



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 10th February 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
Cllr Syd Gaskin
Cllr Mike Kermode
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Town Clerk
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk

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

Cllrs Arwel Roberts, Mike Kermode, & Andrew Smith regarding item 6b. Cllr Arwel Roberts for item 18 and Cllrs Gareth Rowlands, Arwel Roberts, Jackie Burnham, Bleddyn Williams and Mike Kermode for item 19.

3. Urgent Matters

In the opinion of the Chair a verbal update from the Information & Website Committee was urgent and should be considered at this point. He then handed the matter over to Cllr Gareth Rowlands as Chair of that committee.

The committee had met on 8th February. The election brochure was discussed along with Zoom meeting recordings storage. Zoom capacity for storage has almost been exceeded and Zoom will charge \$40 a month for exceeding it hence the urgency along with a tight timescale for the brochure delivery in readiness for the May elections. Both matters were given a full

and informative debate and several recommendations for Council approval were agreed. Cllr Rowlands highlighted the recommendations verbally.

Brochure - Cllr Mike Kermode and the Clerk had contacted DCC electoral services to ensure compliance with guidance, wording and legislation, and were awaiting a response. Any new aspiring councillors must apply by 14th April 2022. The brochure will be bilingual and current councillors are invited to provide a short comment about why they become a councillor and what it means to them. These to be forwarded to the Clerk and Council agreed to delegate final design and wording to the committee. Proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Andrew Smith. **Resolved.**

Zoom Storage - The Chair highlighted the storage problem and the costs associated with keeping items over our permitted capacity. Council has been using Zoom for 18 months and although the recordings have proved useful for Freedom of Information requests and minute taking. Members were asked to consider deleting historical recordings.

The recommendation was that all Full Council meetings be stored for 6 months before deletion. This does not apply to sub committees or working group recordings. These are only to be kept until approved by Full Council. Proposed by Cllr Syd Gaskin, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

The Chair was handed back to the Mayor.

5. Police Matters

No January report received. However, Cllr Mike Kermode reported that he had attended a meeting in a private capacity and had met a police officer who completed a survey with Cllr Kermode about police services. Cllr Kermode took this opportunity to mention the police response to queries being inadequate, and no representation at Council virtual meetings. The officer answered that the police policy was not to communicate via Zoom.

Cllr Mike Elgin suggested Council writes formally to the Police & Crime Commissioner on this matter, and offered his input along with the Clerk if Council agreed. **Resolved.**

6. Minutes

Town Council Meeting 9th December 2021

Subject to amendments regarding **7b** the Clerks report ref the defibrillator was sited at Coedy Brain not the New Inn and item **13** paragraph one agreeing that the sentence regarding planning applications was no longer required. The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Mike Kermode seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

The Minutes were duly signed.

Matters Arising

- a. **Cemetery** – A further report had been received along with a DCC apology for the long delay. It was reported that further investigation work was being undertaken.
- b. **Defibrillator training day** - 12 attendees attended. The Clerk suggested that another course could be arranged if Members wanted when the next 2 defibrillators were installed.
- c. **Hybrid Council Meetings** – The Clerk identified that hybrid meetings had become law and Members need to consider how Rhuddlan Town Council will achieve this. There was a feeling that set up costs had not been considered by the Welsh

Government and Members were concerned where the funding would come from. The Council should use the library facility as a trial. Members agreed to place this issue on the agenda in the future. **Resolved.**

- d. **Castle Street Bollards Improvements** – previous Clerk wrote to DCC on this matter before leaving. A response to be chased by Clerk.
- e. **Car parking Disc** – The Clerk had written to DCC about considering a county wide disc parking scheme. No response yet.
- f. **Meifod Wood Products** – Cllr Arwel Roberts as a County Councillor, reported that the opening date has now been moved to the beginning of April.
- g. **Knights Statues Fly tipping** – Several Members reported continued complaints about this matter and some removal of branches and tree cuttings had been done. Members felt this did not resolve the issue and discussed ways of dealing with the issue. Cllr Andrew Smith proposed and Cllr Syd Gaskin seconded that Council write asking for a site meeting with Mr Tom Rowley Conway of Bodrhyddan Estate who are the land owners. **Resolved.**
- h. **Castle Lighting** – The Clerk confirmed he had written to the Custodian but had not received a response yet.
- i. **E-scooters** – The Council's complaints had been sent to the police but no response had been received yet. It was reported for information that this item had also been mentioned during the police survey mentioned above under Police Matters.
- j. **Community Association Bench Request** – confirmed they will meet the cost of purchasing and siting the bench.

