



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the Budget & Precept meeting on the 4th January 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Present:

Cllr Mike Kermode (Mayor),
Cllr Val Simmons (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Ivor Beech
Cllr Jackie Burnham
Cllr Ann Davies
Cllr Mike Elgin
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Steve Wilson - Town Clerk
Paul Smith - Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk
Two members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllr Bleddyn Williams
The meeting was recorded from this point (audio only)

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting offering his good wishes to all for the New Year. He was attending virtually due to feeling unwell and reported that this would cause him difficulty in chairing the meeting and asked if Members would support the Deputy Mayor chairing the meeting as a consequence. **Resolved.**

The Mayor then offered the council's congratulations to Cllr Ann Davies who had received a BEM in the New Year honours list. Cllr Ann Davies thanked the Council for their kind sentiments.

2. Declaration of Interest

None offered

3. Urgent Matters

None

4. Setting of Precept Budget 2024/25

The Deputy Mayor reminded Members that the Clerk had circulated a draft document for discussion which highlighted all budget lines, the allocated budget for 2023/4, a projected outturn, a proposal budget for 2024/5, and the change of budget proposed if approved by the Council. The document

included options for the precept based on the number of properties in Rhuddlan, the potential use of financial reserves, and an indication of the cost per household for each option.

The resulting debate considered each proposed budget line Members noting its impact in terms of any increase, decrease, no change, not required in the next financial year, or it being a new proposal for consideration.

In order to limit the length of these Minutes not every budget line is hereby recorded in detail but below is a short synopsis of the approved budget for 2024/25. A detailed budget and precept spreadsheet is attached.

- The inclusion of a reduced provision for SID maintenance and any additional road safety measures. Members noting the potential provision of another SID on New Road which is awaiting a decision on a DCC survey on the impact of the 20mph limit recently imposed.
- An increased budget for the staff salary and on costs in accordance with national guidelines.
- A reduction in the bank charges budget due to implementing internet banking.
- An increase in subscriptions to the One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks,
- Increase in travel budget to cover Clerks travel and Town Council representation at any potential conferences.
- The budget for revenue sundries was exceeded in 2023/4 due to unforeseen regalia costs but will revert to base budget level along with other budget lines e.g. translation, Remembrance Day costs, grants, events, car parking costs to DCC for free parking to support local business, and litter collection.
- Provision for additional Christmas lights was removed because of installation problems.
- Members resolved to increase the CCTV budget line by 100% in anticipation of the new contract being negotiated. Other new budget lines agreed include additional financial support for the library in response to the 40% cut by Denbighshire County Council, a £40k contingency fund which can be used to respond to any other cuts in Denbighshire County Council services in Rhuddlan and funding for the group looking for a site for a new cemetery.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the proposed budget as discussed and now approved would total £223,099 and illustrated three options of how the budget could be achieved via the precept as previously mentioned above.

Members recognised the current economic crisis being experienced by local households and the need for Council to use some reserves to help keep the precept as low as possible, whilst meeting the Council's financial commitments. The Mayor highlighted the importance of having a contingency to use to mitigate any unknown cuts that DCC may make; he said that Town Councils were not usually seen as being there to provide safety nets for cuts in County services but it was important that we had the capacity to respond positively to maintain important services for the community. Cllr Mike Kermode therefore proposed that Option three be approved. This option is for a £116.70 per annum precept; which is an increase of £0.85 per month per household and would leave the Council with £55,000 in reserve. This was seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. **Resolved.**

It was also noted that SLCC and One Voice Wales recommend that Council reserves should be between 25% and 50% of annual spend.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the Clerk for his excellent work on the budget and precept documentation and this was echoed by all the Members.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Val Simmons for chairing the meeting.

The next Full Council meeting on Thursday 11th January will start as 6.30pm to accommodate representatives of the library service to discuss the future of Rhuddlan library.