

At a Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on Wednesday 5th October 2011, at the Civic Offices, Wellington Road Community Centre, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor D. A. J. Thomas (Chair)

Councillors B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield MBE, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, Ms G. A. Jones, Miss M. A. Jones, D. W. Lee, W. N. Tasker and T. Thomas.

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

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors J. B. Bellis (indisposed), J. Butterfield (indisposed), Mrs L. M. Edwards (on holiday), I. A. Gunning (family commitment), Ms D. Hannam (indisposed), Mrs P. M. Jones (indisposed), Mrs M. McCarroll (on holiday), Mrs W. M. Mullen-James (on holiday), G. J. Pickering (indisposed) and A. J. Rutherford (work commitment).

61. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

The Chair welcomed Mr Brett Jones and Ms Sian Bennett to the meeting and invited them, along with one of the Town Council's Champions Councillor B. Blakeley, to update Members on the programme.

Mr Jones and Ms Bennett reported that the 2010/11 programme was very successful and that:

- the Basketball programme was going really well, especially the Wheelchair Basketball.
- the Sportzone activities were for children aged between 8-12, were available during school holidays and were proving very popular, with over 1,500 children attending.
- they had received 20 applications for the Rhyl Talented Athlete Grant Scheme so far.

The 2011/12 programme would include:

- Swimming Top-Ups for children who were not such confident swimmers and had not yet managed to swim 25 metres, and that by the end of the sessions they could. Over 900 children would be taking part.
- a Club Audit database, which currently included 60 Rhyl clubs.
- a Club Coach Development Officer.

In the future they were hoping to include bowls, the over 50s and junior netball.

In response to Members' questions the officers stated that:

- they hoped the programme would go beyond the 2012 Olympics, if the funding was available.
- the whole programme was about having a go and enjoying the many different sports and activities on offer.
- over 200 children participated in the wheelchair basketball programme and that is was for all to play, wheelchair and non-wheelchair users and was proving really successful.
- delivering the different activities bi-lingually was possible as some Coaches were Welsh speaking.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Members thanked Mr Jones and Ms Bennett for their time and congratulated them on their excellent work, which played a vital role in increasing children's confidence and social skills, as well as giving them the opportunity to play a wide range of sports and activities and enjoy themselves.

62. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – RHYL GOING FORWARD DELIVERY STRATEGY

Further to Minute No.46 of the meeting held on 21st September 2011, the Chair reported receipt of correspondence from the Programme Manager (circulated with Agenda) and asked Members to consider appointing three Councillors to the four named Delivery Groups.

The Town Clerk advised that a further two groups would be established by the Strategy at a later date, which would give more Town Councillors the opportunity to get involved.

RESOLVED that:

Delivery Group	Councillors
West Rhyl Regeneration Area	Mrs J. Butterfield Ms G. A. Jones Mrs M. McCarroll
Tourism and the Coastal Strip	Mrs E. M. Chard Ms D. Hannam G. J. Pickering
Retail and Town Centre	Mrs J. Butterfield A. J. Rutherford T. Thomas
Housing and Neighbourhoods	Ms M. A. Jones Mrs P. M. Jones Mrs W. M. Mullen-James

63. DENBIGHSHIRE TOURISM FORUM

The Town Clerk reported that he had attended the Forum on Thursday 29th September 2011, on the Town Council's behalf, and advised that the day was based around three presentations relating to destination management of the County.

The Forum was attended by a good mix of Denbighshire County Council officers and attraction and hotel operators who were asked to identify the County's unique assets and carry out a swot exercise relating to tourism attractors, services and infrastructure, which clearly demonstrated a need in Rhyl for more facilities.

A feedback document was promised, which would be made available to Members in the Committee Room when received.

RESOLVED *that the information be received.*

64. PROPOSED BUS SHELTER – KINGSLEY AVENUE

Further to Minute No.27 of the meeting held on 6th July 2011 (extract circulated with Agenda) the Town Clerk reported that after consultation with residents on Kingsley Avenue, a strong objection to the shelter had been received due to fear of attracting anti-social behaviour. The Town Clerk added that he had also contacted Arriva Buses who had stated that although a number of passengers get off at the stop, very few actually alighted there, which suggested a lack of real need for a shelter.

The Chair further advised that he had again met with the residents asking for the shelter, who had decided to withdraw their request in light of the objection.

RESOLVED *that the request be withdrawn.*

65. INFORMATION ITEM: LOCAL SERVICE BOARD ROAD SHOWS

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

RESOLVED *that the information be received.*

66. CORRESPONDENCE: BIG QUESTION EVENT

The Chair reported receipt of the above from Denbighshire County Council's Senior Detached Youth Worker (circulated with Agenda), advising of the event at Rhyl Town Hall on Thursday 3rd November 2011, and inviting the Town Council to nominate a Member to sit on a panel to receive questions from an audience of young people.

RESOLVED *that the Mayor be asked to attend, subject to her availability.*

67. FREE PARKING DAYS

The Town Clerk submitted his report (circulated with Agenda) for Members' consideration when selecting this year's five free parking dates for Rhyl.

RESOLVED that the Council would like free parking on Thursday 1st December for the 'Switch-On' event and Wednesday 21st – Saturday 24th December.

