



Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 11th November 2021
Virtual Meeting during the Covid 19 Restrictions

Present:

Cllr Mike Elgin
Cllr Jackie Burnham
Cllr Ann Davies – left meeting at Item 9
Cllr Andrew Smith
Cllr Reg Davies
Cllr Syd Gaskin
Cllr Mike Kermode
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Bleddyn Williams – left meeting after Item 11
Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Cllr Charlotte Connolly
Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk

2 Declaration of Interest. Cllr Ann Davies – Planning Applications

The Mayor stated that Item 6d which related to an email from Mr. and Mrs. Williams, the owners of Abbey Farm, would now be brought forward for discussion. **Resolved**

Members had received a copy of an email that had been sent by Mr. and Mrs. Williams to Cllr. Ann Davies and then forwarded to the Town Clerk. The email voiced the Williams' concerns about the process by which they had been requested by Denbighshire County Council to apply for planning permission for a sign on one of their gates on the Station Road entrance to the town. They said that it seemed that the sign had been reported by someone from the Town Council. They were extremely disappointed about this and commented on the hard work that they were undertaking to make their camping and caravanning site up and running, so as to diversify their farm business and felt that their business had received little support from the Town Council.

The Mayor welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Williams to the meeting and gave them the opportunity to address the Council.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams reiterated their dissatisfaction about the way that the issue about the sign had come about and their concerns that it had come about from a referral to Denbighshire County Council by the Town Council. They asked why the Town Council had felt the need to do that. They also felt that their business had been singled out and that the process could have been handled better by the Town Council.

Cllr. Andy Smith explained that this particular area in Rhuddlan has had a lot of problems with fly-posting and litter and it had come to the Town Council's attention that some unauthorised signs had recently gone up in this area and their particular sign had got caught up in this process. Cllr. Smith assured Mr. and Mrs. Williams that they had not been singled out.

Cllr. Ann Davies said that she felt that Abbey Farm had been treated unfairly. The matter about the signs had been discussed, proposed and actioned under a Community Matters item and she questioned the legitimacy of this.

Cllr. Mike Kermode stated that the Town Council had acted properly in discussing and actioning the item under Community Matters. With hindsight, the matter could have been dealt with differently. However, it had highlighted the need for planning permission for Abbey Farm's sign and that matter was now in the hands of the County Council's Planning Department.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams asked which Town Councillor had submitted the photo to the Town Clerk which had been referred to the County Council. The Town Clerk explained that the decision was a collective decision by the Town Council. She also explained that all members were given an equal opportunity to submit photos of any potential fly-posting signs that they were concerned about.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams commented that actions in connection with fly-posted signs in an area close to their sign seemed to have been handled differently. The Town Clerk explained that this fly-posting issue had happened on private land and that she had been given permission by the landowner to take down the unauthorised signs and other promotional material. Abbey Farm's sign was a planning matter and needed to be addressed by the County Council.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams said that they were still dissatisfied with the responses they had received at the meeting and said that they would be taking the matter further. The Mayor said that they do have the right to submit a Freedom of Information request which would give them the opportunity to make detailed requests to the Council. The Mayor thanked Mr. and Mrs. Williams for attending the meeting and said that the Council wished them well with their business.

3. Urgent Matters – Two items had been brought to the attention of the mayor and these will be dealt with under Community Matters.

4. Police Matters. Appendix A

Report received. Concern expressed over a serious incident in Princes Road where a male exposed himself to a young girl which resulted in a police enquiry and a man arrested. Members asked why this incident was not included in the Police report. Town Clerk to make enquiries.

5. Minutes

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Subject to one minor typing error, the Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts.

Matters Arising

- a. **Enforcement Signs** – A draft of the new sign had been circulated to members. The sign needs a No Dog symbol in the prohibited areas shown on the map. The Fresh Air Gym needs to be shown more clearly. The sign to have rounded corners. The sign will be 1.5m x 1 m in size and one to be located at each corner of the field. Awaiting approval from DCC that the sign meets County requirements.
- b. **Vicarage Lane Car Park** - The Town Clerk had contacted the Principal Chartered Valuation and Estates Surveyor with regards to documents found in the archives from 1985 which states that the Town Council owned land in the car park was transferred to Rhuddlan Borough Council in 1985 in return for the Borough Council resurfacing the car park. There is a clause in the transfer which states that the land will revert to Town Council ownership if the land ceases to be a car park.

On this basis of this information, DCC are progressing the lease with the Health Board.
- c. **Defibrillator Training** - A training session to be organised very soon. The cost will be £300 and most likely be held on a Saturday.
- d. **Anti-Speed Measures** - The Town Clerk had requested DCC to look into installing rumble strips on the A547 road from Meliden to Rhuddlan near Tirionfa Housing Estate. The reply from DCC is that rumble strips are ineffective at reducing speed and they are noisy. They lose their effectiveness very quickly and need to be re-instated at regular intervals. On a positive note, DCC are working in partnership with Go Safe and the plan is for enforcement to take place on the A547 (approach on Meliden) in the near future. Another speed survey will be undertaken and DCC will continue an evidence-based approach to assessing the situation.
- e. **Dragon's Football** - Members of Dragon's Football have expressed concern about the proposed cost of hiring Coed y Brain every time they would want to use the

facility. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that this to be an agenda item under Part 2 in December. Cllr Mike Elgin seconded. **Resolved.** Cllr Ann Davies abstained.

6. Correspondence from

a. The Mayor. Appendix B

The report was accepted.

Town Clerk. Appendix C

b. The report was accepted.

The Clerk thanked Cllr Syd Gaskin for checking the defibrillators.

c. Silent Soldier

Correspondence received from DCC regarding concerns about location of the Silent Soldier which is on the roundabout on Rhyl Road. The main concern is that they may potentially create a distraction for drivers, as they can catch the eye and take attention away from the road whilst driving. It was recommended that an alternative site be found. A potential new site for the Silent Soldier (and also the poppies which are on the roundabout) is the corner of the library where the bed of roses has recently been planted. The Manager of the library is agreeable to have them relocated to this area. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that the Silent Soldier and poppies be relocated to the corner of the library. Cllr Ann Davies seconded.

7. County Council Members Reports

a. Cllr Ann Davies

The report was accepted. Appendix D

- a. In addition to the report, it was reported that DCC are re-looking at the proposed pedestrian refuge near Pentre Lane and are progressing with the scheme. DCC are in the process of going out to tender and contractors will be appointed soon.
- b. Work has started on Alexander Hospital in Rhyl which is very positive. This new Community Hospital will take the pressure off Glan Clwyd.
- c. Cllr Ann Davies had attended a 2-hour meeting in DCC with regards to Women in Politics. The meeting was about equality and how women were being treated and bullied which DCC is taking very seriously. One member stated that equality should include men as well as they are also victims of bullying. Cllr Ann Davies said that she would feedback this observation to DCC.

b. Cllr Arwel Roberts

The report was accepted. Appendix E

In addition to the report, it was reported that The Rhuddlan Community Flood Plan is to be delivered to the seven flood risk areas.

8. Town Plan Projects Report

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members verbally on the ongoing projects.

- a. **Speed Indication Devices** – The two devices are now installed.
- b. **Awnings** – Phase 1 all installed except for:
Williams Estates – front wall is only single brick so not strong enough. This problem was not foreseen as virtually all buildings are double brick construction. The building is having an upper floor added so awning will be stored until construction is completed then installed.
Victoria Carpets – one installed but too high and looks out of place so proposal for a 'Z' bracket to be installed will lower the awning to an acceptable height.
The wooden packers on the Little Cheesemonger and Little Flower Monger to be replaced.
- c. **Coedy Brain** – Building works well under way. Potential funding off DCC from the levelling up fund for £98K. However, the process does not start until next year. Electrical work package is out to tender and will be followed by the plumbing. Members are very happy with the excellent progress and wished to thank the Deputy Town Clerk for his work.
- d. **Fence** – awaiting supplier to install – promised in November.
- e. **Farmers Market** – October market was successful and the November market has similar number of vendors. December market will be a Christmas themed one. Two Rhuddlan farms are coming along to sell produce including Christmas trees and wreaths. A discussion took place on introducing charge for vendors to help cover running costs of the market. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that a £10 charge be introduced from January 2022. Seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin. **Resolved**
Cllr Ann Davies suggested that the Deputy Town Clerk contact DCC if they would extend the free parking.
- f. **Museum** – Rhuddlan History Society like the idea of the Virtual Museum but have no volunteers to make it happen. Artifact list, CADW do not have one and they have supplied some pointers and people to contact. Will look for grants to get resource to help set up virtual museum.
- g. **Vicarage Lane Car Park** – this matter has already covered under matters arising, item 5b.

9. Planning Applications

- a. **44/2021/1047**. Conversion of workshop/garage space to annexe accommodation. Rose Cottage, Church Street. **No objection**

- b. **44/2021/1043.** Erection of 2 storey extension to rear of dwelling. 11 Harding Ave. **No objection.** However, need to ensure that there is an archaeological watching brief with regards to the close proximity to Town Ditch and Abbey Farm.
- c. **44/2021/1030 Land** Adjacent and Part Garden of Edgefield Eton Park. Erection of dwelling, formation of access and parking, landscaping and associated works. **No objection**
- d. **Rhuddlan Foundry, Marsh Road Proposed Development** - The Change of use of the site from B2 Heavy Industry to B8 Open Storage. Owens Estate Publicity and Consultation before applying for Planning Permission.

Members are concerned that this area, which is the entrance into town will be populated by storage containers and will be unsightly. Need to stress that this area is to be suitably screened by planting trees and bushes to hide the containers. This area is very near to the Castle and the Church and needs to be protected. The owners need to check that this area is not a flood risk plain.

10. Budget/Finance Matters

- a. The Town Clerk circulated the list of payments to be approved by Members. **The list of payment was accepted.**
- b. The Town Clerk presented an up to date financial report and gave an explanation for the overspend which will come back in line once a grant has been drawn down from Welsh Government for the awnings. A more detailed report will be submitted to the December meeting.
- c. The up to date balance per Cash book £106,292
- d. There will be a meeting early in the New Year to agree on 2022/23 budget and precept. Any member with ideas for projects / initiatives over and above those listed in the Town Plan to submit their ideas along with costs and explain the benefits of the project.

11. Community Matters

- a. A member had made a comment about decisions being made under Community Matters and questioned the legitimacy of this. The Standing Orders contain a list of the agenda items and one of them is Community Matters which specifically relate to the remit of the Town Council. Members agreed that it is correct to raise issues and make decisions / vote on matters under Community Matters. Members were happy with the present arrangement but agreed that a better definition is required so that in can be included in the Standing Orders. The Mayor proposed that a definition be constructed on the ideas already put forward at this meeting and to be submitted to the next Town Council meeting for approval, seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved**

One member added that with regards to the earlier discussion on signs under 6d, that if something concerns a business or an individual then they should not be

named and that it should be referred to in a generic way. If the council feel that the matter needs to go further, then it needs to be an agenda item for the next meeting and that the business/individual is made aware of this. The Mayor said that this was a fair point and that members will have the opportunity to contribute to the remit of Community Matters at the next meeting.

- b. The ongoing problem with e-scooters continues. One youngster took his e-scooter into the Texaco petrol station shop, paid at the counter before exiting the premises. The same youngster along with another youngster are often seen going up and down with their e-scooters, at speed, through Town. The Town Clerk to report this matter again to the police. Cllr Arwel Roberts will flag up the issue again with DCC.
- c. People are going through on red traffic light when exiting the Nature Reserve. This is a traffic offence. Cllr Arwel Roberts to report to DCC and police.
- d. When leaving Rhuddlan and turning right to Aldi, sometimes a car that turns right will be the only car that will go through the lights. There needs to be a better flow system. This matter has been raised with DCC a number of times but Cllr Arwel Roberts will raise again.
- e. An incident occurred on Caste Street just outside Tower House resulting in a minor collision of a car into a bollard. Cllr Arwel Roberts to meet Cllr Bleddyn Williams on site to take a photo of the bollard to send to DCC.
- f. Issues by Banquet House – cars are mounting the pavement to avoid waiting for traffic in opposite direction to come through. Measures needs to be put in place to prevent people mounting the pavement. Cllr Arwel Roberts and Cllr Andy Smith to go to the site and take photo so that it can be followed up with DCC.
- g. Cadwyn Clwyd is promoting a new grant – Green communities Fund which is intended to fund community-led projects to help them deliver green initiatives. Green Communities will offer a grant of up to £30k to 30 rural communities in Denbighshire, Conwy, Flint and Wrexham. The Town Clerk to circulate the information to members. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed that a working group be set up to come up with a package and submit a bid. The working group to include the Town Council, Denbighshire County Council, Community Association, Nature Reserve MAG, Allotments Society. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. Cllr Arwel Roberts and Cllr Ann Davies would like to be part of the working group. It was proposed by the Mayor that the role to progress with this initiative be given to the Deputy Mayor. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved**

- h. Concern about lack of Street lighting in two areas: two lights are not working between Plas Y Brenin and Princes Road which has been reported online. Need to ask DCC for some in the walk through between Castle Street and Hylas Lane.
- i. Proposed Parking Scheme – which could work in the High Street. A self-policing system. This to be an agenda item for the next meeting.
- j. Remembrance Sunday to take place on the 14th November. Cllr Arwel Robert wished to thank Cllr Andy Smith for all his hard work on the arrangements. The Mayor also thanked Cllr Andy Smith for the very valuable contribution, not only for this year but for the previous years.

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.

12 Minutes of Personnel Committee on 28th October.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. Roberts, introduced the minutes and the members of the Committee agreed that they were a true and accurate record of the meeting. A number of issues were raised from the meeting; the main ones being:

- a. **Communications** – Earlier in the year there had been a number of occasions when internal communications to the Council's employees had been disharmonious. The Committee and the Council had agreed to monitor the situation on an ongoing basis. It was reported that there were still occasions when communications were less than satisfactory and the Committee agreed that the Council should be reminded about the need for all communications to be polite and professional. This situation had recently led to allegations from one councillor which, if correct, could be construed as improper behaviour by the staff which would need to be addressed through the formal disciplinary process. If the allegations were not correct, they were causing the staff members undue stress and feelings of being harassed or bullied.

Having considered the situation, the Town Council unanimously resolved that the Personnel Committee ask the concerned councillor to either make a formal disciplinary complaint which can be examined by the Personnel Committee so that it can determine if the allegations are correct and take suitable action or for the councillor to withdraw the allegations formally so that this can be noted on the staff's disciplinary records.

- b. **Town Clerk's Resignation** - The Town Clerk had submitted her resignation as from the January meeting of the Council. She explained that this was for personal reasons

and that she had greatly enjoyed working for the Council, especially because of its positive role to improve the well-being of the town's residents. She also said that she appreciated the support that she had received from the various Mayors and the Councillors. Members of the Council spoke highly about the Town Clerk's hard work and her sound management of the Council's finances over the past 5 years. Members' comments included praise for her "can-do attitude" and her professional and supportive approach to the job.

- c. **Appointment of a New Town Clerk** – The Committee's recommendation was that the roles of the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk/Project Officer, be brought together into a full-time post. This would provide savings on salary costs, operational continuity and would provide the Deputy Town Clerk/Project Officer with the opportunity to progress within the Council. It was also recommended that the appointment be initially for period up to the end 2022 and the effectiveness of the new role could be reviewed in September 2022.

The Council agreed unanimously to support this recommendation. The appointment will commence 9th December 2021. The salary will be in accordance with the current NJC salary point 24 to 28, (£26,347 to £29,624) pro rata for 34 hours per week, commencing at salary point 24. In addition, the Council will pay a Working at Home Allowance.

12. Date of Next Meetings:

Full Town Council meeting on the 9th December 2021.

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

Date