



Cyngor Tref
Rhuddlan
Town Council

Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 12th March 2020

Present:

Cllr Arwel Roberts (Mayor in the Chair)
Cllr Reg Davies
Cllr Syd Gaskin
Cllr Andrew Smith
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Cllr Mike Elgin
Cllr Charlotte Frobisher
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Mike Kermode
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk

1. Apologies

Cllr Ann Davies

1 member of the public was present, along with PCSO Phil Roberts and Sergeant Llyr Hughes

2. Declaration of Interest

None given

3. Urgent Items – having been advised to the Mayor 24hrs in advance

Cllr Arwel Roberts had been approached by a resident concerned about the speed of cars along Pentre Lane. The resident offered to pay for a mirror to assist resident's view of speeding cars before pulling out.

Cllr Andrew Smith agreed adding that speeding is a problem on all routes into the town but especially long straight roads.

Sgt Hughes commented that the police could arrange a speed survey and ask speed enforcement team to position themselves at the area.

4. Police Matters

PCSO Roberts had forwarded his report

There were 76 calls received from 1/02/20 – 29/02/20 for Rhuddlan area. Although high, a very small portion were actually crime related.

February 2020

1 x Anti-Social Behaviour - Rhuddlan Castle

1 x Criminal damage –Vicarage Lane
3 x shoplifting CO OP
1 X Burglary Tirionfa
1 x Criminal damage – Maes Derwen

The CCTV cameras were now all operational following a WIFI signalling problem. PCSO Roberts was cautionary about the longer lighter days bringing more calls and reports of incidents. The castle walls being used to climb and gain access to the castle grounds was a hot spot last year but the castle custodian has a new CCTV system in place.

Cllr Arwel Roberts if there was an update on a car fire in the Nature Reserve. PCSO Roberts said there was not but would check the records to see what if there was anything he could bring back to a future meeting.

Cllr Arwel Roberts asked if there was any update on rubbish/leaflets being posted to every business in Rhuddlan. PCSO Roberts reported that any feedback on actions would have gone to the complainants and that he was not aware of the actions.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands was concerned about criminal damage that had occurred within the Vicarage Lane picnic area and had encouraged residents to report such things to 101. The bug/hedgehog hotel and now been removed completely but the CCTV working again should help reduce this sort of crime.

Cllr Mike Kermode noted that no one had been caught by CCTV yet and hoped that the system might be used more efficiently in the future. Cllr Kermode was also interested to hear about any data that might be available from a previous speeding survey and what constitutes speeding. Cllr Charlotte Frobisher had participated in the previous survey and was aware that there was a threshold for speeding and action taken if over that threshold.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands asked that roads inside Rhuddlan town should be surveyed again.

Cllr Arwel Roberts adding that Members are still anticipating a crossing on Rhyl Road to Admiral's Field.

Cllr Syd Gaskin informed the meeting that the CCTV Partnership had been working on the WIFI signal issue for a long time and February 10th was the date set for the completion of the work. It was not as a consequence of Sgt Hughes contacting the Partnership.

The Town Clerk asked if the item of anti-social behaviour at the castle was around lighting which had cabling ripped out. PCSO Roberts said it was climbing over the wall.

Cllr Arwel Roberts thanked both PCSO Roberts and Sgt Hughes for their attendance and was wondering if there was a drug problem evident in Rhuddlan. PCSO Roberts answered that there would be drug related crime taking place but any information was passed on to a central intelligence department which remains confidential and would be used to combat such crime.

5. BCHUB Primary & Community Care – The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Darryn Thomas was not able to attend this evenings meeting.

6. Minutes – 13th February 2020.

Under Part 2 Exclusion of Press & Public Item 14b, The Rhuddlan Food Festival should read Gwledd Fest Food & Craft Festival

Subject to this amendment the minutes were proposed by Cllr Andrew Smith seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands as a true record and signed.

