

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December, 2011

- PRESENT:** Councillor G.O.Jones – Chairman
Councillor R.Ll.Jones - Vice-Chair
- Councillors W.J.Chorlton, E.G.Davies; Lewis Davies; R.Anthony Dew; B.Durkin; Jim Evans; K.Evans; R.Ll.Hughes T.Ll.Hughes W.I.Hughes; K.P.Hughes; Aled M Jones; Eric Jones; O.Glyn Jones; Raymond Jones; T.H.Jones; C.McGregor; Bryan Owen; R.L.Owen; J.V.Owen; Bob Parry OBE; G.O. Parry MBE; J.P. Williams; S.Williams.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive;
Director of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Committee Services Manager.
Communications Officer.
- ALSO PRESENT:** Commissioner Gareth Jones
- APOLOGY:** Councillors C.Ll.Everett, Ff.M.Hughes, H.E.Jones, R.Dylan Jones, Eric Roberts, P.S.Rogers, E.Schofield, Ieuan Williams.

The meeting was opened with a prayer offered by Councillor E.G.Davies

A warm welcome was extended to Major Owain Luke, 1st Battalion, Royal Welsh Regiment.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare

2. TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

None to report.

3. THE ROYAL WELSH – FREEDOM OF THE COUNTY

Reported by the Head of Service (Policy) – That a request was submitted to the County Council on 13 September 2011, setting out the process for the granting of the Freedom of the County of Anglesey to the Royal Welsh Regiment, following a resolution passed by the Council on 8th March, 2011. (A copy of that report was enclosed as background information setting out the necessary procedures and proposed arrangements)

The report referred to the Council's powers under Section 249 of the Local Government Act, 1972, in relation to the granting of the Freedom of the County to the Royal Welsh and the requirement for a two thirds majority of the Council in order to pass the resolution. On 13

September, 2011, the Council resolved that Group Leaders should discuss these issues before 8th December. If the Council resolved to grant the Freedom of the Regiment, it was proposed that the Freedom Ceremony and Parade be held in Holyhead in 2013.

Councillor Aled Morris Jones - *“Mr Cadeirydd, Major Owain Luke of the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh, Leader, Chief Executive, Members, Commissioner and Senior Officers of the Isle of Anglesey County Council.*

It is my honour and privilege to propose the granting of the Freedom of the County of Ynys Môn to the Royal Welsh Regiment, which will confer the rights of the Regiment to march through the streets of this ancient County on all ceremonial occasions with colour flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed and the presentation of a Freedom Scroll to mark the occasion.

Let us dwell for a minute on what the colours mean to the Regiment and to our country. Adorned on the colours are engagements ranging from the Napoleonic War, Waterloo, Crimean War, South African War, First World War, engagement such as Mametz Wood in 1916, Paschendale, Palestine, the Second World War, crossing of the Rhine, North Africa, Burma 1943-45 and the Korean War, and more recently Iraq and the ongoing operations in Afghanistan. All of these are linked to the history of our country.

The Regiment is also embedded into the culture of Wales. Several writers and poets have served with the Regiment, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, David Jones, Hedd Wyn a'r Gadair Ddu yn Eisteddfod Birkenhead. Also Sir Kyffin Williams served with the Regiment and a portrait of a Welsh Fusilier was loaned to the County Council on the opening of Oriel Syr Kyffin Williams.

There is also humour and let me give you one example. The RWF have a unique uniform which includes a flash and I quote:-

“The Army Council attempted to remove the flash during the First World War citing the grounds that it would help the Germans identify which unit was facing them. As Fusilier Robert Graves reported, “the regiment retorted by inquiring on what occasion since the retreat from Corunna, when the regiment was the last to leave Spain, with the Keys of the town postern in the pocket of one of its officers, had any of His Majesty’s enemies seen the back of a Royal Welch Fusilier?” – and there the matter rests.

The Welsh have been called an unconquerable race this spirit is embodied in the motto of the Regiment which is “Gwell angau na chywilydd” – since the inception of the Victoria Cross award during the Crimean War, 43 Victoria Crosses have been awarded, the citation simply reads ‘For Valour’.

Our thoughts as an Island are with you Major Luke and your comrades as you prepare to embark on another tour of Afghanistan in April, 2012, the granting of the Freedom means to the people of Anglesey that we will be able to show our appreciation, our thanks and admiration of what Her Majesty’s Armed Forces and the Regiment in particular does for our communities.”

Major Owain Luke *“Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a sincere pleasure to be here today at this meeting to represent my Commanding Officer and the Regiment more widely. It is an honour to hear that Ynys Môn will confirm the freedom of the Isle on the Royal Welsh.*

It was a double pleasure for me in that if I was not here today, I would be taking part in a 12 mile loaded march in the rain carrying 40kg. Thank you for that and your hospitality feels all the warmer as a result.

The 1st Battalion of the Royal Welsh is of course the Royal Welch Fusiliers of old with strong links to Wales going back 300 years. I can therefore think of no finer place for the national regiment of Wales to parade than Mon – Mam Cymru. But even today, we still recruit many of our soldiers from North Wales in general and Anglesey in particular.

I currently have the honour to command B Company where there are 3 men from Anglesey under my command. When I told one of them where I was going today, he was at first disbelieving, but then delighted to hear of the possibility of holding the Freedom Ceremony in Holyhead and that he was looking forward to taking part in the parade himself. While we are excited corporately that the Regiment will be granted the Freedom of the Isle of Anglesey, there are also many in our ranks who will be pleased to re-affirm their own links with Anglesey in front of their family and friends.

So, thank you very much Chairman and County Council members for your generous decision today. It promises to be a great day and should herald the start of even closer relations between the Royal Welsh and the people of Anglesey. But just as importantly, ahead of our forthcoming operational tour of duty in Afghanistan in April 2012 it is indeed heartening to know that your community supports us. I'm sure you are looking forward to being on that parade in Holyhead in April 2013 and I hope to be able to meet some of you again then. Thank you very much indeed."

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Councillor A.Morris Jones - *"It is very appropriate that we grant the Freedom on the 90th Anniversary on the formation of the British Legion, whose work is ongoing.*

One cannot be help but be moved with the images that we saw over the Remembrance week-end. It is thanks to the work of these men and women that we are able to go about our business safe, secure and without fear. The Regiment will depart for the East next year we look forward to the Freedom Ceremony in 2013, but we wish you a safe return to the shores of these islands.

A Royal Welch Fusilier in Palestine in 1917 composed these words:-

*"Yn y dywerinol barth o'r byd yr wyf fi heno'n canu
Pe byddai modd fe roddwn naid a disgyn draw yng Nghymru"*

This Fusilier was my grandfather.

Mr Chairman, I move the motion that the Isle of Anglesey County grants the Freedom to the Royal Welsh Regiment."

RESOLVED

- **To unanimously grant the Freedom of the County to the Royal Welsh Regiment.**
- **To confirm that the Freedom Ceremony and Parade be held in Holyhead on 27 April, 2013.**

The meeting concluded at 12:05pm

**COUNCILLOR G.O.JONES
CHAIRMAN**