



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 14th 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Present:

Cllr Mike Kermode (Mayor)
Cllr Val Simmons (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Ivor Beech
Cllr Ann Davies
Cllr Mike Elgin
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Cllr Rob Williams
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk

There were 4 members of the public present, including Tony Hepton and Wayne Hughes from Rhuddlan Town FC and Dean Martin from St Asaph City FC.

1. Apologies

Cllr Reg Davies

The meeting was recorded from this point (audio only)

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Arwel Roberts DCC Planning Committee member and Admirals Field agenda Item.
Cllr Mike Kermode, Jackie Burnham, Mike Elgin and Gareth Rowlands, in connection with Admiral's Field agenda Item.

3. Urgent Matters

None

4. Police Matters

Inspector Kevin Smith had offered his apologies and had sent an email to the Clerk. In the last month there had been 70 incidents reported with none seen as significant by the Police, most

being incidents of anti-social behaviour. Members were asked to report incidents directly to 101, so as they will be recorded by the police and added to the statistics.

5a. Minutes of Town Council meeting held on 8th February 2024.

Minor typographical amendments were noted and taken on board.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that after the amendments were corrected the Minutes be approved as a true record, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

Progress Report on the above

- i) DCC Library Service had sent a draft Service Level Agreement which required some amendments and which will be reported to a later meeting of the Council.
- li) Broken SID had gone for repair.
- iii) Awaiting grant decision for Admiral's Field summer event.
- iv) Arriva bus issue reference not stopping at Tweedmill, letter sent as directed by Members.
- v) MUGA floodlight overspill been corrected.
- vi) Dog waste bags supply received and placed in Library for distribution.
- vii) Members agreed to provide hot drinks and light refreshments at the D Day Anniversary event. **Resolved.**

A councillor had spoken to the British Legion and found that there is a Rhuddlan resident living locally who had survived the D Day landing but it was likely that person may be too frail to attend our event.

5b. Minutes of the Road Safety Working Group held on 7th February 2024

Proposed as a true record by Cllr Mike Elgin, seconded by Cllr Val Simmons. **Resolved.**

Progress Report on the above.

No poster competition response yet from Ysgol Y Castell.

6. Admiral's Field - reconsideration of February decision.

The Mayor welcomed the representatives of Rhuddlan Town and St Asaph City football clubs for this item.

The Town Council's meeting of 8th February 2024 had agreed in principle to allow Rhuddlan Town FC the use of Admiral's Field, subject to receiving further information of their various requirements, and funding opportunities. However, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders 7(a) and (b) reference to previous resolutions, six councillors felt that this decision was done without full consideration of all of the relevant issues and proposed that the issue be revisited. The DCC Monitoring Officer has advised that any councillors making a declaration of interest of a personal nature over issues such as the proximity of their properties or membership of other organisations can still debate and vote on this issue.

The Town Clerk had circulated a report which summarised the pros and cons of the matter. One of the main concerns being the nature of the original gifting of the field with the conveyance stating "The Council shall hold....the land hereby assured.....for the purpose of a public recreation ground for the said parish of Rhuddlan". Other concerns included the legal advice that the Council had received in 2019 in terms of not offering a lease for a part of the field for Dragons FC, the potential for senior teams to degrade the surface of the field, only 3

Rhuddlan residents are players, potential parking problems and the potential for bad language close to the children's play area.

Rhuddlan Town FC representatives were given ample opportunity to make their case for the use of the field and the ways in which it would be developed with better drainage, fences, dug-outs, a small grandstand etc. all being funded by Welsh FA grants

There then followed a thorough and lengthy debate when all views were aired.

Cllr Mike Elgin proposed that Admiral's Field must be retained for the "purpose of public recreation" as described in the conveyance and that the Rhuddlan Town FC request be therefore denied. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands.

Further debate then ensued on issues of historical use of the field for football and concerns comparing the arrangements at St Asaph City football ground scenario, with similar changes potentially happening at the Admiral's Field.

An amendment from Cllr Bleddyn Williams was proposed that if Rhuddlan Town FC use is denied by the Town Council then the Council should support them with finding another location, with a potential budget line of £50,000. Seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **The amendment was defeated.**

Cllr Ann Davies proposed another amendment, that the discussion be postponed whilst further up to date legal advice is sought. **This received no seconder.**

In returning to the original proposal by Cllr Elgin, the Mayor requested a recorded vote which was 6 for and 4 against the proposal. **Resolved.** Those in favour of the proposal being Cllrs Jackie Burnham, Mike Elgin, Mike Kermode, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Rowlands and Val Simmons. Those against being Cllrs Ivor Beech, Ann Davies, Rob Williams and Bleddyn Williams. The Mayor reminded Members that this matter was now closed for at least 6 months.

7. Correspondence from:

a. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor Reports

The Mayor had circulated his report prior to the meeting and asked if any member had any questions. In particular he mentioned the latest Community Market success and reminded Members that they might consider attending the market as a good opportunity to meet with and discuss issues with local residents.

The report was accepted

The Deputy Mayor had also circulated her report and in particular updated Members on the Arriva buses not stopping within the Tweedmill site and people needing to use the bus stops on the busy main road. She welcomed the help received from the local MP, MS, and DCC Cabinet Member for Transport, Cllr Barry Mellor. It was hoped that Arriva will review the situation in the near future. Cllr Simmons was congratulated on her work on this issue.

The report was accepted.

b. The Town Clerk & Town Plan update.

The Clerk had circulated his report in advance of the meeting and read through the various items of correspondence and project updates from the town plan.

Several elements of the report were discussed - in particular:-

- Cllr Mike Elgin as the town's representative on North Wales Tourism proposed that the Council the CEO, Jim Jones, to one of the future meetings. **Resolved.**
- An email asking questions about any future Town Council plans for the land adjacent to the Knights' statues. Members were reminded of a previous decision not to pursue any plans for the Council taking ownership of this area and they agreed to continue with that position. **Resolved.**
- Email questioning if Town Council can action anything to tidy up the land near the church known as the piggery. The land is in private ownership and Town Council has no powers to act.
- Members were made aware of the DCC closure of public toilets report being discussed at DCC Scrutiny Committee scrutiny earlier that day. Cllr Ann Davies, as a County Councillor for Rhuddlan, said that nothing had been decided and it is to be returned to scrutiny at a later date. The Mayor noted that these proposed closures would go against DCC corporate goals but recognised is not a statutory service. Members agreed to write a letter to DCC outlining their concerns about this issue. **Resolved.**

8. County Councillor Reports

Cllr Arwel Roberts had circulated his written report for Members attention.

In particular Members discussed the item on the New Road drainage problem and its proximity to the town ditch, Ffordd Ffrainc (A5151) drains to be cleared in the near future, and there is to be another litter pick on March 16th with an officer of Tidy Wales in attendance. The later caused some concern about the tidal positions and the need to be vigilant in any risk assessment.

The report was accepted

Cllr Ann Davies verbally updated Members of the damaged fencing near the golf club roundabout being repaired successfully by DCC, potholes being repaired in accordance with the guideline pothole measurements by DCC and information that the contractors installing new gas pipes in the Ffordd Ganol area will make good the ground after completion.

The report was accepted

9. Library & Museum Working Group

Terms of reference for this new working group had been circulated to members.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the working group be created, seconded by Cllr Val Simmons. **Resolved.**

In consideration of the group membership, it was proposed by Cllr Arwel Roberts that Cllrs Gareth Rowlands, Val Simmons, Mike Kermode, and Ivor Beech be put forward for this task. Seconded by Cllr Val Simmons. **Resolved.**

Cllr Ann Davies as County Councillor informed Members that DCC had set up a county wide library task group and suggested that Rhuddlan send a representative. Members had not received any information on this group and Cllr Davies was asked to forward information on this county wide group for consideration. **Resolved.**

10. DCC Waste Recycling Changes

The Clerk had circulated information for Members on the new “trolibocs” system of waste collection due to start in mid-2024. It was noted that those with mobility problems can apply to be included in an assisted collection and anyone requiring this type of collection needs to contact DCC.

11. Rhuddlan Community Group

The Clerk had circulated a request from the Rhuddlan Community Group for Council’s approval for the creation of a memorial garden and benches within an area of Admiral’s Field close to Admiral’s Walk and Hendre Close. This is to replace the original memorial garden at Vicarage Lane playing fields in memory of Rhuddlan residents who lost their lives during the Covid pandemic and in recognition of the front line pandemic workers. The suggestion is to include two flowering cherry trees, bulbs, the original plaque, and a refurbishment of the current planter on site.

In addition, the two benches that have to be removed from the original memorial garden be placed between the outdoor gym and the football pitch facing Rhyl Rd.

