



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 13th October 2022

Hybrid Meeting

Present:

Cllr Mike Elgin (Mayor)
Cllr Mike Kermode (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Ivor Beech
Cllr Jackie Burnham
Cllr Reg Davies
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Val Simmons
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk (virtual)

One member of the public was present

1. Apologies

Cllrs Ann Davies, Gareth Rowlands, Rob Williams

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Arwel Roberts Item 17c external surface works at Admirals Field.

3. Urgent Matters

None received

Members were informed that the meeting was being recorded, audio only.

4. Police Matters

Acting Police Sergeant 3152 Nia Williams sent apologies along with those of PCSO Phil Roberts. No report was received.

5. Minutes

Town Council Meeting 8th September 2022

There being no amendments, the Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Mike Kermode, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

The minutes were duly signed

6. Matters Arising

- a. **Aelwyn Morgan Award** – a presentation press release been completed and sent to Journal and the Council's website
- b. **GP Issues** – Clerk forwarded his details to the surgery to explore any future support the Town Council can offer
- c. **Police Matters** – No link to the police Community Alert system been received yet
- d. **Free Parking** – A Member reported that the ticket machine label for the change of language was falling off which may cause issues for car park users.
- e. **Internet Banking** – The Clerk informed Members that this was progressing.
- f. **Code of Conduct Training** – A Member reported that a cancellation email had been received by Members who were attending but DCC denied this although even though cancellation was sent to all members. Some Councillors did attend the virtual training though.

Members were concerned that as DCC cancelled it then Town Council should not be asked to pay for the cancelled training. The Clerk answered that he asked the question already, it was stated that the next one should be free of charge.

- g. **Dog Fouling Signs** – signs now amended and collected by the Clerk today. Will be erected as soon as channel is delivered.
- h. **Long Service Medals** – The Mayor informed Members that the presentation proved to be an enjoyable occasion by all who attended.

- i. **Rhuddlan Castle** – The Clerk had met the curator on site, and reported that visitors can pay cash or by card to enter. An annual permit can only be completed online. Maybe the previous complainant was trying to get an annual permit.

A Member reported that the flags were flown for the Queens death, and that the flag pole still has problems. Members suggested that the Mayor visit the custodian to investigate why and see if Town Council can help in some way with any issues.

- j. **National Eisteddfod** – The Clerk had spoken with the organisers to investigate Rhuddlan being a future site. We will need a 175 acre flat site for the event and a 35 acre site for car parking and camping. A lively debate then took place about the eisteddfod being held back in 1985 at a site off the dual carriageway which was partly in the Rhuddlan parish and partly in Bodelwydden. Members noted that this a big event and being realistic maybe we should not pursue it further. Particularly the time needed by the Clerk to organise it, and DCC's preference for a site often used for eisteddfodau in Denbigh. Others noting that it would bring much needed tourism visitors to the town, clearly putting the town on the map, and businesses could benefit from this

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed it not be pursued, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin.

Cllr Jackie Burnham made an amendment to the effect that local farmers and land owners by emailed to ask about the land condition above being available if pursued then scratch it if no support is forthcoming. **Resolved.**

The next national eisteddfod (2023) is in Pwllheli, then in 2024 in South Wales, then Wrexham in 2025, so plenty of time to consider Council's involvement level.

- k. **Access gate to River** – A Member in discussion with local water sports enthusiasts discovered that the river level was too shallow for any water sports. Another

commented that there should be enough 1 hour before high tide, 1 hour whilst the tide is high, then 1 hour after high tide, making 3 hours possible availability.

Should any future development for the site in question come forward, Council could review the item, but for now the proposal by Cllr Jackie Burnham was to drop the item, seconded by Cllr Reg Davies. **Resolved**