Matters Arising

- a. **Town Plan** – A special meeting of the Town Council will take place on Monday 16th March, 7pm to discuss the development of a Town Plan. Cllr Mike Kermode informed Members that he had experience of developing and monitoring similar plans in his role at county council level in the past and he is happy to facilitate the event if Members agree. He had prepared a framework for discussion which was then circulated. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed and Cllr Andrew Smith seconded that Cllr Kermode facilitate discussions at the special meeting of the Town Council. **Resolved.**
- b. **Website Studio** – there is a meeting to be held on 18th March at 3pm between the Studio, Cllr Gareth Rowlands, and the Town Clerk. Any Member wishing to participate can attend.
- c. **Tourist Video** - The Town Clerk was waiting for RhuddFest to send their video for inclusion.
- d. **Dog Waste Bag Dispensers** – The Town Clerk confirmed that the dispensers with the Town Council logo had been ordered and was awaiting delivery. There then followed a discussion between Members on various sites in Rhuddlan where dispensers had been placed and which were now no longer present including Admiral's Field, Rhodfa Clwyd, and the Nature Reserve. There was also a report that some youths had been seen damaging the dispensers. Cllr Gareth Rowlands suggested a press release to educate the public about the dispensers and how to use them properly. The Town Clerk is awaiting a response from Tim Evans on the wording.
- e. **Welcome Sign** – The Town Clerk reported that DCC had still not responded on this matter and that of the car park charge reimbursement scheme, and a pedestrian crossing survey. This was becoming increasingly frustrating with no action being taken. After some discussion the Council decided to formally write to the Chief Executive of DCC on the matter detailing the lack of response. Cllr Mike Kermode so proposed, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved**
- f. **New Cemetery** – Although this item is on the meeting agenda Cllr Andrew Smith reported under Matters Arising that the DCC procedure due to Rhyl's cemetery being full is that all burials would now be in Rhuddlan's cemetery.
- g. **Community Matters** – Cllr Syd Gaskin reported that he had spoken to a taxi operator about the provision of a free taxi phone service at Aldi. The costs involved with the phone provision and the rate of fares did not make it economically viable. Cllr Mike Kermode was meeting the Aldi manager soon about Dementia needs is the store and would bring this issue up again with him.
- h. **Bus Shelter Cleaning** – the Town Clerk reported that 7 of the 11 bus shelters had now been cleaned and a part payment for the work done so far was now required.

7. Correspondence from:

7a. The Mayor.

Cllr Arwel Roberts presented his report.

- 15th of February - Mayor and Mayoress invited to a Coffee Morning in Ebenezer Chapel Rhuddlan organised by the Save the Greyhound Association.
- 15th of February - despite the inclement weather we had a very good night in the Mayor's Buffet night in the Rhuddlan Golf Club, special guest the harpist Morwen Blythin. Many thanks to the town councillors and partners who were present.
- 26th of February - invited by Mrs Iorwen Jones Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych to judge the shop windows long the High Street to remember our patron Saint Dewi Sant. Congratulations to all the shops who were part of the competition. Especially the Cheese Shop who was first.
- 29th of February - Coffee morning in the Community Centre organised by the Dementia Group both of us really enjoyed the presentations especially Mr John Overton relating the history of the Rhuddlan pirates.
- 1st of March - pleasant evening in St Mary's Church Rhuddlan. A concert to remember the Trelawnyd Choir were in fine fettle and the two soloists.
- 7th of March - Buns and Bingo in the Community Centre 2pm supporting Kentigern Hospice.
- 9th of March - Present in the Commonwealth Flag Day in County Hall Rhuthun.

The report was accepted

7b. The Deputy Mayor - None given

7c. The Town Clerk

The report was accepted

The Town Clerk notified Members of a litter pick event on March 28th commencing at the Community Centre at 9.30am, and the Fish & Chip Supper on March 14th.

7d. Seating Bench Proposal – A letter had been received from Keith Smith asking for a bench to be provided at the end of Dyserth Road where it joins the A5151. A member of the public attending the Council Meeting informed Members that he believed the old bench mentioned in the letter was on consecrated land from an old chapel that was on this site as well as an old well which meant it cannot be moved.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands said that the land for the new bench was owned by DCC and permission would be needed from them. But raised the question as to whether the Town Council supported the provision of a bench.

Cllr Mike Elgin commented that the current bench was in good order but the site suggested in the letter was a better outlook.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands added that the current bench be kept and have a new one on the site the letter suggests. If the Council agrees then we need to officially write to Mike Bennion or Wendy Davies of DCC.

The Town Clerk reported that a new bench would cost in the region of £700.

Cllr Andrew Smith supported the idea and proposed that a new bench is investigated with DCC, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved.**

Cllr Mike Kermode suggested that the benches the Town Council owned in Rhuddlan be designated "Happy to Chat" benches.

Cllr Arwel Roberts wishing that whatever plaque maybe provided to make people aware has to be bilingual.

Cllr Syd Gaskin raised the fact that some people may not want to chat but rather spend some quiet reflective time on the bench.

Resolved to look into the provision of half of the Council's benches for "Happy to Chat" use.

