

**HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY 2025 AT 7-00PM AT THE KENYON HALL, HOLT.**

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

APOLOGIES: Mr J Cubitt, Mr J Pridding, Mr D Powell

The meeting was formally opened by the Chairman, Mr J Cubitt. There was one report of a recent death of either a Holt resident or a person with Holt connections; a silence was held in respect of the passing of the late Mrs Rita White.

POLICE REPORT: The Clerk said that the December Police Report had one incident for Holt; unfortunately, the Police Report for November had not been received, however, the Clerk has requested it, and it will be discussed at the next meeting along with the January figures. The Clerk was further able to advise that according to a BBC website reporting on "Speeding hotspots" Go Safe recorded 23 people caught speeding in Holt from January to October 2024; as the GoSafe speed van first came to Holt in October 24, it would seem that the figures related solely to October; no figures were yet available for November and December 2024.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: There were no requested amendments from the minutes of the November meeting; the minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record, Proposed Mr D Munnerley, seconded Mr J Hughes, agreed by all.

ITEM 1: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

1.COMMUNITY GARDENERS: The Clerk advised that the Chairman, Mr J Cubitt, had spoken to Mr Bob Campbell of the Holt Gardeners Group regarding what plans the Gardening Group had future works around the village and any potential financial help from the Community Council that might be required. Mr Campbell had sent an email to Mr Cubitt, advising that Holt would again be entered into the Wales in Bloom Competition. When Holt had entered the Britain in Bloom competition, the judges had commented that they would have liked to have walked along the riverside and past the Castle; unfortunately, the path access down to the Castle from School Lane is in need of some improvement, such as cutting back branches and other growth to widen the path back to the tree line, cutting back any overhead branches restricting headroom, clearing away leaf debris and soil from the top of the path and removal and recycling of the debris.

There followed a discussion and while the Councillors have no objection to considering additional financial help to the Gardening Group on behalf of the village, concern was raised about the Community Council funding works to hedges and trees that belong to householders whose boundaries adjoin public footpaths; there are other footpaths around the village with boundary hedges

adjoining that belong to householders and a situation could arise whereby they ask the Community Council to fund maintenance, once a precedent had been set with the School Lane footpath; also, once the precedent is set, this could then be ongoing and create budgetary issues going forward. Councillor Morris suggested that the Clerk contact the Footpaths Officer at WCBC as the School Lane Footpath may be a “right of way” and if that is so, WCBC may be able to assist.

2. DEFIBRILLATOR: The Clerk advised that he had checked the bank statement and as the third payment of the Precept had been received, he had recently ordered the new replacement Defibrillator, Cabinet and Trauma Kit Cabinet; once a pro forma invoice is received, a cheque can be sent and then the equipment will be delivered. Mr J Hughes said that once it had arrived, he would arrange for the new equipment to be installed as the defib cabinet has to be connected to the mains electricity supply.

3. PLAY EQUIPMENT: The Clerk has contacted WCBC agreeing to the £480 carriage charge and WCBC had sent the damaged Trio Springer to the manufacturer to be repaired.

4. FINANCES: It was agreed to discuss the Finance sheet in the Budget discussions.

5. ALLOTMENTS: No photographs of the allotments have been taken to date.

6. GULLEY GRIDS: Mr D Bithell said that some of the gulley grids down Frog Lane had not been emptied, although the Clerk had been assured by WCBC that all the village gulley grids had been emptied; the Clerk will check which ones are still full and contact WCBC again.

7. RE-ADOPTION OF POLICIES: The Clerk advised that he had not yet been able to look at the policies in any depth but hoped to be able to do so in the near future.