68. FORMALISING THE ROLE AND DUTIES OF TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Further to Minute No.67 of the meeting held on 1st September 2010, the Town Clerk presented his report on the instruction of the Town Council's Risk Assessment Sub-Committee (circulated with Agenda)

RESOLVED that:

- a) *all of the recommendations in Appendix 2 be approved, and with regard to 4.0 Mayors and Chairs should receive compulsory training on particular subject matters within their remits. The Town Clerk to prepare a draft document on Job Specifications for Annual Appointments.*
- b) *all of the recommendations in Appendix B be approved with the last to include that the Mayor or Chair be required to meet with the Town Clerk prior to every formal meeting to fully familiarise themselves with the agenda items, and that the Town Clerk be instructed to make clear on all future agendas that information items are to be received with no debate.*
- c) *in reference to the Welsh Language Scheme sub-heading in Appendix B, any matter requiring a decision by the Council should have a standard item alongside it identifying any legal and/or financial impact a decision may have, which should be written by Officers rather than Members.*
- d) *all recommendations in Appendix C be approved, with the Mayor permitted to invite any group into the Council Chamber, but bring any cost implications to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for authorisation beforehand.*
- e) *with regard to media enquiries made of the Mayor, the Mayor should take the Town Clerk's advice by contacting him during office hours before making any statements.*
- f) *all recommendations in Appendix D be approved,*
- g) *the Town Clerk to adapt Denbighshire County Council's Elected Member Role Description (Appendix 3) for the Town Council's use.*

69. MEMBERS ITEM: RHYL BUSINESS GROUP

Councillor Ms G. A. Jones sought the Town Council's support for the Town Clerk contacting the Business Group to ask about the Town Council becoming a member, to gain a better understanding of the group's issues and ideas for the future.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be instructed to make enquiries with the Business Group and report back to this Committee.

70. MEMBERS ITEM: LIMITED EDITION PRINT BY LOCAL ARTIST

Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield sought the Town Council's support for purchasing the first of a limited edition print taken at Rhyl's Miniature Railway and instructing the Town Clerk to contact the artist, Mrs Lynda Waggett, for further information.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be instructed to contact Mrs Waggett for more details, including price and report back to this Committee.

71. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Finance Officer submitted his report (circulated with Agenda) for Members' information. The report set out the projected income and expenditure within the revenue account and the Community Development Fund for the year ending 31st March 2012, with appropriate explanations for variances to the original budget and the effect on balances.

It was noted that the RPI changes would be made to the Contract Standing Order figures and that the Investment Strategy was under review.

RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report be received.

72. 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.

73. BUDGET ISSUES 2012/2013

The Finance Officer presented his confidential report (circulated with Agenda) which he said was necessary due to the pressing need to inform Members of:

- A developing range of budget issues for 2012/13
- The need to adhere to statutory and Council rules on making financial decisions
- The structure and mechanics of its current budget and financial position

With regard to financial rules and procedures the Finance Officer referred to:

- His statutory role within the Council as Section 151 officer with a clear responsibility to the whole Council for the “proper administration of financial affairs”
- Members obligation under the Code of Conduct - “when participating in meetings or reaching decisions regarding the business of your authority, do so on the basis of the merits of the circumstances involved and in the public interest having regard to any relevant advice provided by your authority’s officers”
- And also in the Code – “not to do anything which compromises, or which is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, your authority”
- Within Financial Regulations – “Items which affect or may affect the Council’s finances shall be submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee which shall report thereon to the Council. Within any such report the Finance Officer shall be required to report on the financial implications of any such proposed action”
- Within the Good Councillors Guide – “At least three clear days before each council or committee meeting, you should receive a summons and agenda. The three clear days is established in law because it is important to be notified of issues to be discussed. Topics requiring a decision cannot be added to the agenda after the deadline of three clear days has passed; they must wait for another meeting. Each agenda item should make it very clear what you as a councillor are expected to do and be precise about the subject under discussion. It is actually unlawful to make a decision, especially a decision to spend money without sufficient (three clear days) warning.

The Finance Officer referred to a number of instances within the last twelve months where he felt that the Council’s financial position was being misrepresented outside the Council, and that there was evidence that Members were not adhering strictly to the aforementioned rules and procedures. He stressed that this posed a risk to Members individually and the Council generally and in the light of this had concluded that he needed to address Members formally with regard to these issues as a matter of urgency via a formal written report to restate the importance of Members’ being fully aware of their responsibilities.

The Finance Officer then gave a presentation on the structure and mechanics of the Council’s potential 2012/13 budget making reference to estimated and probable financial implications relative to a range of subject headings which had been pre-notified within the report. He suggested that Members needed to reflect upon these issues in advance of setting its budget in the New Year.

Finally the Finance Officer gave an open invitation to all Members to speak to him individually if required with regard to any matter referred to during the consideration of this item and then responded to Members questions.

Members generally welcomed the formal advice from the Finance Officer and expressed disappointment that less than half of the Council was in attendance for such an important presentation and in response to a Member’s comment the

Finance Officer agreed to consider how best he would be able to give his advice to those non-attending Members.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the Finance Officer to determine an effective way to give the advice to non-attending Members.

74. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Finance Officer submitted his confidential report (circulated with Agenda) following a comment made by the Town Council's Internal Auditor on reviewing options with regard to short-term interest bearing investments.

RESOLVED that the Finance Officer is authorised to move £50,000 from its current investment account to a new account at the Rhyl branch of the Britannia Building Society.

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

[With the agreement of the Chair, a five minute comfort break was taken]

75. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Further to Minute No.33 of the meeting held on 6th July 2011, the Sub-Committee members presented their confidential report (circulated with Agenda).

The Deputy Mayor went through the comprehensive report recommendation by recommendation, and at the conclusion Members thanked the Sub-Committee for the considerable amount of work it had undertaken so far.

RESOLVED that:

- a) all of the Sub-Committee's recommendations be approved.
- b) Responsibility for progressing the recommendations be delegated to the Risk Assessment Sub-Committee.

[The Deputy Mayor took the Chair for the above item due to the Chair's position as a member of the Risk-Assessment Sub-Committee, enabling him to respond to Members' questions]

76. CLOSURE OF MEETING

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

Chair:

Date: