



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the special meeting on the 5th October 2023

Hybrid Meeting

Present:

CLlr Mike Kermode (Mayor)
CLlr Val Simmons (Deputy Mayor)
CLlr Ivor Beech
CLlr Ann Davies
CLlr Reg Davies
CLlr Mike Elgin
CLlr Gareth Rowlands
CLlr Bleddyn Williams
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk

1. Apologies

CLlrs Jackie Burnham and Arwel Roberts,

There were 14 members of the public present. The meeting was being recorded audio only. The Mayor introduced himself to the meeting and explained how the meeting was going to proceed, explaining that this was not designed to be a formal public consultation meeting.

2. Declaration of Interest

None given

3. Urgent Matters

None

4. Personal Matters

The Mayor informed the meeting of the death of the Chair of DCC CLlr Peter Prendergast and said that a letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the Council. CLlr Gareth Rowlands informed the meeting of the death of Rev John Gareth Griffiths, formerly Vicar of Rhuddlan and Chaplain to Rhuddlan Golf Club and it was agreed to send a letter of condolence to the family.

5. Denbighshire County Council – Street Scene

Members had become aware of changes being proposed in the staffing and organisation of the Street Scene team, which makes such a positive contribution to the tidiness of the town. DCC had informed the Council that they had deleted the post of an agency worker, covering a full-time officer

on sabbatical leave until March next year. This means that the present team will now be one post less and will be used in a slightly different pattern. It was hoped that the team would return to full staffing numbers next year. Cllr Arwel Roberts, who could not be at the meeting, was keen for the Street Scene managers to come to a Town Council meeting to discuss the situation in more detail. Cllr Mike Elgin proposed that this invitation be postponed until April 2024 when the situation for the next year's staffing and work programme will be clearer. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands.

Resolved.

6. Reduction in Library Services

Members had become aware of DCC's proposals to cut library opening hours by 50% across the whole county. There was great concern about how this would affect Rhuddlan library which is very much valued by the community and is supported financially by Rhuddlan Town Council. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk are to meet a senior library manager on Wednesday 11th October to discuss DCC's proposals in more detail. They will also mention that the Council had recently agreed to put forward a proposal for the development of the library premises to provide a Rhuddlan Museum. They will report back to Council on Thursday 12th October. **Resolved.**

Cllr. Ann Davies suggested that residents be encouraged to respond to the consultations on this issue. This was agreed by Members. **Resolved.**

7. Sustrans and the Ysgol Y Castell School Zone

The Mayor had prepared a briefing note for Members on the School Zone proposals put forward by Sustrans. The note explained Sustrans' role as agents of DCC and their aim of promoting Active Travel in Rhuddlan, which focusses on walking and cycling. The School Zone plan is just one part of an extensive Active Travel Masterplan and it puts forward 6 options for consideration. One option will be the closing of Hylas Lane at the school's opening and closing times – this will be trialled on Tuesday 17th October 2023. This would involve a manned closure of Hylas Lane between 8.15 – 9.30am and 2.30 – 3.30pm.

The main focus at this meeting was to consider the effectiveness Sustrans' consultations. A consultation exercise by Sustrans had been held on Monday 2nd October with some parents/guardians from the school. This had been followed by a consultation workshop in the Community Centre that evening. There had also been some consultations with the public on the High Street on the Tuesday.

The Mayor pointed out that the Active Travel Masterplan for Rhuddlan was not confirmed or agreed, that there are no costs available for any of the proposals and that DCC had not said how much funds they have available to support the proposals.

Generally speaking, Members were deeply concerned that the consultation process so far was inadequate. The consultation on Monday evening was poorly organised and due to the large number of residents present it offered only limited time for some people to comment.

There were also concerns expressed about how many of the school's pupils actually live in Rhuddlan, how they currently travel to/from school, whether funding will be available bearing in mind DCC cuts and how the Town Council can ensure that residents' concerns/comments are heard. It was also not clear to what extent any of the proposals will actually increase the levels of walking and cycling to school.

Town Council agreed that further consultation was essential and that Sustrans/DCC be asked to organise this and to include DCC's lead member, so that they can respond to the public's questions on the proposals. Given the large interest at Monday evening's workshop it was suggested that it be held at the Community Centre and be offered on two nights to ensure everyone has an opportunity to comment, plus a virtual meeting for those who cannot attend in person. **Resolved.**

It was also proposed that Sustrans be asked to undertake a detailed survey of all parents/governors of the school, with the aim of ascertaining how many children will walk or cycle to school if any of the proposals are introduced. **Resolved.**

The meeting was then opened for members of the public to make any comments or raise any issues with the School Zone plan which led to a meaningful and useful discussions.

The Mayor then closed the meeting and asked that the members of the public present provide their names and contact to ensure they can be informed of any future consultation.

Signed.....Cllr Mike Kermode (Mayor)