8. ESP HILL FLOODING: The clerk informed the meeting that the flooding seemed to have stopped but that he was not sure of how this had been done; he had been in contact with WCBC and had been told the flooding team were dealing with it and that the Clerk would be contacted by them; unfortunately, he was still waiting for a call! The Clerk had been told that once the water was removed, cameras could be put down the drains to see if they were blocked. It had been suggested that the water could be pumped onto fields owned by Bellis Bros, but this had been refused by management at Bellis Bros because the fields were already water-logged and Bellis Bros had had to hire pumps last summer to pump the water off the fields so that they could get to the strawberry planters. At this time, the situation will need to be monitored and if the flooding re-occurs, the Clerk will contact WCBC again.

ITEM 2: CORRESPONDENCE:

9. The Clerk advised that he had been contacted by Farndon Parish Council about the flooding at Esp Hill and he had advised them of the point 8. The Clerk had received correspondence from WCBC advising of work to be done on the Electric Vehicle Charging Point on the toilet car park; the work would involve putting a separate electricity meter onto the charging point so that WCBC would now manage the finances associated with vehicle charging. A meeting had been arranged by WCBC for stakeholders to discuss “exploring opportunities to create a friendlier and safer environment for walking, wheeling, and cycling around Holt CP School”. WCBC were working on a trial

project with Sustrans Cymru for a small number of schools in the Wrexham area to see if it was possible to make the roads around the schools safer, especially at drop off and picking up times; the meeting had been attended by Mr J Cubitt, Chair of CC, and Mrs G Jones as a Governor of Holt CP School, along with the head of Holt School and other representatives of the Governing body. Various suggestions were made at the meeting which have been taken away to be looked at, to see if they are feasible.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

a) Demolition of Existing Steel Framed Workshop and Conversion of Part of Agricultural Building into Dwelling, Hugmore House, Hugmore Lane, Llan Y Pwll, Wrexham; NO OBJECTION

b) Application of Grant of Premises Licence Under the Licensing Act 2003, Beech Avenue Kitchen, Unit H3, Bryn Business centre, Bryn Lane, Wrexham; this disclosure is for information only as the CC can only make representations on behalf of any individuals affected by the application.

ITEM 3: AGENDA

- a) Budget Approval and Precept Setting 2025/26: The Clerk had completed his work on the Budget for 2025/26; his figures have been checked and discussed with Mr P Hinchliffe, (retired Councillor and Accountant) and Mr J Cubitt, Chair, Holt CC (who was on holiday) and agreement reached. The Clerk advised the Councillors of how he had reached the budget figures and the proposed Precept for 2025/26; he explained the difficulties of trying to forecast income and expenditure for the remainder of this financial year 2024/25 and to then forecast the same for 25/26, especially when he did not know what budget and Precept WCBC would set and what charges would be from contractors working for the Community Council, bearing in mind the changes to minimum wage and NI announced in the UK Budget; he had already been advised that litter picking for all the play areas would be charged in future and this was likely to be at least £1200 extra.

The Clerk considered that his original proposals discussed at the November meeting of a Precept increase of 5% would be adequate; this equates to a Precept increase of £1811 to £38040.

In addition, Cemetery charges to increase as follows from April 2025 (3 years since last increase):

Burial Plots for residents and non-residents to increase by £50, re-opening graves same increase £50

Cremated Remains Plots to increase by £25 residents, £50 non-residents, additional interments increase by £15.

Memorial charges for Headstones and Cremated Tablets increase by £25, Headstones and full surround kerbs to increase by £50

Allotment charges (last reviewed in 2018) to increase for a full plot to £40 (+£10), half plot £20 (+£5), micro plot £15 (+£1).

A discussion was held regarding the notice needed to advise the Allotment holders of an increase to the rents; the Clerk said that he would check the records to see if there was anything in the paperwork he had, suggesting any notice period to be given advising of rental increases.

Proposed Mr J Hughes, seconded Ms A Shone that the Budget and Precept for 2025/26 be accepted, agreed by all.

It was further proposed by Mr J Hughes, seconded by Mr D Bithell, that the allotment and burial charges are reviewed annually and if appropriate to increase by September RPI; agreed by all.

- b) **FINANCES:** The Clerk had previously distributed the finance sheets for month 8, November and month 9, December.

