

At a **MEETING of COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 21st September 2011 in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Wellington Road, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James (Mayor)

Councillors J. B. Bellis, B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, Mrs L. M. Edwards, M. C. Espley, Ms D. Hannam, Ms G. A. Jones, Miss M. A. Jones, Mrs P. M. Jones, Mrs M. McCarroll, G. J. Pickering, A. J. Rutherford, W. N. Tasker, T. C. Thomas, D. A. J. Thomas and G. Williams.

Mr G. J. Nickels	-	Town Clerk
Mr P. M. Thomas	-	Finance Officer
Miss H. J. Windus	-	Personal Assistant & Secretary

41. OPENING OF MEETING

Before commencing proceedings and leading all present in prayer, the Mayor's Chaplain, Canon Prebendary John Glover, congratulated Councillor G. J. Pickering on recently becoming the Chair of Cytun Rhyl.

Canon Glover then led a period of silence for the four Gleison Miners who tragically lost their lives last week.

The Mayor reported that a letter of condolence and a donation to the Appeal Fund had been sent on the people of Rhyl's behalf.

42. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors J. Butterfield (family commitment), I. A. Gunning (other commitment) and D. W. Lee (work commitment).

43. PRESENTATION FROM GIDEONS INTERNATIONAL TO THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed Mr John Graham from Gideons International to the meeting and invited him to address Members.

Mr Graham duly responded and was pleased to present the Mayor with copies of the Scriptures.

44. MINUTES

The Minutes of the following Meetings of Council and Committees were submitted for approval as a correct record:

Council - 20th July 2011 - Min.Nos. 25-40

With regard to Minute No.39 (Presentation: Strategic Regeneration Framework), a Member advised that he had asked Mr Booty to consider expanding the strategy to the South and South East wards of Rhyl, where tourist attractions were lacking, and asked that his request be added to the Minute.

As Mr Booty was in attendance at tonight's meeting, he confirmed that the request had been made and agreed to giving it due consideration.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to amend the Minute to include the request.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James and seconded by Councillor B. Blakeley and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

Planning - 20th July 2011 - Min.Nos. 14-16
Committee

Proposed by Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James and seconded by Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

Planning - 7th September 2011 - Min.Nos. 17-23
Committee

Proposed by Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James and seconded by Councillor Mrs E. M. Chard and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

To Confirm or otherwise:

Finance & General - 7th September 2011 - Min.Nos. 36-59
Purposes Committee

In referring to Minute No.47 (Consultation: Welsh Government – Future of Communities First Programme Post 2012), a Member advised that she had had a further meeting with South West Communities First group, who had now elected to consider joining with another Communities First group.

Proposed by Councillor D. A. J. Thomas and seconded by Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield and **RESOLVED** as a correct record and confirmed for action.

45. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor referred to the list of engagements she and the Deputy Mayor had attended since the last meeting of Council (circulated with Agenda) for Members information, and in particular to her Civic Service, which she had thoroughly enjoyed, her Garden Party in aid of the North Wales Women's Centre, which had raised an amazing £720, the Rhyl Show at the Town Hall, which was bigger and better than ever, and her trip to Chepstow to collect Rhyl's trophy for coming first in the Town Category of this year's Wales in Bloom. Councillor Mullen-James had brought the trophy with her to the meeting and proudly passed it around the table for all Members to see.

The Deputy Mayor drew Members' attention to the board and to a photograph of himself with some of the children from Chernobyl Children's Lifeline, taken at a fundraising concert at the Pavilion Theatre in Rhyl, which he described as a very moving evening.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

46. RHYL GOING FORWARD DELIVERY STRATEGY

Further to (draft) Minute No.41 of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7th September 2011 (circulated with Agenda), the Mayor invited Councillor Hugh Evans, Ms Bethan Jones, Mr Graham Boase and Mr Tom Booty from Denbighshire County Council and Mr Wyn Roberts from Welsh Government to address Members on the above strategy and past public expenditure in Rhyl.

Before doing so, the Mayor welcomed the members of the public present, and explained that, as with all Town Council meetings, they could listen to any non-confidential agenda item, but were only permitted to speak under the Question Time item later on the agenda, where they could put any questions they might have to the Town Council.

The Leader, Councillor Evans, began by assuring the Town Council of the County Council's absolute commitment to Rhyl, which was why Rhyl had been made a corporate priority. He said that he shared the Town Council's frustrations with the slow pace of change, and added that it was not always easy for County Councillors serving other areas to fully appreciate the complex and unique issues affecting Rhyl.

Councillor Evans suggested that the fact that Rhyl had been allocated a high profile senior officer in Mr Tom Booty, dedicated entirely to the Rhyl Going Forward programme was again evidence of the County Council's determination to turn Rhyl around.

The Leader stated that at the Town Council's request, and others, the consultation period had been extended until the end of October 2011 and that to facilitate further engagement with the public, public surgeries would be held in the centre of town to enable people to come along and have a one-to-one discussion with the programme officers. In addition Town Councillors would have an input on the Board and be represented on the Delivery Groups.

