



Rhuddlan Town Council Meeting – Etifeddiaeth - Heritage Working Group

Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 5pm

in person at Hwb Rhuddlan Clos Davids Owen, Rhuddlan LL18 2UJ

M I N U T E S

Present:

Cllr Arwel Roberts – Chair

Cllr Gloria Lambert

Cllr Reg Davies

Richard Polden – Chair, Rhuddlan Local History Society

Ian Davidson - CC Secretary, St Mary's Church, Rhuddlan

Allan Jones - St Mary's Church, Rhuddlan

Heidi Barton-Price – Assistant Town Clerk (Minutes)

There was one member of the public present as an observer.

1. Apologies

Cllr Sophie Baker – Rhuddlan Town Council

Mathew Baker – Rhuddlan Library

Carly Davies – Heritage Lead Officer – Denbighshire County Council

Suzanne Evans - Ecclesia Rose Ltd

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made. It was noted that:

- Cllr Arwel Roberts is a member of Ebenezer Chapel.
- Members of St Mary's Church were in attendance.

3. Welcome

Cllr Arwel Roberts welcomed all attendees and outlined his intention to restart a Heritage Trail, emphasising its importance for Rhuddlan.

Each attendee introduced themselves and provided an overview of their connection(s) to Rhuddlan.

4. Update on Application / Previous Heritage Centre Proposal

Richard Polden provided an update on the previous proposal to extend the Library to create a standalone Museum building. Denbighshire County Council had prepared plans; however, the estimated cost was approximately £1 million.

Several grant fairs were attended, but Lottery funding was only available for existing buildings, not new builds. As a result, the proposal was not progressed.

Action:

- Cllr Arwel Roberts to contact the Denbighshire County Council Heritage Team to attend a future meeting to discuss potential grant funding opportunities.

5. Pop-Up Exhibition Options

a) Ebenezer Hall Chapel

Cllr Arwel Roberts reported that a 2-day exhibition is being explored, with dates to be confirmed.

Richard Polden highlighted the upcoming **Heritage Day on 27 June 2026**, with venues including the Library and the Artisan's Fair. Additional activities proposed include:

- **Community Centre:** Displays and group work from visiting history societies (e.g., Mostyn Docks, Point of Ayr Mine).
- **Ebenezer Hall Chapel:** Guest speakers, with the potential for an evening lecture on Philip Jones Griffiths (see item 5c).
- **Family Activities:** A History Walk and a Treasure Hunt.

Cllr Reg Davies has already begun providing artefacts.

b) St Mary's Church Project

Allan Jones provided an update on ongoing works at St Mary's Church:

- Requested funds are restricted to building maintenance only.
- Organ refurbishment is underway, requiring daytime closure of the Church.
- A new sound system and hearing loop will be installed.
- Bell system improvements will be funded through Windfarm Grant monies and a 10% contribution from the Bell Ringers' Association.

Allan Jones also outlined several modernisation needs, including:

- Disabled toilet
- Kitchen improvements
- Updated heating system
- Redecoration
- Roof issues, with solar panels under consideration
- Conservation of five wall paintings (including the first scripture translated into Welsh, dated 1650), requiring a faculty.
- Access to the Mausoleum via a lit viewing window

The overall aim is to make the building more user-friendly and suitable for wider community use.

Feasibility Study: The St Mary's Church Project will be project-managed by **Suzanne Evans (Ecclesia Rose Ltd)**, who will lead delivery of a £5,000 Feasibility Study. This will include formal engagement with community partners to gather views on proposed developments. The study is part-funded by a Cherish Grant from the National Churches Trust and the Heritage Fund and is due for submission in **September 2026**.

This study will form a key stage in preparing an Expression of Interest to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further actions:

- Suzanne Evans to be invited to the next meeting to provide further progress detail.
- She will also attend the Food Festival, Heritage Day, and Picnic in the Park to engage with the community / opportunities to make contact with her.
- A Project Committee is to be established; Cllr Arwel Roberts and Cllr Gloria Lambert volunteered to join.
- **St Mary's Church, – Project Synopsis is provided as Appendix 1.**

Cllr Arwel Roberts encouraged St Mary's Church to enter Wales in Bloom – It's Your Neighbourhood, as achieving an RHS IYN Level of Achievement could strengthen future funding applications.

c) Philip Jones Griffiths – Photographer

Cllr Arwel Roberts highlighted the significance of Philip Jones Griffiths and his use of the Welsh language. He expressed interest in organising a lecture on the photographer, with support from the History Society.

6. North East Wales Digital Trails

Cllr Arwel Roberts noted that interviews featuring himself, Cllr Reg Davies, and Cllr Gareth Rowlands form part of the Digital Trails project.

Action:

- Assistant Town Clerk to locate and retrieve these digital interviews.

7. New Ideas and Actions

The Group agreed to work collaboratively on:

- Ebenezer Chapel opportunities
- Pop-Up exhibitions
- Heritage Day activities
- St Mary's Church developments

8. Any Other Business (AOB)

No additional items were raised.

9. Date of next meeting.

Tuesday 26th May 2026 at 5pm – The Hwb

St Mary's Church, Rhuddlan – Project Synopsis

St Mary's Church, Rhuddlan is developing a heritage-led project to secure the long-term future of this important historic building while strengthening its role at the heart of the local community. The project brings together essential repair works with plans to improve how the church is used, understood, and enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

Key elements of the project include the repair and conservation of significant historic features, including the mausoleum and important wall paintings, alongside improvements to the building such as upgraded facilities, more flexible internal space, and improved heating. These works will help ensure the building remains sustainable, accessible, and suitable for wider community use.

A central ambition of the project is the creation of a heritage offer within the church, including a small heritage centre or interpretation space that tells the story of Rhuddlan, the church, and its wider historical context. This will provide opportunities for learning, engagement, and tourism, while celebrating the town's rich heritage.

We are particularly keen for this element of the project to be co-created with the local history society. Your knowledge, research, and understanding of the area are invaluable, and we see this as an opportunity to work together to shape how Rhuddlan's story is presented and shared. This could include interpretation, displays, events, and collaborative research, ensuring that the heritage offer reflects local voices and expertise.

Overall, the project aims to create a sustainable, welcoming, and historically rich space, where heritage is not only preserved but actively shared and explored in partnership with the community.