



Rhuddlan Town Council – Annual Report for year ending 31st March 2024

1. Foreword from Mayor of Rhuddlan for 2023-24 (Cllr. Mike Kermode)

The Town Council has had a successful year, building on the excellent work of the past few years. The Town Plan that the Council agreed back in 2020 set many of the foundations for this. The Town Plan for 2024-27 sets out the main aims and aspirations for the next 4 years. Some of these have been carried over from the previous Town Plan, such as a Rhuddlan Museum, a new cemetery and having a clean and tidy town. New elements have been included, such as biodiversity improvements and the strengthening of the diversity of the local culture.

The Town Council's actions make many positive differences for residents. Some of them are noted below and there will be more as the years move by. There are also some challenges on the horizon, mainly from service cuts by Denbighshire County Council but the Town Council has anticipated some of these and has made financial resources in its budget to respond positively, as and when needed.

Admiral's Playing Field is a key Council asset and is also a major recreational asset for the local community. This year the Town Council provided an excellent tarmac path around the field, which now allows better access to people, especially in wet weather conditions. The new path was mainly paid for by external funds and is a clear example of the Council's cost-effective approach. As part of its ongoing work on the field, the Council will be promoting biodiversity and the development of the natural habitat. Recently there was a proposal that Rhuddlan Town FC should be allowed to lease a great part of the field, so as to develop a professional level football ground. The Council decided not to allow this, on the basis that the field had been gifted to the people of Rhuddlan as a general recreation area. This should continue for future years and for future generations.

The library is another key asset. The Town Council and residents, were dismayed when DCC decided to make major cuts in library hours across the county. The Town Council's response was very positive and it decided to provide sufficient funds to maintain the present opening hours for the year ahead. The Town Council is now providing some £29,000 to maintain this important facility. Looking to the future, the Town Council is developing a partnership with DCC and Rhuddlan Local History Society, with the aim of sustaining library hours in future years and extending the library building so as to provide a museum facility. This project will require significant external funding but our experience with other projects, shows that this does have the potential to be achieved.

Cemeteries and burial places also need to be mentioned. There are problems with DCC's cemetery because some areas are in a very wet state at many times of the year. This is extremely distressing for the families and people that tend to these graves. DCC has investigated the problem and its officers have proposed a solution. Unfortunately, DCC is not willing to make sufficient funds available to address this matter. DCC also says that burial places at the cemetery are likely to be full in the next year or two. The Town Council did identify the need for a new cemetery in its first Town Plan but with little support from DCC. Potential sites were investigated but with little success for various reasons. There is no room for new burial places in DCC's cemetery in Rhyl. DCC's view is that burials from Rhuddlan and Rhyl and other localities, will be at DCC's cemetery in Prestatyn, this is not a reasonable solution. Talks are now taking place between local councils with the aim of identifying a suitable cemetery site and working with DCC to have it developed.

Another challenge in the pipeline is likely to be DCC's public conveniences. There are proposals that they are to be closed or offered to Town and Community Councils. We are waiting for more information from DCC on this but it is a clear sign of the times.

Town and Community Councils were not put in place to fill gaps in county council spending. However, they do have the power to respond positively, as and when necessary. The people of Rhuddlan must welcome the fact that its Town Council is prepared to take action and make resources available, to meet local needs at this difficult time.

2. Introduction to Rhuddlan

Rhuddlan town is situated 3 miles inland from Rhyl, at the original crossing place of the river Clwyd. Rhuddlan was granted a charter, the Statute of Rhuddlan, by Edward I in 1284. The Castle and Church overlook the river, there are also numerous historic sites around the town, it is a great place to visit. There is a thriving High Street with a good selection of shops, pubs, eating places, takeaways and plenty of visitor accommodation and caravan parks locally.

Rhuddlan is a great place in which to live, with easy access to all major towns in the area, good access to the A55 expressway and on a range of bus routes. There is also a thriving community that enjoys a range of facilities, including a Community Centre, play areas on both sides of the main road, a Health Centre, a library, a primary school and several places of worship, in either Welsh or in English. The town provides an ideal place to stay while you visit the rest of the Vale of Clwyd and beyond.

3. The Town Council

Rhuddlan Town Council has 3,015 electors (2024) and a total population of 3,796 (2021 Population Census). The Town Council consists of 11 elected Councillors, 2 of these are also Denbighshire County Councillors. It is chaired by an elected Mayor who was Cllr. Mike Kermode for the period covered in this report. The Council has 4 committees covering Personnel, Biodiversity, Events and Information and Website. There is a working Groups looking at Road Safety. Externally, the Council is a member of One Voice Wales, North Wales Tourism and the Society of Local Council Clerks

The Councillors for 2023-24 were:

Mike Kermode (Mayor)

Val Simmons (Deputy Mayor)

Ivor Beech

Arwel Roberts (also a County Councillor)

Jackie Burnham

Gareth Rowlands

Reg Davies

Bleddyn Williams

Ann Davies BEM (also a County Councillor)

Robert Williams

Mike Elgin

The Committee and Working Group members were:

Name of Councillor	Admiral's Field & Hwb Rhuddlan	Biodiversity	CCTV	Events	Information & Website	Nature Reserve	Personnel	Road Safety	School Governing Body	Tourism
Ivor Beech		x	x	x		x		x		
Jackie Burnham		x			x			x	x	
Ann Davies BEM								x		
Reg Davies								x		
Mike Elgin	x			x			x	x		
Mike Kermode	x			x	x		x	x		
Bleddyn Rees Williams			x		x			x		
Arwel Roberts		x	x	x				x	x	
Gareth Rowlands	x				x	x		x		
Val Simmons	x	x		x	x		x	x		x
Robert Williams		x						x		x

The Council published a updated Town Plan for the period 2024-2027 in January 2024 and this was delivered to all households in March. The progress against the previous Town Plan will be reported in Section 5 and then in next year's report progress will be reviewed against the updated Town Plan.

The Council had two employees, a Town Clerk and Financial Officer (Steve Wilson) and an Assistant Clerk (Paul Smith).

The Council engages with residents using its Council website, Facebook page, the Rhuddlan Today Facebook page as well as face to face at its monthly Community Market. Residents are welcome to all Council meetings including committee and working group meetings. Hybrid meetings provide remote access through the internet via Zoom. The Council has representation on Ysgol Y Castell Governing Body, Rhuddlan Community Centre Management Committee, Denbighshire Destination Partnership and Rhuddlan Nature Reserve's Management Advisory Group.

4. Financial Information

In this financial year the Town Council's revenue budget/precept was £183,039 and a summary of the accounts is shown in Fig 1.

£12,630 in grants were paid and are listed below. In addition, Rhuddlan library was supported financially by a £12,000.

Grants paid:

Love North Wales Community Support - £1,500

McMillan Cancer Research - £700

Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych - £1,650

Rhuddlan Allotments Society - £350

Rhuddlan Community Group - £1,800

Rhuddlan Town Community Association - £4,000

Rhyl Marching Band - £100

Rhyl Raptors Wheelchair Sports - £100

St Kentigern - £500

St Mary's Church - £1,250

Urdd For All - £180

Wales Air Ambulance – £500

The Council's assets include Hwb Rhuddlan, Admiral's Field path, bus shelters, flower planters, litter bins, IT equipment, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), fresh air gym, children's play areas, Mayor's, Deputy Mayor's and consort's regalia, Knights sculpture, floodlights, community notice boards, defibrillators, speed indication devices, signage, telephone boxes and seating benches. A summary is shown below.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Original Cost</u>	<u>Current Value</u>	<u>Insurance Value</u>
INSIGNIA	4,432.00	4,432.00	16,782.19
OFFICE EQUIPMENT	5,275.00	3,893.00	4,693.00
OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT	54,915.02	49,415.02	76,181.68
OUTDOOR FACILITIES	222,180.00	222,180.00	296,374.32
Playground Equipment	183,382.22	169,652.22	255,190.00
Street Furniture	2,110.90	6,152.90	75,026.90
War Mrmorial	1.00	1.00	10,300.00
TOTAL	472,296.14	455,726.14	734,548.09

Fig 1 – Summary of Budget/Precept and Receipts and Payments

Rhuddlan Town Council			
Summary Receipts and Payments for Year Ended 31st March 2024			
Last Year Ended 31st March 2023			Current Year Ended 31st March
	Receipts		
169,280.00	Precept		183,039.00
169,280.00		Sub Total	183,039.00
	Operating Income		
3,354.91	Income		1,040.90
17,227.01	VAT Data		18,326.67
189,861.92		Total Receipts	202,406.57
	Running Costs		
63,031.47	Administration		66,309.28
101,610.32	Community Projects		112,244.06
11,870.68	Playing Fields		11,108.07
18,350.66	VAT Data		36,486.06
194,863.13		Total Payments	226,147.47
	Receipts and Payments Summary		
130,583.87	Opening Balance		125,582.66
189,861.92	Add Total Receipts(As Above)		202,406.57
320,445.79			327,989.23
194,863.13	Less Total Payments(As Above)		226,147.47
125,582.66	Closing Balance		101,841.76
	These cumulative funds are represented by:		
125,582.66	Current Bank A/c		101,841.76
125,582.66			101,841.76
	Reserve Balances are represented by:		
-5,001.21	Current Year Fund		-23,740.90
110,218.59	General Reserves		125,582.66
6,750.00	EMR Road Safety Devices		0.00
-4,736.52	EMR Coed Y Brain Com Facility		0.00
13,821.80	EMR Town Plan Initiatives		0.00
1,530.00	EMR Defib Devices		0.00
3,000.00	EMR Green COMMunity Projects		0.00
125,582.66			101,841.76

5. The Town Plan

The town plan has continued to be delivered and was refreshed in January 2024. Progress during the last 12 months is summarised below.

In addition, the Council has installed a defibrillator at the Odyn.

Project Name	Progress made April 2023 to March 2024	Next Steps March 2024 Onwards
1 - Admirals Field Community Facility	Automatic door opening installed on disabled public toilet. Hwb usage increased to include a Youth Club, Welsh classes, art classes, private parties, Menter Iaith children's days, and use by local organisations for meetings and other events.	Maintain both Hwb and Hwb public toilets and maximise Hwb usage.
2 - Rhuddlan Library continued support	£12,000 paid to help fund library. Library and Museum working group established.	Increase funding to maintain existing opening hours to counteract DCC cuts. Identify external funding opportunities. Look at other uses of library including museum.
3 - Youth Facilities	Youth Club now operating at Hwb Rhuddlan.	Continue to fund youth activities at Admiral's Field and Hwb Rhuddlan. Improve facilities at Hwb to increase variety of youth activities,
4 - Coach Friendly Rhuddlan	No progress.	Location identified near Nature Reserve, to be followed up.
5 - Dementia Friendly Rhuddlan	Support provided as requested	Continue to support the group's activities.
6 - Welcome to Rhuddlan	Coronation celebrations funded held. Tourism website up and running. Gwledd food festival funded and delivered. 1hr free parking funded. Carols around the tree funded and delivered.	Fund and deliver Summer Event on Admirals Field in August. Fund and deliver Gwledd Food Festival in May. Fund and deliver Carols around the tree. Fund £1hr free car parking at Parliament Street Car Park.
7 - Clean and Tidy Town	6 litter picks organised. Litter bin emptying at Vicarage Lane Playing Field's funded. Funding provided to Rhuddlan Community Group. Play areas jet washed.	Regular litter picks to be organised. Continued financial support to Rhuddlan Community Association. Introduce regular cleaning of bus shelters.
8 - Public Conveniences	Public toilets opened at Hwb Rhuddlan.	Ongoing support and maintenance of Hwb Rhuddlan's public toilets.

9 - Town Cemetery	North Denbighshire council working group established.	Continue to work on the provision of a new cemetery in or around Rhuddlan. Continue to push DCC for drainage improvements at existing cemetery.
10 - Road Safety and speeding vehicles	Maintenance of existing SIDs carried out. Regular meeting of Rhuddlan Council's Road Safety Group.	Continued road safety working group. New children's road safety competition and refresh bus shelters.
11 - Parliament Street Car Parking Improvements	1-hour free parking implemented.	Continue to fund 1-hour free parking.
12 - Farmers Market	10 markets held and renamed Community Market.	Continue to fund and manage monthly Community Markets.
13 - Rhuddlan Museum	Library and Museum working group established.	Develop plans, permissions and costings for museum to be attached to Library. Obtain grants to build new museum.
14 - Vicarage Lane Car Parking	No progress.	Work with DCC to ensure the improvements are implemented.
15 - Admiral's Field Sports Facilities	New 450m meter path constructed and opened around edge of playing field. Play equipment and field maintained. Use of field by Rhuddlan Dragons Junior Football Team.	Continue to support summer activities for children. Improvements to field including levelling. Relining of MUGA.
16 - Car Parking Fees and on-street car parking	Introduction of free 1hour car parking at Parliament Street Car Park.	Continue to fund 1hour free parking.
17 - CCTV	Funding provided to partnership.	Replacement of all CCTV cameras with more modern and reliable units. Continue to fund CCTV partnership. Work with partnership to improve service provision.
18 - Admiral's Field environmental/botanical areas	Council biodiversity committee established. Biodiversity Plan established and 3-year biodiversity report published.	Implement wildflower garden and further biodiversity projects at Admiral's Field.
19 - Town Cycle Path	No Progress	Support practical active travel plan initiatives linked to cycling infrastructure improvement.
20 - Local re-cycling initiative	No progress.	To be determined.

