

**HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7-00PM AT THE KENYON HALL, HOLT.**

PRESENT: Councillors: Mr J Cubitt, Mrs G Jones, Mr J Pridding, Mr J Hughes, Mr A Jones, Mr D Powell. Mr D Bithell, Councillor M Morris, Mr G Mitchell, Clerk

APOLOGIES: Mr S Lewis, Ms A Shone, Mr D Munnerley

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 Mr Len Murray.

POLICE REPORT: The Clerk advised that he had now received the Police Reports for November and January; the November report showed no incidents for Holt, but unfortunately, 3 incidents were reported for January. PCSO Maddocks had recently sent an email to the Chair, Clerk and Councillor Morris about an initiative called "Three Priorities- Community Councils"; the Police Inspector for the area had met with officers and advised that he would like them to re-visit a previous initiative, whereby Community Councils discussed and agreed with local officers 3 priorities that they would like to consider for their area; the priorities do not necessarily have to all be related to Police matters, and some may require multiagency assistance. As PCSO Maddocks was not available to discuss the initiative, Councillors were asked to consider what priorities that would like including for Holt, to be discussed at the next meeting that PCSO Maddocks is able to attend.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: The Clerk advised that he would like to re-visit the previous minutes to discuss charges in the Cemetery; at the last meeting, increases had been agreed for new graves and cremated plots and also for re-openings but only for residents and people with Holt Connections; interments of people with no Holt connections had not been considered; the Clerk had been advised by some funeral directors that Holt Cemetery charges were considered to be cheap and that people may consider burials in Holt because their local alternatives were much more expensive. After a discussion, it was agreed to increase the cost for new plots for burials for people with no connections to Holt to £1200 and £500 for new cremated plots. Proposed Mr J Pridding, seconded Mr A Jones.

There were no other requested amendments from the minutes of the January meeting and accordingly, the minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record, Proposed Mrs G Jones, seconded Mr D Bithell, agreed by all.

ITEM 1: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

1.COMMUNITY GARDENERS: Following the January meeting, the Clerk had contacted Mr S Roberts, Footpaths Supervisor, WCBC and they had met, walked down the Old School footpath and discussed works required to bring it to a standard whereby it could be included in the Holt entry for the Wales in

Bloom Competition, that the Community Gardeners intended to enter again this year. The Clerk had stressed that it was hoped to get the footpath to a condition whereby easy access for wheelchair users was possible; some work was required to tidy up parts of the hedge, a small tree near the bottom of the path needed cutting back and the surface needed raking up, the spoil removing and the path possibly re-stoning. Mr Roberts advised that, as ever, funding was an issue but he would contact contractors to get prices for the work, see what funds were available and if grants could be applied for to complete the works.

The Clerk also showed Mr Roberts a badly rusted and corroded with sharp edges footpath sign on the path just up from Bellis Bros which he agreed to get replaced.

A representative of the Community Gardeners was recently presented, on behalf of all the Gardeners, with 3 certificates for their achievements in the “Its Your Neighbourhood 2024”, which was part of Wrexham’s entry in the City Category of Wales in Bloom 2024. The Gardeners Allotments were considered “outstanding” and Holt Cross and Copse were given a “Thriving” certificate. The Gardeners also intend to hold their Christmas Market and Community Christmas Event on Sunday 30th November and have applied for road closures to WCBC.

2. DEFIBRILLATOR: The Clerk advised that he has received the new Defibrillator, Cabinet and Trauma Bleed kit cabinet; the Defibrillator cabinet has been installed free of charge by Mr Gary Gibson, for which he was thanked by the Clerk on behalf of the Community Council; the Clerk has texted the First Responder asking for the new defib to be set up.

3. PLAY EQUIPMENT: The damaged Trio Springer has now been repaired and re-installed; the Clerk had received an invoice for £600 + VAT, instead of the agreed £480 so he was waiting to hear back from WCBC regarding clarification.

