Cyngor Dinas Llanelwy
St Asaph City Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of St Asaph City Council held on Wednesday 8th November 2023 at 7.00 pm at the Council & Community Meeting Room and also with remote attendance via Zoom.

Present:

In person: Cllrs M Gedd, L Groves, C A Hardie (Mayor), P G Morton, L Nelson, J O Roberts and P Scott.

Via Zoom: Cllrs M J Hogg, L Griffiths and R S Williams.

2023/187 Apologies for Absence

- Apologies were received from Cllr Ellison.

2023/188 Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Scott declared an interest in item 19, due to proximity to his property;
- Cllr Hardie declared an interest in item 19 d), as he has an allotment;
- Cllr Roberts declared an interest in item 19 as he is the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the Football Club.

2023/189 Public Participation

- One member of the public was present in person.
- One member of the public was present on Zoom, but did not respond when the Mayor asked whether they would like to address the Council.

2023/190 North Wales Police

- No report.

2023/191 Mayor's Report

The Mayor, Cllr Hardie, gave his report:

- It had been a quiet month;
- Attended Council committee meetings;
- Attended Caerwys civic service;
- Opened two show homes at the castle Green development;

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Scott, gave his report:

- Attended a service for St Johns Ambulance;
- Judged a pumpkin competition at Ysgol Esgob Morgan.

2023/192 County Councillors' Reports

Cllr Scott

- Chaired a number of meetings;
- Attended a site visit re: Planning;
- A response had been sent re: the library;
- Written to the head of service re: flooding at Llys-y-Felin. This will be discussed under item 15;
- Attended his last planning meeting.

Cllr Hogg

- Will discuss floods later under the relevant agenda item;
- Attended a meeting re: corporate parenting;
- Attended a meeting re: the substation extension at Cefn;
- Made a site visit to the castle Green development to check re: bat & bird boxes;

- Highlighted a climate change workshop next week. Councillors to contact Cllr Hogg if they would like to attend.

Questions were asked about affordable homes on the new development. Denbighshire's policy is in the local development plan.

2023/193 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting 1st November 2023 were discussed regarding accuracy (circulated prior to the meeting).

Resolved to approve the minutes of 1st November 2023 as an accurate record.

2023/194 Matters Arising

2023/185 – Library – the Clerk has received an acknowledgement from Denbighshire, with a further response promised once a decision is made.

2023/195 Financial management

a) The payment schedule was reviewed:

- £661.50 St Asaph Bowling Club – for the annual winter green maintenance, as per agreement;
- £99.70 John Owens – re: Ashly Court and Land on the High Street – first invoice;
- Final bills to Scottish Power have been paid. A smart meter is to be fitted at the meeting room later this month. The football pavilion is not yet on the schedule.
- Clerk's wages in includes 46.5 hours servicing meetings, including four council meetings. This is higher than usual, due to the additional meetings;
- Clerk's expenses includes £125 gift card for an ex-cllr, as agreed at the February full council.

As previously discussed, the budget meeting will consider the Clerk's hours as the contracted hours are insufficient for the workload.

Resolved to approve the Payments Schedule, total value £9,338.61.

b) The Finance report was discussed:

- VAT refund claim £1597 received. Claim made to end November.
- Rent received for football pavilion and Mill Race Meadow;
- Refund £97 Council tax re: meeting room;
- Outdoor costs include costs for tree work on Elwy bridge;
- £100 projects is the refund to the volunteer for the friendship signs;
- Cashflow has been updated with actual figures to October.
- The quotation for installation of the donated picnic bench will be deferred until the new year.

Resolved to increase the weight limits for Ash Waste containers, as this will be more cost effective over the winter months when only two containers are in place.
Resolved to approve and accept the finance report.

c) **Resolved to approve the updated quotations for supply & installation of a new noticeboard at Roe Plas:**

i.	**Parish Noticeboard Company**	**£1850 & VAT**
ii.	**KM Construction**	**£925 & VAT**

It was noted that a grant to offset these costs of £2400 from Denbighshire has been approved and must be claimed before 31st March 2023.

d) **Resolved to approve the following quotations for remedial work at the football pavilion:**

i.	**Intellec**	**£95 & VAT**	**replace kitchen fan;**
ii.	**Intellec**	**£135 & VAT**	**replace RCBO for shower**

It was noted that Mick Dodd Electrical will address the issues with lighting on the drive.

