**Notes from Wrexham Town & Community Council Forum, Thurs 17 March 2016 @ Guildhall, Wrexham**

**WAG Newly Appointed External Auditors**

A talk was given by Laura Hallez, for Grant Thornton explaining that Grant Thornton are new Accountants for the next three years running from Cardiff office. Three main changes/updates:

1. Audit fees – usually a fixed fee but will now be based on time taken to audit accounts – more information about the costings bands available on Welsh Audit Website.
2. Annual Government Statement
3. Budget setting
4. Monitoring
5. Engagement for internal audit can be done electronically – but must be printed off and signed.
6. There will be a staggered request for files – don’t sent any information NOT required as this can cause more questions and add on time fees.

**Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy**

Nicola Corbishley, Planning Officer ran through where the LDP is at the moment. Over 550 sites being considered. It was stressed that Preferred Strategy is an ‘information’ document only outlining which candidate site would be preferred.

Nicola highlighted the three main sites:

1. Ruthin Road
2. Holt Road
3. Wrexham Industrial Estate (no boundaries identified yet)

Nicola explained that the ‘Your Voice Portal’ is new -Cllr Hugh Jones and others voiced concerns that this portal was not user friendly at all.

**Important** - It was pointed out that the candidate sites could have other sites added on.

Concerns were raised regarding growth of communities and the pressure on hospitals, schools, sewage and highways. 200 sites have been given already and building work has started/been completed.

**Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act 2014**

Louise Davies gave a talk about the Act coming in on 6 April 2016. Workshops have been held and training in social care rolled out. This will cover new duties for Adults, Children and Carers – promoting wellbeing.

There is a new information and learning hub that has all information/videos etc. Handouts were given out.

Community Councils are encouraged to get involved in this Act and this is how the ‘Community Agent’ came about. It was suggested that a workshop for Town/Community Councils is set up for those wanting to get involved.

**Deployment of Wrexham Parking Wardens to the Rural Areas**

Cllr Hugh Jones firstly pointed out that parking was decriminalised some years ago and not appropriate for PCSO’s to issue tickets – and there were **no** plans to change this! The PCSO’s are able to issue tickets for ‘obstruction’ – this caused a big discussion (but this is a grey area for which Cllr Hugh Jones is getting it in writing what ‘obstruction’ defines).

Currently, six Enforcement Officers cover WCBC, 2 covering the Town Centre, 2 covering Rossett/Coedpoeth areas and 2 covering Chirk/Trevor areas. From 4 April 2016 Wrexham Council are employing a Contractor who will being responsible for 5 Officers covering parking and environmental crimes (dog fowling/littering).

Several Community Councils questioned whether the Enforcement Officers could go out to rural Communities – this apparently does happen (but not often enough and unlikely to change).

**Members Code of Conduct**

Trevor Coxon talked us through the notification received from Welsh Government regarding discrepancies of ‘Code of Conduct’. 102V has been removed – Clerks should have received this information by email from Steve Philips regarding the changes.

Clerk are to maintain declarations at meetings and keep a register. Declaration of Interest and Annual Reports should be made available online - Trevor Coxon said to contact One Voice Wales who can advise what is required on Town/Community Council websites. It was stressed that all Town/Community Councils should put in their ‘code of conduct’ registration of gifts/hospitality and define a value (WCBC £25.00).

New/revised ‘Code of Conduct’ to be adopted by 26 July 2016.