

SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

WELCOME

It is a pleasure to present Sealand Community Council's second annual report which records the work that has been undertaken in 2023/24 and how we are working with the community and partners to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of the community to make Sealand an even better place to live and visit. The vision is to "ensure that Sealand continues to be a pleasant and welcoming place for people of all ages to live because they will feel safe, have opportunities to be physically and mentally healthy and to socialise and work in a quality environment."

We are extremely fortunate to have some supportive and knowledgeable people locally who contribute and work together with us to improve our community. That teamwork is critical to success and I would like to thank all who have contributed to the community, however small, in whatever way.

The report aims to give a taste of the work of the Community Council during the year.

We acknowledge that this is a challenging environment for everyone and we are committed to work together with the community and partners to achieve the vision.

The Council works as a corporate body.

Being the Chair of the Community Council can at times be a challenge but it has been helped enormously by having the support of colleagues and our Clerk. I always find it a privilege to wear the chain of office when I represent the Council at events and Civic Functions.

I am pleased with the way that the elected Members of Council and the Clerk of the Council have worked closely together this year, to ensure that we deliver services which benefit both our residents and visitors, and thank them publicly for their endeavours in this respect.

Councillor Ashley Griffiths

Chair of Sealand Community Council

March 2024

INFORMATION ABOUT SEALAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL

1. Sealand Community Council

The Council is a corporate body with a legal existence of its own which is quite separate from that of its members. Its lawful acts, assets and liabilities are its own and not those of its individual members. Any decisions taken by the Community Council are the responsibility of the whole body, and it is irrelevant if any particular Member agreed or disagreed with any particular proposal. A Community Council can legally raise money through the Precept – a levy which its residents pay through the Council Tax. It also has a range of powers which allows it to spend this public money on the services which it provides. These may include the provision of Playing Fields, Playgrounds, Public Parks, and Community Centres.

Parish/Town Councils were established in 1894 by an Act of Parliament and were further reformed into Community Councils by the Local Government Act 1972, when Wales was divided into communities. The Community Council has a duty to ensure that the rules for the administration of the Council are followed - the Council must appoint a Chair, appoint a Clerk, appoint a Responsible Financial Officer, appoint an independent and competent internal auditor, hold an Annual Meeting of the Council and keep records of all decisions related to Council business.

Council meetings are held once a month normally on the third Monday, except for August when the Council is in recess. In December the meeting is held on the second Monday.

Sealand Community Council

- has a number of broad ranging responsibilities and powers which, dependent on finance and other resources, enable the development and improvement of facilities and services to residents and also visitors to the community;
- works in partnership with a number of other organisations, community groups and the community to try to ensure the best for Sealand residents and the maintenance of services;
- works on behalf of local people to request that Flintshire County Council and other statutory bodies meet their duties and responsibilities in a way which satisfies the needs of Sealand residents;
- considers and responds to planning applications;
- considers and responds to a number of consultations by statutory bodies on a national and local level and always considers how decisions affect people in the area;

2. Membership

Thirteen councillors have been elected on to Sealand Community Council. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected at the May annual meeting. Councillor Ashely Griffiths is the current Chair of the Council and Councillor Barbara Hinds the Vice Chair.

3. Staff

The Council has one member of staff, Peter Richmond who is the Clerk and Finance Officer. He works part-time. The Clerk can be contacted by e-mail sealandcommunitycouncil@gmail.com, letter to 3 Blakeley Court, Raby Mere, Wirral. CH63 0ND or phone/ text to 07920 284026

4. Meetings

Meetings of the Council are held monthly normally on the third Monday starting at 6pm at Sealand Primary School.

Provision is made for holding the meetings in a hybrid manner with the non-face to face requestor having a conference phone dial in access to link to the meeting. The Clerk must receive a request to hold a hybrid meeting by the previous Thursday to the Monday Council meeting.

Details of meetings being made available on the Council's web site and 7 notice boards to encourage members of the public to attend.

5. Website

Information about the Community Council including the agenda for meetings, policies and minutes are available on the Council's website: <https://sealandcommunitycouncil.co.uk>

EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP

The Community Council benefits enormously from being a member of One Voice Wales, which is the main representative body for community and town councils in Wales.

One Voice Wales ensures a strong voice to represent the interests of councils and offers a range of quality services to support their work. By being a member, the Community Council is able to benefit from legal advice, advice on how to improve services, training, policy matters, information in a monthly newsletter and also attendance at conferences which provide networking opportunities and sharing good practice in the sector. The Council can elect a member to attend One Voice Wales's on-line Regional Committees. The Clerk of the Council often attends these meetings.

Additionally, the Clerk is a member of the "Society of Local Council Clerks" SLCC which is a source of information and good practice in the sector and which also offers training courses and conferences. There is a Clwyd Regional Committee for Clerks who are members of the SLCC and which meets occasionally during the year. The Clerk of the Council often attends these meetings.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Community Council has adopted a member's code of conduct and a register of interests is kept for each member. Each councillor has to declare any interest they have in items to be discussed at the start of each meeting and these are noted in the minutes.

The Community Council is audited by internal and external auditors annually. The internal audit is undertaken by JDH Business Services Ltd and the External Audit by Audit Wales.

FINANCE AND EXPENDITURE

The Community Council has an expenditure budget of £64,321 for the financial year 2023/24 as agreed by Council at its Annual Finance Meeting on 12th December 2022.

A summary of the main areas of the budget expenditure for 2022-23 are provided below:

Annual Subscriptions	£750
Audit Fees	£725
Bank Charges	£150
Chair's Fund	£800
Chain of Office - Engraving	£10
Clerk's salary and allowance	£14,158
Conferences - attendance	£200
Council's Web Site	£2,400
Data Protection Registration	£35
Defibrillator – Energy – Garden City	£75
Free Resource Fund – Grants	£4,000
Free Resource Fund – School Milk	£0.00
Hire Costs – St Barts	£500

Insurances	£650
Joint funded project play areas	£5,000
NI Employers contribution	£690
Playleader Scheme	£6,378
Postage / Mileage	£800
Printer, Computers repairs etc. and printer cartridges	£500
Sealand Newsletter	£200
Stationery	£100
Street Furniture Repairs – Seats / Notice Boards	£200
Street Lighting – Energy £3,000 - Repairs, Maintenance - £3,450 and Replacement / Adoption of 9 lights at Riverside Park and Cedar Close- £19,350	£25,800
Councillors and Clerks Training Costs	£500
Full Total	£64,621

The main source of income for the Community Council is the precept which is set annually and presented to Flintshire County Council in December for the following financial year. The precept is collected on behalf of the Community Council by Flintshire County Council and is the only source of tax revenue available to Town and Community Councils.

The process of deciding on the level of precept by Sealand Community Council includes the preparation of a draft budget on the basis of the financial situation of the Community Council by considering the likely costs, plans for projects, setting an amount for contributions - within the guidelines published annually - and any other financial matters.

Consideration is also given to the reserves held by the Community Council to ensure an appropriate precept is set. The precept level for 2023/24 was £62,000

The Community Council reclaims the VAT paid for goods and services annually.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2023/24

1. Street Lighting

The Community Council has invested in more efficient and environmentally friendly use of energy sources during recent years which has resulted in a reduced carbon footprint and energy costs. The Council has systematically been upgrading its streetlighting with new LED Heads which consume less energy and are more environmentally friendly. These lights are then adopted by Flintshire County Council. In 2010 the Council had 169 old and almost obsolete lights and as at 1st April 2023 the lighting stock was 50 with a further 9 lights being upgraded and adopted in the 2023/24 financial year at Riverside Park and Cedar Close, Garden City. Bringing the number of Council owned lights down to 41.

