

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2010 (2:00pm)

- PRESENT:** Councillor Gwilym O Jones - (Vice-Chair) in the Chair
- Councillors W.J.Chorlton; Lewis Davies; Barrie Durkin;
Jim Evans; K.Evans,C.LI.Everett;,D.R.Hughes;
Fflur M.Hughes; K.P.Hughes; R.LI.Hughes; W.I.Hughes;
W.T.Hughes,T.Lloyd Hughes Eric Jones; H.Eifion Jones;Raymond
Jones;R.Dylan Jones; T.Jones; R.LI.Jones; C.McGregor; Rhian
Medi;Bryan Owen; J.V.Owen; R.L.Owen; R.G.Parry OBE; G.O.Parry
MBE; Eric Roberts, Peter S. Rogers, H.W.Thomas; Ieuan
Williams;J.Penri Williams
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Interim Managing Director;
Corporate Director (Finance);
Corporate Director (Environment & Technical Services);
Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services);
Director of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer;
Head of Service (Highways and Waste Management)
Head of Service (Policy),
Solicitor to the Monitoring Officer;
Committee Services Manager;
Interim Head of Scrutiny
Scrutiny Officer
Communications Officer
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors E.G.Davies, T.Lloyd Hughes, G.W.Roberts, OBE, J Arwel
Roberts, E.Schofield, Selwyn Williams
-

The meeting was opened with a Prayer by Councillor Ff.M.Hughes.

1. MINUTES

Submitted and confirmed as a true record, the minutes of the meetings of the County Council held on the following dates:-

- 11th May, 2010
- 11th May, 2010 (AGM)
- 5th July, 2010 (Extraordinary)

2.DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor K.P.Hughes and T.Jones declared an interest in item 13 of these minutes, remained at the meeting but did not take part in any discussion or voting thereon.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OR THE HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICES.

The Chair congratulated all those from the Island who had competed and all those that had been successful at the National Eisteddfod in Blaenau Gwent. Congratulations were also extended to Glenys Mair Glyn Roberts, the daughter of the late Reg Powell, former head of Planning, Anglesey Borough Council, who won the crown at the National Eisteddfod. He also referred to Mrs. Grace Roberts who had won the Daniel Owen Memorial Prize. Although she resided in Y Felinheli, she had her roots in Pensarn.

The Chair also took the opportunity of congratulating the pupils of Anglesey Secondary Schools who had achieved success in their GCSE's and 'A' level results. He extended his best wishes to all of them for the future. He also thanks their teachers for their commitment and hard work.

He also mentioned the successes that had taken place at the Royal Show and at the Anglesey Show this year.

At this juncture, the Leader of the Council took the opportunity of informing Council that Councillor Phil Fowlie had due to ill health, resigned as a County Councillor for the Rhosneigr Ward. He thanked him for his contribution to local government since his election in 1999. He had been a popular member of this Authority and the Council's best wishes were extended to him in his battle to overcome the illness that had affected his life over the last 18 months.

Councillor Bryan Owen also wished to pay his respects to Phil Fowlie. He stated that Phil had undergone surgery at Manchester yesterday and he extended his best wishes to him for a full and speedy recovery. He had been a popular member of this Authority, perhaps the most popular Councillor of all. That popularity 2 years ago had brought together a group of 21 Councillors which was the majority group on the Council at that time. With Plaid Cymru there had been a majority of 29 members within the Council. He was a principled man and did not let down his friends. Under the leadership of Phil Fowlie, the concept of Energy Island was born. It was encouraging now to see that the concept was gaining momentum. Phil Fowlie had been an excellent ambassador for this County and he had taken the opportunity of promoting the Island at every possible opportunity.

The Chair also took the opportunity of wishing him a full and speedy recovery. He also referred to the fact that Councillor E.G. Davies had undergone surgery recently and he was also wished a full and speedy recovery.

The Chair then went on to welcome the representatives of Bro Cefni Dancers, Llangefni to the Chamber. They were to be praised for their thorough work and for their use of traditional musical instruments such as the Welsh harp. This year they had been successful at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod when they won two 1st prizes. That was quite an achievement. It gave him great pleasure to present commemoration medals to both the junior and adult representatives of Bro Cefni Dancers.

Medals were also presented to the representatives of the Holyhead Weightlifting Club by Mr. Eric Jones, world renowned mountaineer from Tremadog, who was well known for the British solo ascent of the north face of the Eiger and for his climbs of the Matterhorn and the South Col of Everest.

Before the presentation, the Chair introduced the members of the weightlifting club and paid tribute to their significant sporting achievements. He wished them every success for the future. Councillor Raymond Jones, local member, was also afforded the opportunity of congratulating the club and thanked Eric Jones for his attendance today.

On a sadder note, the Chair referred to the death recently in London of Mr. Gareth Williams from Valley. On behalf of the Council he conveyed his deepest sympathy to his cousin Councillor W.I. Hughes and to his aunt, Mrs. Judith Thomas, Translator. The Council's sympathy was also extended to all his family and friends.

Councillor R.L.I. Hughes, Portfolio Holder, referred to the sudden death of Mrs. Helen Williams yesterday. Helen was a Deputy Manager at the Brwynog Home in Amlwch. Deepest condolences were extended to the family and especially to her sister Megan Roberts who worked in the Social Services Department.

The Chair also sympathised with any Member or Officer who had suffered bereavement since the last meeting of this Council. Members and officers stood in silent tribute as a mark of their respect.

4. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

No petitions were received in accordance with Paragraph 4.1.11 of the Constitution.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

Submitted - The report of the Interim Head of Scrutiny setting out the work done by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees between the Council's Annual Meeting on 5 May 2009 and 11 May 2010.

The five Chairpersons, of the newly established Scrutiny Committees had contributed to the report and a summary of their intent, for the forthcoming year, was included as an **APPENDIX** to the report.

Following on from the Corporate Governance Inspection Report, steps were taken to improve scrutiny at this Council. The Council asked the W.L.G.A's support to develop and support its scrutiny function and requested it to develop recommendations for improving scrutiny. During February, 2010 the WLGA published a "Review of Scrutiny Arrangements in Anglesey"

The Local Government Minister addressed the Council on 24th February and wrote a letter to the Leader on the 4th of March stating that there should be a fundamental restructuring of Overview and Scrutiny to ensure the Council had in place adequate provision for scrutinising the performance of its service areas.

On 11 May, 2010 a report on Overview and Scrutiny was submitted to the full Council and it was agreed that a new scrutiny structure would be put in place. The new structure should make it easier for members to pick topics for scrutiny that are of value and interest to the people of Anglesey and improve the link between the scrutiny process and the Executive.

The effectiveness of Scrutiny Committees depended on a number of factors such as insufficient or inappropriate officer support, the impact of party/group politics and a poor Executive response to scrutiny. The Council was looking to address these weaknesses and a Scrutiny Manager had been appointed and one more additional scrutiny support officer was to be appointed.

The Chairs of the 5 Scrutiny Committees were afforded the opportunity of addressing the Council on their plans for the future, as referred to within the appendix to the report.

RESOLVED

- **That a steering group of Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs be re-convened, a clear remit for the group identified and a process agreed for chairing the group.**

• **That Councillor W.J.Chorlton be nominated to act as the “Scrutiny Member Champion” (from the Executive) to support the raising of the profile of Scrutiny across the Council and to increase communications in particular between Executive and Non-Executive Members.**

• **That a research budget of £5,000 be identified and allocated to Scrutiny Committees to strengthen Scrutiny’s capacity in providing expert research and advice. Allocation of this budget to be determined by the Scrutiny steering Group.**

• **That a Link Officer from each Department be identified and nominated by all Corporate Directors as the pivotal point for communication for non-executive members and Scrutiny Officers to provide :-**

- * **rapid sign-posting to relevant departmental areas**
- * **key information and existing reports concerning service areas**
- * **nominations for additional, relevant, departmental officer support for Scrutiny reviews**
- * **external contacts and information resources**

• **That a 12 month member and officer development programme to support the continuing development of Scrutiny be worked up by the Interim Head of Scrutiny and the Training Manager based on the identification of member and officer feedback and training needs, new government legislation and good practice nationally.**

• **That a Scrutiny Communications Plan be established with the support of the Communications Unit to raise the profile and increase awareness of Scrutiny across Anglesey.**

• **That agreement should be given to updating the look of future Scrutiny Annual Reports following the good examples nationally (Cumbria County Council, Sandwell Borough Council etc.) and, as an initial step, to obtain advice and guidance from the Council’s Graphic Unit on the matter.**

• **That a new, integrated process for scrutiny of the annual Council budget be discussed and defined by an informal member working group in conjunction with the Finance and ICT Corporate Director.**

6. ROLE DESCRIPTIONS AND PERSON SPECIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERS.

Reported by the Interim Managing Director- That the recently established Member development Workgroup, supported by the WLGA had developed a Member Development Strategy as an underpinning foundation on the ultimate destination of achieving Charter status but also gave the workgroup a reference point and clear focus.

