

**SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024 AT SEALAND COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, FARM ROAD, GARDEN CITY. CH5 2HH**

**PRESENT: Councillors:** Barbara Hinds (Acting Chair), Gwyneth Bullock, Christine Jones (County Councillor), Lionel Prouve, Mary Southall, Norman Jones, Linda Thomas, Alex Lewis and David Wisinger.

Ashley Griffiths – Clerk.

Peter Richmond – Retiring Clerk attending in an advisory capacity.

Councillor Norman Jones joined the meeting at 6.30pm

**23/254            APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Jean Fairbrother, Brian Ward and Shelley Webber.

**23/255            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.

**23/256            MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC**

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

**23/257            CHAIR'S REPORT AND ACTIONS SINCE 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024**

The Clerk conveyed a message from Mrs Maureen Jones thanking the Council for the kind donation on behalf of the members of Sealand Happy Group.

**23/258            MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

**23/259            CHAIR'S FUND 2023/24 AND 2024/25**

The Clerk reminded Council that the agreed spend for the Chair's Fund for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years is £800.00. Payments being made under expenditure powers - Ancillary Power Local Government Act 1972 (S1). The full allocation for 2023/24 was spent.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

**23/260**            **POLICE ISSUES**

**a)        Community Speed Watch**

The Clerk communicated a message from the new Speed Watch Coordinator Brian Ward asking if any other members of Council wanted to help with future speed watches.

**b)        PCSO Aled Hughes – 3292**

It was reported that Aled had recently visited the County Councillor to discuss many issues in Garden City and noted that he would like to do a joint speed watch with the local team because of the ongoing issues of speeding cars in the area.

Councillor Norman Jones advised that he had tried on a number of occasions to speak to PCSO Aled Hughes regarding recent issues.

RESOLVED – That PCSO Aled Hughes should contact Councillor Norman Jones regarding a number of issues.

**23/261**            **MATTERS REFERRED TO FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**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 Council that the new A frames have been targeted and illegal attempts to remove them have triggered Flintshire County Council to repair the newly installed fixings.

RESOLVED – That an email of support should be sent to Mike Taylor regarding the Councils stance on keeping A frames in the area.

**b)        Dandy's Top Soil – Sealand Road**

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Matthew Linford – Planning Enforcement Officer advised that he understands that all the previous unauthorised development on site has either been removed or regularised through planning applications / lawful development certificates. Matthew will however go out and look at the site and confirm this.

The County Councillor advised that she awaits a progress report from Matthew and the Council are also awaiting a reply from Matthew Linford dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**c) Sealand Ditches**

**i) Main River watercourse adjacent to Dandy's.**

Neil has reported to NRW possible impedance and culverting of the Main River watercourse adjacent to Dandy's. He is aware that NRW have undertaken an inspection but he has not yet been advised of the outcome of that inspection.

RESOLVED – That Neil Parry be advised that Council are concerned about the length of time it is taken for NRW to produce such report.

**ii) Main River watercourse located in England which crosses beneath Seahill Road.**

Neil informed Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 that he is engaging in meaningful dialogue with land owners on the border and will update Council following a site inspection.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

**iii) Stuart Banks.**

Neil is still in the process of arranging a meeting with Stuart Banks.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

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

Glyn Jones reported on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 that there is nothing further to add on this matter and he is awaiting a response from the agent to then advice Council on.

RESOLVED – That Glyn Jones be advised that Council is concerned about the dreadful state of the side access which is dangerous for both members of the public crossing the access and for vehicles using it. The Council would like an update on a time scale on engagement with the applicant, via the agent to remedy the current issue.

**e) Damaged fencing – Cycle Bridge – A494**

NMWTRA have informed Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 that a temporary repair has been made while the Agent develops a design for a permanent repair to the fencing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**f) Sealand Road – A548 – Extend Street Lighting**

There was no report.

RESOLVED – That Darrel be asked for an update on the Police report.

**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 Mike be questioned on any funding collaborations with the current owners of the Clock tower.

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

Councillor Mary Southall informed Council that a temporary fix to the current pot holes have been completed.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

**i) Problem with Trees- Orchard Way and North Green at Sealand Manor**

The County Councillor and Councillor Gwyneth Bullock have met the Housing Officer on Orchard Way and Chris Povey is monitoring the current state of the trees.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

**j) Foxes Lane – Underpass - Water leakage and Graffiti**

This has been referred to Wayne Jones – StreetScene.

RESOLVED – That Council would like a site visit with Wayne Jones to discuss the ongoing issues regarding the underpass.

**K) Garden City – Dog faeces bag dispensers**

The two County Councillors reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 that after a walkabout in the community that dog bag dispensers would be a good idea to clean up the area. The Clerk reported that Council could purchase dispensers under Section 137 of the Local Govt Act 1972.

RESOLVED: That –

i) Councillor Linda Thomas will convey with Council in the near future the data on how successful dog faeces dispensers work in Hawarden and Ewloe.

ii) Bob Nicholson of NPL Ltd be asked if a dog faeces bin can be erected on the Pochins development.

**23/262 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. These will be the 6 remaining lights at Riverside Park and 2 at Cedar Close. Then leaving 33 to be replaced and adopted. 12 years ago, the Council had 169 lights.

5<sup>th</sup> April 2024 the Clerk and Peter Richmond - Retiring Clerk attending in an advisory capacity had a joint site visit with Dylan Williams to discuss the 8 lights being replaced in 2024/25. All current 41 lights are working.

RESOLVED – That Dylan be asked to inform Council on the charges to replace the 8 lights.

**23/263                    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 December 2023 was 2596. So, per elector produces a total of £28,062.76.

Spend in 2023/24 so far is £1,900.00 - Sealand Primary School £1,500, Earl Haig Poppy Appeal £250.00, and St. Bartholomew’s Church - £150.00.

Allocation for 2024/25 is £3,035.00

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**23/264                    PROVISION OF NOTICE BOARDS – PRAXIS AND POCHINS**

Councillor Linda Thomas has the key for the Praxis notice board and the Clerk is awaiting to receive the key for the Pochins notice board due to manufacturing issue.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**23/265                    PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

PA Number	Application details	Location
FUL/000209/24	The redevelopment of the former hotel site to provide 4 no. food and retail units falling within use class A1 and A3, together with landscaping, car parking and site signage	Former Gateway to Wales Hotel, Welsh Road, Garden City, Deeside, CH5 2HX
FUL/000144/24	Proposed installation of SR1 powder coated black rated mesh fencing to the boundary and two cantilever gates at the vehicular entrances to the facility	AkzoNobel, UNIT 101, Tenth Avenue, Sealand, Deeside, CH5 2UA
FUL/000226/24	Application for Removal or Variation of Conditions 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 following Planning Permission 063591	Former Corus Site, Northern Gateway, Welsh Road, Garden City, Deeside, CH5 2RD

RESOLVED – that –

i) Objections be raised in respect of the above planning application - FUL/000209/24 on the grounds that the application has not been amended since the council last objected to the application.

a) On the grounds that the proposal will increase traffic flows leading to potential road safety problems with its nearness to the traffic roundabout and bus stop.

b) The entrance to the site is of course the same entrance as used by the former Gateway to Wales Hotel, however, there is now more traffic using this roundabout than in the past.

c) The proposed development potentially may cause traffic queues that could prove a danger to traffic leaving the dual carriageway to enter Welsh Road.

d) Improvement is needed to the current entrance and exit for the proposed site if this development is to go ahead.

ii) That no objections be raised in respect to FUL/000144/24 and FUL/000226/24.

## 23/266 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 £10.40 - re £7.00 per month with an additional charge of 4 cheques x £0.85 = £3.40.

Cheque No	Payable to	Details	Amount	VAT	Vat Code	Expenditure Powers
003621	Jolora LTD	Web Site Maintenance	£384.00	£64.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003622	Wainwrights Accountants	Annual Payroll Charge, Nest Pension Set Up, Management of Pension	£474.00	£79.00	932721925	Local Govt Act 1972 (S111))
003623	Ashley Griffiths	April 2024 Salary etc	£946.64			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
003624	Peter Richmond	April 2024 Salary etc	£809.51			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
003625	HMRC	Income Tax - NI	£879.00			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
<b>Total Spend</b>			<b>£3,494.15</b>	<b>£143.00</b>		

**23/267**            **INCOME**

Lloyds Bank	Interest payment	£51.81
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>£51.81</b>

RESOLVED – That the income be noted.

**23/268**            **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no additional correspondence to report on.

**23/269**            **FRIENDS OF SEALAND –ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S CHURCH**

There was no report.

**23/270**            **WELSH ROAD SKATE FACILITY**

At the Annual Finance Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Council resolved to allocate £11,000 to jointly fund the skate ramps outlined by Richard Roberts – AURA - Play Design Officer in the 2024/25 financial year. Richard Roberts has been advised of Council’s decision. Richard responded on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 for the project to go ahead is subject to the County Council continuing the match-funding scheme in 2024/25 the County Council normally finalises its budget in mid-February so Aura’s funding for 2024/25 should be confirmed shortly after and subject to the maximum limit for match-funding contributions which may change in 2024/25.

RESOLVED – That Richard Roberts be asked to advise Council on the process of match funding per Aura’s funding for 2024-25.

**23/271**            **PLAY SCHEMES - 2024**

There was no report.

**23/272**            **CLERK’S RESIGNATION AND RETIREMENT**

The new Clerk appointed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 has taken the full lead on all work with Peter Richmond the retiring Clerk providing transitional support for a period of two months. This means that there will be two paid clerks for the given period. Peter Richmond retiring Clerk announced that Wainwright Accountants advised that the new Clerk will need to be automatically enrolled into a pension scheme either by the payroll provider or council may prefer to manage the scheme.

Wainwright Accountants previously noted that if the Council were to use them, they would enrol the Clerk into a NEST pension scheme and the charge to do this is £100+VAT and If the employee stays in the scheme, they can manage the monthly pension submissions for £240+VAT per year.

Kelly Hutchinson- Wainwrights Accountants advised Council on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 that as the new Clerk is over 22 and earns over £833 per month, he automatically gets enrolled into a workplace pension, with regards to the Auto Enrolment Pension Scheme, there are lots of difference pension providers out there. Most of our clients use NEST as it is a scheme set up by the government and is a public

corporation of the Dept of Work and Pensions. Furthermore, the employee pays a minimum of 5% of their qualifying earnings (earnings over £520) into the scheme which is deducted from their pay (only 4% is deducted and the other 1% is paid into the pension by the government) and then the employer must pay a minimum of 3%. The contributions are paid forward to NEST each month by Direct Debit.

The Clerk advised Council that due to the 2008 Pensions Act, Wainwright Accountants have automatically enrolled him into the Nest pension Scheme with the provider running the scheme by submitting the schedules each month and submitting the payment which will then debit the account on or around 10th of each month (April's pension contributions will debit the account around 10th May).

RESOLVED – That -

- i) The outlined pension arrangements for the new Clerk be noted.
- ii) The Clerk should set up the required direct debits arrangements with Wainwright Accountants for the pension scheme.

**23/273                    SEALAND COMMUNITY FLOOD PLAN AND FLOOD WARDENS**

Councillors Mary Southall and Gwyneth Bullock whom attended the Flood Volunteer event on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2024 in Llandudno Junction reported that the event was very informative and stated that the Sealand area is needs more flood wardens and any prospective community member wanting to volunteer can get in touch with Councillor Shelley Webber who will be holding a 30-minute meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 5:30 PM.

RESOLVED – That Gwenno be emailed in regards to reimbursement for expenses to and from the venue.

**23/274                    SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS –2023/24 AND 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEARS**

The Clerk outlined the expenditure and income for the 2023/24 financial year and for the 2024/25 financial year up to cheque number 003625.

<b>2023/24 Financial Year</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Anticipated</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Precept	£62,000.00	£62,000.00	£0.00
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	£524.67	£30.00	£494.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>£68,477.80</b>	<b>£62,530.00</b>	<b>£5,947.80</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Anticipated</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Bank Charges	£128.00	£150.00	£22.00



Chairman's Fund	£800.00	£800.00	£0.00
Staffing Costs	£15,488.30	£14,848.00	-£640.30
General Admin inc St Barts rental costs	£2,066.43	£4,395.00	£2,328.57
Insurances	£642.45	£650.00	£7.55
Play Schemes and New Play Equipment	£7,477.60	£11,378.00	£3,900.40
Street Furniture Repairs	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
Street Lighting	£22,596.10	£25,800.00 (exc VAT)	£3,203.90
Council Web Site	£2,532.00	£2,400.00 (inc VAT)	- £132.00
S137 - Grants	£1,900.00	£4,000.00	£2,100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£53,630.88</b>	<b>£64,621.00</b>	<b>£10,990.12</b>

Current Summary	Balance as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023 including £25,000 contingency fund.	£41,104.96
	Total expenditure	£53,630.88
	Total income	£68,477.80
	Balance	£14,846.92
	<b>Overall balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>£55,951.88</b>
	VAT Costs for 2023/24 financial year	£1,050.52
End of Year Prediction	Balance as at 1 <sup>st</sup> 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
	<b>Anticipated Overall Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>£ 39,013.96</b>

**2024/25 Financial Year**

		<b>Actual</b>	<b>Anticipated</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Income	Precept	£0.00	£64,000.00	-£64,000.00
	Bank Interest and Refund of Fees	£0.00	£500.00	-£500.00
	VAT Refund HMRC	£0.00	£2,000.00	-£2,000.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£66,500.00</b>	<b>-£66,500.00</b>

