



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 8th February 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Present:

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

There were 3 members of the public present Carol & Malcolm Boyton and Amy Davies. Also in attendance were the Mayoress (for item 1), Police Inspector Kevin Smith, Tony Hepton from Rhuddlan Town Football Club and Matt Baker and Deborah Owen from the DCC Library Service.

1. Presentation of Award

The Mayor welcomed all present to the informal part of the meeting, for the presentation of a special award to Carol and Malcom Boyton, to recognise their volunteer service to Rhuddlan Scouts for over 25 years. He highlighted the importance of volunteering, adding that there are many in Rhuddlan doing sterling work on behalf of our town. He thanked Carol and Malcolm on behalf of the Council and said that they must have made a positive difference to many young people in their work with the Scout movement.

The Mayor also said that he had visited the recent Prestatyn Town Council's Volunteers Fair. He was keen to hold a similar event in Rhuddlan in the future, possibly as a part of the mid-summer event.

2. Apologies

Cllr Jackie Burnham

The meeting was recorded from this point (audio only)

3. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Arwel Roberts as DCC Planning Committee member.

4. Urgent Matters

The Mayor informed Members that there were five urgent matters, several of which appear on the agenda already, along with a grant application and a DCC document about electoral matters, which will be dealt with in part 2.

The Mayor asked members approval to move agenda items forward to ensure the police inspector and Rhuddlan Football Club person were not kept waiting. **Resolved**

5. Police Matters

Inspector Kevin Smith informed members about the new Prestatyn police station and said that Rhuddlan Police station would not be detrimentally affected, however some members of staff would be based in Prestatyn.

A Member asked for the Inspector's views on the Partnership CCTV system. The Inspector gave his support for the continuation of the service. He had not been able to attend the recent meeting but had emailed his support to DCC.

Another Member stated she was pleased to see a visible presence of police on the town's streets and asked if this would continue. The Inspector confirmed it would but only as a trial period for now, with his assurance that he was keen to continue it and he spoke on the importance of neighbourhood policing.

The Clerk asked that a written crime report be provided for Council's monthly meetings which can be circulated to Members prior to a meeting. The Inspector confirmed this action and that PC Rob Jones would attend.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Kevin Smith for his attendance. The inspector then left the meeting.

6. Rhuddlan Library

The Mayor welcomed Deborah Owen and Matt Baker from DCC Library Service, to discuss how Town Council can best work in partnership with the service. He reminded councillors of the current financial commitment the Council makes of £12,000 to support the Library's running costs. Matt thanked the Council for the continuing financial support already approved for the next financial year and Deborah circulated some statistics about the excellent use of Rhuddlan Library. A discussion took place on how best to support the Library through the next twelve months. There was some concern whether the service would be cut again in 2025/26 and if the support should be for just twelve months or longer. The issue of funding Saturday opening was discussed but the statistics showed that a week-day opening would be more effective. The Mayor asked how much it would cost in addition to the present support of £12,000 to keep the Library at its present hours. Deborah said that it would cost an additional £17,000 a year. This prompted a discussion on council funding, the potential of increasing funding and opportunities for external funding.

Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that because of the importance of the Library in the community; an additional £17,000 be approved for one year, making the total support £29,000. He also followed up on Cllr Gareth Rowland's idea that there should be a working group created to investigate grant opportunities, including the Town Plan's proposal for a museum facility. Seconded by Cllr Reg Davies. **Resolved.**

Deborah and Matt then left the meeting.

7. Rhuddlan Town FC

The Mayor welcomed Tony Hepton and invited him to put forward his comments and ideas about the future of Rhuddlan Town FC.

Mr Hepton outlined his involvement with North Wales football and particularly Rhuddlan Town FC who hold a lease to use Pengwern Hall football pitch. He informed Members of the issues surrounding the lease and continued use of the facilities. The main challenge was the need of a 10-year lease so that the club can access FA grants. Unfortunately, the present lease only had 3 years left and it seemed unlikely that this could be extended. Mr. Hepton said that his preferred solution was to move from Pengwern to Admiral's playing field. He explained the various works that would be needed on the field, including secure dog-proof fencing, coach/trainers' dug-outs and changing rooms in a portable classroom type structure. He said that these could be funded by grants if the club was given a 10-year lease. There followed a lengthy debate on issues such as Welsh FA grants, changing room and pitch requirements for acceptance by the league, drainage, Admiral's Field use and the presence of many young people now playing football in Rhuddlan because of Rhuddlan Dragons FC work. Cllr Arwel Roberts declared an interest as he stated his house was close to the proposed changing room.