One of the key elements, and cornerstones of the strategy were the role descriptors which like the job description was intended to set out the responsibility and functions of the role of the elected member. They provided members with clarity on their roles but were also useful evidence for the electorate that Members were doing a clearly defined professional job

These role descriptors formed a cornerstone of the Member Development Charter which had been developed to give structure and impetus to the growing body of the support services for elected members within Welsh local government. Authorities who attained Charter status were seen as committed to improving standards and developing good practices.

Agreeing to move forward with role descriptors and person specifications was seen very much as the kind of good practice expected from a forward thinking local authority and took very positive steps to help members address development needs that they required to support them in their role. It would certainly support future development work on gaining the Member Charter but it would also confirm to the Recovery Board a real intent to change the approach by members themselves to their role.

RESOLVED that each individual member commits up to the relevant role descriptor and that the Isle of Anglesey County Council formally adopts the full range of role descriptors for the various elected member roles with immediate effect.

7. TO AMEND THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE.

Reported by the Solicitor to the Monitoring Officer- That following a recent complaint, the Ombudsman had recommended that the Council amend its Complaint Procedure to add a new clause. Attached to this report was a copy of the Council's current Corporate Complaints and Compliments Procedure. It was proposed to add a new clause to it at 1.3.3 as follows:-

"An officer who is the subject of a complaint should not respond to that complaint, and in the case of a senior officer that arrangements will be made for a response to be prepared by an officer of similar or higher seniority".

RESOLVED

That subject to the direction of the Welsh Ministers, to revise the Constitution by adding the following clause at 1.3.3 :-

"An officer who is the subject of a complaint should not respond to that complaint, and in the case of a senior officer that arrangements will be made for a response to be prepared by an officer of similar or higher seniority."

8. ESTABLISH A RECOVERY STEERING GROUP OF THE FULL COUNCIL

Reported by the Interim Managing Director - That at it's meeting today, the Council would be asked to endorse its Recovery Programme.

As well as identifying those steps already successfully completed, the Recovery Programme would set out further activities which the Council must undertake in order to satisfy the Minister and the Recovery Board that the Council was fit and would remain fit, to run its own affairs without need for continuing intervention.

The progress of the Recovery Programme must be monitored and, while there were a number of existing groups / committees which would have a role to play in this, it was proposed that a Recovery Steering Group be established. The overall arrangements would be as illustrated in the diagram at Annex A of the report to Council.

The suggested Terms of Reference for the Recovery Group were attached at Annex B of the report. The report also referred to proposed officer support in order to assess the progress and performance of the Recovery Programme Projects and to report to the Recovery Group.

The report also referred to a number of factors which might need to be taken into consideration as regards the proposed membership of the Recovery Group.

A proposal was lost by Councillor Bryan Owen that membership of the Recovery Group should consist solely of backbenchers of the Authority.

Prior to the votem the Interim Managing Director pointed out that it was a matter for each political group to decide upon the member put forward, having regard to the desirability for both Executive and non Executive members on the Steering Group. However, he did agree with the general sentiment put forward today that if there was not a fair number of members from the backbenches, then the Group would not actually achieve its objectives. Through discussions via the normal political channels in terms of the nominations, the Council could try to comply with both the spirit of what Councillor Owen was trying to achieve but also make sure that there were some members from the Executive as well.

RESOLVED

- **That Council confirms the Terms of Reference for the Recovery Steering Group as shown at Appendix B of the report.**
- **That the membership of the Steering Recovery Group shall be one member from each Political Group together with one unaffiliated member and that meetings of the Group be Chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Council."**

9. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2009/10

Submitted by the Portfolio Holder (Finance) - A report on the monitoring of Treasury Management activity for financial year 2009/10.

RESOLVED to accept the contents of the report and that it be also forwarded to the Audit Committee consistent with the Council's decision.

10. REVISED DISPOSAL OF LAND AT PENUCHELDRE

Submitted for information - A report by the Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) on a decision taken as a matter of urgency by the Executive on 16th March, 2010. This was to secure the sale of land before the end of the financial year, thereby safeguarding significant Social Housing Grant Investment from W.A.G.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report for information purposes only.

(Councillors W.J.Chorlton and W.I.Hughes both wished it to be minuted that they had not taken any part in the discussion or voting on this item).

11. ENERGY ISLAND

Submitted for information - A report by the Head of Service (Economic Development) on a decision taken as a matter of urgency by the Executive on 15th June, 2010. This was in order to secure additional external expertise for an existing piece of work being undertaken by contracted consultants working on Energy Island.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report for information purpose only.

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES.

Reported by the Interim Managing Director - That the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales had a duty to review the electoral arrangements for every principal council in Wales at intervals of not less than 10 and not more than 15 years for the purpose of considering whether or not to make proposals to the Welsh Assembly Government for a change in those arrangements.

The Commission were directed to undertake this periodic review in January 2009 and they gave a presentation to the County and Community Councils during May 2009 and invited proposals

Draft Proposals were published on 25 January 2010 with an invitation to comment. The Council, and others, subsequently considered the Draft Proposals and made observations earlier this year.

The Final Proposals were now with W.A.G for consideration and there was a final opportunity to comment before the deadline of 12 October 2010. After this deadline W.A.G may make an order giving effect to the proposals made to it by the Commission either as submitted or with modifications. Alternatively it may give notice that it did not propose to give effect to the proposals.

The Final Proposals recommended a County Council of 36 Members representing 31 electoral divisions. Only 6 of the existing electoral divisions were proposed to be retained. The remaining electoral divisions may be changed. In addition the Final Proposals proposed four multi-member electoral divisions in the Holyhead, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll and Menai Bridge areas.

The Leader of the Council reported that he had received a letter from Llanellian Community Council expressing their concerns that the recommendations were splitting the Penysarn Ward in two and was not a democratic decision for the area.

RESOLVED

- **That the Council reluctantly accepts the proposals but regrets that the Boundary Commission did not take on board some of the observations made by the Council.**
- **That the Boundary Commission be again requested be re-consider its use of the Ward name Morawelon as the proposed new Ward name for the present Wards of Morawelon, London Road, Kingsland and Maes Hyfryd.**

13. HM COURTS SERVICE ESTATES.

Reported by the Interim Managing Director - That the Secretary of State for Justice had issued a consultation on the most strategic locations for Magistrates and County Courts across England and Wales.

The consultation included a proposal to close the Llangefni Magistrate Court and to transfer the work to Holyhead. In addition there were also proposals affecting the Llangefni County Court with the intention that both the Magistrates Court and County Court transfer to the Holyhead Law Courts.

There were currently 6 local justice areas within the local Criminal Justice Board Area of North Wales, each with a separate Bench of Magistrates which included one for Anglesey. At this stage it was not proposed to take forward any formal consideration of Bench mergers.

A copy of the letter received from HMCS was attached inviting comments on proposals. The consultation period ended on 15th September, 2010

Some of the members felt that the Magistrates Court at Llangefni should be retained since Llangefni was the main town of Anglesey as far as Island administration was concerned. Little consideration had been given to the cost implications and inconvenience of having to travel to Holyhead Magistrates Court from the more rural areas of the Island. The Island deserved two Court facilities. Mention was also made of the intention to erect a new Police Station at Llangefni and retention of the Llangefni Court would strengthen this aspect.

Reference was also made to the inadequate parking facilities should there be an increase in the use of the Holyhead Magistrates Court. Likewise, if the Holyhead Court was closed it would be just as difficult for members of the public to travel to Llangefni.

The Interim Managing Director having listened to the debate stated that a large number of points had been made, particularly about the quality of the case made as regards any closure at all. let alone the particular closures that were proposed. Comments had been made about inadequate car parking, capital investment and facilities, government bodies not recognising adequately the restraints of rural communities and the additional cost and efforts getting to facilities. The general feeling of the Council was to oppose these particular proposals and support the status quo. He would be prepared to capture the tenure and tone of the debate, the

points raised and forward a response to H.M.Court Services. This Council was not opposed to them finding savings but were opposed to actually taking the facilities away from the two current locations.

RESOLVED that authority be given to the Interim Managing Director to respond to the consultation in accordance with the comments made at today's meeting.

14. LEIN AMLWCH

Reported by the Head of Service (Highways and Waste Management) - That since 1993, the disused Gaerwen to Amlwch had been the subject of various proposals to open the whole or part of it to either a heritage railway or as a cycle track. However, there had been no developments and the line remained the property of Network Rail, whilst the track was overgrown and the boundary fences and structures, such as bridges and retaining walls, continued to deteriorate with little or no maintenance work undertaken.

The County Council on 6th March, 2007 resolved *"that this Council's preferred options for the Line is that of a cycle, walking and bridlepath route."*

Since that date there had been renewed hope of reopening the railway line with the Welsh Assembly Government commissioning a feasibility study for a train service between Bangor and Gaerwen and the potential for external private funding for a heritage railway between Llangefni and Amlwch which would not involve any funding from the public purse.

The Executive on 7th September 2009 resolved in favour of a train service between Gaerwen and Llangefni and that the matter should be taken to the County Council to review its original decision.

In the current financial climate it appeared highly unlikely that external funding would be available for reopening the railway for cycling, walking or as a bridleway.

