

At a Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on Wednesday 4th December 2013, at the Civic Offices, Wellington Road Community Centre, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor P. Prendergast (Chair)

Councillors B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, Ms J. Hughes, A. R. James, Mrs M. McCarroll, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, S. H. Ratcliffe, A. J. Rutherford, D. Simmons and Miss C. L. Williams.

Mr G. J. Nickels - Town Clerk
Mr R. A. Hughes – Finance Officer
Miss H. J. Windus - Personal Assistant & Secretary

100. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield MBE (other commitment), Mrs P. M. Jones (family commitment), B. Mellor (indisposed) and Miss R. Siddall (family commitment).

101. RHYL AND PRESTATYN FUNTIME BROCHURE – NORTH EAST WALES BRAND

The Mayor and the Town Clerk presented their report (circulated with Agenda) following their meeting with Denbighshire County Council officers in respect of the discontinuation of the above publication along with the Borderlands brochure, and advised that they both raised objections to the move and to the newly designated 'North East Wales' tourism area and publication, which would replace both.

The Town Clerk added that the decision had been taken by the North Wales Tourism Partnership and not Denbighshire County Council.

The Mayor felt that the move would leave Denbighshire's main tourist spots, including Rhyl and Prestatyn lost amid the larger catchment area, which might have a detrimental effect on the number of visitors attracted to the towns.

On behalf of a Member not present, the Town Clerk sought Members' views on inviting an organisation called 'British Destinations' to give a presentation to a future Council meeting to explore any possibilities for Rhyl and Prestatyn with them.

RESOLVED that *'British Destinations' be invited to a future meeting of Council.*

102. MEN'S SHEDS

Further to Minute No.91 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 6th November 2013, the Chair referred to the information received from the Men's Sheds Co-ordinator, Mr Simon Poole, (circulated with Agenda) and asked Members to consider receiving a presentation from Mr Poole at a future meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that the request to present to a future meeting of Council be approved.

**103. RHYL TOWN & AREA PLAN STEERING GROUP AND SUB-GROUPS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP**

Further to Minute No.50 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 5th September 2013, the Chair invited Councillor S. H. Ratcliffe to update Members following a meeting of the Sub-Group held on 25th November 2013.

Councillor Ratcliffe advised that he had been appointed to the group as a point of contact for Town Councillors wanting to raise community issues, with a particular emphasis on community engagement via social media like Facebook.

104. CONSULTATION: ACCOUNTS & AUDIT REGULATIONS 2014

The Finance Officer referred to the above document and to his proposed response to the Welsh Government (circulated with Agenda).

RESOLVED that the Finance Officer's response be approved for submission.

**105. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED ACTIVE
TRAVEL ROUTE – FOOTBRIDGE / CYCLE BRIDGE OVER RIVER CLWYD**

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to arrange a visit of the proposed routes for the Cefndy Ward Members, Councillors Mrs P. M. Jones, Mrs M. McCarroll and B. F. Moylan along with Councillor A. R. James with Mr Banks (Northern Highways Design Engineer).

**106. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – DRAFT LOCAL
HOUSING STRATEGY 2014-2019**

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the document be received.

**107. INFORMATION / ADVANCE CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL DELEGATION OF SERVICES TO TOWN AND COMMUNITY
COUNCILS**

The Town Clerk reported that he had met with Denbighshire County Council officers who were giving the Town Council advanced warning that because of the significant cuts being made to Local Authority funding, Denbighshire would be withdrawing some services in 2015/16 and would be asking the larger Town and Community Councils in the County to take on responsibility for providing those services.

Members advised of the numerous times various senior officers at Denbighshire County Council had clearly stated that budgets would not be transferred over with the services to the Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED that the information be received.

108. INFORMATION ITEM: VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES BID – MINISTER’S RESPONSE

Further to Minute No.50 of the meeting of Council on 18th September 2013, the Chair reported receipt of Carl Sergeant AM, the Minister for Housing and Regeneration’s response to the Council’s representations.

Members were disappointed with the “standard” response from Mr Sergeant and to learn that the bid criteria had been changed half way into the process, but acknowledged that Denbighshire’s bid had been rather rushed.

RESOLVED that correspondence be received.

109. INFORMATION ITEM: NETWORK RAIL – RHYL RAILWAY STATION

The Chair reported receipt of correspondence on the works to be undertaken at Rhyl Station (circulated with Agenda).

Members welcomed the proposals and hoped that a maintenance budget had been secured as part of the plans, which was sadly lacking following the last refurbishments to the station.

They were also disappointed that the issue surrounding the use of the lift, whilst the station was unmanned, for those with mobility problems and pushchairs, etc, had not been resolved as part of the works, and asked how this sat with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to request a copy of Network Rail’s Equality Impact Assessment in line with the Town Council’s Strategic Plan.

110. PRESENTATIONS FROM RHYL GOING FORWARD OFFICERS (IF REQUIRED)

Further to Minute No.29 of the meeting held on 3rd July 2013, the Town Clerk reported that there had been no request to report to the Town Council.

111. MEMBERS’ INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no urgent matters arising.

112. ADDITIONAL ITEM: Y DYFODOL

Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll sought Members’ support in not exchanging Christmas cards with one another this year and donating to Y Dyfodol instead and left a collection box in the Chamber.

113. ADDITIONAL ITEM: VALE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll sought Members' support for acknowledging the sad loss of the Vale Residents Association, who had taken the decision to close after many years of work in the community.

RESOLVED that the Mayor to send a letter of thanks to the Association.

114. ADDITIONAL ITEM: FOOD BANK AT THE FORYD CENTRE

On behalf of Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield MBE, the Town Clerk asked Members to take a bag of food along to the Foryd Community Centre for distribution by the food bank in operation there before 20th December.

115. INFORMATION ITEM: NEW RHYL HIGH SCHOOL

Councillor Mrs W. M. Mullen-James gave Members a brief update on the plans for the new High School, namely that an overspend had led to a slight change in the design, the entrance would be on Grange Road, the Youth building would remain and they were a year ahead of schedule.

Councillor Mullen-James responded to Members' questions and said she would ask about the logic behind the refurbishment works currently underway at the Leisure Centre in view of the possibility of its closure once the new Aquatics Centre once up and running.

Councillor Mullen-James added that she would bring the revised plans to the Town Council for its December meeting.

116. ADDITIONAL ITEM: VISIT TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN LIVERPOOL

The Town Clerk advised that having recently met with Ms Sandy Williams from the DVSC, the date suggested for the visit was Monday 3rd February 2014.

RESOLVED that the date be approved with nine Councillors expressing an interest to take part.

117. ADDITIONAL ITEM: VISIT TO RHYL POLICE STATION

The Town Clerk advised that he had been given Wednesday 22nd January 2014 as the date for Town Councillors to visit at 6.00pm.

RESOLVED that the date be approved with seven Councillors expressing an interest to attend.

118. ADDITIONAL ITEM: ALADDIN AT PAVILION THEATRE

The Town Clerk reminded Members that they should contact Mrs Sue Jones at the Theatre by 12.00pm on Friday 6th December if they would like to go along to the pantomime later that evening.

119. INFORMATION ITEM: 'CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES' IN THE TOWN CENTRE

The Town Clerk referred to the negative publicity attracted by allegations about the poor condition of one of the reindeer in the Town Centre on Saturday which had started from a photo put onto Facebook later that evening.

The Town Clerk confirmed that no complaints had been received by the animal handlers or the event organiser Denbighshire County Council on the day or since, but that as a result of the spread of the story, the County Council's Animal Welfare officers had contacted their counterparts in Staffordshire (where the reindeer resided) and been informed that they had been out to the animals just a week before and no concerns were raised.

As an extra precaution the RSPCA had also been in touch and would be making their own investigations.

120. INFORMATION ITEM: CHRISTMAS WINDOWS COMPETITION & SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Councillor Mrs Mullen-James reported that she had only received four entries for the Christmas Windows competition, with the closing date being Friday 6th December and that having called in at another four businesses in the town centre who regularly entered, had been told that the entry forms had not been delivered to them.

Councillor Mullen-James was disappointed that the forms had not reached a number of businesses with just two days to go to the closing date, and also raised concern about whether the other paperwork accompanying the entry forms (the Shop Front Improvement Scheme application forms in particular) had not been delivered.

The Town Clerk confirmed that as yet he had not received any applications for the Shop Front Improvement Scheme, with the closing date being 20th December 2013.

Councillor Mullen-James asked the Councillors who delivered the bundles to let her know exactly which businesses they visited so that she could get to the shops missed out by Friday 6th December and hopefully get enough entries in to salvage the competition. Councillor Mullen-James said she would also deliver the Shop Front Improvement Scheme application forms at the same time.

121. 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.

122. PENSION FUND – ACTUARIAL REVIEW 2013

The Finance Officer submitted his confidential report (circulated with Agenda) relating to the Clwyd Pension Fund review going forward to 2016, and the impact of the original 2007 deficit, the death in service of a member of staff in 2008 and the recession on the Council's budget setting process.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to and dealt with by the Council's Strategic and Operational Planning (SOP) Committee.

123. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Chair:

Date: