

**HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 28TH MAY 2024 AT 7-00PM AT THE KENYON HALL, HOLT.**

PRESENT: Councillors: Mr J Cubitt, Mr S Lewis, Mr D Bithell, Mr J Pridding, Mr D Munnerley, Mrs G Jones, Ms A Shone, Mr J Hughes, Councillor M Morris, Mr G Mitchell, Clerk

APOLOGIES: Mr D Powell, Mr A Jones

ITEM 1: AGM

1a): Election of Holt Community Council Chairperson 2024-25; it was proposed by Mr S Lewis, seconded by Mrs G Jones that Mr J Cubitt be once again elected as Chairman of Holt Community Council; Mr Cubitt advised that he was happy to continue in the role; Agreed by all.

1b): Election of Holt Community Council Vice Chairperson 2024-25; it was proposed by Mrs G Jones, seconded by Mr J Pridding that once again, Mr S Lewis be elected as Vice Chairman of Holt Community Council; Mr Lewis was happy to continue in the role; Agreed by all

The meeting was formally opened by the Chairperson, Mr J Cubitt, who welcomed everyone. There was a report of 1 recent death of either a Holt resident or a person with Holt connections. A silence was held in respect of the passing of Martin Solari.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: There was 1 minor request for an amendment, and it was pointed out that the correct name for one of the deceased reported at the previous meeting was Anne Reney-Smith; with the amendment, the minutes of the April meeting were accepted as a true record; Proposed Mrs G Jones, seconded Mr S Lewis.

POLICE REPORT: There was no Police presence at the meeting, and the Clerk had not received an email advising of the Police Report for April; the Clerk advised that he believed the area PCSO was on holiday.

1c) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

1.COMMUNITY GARDENERS: Mr Bob Campbell of the Holt Community Gardeners had emailed (from his holidays) to advise that he had just come off a video call with the UK Shared Funding Team and had been advised that funding from the People and Skills element of the global funding was now available for phase one of the Holt Nature and Heritage Reserve; it should be noted that this is a conditional offer pending the outcome of certain elements such as formal approval from WCBC, planning approvals, more project outputs and outcomes; once done, a formal offer of funding should be received.

After a discussion, the Clerk was asked to contact Mr Bob Campbell to express the appreciation and gratitude of the Community Council for his hard work in trying to get this project up and running.

The result of the Green Flag Award judging should be known early July.

2. FINANCES:

a) The Finance sheet for April 2024, month 1, was discussed and agreed as satisfactory; Income was £12,354.08, which included the first precept payment; expenditure was £5157.19, which included the cost of a new defibrillator and housing cabinet.

b) The Clerk advised that he had received back the results of the Internal Audit and 4 issues were identified:

- 1) The Financial Regulations were not provided for audit or available on the website. These have been provided for previous audits and stated a de-minimis level for obtaining quotations of £3,000 and a level of tenders for £25,000. This is not consistent with the standing orders which states a level of £10,000 for 3 weeks public notice

ACTION: Clerk to review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to ensure both are consistent; all Regulations/Policies to eventually be on the website.

- 2) Testing of a sample of payments identified: a) no letter of receipt or other documentation on file for a £1780 payment to Kenyon Hall Committee b) a payment of expenses to the Clerk was not supported by a expenses claim, but receipts were provided; part of the claim was for £25 cash which needs to be explained

ACTION: Clerk to ensure letters/receipts for S137 & S19 grants are provided for audit and all expenses claims to be accompanied by expenses form which is countersigned by Chairman.

- 3) The Asset Register for 2022/23 and Annual Return were updated in 2022/23 to include a solar lantern at a value of £2202; the 2023/24 asset Register includes the lantern at a value of £2400

ACTION: Clerk to double check figures but may have been input error

- 4) The Fidelity Insurance cover of £100k does not cover the maximum cash balances of the Council calculated as approx. £112k (calculated as year end cash balance plus first precept payment)

ACTION: Clerk has already increased Fidelity cover to next level of £250k.

The Clerk pointed out that all the issues identified were of a minor nature and this was the first Internal audit completed on his own.

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor had suggested that the Community Council move towards using a computerised accounts package and that Holt CC was one of very few Community Councils locally to still use a cash book; the Clerk was asked to get costings for using a new accounts package.

2a) Proposed Mr J Hughes, seconded Mrs G Jones, agreed by all, that the Finance section be accepted.

2b) Proposed Mr J Hughes, seconded by Mrs G Jones, agreed by all, that the Internal Audit be accepted.

3. DEFIBRILLATOR: The Clerk has spoken to the management of Bellis Bros who are waiting for their electrician to be available to install the housing cabinet, which has to be wired up to mains electricity; as soon as that is done, the defib will be installed and the Clerk will put a post on Facebook to let people in the village know that another defib is now available to be used. The defib will be registered with the British Heart Foundation "Circuit" so that if someone calls needing to use a defib, they will be routed to the nearest one. The Clerk had checked prices for a "Trauma Bleed Kit" and cabinet to house it; kits are approx. £80 and cabinets £400; as it may be possible to put the bleed kit in with the defib, the Clerk was asked to initially purchase a bleed kit which will be located at Nisa on the Cross; Proposed Mr S Lewis, seconded Mr J Pridding.

4. PLAY EQUIPMENT: The Clerk has received a quote from Mr J Cathrall for the painting of the play equipment at the two play areas; the Clerk had also asked for the ceiling in the Gents Toilets to be painted as this was in a poor condition; the quote received was for £2800 plus vat for all areas; the quote received from WCBC to just paint the play equipment was £3211 plus vat; Clerk to ask Mr Cathrall to do the agreed works.

5. The Clerk had put a post on Facebook about bags of dog excrement being discarded not only under the hedges on footpaths but also generally around the village; the post had been favourably commented upon; The Clerk had made some enquiries, and it does appear to be an offence not to dispose of bags of dog excrement in an appropriate bin. The Clerk advised that "The Litter (Animal Droppings) Order 1991, under the Environmental Protection Act (1991) places a duty on the local authority to keep public walk, pleasure ground or any land used for the purposes of recreation clear of dog faeces. It was suggested that the Clerk write to the Chief Environment Officer at WCBC.

6. Speed Limit in Village; The new Transport Minister for Wales has agreed to a review of the default 20mph limit in Wales; the Community Council agreed to wait until more information is forthcoming before contacting WCBC about the policy for Holt.

7. Mr A Jones had sent a message to advise that he had spoken to Natural Resources Wales who have advised that WCBC were aware of the issue with the road culvert and blocked pipe at the junction of Borrass Road and Rossett Road and it was apparently in a programme of works; it was suggested that the Community Council write to WCBC to ask for the works to be carried out ASAP.

ITEM 2: CORRESPONDENCE:

8. The Clerk had received correspondence regarding the forthcoming Tour of Britain Women 2024, stage 2 of which would be passing through Holt between 11-40am to 12-15pm on Friday 7th June.

The Clerk had also received correspondence from WCBC Planning Dept advising of the installation of a new Planning Register which was going live on 28th May and all planning applications received after 9th May 2024 would be on and viewable on the new register; applications received previous to this would be on the old register, both registers will have links to them on the same page on the current site.

The Clerk had received from One Voice Wales a document entitled “Community and Town Councils Digital Guidance- Multi Location and Hybrid Meetings”. Due to the complexity of the document, it was decided to discuss this further at the next meeting and to set up a sub committee to go through the document.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a) Extension of Storage Unit, Bellis Country Market, Wrexham Rd, Holt: **NO OBJECTIONS**

b) Replacement Windows Within Holt Conservation Area, 15 Whitegate Fields, Holt: As this property faces onto Green Street, which is part of the Conservation Area, it will be discussed under Agenda Item B; **NO COMMENT AT THIS TIME**

ITEM 3: AGENDA:

a) Allotments: A further discussion, carrying on from the previous meeting, was held; it was pointed out that there is a disconnect between the amount of rent charged for an allotment in Holt, compared to rents charged by WCBC; it was also thought that private rents for allotments in the village, off the bypass, are significantly higher than the Community Council owned allotments. In addition, the state of some of the Community Council owned allotments gave rise for concern. It was agreed to set up a working party of Mrs G Jones, Mr D Bithell and Mr J Pridding; the Clerk was asked to supply the working party with a rental agreement for Holt CC allotments and a sample rental agreement for WCBC allotments; it had been previously agreed to hold rents at the current sum for 2024/25, but to review for 2025/26; working party to hopefully report back by July meeting of the Community Council.

b) Conservation Area and Planning: The Clerk advised that he had received comments about the way in which Conservation Area Policy in the village was being interpreted and the number of building works being carried out within the Conservation area without planning permission and subsequent retrospective planning applications being submitted. Previous interpretation of the Conservation Area Policy had been strict but consistent, but this no longer seems to be the case. One previous policy had been that any property facing onto a street within the Conservation Area must have wooden windows at the front; Mr P Gaade had commented when he left the Community Council that he was disappointed that he was not supported when he wanted the Community Council to object to a property facing onto Church Street applying for UPVC windows; permission had been granted, a precedent was set and now another property nearby has installed UPVC windows. Because of this policy change, it is difficult for the Community Council to object to the planning application at 15 Whitegate Fields.

The Clerk was asked to write to the Chief Planning Officer and to the Conservation Officer to express the concerns of the Community Council and to stress the need for consistency in planning decisions within the village and especially within the Conservation Area. The Clerk was also asked to look at the Conservation Area policy in order that it can be further discussed at a future meeting.

