

SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 28th APRIL 2025 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, Bob James, and Alex Lewis.

Others: Robin Davies – Headteacher – Sealand Primary School.

One member of the public.

Two Members of GWELLA (Flintshire Libraries and Leisure Limited).

Officer: Ashley Griffiths – Clerk and Financial Officer.

24/301 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Shelley Webber, Jean Fairbrother, Linda Thomas, Gwyneth Bullock, Norman Jones and Lionel Prouvé.

RESOLVED – that the apologies be received and accepted.

24/302 GWELLA INTRODUCTION

GWELLA formally presented themselves to the Council and initiated a dialogue regarding the local community's needs, priorities, and aspirations. The discussion encompassed an overview of existing community facilities and an invitation for the council to provide informed feedback. This feedback will assist GWELLA in developing a comprehensive understanding of the area and facilitate a community focus group with whoever would like to be involved.

The focus group's purpose is to explore strategies for encouraging active lifestyles, identify opportunities for securing funding through various initiatives, and strengthen relationships between local businesses and the wider community.

This area has been selected as a focal point for GWELLA's community engagement efforts. To date, an initial consultation event has been convened and attended by over 60 residents. It has provided valuable insights into community needs and interests.

RESOLVED— that the report be noted.

24/303 IN-HOUSE TRAINING

A significant number of Council members engaged in a comprehensive session focused on diversity and inclusion to deepen their understanding and enhance their knowledge in these critical areas.

24/304 SEALAND COMMUNITY FLOOD PLAN AND FLOOD WARDENS

The Council received several NRW flood management documents that Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) circulated to various members of the flood warden team for review until the requested marketing material is delivered.

RESOLVED – that Gwenno be contacted to organise a hybrid meeting once the remaining NRW material is delivered.

24/305 RECYCLING AND WASTE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE

Chris Cunningham, Recycling, Compliance, and Data Officer, reported to the Council that a team would be assigned to present detailed updates on the new three-week bin collection system to local community groups. The Council recognised this as valuable; consequently, the Council recommended that attending a Council meeting would be beneficial.

The Flintshire County Council, Streetscene, and Transportation Team outlined the key updates, including the new three-weekly bin collection system from the 28th day of April 2025, with collections on Wednesday and Thursday in the Garden City area and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the areas of Sealand:

Garden Waste: The garden waste collection will remain unchanged and continue fortnightly between March and November.

- Domestic Waste Collections: Domestic waste collections will transition to a three-weekly schedule instead of every two weeks.
- Nappy and absorbent hygiene products and clinical waste will remain unchanged and continue to be collected weekly.
- Recycling Collections: Recycling collections will continue to be collected weekly.
- Saturday Collections: Saturday collections will be discontinued and redistributed from Monday to Friday.

RESOLVED— that the report be noted.

24/306 CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION

RESOLVED - that it should be noted that one declaration of interest during the meeting was made: -

Cllr Christine Jones declared an interest in minute number 24/312 (b).

24/307 MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) had not received a request to hold a hybrid meeting.

24/308 CHAIR'S REPORT AND ACTIONS SINCE 17th MARCH 2025

Barbara Hinds (Chair) formally reported that the scheduled monthly meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk was duly convened, with all designated attendees present. The meeting provided an opportunity to deliberate on a range of administrative matters.

These meetings have proven to be a constructive forum for coordination and strategic oversight, and I trust they will continue to serve the same purpose under the incoming Chair's stewardship. I sincerely hope the practice will be maintained to ensure continuity, collaboration, and efficiency.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

24/309 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2025

RESOLVED—that the minutes of the Council meeting held on March 17th, 2025, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

24/310 CHAIR'S FUND 2024/25 AND 2025/26

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) reminded the Council that the agreed spend for the Chair's Fund for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial year is £800.00. Payments are being made under expenditure powers—Ancillary Power Local Government Act 1972 (S1). The full allocation for the 2024/25 was spent.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

24/311 POLICE ISSUES

a) Community Speed Watch

There was no report.

b) PCSO Aled Hughes – 3292

There was no report.

24/312 MATTERS REFERRED TO FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

a) Sealand Ditches

i) The Main River watercourse is adjacent to Dandy's.

