

SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DECISIONS SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL FINANCE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 16th DECEMBER 2024 AT SEALAND COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, FARM ROAD, GARDEN CITY. CH5 2HH

PRESENT: Councillors: Barbara Hinds (Chair), Christine Jones (County Councillor), David Wisinger (Vice-Chair), Brian Ward, Mary Southall, Gwyneth Bullock, Lionel Prouvé and Norman Jones.

Four members of the public.

Jane Parry – Headteacher – Sealand Primary School.

Ashley Griffiths – Clerk and Financial Officer.

24/172 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Linda Thomas, Shelley Webber, Alex Lewis, and Jean Fairbrother.

RESOLVED – that the apologies be received and accepted.

24/174 NOTICE UNDER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 (Section 87 (2))

VACANCY FOR ONE COUNCILLOR

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) advised that Flintshire County Council had informed him that no request for an election had been received within fourteen days of the original Notice date, and it is for the Council to fill the vacancy by co-option. Council is required to give public notice of co-option in accordance with Section 116 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Council agreed to readvertise the public notice of co-option for the week commencing the 23rd day of September, which will be advertised until the 13th day of October per the recommendation of the Democratic Services department of Flintshire County Council. This was emailed to Council members, attached to the notice boards, and added to the Council's website.

RESOLVED – that the Clerk liaised with Flintshire County Council regarding readvertising the co-option notice and had clarification on how to proceed with a further readvertisement.

24/179 CHAIR'S FUND 2024/25

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) reminded the Council that the agreed spend for the Chair's Fund for the 2024/25 financial years is £800.00. Payments are being made under expenditure powers—Ancillary Power Local Government Act 1972 (S1). At the September, 16th 2024 meeting Minute Number 24/97, it was agreed that the Chair's Fund should cover the refreshments at St Bartholomew's Church for the Remembrance Service on Sunday, November 10th at 10:30 AM and the Christmas Concert on Wednesday, December 18th at 7:00 PM.

The Chair proposed that a payment of £50.00 from the Chairs Fund be approved for each of the following groups: Sealand Happy Group, Eye 2 Eye Social Group, 50 Plus Action Group (Flintshire), Flint Ladies Choir (who will be attending the Christmas Celebration event at St. Barts), Sealand C.P School, and St. Bartholomew's Community Hub.

RESOLVED – that £50.00 from the Chairs Fund be approved for each of the following groups:

Sealand Happy Group.

Eye 2 Eye Social Group.

50 Plus Action Group. (Flintshire)

Sealand C.P School.

St. Bartholomew's Community Hub.

Flint Ladies Choir. (who will be attending the Christmas Celebration event at St. Bartholomew's Church)

Spent so far - £350.00.

24/183 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 has advised that the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2024/25 is £10.81 per elector. The electoral roll from Flintshire County Council was 2538 in December 2022. So, per elector produces a total of £28,062.76.

The Allocated spend in 2024/25 is Section 137 grants of £3,035.00 and for school milk £0.00.ing

Spending in 2024/25 so far is £300.00.

A grant request has been received from Sealand C.P. School for funds to aid educational trips as part of the school curriculum. Up-to-date copies of bank statements have been provided.

RESOLVED – that in accordance with Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1971 that, the Council should award a grant of £1000 to Sealand C.P School, which is in the best interests of the area and its inhabitants.

Councillors Christine Jones and David Wisinger declared an interest regarding the grant payment to Sealand C.P. School.

24/185 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 £12.95 - re £7.00 per month with an additional charge of 7 cheques x £0.85 = £5.95.

Cheque No	Payable to	Details	Amount	VAT	Vat Code	Expenditure Powers
Direct Debit Payment	NEST	Pension	£46.90			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)

003661	Jo-Lora Ltd	Website standard Hosting package/dom ain name renewal	£228.00	£38.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003662	Jo-Lora Ltd	Website Maintenance – 2 months	£384.00	£64.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003663	Ashley Griffiths	Stationary refund	£16.00			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
003664	Ashley Griffiths	December 2024 Salary, etc.	£962.16			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
003665	Sealand Happy Group	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)
003666	Eye 2 Eye Social Group	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)
003667	50 Plus Action Group (Flintshire)	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)

003668	St. Bartholomew's Community Hub	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)
003669	Sealand C.P School	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)
003670	Raised in Error					
003671	Sealand C.P School	Grant Payment	£1000.00			Section 137 of the Local Govt Act 1971
003672	Flint Ladies Choir	Payment from the chairs fund 2024/25	£50.00			Ancillary Power Local Govt Act 1972 (S1)
Total Spend			£2,937.06	£102.00		

24/191 SEALAND MANOR PLAY AREA

Richard Robert (Play Design Officer) informed the Council on November 18, 2024, that the tyre swing at Sealand Manor play area is over 26 years old, uneconomic to continue to maintain, and requires replacement. The proposal is to provide a new tyre swing utilising the existing play bark surface; the cost to install this is £2000, making the total £8,315.00. Match funding for Sealand Community Council would be £4000 from the 2024/25 financial year.

RESOLVED— that Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) will notify Richard Roberts (Play Design Officer) of the Council's decision to match fund the replacement of the new tyre swing.

24/195 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2024

The Local Government Association informed One Voice Wales that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and encourages employers to implement this pay award as soon as possible. Copies of the pay award details and salary scales were circulated to members of the Council on October 29, 2024.

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. Council also agreed under minute 21/80 that

from effect from 1st April 2022, the home allowance payment is £312. Noting that the internal auditor advised on the 22nd April 2021 that this amount is non- taxable.

RESOLVED – that the Council agreed to implement the pay award and backdate the retired clerk in line with the NJC agreement. Wainwright Accountants should be notified of this amendment to the payroll.

24/201 FINANCIAL REPORT- 2024/25 AND 2025/26

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 precepting authority – Sealand Community Council, and that the schedule of payment from Flintshire County Council will be three 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. The Welsh Government advised that the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2024/25 was £10.81 per elector.

Welsh Government has advised that the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2025/26 is £11.10 per elector. Flintshire County Council confirmed the electorate as of the end of November 2024 was 2733. So, per elector produces a total of £30,336.30.

The allocated spend for 2024/25 for Section 137 grants is £3,035.00. Section 137 payments so far in the 2024/25 financial year are grant payments to Sealand Happy Group for £150.00, 50 Plus Action Group for £150.00, the Earl Haig Poppy Appeal for £200.00, and Eye 2 Eye Social Club for £150.00.

- c) The clerk is contracted for a 16-hour working week. Payment is net, with the Council deducting income tax at 20% on the full income and making payment to HMRC. The Council also pays the employer's National Insurance contribution to HMRC and the NEST Pension scheme, agreed under Minute 23/272. Wainwrights Accountants is undertaking payroll.
- 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.

Council also agreed under minute 21/80 that the home allowance payment will be £ 312 with effect from 1 April 2022, noting that the internal auditor advised on 22 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 will be implemented on 1 April 2023. Copies of the pay award details and salary scales were circulated to members of the Council on 7 November 2023.

Based on the 16 hours worked in the contract, the salary for 2025/26, on a scale of 24, £33,024, will be £14,280.65. Plus, the home working allowance of £312 = £14,592.65.

The Council noted all the above at its meeting on 20 November 2023—minute ref 23/145 and the meeting held on 15 April 2024—minute ref 23/272.

- 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 is incurred on behalf of the Council as part of its administration and running costs, 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 2024/25 financial year is £66,500.00, and the estimated expenditure is £68,125. The opening balance at 1 April 2024 was £55,951.88, including £25,000 contingency fund.

The estimated opening balance at 1 April 2025 is £57,594.94, assuming all planned expenditure occurs, which may not be the case.

- h) the precept for the 2024/25 financial year is £64,000.00

RESOLVED – that the following funds be allocated.

Annual Subscriptions	£850.00
Audit Fees	£775.00
Bank Charges	£150.00
Chair's Fund	£800.00
Chain of Office - Engraving	£20.00
Clerk's salary and allowance.	£14,592.65
Conferences - attendance	£200.00
Council's Web Site inc VAT	£2,400
Clerks Pension	£241.20
Data Protection Registration	£40.00
Defibrillator – Energy – Garden City	£75.00
Free Resource Fund – Grants	£3035.00
Insurances	£650.00
Joint-funded project play areas	£8,000
NI Employers contribution	£715.44
Playleader Scheme	£8,813.00
Postage / Mileage	£500.00
Printer, Computers repairs, etc., and printer cartridges	£200.00
Stationery	£150.00
Street Furniture Repairs – Seats / Notice Boards	£200.00
Street Lighting – Energy - £5,000, Repairs & Maintenance £3500 and Replacement / Adoption of 9 lights and - £20,250. VAT charged for maintenance	£28,750

Councillors and Clerks Training Costs	£500.00
Full Total	£71,657.29

24/202 PRECEPT 2025/26

The Clerk advised that the Council has an indicated estimated expenditure of £71,657.29 for the 2025/26 financial year. Estimated income excluding precept for the 2025/26 financial year is £1,525.10, which includes HMRC VAT refund and bank interest. The estimated opening balance on 1st April 2025 is £57,594.94.

The Clerk advised that Flintshire County Council requires the completion of a precept mandate form, which must be signed by the chairperson and the Clerk and returned by January 28, 2025.

Current year's precept – 2024/25- £64,000

The current Tax Base of equivalent Band D properties is £1,554.24

The current Band D charge is £41.18

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

The precept for 2025/26 - £64,000

Tax Base for 2025/2 of equivalent Band D properties is £1,564.80

The band D charge for 2025/26 will be £40.90

The decrease in the Band D charge amount is £0.28

The percentage decrease in the 2025/26 Band D charge compared to the 2024/25 Band D charge is 0.67%

RESOLVED: - that –

- i) the precept for the 2025/26 financial year be agreed upon at £64,000.
- ii) the Clerk be thanked for his clear and concise explanation of the financial report.

24/203 COUNCIL RESERVES 2025/26

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 2025/26 is £71,657.29 – 6 months is equivalent to £35,828.65

RESOLVED – that of the estimated carry forward of £57,594.94 at 1st April 2025, £25,000 should be held as a Contingency Reserve to assist cash flow in the event of unforeseen occurrences. The remaining funds are required to cover council expenditures until Flintshire County Council makes the first precept payment during the 2025/26 financial year. The Council's Policy on Reserves will need to be amended accordingly

24/204 DATE OF COUNCIL'S NEXT MEETING – 20th January 2025.

24/205 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

DECLARATION OF INTEREST— Two Council members declared an interest to the Council.

Cllr Christine Jones declared an interest in minute numbers 24/181 (c) and 24/183.

Cllr David Wisinger declared an interest in minute number 24/183.

The meeting opened at 5:30 pm and closed at 8:50 pm.

..... Signed 20th January 2025

Barbara Hinds, Chair of the Council