		<b>Actual</b>	<b>Agreed Spend</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Expenditure	Bank Charges	£10.40	£150.00	£139.60
	Chairman's Fund	£0.00	£800.00	£800.00
	Staffing Costs	£2,546.09	£15,375.00	£12,828.91
	General Admin etc	£563.06	£4,500.00	£3,936.94
	Insurances	£0.00	£650.00	£650.00
	Play Schemes and New Play			
	Equipment	£0.00	£18,665.00	£18,665.00
	Street Furniture Repairs	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
	Street Lighting	£0.00	£26,200.00	£26,200.00
	Council Web Site	£384.00	£2,400.00	£2,016.00
	S137 - Grants	£0.00	£3,035.00	£3,035.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,503.55</b>	<b>£71,975.00</b>	<b>£68,471.45</b>

Current Summary	<b>Balance 1st April 2024 inc £25,000 contingency fund</b>	<b>£55,951.88</b>
	Total Expenditure	£3,503.55
	Total Income	£0.00
	Balance	-£3,503.55
	<b>Balance as at 15th April 2024</b>	<b>£52,448.33</b>
	<b>VAT Costs for 2023/24 Financial Year</b>	<b>£143.00</b>

End of Year Prediction	Balance as at 1st April 2024	£55,951.88
	Total Anticipated Expenditure	£71,975.00
	Total Anticipated Income	£66,500.00
	Balance Expenditure compared with income at 31st March 2024	-£5,475.00
	<b>Anticipated Closing Balance as at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>£50,476.88</b>

**23/275**

**SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL – BANK RECONCILIATION –**  
**31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024**

In line with Council’s Financial Regulations and audit requirements the Clerk submits details of the Council’s overall bank balances in respect of – as at 30th June, 30th September, 31st December and 31st March each year.

Account - no 0388217 – £11,793.05 - Account - no – 7326098 - £45,042.83 Total - £56,835.88

Unpaid - Cheque number	Payable to	Amount - £
003614	Jolora Ltd	384.00
003616	Information Commissioner	40.00
003619	Sealand Happy Group	100.00
003620	Sealand Primary School	360.00
Total		884.00

Total bank accounts – £56,835.88 less unpaid cheques of £884.00 as outlined above leaves a net balance of £55,951.88. This amount cross references with the summary of income and expenditure report as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

The Chair signed two hard copies of the bank reconciliation statements.

RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.

**23/276**

**INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Clerk outlined the requirement to Council for the internal audit and referred to the audit form that has been completed with the retiring Clerk to members of council for information on the way the Audit is conducted. It is required to include various working papers and documentation, failure to do so may result in a delay in completing council’s internal audit and additional audit costs. Subsequently this could possibly delay the External Audit.

The Clerk advised Council that he had submitted the Audit check list form, Annual return and uploaded a variety of documents to the online portal for JDH Business Services Ltd on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and will be handing additional documents for the internal audit on 25th April 2024.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**23/277**

**EXTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN – 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Clerk gave an overview of the requirement to council for the external audit noting that the documents can be delivered by hand to South Wales or sent via recorded delivery with a deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and mandated the council to publish an audit notice by the 16<sup>th</sup> of June on all notice boards and council website for a period of 14 calendar days, after the forementioned period it is the requirement of council to allow the electors 20 days of inspection from the 1<sup>st</sup> July to the 26<sup>th</sup> of July. Section 30 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004 gives the rights of the elector to inspect the councils accounts.

The clerk received the audit notice 2024 for the audit of accounts and noted to council that he will send the relevant documents to the auditors in the near future after he has received the internal audit

back and outlined the accounts for Council in the Local Council for Wales Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### **Annual governance statement – Part 1**

We acknowledge as the members of the Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 as outlined by the Clerk.

#### **Expenditure under S137 Local Government Act 1972 and S2 Local Government Act 2000**

Section 137(1) of the 1972 Act permits the Council to spend on activities for which it has no other specific powers if the Council considers that the expenditure is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, the area or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants, providing that the benefit is commensurate with the expenditure. Section 137(3) also permits the Council to incur expenditure for certain charitable and other purposes. The maximum expenditure that can be incurred under both section 137(1) and (3) for the financial year 2023-24 was £9.93 per elector.

In 2023-24, the Council made payments totalling £1,900 under section 137. These payments are included within 'Other payments' in the Accounting Statement.

The Clerk advised that the report / Annual Return will again be presented to Council following completion of the internal audit. Following certification by the Responsible Financial Officer the Council is required to approve the Annual Governance Statement Part 2

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **23/278            PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR**

A form for completion concerning the 2024/25 financial year has been circulated by the Clerk to all 13 Councillors. 11 Councillors have signed the forms advising that they have declined the payments this leaves 2 Councillors to complete and sign the form – Councillors Jean Fairbrother and Norman Jones.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### **23/279            MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

#### **23/280            MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

#### **23/281            DATE OF COUNCIL'S NEXT MEETING – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

#### **23/282            IN ACCORDANCE WITH SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATION OF INTEREST - NONE**

The meeting opened at 6pm and closed at 7.58pm.

..... Signed    20<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
Chair of the Council