7e. Rhuddlan Bowling Club - The Town Clerk had received correspondence from the club asking for them to be placed on the Town Council's website on the Community Links page and that Members use their social media outlets to fully support the opening of the new season on March 28th.

Cllr Mike Elgin suggested that a video clip be put on the tourist video being created.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands stated that the Council cannot promote the club on the website but it would be ok to use as a news item.

7f. Letter of Thanks – Received from Maurice Beer applauding the work and effort of the Mayor during recent weeks due to the storms. The Council congratulated the Mayor.

7g. DCC Marsh Road – in answer to a request to provide a pavement on the northern side of Marsh Road DCC have replied that the request cannot be supported and gave reasons as to why not. However, the uneven sections of carriageway will be improved to minimise any tripping hazard.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands commented that it was a disappointment that DCC had originally stated that a pavement would be provided and had now changed their mind.

Cllr Mike Kermode wondered if any grant funding maybe available and why not organise a petition to support the provision of a pavement including the caravan park customers on Marsh Road.

Cllr Rowlands adding that a letter should be sent to the Head of Highways asking what if someone is killed because of the lack of pavement.

Cllr Andrew Smith proposed that a letter be sent asking that DCC fulfil their earlier promise of a pavement. Cllr Mike Kermode seconded. **Resolved**

Members also wanted to add the provision of a drop kerb outside of the community centre and by the coffee shop. **Resolved.**

Cllr Mike Kermode adding that maybe Rhuddlan Town Council could provide the items if DCC cannot.

A.R.

7h. Library & One Stop Shop Annual Report – the report was received by Members. It was noted that the key holders were now Cllrs Arwel Roberts and Mike Kermode, the Town Clerk having given up her key. Cllr Gareth Rowlands would cover in case of emergencies.

8. County Council Members Report

Cllr Arwel Roberts

- The Coronavirus is obviously on the minds of us all and during this week in a briefing led by county officer Emlyn Jones all County Councillors present were informed of the steps the County will be taking to prevent the virus spreading, naturally Public Health Wales are leading on this. The county is aware of the problems including the public toilets owned by the county. Libraries will have advice to residents what should be done. At present this is an outbreak and not a pandemic.
On the same day we were given information by the North Wales Regional Emergency Planning Service. The six areas are covered and Graham Boase is Denbighshire representative - amongst aspects covered are Mass Fatalities, Severe Weather, Digital Infrastructure and environmental problems.
- During this month I and Cllr Gareth Rowlands met County Officer Garry Davies and Lord Langford regarding the development of the Nature Reserve on site. The castle will be seen better in the coming months from the site. Good to see the lights back on the castle well done our clerk.
- As everybody is aware two storms have affected all of Wales and Rhuddlan itself was affected, but considering the whole of Wales and areas within England our town has been quite lucky. Nevertheless, it was touch and go on Abergele Road and Pont Robyn during both periods. I visited a few properties and had a site meeting with Natural Resources Wales workers on the confluence of Pont Robyn with the River Clwyd. I believe photographs I took are now on the Rhuddlan Town Council Website.
- Still supportive of the Sit and Fit and Community Singing Sessions many thanks to the two Mikes. Cllrs Kermode and Elgin.
- I'm a representative on the group which discusses Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Working. Very interesting.
- Like Cllr A Davies I have been asked to look at problems arising with the Tirionfa Estate.
- The empty property a bungalow in Tan yr Eglwys is causing a resident living in the area to question how the property owned by Denbighshire is to be modernised especially the garden. The head of housing has been informed and the resident has been informed why and the reason for such modernising.

- Pot holes are a very big problem within the county especially in the south of the county.
- Please come and support the Town Plan meeting and the Fish and Chips night.

The report was accepted

Cllr Andrew Smith commented that Coronavirus was causing concern in Rhuddlan.

Cllr Arwel Roberts read out a letter from Simon Dean the interim CEO of Public Health Wales which included information about the first case in Wrexham.

Cllr Smith wondered if the Town Council should now put this on the website.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands said that the Town Council should ask Simon Dean for a press release that we might place on our website. **Resolved.**

County Councillor Report – Cllr Ann Davies

Brown Signs on A55

I represent the Elwy Group on the Denbighshire Tourist Signage Strategy Working Group. At the meeting last week, the following was discussed: -

- 1. Tourism signage criteria and funding*
 - 2. Ensure Vale of Clwyd is adequately signed from the A55*
 - 3. Identify and develop signage for scenic tourist routes to compliment the Wales Way*
 - 4. Provide suitable follow-on signage within town/villages centres to tourist destinations*
- After many years of campaigning for these signs, it is looking more positive.*

Date of next meeting - 26th March

Abbey Road

Following concerns from residents regarding some land movement in the road, I arranged a site meeting with the Highways Office to assess the situation.