Neil Parry (Project Engineer, Flintshire County Council) reported to the Council on April 28, 2025, that all previously identified impediments have been addressed. Nevertheless, he has requested external clarification from NRW concerning the installation of the piped drainage system and is awaiting their response.

RESOLVED – that Neil Parry will be asked for a report on the piped drainage system.

ii) The main river watercourse is located in England and crosses beneath Seahill Road.

Neil Parry, Project Engineer (Flintshire County Council), informed the Council on April 28, 2025, that he had visited the site and met with NRW regarding the impediments within the main river watercourse. He intends to re-establish communication with NRW to request a formal site survey update.

RESOLVED – that Neil Parry will be asked for the NRW report once the survey has been completed.

iii) Banks Farm

Neil Parry, Project Engineer (Flintshire County Council), informed the Council on April 28, 2025, that he had inspected the watercourse at one of the landowners' sites and observed that one section had been cleared of all impediments. He will contact the landowner for further information on the impediments.

RESOLVED – that Neil Parry be requested to provide a further update on the impediments.

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

Glyn Jones, Flintshire County Council (Chief Officer, Planning, Environment, and Economy), reported to the Council on March 17, 2025, that Flintshire County Council attempts to seek a reasonable address of any issues without the need to resort to formal action. However, where our reasonable attempts do

not yield the desired outcome, we will pursue formal action where it is expedient. Further correspondence will be reported in due course.

Cllr Christine Jones declared an interest regarding the condition of the side access to the Spar Shop.

RESOLVED— that Glyn Jones be asked to provide a timeline for the progress of the ongoing legal issues.

c) Sealand Road – A548 – Extend Street Lighting

Lee Shone, Streetscene Officer (Flintshire County Council), reported to the Council on November 18, 2024, that he has compiled a shortlist of funding areas within the ward for extended street lighting in collaboration with the Welsh Government. He informed the Council that this particular area has been added to the shortlist and clarified that the criteria for such street lighting consider road traffic incidents.

RESOLVED – that Lee Shone be requested to provide an update on the shortlist.

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

Mike Taylor, Senior Coastal Ranger (Flintshire County Council), informed the Council on April 28, 2025, that round 2 of the UK SPS Fund is scheduled to commence imminently. He has thoroughly reviewed the funds allocated for the benches in question and is currently getting quotations for similar benches installed along the coastal path. Along with a possible collaboration with Wilson Auctions. The Council has agreed that the seat formerly situated between the two road bridges should replace one of the four existing seats, as mentioned above. Wayne Jones, Flintshire County Council (Streetscene Officer), has advised that he is waiting for Mike Taylor regarding the funding.

RESOLVED – that Mike Taylor be requested to provide a further update on the progress of the quotations and funding.

e) Problem with Trees- Orchard Way and North Green/South Green at Sealand Manor

Councillor Christine Jones reported to the Council that Alex Philips (Housing Officer) will schedule a walkabout to examine the trees on Sealand Manor and Orchard Way.

RESOLVED—Alex Philips (Housing Officer) be requested to provide a comprehensive report regarding the tree inspection and the removal of the tree stump on Orchard Way.

f) Foxes Lane – Underpass - Water leakage and Graffiti

Wayne Jones, Streetscene Officer (Flintshire County Council), informed the Council on January 14th that he would investigate this issue further. However, he conveyed that during his last inspection, groundwater was present due to the very high-water table resulting from current conditions.

RESOLVED—that Ken Skates (Cabinet Secretary for Transport) be asked for a further update on the site inspection and that Wayne Jones be informed that an inspection is needed and arrangements be made for the underpass to be jet washed.

g) Garden City - HGV Issues

Councillor Christine Jones updated the Council regarding safety measures in Garden City, informing the Council that more prominent signage has been ordered in response to concerns about HGV vehicles and the size of the temporary signage.

RESOLVED— that Ian Bushell (Streetscene Maintenance Manager for South and Structures) be asked to amend the signage on the Garden City Industrial Estate.

h) Ferry Lane Footbridge

Robin Nursaw (Streetscene Maintenance Management Team) informed the Council on March 24, 2025, that a specialist consultant will have to be appointed to provide a detailed report on the footbridge's ongoing issues. The previous report was not available.

RESOLVED— that Ian Bushell be asked for an update and clarification on who replaced Robin Nurshaw.

i) Pavements - Sealand

Barbara Hinds (Chair) informed the Council that many pavements around Sealand have overgrown branches and moss covering the pathway, which can be dangerous during winter.

RESOLVED— that the Council will contact Wayne Jones, Flintshire County Council (Streetscene Officer).

j) Banks Farm

Brian Ward reported to the Council that heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) associated with a local commercial enterprise have been observed engaging in hazardous conduct, specifically competing in speed along Sealand Road following their departure from the premises.

RESOLVED— that the Council will contact Glyn Jones, Flintshire County Council (Chief Officer, Planning, Environment, and Economy) regarding the matter.

24/313 COUNCIL'S STREET LIGHTING

Dylan Williams (Street Lighting Team Leader) has been asked to advise the Council on several of the selected replacement lights for the 2025-26 financial year.

All 33 of the current street lights are working.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted

24/314 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.

Spending in 2024/25 so far is £1650.00 – Sealand Happy Group £150.00, 50 Plus Action Group £150.00, Earl Haig Poppy Appeal £200.00, Eye 2 Eye £150.00, and Sealand County Primary School £1000.00.

The allocated spending in 2025/26 is Section 137 grants of £3,035.00.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

24/315 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

PA Number	Application details	Location
FUL/000056/25	The erection of two single-storey units and alterations to the associated bay layout	Plot A, The Airfields, Northern Gateway, Sealand, Flintshire, CH5 2RD.
FUL/000269/25	New single-storey rear extension, associated internal works and demolition of large existing conservatory. New solar panels for the main front and rear pitched roofs, and battery storage in the garage space.	1, St Bartholomews Court, Sealand, Deeside, CH5 2QT.

RESOLVED – that –

No objections be raised in respect of the above planning applications - FUL/000056/25 & FUL/000269/25.

24/316 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 (28/03/2025) is £16.50 - re £8.50 per month with an additional charge of 8 cheques x £1.00 = £8.00.

Cheque No	Payable to	Details	Amount	VAT	Vat Code	Expenditure Powers
Direct Debit Payment	NEST	Pension	£49.95			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
003691	Wainwrights Accountants	Payroll reporting/pension auto-enrollment	£366.00	£61.00	936721925	Local Govt Act 1972 (S111)
003692	Flintshire County Council	Street lighting supply and installation 1no 15w led/1 no photocell (Ferry Lane)	£262.80	£43.80	636613732	Highways Act 1980 (301)

		Column No. CTM012				
003693	Flintshire County Council	Monthly street lighting inspections for January, February and March 2025	£313.90	£52.32	636613732	Highways Act 1972 (301)
003694	Jolora Ltd	Website Maintenance 2 months	£384.00	£64.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003695	Jolora Ltd	Domain name renewal	£24.00	£4.00	294456859	Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003696	One Voice Wales	Annual Subscription	£718.00			Miscellaneous Powers LGA 1972 (S111)
003697	HMRC	PAYE – Income Tax and National Insurance January, February and March	£926.94			Local Govt Act 1972 (S142)
003698	Ashley Griffiths	April 2025, Salary & allowance	£969.47			Local Govt Act 1972 (S112)
Total Spend			£4,015.06	£225.12		

24/317 INCOME

Lloyds Bank	Interest payment 09/04/2025	£47.48
Total Income		£47.48

RESOLVED – that the income received be noted.

24/318 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no additional correspondence to report on.

24/319 FRIENDS OF SEALAND –ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S CHURCH

Brian Ward (Friends of Sealand) informed the Council that a new vicar has been appointed in Sealand. He further reported that a plant sale and a model railway exhibition will occur in the locality.

RESOLVED- that the report be noted.

24/320 PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk advised on information received from the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, which had been emailed to all members of the Council on March 24, 2025. The Panel has decided to make partial changes. The sum for Members of community and town councils will be paid £156 a year (equivalent to £3 a week) towards the extra household expenses (including heating, lighting, power and broadband) of working from home.

Councils must either pay their members £52 a year for the cost of office consumables required to carry out their role, or alternatively, councils must enable members to claim full reimbursement for the cost of their office consumables. (Determination 46 of 2023). These figures have not changed since the 2024/25 financial year.

All other Determinations set out in the 2022 /2023 Annual Report of the Panel remain valid. Refer to Minute 21/268 - PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS 2022/23 FINANCIAL YEAR, and it was then resolved that in relation to the 2022/23 financial year, the determinations required concerning payments to members are noted and that the Council will not introduce an attendance allowance for members.

Regarding payments to members for the 2025/26 financial year, these will need to be listed, sent to the Panel, and displayed on the council’s website and Council noticeboards from April 2025.

RESOLVED: that –

- i) the report be noted.
- ii) Should a member of Council decide to request a payment of £156.00, then payment would be held back until March 2026.
- iii) Council should affect a payment of £52.00 for office consumables rather than pay on a reimbursement basis. Should a member of the Council decide to request a payment of £52.00, then payment would be held back until March 2026.
- iv) that, in relation to the previous determinations as required concerning payments to members, be again noted, as per Minute 21/268.

24/321 WELSH ROAD SKATE FACILITY

Richard Roberts (Play Design Officer) advised the Council on March 10, 2025, that the graphics for the mini scooter and trike area will be installed soon when weather conditions are best suited for the hydration process, ensuring proper hardening and attaining the desirable strength and durability required.

RESOLVED— that Richard Roberts be asked when the scheduled graphics will be installed.

24/322 WELSH ROAD PLAY AREA

Richard Roberts (Play Design Officer) advised the Council on April 17, 2025, that the Communications Board, awarded to Sealand Community Council by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, has been affixed to the fence in the Welsh Road play area for £135.60.

RESOLVED— that the report be noted.

24/323 SEALAND PLAY AREAS

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) contacted Richard Robert (Play Design Officer) to formally request a comprehensive report outlining the projected lifespan of equipment in Sealand's play areas. The report identified any apparatus anticipated to reach the end of its functional life in the near future. This information is sought to enable the Council to make a fully informed and strategic decision regarding prioritising and scheduling future equipment replacements.

RESOLVED— that Richard Roberts be asked to clarify the match funding of the items identified.

24/324 PLAY SCHEMES – 2025

At the November 2023 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Council would fund both play scheme sites for a period of six weeks and enter into a three-year commitment.

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) received notification that the completed forms for the 2025 play schemes had been received.

RESOLVED—that the report be noted.

24/325 CURRENT SAVINGS STRATEGY

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) reported to the Council that the previous Clerk had thoroughly analysed how the Council holds its reserves and deduced that the current method of having all monetary assets with one banking group was satisfactory and in line with savings expectations.

The Council has considered the proposal to transition from traditional cheque book payments to online banking platforms to modernise financial operations.

AND WHEREAS, the Council acknowledged the potential benefits of online banking, including increased efficiency and convenience, but also recognises the associated cybersecurity risks, including data breaches, phishing attacks, and unauthorised access to financial information;

AND WHEREAS, the Council affirms the importance of maintaining secure, reliable and verifiable practices, particularly an institutionally approved cybersecurity framework to support online transactions;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, following thorough deliberation, the Council adopts the following resolution.

RESOLVED—That the Council shall continue to use chequebook payments as the primary method of financial transactions, as this method currently presents lower cybersecurity exposure and maintains a verifiable paper trail until the banking institution discontinues chequebook services or until the Council is satisfied that sufficient cybersecurity protocols and risk mitigation measures are in place to support a secure transition.