Members agreed to the request. **Resolved.**

12. Dog Waste Special Meeting 6th March

Cllr Arwel Roberts reported back to Members on ideas regarding the reduction of this issue. These included:-

- Requesting CCTV operator to monitor any incidents of dog fouling in the Service Level Agreement
- Engagement of dog walkers to identify problems
- Seek better designed dog bag dispensers – challenge Meifod wood products to design something suitable.
- Paint spray the deposited faeces to encourage dog owners to pick it up.
- Use stickers to remind dog walkers that the waste can be placed in the litter bins.
- Publicise enforcement needed as DCC have no enforcement officers anymore.

Resolved – to support these proposals.

13. Planning

The Clerk took Members through the applications received.

Cllr Arwel Roberts declared an interest as he sits on the DCC planning committee.

44/2023/0874 – demolition of existing bungalow & garage and erection of two storey dwelling at Edgefield, Eton Park, Rhuddlan. **No objections**

44/2023/0783 – erection of a detached dwelling on land adjacent to the church yard entrance, Church St, Rhuddlan. Members noted this was a resubmission which they originally objected to on the grounds of proximity to the church and Lynch gate structures, seen as an overdevelopment in the area, concerns on the impact on local residents, and access issues to the site. After some consideration Members agreed to object again on these grounds. **Object.**

14. Budget & Finance Matters

a. The Mayor and the Clerk met with the organiser of the RhuddFest as agreed by Council in February because of concerns about supporting a commercial event.

Cllr Rob Williams declared a prejudicial interest.

The application asks for £5,000 primarily towards the provision of a Welsh Stage.

Cllr Mike Elgin proposed that no grant be given because public funds should not be supporting what is a commercial event. Seconded by Cllr Ann Davies. **Resolved.**

b. A Member noted that the planters at the end of New Road are making cutting the nearby hedge difficult. Following a short discussion Cllr Mike Kermode proposed writing to DCC stating the hedge contractors' concerns and given the planters poor state of repair the Town Council requests that it be removed. **Resolved**

The Clerk noted that the MUGA light upgrade had cost £9,212.36 providing a small saving from the £10,000 budget.

Council's insurance premium is as last years.

A Member shared a concern about the regular payment for the website and social media contract. The Clerk stated that it was a legal requirement for Council to have a website but the contractor's current performance was not always satisfactory so it did need to be reviewed.

The Payments List was then proposed for payment by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

c. Review and Approve the Council's financial regulations – this was needed to comply with our Internal Audit. The Clerk read through the changes being proposed which included the submission date for the precept to DCC. Cllr Arwel Roberts so proposed, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

d. Salary Standing Orders will now appear on the April Council meeting for approval as the new salary points will commence in April.

Members thanked the Clerk for his excellent work on the above matters.

15. Community Matters

Cllr Jackie Burnham had reported previous to the meeting that a child had entrapped themselves within the Admiral's Field playground fencing on Tuesday evening. The Fire and Rescue Service had attended to remove them by bending one of the vertical metal fence struts. No more detail was known. The Assistant Clerk had visited the site that morning and had noted some slight fence damage and was asked to engage Brian Jackson to bend the vertical metal fence strut back into alignment, which had now been done. In response to a Members observation, he stated that there is a RoSPA guideline for the gap between the vertical struts and this fence conforms to that guidance.

Cllr Ivor Beech passed on concerns from local businesses about the new waste collection service commencing in June 2024. It was noted that leaflets had been circulated by DCC and Members discussed the fact that businesses can tender for this service from a licensed waste collector of their choice. As the Town Council is rated as a business it will review our current contract for waste collection with DCC when it expires.

Cllr Arwel Roberts had informed the Community Centre of this new waste collection service and made DCC Officer aware.

Part 2 Exclusion of the Press & Public

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

The audio recording was stopped.

16. To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on February 7th 2024

The Mayor summarised the minutes of the meeting with special reference to the Clerk's appraisal. These had been reported verbally at the previous meeting.

The Minutes were accepted. **Resolved**

The Clerk reminded Members that there will be three biodiversity training events, in April, July and September. The April training will be on the theme of awareness and it was agreed that this will take place at 6.30pm immediately before the April meeting. **Resolved.**

17. Date of next meeting – 11/4/2024 at 6.30pm for biodiversity awareness training 11/4/2024 a Full Council Meeting at 7pm

SignedCllr Mike Kermode (Mayor)