

At a **MEETING of COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Wellington Road, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

## **PRESENT**

Councillor D. Simmons (Mayor)

Councillors I. W. Armstrong, B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield JP MBE, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, A. R. James, Mrs P. M. Jones, 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, W. N. Tasker and Miss C. L. Williams.

Mr G. J. Nickels – Town Clerk  
Miss H. J. Windus – Personal Assistant & Secretary

### **83. OPENING OF MEETING**

The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev. Stan Walker, commenced proceedings by leading all present in prayer.

### **84. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors C. S. Ball (on holiday), Ms J. Hughes (work commitment), Mrs M. McCarroll (indisposed) and J. May (work commitment).

### **85. MINUTES**

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

Meeting of Council - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 - Min.Nos. 68-78

Proposed by Councillor D. Simmons and seconded by Councillor A. R. James and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

Planning Committee - 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 - Min.Nos. 24-27

Proposed by Councillor A. R. James and seconded by Councillor Mrs E. M. Chard and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

Special Planning Committee - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014 - Min.Nos. 28-30

Proposed by Councillor A. R. James and seconded by Councillor Mrs E. M. Chard and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

Proposed by Councillor D. Simmons and seconded by Councillor A. R. James and **RESOLVED** as a correct record.

**86. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor referred to the list of engagements he and the Deputy Mayor had attended over the last month for Members' information.

**87. PRESENTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC) – GREEN SPACE ON ABBEY STREET, RHYL.**

Further to Minute No.52(ii) of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014, the Mayor welcomed Ms Carol Evans and Mr Gerald Thomas from DCC and Mr Peter James from the Welsh Government to the meeting and invited them to address Members.

Ms Evans reported that the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project was a partnership initiative comprising of Welsh Government, DCC, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and North Wales Housing / West Rhyl CLT. The initiative aimed to increase the number of single occupancy properties, refurbish or build new properties to a high standard and make them energy efficient and provide properties with gardens and parking.

Homes would be a mix of private sale and co-operative housing for rent along with opportunity for the private sector to invest in refurbishment to create good quality self contained apartments or family housing.

With West Rhyl in the top five of the most deprived wards in Wales, it is hoped that the scheme will attract more economically active residents to reduce levels of worklessness, crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

So far the project had demolished 54 properties containing 112 households, re-settled 124 households in the rented sector and begun construction of a newly designed green space.

Members were shown the new build plans and street elevations for Gronant Street and Abbey Street and the refurbishment plans for 3-9 Abbey Street.

Ms Evans concluded that the scheme was bold and ambitious and that the radical approach was considered the best way of creating lasting positive change, adding that they were also within budget and on time.

Mr James accepted that attracting new investment into West Rhyl was difficult and that they were looking to purchasing houses on Aquarium Street and John Street and after receiving eight or nine expressions of interest, they had appointed a developer and had written to the Minister for approval. Mr James said he was very pleased with the progress.

Mr Thomas advised that the arranged sale of 35-41 Abbey Street was on the condition that the properties are developed to a high standard and that the layouts cannot be changed.

Mr Thomas stated that a private investor was interested in redeveloping a block of large houses on the corner of John Street and Aquarium Street into high quality apartments and that the plan was to build a maintenance cover charge into each apartment to secure the future of the green space beyond the five year maintenance contract currently in place with DCC. The cover charge in six years time could come to the Town Council for it to then take responsibility for the maintenance of the green space?

In response to Members' questions Mr Thomas said that, with reference to the Town Council possibly taking responsibility for the green space, that a legal charge would be written into the Deeds of each property at no cost to the Town Council, and that each property owner would pay the charge separately and directly to the Town Council. If at all possible, the charge would come to the Town Council sooner, in Year 4.

Members congratulated the officers on a great piece of work, particularly Ms Evans on successfully and sensitively managing the re-settling of 124 households.

The Mayor thanked the officers for their time.

## **88. PRESENTATION: RHYL IN BLOOM**

Further to Minute No.155 of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014, the Mayor invited Councillors Mrs W. M. Mullen-James (Chair of the Rhyl in Bloom Committee) and P. Prendergast (Vice Chair of the Committee) to address Members.

Councillor Prendergast explained that unfortunately the Secretary of the Committee, Ms Heidi Crompton, was unable to attend. Councillor Prendergast spoke of the support Ms Crompton continued to give to the Committee and thanked her for this vital help.

Councillor Mullen-James played a DVD, which was made free of charge by Pixel (the multi media education programme based at the West Rhyl Young People's Project on Bedford Street in Rhyl) along with a booklet in support of this year's entry into the Wales in Bloom competition.

Councillor Mullen-James reported that Rhyl came 4<sup>th</sup> in the Class 3 – Town Category and awarded a Silver merit, with Llandudno, Prestatyn and Caerphilly coming 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Judge had made some very positive and encouraging comments, which they would take on board and try and incorporate in next year's entry, if they had the finances to enter again.