Members had concerns about a number of issues, including the request for a 10-year lease on the Admiral's Field, whether the pitch could accommodate 2 teams using it and potential construction developments required at the site.

Cllr Ann Davies proposed that the Town Council should allow Rhuddlan Town FC to use the Admiral's Field. Seconded by Cllr Rob Williams. It was generally agreed that more detailed proposals would be required before committing a full approval. Therefore, Rhuddlan Town FC's use of Admiral's Field was agreed in principle on a vote of 5 to 4 with Cllr Arwel Roberts abstaining. **Resolved.**

Mr Hepton confirmed he would provide further details and a business plan, he then left the meeting.

8a Minutes of the town Council Meeting held on 11th January 2024

Proposed as a true record by Cllr Mike Kermode, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

Progress Report on the above

Broken SID to be sent to manufacturer for repair and is out of warranty.

The Mayor asked the County Councillors for an update on the flooding on the Dyserth Road. There was no update and they are awaiting DCC for a site meeting.

8b. Minutes of the Events Committee held on 16th January 2024

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

Progress Report on the above.

Cllr Ann Davies left the meeting at this point due to technical issues.

The Clerk had circulated a paper showing members that the proposed summer event could cost up to £13k. However, £9.3k of this could be included in the grant application to Denbighshire Leisure. He explained what was envisaged on the day of the event.

It was noted that the RhuddFest is to be held the week before the Council's event and members discussed the closeness of them. Members were told that the events were different and that one should not impact the other, as they were aimed at different audiences. Some members showed concern that the Council's event would put too much pressure on the Clerk's work load and discussed Member's ability to offer their support on the day. The Clerk explained that if the grant was successful then it would include an element of project management to run the event and if not, the event would be scaled back to be more manageable. The Mayor also said that it was important for councillors to be involved in the running of the event in the role of official stewards. Cllr Rob Williams proposed that the event be held in the school summer holidays, on Saturday August 3rd. Seconded by Cllr Ivor Beech.

Resolved.

The Mayor stated that once the outcome of the grant application was known then the event proposal would be brought back to the council.

8c. Minutes of the Road Safety Working Group held on 7th February.

Cllr. Mike Elgin, the Committee Chairman, gave a verbal report:

- No update given on the Active Travel issue
- The 20mph review on Denbighshire roads is unlikely due to DCC workload but a formal review is planned post 12-months after implementation.
- DCC asked to discuss with police the speeding issue on Highlands Road
- Town Council to approve another speed reduction poster competition for the two local primary schools. Ysgol Y Castell and Ysgol Dewi Sant. **Resolved**
- Council to approve 10 prizes for the speed poster competition at £20 each making £200 in total. **Resolved.**

9. 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 his attendance at St Kentigern Hospice and the excellent and popular Café Cariad.

The report was accepted

The Deputy Mayor's report mentioned complaints received about the Tweedmill bus stop closure and road safety concerns when alighting the bus to access Tweedmill. Cllr Simmons explained that Arriva claimed that this was a consequence of the 20mph speed limit. During the discussion, Members were made aware that several Rhuddlan residents and some support groups use the Tweedmill facilities and the bus stop closure adversely affects them. Contact had been made on the issue with the MP, MS, and Cllr Barry Mellor (DCC Lead

Member for Transport). It was mentioned that other community councils maybe receiving similar complaints.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that a letter be sent to the MP, MS, and Cllr Mellor, and the neighbouring community councils; mentioning the road safety fears expressed in the discussion. Seconded By Cllr Reg Davies. **Resolved.**

Cllr Ivor Beech proposed that the letter be copied to the Welsh Government as a consequence of the 20mph speed limit they have imposed. Seconded by Cllr Rob Williams. **Resolved.**

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:

- Asbestos-type materials had found in soil risings on Admiral's Field. It has been safely removed by DCC's contractors at no cost to the council. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the CEO of DCC be written to thank DCC for the officer's very quick response. Seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts who suggested that Graham Bose is made aware of the decision regarding library funding. **Resolved.**
- Email from DCC Tony Ward regarding DCC contacting all local councils in the future about public toilet provision and ownership.
- Complaint from a resident regarding the MUGA floodlights overspill. The guidelines for light pollution will be investigated. Cllr Gareth Rowlands suggested that the light installer be asked to alter the floodlight positioning accordingly, to reduce overspill. **Agreed**

10. Budget & Finance

a. Grant Requests

A late application was received from RhuddFest which was circulated at the meeting. It requests £5,000 towards to the event, in particular for the cost of a "Welsh Stage". During the discussions, Members noted that RhuddFest is a commercial venture and noted the costs of the tickets. Further information would be needed before the Council could make a decision. The potential for the Council to receive a share of the profits, if a grant was provided, was mentioned. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that the request be refused as it is a commercial venture, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. Some concern was expressed by Cllr Bleddyn Williams that a lack of council grant might mean that the "Welsh Stage" might be cancelled as a consequence. Cllr Ivor Beech proposed an amendment that the application be presented again in March after further discussion with the applicant. Seconded by Cllr Rob Williams. **Resolved.**

Members then highlighted questions that needed to be answered by the applicant, and it was agreed that the Mayor, Clerk, and Cllr Bleddyn Williams should action this.

b. Payments List

Proposed for payment by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

11. County Councillor Reports

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

In particular Members discussed the item on dog waste and the supply of free dog waste bags at various sites. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that the Vicarage Lane car park area box be removed in favour of the library and removal of all the other boxes. Seconded by Cllr Ivor Beech. An amendment was proposed by Cllr Val Simmons that the bags be made available at the Library and in the area of CCTV cameras. This was seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

Cllr Arwel Roberts proposed that a working group be set up to deal with this issue and Cllr Mike Kermode seconded. **Resolved.**

12. D Day Anniversary

The Council had received a request from the Pageantmaster regarding how to mark the 80th Anniversary of D Day on June 6th 2024. The plan is to light as many beacons as possible at 9.45pm. Members discussed this and Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed a memorial service be held in St Mary's followed by the beacon lighting and ringing of the bells. This was seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

Cllr Bleddyn Williams and the Assistant clerk left the meeting as the sound had been lost via Zoom.

13. Planning

The Clerk took Members through the application received.

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

44/2023/0872 – Car park at Rhuddlan Castle. Members had no objection or comments.

14. Community Matters

A member brought up a complaint regarding the time work started at The Rise construction site. Clerk to contact the planning team for advice.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed a letter of thanks be sent to the CEO regarding the great work done by the DCC lighting team at the MUGA, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved**

Part 2 of the meeting.

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. Proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands and seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode to move to part 2. Resolved.

15. Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 7th January 2024

The Mayor, in his role of Personnel Adviser, gave a verbal report on the meeting of the Personnel Committee. The main item had been the Town Clerk's appraisal. This had been

carried out in a structured way covering key competencies (legal, members' roles, finances, planning and information technology), effectiveness, efficiency, day-to-day support and professional development. The overall outcomes were extremely positive and the Committee commended the Town Clerk for his excellent work and praised his development in the role over the past 12 months. Cllr Kermode reminded members that the Town Clerk had come from a business/project background, rather than a local government officer background. His capacity to learn the role and skills of being Town Clerk over a short time was a point to remember if and when a new Town Clerk needed to be recruited in the future.

16. DCC – Local Election Arrangements

Cllr Ann Davies had made available information regarding DCC's capacity to introduce a single transferable voting process for local elections. However, this information was confidential and restricted at the moment, so the Town Council was not in the position to discuss and comment on it. The Mayor said that members did have the opportunity to contact Cllr Ann Davies, on a one-to-one basis if they wished to explore the matter in more detail.

15. Date of next meeting – 13th March 2024 Full Council Meeting 7pm

SignedCllr Mike Kermode (Mayor)