- l. Tree Debris in River** – No response had been received from NRW
- m. Bron Castell, Castle St** – DCC had responded to say that the property is needed for local housing but could be sold off to build new local housing elsewhere in Rhuddlan. Whatever DCC decides would be communicated to Town Council as to what that might be? Cllr Arwel Roberts as a County Councillor had already lobbied Cabinet members and officers about the properties future and the possibility of Town Council buying it. This led to a lengthy and interesting debate about creating a charity to progress a museum of Rhuddlan's artefacts if it can be purchased. Members could not see a way for Council to create such a charity but clearly interested parties and individuals could, and Council could be approached for support in the future for some match funding. Members were reminded that Council has already agreed to investigate a museum and this is in the Town Plan. It needn't be this property if DCC want to keep it. Members agreed to await DCC's decision on Bron Castell future use. **Resolved.**
- n. First Aid Course** – this had proved expensive so Clerk is investigating a 3 hour refresher course.
- o. Community Market** – the change of direction and name had proved successful as there are 18 stalls for Sat 15th Oct and 25 so far for the Nov market
- p. DCC Advice** – litter bin replacement at Vicarage Lane play area is progressing. The red brick wall ownership has not been investigated yet.
- q. Playground Repairs** – the Clerk reported that some repairs had been affected and contractors were there today.

7. Correspondence From

a. The Mayor

The Mayor's report had been circulated.

Members congratulated the Mayor's on his busy schedule on behalf of Town Council.

The report was accepted.

b. Town Clerk

The Clerk had circulated his report prior to the meeting and read out the key items of correspondence with particular attention made to the St Mary's church asking for a letter of support to aid a Green Communities grant application. **Resolved**

This report also included the Town Plan Project update on the Community Market, SIDs x 3 provision, the Admiral's Field resurfacing and car parking, and the Hwb Rhuddlan Hub project. The later two drew particular attention of the Members who discussed both in turn and at length. I summarise them below.

Hwb Rhuddlan Hub update on progress and financial implications caused by increased costs with the electrical fix passed on to Members along with the result of a meeting with Dragons FC which proved very successful. In brief Dragons FC do not want to use the facility as a changing rooms so no folding doors will be required. It was

recommended that one set of folding doors be installed to separate the kitchen area off. Storage space in the container was agreed for their goals. They would be happy to be key holders for the building which would help with the opening of the public toilet during the weekend. Awaiting DCC toilet servicing quote for the remainder of the week and questions were asked if DCC actually opened the public toilets at the weekend in Rhuddlan. The Mayor/Clerk will check.

Dragons FC were interested in having showers via a Welsh FA grant for a shower unit which could be placed in the garden area as a stand-alone facility. After some further discussion on need for shower provision Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that we thank Dragons FC for the offer of working together on this but Council would prefer to wait for a few years to see how the use develops. Seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham.

Resolved.

Members then turned their attention to the naming of the Coed Y Brain facility which is not generally not know or used by residents being a project title by Town Council and previously being Munchkins Nursery.

Many suggestions and concerns were discussed which are not replicated here in great detail but the Members eventually agreed to Cllr Arwel Roberts proposal “Hwb Rhuddlan Hub” with a plaque placed on the building to mark the name of Admiral’s Field alongside information to make residents aware of its historical origin. Seconded by Cllr Ivor Beech. **Resolved.**

Admiral’s Field external resurfacing and car park provision also brought about a lengthy but meaningful debate under Item 17c later in the meeting.

8. County Councillors Reports

Cllr Arwel Roberts had circulated his report.

In which he especially congratulated the Wales in Bloom volunteers for their success noting the allotment reaching level 5, and the bowling club level 3 at their first attempt. Also of great praise was given to the team at Ysgol Y Castell Estyn for their hard work during the recent Estyn Inspection which as Chair of the Governors Cllr Roberts had seen but advised it will be made public on December 2nd after ratification. A Letter will be sent then be sent from Council when the formal results of the inspection have been made public.

The remainder of the report as Rhuddlan’s County Councillor and DCC Chair were read out.

The report was accepted.

9. Training Plan

The Clerk had circulated a draft plan based on 20 modules of training, some mandatory and some voluntary. It included suggestions as to who should attend each module based on their length of being elected, their portfolio of committees they attend, the modules costs, and if they aspire to becoming our Mayor or Deputy Mayor. The modules cover such things as finance control, law, personnel staffing issues, and there are several which will be virtual and in the evening.

Members thanked him for this plan noting that it is a great step forward, more work for themselves, but some are one off in nature. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the plan is accepted and supported, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.** Anyone wishing to attend any module please inform the Clerk remembering those that are mandatory.

10. Events Committee Minutes 4th October 2022

Cllr Mike Kermode as Chair of the committee presented the Minutes highlighting that several community groups were in attendance and the positive support the committee received. He added a reminder that the committee had delegated powers to approve any decisions they made. Details of the Gwledd Fest contract with Bespoke Fitness & Events which was approved, Remembrance Sunday, and Christmas carols around the tree at the community centre the details of which were also approved along with a budget of £1000, and the potential of the King Charles coronation in 2023. The coronation bringing a discussion on whether the Council wished to start organising an event or supporting residents and community groups in holding their own street parties or small localised events. This included issues such as residents and Councillors feelings on celebrating the coronation being gathered, should it be a low key event, potential provision of local shop vouchers from Council to support community events, and a concern about the lack of interest in the Queens 75th jubilee event in Admiral's Field.

Future decisions will be brought back to Council for information as they progress.

The next meeting is on 8th November at the community centre. All are welcome to attend.

11. Tourism & Business website

The Clerk had circulated a quote from Web Studio for a new tourism website to promote businesses, and aspects of Rhuddlan including photography, content writing, along with a Welsh translation option. The cost of which was £6970 +vat.

There was also a quote for the ongoing website management of £320 +vat per month for a whole list of services including listing updates, website hosting's, back up services, domain name, social media postings, and business updates. This currently is £200 +vat per month.

Discussions took place as to why a new tourism/business website was required when Council already has a website. Members were informed that it's bigger in nature and will present a more professional view than the current website. It could be financially sponsored by local businesses, it would provide better links to other websites and visually improved maps, and lastly, it would provide a specific tourism information hub. An example of the Prestatyn website which brings together tourism, business and Town Council information was cited, but an alternative view was that it only had a small number of businesses on its directory, was obviously not regularly updated, and needed to be more dynamic. Members discussed the contract implications if approved to accept and if the set up costs in particular could be reduced before any decision is made.

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that Council accepts the idea of a new tourism and business website but before approval the Clerk seeks any reduced costs. **Resolved.**

12. Road Safety Working Group Minutes 14th September 2023

Formally the Anti Speed Campaign Working Group.

The Mayor informed Members that a very useful meeting was had with the DCC officers and support for a strategic plan was gained as Rhuddlan had been selected for the next Active Travel Plan initiative by the County. This is due to Council's proactive actions on road safety and willingness to fund collaborative works with DCC. A budget for this has already been designated and another meeting with officers to progress this is on 25th October 7pm in the community centre or virtually.

There is also to be another desk top review of the Abergele Road issues, and the potential of another pedestrian refuge on Rhyl Road.

The Welsh Government has strict guidelines as to what can be included in the Active Travel plan and were explained to Members as was the desk top review inclusive items.

The Mayor was thanked for all his hard work in achieving both the above positive results.

The current situation with the SIDs for the road to Rhuddlan from Meliden was explained, along with the potential of another on Dyserth Rd. The current positioning of the Rhyl Rd SID was explained, and that another for this road is on order.

An update on the A55 brown sign was given and it was stated that the high street yellow lines repainting had been completed.

Members were keen to see new initiatives such as a "cut out" policeman and more children's posters on street lamp posts. Cllr Arwel Roberts as a County Councillor said that items on lamp posts are not often supported by DCC but he would ask again.

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the Minutes be approved and the website be posted with the information on the strategic plan and Abergele Rd review. Seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

13. Wild Meadow

A meeting with Tony Ward, Director of Services with a remit for the implementation of this item was held virtually with the Council. He set the scene as to why DCC were developing plans to become a net zero and ecologically positive council by 2030, part of which is to pursue wild meadow areas. There are some 100 sites across the County and 11 of these are in Rhuddlan. The work it entails was described and Members discussed both sides of the debate in a clear manner but particularly focusing on Nant Close residential area as opposed to road side wild meadow sites. There was also an issue of delivery vehicles reporting visual obstructions by the high grass growth. It was noted that given time the situation will get better and the Town Council's support for the project was requested by Mr Ward. Members debated how support could be given when so many residents of Rhuddlan are opposed to the Nant Close section. Other sites which might seem more suitable were suggested and Nant Close asked to be

reinstated as before. These included land by the castle, the library, and on the boundary between Admiral's Field and Hendre Close.

It was proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode that DCC be asked to remove Nant Close from the current wild meadow sites, and an offer of other sites be made to DCC for consideration. Seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved.**

14. Vulnerable people

Much has been in the media about creating warm places to assist the ever increasing energy crisis the UK is facing. A place where people can come together during the winter months to get a hot meal, drink, financial advice, and social interaction. DCC are investigating using libraries and other public buildings for this and would the Town Council be supportive of the Hwb Rhuddlan Hub being considered. The Clerk was asked to contact DCC on the matter to investigate more details. **Resolved.**

15. Christmas Lights

The Clerk had received tenders back for the Christmas lights provision from 5 companies and the details were discussed. Cllr Reg Davies kindly offered to order the 2 x trees and place them outside the Fei Von Chinese restaurant and the community centre. There was discussion reference the securing of the trees, and the dates needed to be completed in time for the lights switch on. Members were informed that the SPAR had sponsored the lights and that Fei Von should be consulted as a matter of courtesy. Noting that liaison with the County was required, it was proposed by Cllr Arwel Roberts that Blanchere Illumination UK Ltd tender be accepted, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

16. Planning

- i) 44/2022/0794 – Parliament House, 1 Parliament St. Conservatory at rear and replacement windows. No objections.
- ii) 44/2022/0795 – Parliament House, 1 Parliament St. Second application as above for the purpose of Listed Consent. No objections.

17. Budget & Finance Matters

a. To approve the payments list due – Members attention was particularly drawn to the North Wakes Outdoor Learning item which is for Ysgol Y Castell teachers to receive forest school training, which is supported by a grant. The list was approved. **Resolved.** Cllr Arwel Roberts as Chair of the school governors thanked the Council for their support.

b. The Clerk had circulated a detailed half-yearly budget report and asked if Members had any comments to make. With none being voiced the report was accepted **Resolved.**

The Clerk was asked to provide an end of year estimate for the next meeting.

c. Additional Public Borrowing – The Clerk informed Members that the cost of resurfacing the Admiral's Field MUGA and access road with suitable drainage infrastructure along with car parking lines was around £200k. As a consequence the

Council might like to consider a public borrowing loan to meet this cost and spread over a few years as had been done with Hwb Rhuddlan Hub.

Cllrs Arwel Roberts and Reg Davies declared an interest and left the meeting.

The work dimensions were explained including the use of permeable tarmac. Members held a constructive and informative debate on the merits of this important scheme, could it potentially include surface water drainage issues from the cemetery, and what are the estimated costs of the loan repayments that Council would be committing to. Members felt that a proper professional job was needed or face criticism from local householders and residents that the works had failed. At the same time there was concern expressed about the loan commitment. A meeting with the Engineering consultants to be held at Hwb Rhuddlan Hub, to discuss specification of the works, potential solutions to the problems, and costs. All Councillors were invited to attend.

Members agreed that it should not include cemetery drainage issues. **Resolved.**

It was proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode that Council investigate the solutions with the consultant and the further potential of a public borrowing loan and its more detailed costs. Seconded by Cllr Val Simmons. **Resolved.**

Cllrs Arwel Roberts and Reg Davies were readmitted.

18. Community Matters

a. Cllr Arwel Roberts had attended the CCTV partnership meeting on behalf of Town Council. The current contract for this service was discussed but the meeting was not quorate so no decisions were made. Cllr Roberts had obtained a copy of the current contract and will pass on to the clerk for reference and forward on to council members. He stated that a meeting between the council and the Police Commissioner will be held next year.

Cllr Roberts sought Council's approval to hold another litter picking day before Christmas. **Resolved.** He also stated the council had received positive feedback from Streetscene regarding involvement from individuals and groups within Rhuddlan.

b. Cllr Val Simmons reported that she had attended the DCC Tourism Partnership meeting at which she received positive comments from the Denbigh library manager regarding the Rhuddlan walks leaflet.

c. The Mayor/Clerk/Deputy Mayor had met with the DVSC and suggested that a volunteer fayre is held Rhuddlan early in 2023.

19. Date of next meeting – 10/11/2022 Full Council Hybrid Meeting 7pm

Signed.....Cllr Mike Elgin (Mayor)