Councillor Mullen-James referred to the recently announced cuts to non-statutory services by DCC, which unfortunately included 'Grounds Maintenance' where it was proposed to "stop all spending on floral displays / hanging baskets, and associated work. Replace flower beds with grassed areas. Consequential reduction in front-line maintenance staffing levels."

In order to maintain the current level of provision in Rhyl alone, it was estimated that £27,000 had to be found. Councillor Mullen-James added that the Rhyl in Bloom Committee would of course continue to apply to all relevant funding streams beyond the County and Town Councils, but that that was the reality of the impact of the next round of proposed DCC cuts.

[Councillor Miss S. L. Roberts left the meeting at this point to attending an appointment]

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the need to declare an interest in this matter now that a figure had been mentioned.

A Member requested that those about to declare their interest and vacate the Chamber be permitted to remain just to answer a few questions, which was granted.

In response to the questions asked, Members of the Rhyl in Bloom Committee advised that:

- the Committee worked all year round and did not focus entirely on Rhyl's entry into the Wales in Bloom.
- they agreed that the use of rose bushes, spring bulbs, shrubs and alpines were cost effective and provided good impact.
- they were keen to continue working with the Bruton Park estate.
- they were pleased with the wild flower garden on Ffordd Elan and wanted to plant more.
- sustainability was very much the future focus of the Wales in Bloom criteria and that this was something they continued to work towards.
- £15,000 was spent in Rhyl last year by DCC and that DCC had estimated that £27,000 was needed for next year.
- they were already looking at partnering with adjacent towns.
- Prestatyn's continued success was largely due to Prestatyn Town Council committing £20,000 each year to their working Committee.
- they were in the process of getting costings for all of the different sizes of planters and boxes, etc, to offer them as sponsorship opportunities to local businesses.
- the plants grown at Botanical Gardens all belonged to DCC and that the Rhyl in Bloom Committee had used them to boost the town's displays and would otherwise have been left unseen and unappreciated.
- Bryn Hedydd School had taken part in this year's Wales in Bloom entry as shown on the DVD, and Christchurch School were on board, but they would like more participation from schools.
- DCC Countryside Services was essential provision for Rhyl and needed to be preserved.
- there had to be a restriction on the level of voluntary help the Committee could accept because of health and safety issues around areas like roundabouts, verges, etc, as enforced by DCC.
- garden centres were expensive. It was much more cost effective to buy wholesale just now.

- watering had been a problem this year and that they were open to ideas.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received an e-mail from DCC's Steve Parker that evening detailing the costs of each flower bed in Rhyl, which he had not yet opened. He said he would circulate the details to all Members.

**[Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield JP MBE, A. R. James, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, P. Prendergast, S. H. Ratcliffe and D. Simmons declared their personal and prejudicial Interests in the above item due to the respective positions on and their involvement with the Rhyl in Bloom Committee and vacated the Chamber taking no further part in discussions or voting thereon]**

After some debate it was ***RESOLVED*** that the Town Clerk requests a full breakdown of costs and exactly where the Town Council's donation would be spent, should it decide to make a financial contribution.

[As the meeting had reached two hours, a five minute comfort break was taken]

## **89. QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

## **90. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

***RESOLVED*** that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, on the grounds of confidentiality.

## **91. MAYOR'S GALA AWARDS EVENING**

The Town Clerk submitted his confidential report (circulated with agenda) on the difficulties and challenges experienced in organising the annual event, largely due to it becoming increasingly harder to attract the necessary level of sponsorship and the significant fees charged by the Pavilion Theatre and often the headline act.

Discussions around alternative venues and ways of financing the event took place before it was ***RESOLVED*** that:

- (i) *the Town Council's contribution be increased from £1,800 to £3,000 to ease the pressure on identifying and securing sponsorship.*
- (ii) *'early bird' ticket prices be introduced offering ticket buyers a reduction in price if they bought early.*
- (iii) *the event be promoted earlier.*
- (iv) *the event be reviewed in 2015.*

## **92. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Mayor advised that the Risk Assessment Sub-Committee had nothing new to report.

**93. ADDITIONAL ITEM: CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON**

The Town Clerk advised that this year's 'Switch On' event would be on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November from 3.30pm until 6.30pm.

**94. ADDITIONAL ITEM: CHRISTMAS POPS**

The Town Clerk advised that this year's concert would be on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December at St. Thomas' Church, starting at 5pm and concluding around 7pm. The event organised offered two tickets to each Councillor and had informed him that children under the age of four would not be permitted entry and that wheelchair / disability scooter users would need to let them know in advance of the night to enable them to be catered for.

**95. ADDITIONAL ITEM: FOUR FREE PARKING DAYS IN RHYL**

The Town Clerk distributed signage and sticky tape to the six Councillors who had volunteered to affix and remove the signs to and from the ticket machines in the Morley Road, Underground, Sky Tower, Railway Station, West Kinmel Street and Library car parks on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November and Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of December.

**96. ADDITIONAL ITEM: VISIT TO THE NORTH WALES WOMEN'S CENTRE**

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the visit planned for Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 9.00am at which breakfast would kindly be provided.

**97. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

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

Mayor: .....

Date: .....