2. Play leadership Scheme

The Community Council annually supports a summer Play Scheme at the recreation fields at Garden City and Sealand Manor. The scheme is professionally run by Flintshire County Council and the Community Council provides funding to the county council on an annual basis so that the scheme can run each year.

3. Match Funding Scheme Improvements to Children's Play Areas 2023/34

Flintshire County Council and Aura continued working in partnership with Town and Community Councils on a match-funding basis (£ for £) and seek expressions of interest for the 2023/24 scheme. The Council allocated £5,000 of its funds to improve play equipment at the Garden City Recreation Field.

4. Grants

Each year the Council considers applications for financial assistance. Understandably, the Council can be inundated with applications, the majority of which are for worthy causes. In these circumstances the Council formulated a policy whereby, in the main, grants are restricted to organisations from within the community or those which may have a link with the community and /or its residents. There are a number of organisations within the community which provide a valuable service and the Council is keen to help those organisations which help themselves. Applications are considered whenever they have been submitted to Council.

Any organisation making application must have its own bank account and the Council cannot make grants to an individual member of the public.

5. Police

The Council has regular involvement with North Wales Police to discuss on issues that impact on the area.

6. Flintshire County Council

Throughout the year the County has been heavily involved with Flintshire County Council in progressing a number of issues and seeking improvements to the community.

7. Paperless Office

The Clerk is working towards a paperless office transferring files from paper to electronic, where possible, and archiving older documents via the Record Office. The use of email as a

form of communication has greatly increased and large documents are circulated via email rather than in paper copy with the Council's agenda.

Members of Sealand Community Council – 2023/24

Cllr Gwyneth Bullock, 28 Orchard Way, Garden City. Deeside. Flintshire CH5 2JP	gwynethbullock@hotmail.com
Cllr Jean Fairbrother 56a Green Lane Estate, Green Lane East, Sealand. Flintshire CH5 2NA	jean.fairbrother.2010@btinternet.com
Cllr Ashley Griffiths Chair Sealand Community Council 3 Bridge View Garden City Deeside CH5 2HY	ashleygriffiths57@btinternet.com
Cllr Barbara Hinds Vice - Chair Sealand Community Council 5 St. Bartholomew's Court Sealand Deeside –Flintshire – CH5 2QT	b7beh@icloud.com
Cllr Christine Margaret Jones 31 Welsh Road Garden City Deeside CH5 2NU	christine.m.jones@flintshire.gov.uk
Cllr Norman Jones 19 Kingsley Road Garden City Deeside CH5 2HZ	m.n.jones@talktalk.net
Cllr Alex Lewis 56B Green Lane Estate Green Lane Sealand Flintshire CH5 2NA	anlewis@hotmail.co.uk
Cllr Lionel Prouve 74 Sealand Road	Lionel_prouve@yahoo.co.uk

Sealand. Flintshire CH5 2RJ	
Cllr Mrs M Southall 4 East Green Sealand Manor Deeside Flintshire CH5 2SS	mary.southall@hotmail.co.uk
Cllr Linda Thomas 23 Kenneth Cross Way Sealand. Deeside. Flintshire CH5 2FJ	lindathomaspcs@hotmail.co.uk
Cllr Brian Ward 38 Sealand Road, Sealand, Deeside, Flintshire CH5 2RJ	brianefc@btinternet.com
Cllr Shelley Webber Ivy Cottage Gladstone Street Queensferry Deeside CH5 1ST	shelley.webber@hotmail.co.uk
Cllr David Edward Wisinger Chair Sealand Community Council 7 Church Cottages Sealand Road Sealand CH1 6BR	davidwisinger@yahoo.com

Clerk of the Council

Peter Richmond 3 Blakeley Court Raby Mere Wirral CH63 0ND	Sealandcommunitycouncil@gmail.com 07920 284026
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The Annual Report was approved by Council at its meeting held on 18th March 2024

PR – 18th march 2024