24/326 SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS –2024/25 AND 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEARS

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) outlined the expenditure and income for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial year up to cheque number 003698. Note that outstanding cheque numbers not banked by organisations: -

- (No: 003688) from March 2025, totalling £50.00

Totalling £50.00

Sealand Community Council - Summary Accounts						
2024/25 Financial Year						
Income				Actual	Anticipated	Difference
	Precept			£64,000.00	£64,000.00	£0.00
	Bank Interest and Refund of Fees			£622.14	£500.00	£122.14
	VAT Refund Flintshire County Council			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	VAT Refund HMRC			£1,050.52	£2,000.00	-£949.48
	Total			£65,672.66	£66,500.00	-£827.34
Expenditure				Actual	Agreed Spend	Balance
	Bank Charges			£156.75	£150.00	-£6.75
	Chairman's Fund			£800.00	£800.00	£0.00
	Staffing Costs			£17,371.86	£15,375.00	-£1,996.86
	General Admin etc			£2,458.91	£4,500.00	£2,041.09
	Insurances			£625.99	£650.00	£24.01
	Play Schemes and New Play Equipment			£11,663.20	£18,665.00	£7,001.80
	Street Furniture Repairs			£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
	Street Lighting			£20,324.20	£26,200.00	£5,875.80
	Council Web Site			£2,532.00	£2,400.00	-£132.00
	S137 - Grants			£1,650.00	£3,035.00	£1,385.00
	Total			£57,582.91	£71,975.00	£14,392.09
	Current Summary	Balance 1st April 2024 inc £25,000 contingency fund			£55,951.88	
Total Expenditure			£57,582.91			
Total Income			£65,672.66			
Balance			£8,089.75			
Balance as at 31 March 2025			£ 64,041.63			
VAT Costs for 2024/25 Financial Year			£976.18			
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		
	Anticipated Closing Balance as at 31 March 2025			£ 50,476.88		

Sealand Community Council - Summary Accounts						
2025/26 Financial Year						
Income				Actual	Anticipated	Difference
	Precept			£0.00	£64,000.00	-£64,000.00
	Bank Interest and Refund of Fees			£47.48	£525.10	-£477.62
	VAT Refund Flintshire County Council			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	VAT Refund HMRC			£0.00	£1,000.00	-£1,000.00
	Total			£47.48	£65,525.10	-£65,477.62
Expenditure				Actual	Agreed Spend	Balance
	Bank Charges			£0.00	£150.00	£150.00
	Chairman's Fund			£0.00	£800.00	£800.00
	Staffing Costs			£1,920.36	£14,592.65	£12,672.29
	General Admin inc			£1,110.00	£4,266.64	£3,156.64
	Insurances			£0.00	£650.00	£650.00
	Play Schemes and New Play Equipment			£0.00	£16,813.00	£16,813.00
	Street Furniture Repairs			£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
	Street Lighting			£576.70	£28,750.00	£28,173.30
	Election Costs			£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	Council Web Site			£408.00	£2,400.00	£1,992.00
	S137 - Grants			£0.00	£3,035.00	£3,035.00
	Total			£4,015.06	£71,657.29	£67,642.23
Current Summa	Balance 1st April 2025 inc £25,000 contingency fund			£64,041.63		
	Total Expenditure			£4,015.06		
	Total Income			£47.48		
	Balance			-£3,967.58		
	Balance as at 28th April 2025			£ 60,074.05		
	VAT Costs for 2025/26 Financial Year			£284.12		
End of Year Prediction						
	Balance as at 1st April 2025			£64,041.63		
	Total Anticipated Expenditure			£71,657.29		
	Total Anticipated Income			£65,525.10		
	Balance Expenditure compared with income at 31st March 2025			-£6,132.19		
	Anticipated Closing Balance as at 31 March 2026			£ 57,909.44		

24/327 SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL – BANK RECONCILIATION – 31ST MARCH 2025

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

Account – No 0388217 - £6,346.66 - Account – No 7326098 - £58,664.97. Total - £65,011.63

Unpaid – Cheque number	Payable to	Amount - £
003678	Jolora Ltd	384.00
003681	Information Commissioner Office	52.00
003682	Jolora Ltd (JUNE REPLACEMENT)	384.00
003687	Sealand County Primary School	50.00
003688	50 Plus Action Group	50.00
003689	St Bartholomew's church council	50.00
Total		970.00

Total bank accounts - £65,011.63 less unpaid cheques of £970.00 as outlined above, leaves a net balance of £64,041.63. This amount cross-references with the summary of income and expenditure report as at 31st March 2025.

