

RHAYADER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18th OF AUGUST 2020 AT 7.00PM (VIRTUAL DUE TO COVID-19)

THOSE PRESENT

Chairman	Chair Cllr. J. Narborough			
Councillors	J. Stuart	D. Davies	G. Williams	C. Walton
	A. Davies	R. Thomas	L. Price	V. Jones-Davies
Observer:	County Cllr. K. Curry			

1. APOLOGIES: Cllrs. C. Evans, D. Evans, W. Davies, and D. Thomas

1a. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Cllr. J. Narborough paid tribute to Cllr. John Jones who has retired from Rhayader Town Council after 18yrs of service to the Rhayader and Cwmduddwr communities. He has been an excellent Councillor with a wealth of knowledge about Rhayader and the surrounding area. He was our friend and we wish him a wonderful retirement.

On the 3rd of August the Mayor, several Councillors and the Clerk attended the opening of the Elan Public House to the public who could now eat inside for the first time since the lockdown in March.

Pavement Art 11th of August – The Mayor, local artist Amanda Skipsey, and Christine Phillips Chair of Rhayader W.I. all took part in judging the local pavement art competition. The idea was to make following the one-way system in Rhayader Town Centre a fun thing to do and observing social distancing. Children sent in their designs and all got the chance to paint their creations on the pavements. The winners were Milly Price, Meurig Rees, Joel Earp, Mared Carrod, and Livvy Reeve.

The Mayor was instrumental in obtaining banners for the 2 hours free parking at Dark Lane Car Park. The banners were positioned so they could be seen when coming into town.

The Mayor and the Clerk distributed posters informing people and businesses about the difficulties pedestrians face when cars park on the pavement in the hope to reduce this happening in the town centre.

The Mayor and Council members congratulated Cllr. R. Thomas on his interview with BBC News after the flash flooding, we had recently.

1b. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr. C. Walton – General Physiotherapy Support

Cllr. A. Davies – Photograph of Council Members in relation to Cllr. J. Jones's retirement

Cllr. R. Thomas – R2000

Cllr. K. Curry – Resilient Fund

2. MINUTES TO BE AGREED

Minutes of the July Meeting agreed as a true record of events

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Forms in relation to public footpath have been circulated to Council

Letters to be sent to Amanda Skipsey and Christine Phillips for helping judge the Pavement Art Competition

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Covid-19 Guidelines are in place around the town, but we need to do something else to address social distancing and the one-way system. Ideas: Cllr. R. Thomas - Place A boards in strategic locations so people can see and follow the signs and information. Cllr. C. Walton - Banners erected on poles so that people would walk under them and they would be noticeable.

Action – Cllr. R. Thomas to investigate the cost of A frames/boards, blank so they can be used again. He will send his findings to the Mayor. There is a possibility that the pavements will be too narrow in places to place an A board.

4: REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORTS

Cllr. C. Walton Chair of the Toilet Committee reported back on the Toilet Sub Committee meeting held 5.8.20. Discussions included completion of the Covid-19 Public Toilet Risk Assessment which has since been completed by Cllr. L. Price and Aubrey Thomas. Other points raised included the review by the committee of the Terms of Reference which was agreed by Council as an active document. Precept payments, contracts, and a review of the work undertaken by RTC employee Aubrey Thomas. Committee agreed to congratulate Mr. Thomas on his work not only through the pandemic but daily. Meal vouchers was purchased for Mr. Thomas in recognition of his work.

