

SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL FINANCE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2023 AT
SEALAND COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, FARM ROAD, GARDEN CITY. CH5 2HH**

PRESENT: Councillors: Ashley Griffiths (Chair), Barbara Hinds (Vice Chair), Chris Jones (County Councillor), Lionel Prouve, Mary Southall, Brian Ward, Shelley Webber and David Wisinger.

Robin Davies – Acting Headteacher- Sealand Primary School

One member of the public

Peter Richmond - Clerk and Financial Officer.

23/151 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were received and accepted from – Councillors Gwyneth Bullock, Jean Fairbrother, Norman Jones, Alex Lewis and Linda Thomas,

23/152 CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION

RESOLVED – that it be noted that no declarations were made to Council at the beginning of the meeting in respect of the agenda.

23/153 MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

The Clerk had not received a request to hold a hybrid meeting.

23/154 CHAIR’S REPORT AND ACTIONS SINCE 20th NOVEMBER 2023

There was no report.

23/155 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 20th NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th November 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

23/156 CHAIR’S FUND 2023/24

The Clerk reminded Council that the agreed spend for the Chair’s Fund for the 2023/24 financial year is £800.00. Payments being made under expenditure powers - Ancillary Power Local Government Act 1972 (S1). At the September 2023 meeting it was agreed that the Chair’s Fund should cover the cost of refreshments at St Barts for Sunday November 12th Remembrance Service and Tuesday December 12th Christmas Concert.

Spent so far – £100 to Dee-Sign BSL Choir.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23/157 POLICE ISSUES

a) Community Speed Watch

There was no report

b) PCSO Aled Hughes – 3292

PCSO Aled Hughes had advised that he was planning to attend the meeting. Aled had attended the Remembrance Service at St. Barts.

23/158 FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES.

a) Ferry Lane Footbridge

i) Project to improve the footbridge to reduce the noise nuisance

There was no report.

ii) A frame barrier amendment proposals

The County Councillor advised the A frame proposals will be considered by the County's Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

b) Dandy's Top Soil – Sealand Road

County Councillor Chris Jones advised on 11th December 2023 that she has requested Matthew Linford – Planning Enforcement Officer to visit the site to check if all activities have planning permission or certificates of lawfulness.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

c) Sealand Ditches

Neil Parry advised on 8th December 2023 that he has spoken with Stuart Banks about the watercourse adjacent to Cottage Garage and that he will be meeting him on site week beginning 11th December 2023.

Neil has now inspected the watercourse to the rear of Deeside Crescent. This watercourse does need to be desilted and Neil will be e-mailing the Riparian Owner to ask them to undertake this work. Neil will advise when this work has hopefully been undertaken.

Saughall Parish Council (SPC) have asked about a possible joint meeting regarding flooding on Seahill Road. SPC have been advised that Council has been informed that all the drainage ditches in this area of Sealand have recently been checked and cleaned. SPC will try to find out from the land owners on their side of the border whether the ditches have also been checked and cleaned. SPC have advised that there are no ditches on the England side.

The Clerk asked Neil Parry on 5th December 2023 whether he is aware of any drainage ditches that are across the border in England and are impacting on the flooding issues in this area and whether he would agree that the flooding issue on Seahill Road is caused by the drainage ditches not being able to drain away excess rainfall. Re Seahill Road it is assumed that the surface water drains to the above ditches. SPC have been advised of this.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

d) Concern about condition of side access – Spar Shop, Welsh Road

Glyn Jones has advised that the report of the site meeting held on Thursday 2nd November 2023 will shortly be provided.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

e) Damaged fencing – Cycle Bridge – A494

Traffic Wales advised on 19th September 2023 that they consider Council's enquiry to be operational in nature, requiring a detailed response. They have forwarded the enquiry to North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent.

RESOLVED – that Wayne Jones and Ian Bushell be advised that repairs works have still not been carried out.

f) Sealand Road – A548 – Extend Street Lighting

Darell Jones asked on 27th September 2023 whether Council requests for a lighting assessment to be undertaken in accordance with the BS and FCC policy. This was confirmed to Darell on the same date.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

g) River Dee Embankment – Coastal Path and Cycleway – Bluebridge to the Railway Bridge

Mike Taylor has previously advised that the repair cost is £200.00 per bench. Source for the funding is being investigated. Council has agreed that the seat formerly situated between the two road bridges should replace one of the existing 4 seats as above. Wayne has advised that he is waiting on Mike re-funding.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

h) Foxes Lane – Pot Holes – Need to carry out repairs

RESOLVED – that Ian Bushell and Wayne Jones be asked to advise on when Foxes Lane will have a full resurface and what is its current status in the matrix of proposed works.

i) Overgrown Trees- Orchard Way and North Green at Sealand Manor

Chris Povey – Housing Officer had a walkaround scheduled for 20th October 2023 which was

cancelled and will be rearranged during which he will specifically check the areas as mentioned and address any concerns accordingly.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23/159 COUNCIL'S STREET LIGHTING

Jamie Bennett has been asked to advise on the next 8 lights that should be replaced in the 2024/25 financial year. All 41 lights are working.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23/160 SECTION 137 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – PAYMENT OF GRANTS

The appropriate sum for the S137 Expenditure Limit for the purpose of Section 137 (4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the calculation of the Free Resource Base is based on the local population taken from the current electoral role. The Welsh Government have advised that the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2023/24 is £9.93 per elector. The electoral role from Flintshire County Council was 2538 at December 2022. So, per elector produces a total of £25,202.34. Allocated spend in 2023/24 is Section 137 grants of £4,000 and for school milk £0.00. The Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2024/25 is £10.81 per elector. The electoral role from Flintshire County Council at September 2023 was 2565. So, per elector produces a total of £27,727.65. Spend in 2023/24 so far is £1,250.00 - Sealand Primary School £1,000 and for the Earl Haig Poppy Appeal £250.00.

The Acting Headteacher would very much like to apply for an additional community grant. We are looking to raise funds to replace our climbing frame with some new play equipment for the children.

A grant request has also been received from St. Bartholomew's Church

RESOLVED – that -

- i) the report be noted.
- ii) in accordance with Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1971 that the Council should award a grant of £500.00 to the Sealand Primary School and a grant of £150.00 to St. Bartholomew's Church which are in the best interests of the area and its inhabitants.

Councillors Chris Jones and David Wisinger declared an interest regarding the grant payment to Sealand Primary School.

23/161 PROVISION OF NOTICE BOARDS – PRAXIS AND POCHINS

Both Pochins and Praxis are in the process of arranging for the two notice boards to be installed. Once installed the two notice boards will be added to Council's asset register and the Council's insurer will be asked to add to Council's insurance inventory

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23/162 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

PA Number	Application details	Location
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001017/23	Erection of a 66-bedroom care home (Use Class C2) for the elderly with associated access, parking and landscaping.	Plot 2, The Airfields, Northern Gateway, Sealand, Flintshire, CH5 2FN
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RESOLVED – that no objections be raised in respect of PA – 001017/23

23/163 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

RESOLVED: - that-

- i) the under mentioned accounts be approved for payment.
- ii) it be noted that the Lloyds Bank charges for the most recent period is £9.55 re £7.00 per month with an additional charge of 3 cheques x £0.85 = £2.55.

Cheque No	Payable to	Details	Amount	VAT	Vat Code	Expenditure Powers
003600	P. Richmond	December 2023 Salary etc	£769.24			Local Govt Act 1972 (\$112)
003601	HMRC	December 2023 Income Tax - £461.60 and Emp NI - £54.62	£516.22			Local Govt Act 1972 (\$112)
003602	Jolora Ltd	Web Site Maintenance - 2 months	£384.00	£64.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (\$142)
003603	Jolora Ltd	Web Site Standard Hosting Package and Domain Name Renewal	£228.00	£38.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (\$142)
003604	Flintshire County Council	Street Light 9 Replacement Lights and all adopted – VAT is not charged for upgrades / adoptions.	£19,350.00			Highways Act 1980 (301)
003605	Audit Wales Office	External Audit Charge re 2022/23	£200.00			Local Govt Act 1972 (\$111)
003606	Sealand Primary School	Grant payment	£500.00			Local Govt Act 1972 (\$137)
003607	St. Bartholomew's Church	Grant payment	£150.00			Local Govt Act 1972 (\$137)
Total Spend			£22,097.46	£102.00		

23/164 INCOME

Lloyds Bank	Interest payment	£64.30
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Total Income	£64.30
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RESOLVED – that the income be noted.

23/165 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no additional correspondence to report on.

23/166 FRIENDS OF SEALAND –ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S CHURCH

The Christmas Carol Service on Tuesday 12th December 2023 starts at 7.30pm

23/167 WELSH ROAD SKATE FACILITY

Richard Roberts – AURA - Play Design Officer advised that the skate ramps were removed on 24th November 2023 and that he has not received any phone calls or emails from the public in relation to their removal.