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

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

24/328 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk outlined the requirements for the internal audit and referred to the audit form completed to the members of Council for information on how the audit is conducted. The form must include various working papers and documentation; failure to do so may result in a delay in completing the council's internal audit and additional audit costs. Subsequently, this could delay the External Audit.

The Clerk advised Council that he had submitted the Audit checklist form and annual return, uploaded various documents to the online portal for JDH Business Services Ltd, and handed over additional documents for the internal audit on April 24, 2025, at Pontblyddyn Cricket Club.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

24/329 EXTERNAL AUDIT – ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk gave an overview of the requirement to Council for the external audit noting that the documents can be sent to the Cardiff office via recorded delivery or By secure data transfer via Objective Connect with a deadline of the 30th June 2025 and mandated the Council to publish an audit notice by the 16th of June on all notice boards and Council website for a minimum of 14 calendar days, after the forementioned period it is the requirement of Council to allow the electors 20 working days of inspection from the 1st July to the 28th of July. Section 30 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004 gives the rights of the elector to inspect the Council's accounts.

The clerk received the audit notice 2025 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 2025.

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 2025 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 2024-25 was £10.81 per elector. In 2024-25, the Council made payments totalling £1,650.00 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 the Council following the 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.

24/330 EXTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN – 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR AND NOTICE OF AUDIT

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) conveyed the council's external audit requirement, noting that the documents will be partly delivered to South Wales via recorded delivery and that the remainder will be uploaded to the objective portal. He also mentioned the public notice and details of the public inspection arrangements for the 2023/24 financial year, specifically that they are on the Council website and notice boards. Inspection runs from the 1st of July to 26 July between 10:00 and 17:00 on Monday to Friday in line with Section 30 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004, which gives the elector the right to inspect the Council's accounts.

The Clerk advised that the completed Annual Return and most of the requested information were uploaded to the objective portal on July 10th, 2024, and 2 documents were posted via special delivery to Audit Wales on July 18th, 2024.

Publication of audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

Regulation 15(5) of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 (as amended) requires that by 30 September 2024, Sealand Community Council publish its accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 together with any certificate, opinion, or report issued, given, or made by the Auditor General. The accounting statements in the form of an annual return have been published on the Council's website. However, the accounts are published before the conclusion of the audit.

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) informed the Council that Dyfrig Henson (Audit Wales) contacted the Council on the 30th day of January to ask for further information to be sent to the audit office due to the previously uploaded documents to the Objective Connect portal having become inaccessible to him

because the information was not extracted. Dyfrig Henson is working on the file, so all previously sent information has been reuploaded to the portal.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

24/331 ONE VOICE WALES DIGITAL MATURITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED DIGITAL OPERATIONS

Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) informed the Council that he had completed the One Voice Wales programme of Digital Maturity Assessments for councils and had received the conclusion, which included several recommendations that were not mandatory. Furthermore, he informed the Council that he had one quote for a hosting package and the current provider's CMS Proposal for integration on the current website.

RESOLVED—Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) will present the Council with further hosting packages at the next meeting.

24/332 PAYMENTS TO MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk has circulated a form for completion concerning the 2025/26 financial year to 7 Councillors present at the meeting, whom completed and signed the form advising that they declined the payments. This leaves 6 Councillors to complete and sign the form.

RESOLVED—that the report be noted.

24/333 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

24/334 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

24/335 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSING OF FORMER COUNCILLOR

Barbara Hinds (Chairperson) reported with sadness the death, on 23rd April 2025, of former long-serving Councillor and chairperson John A Dodd. Members of the Council observed a minute's silence in memory of John A Dodd. After the meeting, Ashley Griffiths (Clerk) spoke to pay tribute to him for his steadfast dedication to public service.

24/336 DATE OF COUNCIL'S NEXT MEETING – 19th MAY 2025.

**24/337 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT
DECLARATION OF INTEREST—** One Council member declared an interest to the Council.

Cllr Christine Jones declared an interest in minute number 24/312(b).

The meeting opened at 6:00 pm and closed at 8:40 pm.

..... Signed 19th May 2025

Chairperson of the Council