Cllr. A. Davies reported to Council as Chair of the Allotment Sub-Committee, that there will be 1 and a half allotment plots available come January next year and that all the allotment holders are enjoying their allotments specially in the current climate. They are all social distancing and at the same time enjoying the outdoors at the site.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. R. Thomas Item 8.1

6 AGENDA ITEMS

6.1 Devils Gulch

Concern was raised about the continuing closure of Devils Gulch. Council are extremely disappointed in the lack of progress in getting the Gulch reopened. Some of the ideas suggested by Welsh Water/Elan Valley are dangerous. Cllr. A. Davies has contacted Jen Newman direct and has arranged a site meeting to discuss several issues. Rangers have been directing traffic for parking at Penbont House causing build up on the roads in the area. Better signage is required, and Rangers need to be fully updated on what is to be done. Cllr. J. Stuart stated that parking should not be promoted in the area as there is little room to park and little room to get by if you are a cyclist. Cllr. K. Curry suggested a meeting with Sian Barns and Stake Holders would be of benefit as they are willing to discuss options. (future action). It was deemed by several Councillors that a full closure should take place before someone gets killed. It was agreed that the Clerk write a letter to PCC Rights of Way Dept. with RTC concerns. Proposed by Cllr. A. Davies and seconded by Cllr. C. Walton. Also issue a press release. Proposed by Cllr. R. Thomas seconded by Cllr. A. Davies
Action – Clerk to write to PCC Rights of Way Dept. and issue a press release.

6.2 Llandrindod Wells Driving Test Closure

Council were disappointed to hear of the closure of the driving test centre in Llandrindod Wells. Learner drivers now must have 2-hour lessons and the nearest test centres are Newtown and Brecon. Council asked the Clerk to write to the DVLA to express their disappointment at closure.
Action – Clerk to write to DVLA

6.3 Dolgerddon Hall and Related Issues

The issue of crows/jackdaws nesting/roosting in the trees and the roof at Dolgerddon Hall has been brought to the attention of Council. The noise is extremely loud and there are too many birds. Cllr. G. Williams has

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been in touch with PCC Environment Health to see what can be done. Unfortunately, there is nothing PCC can do about the birds and trees are in a conservation area and cannot be cut back.
The only thing to be done is to seek professional help. Cllr. J. Stuart offered to investigate.
Action – Cllr. J. Stuart to seek professional advice on bird control.

6.4 Asset Transfers and Related Issues

RTC have had a response to their expression of interests requests for the Weirglodd and Lower Ffynnon Fair Land. David Pritchard states that due to resources available (the Property team have recently taken on additional workload) it is considered that before considering any further expressions of interest that it would be appropriate and prudent to complete ongoing matters with regards the Library, Clock Tower, Dolgerddon Land. and complete the lease on the Bike track on part of Weirglodd fields. He also added he had received a response from RTC solicitor with regards the matters concerning the Library transfer and will get back to us shortly.

6.5 Reviewed Terms of Reference for Toilet Committee.

The draft document was circulated to Council prior to the meeting for Council approval. Cllr. J. Stuart proposed that this be adopted as an active document by Council, seconded by Cllr. G. Williams. Council in full agreement.

Action – Clerk to record TOR as a Council document to be reviewed again when required.

6.6 Pay Phone Consultation

The information sent to Council regarding the usage of the 3 pay phones we have in our area show that the average phones calls made in a month from these phones is nil. Notices have been put in all 3 of the phone boxes (Elan Village, East St. Rhayader, and Claerwen Valley) that suggests these phones are to be removed. RTC concerned that if they are removed people's health and safety could be at risk danger as there is poor mobile signal in the area which would need to improve before removal of phone boxes is considered. Also, BT may need the boxes in the future.

Action – Clerk to send letter to PCC expressing concerns of RTC to the removal of the phone boxes.

6.7 New RTC (draft) Grant/Donation Paperwork and Criteria

Cllr. J. Stuart had circulated draft copies of the new paperwork he had produced for allocation of grants/donations from Council, prior to the meeting. With the addition of "Hire of contractors or seasonal work" to the form, Council were in full agreement of using theses forms as active documents. All other forms and paperwork in relation to grants and donations were to be archived.

Discussion on the amount for basic small grant confirmed that £50 be the maximum. This was proposed by Cllr. J. Stuart and seconded by Cllr. D. Davies.

Action – Clerk to archive all old related paperwork and start using the new paperwork from immediate effect.

6.8 Car Charging Points

Cllr. K. Curry reported his finding regarding car charging points and funding for Rhayader. There was a questionnaire circulated to the public regarding car charging in the area which received poor response so moved Rhayader down the list of areas to be considered. There is now no funding available. Builth and Llanidloes are the nearest charging points to Rhayader.

Cllr. D. Davies mentioned possible funding from the car lease scheme (Ross Young). We could enquire if there was enough funding to consider car charging points. Cllr. D. Davies will make enquires and send contact details to the Clerk to write to Mr. Young.

Cllr. C. Walton mentioned that the infrastructure may be an issue in Rhayader.

Action – Cllr. D. Davies to make enquiries regarding car lease funding and provide Clerk with contact details for Mr. Young.

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6.9 Dark Lane Car Park

Powys County Councillors had recently voted against extending the free 2-hour parking across Powys. A lengthy discussion followed as this appears to go against the ethos of encouraging people into the area to shop locally. It was proposed by Cllr. J. Stuart to write to all County Councillors expressing concern over the apparent short sightedness of this decision. Seconded by Cllr. R. Thomas.

The possibility of free car parking paid for by RTC was discussed but deemed as an inappropriate use of rate payer's money. Cllr. R. Thomas argued that not extending the free parking is a disgrace and PCC should be reminded of the economic effect it will have on the town. Cllr. C. Walton proposed that we write to PCC, seconded by Cllr. D. Davies.

Action – Clerk to write to each County Councillor and to PCC.

Cllr. A. Davies had concerns about the lack of parking at the Smithfield.

Cllr. J. Stuart proposed that RTC write to the Smithfield Trust to see if RTC can assist in anyway with a view to opening the Smithfield for car parking on a partial basis, seconded by Cllr. V. Jones-Davies

Cllr. A. Davies thanked Cllr. K. Curry for his work on this issue and for supporting the town by voting to keep the free parking at Dark Lane car park till Christmas. Council all in agreement.

Action – Clerk to write to the Smithfield Trust offering help from RTC to a partial opening of the Smithfield for car parking.

6.10 Caravan, Cwmdauddwr Car park.

Several complaints have been received about the parked caravan in Cwmdauddwr car park. It has been there for many months despite letters from RTC to the owner for its removal. Further letters are to be written and legal advice sought.

Action – Clerk to send a registered letter to owner of the caravan.

6.11 Arches Office

The Clerk needs to find a temporary office accommodation. Several options were discussed, Cwmdauddwr School but no Wi Fi connection, Football Club but due to location and isolation deemed unsuitable for a loan worker, and the Arches at a charge of £30 a week providing office facilities, Wi Fi, and central location.

Cllr. J. Stuart proposed a temporary move of office for the Clerk being the Arches, seconded by Cllr. D. Davies.

6.12 Pavement Painting and Free Parking, Banner and Posters

Pavement painting and free parking etc addressed earlier in the meeting.

Related issue - There have been occasions when Co-op staff have been moving the cones place outside the shop to allow delivery lorries to park. Situation to be monitored.

6.13 Benches

Cllr. G. Williams informed Council that the 2 custom made remembrance benches have been sent to be re-coated. Painted black with a red poppy and lacquered. On return one will be placed in Cwmdauddwr and the other in Rhayader.

6.14 Planning Application 18/0463/FUL Broiler Unit St. Harmon. Discussed by RTC in November 2018 and comments sent to PCC Planning Dept.

Cllr. C. Walton brought to Councils attention that the above planning application commented on over 2 years ago by RTC, has been approved on 30th of June 2020. There were several issues raised at the time by RTC including incorrect access on the map, safety to children due to impact on traffic calming measures, and that

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the barn conversion had been omitted from the plans. Cllr. J. Stuart suggested we write to PCC to note RTC's disappointment in this discussion.

Action – Clerk to write to PCC Planning.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Cutting of Grass Verges – Polly Pearshouse. Verges down by the Groe were full of wildflowers wildlife but have been cut right back. Council referred correspondence to the Groe Trust.

