

At a Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012, at the Civic Offices, Wellington Road Community Centre, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

### **PRESENT**

Councillor P. J. Williams (Chair)

Councillors I. A. Armstrong, B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield, Mrs E. M. Chard, Ms D. Hannam, Ms J. Hughes, A. R. James, Mrs P. M. Jones, Mrs M. McCarroll, B. Mellor, B. F. Moylan, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, P. Prendergast, S. H. Ratcliffe, Miss S. L. Roberts, A. J. Rutherford, Miss R. Siddall, D. Simmons and Miss C. L. Williams.

Mr G. J. Nickels	-	Town Clerk
Mr P. M. Thomas	-	Finance Officer
Miss H. J. Windus	-	Personal Assistant & Secretary

#### **24. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones (indisposed) and W. N. Tasker (work commitment).

#### **25. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ISSUES**

The Finance Officer presented his report (circulated with Agenda) on various IT issues needing consideration due to: various software packages and hardware equipment becoming outdated or no longer supported; possible alternative provision of telephone, internet and email at cheaper cost. Indicative costs were provided to enable Members to make an informed in-principle decision on whether to proceed. Total costs amounted to approximately £7,500 and the Finance Officer identified that an existing financial allocation of £10,000 to provide a new web site could be used since the Council had successfully delivered a new site in partnership with the BRAND project at no cost.

After general discussion and the Finance Officer answering a number of questions, Members were of the view that although they were reluctant to spend on this type of equipment at the moment, it was important for the Town Council to keep up with the world around it and become cleaner and greener in the way it conducted its business, and were confident that in the long-term savings would be made.

***RESOLVED*** that the expenditure be approved in principle with the Finance Officer authorised to make further investigations and report back with the final costs before making the necessary arrangements.

#### **26. APPEALS COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk submitted his report (circulated with Agenda) relating to the appointment of replacement Members to the Committee and stated that of the original three, Councillor Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones was the only remaining Member of the Committee.

The Town Clerk further advised that in the interest of objectivity and fairness Members of the Committee should not also be Members of the newly established Staffing Committee (Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield, A. R. James, P. Prendergast, A. J. Rutherford and D. Simmons) who are tasked to consider all future staffing matters as they arise.

**RESOLVED** that Councillors B. Mellor and B. Moylan be appointed.

## 27. **MARSH TRACKS**

The Town Clerk referred to his report (circulated with Agenda) explaining that he had not passed an invitation from Marsh Tracks on to Members to attend their AGM as they had asked him to in late May. An oversight for which he apologised.

The Town Clerk referred to the invitation as part of the papers circulated to Members and advised that he had since spoken to Marsh Tracks and agreed that he would ask the Town Council to consider receiving a short presentation from the organisation, giving Members the opportunity to be updated on the facility and put any questions they may have directly to them.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk to invite representatives from Marsh Tracks to a future meeting of Council.

## 28. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS: FORYD HARBOUR PROGRAMME BOARD**

The Town Clerk presented his report (circulated with Agenda) following receipt of an invitation for the Town Council to appoint representatives to the Programme Board.

In accordance with the Town Council's policy, Members went through the Audit Commission's suggested nine questions to answer before deciding upon future partnerships with organisations and answered positively to all of them.

Councillor Butterfield advised that the next meeting of the Board was Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July at 2.00pm.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor D. Simmons be appointed to the Board.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Town Clerk to act as a matter of urgency.

## 29. **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION: ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

The Town Clerk submitted his report (circulated with Agenda) following receipt of a request for the Town Council to consider providing a letter of support for an Armed Forces Community Covenant to be established within Denbighshire.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk to provide a letter of support.

**30. DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL MEETING FOR MAYORS, CHAIRS AND CLERKS**

The Chair reported receipt of correspondence inviting the Town Council to attend the above annual event (circulated with Agenda) at 6.30pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July at County Hall in Ruthin.