6. Correspondence From

a. The Mayor

The report was accepted.

b. Town Clerk

DCC will not install lighting on the alleyway between Castle Street and Hylas Lane due the land not being adopted. It would require permission from the land owners and electrical connection would be expensive.

DCC state that the wild flower project by the library will not have height implications and they will be doing an information letter drop to surrounding households.

One Voice Wales video reference election awareness request to be posted on our website. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed to approve, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts.

Resolved.

Grwp Gwledd request to use Parliament Street car park for an event on 14th February. Cllrs Arwel Roberts, Mike Kermode, & Andrew Smith declared in interest. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed approval, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved.**

The British Legion letter regarding planting a tree for the jubilee event. Letter to be passed to the jubilee working group. **Resolved.**

The report was accepted

7. County Councillors Reports

The report from Cllr Arwel Roberts was accepted.

8. Town Plan Projects Report

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

Farmers Market times changed to 1000-1400 at the request of the stall holders.

Phase 2 of the awnings element of the town plan have been costed, grant application made and informed it's not eligible so exploring other grant schemes that could fund the project. Businesses in phase 2 have been updated.

Regarding Coed y Brain fencing, a Member identified there are no wedges to secure the panels to the supports. The Clerk will check with Glascoed. Building. Regulation officers had visited the site today.

Commuted Sum grant application submitted and five Expressions of Interest submitted for Green Communities.

The report was accepted.

9. CCTV Update

Cllr Gareth Rowlands one of the CCTV Partnership representatives of the Council reported that he had received two comments from Members on the draft service level document. These will be passed on to the Board in April.

The Member who had taken part in the police survey mentioned in Police Matters, as an individual, informed Members the officer had noted that there are 3 CCTV Partnerships in North Wales of which 2 are effective and 1 is ineffective due to it not being live monitored. This is the Denbighshire one. The Members debated this observation at some length, and Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that Council ask for a live monitoring system for the draft agreement inclusion. Seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin.

Resolved.

Cllr Rowlands stated that the decision is the Partnership Board's but comments will be passed on to the DCC Officer drafting the document, and Members will be copied in.

10. Minutes of the Jubilee Working Group

The Mayor asked the Chair of the group Cllr Andrew Smith to address the meeting.

The Minutes were proposed as correct by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin.

Resolved.

Cllr Smith wished the Minutes to record a vote of thanks for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for attending several recent committee and working group meetings. **Resolved.** Several recommendations were put before Members for their consideration.

- Cor Meibion Colwyn be booked for the concert on Saturday June 4th at 7pm in St Mary's church at the cost of £500. Trelawnyd choir had been approached but they are currently not meeting
- Best Business and Best House display competition to be held and supported financially.
- Advertise the various events in the parish magazine & the website
- Members were keen for all ages to be involved during the weekend events so it was recommended to approach several groups including the bowling club,

DCC youth services, Dragon FC, Rhuddlan children's nurseries, and Ysgol y Castell for their potential involvement. The bowls club had met and were keen to hold a fun tournament with light refreshments and fancy dress in 50's style

- The ringing of church bells at the time of the Queens Jubilee Parade on June 2nd

The above recommendations were approved. **Resolved.**

A Members enquired about the beacon being lit on the Thursday evening and the concert on the Saturday timing. Agreed to discuss at a future meeting.

The Mayor resumed the Chair.

11. Minutes of the Anti-Speed Working Group

The draft Minutes had been circulated and the various recommendations were reported by the Chair for Members consideration.

One slight amendment under item 3 it was recorded as "DCC responded that a request for a reduction in speed from 40mph to 30mph on Abergele Road was not reasonable" and should be replaced with "not unreasonable".

Apart from this amendment the Minutes were approved. **Resolved.**

The recommendations were proposed in full by Cllr Mike Elgin, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved**

The Clerk reported that there had been no response by DCC to the buffer zone idea discussed or the review of the Abergele Road speed reduction to 30mph. The Council's County Councillor Arwel Roberts will discuss with the Head of Service.

Members then discussed making the SID's more challenging of motorists by including messages as well as speed as seen on more expensive SID's in other areas.

The poster competition recommendation was resolved as above but to add Ysgol Dewi Sant to the participating schools. **Resolved.**

12. Internet Banking

The Mayor asked the Clerk to inform the Members on the benefits of internet banking. The Clerk identified savings in bank charges for cheques, stamp purchases, envelopes, and the Clerks/Councillors time in getting cheques signed. He explained how the accounts would be monitored, payments approved, bills paid quicker, e-signatures gained, and immediate statement checking when required.

A Member reported that the previous Clerk had noted in their exit interview support for future internet banking by the Council to save resources and officer time. Members showed a high level of support for this change to internet banking.

The Clerk had surveyed 16 town & community councils and 15 used internet banking, and that DCC had refused to accept a cheque for building regulation fees.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed to begin internet banking, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

A Member asked Council to consider the provision of a Council debit card to help ease the payment of supplies, fees, expenses, and reduce petty cash administration. Several examples of how this would help the Clerk and Councillors pay on behalf of

the Council were discussed, and that an agreed sum of money could be transferred into a suitable debit card account for the purpose.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that Council set up a debit card account with Sterling Bank, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

13. Planning Applications

i) 44/2022/0052 – Erection of a two storey rear extension at 11 Harding Avenue. No objections.

ii) DNS/3247619 – Solar farm at Gwernigron Farm, The Roe, St Asaph Members noted the response received, and had nothing to add but to continue Council's objections on the grounds of the loss of good agricultural land. **Resolved.**

14. Budget/Finance Matters

a. The Town Clerk had circulated the list of payments highlighting that the Vodafone contract runs out in October 2022 when a phone contract will be reviewed.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the list be paid, seconded by Cllr Andrew Smith. **Resolved.**

A Member asked if Council should investigate the cost of Welsh translation costs and look at a more cost effective way than an being done ad hoc. Members discussed some options but heard that all translators have the same ratio of rates, but this should be clarified with Menter Iaith. The Clerk is to investigate translator's costs and include a discussion on a timescale for translation. **Resolved.**

15. To approve Standing Orders.

A Member queried the omission of an absenteeism policy or clause in the Standing Orders. Adding a suggestion that any councillor missing a period of time at meetings without a valid reason they will be excluding themselves from Council. It was stated that there is national framework for absenteeism and a Council policy is not required. The Council should use what's there nationally. Members asked the Clerk to clarify for the next meeting. **Resolved.**

16. Community Matters

a. Cllr Mike Kermode had noticed that the new house development near the golf club had problems with their sewerage system and contractors had attended to rectify. This is not the first time this has happened and Cllr Kermode had noticed that recently this was being worked on at midnight and they were back again today. He was concerned that the sewerage system had major problems and it needs reporting to the authority responsible for it. The Clerk was asked to investigate this issue with Welsh Water who Members felt were the responsible. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed this action adding that a formal complaint be made on behalf of the Council at the same time. Seconded by Cllr Andrew Smith. **Resolved.**

b. Cllr Arwel Roberts informed Members that the next litter picking event would be on February 19th and asked that this be placed on the Council website and Facebook page.

c. Cllr Bleddyn Williams reported what appears to be an abandoned vehicle outside the cemetery. Members heard that this had already been reported and the owner of the vehicle had confirmed it has broken down and will be collected soon.

d. The Mayor attended a recent meeting of the Community Centre Association and mentioned that Roy Price will be standing down as Parade Marshal for Remembrance Day. Cllr Gareth Rowlands was aware of a suitable replacement who has a military background and will pass this information to the Mayor and Cllr Andrew Smith to determine that person's interest.

The Mayor highlighted that the association had financial issues mainly due to rising energy costs. They are investigating insulation measures to reduce costs and increasing charges for use of the centre. Members voiced concerns that increasing charges will be passed on to the users of the centre and may be counterproductive. Ways of minimising the impact of increased charges should be investigated.

e. Members discussed instances whereby the Mayor, Clerk or Councillors attend external group meetings on behalf of the Town Council. There was a concern that this should not be done alone but being supported by another person. It was proposed by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts that Council representatives should not attend external group meetings without another person. **Resolved**

Reference was made to Cllrs Mike Elgin & Andrew Smith as potential accompanying persons.

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.

18. Grant Application – Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych

The applicant is seeking a grant for a St David's Day window display competition, and children's local history workshops. A total of £350.

Cllr Arwel Roberts declared an interest.

Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the grant be approved, seconded by Cllr Bleddyn Williams. **Resolved.**

19. Code of Conduct Complaint

Cllrs Gareth Rowlands, Arwel Roberts, Jackie Burnham, Bleddyn Williams and Mike Kermode declared an interest and left the meeting. The code of conduct complaint was discussed by members. Cllr Mike Elgin proposed the issue be forwarded to the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee. Seconded by Cllr Andy Smith. **Resolved**

20. Date of next meeting – 10 March 2022 Full Council Meeting 7pm

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

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