7.2 Letter of thanks from CARAD for the Council precept payment and they also sent a copy of their annual report. Noted by Council

7.3 One - way system and social distancing issue - Louise Howell – Discussed and reply to be sent

7.4 One - way system and social distancing issue - Dr. Evans – Discussed and reply to be sent

7.5 One - way system and social distancing, traffic, and space on the pavements – Beryl Hughes – Discussed and reply to be sent.

The one-way pedestrian system in town is in place to enable the community to move more freely following the Welsh Government Covid-19 guidelines. The guidelines are subject to change but maintaining social distancing, hand washing, or sanitising will remain unchanged. RTC encourage the community to follow all the guidelines, to remain safe, and keep our town safe.

7.6 Letter of retirement from RTC from Cllr. J. Jones. Noted by Council

8. PLANNING

8.1 20/1004/FUL The Bear East Street, Rhayader – Conversion of Restaurant to 2 Holiday Lets. Owners were present at the meeting.

Whilst Council have no objection to this planning application there are several concerns.

1) The loss of a business in the town. By converting the restaurant to holiday lets there is a risk of the loss of another licenced property in Rhayader. Therefore, the licence should be protected. Rhayader Town Council insist on being consistent with their view on this just as they have been with similar applications from other businesses in the town.

2) Access and egress issues. These concerns have been raised before with past applications for this site. The danger to public walking on pavements when cars are going in and out of the site entrance. Visibility is an issue particularly on exiting the site.

3) Carparking and additional carparking requirements

8.2 20/1169/FUL Glanllyn, Cwmdauddwr, Rhayader. Extension to General Purpose Agricultural Building. Council have no comments to make on this application.

9. FINANCE

9.1 Bowel Cancer UK Appeal request for donation. Proposed by Cllr. V. Jones-Davies that we donate £50, seconded by Cllr. G. Williams. Agreed

Action – Clerk to send donation

9.2 Marie Curie Appeal for Support. Proposed by Cllr. V. Jones Davies that we donate £50, seconded by Cllr. G. Williams. Agreed

Action – Clerk to send out donation

9.3 Precept Tracker. Clerk had circulated a new precept tracker to Council prior to the meeting. It will be updated each quarter and presented to Council.

9.4 Bryntitli Payment. The Bryntitli Payment has been received and is now in the Bryntitli Account. Cllr. J. Stuart proposed putting Bryntitli PDF Forms on RTC website, seconded by Cllr. C. Walton.

Action – Clerk to ensure forms go on website

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9.5 Audit Update – Ongoing and on track to be completed in the next few weeks.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr. C. Walton – General Physiotherapy Support – Local residents are having difficulty accessing this service. Although access can be gained private, there is currently no NHS physiotherapy available.

Action – Clerk to write to the Head of Physiotherapy regarding service deficiency

Cllr. A. Davies – Photograph of Council Members in relation to Cllr. J. Jones's retirement – Discussion took Place. Cllr. A. Davies to investigate other options discussed and report back to Council.

Cllr. R. Thomas/R2000 – Blog to advertise the area. To promote and advertise Rhayader it was suggested that a blogger be invited to the area to raise the profile of Rhayader and to encourage visitors to the area. Cost of funding the blogger would be £200. Cllr. C. Walton proposed RTC fund the blogger as positive step to raising the profile of the town seconded by Cllr. G. Williams. All in agreement. Money to be made available when required.

Action Cllr. R. Thomas to keep Council updated on this activity.

Cllr. K. Curry – Resilient Fund of £10,000 – Cllr. K. Curry informed Council of a resilient fund available to Rhayader of £10,000. It was agreed that we hold an emergency Asset and Project Management meeting along with R2000 and local businesses to put in a bid for the funding. Council in agreement.

11. PRESS RELEASE

12. BUSINESS FOR NEXT MEETING

Cemetery

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 22nd of September 2020 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 10.30pm

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