November had an Income of £311.03 and Expenditure of £8624.49.

Income comprised of Toilet doors (£62), Allotments (£28), Bank Interest (£222).

Expenditure comprised of normal expenditure of salary, wages, General and Admin (£229), Hillfield POS (£160), Cemetery and Allotments (£750), Bowling Green (£150), WCBC Trade Waste (£1133), S137 Grants (£3593), and S19 Grant (£1750).

December had an Income of £12,711.72 which comprised WCBC 3rd Precept £12076, Toilet Doors, £37.80, Burials £350, and Bank Interest £247.92.

December Expenditure included salary and wages, VAT £151, General and Admin (£1390), Clerks Expenses (£182), Hillfield POS (£160), Toilets and Village General (£1055).

Proposed by Mrs G Jones, seconded by Mr A Jones that the finances be accepted.

- c) **TREES:** Following a storm in December, a large tree came down behind the toilets which necessitated calling in Joe Hughes Tree Surgeons to cut it up; the tree fell and hit fence panels belonging to two houses on Ashley Court; the Clerk has been to speak to the Householders and advised that the Community Council would re-imburse them for repairing any damage. The Clerk also rang Zurich Insurance, expecting to be able to make a claim for the costs of having the tree cut up but was told that any trees belonging to the Community Council were not covered by the policy and the Council would have to pay the costs; in addition, with regards to the householders costs, they would have to claim off their own household insurance policy and their insurance company would then claim the costs from the public liability insurance held by Zurich for the Council. The Clerk said that he was not happy with the policy as the Council is responsible for a number of trees and that the Council should be looking more closely at the policy and what it actually covered and whether it was fit for purpose; Councillor Morris advised that many Councils use Zurich as there were not many Insurance companies that were willing to cover Community Councils. The Clerk also advised that there were a number of trees adjacent to houses and that it maybe a good idea to have some of them trimmed back; The Clerk will contact the Tree Officer at WCBC for advice.

ITEM 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Mrs G Jones advised the meeting that Holt CP School recently competed in a local inter schools' tournament and were the winners, which has given the school teams a lot of confidence going forward.

The Clerk passed over the name and contact details of the new agent for the Rainbow Foundation to Mr J Hughes in order that he could pass it on to the resident who was having issues applying for a new Blue Badge.

Mr D Bithell said that part of the Chevron signs leading into the Brickyard Corner had come down as well as an upright sign just before the Chevrons; also a footpath sign just up from Bellis Bros needs repairing and a bin top on the Cross had disappeared; Clerk to contact Streetscene.

Mr Bithell also mentioned that there were moles starting to dig in the cemetery, but at present they were on the unused part.

Mr S Lewis asked if the hedge down Francis Lane could be cut, Clerk to ask Mr Stuart Jones to cut it before the end of February.

ACCOUNTS: Approved for payments for January: Proposed Mrs G Jones, seconded Mr A Jones.

PAYMENTS FOR DECEMBER

3129 – AVOW, Salary, Wage, Charge, December	£880.53
3130 – G Mitchell, Clerks Interim Expenses	£194.89
3131 – JH Tree Surgery, Emergency Tree Cutting, Car Park Area	£890.00
3132 – Monument Landscapes, Grass Cuts Village Entrance	£178.60
3133 – J&L Garden Services, Grass cuts Dee Park Play Area/POS	£210.00
3134 – Healthmatic, Repairs Toilet Cash Box Electrics	£336.00

PROPOSED PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY

3135 – AVOW, Salary, Wage, Charge, January	£880.53
3136 – First Rescue Training Ltd, New Defib, Cabinet, Trauma Cab	£1980.00
3137 – WCBC 6 Mnthly Charge Play Area Inspections	£1029.60
3138 – Kenyon Hall Committee, Hire Hall, Nov & January	£60.80
3139 – Mr G Crofts, Toilet Expenses	£80.91

NEXT MEETING OF HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT THE KENYON HALL ON TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7-00PM

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