Richard advised that the quote for a single ramp dated 27th November is for £19,615. The Clerk advised that £3,900 remains in budget for 2023/24 and could be rolled over to 2024/25 increasing the matched fund allocation to £8,900. Richard advised at best, and pending the financial settlement Aura receive from the County Council from April 2024, Aura will only be able to match the £8,900 meaning the total funding available will be £17,800. This leaves a shortfall of £1,815. Without additional funding from the Community Council then Aura will be unable to proceed. Subject to the variables highlighted above, Richard’s advice would be to factor in 10% over the next year, in addition to the current shortfall of £1,815. So, £11,000 in total is needed by Council to fund the new provision in 2024/25.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

23/168 PLAY SCHEMES - 2024

At the November 2023 Council resolved to fund both sites in 2024 for 6 weeks and to enter a 3 – year commitment noting that Council can amend its commitments at any time regarding future years. Darren Morris – Lead Officer for Play Development advised on 24th November 2023 that marketing will be done digitally and these will be shared with you to promote the schemes, it will be sent to all schools and used on FCC social media. They are also looking at a short film to promote the schemes that schools can show as part of their assemblies, but this is dependent on agreements and consent.

RESOLVED – that Darren Morris be asked to outline his plans to digitally market the 2024 Play Scheme’s

23/169 SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS –2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk outlined the expenditure and income for the 2023/24 financial year up to cheque number 003604.

2023/24 Financial Year	Actual	Anticipated	Difference
Income			
Precept	£41,333.33	£62,000.00	-£20,666.67
Refund VAT Flintshire County Council	£578.66	£0.00	£578.66
VAT Refund HMRC	£5,374.47	£500.00	£4,874.47
Bank Interest and Refund of Fees	£317.41	£30.00	£287.41
Total	£47,603.87	£62,530.00	-£14,926.13
Expenditure	Actual	Anticipated	Difference
Bank Charges	£89.15	£150.00	£60.85
Chairman's Fund	£100.00	£800.00	£700.00
Staffing Costs	£10,876.14	£14,848.00	£3,971.86
General Admin inc St Barts rental costs	£1,656.34	£4,395.00	£2,738.66
Insurances	£642.45	£650.00	£7.55
Play Schemes and New Play Equipment	£6,377.60	£11,378.00	£5,000.40
Street Furniture Repairs	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
Street Lighting	£22,045.20 (inc VAT £449.20)	£25,800.00(exc VAT)	£3,754.80
Council Web Site	£2,148.00 (inc VAT of £358.00) net £1790.00	£2,400.00(inc VAT)	£252.00
S137 - Grants	£1,250.00	£4,000.00	£2,750.00
School Milk - Section 137	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total	£45,184.88	£64,621.00	£19,436.12

Current Summary	Balance as at 1 st April 2023 including £25,000 contingency fund.	£41,104.96
	Total expenditure	£45,184.88
	Total income	£47,603.87
	Balance	£2,418.99
	Overall balance as at 11th December 2023	£43,523.95
End of Year Prediction	VAT Costs for 2023/24 financial year	£894.80
	Balance as at 1 st April 2023 including £25,000 contingency fund.	£41,104.96
	Total anticipated expenditure	£64,621.00
	Total anticipated income	£62,530.00
	Anticipated balance for the year	-£2,091.00
	Anticipated Overall Balance as at 31st March 2024	£ 39,013.96

23/170 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Councillor Shelley Webber referenced the Flintshire Domestic Energy Team and their current initiative.

23/171 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Concern about parking at the junction of Ferry Lane and Sealand Road. The County Councillor advised that she will see if she can action on this.

23/172 REQUEST FOR PUBLIC TO BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: - that in view of the special nature of the business to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public is excluded.

23/173 FINANCIAL REPORT – 2023/24 and 2024/25

The Clerk advised on the Financial Report as circulated: -

- a) that a precept is an order to the charging authority – Flintshire County Council to pay a requested sum to the precept authority – Sealand Community Council and that the schedule of payment from Flintshire County Council will be 3 equal instalments – on the last working days of April, August and December.
- b) the appropriate sum for the S137 Expenditure Limit for the purpose of Section 137 (4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the calculation of the Free Resource Base is based on the local population taken from the current electoral role. Welsh Government have advised that the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2024/25 is £10.81 per elector. The electoral role from Flintshire County Council at September 2023 was 2565. So, per elector produces a total of £27,727.65. Allocated spend for 2023/24 for Section 137 grants is £4,000. Section 137 payments so far in the 2023/24 financial year are for grant payments to the Sealand Primary School £1,000 and for the Earl Haig Poppy Appeal for £250.00.
- c) the Clerk is contracted for a working week of 16 hours. Payment is net with the Council deducting income tax at 40% on the full income and making payment to the HMRC. The Council also pays the employers National Insurance contribution to HMRC. Payroll being undertaken by Wainwrights Accountants.
- d) refer to Minute 21/80 – meeting 19th July 2021 - RESOLVED – that it be agreed that the Clerk should move to scale point 24 with effect from 1st April 2022 and then point 25 at 1st April 2023 and point 26 at 1st April 2024. Council also agreed under minute 21/80 that that with effect from 1st April 2022 that the home allowance payment is £312. Noting that the internal auditor advised on 22nd April 2021 that this amount is non-taxable.

The NALC pay award 2023/24 has been advised on by the LGA via One Voice Wales and to be implemented from 1st April 2023. Copies of the pay award details and salary scales were circulated to members of Council on 7th November 2023.

Based on contracted 16 hours worked the salary for 2024/25 on scale point 26 £34,834 will be

£15,063. Plus, the home working allowance of £312 = £15,375. All the above was noted by Council at its meeting on 20th November 2023 – minute ref 23/145.

- e) that IT expenses will be reimbursed by the Council.
- f) non-IT expenses incurred in carrying out his duties are also reimbursed. The expenditure being incurred on behalf of the Council as part of its administration and running cost, i.e. stamps and travelling expenses. NJC rate for Casual Users / HMRC approved mileage rate being paid for car mileage within Sealand and as required mileage to venues outside Sealand – £0.45p per mile.
- g) the estimated income for the current 2023/24 financial year is £68,130 and estimated expenditure is £60,121. The opening balance at 1 April 2023 was £41,105. The estimated opening balance at 1 April 2024 is £49,114 assuming all planned expenditure takes place which may not be the case.
- h) the precept for the 2023/24 financial year is £62,000

RESOLVED: - that the following funds be allocated.

Annual Subscriptions	£800
Audit Fees	£750
Bank Charges	£150
Chair's Fund	£800
Chain of Office - Engraving	£20
Clerk's salary and allowance.	£15,375
Conferences - attendance	£200
Council's Web Site inc VAT	£2,400
Data Protection Registration	£35
Defibrillator – Energy – Garden City	£75
Free Resource Fund – Grants	£3,035
Insurances	£650
Joint funded project play areas	£11,000
NI Employers contribution	£720
Playleader Scheme	£7,665
Postage / Mileage	£800
Printer, Computers repairs etc. and printer cartridges	£500
Stationery	£100
Street Furniture Repairs – Seats / Notice Boards	£200
Street Lighting – Energy - £5,000, Repairs & Maintenance £4,000 and Replacement / Adoption of 8 lights at Riverside Park and Cedar Close - £17,200 - VAT charged to maintenance	£26,200
Councillors and Clerks Training Costs	£500
Total	£71,975

23/174 PRECEPT 2024/25

The Clerk advised that the Council has an indicated estimated expenditure of £71,975 for the 2024/25 financial year. Estimated income excluding precept for the 2024/25 financial year is £2,500 – made up of HMRC VAT refund and bank interest. Estimated opening balance at 1st April 2024 is £49,114.

The Clerk advised that the County Council require the completion of a precept mandate form to be signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

Current year's precept – 2023/24 - £62,000
Current Tax Base of equivalent Band D properties is £1,458.01
The current Band D charge is £42.52

After much debate and consideration it was decided to agree on a Precept of £64,000

The precept for 2024/25 - £64,000
Tax Base for 2024/25 of equivalent band D properties is £1554.24
The band D charge for 2024/25 will be £41.18
The decrease in the band D charge amount is £1.34
The percentage decrease in the 2024/25 Band D charge compared to the 2023/24 B and D charge is 3.15 %

RESOLVED: - that –

- i) the precept for the 2024/25 financial year be agreed at £64,000.
- ii) Clerk be thanked for his usual excellent and informative and very clear financial report.

23/175 COUNCIL RESERVES – 2024/25

The Council's policy on Financial Reserves recommends an amount to be held in reserves for contingency purposes should be proportionately 6-9 months of gross expenditure – estimated expenditure for 2024/25 is £71,975 – 6 months is equivalent to £35,988

RESOLVED – that of the estimated carry forward of £49,114 at 1st April 2024 an amount of £25,000 will be held as a Contingency Reserve to assist cash flow in the event of unforeseen occurrences. The remaining funds being required to cover council expenditure until the first precept payment is made by Flintshire County Council during the 2024/25 financial year. The Council's Policy on Reserves will be amended accordingly.

23/176 DATE OF COUNCIL'S NEXT MEETING – 15th JANUARY 2024

**23/177 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT -
DECLARATION OF INTEREST - NONE**

The meeting opened at 6pm and closed at 7.50pm

..... Signed 15th January 2024