

Rhuddlan Town Council – Minutes of the meeting on the 11th July 2024
Hybrid Meeting

Present:

Cllr Val Simmons (Mayor)
Cllr Jackie Burnham (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Ivor Beech
Cllr Ann Davies (virtual attendance)
Cllr Reg Davies
Cllr Mike Elgin
Cllr Mike Kermode
Cllr Arwel Roberts
Cllr Gareth Rowlands
Cllr Bleddyn Williams
Steve Wilson - Town Clerk
Paul Smith - Clerical Assistant/Minute Clerk (virtual attendance)

There was 1 member of the public present, and Jim Jones, CEO North Wales Tourism (virtual attendance)

The meeting was recorded from this point (audio only)

1. Apologies

None

The Mayor welcomed all present and reminded Members to follow the Code of Conduct and be respectful to other members.

2. Declarations of Interest

None expressed

3. Urgent Matters

None

4. North Wales Tourism (NWT)

The Mayor invited Jim Jones to address the meeting. Mr Jones gave members a comprehensive update on tourism issues in North Wales and Wales.

The Mayor then thanked Jim Jones for his excellent presentation and discussion. Jim then left the meeting.

5. Police Matters

No Police Officers attended the meeting nor was any police report provided. The Clerk circulated and took members through a report of incidents in Rhuddlan sourced from the North Wales Police website.

A member raised concern regarding alleged anti-social behaviour at the nearby retail park and at McDonalds Restaurant. This was at the same time of an event being held at Cwybr Farm. Members were concerned that it could have impacted Rhuddlan Town Centre. Following a short discussion, it was decided to write to the land owner raising concerns. Proposed by Cllr Jackie Burnham, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode.

Resolved.

A member raised a concern that residents cannot report issues at Rhuddlan police station and must utilise the website or 101. Members recalled the building being gifted to the police for the purpose of a police station and it is believed that a covenant exists which may state that residents can report incidents in person. The Clerk was

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tasked with writing to NWP asking for a copy of the covenant. **Resolved.**

6a. Minutes of Town Council Meeting held on 13th June 2024

The Minutes were proposed as a true record by Cllr Arwel Roberts, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.** The Minutes were signed by the Mayor

b. The Minutes of the Active Travel meeting held on 2nd July 2024

The Chair of this group Cllr Mike Elgin asked those that were present if the Minutes were a true record of what was discussed. Council agreed their accuracy and suggested they be approved. **Resolved.**

7. Progress Report from Minutes

Regarding the Active Travel meeting Members were told there is to be further consultation in the autumn with stakeholders including the school, members of the public and town council. It was made clear that DCC were committed to further consultations leading to implementing proposals at the Ysgol y Castell/Hylas Lane area. They will finalise these once the consultations have been completed and analysed.

Regarding the Council meeting on 13th June, the Clerk stated the Bus shelter had been repaired, waste collection letter of complaint had been sent to DCC, UK Parliament representative agreed to attend September Council meeting regarding the safety of lithium batteries and that the Rhyl Rd SID was working again. Cllr Ann Davies informed members that the Hylands Rd speed survey is completed, speeds were above the speed limit and GoSafe are to be informed by DCC.

8. Reports from

a. The Mayor reported that she had completed OVW Charing Skills training. The following items have happened since her report include news that the bus service will return to stopping at Tweedmill factory outlet starting September and Cllr Mike Kermode congratulated the Mayor on her hard work on this issue.

Overhanging trees on Rhyl Rd have been cut back by DCC and that she had attended the St Kentigern golf event.

The Deputy Mayor's report had been circulated but she added that she had just recently presented the prizes for the speed poster competition at Ysgol Y Castell.

Both reports were accepted.

b. The Town Clerk had circulated his report and noted that several items need Members approval.

Parliament St car park free parking agreement with DCC runs out in September and DCC asked if the council want to continue with the agreement post September. There will be a slight increase in costs. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed the council continue to fund as it was in the budget, seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. **Resolved.**

A letter from Rhuddlan Bowls Club regarding a charity Bowls Event in aid of St Kentigern, asking whether the Town Council would like to sponsor the event.

Cllr Mike Elgin as chairman of the Bowls Club declared an interest.

After a short discussion Cllr Mike Kermode proposed sponsoring the event with £40, seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. **Resolved.**

The Clerk asked Members if this sponsorship and any other grants awarded at this meeting be added to tonight's payments list. Cllr Gareth Rowlands so proposed, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

In response to a Members question regarding no grant application being submitted, the Clerk stated that this was not a grant, but sponsorship so the form was not required.

9. County Councillor Reports

Cllr Ann Davies provided a verbal report and she commented that the Zoom reception was very good that evening, the Assistant Clerk agreed and commented that the relocation of the equipment in the chamber had made positive improvements. Cllr Ann Davies then thanked the Mayor in her efforts to reinstate the Tweedmill Outlet bus stop. She then commented about the overgrown vegetation on Gwindy St had been reported to DCC. The Vape shop does not need planning permission as it's not a change of use but the signage display maybe investigated. The waste collection in Rhuddlan on Tuesday did collect the majority of household bins but not all. She stated she had seen a video of operators entering a property but not emptying the bins, and gave members an example of a resident with dementia who needs an assisted collection which has not yet been provided. She is pursuing this and hopes that such vulnerable residents might in the future be exempt from recycling as this task can be

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too onerous on them. A Member had been informed that the local litter bins had shown a 70% increase in rubbish being deposited and wanted Cllr Davies to note that it implies people are depositing their rubbish in litter bins instead of recycling it at home.

The report was accepted

Cllr Arwel Roberts had circulated his written report for Members attention. Additional points raised were as follows:

Cylch Meithrin had not had a bin collection for months until very recently, and a Rhyll dentist approached Cllr Roberts about their waste not being collected. Cllr Roberts has escalated these issues to DCC.

Cllr Roberts duplicated the concerns regarding the inappropriate signage installed on the Vape Shop on Rhuddlan High Street. The concerns were discussed in detail by Members with Cllr Mike Kermode proposing that the council contact DCC to urge them to make a quick decision and if this does not happen then the council write to the shop owners, seconded by Cllr Jackie Burnham. Cllr Mike Elgin proposed an amendment that the shop owner is contacted first and if this is unsuccessful then then DCC are contacted to resolve. Cllr Bleddyn Williams then tabled a further amendment that the Town Council take no further action and allow DCC to follow their enforcement investigations. Seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands **Resolved.**

Mentioned issues regarding Phosphate contamination of the River Clwyd impacting wildlife and fish. Cllr Ivor Beech advised councillors about the significant pollution effects from other sources, such as of dishwasher tablets.

Although weed killing and grass cuttings had been enacted there was a shortage of operatives to collect the risings.

Invited all members to the Dementia group's AGM on 18/7.

The report was accepted

Both County Councillors advised Members about the DCC Customer Services backlog of complaints and urged patience.

10. Public Toilets

The Clerk reminded Members on the progress to date and reported that the council had not received appropriate answers to the Council's queries from DCC. Members debated the issue. Cllr Gareth Rowlands suggested that the council does not take on the toilets from DCC, this was seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin as the council did not know the actual cost of taking off this service. Cllr Jackie Burnham proposed that the council investigate with local businesses the £500 payment for use of their facilities, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. The Clerk reminded members of all the options open to the council. A member did not agree with the cessation of potentially taking on the toilets and reported that Carrog had already taken on their public toilet. It was suggested that the council should wait for a response from DCC to its original questions before making any decisions. Another member reinforced the importance of public toilets for many groups of people in our community. Cllr Arwel Roberts proposed that Town Council wait till September before making a decision, seconded by Cllr Reg Davies. **Resolved.**

11. DCC Rhuddlan Town Regeneration Summary

Cllr Arwel Roberts took members through the DCC document and informed members that there is a workshop on the Denbighshire Economic Strategy being held in which the Clerk and some members of the council will participate.

12. Foraging sessions

Cllr Gareth Rowlands was tasked to investigate Town Council supporting another session at the nature reserve. He had met with the provider Sarah Taylor who was happy to organise one. She has funding for one more session only and provided two dates if Council wishes to support the cost of a second one. The cost is £300 per 3 hour session and 10 people can attend each one. Dates would need to be confirmed. Cllr Rowlands proposed that Town Council confirm the first free session, and financially support the second session. Seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

13. Knights' Statues & Library Rose Gardens

These two areas have not been maintained and are looking unsightly. DCC have been requested on a number of occasions to carry out the works with no action yet been taken. Members discussed asking the if the community group would be interested in looking after the areas or whether a contractor should be engaged to do the work. Cllr Gareth Rowlands proposed that a contractor be engaged but Cllr Jackie Burnham tabled an amendment that Rhuddlan local community group be asked first. This amendment was seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. Cllr Ann Davies proposed a further amendment to ask DCC Street Scene via Wendy Davies/ Mike Bennion. This was seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

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14. Planning

None received

15. Budget & Finance Matters

a. Grant Requests

i) **Rhuddlan Community Group** – application for £1,750 towards plants & materials, room hire, insurance and stationary. It was recognised what a great job they do. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed approval of the grant, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

ii) **River & Sea Sense** – application resubmission for £450 which now makes clear that it is for delivering class workshops and teacher training. Cllr Jackie Burnham as a school governor confirms that the school has been consulted by RSS and proposed the grant approval. Seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

iii) **Treasure Chest - Breast Cancer** – application for £1,350 towards training at Marsden Hospital for a BCHUB nurse who will then pass on the training to other nurses at Glan Clwyd. Members noted that this support group was a worthy cause and Cllr Arwel Roberts proposed that the grant be approved. Seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

iv) **St Kentigern Charity Golf event** – application for the sponsorship of two tees at a total of £80. Cllr Gareth Rowlands so proposed approval, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

b. Payments List

The list was proposed for approval by Cllr Gareth Rowlands, seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**

16. Community Matters

- Cllr Arwel Roberts reported that the Beyond the Gates farming-based event had now insurance for the event in place and proposed that the previously agreed financial support of £500 now be released. Seconded by Cllr Mike Kermode. **Resolved.**
- Reminder that the Community Market is on Sat 13th July.

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. Cllr Mike Kermode proposed the council moved to part 2. Seconded by Cllr. Val Simmons.

The recording was switched off and Members of the public asked to leave

17. Minutes of the Personnel Committee 4th July 2024

The Minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and Cllr Mike Kermode as Chair and Personnel Adviser, gave an outline of the proposals following the resignation of the Assistant Clerk. These related to changes in hours and an enhanced role for the Assistant Clerk. Cllr Kermode proposed the recommendations be approved by the Council and asked that the Personnel Committee be given the power to carry out the recruitment process.

The proposals were seconded by Cllr Gareth Rowlands. **Resolved.**

A member asked why the Council required an Assistant Clerk and was informed that the current Clerk's workload is high because there are more events and community work. This new structure will allow the Assistant Clerk to have a wider role including the operation of the Rialtas finance system and to shadow elements of the Town Clerk's work. This would be important in any cases of sudden illness, as had happened a few months ago. It will also be a potential opportunity for succession planning.

The Personnel Committee had also discussed matters connected with the Council's Local Resolution Protocol and communications between the Monitoring Officer and the Town Clerk. This is explained further in the next item.

18. Complaints Process

Cllr Kermode explained that this item is to discuss the existing process for members making complaints about other members and staff members using the Council's Local Resolution Protocol. A Town Councillor had made a complaint directly to the Monitoring Officer (not following the correct process) and as a result a number of recent communications had taken place between the Clerk, Monitoring Officer and the Town Councillor. The Monitoring Officer had set up a meeting on 18th June between himself, the Town Councillor, Mayor, Past Mayor and the Town Clerk.

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This meeting was cancelled at short notice without any reason given. Cllr Mike Kermode regarded this as disrespectful towards the Town Council. In addition there had been no responses from the Monitoring Officer to a number of emails from the council and him. There was concern that Town Councillor's direct approach to the Monitoring Officer reflected on the impartiality of the Clerk and Mayor as in-house mediators. The Clerk had received clarification from One Voice Wales on the matter and their view was that the Monitoring Officer should not have direct involvement at the initial stage of an internal complaints process.

The Town Councillor who made the complaint gave their account of what happened and why they had involved the Monitoring Officer. There then followed discussion about the use of the internal complaints procedure.

Cllr Mike Kermode made a three part proposal.

Part 1 – The council reminds everyone that we have an Internal Complaints and Resolution process and that the Monitoring Officer has no role in this at the initial stages.

Part 2 – The Town Council refuses to be drawn into meetings with the Monitoring Officer about any internal complaints – they need to be handled in-house or by the Ombudsman.

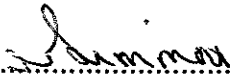
Part 3 –The Council writes to DCC Chief Executive and complains about the Monitoring Officer's decision to get involved in the Town Council's internal complaints matters.

These proposals were seconded by Cllr Mike Elgin and two members abstained from the vote. **Resolved.**

19. Urgent Decisions

It was proposed that if during the August recess, should any issue require urgent attention then the Clerk and Mayor should discuss it and decide on appropriate. If this cannot be achieved then a special meeting be convened for the purpose of deciding an action. Proposed by Cllr Mike Kermode, seconded by Cllr Arwel Roberts. **Resolved.**

18. Date of next meeting – 12/9/2024 Full Council Meeting 7pm

Signed  12/9/24 Cllr Val Simmons (Mayor)