2023/196 Planning Applications

Resolved the Clerk should advise Planning of the City Council's responses to the applications as follows:

	Application	Proposal	Response
a)	46/2022/0431 Land rear of Kentigern Arms fronting Gemig St	Erection of 9 dwellings including access, internal estate roads, landscaping and associated works	Object on the grounds of: • Over-development • Concerns re: traffic; • Concerns re: parking The City Council would like to see this land developed and would look favourably on a smaller development.
b)	46/2023/0037 Red Lion House Gemig St 46/2023/0038 (listed building application)	Demolition of existing single storey extension and first floor balcony to rear and erection of replacement single storey extension and associated works	No objections
c)	Letter from Cornerstone Glan Clwyd farm, Oak Lane LL17 0DX *Response to Cornerstone*	Proposed base station upgrade at Cornerstone 12633629	No particular objections but disappointed there will be no benefit for St Asaph residents. Please advise whether Cornerstone are covering a different area from the current cells or overlaying an existing area for a different provider. It would be beneficial if you could provide a map of the proposed coverage area.
d)	46/2023/0719 New Vision Business Park Glascoed Road	Erection of 2 commercial units (use Class D1) including the formation of parking, landscaping and associated works (amendment to previously approved B1 use)	No objections

2023/197 Policy Resources & Finance Committee

Cllr Gedd gave his report following the meeting.

a) Resolved to receive and accept the minutes of the meeting of the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee on 2nd November 2023.

b) Resolved to approve the recommendations of the Committee as follows:

i.	To approve and adopt the following policies: A. Community Engagement Policy; B. Public Participation Policy; C. Compassionate Leave Policy; D. Clerk's Job Description; E. Employee Recruitment Policy & Application form; F. Foreword to staff handbook; G. Volunteer Policy.
ii.	To approve the amendments to the Welsh language policy.
iii.	To instruct the Clerk to order two new signs for Roe Plas. If the parking areas by the Doctors' surgeries and behind the library don't have similar signs, additional signs are to be ordered for these locations.

2023/198 Delegated Decisions

Resolved to approve and ratify the following delegated decisions made by the Clerk, following consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor:

Number	Decision
DD2023/008	To waive the Council's request for leftover paint to be donated. The volunteer has been reimbursed with £100 and has had the English language signs returned to her as they cannot be used by Council.
DD2023/009	To have the waste water tank at Roe Plas emptied.
DD2023/0010	To make a claim on the Council's insurance re: damage to the pheasant woodcarving, following storm Babette.
DD2023/0011	To approve replacement of 2 no. metal bin liners for 2 litter bins at a cost of £135 & VAT for two.

2023/199 Code of Conduct

a) Denbighshire had advised they could not provide Code of Conduct training sessions for councillors until the Spring. Alternative training from One Voice Wales would cost £38 per person per session.
Resolved that the Councillors who have not yet been trained are to be booked on the sessions at Denbighshire, once they become available.

b) The Council's Code of Conduct requires all councillors to undertake Code of Conduct training in each electoral term within six months of taking office. This deadline had been extended until 31st December 2023.
Resolved to amend the Code of Conduct to reflect an extension to the deadline for Councillors to undertake this training until 30th June 2024, so Councillors can attend Denbighshire's training.

2023/200 Councillor Allowances

Correspondence from the Independent Remuneration panel for Wales (IRPW) was discussed. The IRPW had reached an agreement with HM Revenue & Customs regarding taxation of the basic allowance and allowance for consumables.

a) The tax free exemption for the basic & consumables allowances is subject to the following conditions:
   i. There must be a formal arrangement between the individual councillor and the Council;
   ii. Each individual councillor must declare they work from home regularly under these arrangements. A template letter is provided for this purpose.
Resolved the Council is to enter into a formal homeworking arrangement with each individual Councillor.

b) A payment for consumables must be offered to each councillor. This can either be an allowance of £52 per annum, or an unlimited amount against receipts.
Resolved the Council is to offer £52 per annum to each councillor for the cost of office consumables.

c) As the basic allowance and allowance for consumables are tax free, Audit Wales has confirmed these sums can be paid without the need for payroll. Taxable allowances, such as seniority payments, will still be paid via payroll.

d) Resolved to amend the Councillors' Allowances Policy to reflect these amendments.

2023/201 Flood

a) Cllr Scott advised the Flood Wardens had held a meeting after the recent flooding to discuss their next steps. He wrote to the Head of Service for housing regarding concerns for the residents at Llys-y-Felin. Denbighshire had mentioned options such as constructing a bund or emptying vulnerable properties.
Cllr Hogg was on site on the night of the storm. There were concerns about the manhole near the Common. A meeting is to be held with Welsh water, Denbighshire,

NRW, the Flood wardens and residents as there is a need to find out why this happened. They will give the three bodies chance to investigate and put plans in place. Any solutions need to be assessed by experts. Properties need to be made more resilient to future events.
Cllr Roberts raised the football pavilion, which had also flooded. The Football Club had pumped out and cleaned the building. There is a need to protect the building.
Cllr Hardie raised the flooding at Heol Esgob, Tan y Bryn, Ashly Court and the bottom of Rosehill.
Cllrs Hogg and Scott will report back to Council following attendance at meetings to discuss flooding.

b) The Council considered a brief report from the Clerk regarding Council assets:
- Roe Plas had flooded and the football pavilion was affected – see item a);
- The waste water tank has been emptied. It was noted the tank is split and will need replacement in spring. The water table is too high to do this now;
- Pheasant woodcarving had been swept downstream and has been recovered. This will need restoration – see delegated decisions;
- One of the riverside bins at Mill Race Meadow was swept away;
- Fencing to the steep bank under Elwy bridge had been flattened. This has been restored.

