



Cyngor Tref
Rhuddlan
Town Council

Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 14th May 2020

Virtual Meeting during the Covid 19 Restrictions

Present:

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

1. Apologies

None

Although members of the public could be invited to join the meeting, and the Council following the guidance as to how to facilitate that, there were no members of the public who had taken up the invitation.

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Ann Davies reference Planning Applications.

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

The Mayor had received a concern about trees growing over a bungalow by New Road and the Cemetery. Cllr Arwel Roberts had sought a response from DCC who stated it was not their land and therefore not their responsibility. He asked if any Member had information as to who might own the land in question. Cllr Reg Davies said he used to own the land on which the bungalow is built and the tree is on land which was a public footpath, and therefore he believes it does belong to DCC. Cllr Arwel Roberts is to meet with DCC officer to investigate further.

4. Police Matters

PCSO Roberts was not in attendance and no report had been received.

5. Minutes – 12th March 2020.

The Minutes had been circulated and there being no amendments Cllr Mike Kermode proposed they be accepted as a true record, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin and all voted in favour. **Resolved.** The Minutes were duly signed.

Matters Arising

- a. **Speeding Cars, Pentre Lane** – Cllr Arwel Roberts had received no response from DCC on the matter.
- b. **BCHUB** – The Town Clerk had still not heard anything from Darryn Thomas as to when he would be able to attend a Town Council meeting.
- c. **Town Plan** – on the agenda
- d. **Tourist Video** - The Town Clerk found a reliable video company who can create a new video. This will include a few of the ideas from Members e.g. golf club, fishing, Wales in Bloom, the Tea Rooms. The cost would be no more than £1000.

Cllr Mike Elgin thought it was a good idea and wanted to proceed.

Cllr Syd Gaskin was concerned about spending money on items that might be deemed unnecessary during these unprecedented times of restrictions.

Cllr Mike Kermode commented that according to our annual financial statement the Council has a healthy balance and thought that we could spend on this item if Members agreed.

Cllr Mike Elgin appreciated that it might appear a bad time for spending, but thought the Council should be prepared to support local businesses when restrictions are lifted and that the video would be a good marketing tool for our Town's facilities.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands said he thought the video was a good idea, and in questioning whether now was a good time or not, he believed it was. It would be too late when the restrictions are ended. We need to be ready.

Cllr Ann Davies said that as Members we should be mindful of unnecessary expense now as we may experience more costs when Covid 19 ends and suggested caution.

Cllr Andrew Smith agreed that Members should be mindful, but look forward to the day that restrictions are lifted and our town can return to normal. It was agreed to go ahead with the video. **Resolved**

- e. **Dog Waste Bag Dispensers** – Cllr Gareth Rowlands reported he had purchased some plastic washing up bowls and placed them at a few sites for the distribution of dog waste bags and dispensers. Cllr Rowlands had received some refills from DCC and suggested that the Town Council buy some more. Cllr Mike Elgin had noted during his daily walk that dog waste was not being picked up on the route he uses. Others reported that dog waste had decreased and so thought that the provision of dog bags was working. Cllr Mike Kermode said that we do have funds for the purchase of more and it appears the scheme is working. Cllr Rowlands proposed to purchase more dog bags. **Resolved.**

Cllr Ann Davies had noticed that dog waste dispenser's provision should be made at the top of Pentre Lane. Cllr Charlotte Frobisher had noticed a dispenser there a week ago but it had all gone now. It needs replacing. Cllr Davies so proposed. **Resolved to replace.**

The Town Clerk reported that she had asked the Journal to issue a press release on the provision of dog waste dispensers & bags, which they were considering.

- f. **New Cemetery** – the Town Clerk had contacted the land owner to discuss an Option Agreement for the purpose of a groundwater assessment and potential purchase if this proved suitable. The land owner will need to discuss this with his siblings and that this will take time.
- g. **Bus Shelter Cleaning** – this will recommence once the present lockdown situation is lifted.
- h. **Seating Bench Proposal** – The Town Clerk reported that she had contacted the proposer as to exactly where the bench could be sited. Cllr Mike Kermode reminded Members that the Council had resolved to create some "Happy to Chat" benches in Rhuddlan. Cllr Syd Gaskin repeated his concern that not all people want to sit and chat. Some prefer quiet reflection. Cllr Kermode stated that the Council had resolved to provide half of the benches as "Happy to Chat" benches so as to accommodate those that wish for quiet reflection.
- i. **Marsh Road Pavement** – The Town Clerk had still not received any progress from DCC.
- j. **DCC Destination Partnership** – Cllr Mike Elgin reported that a virtual meeting on this subject was being arranged soon.
- k. **Castle Flag Flying** – The Town Clerk had received a reply from the Castle Custodian as to why the Ddraig Goch was not flying on St David's Day. The flag is only flown when the castle is open to the public. To have the team come over is classed as none essential journey
- l. **Planning Complaint** – Cllr Andrew Smith informed Members that he had received a complaint about a previous Heol y Hendre planning application. He had referred the complainant back to DCC.

6. Correspondence from:

a. The Mayor.

- *The last charity event Mrs Roberts and I were involved in as Mayors was the Fish and Chips night in the Community Centre in Rhuddlan. A fine night – Pudding and Pie really did us proud. Many thanks to the Community Centre Committee for their support. (14th of March)*
- *Present in the Personnel Meeting and Town Plan meeting (16th of March)*
- *Leaflets were produced instigated by myself with the support of our Clerk as soon as the Lockdown had started. You all have seen them – I thank those of you who were available to distribute the leaflet. Diolch yn fawr. The fact that the leaflet was placed in the Rhyl Journal was also a positive move. Thanks to our Assistant Clerk for his diligence as a point of contact.*
- *Also, very grateful to Cllr Rowlands and the Clerk for organising these zoom meetings which includes this meeting tonight.*

- If you read the Rhuddlan Mag you will notice a letter I sent to the editor regarding the Town Council Precept this year. Very grateful to the editor and to Cllr Kermode for his assistance.
- The dog bag dispensers are in place within the town.

The report was accepted

b. The Town Clerk

- March** 12th Town Council Meeting.
 14th Fish & Chips Charity Event
 16th Personnel Committee & Town Plan meeting
 18th Web Studio – meeting with staff
April 1st Distribute Leaflets – Volunteer Response
 7th End of Year Accounts session with Rialtas
 21st Meet Mayor & collect Deputy Mayor's Chain

General

- 2019-20 End of Year Accounts completed
- 2019-20 VAT Re-claim submitted to HMRC
- Updated Asset Register
- Updated policies on website
- Started on process on completing Statement of Accounts for Audit

The report was accepted

c. Clerical Assistant Covid 19 Volunteer Action Report
 This report covers 25 March – 23rd April 2020

There has been a total of 37 calls in all for assistance. Each requiring an e-mail and/or call to DVSC to inform them of the requests for help. I usually bundled them together at the end of the day to support a more efficient volunteer action of doing several calls together on one day.

The majority of the requests were for repeat prescriptions and others for shopping. Problems encountered include caller's lack of connection to the internet, not wanting to use bank cards, and a lack of understanding as to what "essential" means. Although our leaflet stated letter posting was ok, DVSC did not agree.

I sought confirmation from DVSC or the caller that the request had been actioned.

Also helped to collate a list of businesses in Rhuddlan available for take away, delivery, or were closed due to the pandemic. The DVSC list of businesses as above was amended and updated where necessary.

The Town Council leaflet appearing in the Journal did bring in some requests for help (five), but confused some people who lived in other towns and thought they could get help from our scheme. In addition, two callers from Rhyl were advised to come to us from their GP surgery, Clarence House. And one from the North Wales Women's Centre, Rhyl.

