



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 12th May 2022

Virtual Meeting during the Covid 19 Restrictions

Present:

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

1. Apologies

None

Members of the public were invited to join the virtual meeting but none had requested to do so.

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

2. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Jackie Burnham and Cllr Mike Kermode, Item 11 Fence at 28 Hendre Close.

3. Urgent Matters

The Mayor reported 3 Urgent matters. The first will be dealt with in Part 1 but the remainder in Part 2.

Members heard that Zoom virtual meetings had now been used for 2 years and had proved successful but is it now time to return to Face 2 Face meetings?

Cllr Gareth Rowlands explained the issues around the matter which included: the importance of Face 2 Face, getting to know our new Councillors better, associated costs, and the need for Lateral Flow Tests before meetings.

The Clerk pointed out to Members that under the Local Government Act 2021 there needs to be a Multi Format Meeting and consideration must be given to this.

This brought about a lengthy and full debate on the various issues of Face 2 Face, Multi Format, and Hybrid meetings. Several examples of Face 2 Face meetings now in operation were discussed, along with organising a trial of how a Face 2 Face/Virtual meeting might work to test the practicalities of equipment needed, venue suitability, and Members preferences of model. The debate also brought up several proposals and amendments which concluded with a proposal from Cllr Jackie Burnham to hold June's meeting as a trial of both Face 2 Face and virtual meeting with an ad hoc communication system (using a laptop and external speakers) which would allow Members to hear what was debated but not see, and no requirement for any Lateral Flow testing. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

4. Police Matters

An e-mail had been received with no report attached but a commitment to attend the June meeting.

5. Minutes

Town Council Meeting 10th March 2022

The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. **Resolved.**

The Minutes were duly signed.

6. Matters Arising

- a. **Castle Street Bollards Improvements** – No change yet.
- b. **Free Car parking at Parliament Street Car Park** – The Clerk reported that DCC had provided a cost of £498 to re-programme the ticket machines for 1 free hour, and would be implemented once Town Council agreed. Cllr Jackie Burnham so proposed, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

On the subject of parking at Vicarage Lane, Members discussed the ongoing doctor's surgery use of the car park and the lack of a disabled parking place. It was acknowledged that this area of parking is not owned by the Town Council and as such it was not Council's place to discuss terms with BCUHB or agree decisions on how it should be used. DCC were asking Council for an opinion on the matter and Members agreed to inform DCC to proceed with BCUHB as the area is not in our ownership. **Resolved.**

It was suggested that the County Councillors speak to BCUHB and DCC explaining the situation as above. **Resolved.**

- c. **Green Communities Grant** – The Clerk informed Members that the grants for everything we applied for had been successful.
- d. **Internet Banking** – The Clerk informed Members that the previous mandate document was incorrect. A new document had been received, completed, and will be signed by all new signatories.
- e. **Land Behind the Knights** – Bodrhyddan Estate had made further progress with the area much to the satisfaction of Members. The lease agreement was being drafted, and Members discussed a potential additional planting of trees by the river and footbridge. Council agreed to send a letter of thanks to the estate. **Resolved.**

- f. **Road Safety Update** – DCC was experiencing delays with assessing the additional SID sites. Ysgol Y Castell confirmed they had 200 paintings for the competition. The working group would arrange a meeting to judge the same within 2 weeks, adding that any member can attend that meeting.
- g. **St Mary's Church** - been written to so as to investigate how we can work together legally to support them.
- h. **Cemetery** – the poor grass strimming has been reported and DCC have stated they will action this more diligently in the future. On the subject of the cemetery Members noted two issues. Flooding and need for a new one. It was suggested that the Clerk ask DCC for a meeting on site to report on progress.
Cllr Ann Davies as a County Councillor reported that the second survey was completed and flooding issues were under control. Work is expected to commence soon. Members thanked Cllr Davies for her efforts on the issue but agreed that Town Council needs to push these two items. DCC is to be written to and details obtained of the survey and actions they propose to take. **Resolved.**

7. Correspondence From

a. The Mayor

The Mayor's report had been circulated.

The report was accepted.

b. Town Clerk

The report was circulated previous to the meeting and was discussed.

- a) The Clerk had received an email from DCC reference the A55 tourist directional sign delay. Members were concerned that DCC had the Town Council's contribution for over 12 months, and wished to send a strong letter complaining of the lengthy delay and sending a copy to the item funding partners Denbigh Town Council, St Asaph City Council, and St Asaph Cathedral. **Resolved.**
- b) A training plan has to be developed for all Councillors by law to include Code of Conduct and Data Protection policies especially. Clerk asked to investigate options. **Resolved**
- c) The Annual Report is required to be completed by the end of August so will be scheduled for approval at the July meeting. Members discussed linking the report to the town Plan, the Council's website, and Facebook page to inform the community of progress on all Council's activities, to gauge thoughts on the future Rhuddlan's needs, and to get closer to them. It was noted that the Council's job was to progress were possible the communities need, and a two way communication has to be developed. Is it feasible to follow the Rhuddlan Today Facebook pages to achieve this? Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that the Website & Information Committee progress this discussion and return to Full Council with some recommendations. Seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. **Resolved.**
- d) Members heard that it would be beneficial to have all Members on a Town Council email address. Cllr Mike Elgin so proposed, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

- e) Members were reminded that any Council meeting agenda items, or reports, must be forwarded to the Clerk by 1900 hours on the Friday prior to the meeting.

The report was accepted

8. County Councillors Reports

None had been received due to the elections.

9. Town Plan Projects Report

The Town Clerk had circulated an update and each project update was read out.

The next Farmer's Market is on June 18th.

The report was accepted.

10. Minutes of the Jubilee Working Group 26th April 2022

The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Gareth Rowlands and should be approved. Seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved.**

Members, in noting the groups comment that no further meeting was thought necessary, debated several items that they thought needed more input. This included

- The delivery of flyers or not
- Concert charging policy
- Overturning previous recommendations approval by Full Council
- 1st come 1st served tickets potential to lead to a favouritism accusation
- New Members involvement

Members requested a further meeting of the group where these issues could be aired. It was proposed to meet virtually on Tuesday 17th May 7pm. Cllr Gareth Rowlands offered to organise in the absence of the Clerk. **Resolved.**

11. Fence at 28 Hendre Close

Cllrs Jackie Burnham and Mike Kermode had declared an interest and removed to the waiting room.

The Clerk had undertaken the ownership research and informed Members of his findings. In 1972 the previous parish council paid for the boundary fence, the Council's Deeds show joint maintenance and equal costs of maintenance, and the Land Registry is silent on the issue.

Mr Burnham was asking for permission to replace the fence from Town Council and that Council contribute 50% to the costs of the materials. Mr Burnham was offering to do the work himself at no cost to Town Council.

The ensuing debate involved much discussion. This included

- Rhuddlan Town Council refused to contribute back in 2008,
- The high standard of materials being suggested by the owner.
- Council to seek alternative material costs and contractor.
- Bowls club boundary fence being successfully replaced by Mr Burnham in the past.
- Council Deeds indicating a shared boundary.

- Transparency of the use of public funds.
- An acknowledgement of rising costs across contractors which will only increase with time.

Members agreed to a proposal by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts that Council give permission for the replacement boundary fence, and pay half the costs of materials. **Resolved.**

Further discussion took place about the need to tender for the materials and work being undertaken by the Council's fencing contractor. Along with an acknowledgment that Mr Burnham was going to remove the old fence, the high wire netting, and hedging. There was therefore a need to ensure like for like considerations within the above.

The Mayor wanting to progress the issue, reminded Members that they had already resolved to pay 50% of the costs and now had received a proposal that Council's fencing contractor be asked for a quote for the work ensuring like for like materials and work to be undertaken. **Resolved.**

Cllrs Burnham and Kermode were re-admitted to the meeting.

12. Local Places for Nature

A Member had asked for this item to be placed on the Agenda and was wondering if there was potential for the knights' area of land or any of our local environment groups being interested. It was noted that Tidy Wales, the correspondent, had visited Admiral's Field last year and that Starter Packages were not for us but potentially a community orchard could be. No suggestions came forward.

It was proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands that the details be posted on our website and Facebook page so the community can see it. Seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

13. High Street Issues

Members commented on the issues of struggling businesses, empty shops, online shopping, and shopper's car parking. They noted that working with local businesses would be beneficial and some had participated in developing the Town Plan, but a collaboration with them had been tried before and was not supported by businesses. Ideas of creating a list of visitor attractions on the website and Facebook pages of the Council were suggested, along with vouchers to use at local businesses, Q Codes, a separate business workers car park, and information boards.

It concluded in a proposal from Cllr Jackie Burnham that a committee be created to work with businesses to see what may be achieved. Seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

14. Planning Applications

i) No Planning Number Provided - Mona Offshore Wind Limited regarding an Environmental Impact Assessment

Cllr Ann Davies declared an interest as a Member of the DCC Planning Committee.

There were no comments.

15. Budget/Finance Matters

a. To approve the End of Year Statement for internal audit review. Proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

Members wished to Minute a recognition of the good work undertaken by both the previous Clerk and the current Clerk.

In addition the Statement would demonstrate that balances were used to keep the precept down, inform the auditor of Council's healthy balances, and prove useful in drawing funds from other agencies.

b. To approve the Payments List. **Resolved.**

c. Amendment to Salary Standing Orders. Required to take into account recent pay rises. Proposed by Cllr Mike Elgin, seconded by Cllr Bleddyn Williams. **Resolved.**

16. Community Matters

a. Cllr Val Simmons mentioned her concern about the lack of disabled parking at the doctors surgery and speeding along Highlands Road.

b. Cllr Arwel Roberts asked that Members approve Urdd bunting be placed on the Council's noticeboard. **Resolved**

Approval for the next litter picking dates. **Resolved**

Y Cyngerdd dates and times details, 7pm May 20th.

Request for councillors to support the Gwledd Festival Saturday May 14th.

At this point the internet connection failed and the virtual meeting stopped. After some time the connection was re-established and the meeting continued with some Members unable to reconnect. Those being, Cllrs Bleddyn Williams, Ann Davies, and Reg Davies

No recording was possible.

c. Cllr Rob Williams, a newly elected councillor, commented on the speeding issue on Highlands Road, and the state of the grass cutting on the football pitch at Admiral's Field. Members asked the Clerk to investigate the grass cutting regime from our contractor. **Resolved**

The Mayor enquired about the wild meadow area at Nant Close. Cllr Arwel Roberts as a County Councillor said that DCC was investigating the issue.

d. Cllr Jackie Burnham raised the issue of dog waste asking what can Town Council do to improve the situation? A short discussion took place. Members were informed that enforcement officers are concentrating action around the school area, and that Tara Dumas was the DCC officer to report dog waste issues to. In addition, the legislation on dog waste signs was explained, they should be larger (already agreed by Council in the past), and perhaps consider designing notices for residents to place on their property gates.

e. The Clerk informed Members that CADW were holding a re-enactment at the Castle on Bank Holiday but no date was given. Members asked the Clerk to place details on the website.

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.

17. Approval of Supplementary Minutes 10th March 2022

For the purposes of the newly elected Members the Mayor explained the implications of being in Part 2 and what it means to them as part of the Council's Standing Orders. All Members were reminded that nothing in Part 2 can be communicated publicly.

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the Minutes be accepted as a true record, Cllr Gareth Rowlands seconded. **Resolved.**

Matters Arising – the letters resolved to be drafted and sent had been actioned.

18. Urgent Matters under Part 2

a) The Council has previously presented Long Service Medals to Councillors who had served more than 10 years. It was proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode that Cllrs Syd Gaskin and Andrew Smith both be considered for the medal. **Resolved.**

It was suggested by the Mayor that the Long Service Medal consideration be placed in the Standing Orders. **Resolved**

b) The Mayor read the response from the Welsh Ombudsman adding that the case should now be closed within Town Council, and the call for all Members to work together from a "clean sheet" perspective.

It was agreed that a copy of the report would be sent those councillors and staff members involved. **Resolved.**

19. Date of next meeting – 9th June 2022 Full Council Meeting 7pm

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