Resolved to amend the contract for servicing litter bins, so that the riverside bins are brought in and stored at the end of September, rather than October, as at present.
Resolved the Clerk is to write to the City Times to ask them to publish a request for the public not to leave rubbish on the site of the bins which are stored over winter.
Resolved the Clerk is to reply to two residents who have written re: flooding, to advise of the meetings the flood wardens are arranging.

2023/202 Street Light

Cllr Gedd had reported street lights near the Trim Trail car park, which were not working. These are part of a set with Denbighshire labels, although Denbighshire state they do not belong to them. Some of the lights are on the unadopted road and some are on the bund and riverside footpath.
Cllr Scott will write to Denbighshire regarding the lights.

2023/203 Land behind the Library

Cllr Hardie explained the background to the NRW maintenance of City Council land. The Council was disappointed as promises made before the construction work had not been kept. NRW had removed nearly 100 trees to enable the construction to go ahead. The Council's Sakura cherry trees had been accounted for by NRW to offset the trees removed. These trees had not been properly maintained and some of the trees had been lost. NRW's contractors had used the land behind the library as a compound and this area was supposed to be restored and landscaped once the work was complete. The project had not been managed at all since the spring and a lot of the Clerk's time was taken up with chasing NRW.
Resolved the Clerk is to contact John Owens Solicitor for advice on the Council's legal position and whether steps can be taken.
Cllr Hardie also raised the issue of car sharers using the land behind the library, thus leaving no space available for St Asaph residents. A resident has offered to put leaflets on windscreens advising the car park is for short stay only.
Cllr Scott will liaise with the resident to confirm the City Council has consented to this action. Cllrs Scott and Hogg will raise the possibility of car parks for car sharers provided by Denbighshire.

2023/204 Cemeteries

Cllr Roberts had attended a meeting arranged by the Mayor of Rhuddlan re: cemeteries to discuss the availability of burial plots in the area. St Asaph and Prestatyn do not have

an issue at present. It is believed in the long term, Prestatyn cemetery will be used for all communities. There are issues with public transport to the site, even for Prestatyn residents. Rhyl cemetery is full and Rhuddlan is likely to reach capacity in three years. The group would like to ask Denbighshire to provide a further site in the north of the County. The point was raised that the involvement of County Councillors would be needed to progress this.

2023/205 Mill Race Meadow

a) Following the meeting of 28th November the Clerk reported on the following issues:
   i. There is no evidence that an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) had been requested for the Allotments when they were agreed in 2009.
   ii. There is a statutory duty on the Council to provide allotment gardens sufficient to meet the demand of the local community. Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908 s23 & Allotments Act 1950 s9. Allotments are classed as agricultural land.
   iii. The section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires the Council to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity. Advice from Denbighshire Planning and Biodiversity Officers confirms that an EIA will be needed.
   iv. The biodiversity effects of allotments and a sports pitch can be summarised as the difference in the level of cultivation. The more neglected and less maintained the land is, the better for biodiversity. Another issue is the existing state of the land to be used. As the field is currently managed through grazing, a pitch would have an adverse effect.
   v. Planning have confirmed a planning application would be needed for the change of use. Considerations include justifying loss of agricultural land, operation of use, parking, drainage, flood risk, residential amenity (proximity to houses, noise and general activity, lighting, screening) and biodiversity.
   vi. Costs re: valuations are contained in the Clerk's report.

   There was a discussion regarding a feasibility study. The Football Club would be responsible for applying for planning.

b) **Resolved to set up a new Mill Race Meadow Working Group to consider the information**.

c) The importance of ensuring that all working group members were impartial was discussed. The working group would be able to invite interested parties to attend, if further information is required from them.
   Resolved that Cllrs Gedd, Morton, Hogg and Nelson will be members of the Mill Race Meadow Working Group.

d) E-mail received from the Allotments Association asking to be consulted about these proposals.
   Resolved that the Allotments Association will be consulted, equally with the existing tenant and the Football Club. The Clerk is to reply to the Allotments Association to confirm this.
   Resolved that the Clerk will write to the Football Club to advise of the information in a) above.

2023/206 Correspondence

a) E-mail from a resident re: Gift – received.
b) E-mail from Welsh language Commissioner re: Welsh Language Policy – received.
c) E-mail from Denbighshire County Council re: Open Spaces Funding – received.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm

Date of Next Meeting

Meeting in person and with remote attendance held 13th December 2023.

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