

MOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Mold Town Council held at the Town Hall, Earl Road, Mold at 6pm on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 (also, by Video conferencing).

PRESENT:

Councillors: Cllrs. Sarah Taylor (Deputy Mayor and Chairman), Geoff Collett, Haydn Jones, Pete Dando, Brian Lloyd, Tina Claydon, Robin Guest, Chris Bithell

Via Zoom: Cllrs. Teresa Carberry, Bryan Grew, Joanne Edwards, Catherine Frances Hill, Megan Lloyd Hughes

Officers: Jo Lane, Town Clerk and Finance Officer.

Guest: Mark Atherton, Legat Owen

140. APOLOGIES: Cllrs Paul Beacher, Jane Evans (Events and Community Officer)

ABSENT: Cllrs Tim Maunders, Haydn Bateman

141. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest

142. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: There were no members of the public or press in the attendance.

143. BUILDING SURVEY REPORT – TOWN HALL

Purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Legat Owen Survey report which has been recently commissioned.

Mark introduced himself and explained he was the original surveyor who completed a report 10 years ago on the Town Hall. The building hasn't changed a much since completing the previous report. Some slight changes have taken place.

The survey completed outlines a budget cost of £280,000 for essential works to bring the building up to approved standards. The costs do not include a full internal refurbishment or upgrades to the services needed in the building such as heating, upgraded boiler etc. In Marks opinion, there are four main areas of work needed. These are:

1. Weather tightness of the Town Hall – the building is not weather tight. There are issues with the main roof in the council chamber and the jubilee room. Slates are ok but the fixings are coming to the end of their life. The roof needs a complete recover. Nervous with regards to the conditions of the timber areas of the roof. A closer look at the timbers is needed.
The windows – some for the windows are in a terrible state.
Rain water goods – leaky rain water goods – patch work has taken place but not effective enough.

There are a number of cracks in the external walls of the building which will allow water in.

2. Stability – structural stability. Building inheritably sound. Have seen evidence of structural movement. Concerned about the foundation's stability to the rear of the building by the kitchen and extreme left-hand side – there is evidence of some recent cracking. Localised foundation movement. Probably due to drain leakage. Further investigation needed. Some of the lintels and arches over the windows show signs of movement.
3. Services – internal electrics, some big-ticket items that need to be attended to. Some equipment appears redundant. Further investigation M and E investigation needed.
4. Legal aspects – Occupy the first floor under a formal lease. Mark would welcome seeing a formal lease to get a better understanding of what maintenance works are that of the landlords and the tenant. Would like to see what the formal obligation work is in place external and internal. Mold Town Council have occupation responsibilities to look after staff, councillors and visitors to the parts of the building that you formally occupy.
 - a. Asbestos survey needed – seems to be contained to the boiler room.
 - b. Security element – building is open to the public – staff at risk.

The report is a broad-brush report – it's not intended to focus on any area in particular. Detailed reports need to be completed to develop a schedule of work.

All Members were individually given the opportunity to ask Mark questions, the questions and answers were as follows:

Q: £280,000 has been identified as possible costings to undertake essential works, does that include deeper investigation work.

A: Some costings for further investigation work has been included in the £280,000, it is likely that further investigations would be needed which have not been included.

Q: Would you buy the building and how much would you pay for it? With regards to fixing the slate roof how much slate could be retained?

A: Probably retain 60% of the original slate. The stone itself does not deteriorate. There is some breakage that would need replacing. Hope to re-use as much of the slate as possible. Likely able to find enough slate to make up the 40%.

The building is an attractive building and is planning listed. Think it can be brought into order. Would be unable to value the building – a commercial valuer would be needed. £300,000 purchase from Flintshire – does not seem too expensive to purchase but requires a huge cost to bring to order.

Q: If we did buy but may only need one floor – is there potential to let areas that are not being used. Maybe able to find a commercial independent tenant.

A: Would you be paying be rates? Maybe able to look at rates mitigation.

Q: The stability of building mentioned is concerning. Do we need a structural engineer report to look at that?

A: Mark is able to look into that. This could be covered by insurance, would be worth speaking to the insurers to see if they could help as it needs to be dealt with it now.

Q: What further information and costings do we need? We have the ability to raise some funds but have a duty to residents.

A: The ability to interrogate existing documents held would be useful. A list of these documents has been sent to the Town Clerk to try and locate.

The Town Clerk has sent a request to Flintshire County Council to request the documents, no response has yet been received.

Cllr Taylor gave a brief history of the Town Council's effort to secure a formal lease from FCC.

Q: Are the loose slates currently a hazard to members of the public?

A: Yes! Liability would be Flintshire.

Q: Do the windows need to be replaced?

A: They can likely be repaired, replacing would be extremely expensive. The windows are apart of the listing. Built in 1911-12.

Q: The building is unique, one of the concerns is accessibility. I cannot get up the stairs and struggle to get into the building. How easy is it to make internal alterations?

A: The accessibility is poor – I have recognised that accessibility has been attempted with the stair lift. Can look to install a platform lift – possibly find space to install. A possibility is for the Town Council to occupy the ground floor with further work to accessibility to the rear of the building. An accessibility audit is recommended.

Q: It's clear that a number of additional reports are needed to get a clearer picture of what work is required and the potential costs. Would you be able to provide a list of surveys that would be needed?

A: I would recommend the following surveys:

- Roof Survey
- Timber and Damp Survey
- Structural Survey – maybe able to go through the insurers.
- Occupying the building – measured surveys with space plans.
- Services and drains survey – maybe picked up by insurers.
- New up to date reports on the reports requested from FCC
- Architect – Historical Building report. Listed building consent.

Mark will put together a more formal list with an idea of costings per survey.

Q: How much can the work be staged. What are the absolute priorities and how can we stage the works?

A: Fazing of the work can definitely be looked into. Weather tightness, stability, cracks in walls and roof needs to be looked at now. Internal work can be completed at a later date. Majority of the costs that have been quoted. Mark can put together a schedule of works and costs.

Mark will get a schedule to the Clerk and will be added to the agenda for a brief discussion at the next Town Council Meeting.

Cllr Collett advised that due to the building being listed, there are possibilities to apply for grants to support with the costs.

This meeting, additional information and then speak with grants. Still an information gap. The finance side is where we have an information deficit.

Cllr Grew enquired to how much Flintshire County Council would be looking for with regards to the purchase? Members recollection is £325,000, but negotiations would be possible.

Cllr Guest asked if Legat Owen could lead the negotiation with FCC if required? It was agreed that professionals would be needed for this.

Mark stated that FCC as landlord's are responsible for the exterior of the fabric. List of essential works that have been discussed. MTC are on the hook for a proportion of those costs as tenants.

It was agreed that further information is needed with regards to potential grant funds before a final decision could be made. Another Extra Ordinary meeting would be needed with officers who have more experience regarding potential funding opportunities.

Mark left 19.24pm

143.1 LEGIONELLA REPORT

The Legionella reinvestigation was organised by FCC. Report was attached to the papers sent out to members.

A question was asked as to what FCC doing with regards to the recommendations received in the report?

No information has been received by the Clerk from FCC with regards to this. It is a requirement for monthly checks to take place. Another check took place today highlighting additional concerns.

144. NOTICES OF MOTION

Cllr Megan Lloyd Jones left 19.38 pm

Cllr Sarah Taylor read out the notice of motion and stated concerns highlighting the council's collective responsibility for people who work at the Town Hall and visitors to the premises. In its current state the Town Hall is not suitable accommodation.

Recommend locating the Town Council staff to the Bailey Hill Centre on a short-term basis until suitable accommodation can be sought.

Cllr Haydn Jones seconded the motion. Lone Working was spoken about months ago. So many things that not suitable not only for staff but for councillors and visitors. The decision for a permanent solution is required.

Cllr Geoff Collet asked the question of if staff could be relocated to Bailey Hill on a permanent basis.

It was felt that relocation to the Bailey Hill Centre was not a permanent solution due to size and accessibility.

Cllr Chris Bithell acknowledge the deficiencies and agreed that the critical decision of staying or moving is needed.

Cllr Tina Claydon enquired if a discussion could be had to talk to Flintshire about using downstairs or using empty rooms in county hall?

Cllr Megan Lloyd Jones re-joined the meeting – 19.47pm

Cllr Catherine Francis Hill – spoke in support of the motion.

Cllr Teresa Carberry – Felt that this highlighted the building currently is not fit for purpose. And re-iterated that staff safety is primary concern and action is needed quickly.

Cllr Joanne Edwards – Agreed that urgent action is needed.

Cllr Chris Bithell enquired if HSE could be invited to the Town Hall to complete an official report?

Cllr Tina Claydon asked if the Bailey Hill Centre is big enough for Town Council meetings to take place.

The Clerk advised that the Bailey Hill centre is not big enough to host Town Council meetings and working from the centre would only be possible on a temporary basis until more suitable accommodation could be sought.

Cllr Sarah Taylor advised Members that the next Town Council meeting would take place in Ebenezer Church to allow accessible for all Members to attend.

Proposal: Cllr Sarah Taylor formally proposed that Town Council Office staff temporarily re-locate to the Bailey Hill Centre until suitable accommodation can be found. The new location to be monitored on 3-month basis.

11 Councillors voted in favour, 2 Councillors voted against.

The motion was agreed.

Meeting closed at 20.17pm

Mayor's signature: Date:

**SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH MOLD TOWN COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT**

MOLD TOWN COUNCIL		DATE: 22ND November 2023
MEMBER	ITEM	MINUTE NO. REFERS

WORD/MINUTES/MTC/MIN/ JE 280923