

At a **MEETING of COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 18th July 2012 in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Wellington Road, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor W. N. Tasker (Mayor)

Councillors B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, Mrs J. Hughes, A. R. James, Mrs P. M. Jones, Mrs M. McCarroll, B. Mellor, B. F. Moylan, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, P. Prendergast, S. H. Ratcliffe, Miss S. L. Roberts, A. J. Rutherford, Miss R. Siddall, D. Simmons and Miss C. L. Williams.

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

21. OPENING OF MEETING

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain, Father Charles Ramsay, Rev. Stan Walker commenced proceedings by leading all present in prayer

22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors I. W. Armstrong (no reason), Ms D. Hannam (indisposed), P. J. Williams (work commitment) and the Town Clerk (on holiday).

23. OLYMPIC TORCH BEARERS

The Mayor welcomed two of the Rhyl High School students from the team who had carried the Olympic Torch through Rhyl on 29th May, Dylan Evans and Liam Roberts to the meeting, along with their Headteacher Claire Armitstead and the Torch itself!

The Mayor advised that the students had been chosen as Torchbearers as part of the Flame Followers programme for the London Olympics Torch Relay because they had all achieved their Sports Leaders Level 2 qualification and two were also Sports Young Ambassadors in their chosen fields.

Rhyl High School was selected because it had used the London Olympic and Paralympic Games to raise awareness of the Olympic values, and because of the number of sporting successes enjoyed by so many of its students, some to international standard.

Ms Armitstead reported that Rhyl High was the only school in Wales to carry the Torch and that the school was extremely proud of their Torchbearers, adding that as well as their sporting talents Dylan and Liam were two of the loveliest boys you could ever meet. Dylan and Liam expressed their pride in representing Rhyl, Denbighshire and Wales.

Members duly responded and said that they were proud of all the students involved and that they had brought great credit to themselves, their families, their school and to Rhyl.

On behalf of the Town Council the Mayor thanked and congratulated the students and the school and presented them with a Town Crest to take back to Rhyl High School.

24. MINUTES

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

Council - 20th June 2012 - Min.Nos. 12-20

Proposed by Councillor W. N. Tasker and seconded by Councillor B. Blakeley and RESOLVED as a correct record.

Planning Committee - 20th June 2012 - Min.Nos. 4-7

Proposed by Councillor Mrs E. M. Chard and seconded by Councillor P. Prendergast and RESOLVED as a correct record.

Planning Committee - 4th July 2012 - Min.Nos. 8-11

Proposed by Councillor Mrs E. M. Chard and seconded by Councillor B. Mellor and RESOLVED as a correct record.

To Confirm or otherwise:

Finance & General Purposes Committee - 4th July 2012 - Min.Nos. 24-44

Proposed by Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll and seconded by Councillor A. R. James and RESOLVED as a correct record and confirmed for action.

25. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor referred to the list of engagements he and the Deputy Mayor had attended since the last meeting of Council (circulated with Agenda) for Members information, and in particular to the 12 Hour Wheelchair Basketball Marathon at Rhyl Leisure Club and to the Vision Support presentation at Morfa Hall.

Councillor Tasker added that he and his Consort would be taking part in a sponsored walk for the local branch of the Alzheimers Society in mid September for which he hoped he would have Members support.

The Mayor invited the immediate past Mayor, Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, to provide some recent good news about one of the performers at her Mayor's Gala earlier this year. Councillor Mullen-James was delighted to report that Ms Lindsay Kearns would be singing inside the Olympic Village for the Opening Ceremony of the London Paralympics next month, and that she would also be making her debut on London's West End in August.

With regard to the fundraiser at Botanical Gardens for a terminally ill little girl that the Mayor had attended, a Member thanked him for his support and was

delighted to report that the event had raised just under £5,000, pushing the grand total to over £20,000 and enabling Paige and her family to make her dream trip to Disneyland Paris and more.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to write to:

- i) Ms Kearns to congratulate her and wish her well.
- ii) Ms Gail Waring and Ms Jeanette Barlow, fundraiser organisers, to congratulate them on a very successful day.

26. PRESENTATION: MARSH TRACKS

Further to Minute No.27 of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 4th July 2012, the Mayor welcomed Mr Gren Kershaw and Mr Justin Lewis to the meeting and invited them to address Members on the operation of the cycling facility.

Mr Kershaw and Mr Lewis advised that:

- the project had been born out of the Rhyl Cycling Club tragedy five years ago, which highlighted the need for safe cycling routes.
- Marsh Tracks was a non-profit making Limited Company and depended on grants from numerous partnership organisations. The vast majority of these had been for capital projects to establish the facility but its more immediate need was for revenue support.
- the facility employed two people supported by a Board of volunteers.
- the project had been open now for just over a year and had been very successful operationally with annual running costs in the region of £40,000 each year. It anticipated making a small loss of £1,000 this year.
- the facility has a national standard BMX Track, a 1.3K Road Circuit, an 'off road' area and new Mountain Bike Trials along with free parking, toilets, showers, changing areas, a meeting room and also catered for birthday parties.
- the project was for all ages and levels of ability and had recently established a BMX Club for young people called Marsh Tracks Dragons.
- the long-term goal for the facility was for a local rider to reach the international stage and the Tour de France.
- whilst marketing had been undertaken the project required some help in this area.
- pricing for facility use was proving to be difficult as some visitors were surprised at how cheap it was whilst others claimed that it was too expensive. Whilst Marsh Tracks wanted local youth to participate in activities it was aware that, to some, the current pricing was a barrier. They appealed to the Town Council for any ideas as to how to reach this demographic without stigmatising individuals but also preserving the project's necessary

income.

