feasible to use the main commercial network as a hub in to which localised non commercial services could link.

It was pointed out that Hope Community Council had the benefit of two railway stations within its area and it was assumed that any transport strategy would reflect that.

Councillors raised a number of other questions with Mr Jones concerning traffic management and waste collection to which he responded or undertook to deal with.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jones for attending the meeting and assured him that the Council would be represented at the workshop(s) in April.

270. Matters Arising.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Parsonage for his work in checking out and reporting back on the condition of the Council's bus shelters.

271. 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 – 3 February 2016.
- (ii) Leisure and Environment – 3 February 2016.
- (iii) Finance – 3 February 2016.

272. Post of Clerk and Financial Officer - Recruitment.

The Chairman reported that following interviews by the appointments panel appointed by the Council, Mrs Sarah Hughes had been offered the post of Clerk and Financial Officer to the Council. Following receipt of the contract of employment Mrs Hughes had requested that as her present salary point at Penyffordd Community Council was SCP25 and the maximum for this post was SCP22 that she be permitted to commence the job on the maximum salary point (SCP22). The Clerk advised that as the post had not been reviewed since 2005 it would also be appropriate to do this within the near future.

Mrs Hughes had also indicated that her preference would be not to have a separate phone line in her home but to use her existing telephone line with the appropriate cost being reflected in the home expenses allowance. The current Clerk advised that the Council had always provided a computer, the most recent having been provided in 2006. This had however now ceased to function and a decision needed to be made as to whether to replace that computer or further reflect that cost in the home expenses allowance.

Resolved:

- (i) that Mrs Sarah Hughes be appointed as Clerk and Financial Officer with effect from 1 April 2016 at a commencing salary point of SCP22.

(ii) that following the satisfactory completion of her 3 month probation period the Council undertake a review of the salary grade currently paid to the Clerk.

(iii) that the Council does not have a separate telephone line but utilises Mrs Hughes' existing home telephone line with the appropriate cost being reflected in the home expenses allowance.

(iii) that a new computer be not purchased at this stage (Mrs Hughes will be using the computer provided by Penyffordd Community Council) but this Council provide a replacement as and when this is required in the future.

273. Retiring Clerk and Financial Officer – Retirement Gratuity.

The Council considered a report copies of which had been circulated to all Councillors.

The Council at a special meeting held on 2 March 2005 Minute no 284 (iv) had

Resolved: 'that with effect from 1 April 2005 a lump sum tax free retirement gratuity be paid to the current Clerk and Financial Officer in accordance with the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996.' The maximum gratuity payable under these Regulations is 3.75% of the Lower Earnings Level for National Insurance at the time of retirement for each year of service.'

The Clerk had now received confirmation from the Society of Local Council Clerks that as this gratuity had been clearly approved prior to 2006 when the Regulations changed the Council could legally make this payment. The payment however would be subject to income tax this having recently been confirmed by HMRC.

Based on the Lower Earnings Level for 2015/2016 the gratuity would be calculated as follows: Lower Earnings Level (LEL) for 2015/2016 £5832 x 3.75% x 11 years = £2405. This figure may be slightly amended should the LEL be changed with effect from 1 April 2016.

Resolved:

that the Council confirms approval of payment of a retirement gratuity in accordance with the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996 to the existing Clerk and Financial Officer on his retirement on 30 April 2016 in the estimated sum of £2405 (subject to any change in the LEL on 1 April 2016) this decision having originally been made at a special meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2005 (Minute no 284 (iv)).

274. Community Transfer of Hope Library.

Councillor Mrs Cunnah reported that unfortunately she had been unable to attend the most recent meeting of the Friends of Hope Library (FHL) but that she had been able to confirm that the £2000 which would be provided by Flintshire County Council could be used for staffing cost purposes.

A number of Councillors did comment that there had recently been incidents when the library had not been open to the public at the scheduled times and as a result there appeared to have

been a reduction in footfall. Councillor Cunnah hoped that this was a temporary issue and undertook to attend the next meeting of the FHL on 15 March 2016 and would report back to the next meeting of the Council.

Resolved:

that the above report be noted.

275. Formal Risk Assessment 2016 – 2017.

The Council considered a report, copies having been circulated to all Councillors.

Resolved:

that the Formal Risk Assessment report as presented be approved.

276. Review of Internal Financial Controls 2016 – 2017.

The Council considered a report, copies having been circulated to all Councillors.

Resolved:

that the Review of Internal Financial Controls 2016 – 2017 report as presented be approved.

277. South Flintshire Police Consultation Meeting – 3 February 2016.

Councillor P Smith reported on the above meeting which he had attended on behalf of the Council. The meeting had been convened by Inspector John Bowcott who had covered a range of topics including performance, staffing, current challenges faced, safer neighbourhood teams, anti-social behaviour and priorities going forward.

Councillor Smith also reported that there had been a reduction in the crime statistics for the South Flintshire area over the last quarter but had reminded the meeting that there was still an unsolved murder affecting the community.

Resolved:

that Councillor Smith be thanked for his attendance and report in respect of the above meeting

278. Future Agenda Items.

The following future agenda items were requested:

- (i) Assisting young working people within the community.
- (ii) Speeding traffic through Abermorddu.