The Town Clerk stated that he had accompanied the Mayor in the past, but that on this occasion he would be on annual leave and asked Members to consider appointing another Councillor or the Finance Officer in his place to ask about the Denbighshire and Town and Community Councils Charter.

**RESOLVED** *that the Finance Officer to attend.*

**31. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC) – REDUCTION IN BUS SERVICES**

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) relating to proposals to reduce some bus services in Denbighshire.

The Town Clerk advised that he had read a DCC press release this week reporting that the Welsh Government had now confirmed that the reduction in subsidies would be 10%, rather than the previously announced 27%.

The Town Clerk added that although the planned reduced services had little impact on Rhyl, the position may change once other communities who are significantly affected, make a case for keeping them, and suggested the Council asks to be re-consulted if that happens.

On a related matter, a Tynewydd Ward Member reported that he had received a complaint about the lack of waste bins at bus stops in the Tynewydd, Trellewelyn and Derwen Wards, and sought support for this request to be made of DCC.

**RESOLVED** *that:*

- i) the document be received.*
- ii) the Town Clerk to request waste bins at all bus stops in the three Wards mentioned above.*

**[Councillors B. Mellor and P. J. Williams declared a prejudicial interest as employees of Arriva Buses and vacated the Chamber taking no further part in discussion or voting thereon]**

**[Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James and Miss C. L. Williams declared a prejudicial interest due to their involvement on DCC's Communities Scrutiny Committee and vacated the Chamber taking no further part in discussion or voting thereon]**

**32. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – WELLINGTON ROAD AND BRIDGE STREET PROHIBITION OF WAITING ORDER**

The Chair reported receipt of the above proposed Waiting Order (circulated with Agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Order be received.

**33. CONSULTATION: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES – FLOOD AWARENESS WALES**

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) relating to the development of a Flood Awareness Plan for Rhyl.

Bodfor and Foryd Ward Members reported that they had attended a meeting recently and that Flood Plan had been prepared for those areas.

Members from other Wards were unaware of Flood Plans in their areas.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk to invite representatives from the Environment Agency to a future meeting of Council to clarify the position throughout the town.

**34. ANNUAL REPORT – PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES**

The Town Clerk referred to the above (copy in Committee Room) and in particular to the Ombudsman's criticism of the conduct of Prestatyn Town Councillors, where the vast majority of the complaints his office had been dealing with had been generated from, and which had led to very negative Press reports for Prestatyn Town Council.

The Town Clerk further stated that sadly this Town Council came second to Prestatyn and were it not for them, Rhyl Town Council would have been the subject of that damaging publicity.

A Member acknowledged the unfortunate behaviour of both Councils, but was certain that the new membership since the Elections in both towns was the start of new, more productive times ahead.

**RESOLVED** that the document be received.

**35. MEMBERS ITEM: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S DAY SERVICES REVIEW STAKEHOLDERS GROUP (HAFAN DEG)**

Further to Minute No.7 of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll, as the Town Council's appointed representative to the group, circulated a brief report showing a huge price increase to users of the Centre from March to April of this year because of the withdrawal of subsidies. Furthermore, showing the percentage of cuts to the total Social Services budget annually over the last seven years, with this last year being the highest at 1.83%.

Members were strongly opposed to the price increases, which many users just could not afford and were very concerned about the impact the price hike would have on this already vulnerable section of society.

A Member reported that the issue would be discussed at a meeting of the County Council's, Communities Scrutiny Committee would be held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 9.30am and urged all Councillors to attend and make their protests heard.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk to write a strongly worded letter to Denbighshire County Council conveying the Town Council's disgust at the withdrawal of subsidies and the threat of closure the Centre is faced with, and requesting the level of subsidy withdrawn and whether a Quality Impact Assessment had been carried out to measure the affect to the local community.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Town Clerk to act as a matter of urgency.

**36. INFORMATION ITEM: THE FORYD CENTRE**

The Chair reported receipt of a poster (circulated with Agenda) advertising forthcoming events at the new community centre on Princes Street in Rhyl.