Some years ago, steel girders were inserted to strengthen the road. The findings were that there has been movement of this area leaving a 1meter gap. The Highways Office commented there is deterioration of cracks in the road. Also, it was noted a few trees had fallen in to the river. Although the Highways Officers regularly assess the area, it has been decided that a geologist should now undertake a detailed assessment of the area.

Bryn Hafod

The Highway Officer has inspected Bryn Hafod road and is concerned that the finished work is not up to standard. He will liaise with the contractors to ensure the work is completed to a satisfactory standard.

Tirionfa

Concerns have been raised by residents in Pentre Lane regarding the Tirionfa building site. I have liaised with Planning Officers, Tirionfa Site Manager and the PA to the Director of McBrydes in an attempt to get a resolution for the residents.

St Kentigern Hospice

A Day Centre at the hospice is now open. Referrals for people living with dementia who wish to attend this facility can be undertaken by GPs.

The Report was accepted

Cllr Mike Kermode was concerned to hear that the Bryn Hafod surface was up to standard and hoped that DCC will take it up with the contractors.

9. DCC Destination Partnership – Cllr Mike Elgin had attended the meeting on behalf of the Town Council and he gave a resume of the event. Cllr Elgin noted that there was a lot about the Llangollen/Corwen area, it was enlightening, and was leading up to producing a new destination plan for 20/25. Ruthin is the first town in DCC to have a Cultural Friendly Scheme, Denbigh wants to focus on its town hall, and he noted that wedding tourism was popular. There was evidence that excursions from cruise ships and Warner's Bodelwydden Castle Hotel were increasing and Rhuddlan should look at providing a coach drop off – pick up point and coach park.

10. Tour of Ruthin Town Council Old Bank Building – Cllr Elgin then informed Members of this tour which had some similarities to the Rhuddlan old bank building, including a large walk in safe to keep secure national treasures. It would be possible to arrange a visit for Rhuddlan Town Council members.

Cllr Mike Kermode responded that this all seemed very interesting and suggested that we do arrange a visit to the Ruthin Old Bank. His Town Plan framework actually mentions a suitable location for tourist coaches parking for the meeting discussion.

11. Budget/Finance Matters

a. The Town Clerk presented the due payment list for Members approval.

The payments were approved

Cllr Gareth Rowlands took the opportunity to show Members several frames that Nerys Rowlands had created for the Wales in Bloom and Blodau certificates. The Community Centre had agreed to place them on the wall.

Members agreed that the previous certificate frames coloured green should be changed to the same as these new ones. **Resolved.**

Cllr Syd Gaskin wanted the Minutes to include a vote of thanks to Nerys Rowlands for her assistance.

b. The Town Clerk advised Members that an auditor for 2019/20 had to be appointed and recommended DCC again. **Resolved**

c. The Town Council's Financial Regulations were due to be reviewed by Members and had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Town Clerk asked if any amendments were required. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that the regulations be approved as circulated. **Resolved.**

d. The Town Council's Risk Assessment was also due to be reviewed by Members and had been circulated prior to the meeting. A minor amendment needs to be made. This being amended **the assessment was approved.**

e. The Town Council's Insurance was due for renewal. The Town Clerk presented a short report on some quotes received from 4 insurance companies culminating in a large saving if Members agreed to change company to Came & Company Local Council Insurance. This company specialise in providing insurance for town councils.

Cllr Mike Kermode had investigated comments on Came & Company which proved supportive of their work and Cllr Mike Elgin proposed acceptance of the quote. Cllr Mike Kermode seconded. **Resolved.**

12. Planning Applications for comment:

Cllr Mike Kermode abstained from commenting

a. **44/2020/0127** – extension to 36 Ffordd Nant.

No Comment. **Resolved**

b. **44/2020/0137** – Crown reduction to a sycamore tree at 2 Tirionfa.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands could not understand why this was needed but moved that No Comment be recorded. **Resolved**

c. **44/2020/0168** – Development of 4 houses behind The Rise

After some discussion Members wanted to comment that the development was not in keeping with the surrounding area of bungalows as it was for 2 storey houses. Similarly, Members were concerned about access to the development from existing highway. **Resolved.**

13. Library Service Review February 28th 2020— Cllrs Arwel Roberts, Ann Davies, and Mike Kermode had met with the Principal Librarian and the Area Library Manager to discuss the library service that Rhuddlan Town Council are financially supporting. The Town Clerk had placed copies of the meeting notes for Members to receive.

It was noted that the financial support given had not been increased for 4 years and the library service may present an invoice to the Council for an increase in line with inflation at a later date.

Meeting notes received.

14. Community Matters

Cllr Reg Davies commented that there was a lack of soap in the gent's public toilets. Cllr Davies also noted that there was no Ddraig Goch flying at the Castle on St David's Day. **Members resolved to write to CADW asking why.**

Cllr Andrew Smith said that CADW had a free entry scheme for St David's Day for their sites but that it was not well publicised.

Cllr Davies reported that the inscription on the Old Parliament building was done today Thursday 12th March.

Cllr Syd Gaskin had concerns about a site being unsightly on the right over the river bridge which is a furniture recycling business. Cllr Arwel Roberts had contacted DCC Planning Officer Paul Mead and had received no update. He asked the Town Clerk to write and follow this up. **Resolved.**

Cllr Gareth Rowlands had noticed that the "No dogs on play areas" sign had been removed from the fresh air gym fence but had been found and replaced. He also reported that one of the fresh air gym pieces of equipment was loose in the ground. The Town Clerk will contact Heddwyn Jones. **Resolved.**

The Town Clerk advised Members that a piece of equipment on Vicarage Lane playground had been removed for repair and was now sealed off for safety. She also advised that the trip to the Police call centre had been called off due to the coronavirus situation.

The Assistant Clerk had spoken to the playground contractor about an item of work on the swings at Vicarage Land playground. One of the cross-beam bolts is in such a position against the internal cross beam, that it cannot be repaired without burning out the current threaded hole and then re-bolted. Cllr Gareth Rowlands advised that this would be sufficient to repair the cross beam and the Assistant Clerk should ask the contractor to proceed, along with the sealed off piece of equipment. **Resolved.**

15. Part 2 Exclusion of the Press & Public

By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press & 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.

- a. **Provision of a New Cemetery** - The Town Clerk informed Members that a quote for a groundwater assessment had been received which was £4900 +vat from CDS Group. The details were circulated prior to the meeting.

There then followed a discussion with Cllr Gareth Rowlands beginning with the fact that the Council cannot continue without the farmer/landowner permission, and that part of the site does not seem suitable. Part of it however may be used for a coach park. A cemetery usually having 2400 single graves on 1 hectare.

Cllr Charlotte Frobisher suggested that an Option Agreement could be created with the farmer/landowner to allow the assessment to take place and purchase afterwards if it proves suitable.

Cllr Mike Kermode found the Option Agreement interesting but the Council would also need to look at the development, maintenance, and running costs beforehand.

Cllr Andrew Smith said this would be a costly project but it's a service that our community need. Asking if the Town Council can stipulate that the cemetery would be for the residents or past residents of Rhuddlan only. The Members thought that this was possible as it was a Town Council facility not a County facility.

Cllr Mike Kermode believed that having a cemetery is not a statutory function of the Town Council but we have the powers to have one if thought needed. He proposed that an Option Agreement be developed with the farmer/landowner for the Groundwater Assessment and if suitable for the development of a cemetery. Cllr Gareth Rowlands seconded. **Resolved.**

- b. **Coed y Brain** – The Town Clerk had circulated a letter from the Welsh Government regarding the approval for borrowing. It was hoped that a decision would have been received by March 12th but reported that the Letter of Approval was awaiting Ministerial signature.

Cllr Mike Kermode was pleased to receive the news but asked about any decision about the Change of Use issue with Planning. It was recommended that the Town Clerk approach Brian Robinson as the Council's agent. **Resolved**

Cllr Kermode reminded Members that the future use of the building was still not agreed and hoped that the emerging Town Plan would include this aspect.

- c. **Resignation of a Councillor** – The Town Clerk read out a letter of resignation from Cllr Gareth Smith, Deputy Mayor who highlighted that his career work load had now increased and in order to pursue his career he no longer had time to be a town councillor.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands moved that a letter of thanks be sent to Cllr Gareth Smith. **Resolved.**

Cllr Arwel Roberts asked how the Council shall fill the role of Deputy Mayor until the AGM. It was suggested that Cllr Mike Elgin becomes the Deputy Mayor until that time. **Resolved.**

15. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 16th March 7pm to discuss the Town Plan, followed by Thursday April 9th at 7pm for full Council.

Signed.....*Arwel Roberts*..... Cllr Arwel Roberts (Mayor)

Date.....*March 2020*.....