In response to Members' questions and comments Mr Kershaw and Mr Lewis stated that:

- the promotional leaflet circulated around the table was "hot off the press" and would be going into local schools via their 5x60 Officers.
- concessions were available for schools. Both of Rhyl's secondary schools were currently paying £30 per session for 10 students and that Prestatyn Town Council were also paying for sessions for young people from Prestatyn as part of their summer playschemes.
- they couldn't drop prices any lower as the project would become financially unviable but were open to ideas on how to increase usage by people from the immediate vicinity.
- they seem to have exhausted the grant opportunities from a number of sources including the County Council and the Welsh Government and asked for Rhyl Town Councillors to help in any way they could.
- they were already working with the 'Cycle Life' shop.
- A recent application to the Lottery Fund had been unsuccessful, but they were exploring the sponsorship route by offering to advertise other organisations on site and asked Councillors if they knew of anybody who might be interested?
- offering Road Safety courses for cyclists and Gift Vouchers were ideas that they would consider.
- agreed that signage around the town would help to promote the facility but 'brown signs' were too expensive.
- a reduced price of £2.00 from £5.00 per session was available provided that the rider came with their own bike and equipment meeting the required safety / road worthy standards.
- season tickets were something they were already looking at.
- the introduction of a café was another idea they hoped to be in a position to offer in the longer term, but for now a small range of light refreshments were available.
- the next Marsh Tracks meeting would be on site on 8th August and that they would send a note through to the Town Clerk.

The comments from Members reflected strong support for the project and a commitment to consider the issue of some form of concessionary scheme for those less able to pay at a future meeting.

At the conclusion of the presentation the Mayor thanked Mr Kershaw and Mr Lewis for a very informative session and on behalf of the Town Council stated that Marsh Tracks was an excellent facility and wished them well for the future.

27. SCARBOROUGH DEVELOPMENTS

Further to Minute No.38 of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 4th July 2012, the Mayor submitted the Town Clerk's report (circulated with Agenda) informing Members of the action he had taken and seeking authority to invite Scarborough Developments to provide an exclusive presentation to the Town Council in early September.

The Finance Officer added that the report included the responses received in relation to the Council's requests but they posed a difficulty in that there appeared to be factual anomalies between them. However given that the response from Scarborough Developments addressed the Council's previous primary concern by offering an exclusive consultation in early September he hoped that Members would be satisfied and reach agreement upon that.

Whilst Members welcomed Scarborough Developments' offer to provide the Town Council with an exclusive consultation presentation the view was expressed that Denbighshire County Council had circumvented the Town Council and should not have directed the company to the Business Group in the first instance.

Some Members were of the view that the Town Clerk should not have included reference to the recent telephone conversation between the Finance Officer and the Chair of the Rhyl Business Group who had contacted the Town Council about what he described as "adverse comments" made by two Town Councillors on Facebook in relation to the meeting with the Business Group and Scarborough Developments. These Members felt that releasing this information into the public domain only served to inflame the issue.

Some Members felt that a line should now be drawn under the matter and that the positive way forward was to accept the offer by Scarborough Developments.

By way of explanation the Finance Officer advised that he had made it very clear to the Chair of the Rhyl Business Group that he was unaware of the discussions on Facebook and that any views expressed by Councillors in this way were their own personal views and not those of the Town Council. The Finance Officer further advised that if the Business Group wished to make an official complaint it should do so in writing and that this would be dealt with via the proper channels. He added that he expected a letter of complaint to be forthcoming and that with that in mind the Town Clerk had taken the view that he should inform the Council accordingly.

For clarity one of the Councillors who had commented on Facebook said that he had brought a full transcript of the relevant comments to the meeting and asked for the Council to determine whether the views expressed were "adverse". The Finance Officer advised that it would not be appropriate for the Council to judge the personal comments of the Member without proper notice in the usual way. Some Members stated that having seen the comments on Facebook they were satisfied that they were not "adverse".

A general discussion took place about the rights of free speech and the placement of comments in the public domain via social media and this was felt to be a

fundamental right and not in dispute. One Member advised that he specifically included a formal statement to indicate that his Facebook comments were personal and this was generally accepted to be good practice.

RESOLVED that:

- i) *Scarborough Developments be invited to provide an exclusive presentation to the Town Council in early September via a Special Meeting of Council, prior to their planned public consultation. It was added that it should include a full report on the Sub-Station which was integral to the development.*
- ii) *the Town Clerk should write to Denbighshire County Council to ask for detailed clarification of the circumstances by which Scarborough Developments was requested or directed to meet with the Rhyl Business Group and why the Town Council was excluded.*

28. AUGUST RECESS – DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE POWERS

The Mayor requested Members' approval of the arrangements for the delegation of Executive Powers to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the appropriate Chairs during the August Recess, as follows:

Civic Matters	-	Mayor and / or Deputy Mayor
Planning Matters	-	Chair and / or Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
All Other Business	-	Chair and / or Vice-Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED that the arrangements be confirmed and the Town Clerk instructed to take the suggested action during the recess period.

29. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ITEM: FORYD HARBOUR PROGRAMME BOARD

With the Mayor's permission, Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield was pleased to report that Councillor A. R. James had been appointed to the Foryd Harbour Programme Board to act as a Champion to engage with Sustrans and similar partnership organisations in relation to the Harbour development. Councillor Butterfield offered him her congratulations.

RESOLVED that the information be received

30. QUESTION TIME

There were no questions by Members of the public present.

31. CLOSURE OF MEETING

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

Mayor:

Date: