

HOLYWELL TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF TREFFYNNON

Minutes of the **Meeting of the Finance Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Bank Place Offices, Holywell on Tuesday 22 January 2019 at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P.A. Johnson (Deputy Mayor, Chair).
Councillors: M. Brooke, R. Dolphin, E.B. Palmer and K. Roberts.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors L.A. Carter, K. Davies, J.M. Johnson, S. Johnson, M.D. Phelan, B. Scragg, S.E. Wallbanks and P.A. York. Councillors A. Coleman and P.J. McGarry were absent without apology.

IN ATTENDANCE: J. Baker (Clerk).

F7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – MEMBERS’ CODE OF CONDUCT

The following Declarations of Interest were made and the relevant forms completed for the Clerk to action under the statutory requirements.

Minute No.	Name of Councillor	Personal	Prejudicial	Nature of Interest
F9	R. Dolphin	✓		Member of Carmel Bowling Club.
F9	P.A. Johnson	✓		Member of Thomas Pennant Society
F11	E.B. Palmer		✓	Friend of owner of company

F8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded for the following minute, F9, on grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted arising from the supporting financial and other information provided with the applications.

F9. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE – 2018/19

Members considered requests received for financial assistance from various organisations together with a schedule of the organisations and events supported by the Council in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Clerk read out supporting background and financial information provided by each organisation. The Chairman had given permission for the Holywell Walkers are Welcome application to be considered which was a late addition to the agenda.

A statement was circulated with details of donations made to date in the current financial year, budget provision for general donations (£5,000) and earmarked donations (£3,850), with remaining provision (£4,500) being available for allocation, and the Council's policy on donations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, having considered each application on its merits and in accordance with the general policy on applications, the following donations from the budget be made:

Organisation	£
Carmel Bowling Club	200
Holywell Town FC Girls Team	250
Greenfield FC Youth	250
Thomas Pennant Society	200
Total	900

The following applications were received without donation on this occasion:

Holywell Autumn Club, Bobath Children's Therapy Centre Wales, Citizens Advice Flintshire, Talking Books Wales and Holywell Walkers are Welcome.

- 2) That Holywell Autumn Club will no longer be charged weekly rent for their use of the council offices, in line with the arrangements in place for other community organisations.

F10. BANK RECONCILIATION 2018/19

Members considered the reconciliation statements for the period 31 December 2018, circulated with the agenda. The Audit Sub-Committee would be similarly notified.

RESOLVED:

That the statements be received and noted.

F11. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE – 2019/20

The Clerk delivered a presentation to members which considered the budgetary issues and determinations for 2019/20. The Clerk identified and explained certain items for members' information and also answered questions.

The key points noted for this year's budget setting process were:

- To ensure income matched up with expenditure without the need to use any of the Council's reserves.
- The budget protects and maintains current financial commitments.
- The reserves had been set above the minimum level of 20% of the proposed precept, in line with Council policy.
- Budget growth items of £19.4k were identified and considered.
- Budget savings options of £11.8k were identified and considered.
- One off and variable recurring items of a potential £11.1k were identified and considered, which included re-development of the Council's website.
- Staff costs were increased due to revised working hours for all staff, incremental progression, a 2% pending national pay award and a 1% pension increase for employers.
- A 10-year loan was proposed to finance the Tower Gardens events area scheme, which had been built into the budget proposals.
- The local taxation precept was considered in the context of the tax base and members' direction that this be contained near to a level consistent with inflation. It was noted inflation using the Consumer Price Index was 2.3% in December 2018.
- A base budget review exercise had been undertaken by the Clerk in drafting this budget ensuring that all current commitments are accounted for at the appropriate budget value. It had been necessary to adjust some budgets up or down based on current operational requirements and spending patterns.
- There was currently no budget provision built in for project costs, for current work being undertaken on for example the railway halt, museum, gateway signs or high street access to traffic.
- Budget provision was included to provide a repair, maintenance and equipment budget for the council offices, including the progression of improvements works to the Project & Development Officer's office.

- Two other documents were referred to and brought to the attention of members:
 - 1) A letter from Holywell Leisure Centre formally requesting the £20,000 contribution towards the management and maintenance of the leisure centre operations for 2019/20.
 - 2) A table showing the current precept level for all Flintshire Town and Community Councils, for the current financial year.

Members considered the probable expenditure for 2018/19, the bank balance including reserves and the determination of an appropriate local taxation precept for 2019/20, which supported all budget proposals.

Members had been made aware of the developing situation with regard to a potential funding shortfall for the High Street traffic scheme. This had primarily arisen due to the grant submission being offered on a 70/30 match funded basis to the County Council, subject to the approval of Welsh Government.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Annual Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2019/20, as presented by the Clerk, be approved.
- (2) That a loan repayment provision be added to the budget over a 10-year period, to finance the Tower Gardens events area scheme.
- (3) That the website is re-developed in the 2019/20 financial year and the contract awarded to Daydream Designs. That the Projects & Development Officer is tasked with researching a grant to fund the work, with any remaining cost to be funded from reserve balances.
- (4) That the Council agree to make a further contribution in 2019/20 to Holywell Leisure Centre of £20,000, and for this contribution to be paid over three equal instalments in April, August and December.
- (5) That a precept of £243,000 be issued on Flintshire County Council for the financial year 2019/20, representing an increase of 2.6% which was broadly in line with inflation. This would equate to £72.07 per household, representing a £0.04p increase per household per week.

(6) That members agree to consider all available options, if required, to assist the County Council in the delivery of the High Street traffic scheme, subject to the funding being made available by Welsh Government.

F12. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN – YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments in respect of the financial year 2018/19 be noted/approved, subject to any changes that may be notified by the Wales Audit Office:

- External (Statutory Auditor) – BDO LLP (Southampton) on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales.
- Internal Auditor – JDH Business Services Ltd, Pantymwyn, Flintshire.

F13. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.30pm.

.....

Chairman