**RESOLVED** that the information be received.

**[Councillor Ms J. Hughes declared a prejudicial interest as the Manager of the Café at the Centre, but remained in the Chamber at the request of the Chairman, to advise on the facilities there]**

**37. ADDITIONAL ITEM: MR NATHAN JONES**

Councillor A. R. James displayed an article in today's Daily Post on Nathan Jones from Rhyl being the only Welsh representative selected for the GB Squad for this year's World Mountain Running Championships in Turkey.

Councillor James sought Members' support for a letter of congratulations to go to Nathan.

**RESOLVED** that the Mayor to write to Mr Jones.

**38. ADDITIONAL ITEM: SCARBOROUGH DEVELOPMENTS PRESENTATION HOSTED BY RHYL BUSINESS GROUP**

With regard to a poster circulated around the table from the Business Group, Members were concerned that Scarborough Developments were providing an update on the Ocean Plaza site (site of the old Funfair) whilst a £7.00 charge was being made per head for food. Members felt that any public consultation should not include a fee for interested residents and that the company should be informing the Town Council of any developments before taking that information out into the community via the local Press.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk writes to the Rhyl Going Forward Programme Manager, Scarborough Developments and Rhyl Business Group to ascertain the relevant facts of the presentation.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Town Clerk to act as a matter of urgency.

**39. ADDITIONAL ITEM: RHYL CARNIVAL**

The Town Clerk reported that the Carnival organiser had invited the Mayor and all Town Councillors to this year's Carnival on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July and to assist with the judging of the floats, May Queens, etc.

The Town Clerk advised that all those planning to go along should be at the car park on West Kinmel Street for 11.00am.

**RESOLVED** that eight Councillors will accompany the Mayor.

**40. ADDITIONAL ITEM: RHYL AIR SHOW**

The Town Clerk advised that unfortunately the Air Show organisers were unable to invite Town Councillors to this year's hospitality event as they were very limited on space and budget for the catering. Only the Mayor of Rhyl, the Deputy Mayor and Rhyl's Denbighshire County Councillors would receive invitations.

**RESOLVED** that the information be received.

**41. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, on the grounds of confidentiality.

**42. SMART GROUP PROGRESS REPORT**

Further to Minute No.195 of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012, (minute extract circulated with Agenda) Councillor Rutherford, on the Group's behalf, reported that unfortunately the Group had been unable to meet due to Members' busy schedules since the Elections, so they were not in a position to provide an update.

Councillor Rutherford added that he was in the middle of arranging a date for the next meeting and hoping to confirm it over the next few days, at which a suggested work plan would be determined.

**RESOLVED** that the information be received.

**43. ESTABLISHMENT**

The Town Clerk submitted his confidential report (circulated with Agenda) and the confidential report and recommendation of the Flexible Retirement Working Group was circulated.

The Town Clerk referred to his report and on the grounds of the economy saving to be made to the Council, he recommended that Members approve the Finance Officer's request, but added that the financial element was not the only consideration.

The Town Clerk advised that he had drafted a new Job Description for a part-time post and asked Members to concentrate on section six of his report (Reduced Service Areas), which although were significant he would manage.

The Town Clerk asked for Members' authorisation to negotiate a new Job Description with the Finance Officer.

Members of the Flexible Retirement Working Group referred to their report, which although acknowledged that a saving could be made if the request were approved, felt that after due consideration, they were unconvinced that the post would be able to deliver the same level and quality of service required by the Council on reduced hours, and would send the wrong message to the community as to the high standard of the Town Council's work, and as such did not feel that the application could be demonstrated to be in the interests of the Council at this time.

***RESOLVED*** that the Town Council declines the Finance Officer's request.

**[The Finance Officer, declared a personal interest as the member of staff making the request for flexible retirement and vacated the Chamber taking no part in any of the discussion]**

**[Councillors B. Mellor and B. Moylan declared a prejudicial interest as newly appointed Members of the Town Council's Appeals Committee and vacated the Chamber taking no further part in discussion or voting thereon]**

**44. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Chair: .....

Date: .....