



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

Virtual Meeting during the Covid 19 Restrictions

Present:

Cllr Mike Elgin (Mayor in the Chair)
Cllr Andrew Smith (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Jackie Burnham
Cllr Reg Davies
Cllr Charlotte Frobisher (late arrival)
Cllr Syd Gaskin
Cllr Mike Kermode
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk
Project Officer

1. Apologies

Cllr Ann Davies

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

None given

3. Rhuddlan Cemetery Update

The Mayor welcomed DCC officers Andy Clark and Mike Bennion to the meeting who had joined virtually.

During the autumn DCC had a survey undertaken of the existing drainage system. A collapse was found at the boundary of the Clos David Owen (CDO) development. The work to repair this was done and DCC is monitoring the outcome. The survey contractor is investigating alternative methods of drainage should the repair not prove effective e.g. french drains.

It was also found via trial ground investigations that there was an abundance of clay soil in the area so there was no alternative for a soakaway system. Currently due to the ground

conditions, soil permeability, the results of the trial holes tests, along with CCTV surveys of the drains, DCC was continuing to monitor the collapsed drain repair and was seeking expert advice on alternative drainage solutions.

There then followed a Q&A opportunity for Members which discussed the following.

People with loved ones interned in the cemetery are very distressed at the water level being experienced as the repaired drain seems to provide little benefit. Can new burials be made aware of the issue via funeral directors? The officers answered that the cemetery manager does inform funeral directors of the situation, so as to pass on to bereaved families. This has been done for at least the past 5 years.

Is DCC looking at alternative sites for a cemetery? Officers highlighted a Scrutiny Paper on this issue about 2 years ago covering the whole of the County. The resulting decision was that as there was available capacity at sites across the County for burials, the costs associated with land purchase and cemetery infrastructure development, no alternative sites are being investigated. County Cllr Arwel Roberts confirmed this Scrutiny decision.

The depth and spread of clay soil was discussed and officers pointed to the trial ground investigation results that it was deep and wide occurring around the site.

There then followed a discussion on the suitability and removal of a drainage ditch for the CDO development.

There being no other questions the Mayor thanked the two officers for their attendance and clear update on the issues. The officers left the meeting.

4. Urgent Matters

None

5. Police Matters

The report was accepted

6. Minutes

Town Council Meeting 9th December 2021

Subject to two amendments regarding **5j** the election budget idea as a project for next financial year – removal of a resume of each Cllr, and **8f** Coed y Brain building works percentage of completion, the Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Arwel Roberts seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

The Minutes were duly signed.

Matters Arising

- a. Enforcement Signs** – The Clerk had spoken with DCC who asked for some amendments to the sign wording, which was proving difficult to resolve due to the many words required to be legally correct. Confirmation of the correct wording is awaited.
- b. Defibrillator Training** – The Deputy Clerk said that currently the training is still going ahead and there are 6 or 7 participants confirmed at present. The trainer requires ALL participants to have a negative Lateral Flow Test (LFT) and it was noted by Members that these test kits are very short in supply.
- c. Silent Soldier** – Now situated within the rose garden at the library site.

- d. **Anti-Speed Measures** – Members discussed the need for a Town Council Zoom meeting with or without DCC officers before a site meeting, or alternatively to move straight to a working group site meeting as previously discussed in December. Members agreed to hold the Zoom meeting first on 25th January at 7pm and invite DCC officers. **Resolved.**
- e. **Nature Reserve Exit** – DCC had said that the flow of traffic nor the evidence of jumping the lights had been noted so the traffic lights timings were not to be altered.
- f. **Best Dressed House & Business Competition** – The Clerk confirmed the winners of both competitions. The house winner being a collaborative effort at a property of four pensioners' flats on Harding Avenue, and the business winner was the Little Flower Monger.
- g. **Business Forum** – The business forum idea was posted on the Council's website but had produced no uptake to date.
- h. **Queens Platinum Jubilee** – The Clerk had circulated the official "Guide to Taking Part" to Members for discussion and suggested that a suitable working group or subcommittee be agreed to progress. Members noted that the beacon lighting event had been moved to 9.45pm, that there were certain songs that had to be sung at certain times during this event, and that the bacon will be taken from storage and cleaned in readiness.

There then followed a full discussion on the type of vehicle that the Council should use to progress the jubilee arrangements, the events Rhuddlan wish to participate in, and a working budget to progress. Points raised include the following:-

- A working group whereby all Councillors could attend
- A committee which has more powers than a working group
- Who should Chair the above and who to be invited to contribute to the above
- The big lunch ideas and costs involved
- Grants availability for events and the setting of a town council working budget

It was agreed that the Council set up an events committee to include Councillors, community representatives, including the community centre and St Mary's church vicar. The Chair to be decided by the committee when it first meets. **Resolved.**

A working budget be created using the Clerk's discretion amounting to a total of £2,000. Proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

- i. **Gwindy Street Kerb** – DCC have successfully dealt with the dangerous kerbing.
- j. **Hybrid Council Meetings** – The Clerk had confirmation from the library service that if Town Council wanted to pursue this type of meeting using their facilities they were more than welcome to do so free of charge. The only condition was to know how many would be attending for a risk assessment on numbers.
- k. **Farmers Market alcohol licence** – Cllr Jackie Burnham had offered the use of her business licence for the market but questioned the logistics of doing this. The Deputy Clerk described the various logistics and advised that it would be a better

option for the Council to apply and then include a sum for this within the markets stall holders charges. It was remarked that the organiser of Gwledd Fest applies for the licence. **Resolved.**

l. Castle Street bollards improvements – The Clerk apologised for not yet writing to DCC on this item but would do so the next day.

m. DCC Winter Well Being – In response to a Members question the Clerk confirmed that this opportunity was not being progressed.

7. Correspondence From

a. The Mayor

Cllr Mike Elgin noted that there was so much good work going on by many Rhuddlan community groups and suggested that Town Council offer our thanks for their work, and the provision of a wonderful community centre. It was noted that all the individual groups need to be included and it was proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode that our thanks be posted on the website, noticeboards, Facebook page and the parish magazine. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

The report was accepted.

b. Town Clerk

The Clerk thanked Cllr Syd Gaskin for his defibrillator testing who informed Members that the New Inn defibrillator siren, which alerts people that it is open, is not working. The Clerk is to inform Achub Calon y Dyffryn.

The telephone kiosks Council applied for are now ready for use and need to be added to the Council's asset register.

A Member asked that our various litter picking days be continued this year and noted that the equipment is safely stored in Cllr Arwel Roberts shed.

The report was accepted

c. Correspondence from Llyr Gruffydd MS

Asking for details of any sewerage overflows in Rhuddlan, their frequency, Council complaints made, and copies of responses from Dwr Cymru.

Members recorded the following:-

- Large sewerage overflow tanks placed either side of the bye pass around 10 years ago
- Broken sewerage pipe on Abergele Road
- Sewerage smell experienced at the junction of High Street & Church Street.

d. DCC Wild Flower Meadow Projects

Members had been invited by DCC to consider the provision of such projects in Rhuddlan and feedback by January 17th. The following points were raised. General support for both Abergele Road and library area sites but make DCC aware of the crocus beds at the library site. The height of the wild flowers and potential issues with traffic vision hazards, and that appropriate signage continued to be provided. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a response as above. **Resolved.**

e. Car Parking Disc

A Member had circulated a short paper on the idea of using a disc parking scheme as seen in Cumbria. Basically a system of allowing time restricted parking through a display of a parking disc showing the time of vehicle arrival against inspection of

payment owed. Several Members were unsupportive of the system but saw merit in the idea of dealing with Rhuddlan parking issues. Points made were lack of regular enforcement patrols, costs of such a scheme, the need for free parking instead of pay & display, and the potential for there to be a County wide system. It was proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands that DCC be asked to consider a county wide disc parking scheme, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved.**

County Councillor Arwel Roberts will support this resolution with DCC.

8. County Councillors Reports

Cllr Arwel Roberts informed Members that since the drafting of his report another two issues had been raised in DCC which he felt Members should be aware of.

1 As the Chair of Performance Scrutiny in DCC Cllr Roberts was very pleased to highlight that the Meifod Wood Products project run by social services for adults with learning difficulties would soon be reopening. Town Council Members were pleased to hear this news and thanks were passed on to Cllr Roberts for this news.

Canol y Dre in Ruthin and Popty (both DCC social services run) are now being relocated to County Hall. Due to the take up of working from home advice from central government, there is a marked availability of space in DCC offices which is allowing this relocation. There is a growing concern that this may result in the closing of County offices in the future due to space created by working from home and the efficiency of keeping them open.

The report was accepted

9. Town Plan Projects Report

The Deputy Town Clerk had circulated an update and proceeded to answer any specific queries with Members.

The commuted sum grant application for a total of £74,216.00 was discussed and the individual items explained. Members approved the items and total sum for the application. **Resolved.**

Members were asked to consider the Green Communities application which the town council has agreed to make. Four projects make up the application and were itemised by the Deputy Clerk as allotment electrification, allotment infrastructure improvements, two bee gardens, and bio diversity improvements at the bowling club. Members noted the Council's success of securing grants and hoped for success again, but if not supported by DCC then return to Council for funding. **Resolved to apply for the four projects.**

Members were also informed that the MP is supportive of Coed y Brain being included in the Levelling Up opportunity, £7,500 has been awarded for external electrical provision at the Community Centre and Ysgol y Castell would like to train a member of staff in woodland skills. Members agreed to add this as Green Communities application.

The report was accepted.

10. Planning Applications

- i) 44/2021/1270 – Erection of a two storey garage at Hylas Bach. Members noted that there are concerns from archaeology in the area. No objections.
- ii) No planning number provided – Solar farm at Gwernigron Farm, The Roe, St Asaph which has been placed before Council previously. After some discussion Members agreed to object on the grounds of the loss of good agricultural land. **Resolved.**
- iii) 44/2021/1245 – Removal of conifer trees/hedgerow within a conservation area at St Mary's Church. Cllr Reg Davies declared an interest. Members were made aware that this is to resolve repeated local residents complaints that the trees are blocking the sun. No objections.

11. Budget/Finance Matters

- a. The Town Clerk had circulated the list of payments highlighting a cancellation and reissue of Coed y Brain cheque, and the addition of cheques received after list was circulated. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the list be approved, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**
- b. Minutes of the Budget & Precept for 2022/3 meeting were circulated for Members approval. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the Minutes and the recommended Budget/Precept be approved, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Approved.**

12. To approve the Minutes of the Welsh Language Policy working group meeting of 5th January 2022 and amended Policy.

The Mayor asked Cllr Bleddyn Williams, Chair of the working group to take Members through the minutes before them. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed the Minutes be approved, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Approved.**

The draft policy had been sent to the Welsh Commissioner for comment who suggested some amendments, which the Working Group had discussed, and which the Chair highlighted to Members. The amendments and recommendations were put to Members to approve. A Member questioned the telephone answering in Welsh item of the policy given that the previous Town Clerk could speak welsh but the new Clerk cannot. After a short discussion Members could see no problem with answering that the Clerk could not speak welsh but would get a welsh speaker from the Council to return the call. This answer to be given in Welsh and a suitable answer to be given to the new Clerk. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed approval of the amended policy and recommendations including the above telephone answering issue. Seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Approved.**

The Mayor returned to the Chair

13. To approve Standing Orders.

This is an annual review requirement. The Clerk highlighted the inclusion this year of the amended Community Matters item. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed the amended Orders be approved. Seconded by Cllr Andrew Smith. **Approved.**

14. Community Matters

a. Cllr Andrew Smith voiced his concern about the rubbish behind the knights town entrance statues and wanted to know what is the way forward with this issue. This sparked a full debate. The Clerk had already written to Lord Langford and had received a reply stating that he was more than happy to work with the town council to maintain it. Members discussed allowing Lord Langford a realistic time to solve the issues, town council to do it, the sites prominent town entrance position, DCC not going to solve it as its private land, and writing to the Bodrhyddan Estate office reference the issue. Cllr Andrew Smith proposed that the Council writes formally to Lord Langford asking for a satisfactory resolution to the issue, and thereafter to DCC if this cannot be reached. Seconded by Cllr Syd Gaskin. **Resolved.**

Cllr Smith also highlighted the castle lighting has not been operating at an earlier time for the winter months and needed to be altered to take the darker nights into consideration. The Clerk informed the new Clerk that Jane Colclough is the Castle Custodian and will pass on the contact.

b. Cllr Gareth Rowlands represents Council on the Denbighshire CCTV Partnership currently managed by Cheshire West whose contract is running out at the end of May. As a consequence a new document outlining what service is required for the new contract is to be drafted and Town Council can make its views known. Any comments to be received by mid-February. All Members to be circulated a copy of documentation for their observations on what Rhuddlan requires from the new contract.

This raised some questions about the Council's commitment and that all decisions on service levels are to be approved by Full Council. It was commented that it should be a corporate Service Level Agreement and not just a Rhuddlan Town Council one. This is the aim of the CCTV Partnership Board. There would be no decisions at Board level until all participating partners have had the opportunity to comment.

Members agreed to agenda this item for the next Council meeting. **Resolved.**

c. Cllr Reg Davies had received several complaints about e-scooters and their use in Rhuddlan. A short debate included informing the police Complaints & Discipline Department, viewing town CCTV footage for evidence, and investigating DCC Public Protection enforcement involvement. Members also commented that any successful prosecution around the e-scooters issue should be widely reported as a deterrent. Members agreed to escalate the issue to the police Complaints & Discipline Department. **Resolved.**

Cllr Davies was also had concerns about 2 retail businesses in Rhuddlan not using masks. Members advised that this should be reported to the police and/or DCC Public Protection.

d. Cllr Arwel Roberts informed Council that Vicarage Lane car park had received the benefit of some tree planting. He will provide photos for the new Clerk to post on the website.

Cllr Roberts also had some concern about litter behind the houses in this area and wondered if cutting the hedge back might reduce the litter being stuck there. Members felt that this was the wrong time of year for pruning the hedge.

e. The Clerk had received a request form the Community Association to have permission to place a bench within the memorial garden on Admiral's Field. There would be no cost to the Council. Members noted that Council has no spare benches to offer the association and there should no encroachment within the goal areas. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that permission be given subject to Council approval for the actual site of the bench. Cllr Arwel Roberts seconded. **Resolved.**

The Allotment Society had requested a letter of support for a grant application to provide mains electric to the site. Cllr Gareth Rowlands declared an interest. Members agreed to provide the letter. **Resolved.**

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.

The virtual meeting audio recording was stopped at this point.

15. Grant Application – Positive Action for Strokes. The applicant aims to bring together stroke survivors and others with long term disabilities to a friendly & supportive atmosphere. The total grant requested is £2550 to support their Christmas dinner, art & crafts materials, and their exercise class. A Member had spoken to the applicant and was very supportive of their work but had noted that they operate on a very tight budget having had to raise the weekly fee for participants to help cover their costs. Advice had been given by the Member reference various grant opportunities and an offer to help. Other Members were also supportive of the applicant and also offered their help. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the grant be approved in full, seconded by Cllr Syd Gaskin. **Resolved.**

16 Date of next meeting – 10 February 2022 Full Council Meeting 7pm

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