Minutes of a meeting of Rhuddlan Town Council held on 7th January 2026.

1. **Apologies** - Cllr. Sophie Baker

2. **Present** – Councillors Jackie Burnham (Mayor), Ivor Beech (Deputy Mayor), Ann Davies. Mike Elgin, Reg Davies, Mike Kermode, Arwel Roberts, Val Simmons and Bleddyn Williams.

3. **Declarations of Interest** – None

4. **Urgent Matters as Agreed by the Chairperson** – The Mayor reported that the Town Clerk was still on sickness leave and members gave their best wishes for a speedy recovery. Cllr. Mike Kermode had volunteered to fill the Town Clerk's role on a temporary basis, so as to facilitate this meeting regarding the budget and precept and the business meeting on 15th January. It was formally agreed that Cllr Kermode would act in the temporary role of Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for this period. It was accepted that the absence of the Town Clerk meant that there would not be any hybrid meetings.

5. **Budget and Precept for 2026-27 –** Spreadsheet had been previously circulated, which provided information about the main elements of the budgets for 2025-26 and 26026-27 plus information about balances and potential precepts.

   The Council firstly considered the budget line-by-line and the following changes were **agreed:**

   - **Website and Social Media** – it was agreed that this would be reviewed by the Information and Website Committee.
   - **Elections** – provision of awareness and information prior to the elections in May 2027 – budget reduced to £2,500.
   - **Christmas Street Lights** – budget increased by £2,500 to allow for additional provision and trees.
   - **Cemetery Working Group** – budget deleted on the basis that there was little/no potential to identify a site for a new cemetery in the Rhuddlan area and the lack of potential of Denbighshire County Council to fund and operate one.
   - **D.C.C. Contingency** to take on board service cuts by Denbighshire County Council – budget reduced to £25,000 bearing mind the underspend in the present year,
   - Welsh Langue Initiatives – new budget line of £5,000 which will allow the Council's Welsh Language Group scope to promote awareness and run activities.

   It was therefore **resolved** that the Council's revenue budget for 2026-27 will be **£252,440**

   The second task was to agree the precept and the use of general balances. Cllr. Kermode said that the general advice was that small town/community councils should maintain a balance of some 25% of their budget and that the larger town/community councils could hold balance of up to 100% of their budget. He suggested that Rhuddlan own Council fitted into the middle range and that general reserves of some 50% of its budget might be seen as prudent. He also gave examples of the levels of reserves being held by some of the larger town and community councils in the North Wales area.

He also mentioned the potential problems that the Council might encounter in future years if it utilised all its "extra reserves" i.e. those beyond the prudent level, in one financial year.

A number of options regarding the use of reserves were discussed. The earmarking of a portion of the reserves was also considered but it was agreed that there was little benefit in doing this.

After further discussion it was **resolved** to maintain the precept at the same level as in the current year, by the use of the required level of balances.

(Notes – the use of £55,000 of general balances will result in an annual precept of £116.28 for Band D properties, equating to £9.69 per month. Remaining balances will be £107,353; this is 42% of the revenue budget, a prudent level for this Council. The detailed spreadsheet for the budget for 2026-27 is attached as Appendix 1)

6. **Date of next meetings** – Thursday 15th January and then 12th February.

Part 2. Exclusion of press and public. By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

7. **Review reasons for apologies** – Cllr Sophie Baker – apology accepted.