There was one Easter weekend call for assistance and knowing that DVSC were closed until Tuesday 14th April I sought assistance from Cllr Arwel Roberts as Mayor. He kindly stepped into the breach and covered that request.

I do not want personalise the requests but to give some idea of the range of calls, they were from people seeking help from Warrington for their elderly parents in Rhuddlan, and someone from a 6-hour drive away, but mainly they were residents of Rhuddlan.

Received two offers of potential volunteers from Rhuddlan which I had to refer to DVSC as they were contacting the volunteers, not me. I don't know if they were ever included though. As can be imagined DVSC had a difficult task ensuring the safeguarding of callers and volunteers from unsolicited abuse or risk of catching Covid 19. It was also a County wide scheme and caused a larger call rate than expected. It changed on 21st April from using local volunteers to Dial a Ride who have already been DBS checked.

The report was accepted

d. Brent Vogelsberger – A letter had been received regarding a public footpath in the Pentre Lane area. The complainant reporting what he believed was the blocking of a public footpath by the farmer. Cllr Arwel Roberts had contacted DCC footpath officer who stated that it is not blocked and can be walked on. Cllr Gareth Rowlands pointed out that the ploughed field did not constitute a blockage and proposed that the Town Council write to the complainant saying that DCC footpath officer had been informed and that there was no blockage. Cllr Mike Kermode seconded. **Resolved.**

e. DCC Welcome Sign - The Town Clerk had received a design from DCC for the sign and asked for Members comments. Members discussed the removal of the old sign by the Premier Inn and the new one being provided at two locations, one on the A547 and one on the A525. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that the "Wales in Bloom Gold Medal Winner" should added to the sign. This was seconded by Mike Kermode. **Resolved**

f. Keep Wales Tidy Local Places for Nature - The Town Clerk had circulated correspondence on the Local Places for Nature scheme which may be of interest to Members. Cllr Gareth Rowlands highlighted an area in Admiral's Field that might be used as a wild flower site and proposed that the Town Clerk explore further with Keep Wales Tidy as a suitable grant application. Cllr Andrew Smith seconded. **Resolved.**

Cllr Arwel Roberts enquired why the Bonica roses had not been planted by the library area. Cllr Gareth Rowlands answered that Glascoed had prepared the ground for the roses which had not yet arrived.

7. County Council Members Report

County Councillor Report – Cllr Ann Davies

GREEN BIN COLLECTIONS

The green bin collection will resume on the 18th May.

RECYCLING CENTRES

The recycling centres will reopen on the week beginning 25th May.

COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAY WORKS.

The weed spraying of all roads and footway throughout the county will begin in June.

Work to cut grass verges on A and Broads will take place from June 1st.

As with National guidelines social distancing will be adhered to at all times.

ROAD CLOSURE

The Rhuddlan to St Asaph by pass will be closed between 21st - 22nd September, the closure is required to facilitate cycle maintenance. Pedestrian access will not be maintained whilst closure is in place.

DVSC

This voluntary service is providing great support to our residents during this Coronavirus outbreak. Hundreds of volunteers have signed up to help deliver shopping and prescriptions to those in need.

I was also asked to register as a telephone volunteer, this involves contacting individuals who have been identified by DCC as needing a chat / reassurance/referral. Needless to say, I'm spending hours on the telephone!

Food parcels are also being delivered to those who meet the criteria.

I have been contacted by many Carers, some are really struggling, I'm able to refer to relevant departments if necessary, or again just having a chat with someone helps over the next few weeks Council staff will be telephoning all residents in Denbighshire who are over 70, this is just a courtesy call to enquire how they are and if they require additional help.

The report was accepted

County Councillor Report - Cllr Arwel Roberts

Braf yw cyhoeddi y bydd y Canolfannau Ailgylchu yn ail agor wythnos yn dechrau Mai y 25ain.

Yn ychwanegol bydd casgliadau y biniau gwyrdd yn cychwyn wythnos 18fed o Fai. Parthed Rhuddlan bydd hyn yn digwydd dydd Iau Mai 28ain.

The three waste and Recycling Centres will open week beginning May the 25th.

Also, green bin collection will restart week starting the 18th of May. With regard to Rhuddlan this will be on Thursday the 28th of May.

Torri gwair wedi cychwyn mewn ardaloedd fel Prestatyn a Rhyl. Rwyf wedi derbyn addewid gan y tim stryd y bydd y glaswellt yn Rhuddlan yn cael ei dorri cyn diwedd y mis.

Grass cutting has started in areas such as Prestatyn and Rhyl. The promise from the Street Team is that Rhuddlan will have the grass area before the end of this month.

2) Rydym yn poeni fod nifer o bobl Sir Ddinbych wedi ei effeithio gyda'r haint Covid -19. Rhai wedi colli eu bywydau yn anffodus. Os oes na rhai yma yn Rhuddlan rwyf fel Cynghorydd Sir a Maer yn cydymdeimlo yn ddwys â'r teulu.

We are worried that some persons in Denbighshire have been affected by the virus Covid – 19. Some have unfortunately have died. I as a County Councillor and the Mayor of Rhuddlan commiserate with their families.

3) Mewn dyddiau roedd Ffordd y Gors Rhuddlan yn llawn sbwriel oherwydd ail agoriad busnes KFC. Rwyf wedi derbyn cwynion diri ac rwyf wedi anfon cwynion i'r Sir ac wedi siarad gyda un o rheolwyr y busnes.

In days Marsh Road Rhuddlan was full of litter because of the opening of the KFC business once again. Residents have contacted me regarding this and the County officers are aware. I have spoken to one of the managers.

The report was accepted

Cllr Andrew Smith noted that grass cutting in Rhuddlan was to start at the end of May and had received complaints from several residents as to why other towns had already been done. Cllr Gareth Rowlands noting that the Mayor had tried everything to get Rhuddlan's grassed areas cut by DCC and our thanks should be recorded for trying.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that grass cutting is not high priority during these unprecedented times and that a lot of DCC staff are not working.

8. Budget/Finance Matters

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

The payments were approved

b. The Town Clerk had circulated the End of Year Accounts for Members approval. Adding that the 1st precept from DCC had been received. Also, a VAT re-claim has been submitted to HMRC.

There being no questions Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed and Cllr Mike Kermode seconded their approval. **Approved.**

Cllr Kermode thanked the Town Clerk for her comprehensive accounts.

c. The Accounting Statement 2019/20 was to hand and required approval and signing. **Approved.**

9. Planning Applications for comment:

Cllr Mike Kermode abstained from the discussion.

a. 44/2020/0289. Land east of Tirionfa. Construction of a 2 bedroomed dwelling in place of a four bedroomed dwelling occupying Plot 84 of existing planning application 44/2018/0855.

Cllr Andrew Smith had difficulty opening the application electronically and the library being currently closed could not see the application to comment.

Cllr Syd Gaskin advised Cllr Smith to enter the planning number on the DCC planning portal. **No objection.**

b. 44/2020/0346. Abbey Farm Caravan Park. Application for change of use of agricultural land to form an extension to existing touring caravan site; siting of 3 no. glamping pods and camping facilities; construction of toilet, shower and laundry blocks and associated works.

Cllr Ann Davies, although having declared an interest, informed the Members that Abbey Farm Caravan Park already had permission for tourers and statics caravans. This application was for glamping lodges.

Cllr Andrew Smith added that it was a formal recognition of what they want to do.

Cllr Reg Davies commented that he supports the application as the park is well established and well run. **No objection.**

c. 44/2020/0168. Land at (part garden of) The Rise Rhyl Road. Development of 0.21 ha of land by the erection of 4 no. dwellings and construction of access road (outline application including access and layout). Amended application for the erection of 4 dwellings in The Rise.

Cllr Charlotte Frobisher had noticed that the only amendment was a different roof height.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands noted a blue line around the land and said that the Town Council had objected previously due to access issues from the highway, and the development not in keeping with the surrounding area of bungalows. Cllr Rowlands proposed Council objects as previously. **Resolved**

Cllr Arwel Roberts thanked Cllr Andrew Smith for his assistance on previous planning applications for 61 Heol Hendre and 28 Glyn Avenue.

Since the Town Council meeting on the 12th March the Town Clerk had distributed to members two planning application:

d. 44/2020/0229. 61 Heol Hendre. Erection of single storey rear extension and formation of 1st floor balcony to rear. **No objection.**

e. 44/2020/0202 28 Glyn Avenue. Erection of extension and alterations to dwelling. **No objection.**

10. Coed y Brain – The Town Clerk had contacted Mr Brian Robinson to act as a planning agent for the Council who declined the offer. However, the Town Council solicitor can, and will, act as our planning agent. Our change of use application will be submitted soon and potentially be dealt with at officer level. The project main grant funders Gwynt y Mor and Burbo Bank have both suspended decisions due to the Covid 19 restrictions. This should help our timescale.

Cllr Ann Davies said that this delay could also help us with our consultation exercise as to what we will do with the building, adding that as a member of the planning committee she could not see any application being dealt with by the end of the month.

Cllr Ann Davies then asked if the building had been purchased yet. The Town Clerk answered that the Welsh Government loan will not be signed off until the planning change of use permission is in place.

Cllr Arwel Roberts thanked the Town Clerk for all her hard work on this issue.

11. Town Plan – Put forward as an extra Agenda item by the Town Clerk.

The planned meeting of the Council to discuss the development of the Town Plan was not held as scheduled due to the Covid 19 restrictions beginning to take hold. However, Members agreed as to what measures should be taken during the pandemic to maintain Council business. As a consequence, Minutes were circulated relating to those measures.

Cllr Mike Kermode asked that those Minutes be re-circulated by e-mail.

The Town Clerk highlighted some of those things agreed such as delegating powers to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Town Clerk during the Covid 19 restrictions. Included was Cllr Kermode's Town Plan Discussion Document which highlighted three key elements (Community, Economic, and Environment) and the suggestion that 5 key issues for each element be forwarded by each Member to the Town Clerk for discussion at a future date as a starting point.

All Members agreed to these actions. **Resolved.**

Cllr Gareth Rowlands commented that the Town Council can now begin and progress the Town Plan.

12. Community Matters

a. Cllr Andrew Smith reported that he had received concerns from several residents about the opening of the waste recycling sites, grass cutting of public open space, and the collection of green bins. Our County Councillors have both this evening provided dates for when these issues will begin and he hoped that the dates could all be met.

b. Cllr Charlotte Frobisher noted that a lot more people are walking along Pentre Lane now and consequently there is more litter in this area and wondered if another litter bin could be provided by the Town Council near to the Pentre Lane and Highland Road bus stops. Or perhaps by the fence of Pentre Lane.

Cllr Arwel Roberts said it was not the purchase and provision of another bin, but a question of emptying it. He would seek an answer from DCC.

Cllr Ann Davies said that she had already done this and DCC will not purchase one but would empty it.

Cllr Arwel Roberts proposed and Charlotte Frobisher seconded that the Town Council purchase a new litter bin for this area.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands wished to make an amendment that it must be on the condition that DCC will empty the bin once provided. Cllr Andrew Smith seconded the amendment.

Cllr Ann Davies will contact Wendy Davies from DCC to formally write confirming they will empty the new bin. **Resolved**

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.

13. Town Council Vacancy – The Town Clerk asked the Members to agree on whether the Council should hold an election process for the vacancy or co-opt.

Cllr Ann Davies stated that the Welsh Government advice was that no elections should take place until 2021.

Cllr Mike Kermode said he believed that co-option was acceptable though and asked the Town Clerk to check if we could co-opt. **Resolved.**

14. Grant - Rhuddlan Allotments Society

Cllrs Gareth Rowlands and Reg Davies declared an interest.

The application was for a total of £4,360 for land drainage, raised beds timber & soil.

Cllr Mike Elgin had two concerns. The first was regarding the land drainage element. The applicant had applied to a Welsh Government grant but any

decisions have been delayed due to the Covid 19 restrictions. Advice received was to apply to local grant schemes until a decision can be made. If successful, the applicant will return the Town Council grant. The second concern was regarding the cost of membership to the Allotment Society. Cllr Elgin stating it is cheap when compared with other allotments, and that if raised membership fees they would be in a better position to fund their own projects. But felt he could propose the cost of the raised beds timber & soil.

Cllr Syd Gaskin commented that there were only 10 members of the society who lived in Rhuddlan. Cllr Gareth Rowlands commenting that this had now risen to 11. Cllr Gaskin stating that this was too few from Rhuddlan given they have 30 members in all and disagreed with grant support.

Cllr Arwel Roberts reminded Members that the discussion was about a grant, not where the society members come from. He added that the applicant has stated that the area had been flooded last February and during the 2019 summer months so the land drainage element of the project is becoming more important.

Cllr Andrew Smith agreed with Cllr Elgin that we should support the raised beds & soil element of the project only.

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed an amendment that the Town Council should support the raised beds & soil element which is £1,140 but remain positive about the land drainage element whilst waiting for the Welsh Government decision. Cllr Andrew Smith seconded.

Cllr Ann Davies reminded Members of the importance of unnecessary spending during the Covid 19 restrictions making sure we can be answerable to the public in our decisions. Adding that she does not recall any flooding in this area.

Cllr Mike Elgin repeated his concern that the membership subscriptions are too low, and perhaps we should consider the raised beds timber only at £580.

Cllr Mike Kermode commented that over the years Rhuddlan Town Council has acted positively towards supporting grants for many community groups and hopes that this will continue for all groups, not just the Allotment Society.

4 Members voted for the amendment to approve a grant for the raised beds & soil at £1,140, 4 Members against, and 2 abstentions. The Mayors casting vote was for the amendment. **Resolved.**

15. Grant - Cylch Meithrin

Cllr Arwel Roberts declared an interest and Cllr Mike Elgin, Deputy Mayor took over the Chair.

The Application is for £600 in total, £350 for a laptop, and £250 for bingo tickets & prizes.

Cllr Charlotte Frobisher commented that the Council should contribute to the laptop element only as the other element is revenue costs.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands noted a lot of money in the account

Cllr Andrew Smith agreed, why can't they use their surplus for the project?

Cllr Arwel Roberts although having declared an interest, explained that the large amount is due to paying wages.

Cllr Syd Gaskin wondered if all the 30+ children are from Rhuddlan.

Cllr Ann Davies questioned this number of children

Cllr Andrew Smith proposed that the Council write to the applicant stating that we are not against supporting the laptop element (£350), in principle, but need some definition of why the large surpluses. Cllr Reg Davies seconded.

Cllr Mike Kermode adding that if we agree this cause of action lets delegate the Town Clerk to authorise the grant.

Both Cllrs Andrew Smith and Gareth Rowlands showed their support for this action. **Resolved.**

The Mayor returned to Chair the meeting.

16. Personnel Matters

The Town Clerk had circulated the Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 16th March 2020.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands suggested the Council approve the various recommendations that the committee had made and proposed their approval. Cllr Ann Davies seconded. **Resolved.**

Cllr Arwel Roberts gave a vote of thanks to both officers for their work.

17. Urgent Item – Cllr Gareth Rowlands is the Council's licensed account holder for Zoom and required permission from Members to host a Nature Reserve Zoom meeting on Friday 15th May 2020 at 3pm.

Cllr Arwel Roberts so proposed, seconded by Cllr Andrew Smith. **Resolved.**

18. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 11th June at 7pm.

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

Date.....*July*.....*2020*.....