The Leader proposed that in light of the above, this Council should therefore rescind its decision of 6th March, 2007. Firstly, this Council should support the Railway Company's intention to re-open the railway service between Llangefni and Amlwch. Secondly, that this Council will not entertain any application for financial assistance whatsoever and thirdly, that the development should commence as soon as possible and that the Railway Company be requested to submit a timetable of works for information to the Council within 6 months.

Councillor Ff.M.Hughes stated that it was she that had raised the matter at the Council meeting in 2007 and she provided members with the background to the matter. With all the pressures on health and fitness today, the decision taken ticked all the boxes in this respect. She wished to state that she had no objection at all to railways but believed in this instance that more people would welcome a bicycle track. What surprised her was that the Council would be reaching a decision today without the benefit of a Business Plan from the Railway Company. This would need to be perused by the Corporate Director of Finance beforehand.

Councillor Bryan Owen fully supported the proposals for a railway line. If this Council was serious about regenerating the towns of Llangefni, Amlwch and Llanerchymedd, then this proposal must proceed. He had no objections to a bicycle track adjoining the railway as was the case with Lon Eifion, Caernarfon.

Councillor R.Dylan Jones considered the scheme to be a vital cog in the regeneration of the Amlwch area. There was also the potential for goods transport and its proximity to the Wylfa 'B' site could be advantageous.

RESOLVED

•That in view of recent developments, and subject to no use of Council funds, that the County Council's preferred option for the future use of the Gaerwen to Amlwch line is for it to be reopened to rail services, and should that initiative fail the Council reverts to supporting the decision made by it on 6th March, 2007 that the preferred option be that of a cycle, walking and bridlepath route.

•That the Railway Company be requested to submit a Business Plan to this Council for information, including a timetable of works within 6 months.

15. NORTH WALES POLICE AUTHORITY

Submitted - A verbal report from Councillor J.V.Owen, one of this Council's representatives on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, of meetings held by that Authority between 1st May, 2010 and 31st August, 2010.

Reported - That finance was available to develop the new Police Station on the Llangefni Industrial Estate. This would be a boost to Llangefni and also tidy up that part of the Industrial Estate. He also referred to the on-going work that was taking place within the Authority as regards reducing costs over the next 4 years, which could amount to 18% of the budget in total over that period of time. He also mentioned that there had been a consortium bid to replace the police helicopter which played a vital part within the police force. The helicopter was expected to be operational next January.

Councillor H.Eifion Jones expressed his concern as to the cuts envisaged to the service provided by the Community Beat Managers and the P.C.S.O.S which had by now become a valued part of the community. He hoped that this service could be protected and prioritised.

Councillor Rogers recognised the importance of that service and the way that it had involved itself particularly with very young people. Some of these officers had done tremendous work, well beyond their call of duty. There would be a great effort made to retain this service.

Councillor C.LI.Everett also expressed his concern regarding cuts to the Service. He stated that he would welcome an engineer's report to substantiate the claims made by the Police Authority that the Police Station at Holyhead was not structurally sound. He requested Councillor Rogers to follow this matter up

Councillor Rogers stated that he would make enquiries and inform Councillor Everett of the position.

16.NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY.

Submitted- A verbal report from Councillor P.S.Rogers, this Council's representative on the North Wales Police Authority, of meetings held by that Authority between 1st May, 2010 and 31st August, 2010.

Reported - Similarly, the Fire Authority were going through a budget reduction process. At the moment, the Authority was facing difficulties in recruiting staff for the retained section which was the backbone of the Authority. He had also been involved in the appointment of an independent Member on the Fire Authority Committee.

He paid tribute to the work done by the former members of the Fire Authority, namely Councillor W.J.Chorlton and J.A.Roberts in respect of the refurbishment of Fire Stations. The refurbished Fire Station at Llangefni would be re-opened by the Minister on 14th October, 2010.

Councillor W.J.Chorlton enquired as to why the Fire Authority had purchased a Subaru vehicle for training purposes with youngsters? Why was the Fire Authority taking over the duties of the Police Authority?

Councillor J.V.Owen promised that he would make enquiries in this respect and report back to Councillor Chorlton.

Councillor Bryan Owen congratulated the Fire Authority for their excellent work with young people and especially those from Community First areas.

17. DELEGATIONS BY THE LEADER.

Submitted for information by the Interim Managing Director - Details of delegations made by the Leader since the last Ordinary Meeting of this Council.

RESOLVED to note the information.

The meeting concluded at 4:30 pm

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM O JONES
(VICE-CHAIR) IN THE CHAIR**