Councillor Evans hoped that the strategy would now pick up pace, particularly with the Welsh Government on board and spoke of his desire to bring in the local Assembly Member Ann Jones.

Ms Bethan Jones accepted that much of the projects and ideas within the strategy were not new, but that they were now at least in the one place, making their co-ordination easier. Ms Jones reiterated that they wanted full engagement with the public and the Town Council and that the surgeries were the perfect opportunity for everybody to get involved and give us their ideas and views.

Ms Jones suggested that rather than give brief answers to all of the questions previously submitted by the Town Council tonight, she would prefer to compile more comprehensive responses in writing and via the surgeries.

Members disagreed with Ms Jones' suggestion and asked the officers to provide the answers tonight and then in writing. The officers agreed and responded as follows:

A1: Mr Booty stated that the views of the community were important to the plans, which is why he had already met with many of them and would continue to do so via the surgeries and annual exhibitions.

- A2: Mr Booty said the site opposite Apollo Cinema was trading very well and that the cinema refurbishment had generated much interest from restaurants and a Travelodge / Premier Inn.
- A3: With Area B of the strategy, they were working hard to improve confidence and attract investors in these times of generally low moral, and that full backing from residents and the Town Council was vital in creating that confidence.
- A4: Clwyd Alyn were not the only social landlords they were working with and that they were looking to secure monies from the developers to create pleasant green spaces.
- A5: Mr Boase advised that thanks to Welsh Government approval, additional resources were now possible in working to the new licensing laws and towards the reduction of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) in Rhyl West in particular. Mr Boase added that there was a concentrated effort in this regard in Rhyl West.
- A6, 7 & 16: Mr Booty confirmed that Clwyd Alyn were involved in the Supported Living schemes and that the majority of it was 'floating' support to individuals and that they knew where those individuals were located and they were monitoring it. They do not want Rhyl West to become a concentrated area from Supported Living.
- A8: That they were working on a Relocation and Support programme and that 13 households had already been successfully rehoused, with only one of those requesting to remain in Rhyl, all others had been relocation in different areas and not all in one place.
- A9: Ms Jones stated that as already mentioned, attracting investors was difficult at this time and that a key part of encouraging investors was to all stand behind this strategy and make it a strong and tangible statement of intent for Rhyl. Ms Jones advised that they were in the process of identifying local entrepreneurs to work with us to bring in new quality retailers, particularly to replace Marks and Spencer in the High Street.
- A10: Mr Roberts said that once all parties were comfortable with the strategy an option might be to hold a Developers Summit, providing developers with a prospectus of all of the opportunities in Rhyl?
- Mr Booty agreed that Rhyl's landmarks like the Skytower, SunCentre and the Pavilion Theatre were important attractions, which is why they were all featured within the strategy.
- A11: Mr Booty stated that the issues affecting Rhyl were deep rooted and complex and that they could not be resolved by applying one scheme. It needed a holistic approach to make Rhyl a truly marketable place for living and visiting, and that once the re-branding was completed, the town would begin to flourish.
- A12: That the Foryd Harbour development was not included in the strategy because that project was set to run beyond the strategy's three year plan.

- A13: An audit of future commercial need for office accommodation in the town centre had not been carried out, but was possible if the Town Council felt it was needed.
- A14: Ms Jones said that they did not know how much Denbighshire County Council had spent on developing tourism in Rhyl since the 2008 elections, but would find out and report the figure back.
- A15: It was reported that a Destination Management Plan for the County was being developed.

In response to Members' follow-on questions:

- Ms Jones reported that nobody had been appointed to the Delivery Groups as yet.
- Mr Roberts agreed that the blue hoardings at the Foryd entrance to the town were unsightly and that they were open to suggestions.
- Ms Jones was equally frustrated with the slow pace of the strategy and that the consultation extension had been at the Town Council's and others' requests, but that once all in agreement and delivered to Cabinet in November for approval, things could really get going. Mr Boase added that projects were moving - Apollo cinema, for example.
- Mr Booty advised that there were no plans to introduce tourist attractions in areas other than the town centre, but that the idea is worthy of more thought.
- Ms Jones agreed that many business premises in the town centre were small and that there was merit in making two units into one larger one to make them more attractive to prospective buyers.
- Councillor Evans acknowledged that at County level the perception is that Rhyl is "getting everything" and agreed that this was not the case. County Councillors from other areas did not appreciate the complex issues in all of Rhyl's Wards, and the strategy addressed this by offering one clear intention for everybody to support and carry forward. We could not and should not hide behind the current recession.
- Ms Jones suggested that the County Council had not always done things effectively in Rhyl, but that she and her colleagues were now walking around Rhyl regularly to see the issues for ourselves, and admitted that what they have seen simply isn't good enough.
- Mr Roberts offered to provide the Town Council with a full breakdown of where the 60% of the £26.1m already spent via the Regeneration Area monies in Rhyl, and added that much of it had gone into buildings so was not that visual.
- Mr Boase reported that the Market in the town centre would run for another 13 months and a full assessment was underway to monitor footfall and the impact on the surrounding businesses. At the end of that period if the information gathered shows that the affect of the market is negative for Rhyl, then he would be recommending that the market ceases.

Rhyl was not a market town which made facilitating one difficult, but in an attempt to tidy up the general look of it, the new Market Regulator had ordered a number of standard sized stalls. There was potential for a Christmas Market over the in the Events Arena perhaps? The Market was very much a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation.

- The Leader advised that Denbighshire’s Cabinet understood Rhyl’s issues well and he did not envisage any problems in it approving the strategy. That it was the job of us as a County Council and you as a Town Council to promote the strategy in our communities as Rhyl’s problems were in fact Denbighshire’s too and needing to be addressed urgently. He agreed that the Town Council could have three representatives on each of the Delivery Groups, but that if they failed to attend a meeting, they would be removed from the group.
- Ms Jones felt that the public surgeries and exhibitions were a better way of getting members of the public’s ideas into the strategy as not everybody could stand up in a large public meeting and put their views across. The surgeries would be less intimidating and more user friendly for all to have their say.
- Ms Jones advised that they were in talks in Welsh Government to improve the hoardings in Rhyl. That generally speaking money would be a problem, but the strategy was a living aspirational document to sell to investors.
- Mr Roberts reported a 25% reduction in regeneration monies on the whole, but the budget for Rhyl had in fact increased to just short of £7m, which must be spent wisely. They were putting in many bids for additional monies to address the housing issues here. Mr Roberts warned that if Rhyl didn’t get behind the strategy to strengthen its case to investors, then other areas would gladly apply for the monies.
- Mr Boase reminded the meeting of the many positives projects Rhyl was now benefiting from – Apollo Cinema, Gorwel Newydd sheltered housing scheme on the Promenade, the new Wilkinsons store, improvements to Edward Henry Street, the Palace Hotel and the Corner Café.
- Ms Jones accepted that members of the public would expect new buildings to go up soon after old ones were demolished, and that they would strive towards that happening and create pleasant areas in the interim if there were prolonged delays.
- Mr Booty stated that the Bee and Station building was to be office accommodation similar to that now offered on Edward Henry Street. Mr Boase advised that work was to begin in November of this year. Ms Jones said she would look into the report of homeless people living in Costigans across the road from the property.
- Ms Jones said she would speak with Housing Associations about the reported problems of anti-social behaviour in the Derwen / South Ward of the town.
- Mr Roberts advised that they had got down to a shortfall of four potential developers for the Queens Arcade back in 2008, just when the banks started to wobble. As a result all four developers decided not to proceed. Since then no developers have been found. We would need to compulsory

purchase the Arcade, but we do not have the £50-60m it would cost, and there is a lack of co-operation with the existing owners on site, so our priorities have shifted.

- Mr Boase reported that there was a small enforcement team charged with administering the new licensing laws for the whole of the County, but they would be spending money on additional temporary contracts and consultants to blitz the backlog.
- Mr Booty said that neighbourhood management was included in the strategy which aimed to reduce HMOs and not attract individuals with a history of anti-social behaviour.

Members thanked the officers for their attendance at tonight's meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- a) *the Town Council to appoint three Members to each of the Strategy's Delivery Groups.*
- b) *Members interested in being appointed to the groups should inform the Town Clerk for submission to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 5th October.*

[Councillor D. A. J. Thomas declared a prejudicial interest in the above item due to his position as a Denbighshire County Council Cabinet Member, but remained in the Chamber and took a seat with the County Council officers as the Strategy fell within his Cabinet portfolio]

47. NEW TOURISM FORUM FOR DENBIGHSHIRE

The Town Clerk reported receipt of an e-mail from Denbighshire's Tourism Systems Officer (circulated with Agenda) inviting the Town Council to attend the new Forum on Thursday 29th September 2011 at Theatr Twm o'r Nant in Denbigh.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to attend on the Town Council's behalf.

[Councillor J. B. Bellis and Ms D. Hannam submitted their apologies and left the meeting at this point to attend another meeting]

48. MEMBERS ITEM: HAFAN DEG DAY CENTRE

Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield reported that the Centre was under threat and asked Councillor B. Blakeley to update the meeting on the actions he had taken since hearing the news.

Councillor Blakeley advised that Denbighshire County Council had reported they needed to save £200,000 in the north of the County before 2013, and he had submitted two petitions to the County Council on residents' behalf to fight against the closure of the Hafan Deg Day Centre.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to write to Denbighshire County Council to ask if the Town Council can become part of the review and whether there are plans to cut back on other day care / social provision?

49. QUESTION TIME

Ms Jo Beck asked the Town Council how it felt about the closure of the Marks and Spencer store on Rhyl's High Street?

The Town Clerk advised Ms Beck that Members had instructed him to write to the Journal newspaper to inform residents of the Town Council's disappointment and concern for the future of the High Street, and to assure them of the actions taken by the Town Council since the news broke.

50. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further items of business the Mayor declared the Meeting of Council closed.

Mayor:

Date: