Cyngor Dinas Llanelwy St Asaph City Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of St Asaph City Council held on Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 6.45 pm at the Council & Community Meeting Room and also with remote attendance via Zoom.

Present:

In person: Cllrs J Ellison, M Gedd, L Griffiths, C A Hardie (Mayor), G Jones, P G Morton, and L Nelson.

Via Zoom: Cllrs M J Hogg and R S Williams

6.45 pm **Presentation from representatives of the Afon Elwy Environment Group (AEEG)**

Cllr Hardie welcomed all to the meeting and thanked the representatives of the Afon Elwy Environment Group for attending.

The AEEG has been in existence for 20 years, and its aims are to undertake activities to maintain and improve the natural environment in the City. Its projects include tree planting, hedge cutting and laying, flower planting, habitat creation, litter-picking and river cleaning. Future projects were outlined and assistance from the Council was requested.

The AEEG will send the Clerk a list of events for circulation to all Councillors. The Clerk is to pass on contact details between Cllr Hogg and the Chairman of the Group.

7.05pm **The representatives of the Afon Elwy Environment Group left the chamber.**

2023/124 Apologies for Absence

- Apologies were received from Cllrs Groves, Roberts and Scott.

2023/125 Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Hardie declared a personal interest in item 10 b) as he worships at the church.
- Cllr Nelson declared a prejudicial interest in item 10 b) as she is involved with voluntary activities at the church.

2023/126 Public Participation

- Four members of the public were present, two of whom had left the chamber at 7 pm.

A member of the public addressed the Council regarding his work with the Denbighshire Youth Service. His role, as a Community Youth Worker for Prestatyn and St Asaph, involves:

- running an Open Access Group and helping vulnerable youngsters, including those who are homeless. Many of those he helps fall outside the usual education process;
- Establishing good community links with young people;
- Encouraging the group to appreciate the natural environment & encouraging pride in their community;
- Teaching life skills, such as cooking, arts and crafts and online safety;
- Supporting the group with sensitive issues;
- Mediating where conflicts occur.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that all sessions are open to all, regardless of where they live, free of charge, and run by qualified youth workers.

Resolved the Clerk is to put the PCSO in touch with the Community Youth Worker.

7.20 pm **One member of the public left the chamber.**

2023/127 North Wales Police

PCSO Dave Jones had sent his apologies. The Clerk read out his report:

- The parade went well on 8th July. Praised the organisation, the road management operatives and the first aid arrangements;
- A few incidents of damage, including a broken window at The Old Palace;
- Two incidents of shoplifting at a food outlet and a retailer;
- Reports of suspicious vehicles in Tremeirchion and Rhuallt were highlighted. Reminder to all to report suspicious incidents, with registration numbers, if possible.

A vehicle theft from Cwttir Lane was noted.

2023/128 Mayor's Report

The Mayor, Cllr Hardie, gave his report after an extremely busy month:

- Most of his time had been taken up with meetings for the Freedom of the City Parade. He thanked the Clerk for all her hard work in organising the event, which was a great advert for the city;
- Attended the Rhyl Lifeboat Station, with other Mayors;
- Attended a flag-raising for the NHS at Denbighshire CC;
- Attended four civic services from Flint to Conwy;
- Met with the photographer and Drone Operator for Saturday's event;
- Briefed the Stewards for the Parade.

Cllr Jones remarked he was pleased with the event and appreciated all the work that had gone into organising it.

2023/129 County Councillors' Reports

Cllr Scott

Cllr Scott had sent his apologies, but had sent his report which was read out by the Clerk. He had attended:

- Full Council;
- Partnership Scrutiny;
- Strategic Planning Group;
- Cabinet;
- Elwy MAG;
- Planning.

He has also arranged for footpaths to be cut back, including at Roe Parc and behind the New Inn.

Cllr Hogg

- Spoke at a meeting of Llanelwy WI re: water quality;
- Denbighshire is working to regain blue flag status for its beaches. Currently, only Prestatyn beach has a blue flag;
- Roadworks at Castle Green development, while work is done to improve the gullies and footpaths;
- Traffic at the Cathedral roundabout seems to have improved, possibly due to the traffic lights. Raised this at Denbighshire for consideration;
- Discussed footpaths at Elwy MAG. The Highways Officer has taken a brief from the Group and will report back at a future meeting;
- Strategy meeting dealt with the Local Housing Market Assessment;
- Attended a budget meeting, where possible service cuts were discussed;
- Discussed unaccompanied minors coming into the country and Denbighshire's obligation to make care arrangements within 5 days.

Councillors commented on planning considerations for castle Green, the City Council's boundary sign, which has been removed, and declining Welsh river water quality. Cllr Hogg attends a Clwyd Catchment Area Forum, which NRW, Denbighshire and Waterco attend. The blue flag scheme considers sewerage, but also farm run-off.

2023/130 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting 14th June 2023 were discussed regarding accuracy (circulated prior to the meeting).

Resolved to approve the minutes of 14th June 2023 as an accurate record.

2023/131 Matters Arising

- None

2023/132 Financial management

a) The payment schedule was reviewed:

- Clerk's wages include 46 hours for Freedom of the City;
- Clerk's expenses includes £411 for a set of printer cartridges.

Cllr Morton raised concerns that the Council should have payment facilities for expenses, rather than depending on the Clerk paying and claiming reimbursement. The Clerk suggested that this is reviewed later this year, following receipt of new draft Financial regulations from One Voice Wales. Internet banking and card facilities, with appropriate controls, could then be considered by the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

Cllr Williams suggested that the Clerk's contracted hours should be reviewed before the next budget, as the current contracted hours are insufficient to cover the workload.

Resolved to approve the Payments Schedule, total value £5,608.64

b) The Finance report was discussed:

- VAT refund claim £1167 received;
- Glascoed Timber invoice relates to service in April and May;
- Payment for Scottish Power for an over-estimated bill. Credit £3009 received following correction. The cost allocations for these will be corrected next month. Care taken to ensure the net VAT claim amount is correct;
- £628 Projects is for the new bin at Roe Plas;
- External Audit – awaiting statement from National Savings;
- Scottish Power have not yet claimed the direct debit for the Bowling Club;
- Ash Waste – following correction of the contract on 8th June, no further excess waste charges have been applied;
- Training Course re: Common Land booked at a cost of £54
- Requested permission for training on contracts.

Resolved to approve the training costs for Common Land, £54; and Contracts, £108.

Resolved to approve and accept the finance report.

2023/133 Planning Applications

a) Application: 46/2023/0284

Location: 5 Bryn Coed, St Asaph

Proposal: Alterations to external materials, installation of replacement windows and associated works

Resolved that the Clerk should advise Planning Department that the City Council has no objections to this application.

b) Application: 46/2023/0374

Location: Church of St Kentigern and Asaph High Street, St Asaph

Proposal: Erection of storage shed

Cllrs Hardie and Nelson had declared a personal interest in this item.

Resolved that the Clerk should advise Planning Department that the City Council has no objections to this application.

2023/134 City Plan Working Group

Cllr Hardie gave an outline of the discussions at the meeting on 12th June, where a number of issues had been discussed with Denbighshire Streetscene Officers.

Denbighshire Highways Officers have been invited to attend the next meeting of the Group.
The condition of some of the buildings on the High Street was discussed. Planning could be invited to a future meeting of the Group.
There was a discussion regarding air quality. Cllr Hogg advise that a monitor will be installed near VP School from January 2024, in addition to the existing one on The Roe. Although live monitoring would be advantageous, it would be costly.
Resolved to receive and approve the minutes of the meeting of the City Plan Working Group on 12th June 2023.

2023/135 Tree on Elwy Bridge

Cllr Gedd had met with the Tree Surgeon earlier this year. The proposal was to cut back the branches on the High Street side, but also on the Bowling Club side to ensure the tree remains balanced. The quotation includes traffic light management.
Resolved to approve and accept the quotation of £530 & VAT from Cambrian Woodland Services for work to the tree.

2023/136 Street Naming

Denbighshire's proposed street names were considered. Cllr Williams had met with a local resident to research appropriate names.
Resolved that the Clerk should respond to Denbighshire to advise the Council's preferred names would be:

i. **Cae Mawr Ucha – Higher Big Field**
ii. **Cae Mawr Isa – Lower Big Field**
iii. **Cae Llwybyr – Path Field**

The Clerk is to state that these names have been taken from the original tithe maps and that the Council's preference is for these to be retained.

2023/137 Football Pavilion

A quotation of £395 & VAT for replacement of a faulty shower was considered. Discussions included the following points:

i. Was it the Council's responsibility to pay for the work?

***Clerk's advice**: The Football Club has a licence to use the pavilion and pitch, rather than a lease. This means the Club does not have the right to exclusive occupation, and therefore, the facilities can be hired to other users.*

ii. When were the showers installed and how many had been replaced? Was it likely that further showers would need to be replaced in the near future?

Four showers installed 2018. Units were replaced in 2019 and 2021 and the invoice is for the third replacement.
Resolved to receive the quotation and consider the cost of this work in the 2024-2025 budget.

2023/138 Unadopted Road

Cllr Williams and the Clerk had attended John Owens, Solicitor for advice on whether the unadopted road was the City Council's responsibility. A summary of advice received had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. In summary:

i. The unadopted road is not the responsibility of the City Council and that it would not be an appropriate use of public funds for the City Council to repair and maintain this road, which is the responsibility of the Doctors' surgeries and twelve houses which back onto the road.
ii. The Council is responsible for the Council's car park, up to where this meets the unadopted road (not to The Roe);
iii. He would recommend that the City Council writes to Denbighshire to seek to have the road adopted, as it meets the criteria.

Resolved the Clerk should write to Highways to seek to have the road adopted.

There are some large deep potholes in the road, which were of concern. Cllr Hardie expressed concerns that the City Council could be asked to pay for other items, such as lighting, if it paid for repairs.

***Clerk's advice**: Should the City Council repair the road, it could drift into accepting responsibility. There are potholes at other locations, such as Roe Plas, where the City Council is legally responsible. The City Council is unlikely to have funds to address both in this financial year.*

Resolved the Clerk is to obtain a quotation for repairs to the road.

2023/139 Freedom of the City

a) Cllr Hardie had updated the Council under Mayor's Report. The event was a great success overall, although there were some issues – see b) below.

b) Refreshments

The initial arrangements were for the refreshments to be served in the Cathedral, using a local caterer. The Royal Welsh requested welfare arrangements including changing facilities. The venue for refreshments was amended to the Leisure Centre. Use of the Leisure Centre was contingent on using Denbighshire Leisure's in-house catering service, which was far more expensive.

On the day of the event, the catering service was disappointing. It was noted that the Royal Welsh did not attend the refreshments, nor did they use the changing facilities. Further a number of guests did not stay for refreshments.

Resolved the Clerk is to write to the Chief Executive of Denbighshire Leisure to express the Council's disappointment with the quality of the service. If the organisation is make the venue available as a corporate venue, a professional catering service would be expected, especially for the cost.

Road Closure

Costs were much higher than anticipated when the budget was agreed in January 2023. This was due to:

- The parade route, agreed in February 2023, included the roundabout between High Street, The Roe and Lower Denbigh Road. Stop/Go traffic management was used, which necessitated using six operatives, rather than two;
- Many more signs were required as parking had to be stopped on the High Street, to enable the parade to pass, and parking had been arranged at three sites, which necessitated further signs.
- As an event unique to St Asaph, operatives could not be shared with other Communities, as with Remembrance Sunday.
- The sign company attended Steering Group Meetings and agreed the traffic management scheme with NMWTRA and Denbighshire Streetworks.

Two days before the event, the Clerk received a quotation for £3160 & VAT. At this stage, it was too late to change the arrangements, or seek alternative quotations. A breakdown of the costs was requested, and an amended invoice for £2840 & VAT was received.

Prior to the meeting, all councillors had received a copy of both invoices, including the breakdown of costs and copies of the road management schemes for this event, and Remembrance Sunday 2022.

There was a lengthy discussion of the course of events. It was noted that, without the traffic management scheme, the event could not have gone ahead. Further, due to late receipt of the quotation, there was no opportunity to seek alternative quotations and give them due consideration.

i. **Resolved to suspend Financial regulations. Three quotes had not been obtained, as the cost was not anticipated to be over £3,000. The net cost is below £3,000.**
ii. **Resolved to approve payment of the invoice for £2840 & VAT to JTM Signs.**
iii. **Resolved to restore Financial Regulations.**

iv. **Resolved the Clerk is to write to JTM Signs to express concerns re:**
- **The barriers on Elwy Bridge not being moved in time for the parade to pass;**
- **A car parked on the High Street, not being towed, despite the signs stating this would be done;**
- **Most importantly, that it was not acceptable to send a quotation, for substantially more than the previous costs indicated, just two days before the event.**

The Clerk advised that a transfer from National Savings may be required as the defibrillators, approved at the June Council meeting, have been ordered and the invoice is due imminently. It was noted that the donation from St Asaph Rotary Club had been received for this purpose.

v. **Resolved to approve a transfer of £5000 from National Savings Account to the Main Current Account.**

vi. **Resolved that future work and projects, with the exception of those required for health & safety, are to be suspended, until the Council is satisfied that sufficient funds are available.**

2023/140 Correspondence

a) Updated schedule of the Council's Representatives on External Organisations and Outside Bodies
The schedule had been updated following the June meeting. The Member of the Public did not wish to be the Council's representative on the Library Committee, or the Elizabeth Williams Charity.
The Parish Church had requested that Council appoints a representative on its management committee.
Resolved to appoint Cllr Ellison as the Council's representative on the Parish Church Management Committee.

b) E-mail from Denbighshire County Council re: 20 mph Speed Limit – received;

c) E-mail from Royal navy re: Celebration of Duty – received.

d) Letter from Chairman of Denbighshire County Council re: Congratulations Freedom of the City – received.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 pm

Date of Next Meeting
Meeting in person and with remote attendance held 13th September 2023.

Signed ……
Chairman of the Full Council 13th September 2023