- c) **Grass Cutting in the Village:** Concern has previously been raised regarding the length of the grass especially on the Dee Park Play Area, and the frequency of cuts; a suggestion was made that the Community Council purchase a ride-on mower to enable grass cuts to be made when needed. It was pointed out that this may create issues with insurance, that there would be a need for risk assessments etc and the cost of maintaining the mower could be expensive. It was further pointed out that many areas in the village are owned or leased by WCBC, who may not agree to the Community Council cutting the grass. At present, WCBC cut the grass on Dee Park Play Area and the Church Green for free, and although the frequency of cuts was unknown, it was decided to not change this arrangement as this would add costs onto the Community Council budget. The Clerk advised that he had spoken to the workmen who cut the grass for WCBC and they had said that the wet weather had caused their cutting schedules to slip. The Clerk has spoken to the Company that now cuts the grass at Hillfield POS and the Cemetery and they would be willing to do ad hoc cuts at approx. £60 per cut for the Dee Park Play Area. The Clerk was asked to contact WCBC to ask would they object to the Community Council making ad hoc cuts to the play areas, and what frequency of cuts do WCBC work towards.

ITEM 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Ms A Shone asked if the conifers at the back of the garage and houses looking onto the Dee Park Play area could be cut back; as ownership of the conifers is unknown, Clerk was asked to contact WCBC.

Mr S Lewis said that he had been contacted by a property owner at the end of Francis Lane about discarded bags of dog excrement that were left in his hedge and by the tree area and pathway leading down to the by-pass; it was commented that extra bins around the village would help but WCBC will not contract to empty any new bins due to a lack of funding.

The same property owner asked if the gaps in the hedge facing onto the Hillfield POS can be filled in with new hedging plants; as this is best done in the Autumn, it was agreed to look at this later in the year.

Mr S Lewis has received a report of a near accident between a car and a push bike on Francis Lane; the young cyclist had apparently come from the Hillfield POS without stopping but luckily, the car driver managed to stop in time; the Community Council have been asked to look at some form of barrier to be placed at the entrance to the Hillfield POS from Francis Lane. The Clerk to look at alternatives.

Mr S Lewis reported that a property owner down lower Dee Lane had informed him that the verge had come down in a mini landslip and if falls further will be on the road; Clerk to contact Streetscene

ACCOUNTS: Approved for payment in April and proposed payments for May. Proposed Mr J Hughes, seconded Mrs G Jones, Agreed by all

PAYMENTS FOR APRIL

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| 3059 – AVOW, Salary, Wage, Charge, Back Pay Clerk | £2198.46 |
| 3060 – Shane Coupland, Grass Cuts Bowling Green | £242.00 |
| 3061 – First Rescue Supplies, Defib and Cabinet | £1590.00 |
| 3062 – Monument Landscapes, Grass Cuts Village Entrance | £85.06 |
| 3063 – Healthmatic, Call Out, Repairs Ladies Toilets | £361.27 |
| 3064 - J&L Garden Services, March Cut Hillfield POS | £145.00 |
| 3065 – Mr S Jones, Hedge Cut Cemetery | £120.00 |
| 3066 – Kenyon Hall Committee, Hall Hire March Meeting | £30.40 |
| 3067 – J&L Garden Services, 1st Grass Cut Cemetery & Areas | £350.00 |

PROPOSED PAYMENTS FOR MAY

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| 3068 – AVOW, Salary, Wage, Charge | £880.53 |
| 3069 – Shane Coupland, Grass Cuts Bowling Green, April | £277.00 |
| 3070 – Monument Landscapes, Grass Cuts Vill Entr & Castle | £353.90 |
| 3071 – J&L Garden Services, Grass Cuts Cemetery £275 Grass Cuts Hillfield POS ££160 | £435.00 |
| 3072 – WCBC, Rates Bowling Green 2024/5 | £229.30 |
| 3073 – Holt Under 5's, S137 Grant, 2nd Part | £500.00 |
| 3074 – EDF Energy, Street Light Power 01/02-30/04/24 | £393.81 |
| 3075 – Holt Local History Society, Two Trails Leaflet, S137G | £200.00 |
| 3076 – Zurich Municipal, Insurance Renewal 2024/25 | £812.52 |
| 3077 – Mega Electrical, street Light faults Jan-March 24 | £444.92 |
| 3078 - Kenyon Hall Committee, Hire Hall April | £30.40 |
| 3079 – Matt Rowlands, Website Support April-June 24 | £60.00 |
| 3080 - J&L Garden Services, Cemetery and Car Park Grass Cuts | £287.50 |

**NEXT MEETING OF HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT THE
KENYON HALL ON TUESDAY 25TH JUNE AT 7-00PM**