4. FINANCES: The Clerk had distributed the Finance Sheet and Narrative for January 2025 which showed an income of £260.56 and expenditure of £4031.84; Income comprised Toilet Doors £25.85 and Bank interest £234.71; expenditure included the normal costs of salary and wages, General and Admin £2036.80 (includes new replacement defib, cabinet and Trauma Kit Cabinet £1650), Muga £553, Toilets and Village general £67.47 and VAT £515.04. Proposed Mr J Pridding, seconded Mr A Jones that the finances be accepted.

5. ALLOTMENTS: The Clerk had checked the rental agreement for the allotments and there was no mention of a notice period needed to increase the rents; in addition, he had contacted WCBC and they advised that they just send a letter when the rents are increased to inform the allotment holders.

6. GULLEY GRIDS: The Clerk emailed Streetscene at WCBC regarding unemptied gulley grids; he had a reply stating that according to their records, all of the gulley grids had been emptied but that because some had been done early last year, they may have filled up again; they now have a record on those that needed re-doing and would get on to them in due course.

The Clerk also had an explanation of the issues with the flooding near Esp Hill on Frog lane; WCBC flooding team had put cameras down the drains and found some issues which have mainly been sorted; they also found that some gulleys run into a ditch which is piped but parts are broken and will be

repaired; in addition, a manhole on one of the adjoining fields is full and blocked so the gulleys cannot run into it; the field owner has been asked to empty the manhole; also, Bellis Bros are going to clean out their ditches again and it is hoped that all the work being carried out will solve the problem. The Clerk also asked Streetscene to replace and repair some signs on the Brickyards Corner which have come down.

7. RE-ADOPTION OF POLICIES: The Clerk advised that he had looked at the Standing Orders and the Finance Policies; apart from a minor point on the Standing Orders and the point regarding insurance cover which has already been sorted, he could not find any other issues.

8. INSURANCE: At the previous meeting, the Clerk had mentioned that the insurance policy from Zurich did not cover the cost of clearing up after a fallen tree; the policy is up for renewal very soon so the Clerk will have a discussion with Zurich then about what it does and does not cover with regards to Community Council assets; it was mentioned that it may be necessary to have insurance with regard to Cyber security so this will also need to be checked.

ITEM 2: CORRESPONDENCE:

9. Since the January meeting, the Clerk had advised the Councillors that the new Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Holt Play areas now included a charge for litter picking for Dee Park and the Church Green Play Areas, a charge which had not previously been included; the 2 areas together added another unbudgeted £1634 onto the costs for all 3 play areas meaning the new total cost for the Service Level Agreement would be £3,393 plus VAT. The SLA cost includes monthly inspections by WCBC, an annual inspection by an external company to ensure the equipment is safe, litter picking and site litter clearance.

There was no clarification in the SLA as to whether grass cutting for all the areas in Holt cut by WCBC was included or whether another invoice would be received for that work; one Councillor contacted the Clerk to ask whether litter picking/litter removal could be done by Councillors and another asked for a total breakdown of grass cutting costs for all the areas in the village such as those looked after by WCBC, Hillfield POS, and the Cemetery, a costing which the Clerk provided.

A discussion was held but as the SLA did not make clear regarding the grass cutting and also the maintenance of the play areas, the Clerk was asked to contact the officer at WCBC in charge of play areas, to seek further clarification.

The Clerk had received pre notification of the Deva Triathlon which is taking place on Sunday 1st June; although the route does not go through Holt, it does circle the village going via Rossett, Borrass Head, and Borrass, down the A5156 link road to the Wrexham Golf Club Roundabout joining onto the A534 down to the Holt/Farndon Bypass before turning left at Sibberfield Lane and heading back to Chester; some disruption to travel may be inevitable on the day.

The Clerk had received notification that the Bank Interest Rate on both the Business Reserve and Liquidity 35 Day Accounts were decreasing following the Bank of England reduction in interest rates; the new rates would go from 1.26% to 1.11% on the Business Reserve account and 2.75% to 2.5% on the Liquidity 35 Day account; the Clerk has applied for a Liquidity 95 Day which is

still paying 3.5% and when opened will transfer a significant amount from the Liquidity 35 Day account.

The Clerk had just before the meeting received the Auditor General's Report and Audit Opinion for the 2023/24 All Wales Audit; this is a full in-depth audit and is the first full one which has been completed on Holt Community Council under the new Audit arrangements for Wales. The Basis of Qualification in the report states that in the "Annual Governance Statement, it is not consistent with the Council's internal controls and governance arrangements for the year in that the Council does not publish on its website the information it is required to publish electronically by the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru Act 2013 and the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021". Unfortunately, the statement gives no further information as to what is missing off the website so the Clerk will have to contact Audit Wales to find out; whatever is missing is not intentional and when the new Community Council website was set up, it followed the format of the previous website.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

- a) First Floor Extension Above Existing Single Storey Element, 2, Holt Lodge Cottages, Hugmore Lane, Llan Y Pyll; NO OBJECTION
- b) Works To Trees in Holt Conservation Area, Land At The Cross, Holt: NO OBJECTION

ITEM 3: AGENDA

There were no Agenda items to be considered at this meeting

ITEM 4: ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Mrs G Jones advised the meeting that Holt CP School recently competed in another local inter schools' netball contest consisting of 12 teams and came a creditable 3rd.

Mrs G Jones also advised that there was a loose kerbstone just in front of the Golden Lion on Church Street (formally Peal of Bells); Clerk to contact Streetscene.

Mr D Bithell said that the landowner of the fields adjacent to the Cemetery had recent cut the side and the top of the hedges on their side of the fields; this left the hedges on the Cemetery side looking untidy; the Clerk advised that he would have a look at the hedges but that by law, hedges cannot be cut from 1st March to 1st October so that nesting birds are not disturbed.

Mr Bithell also said that the big conifer hedges had not been cut on Dee Park; Clerk to contact WCBC. In addition, the gully drain just to the right of the archway on the path leading from the Play Area to Dee Park is still full; Clerk to contact Streetscene again.

Mr A Jones said that the road signs at the top of Borrass head had still not been put back; the Clerk has contacted WCBC about this previously.

Mr J Pridding said that the hedge on the right-hand side of the pathway leading to the Cemetery from Green Street was collapsing in some areas; the owners of the Maesglas Care Home maintain the hedge so the Clerk will contact them.

The Clerk informed the meeting that he had recently attended a meeting at the Hotel Wrexham, along with the local Councillor, M Morris; the meeting had been arranged because some residents local to the Hotel were not happy that the Hotel had been used by WCBC to house homeless people. There had been

some incidents recently and sadly a pedestrian walking towards Wrexham, who had been staying at the Hotel, had been hit and killed by vehicles travelling on the A535; in addition, another pedestrian was seriously injured; there had also been incidents of anti-social behaviour in the area. The meeting was well attended by local people including the Licensees of the Quarry Arms, and the Police were also represented at the meeting. After an interesting discussion, the representative of Hotel Wrexham advised the meeting that although the Hotel had been housing people for WCBC for some years, going forward this would be reduced as much as possible to nil, although they did reserve the right to house people under emergency circumstances.

ACCOUNTS: Approved for payments for February: Proposed Mr J Pridding, seconded Mr A Jones.

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 Monthly Charge Play Area Inspections	£1029.60
3138 – Kenyon Hall Committee, Hire Hall, Nov & January	£60.80
3139 – Mr G Crofts, Toilet Expenses	£80.91

PROPOSED PAYMENTS FOR FEBRUARY

3140 – AVOW, Salary, Wage, Charge, February	£880.53
3141 – EDF Energy, Village Energy Use	£11.60
3142 – Hafren Dyfrdwy CRF, Water, Toilets, Allotments, Cemetery	£816.47

NEXT MEETING OF HOLT COMMUNITY COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT THE KENYON HALL ON TUESDAY 18TH March 2025 AT 7-00PM

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