

RHAYADER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3RD MARCH 2015 AT 6.30PM AT THE OLD SCHOOL CWMDAUDDWR

THOSE PRESENT

Chairman Councillor L. Price
Councillors P. Dark W. Davies D. Jones J. Stuart G. Williams
C.R. Davies J. Humphreys M. Lloyd C. Walton
County Cllr. K. Curry
PCC Mr. Alastair Knox

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. C. Evans, D. Evans, J. Narborough & W. Davies.

The meeting had been convened to finalise the draft Specification for Cleaning of Public Toilets and the Invitation to Tender. Subsequently Mr. Alastair Knox of PCC had agreed to meet the Town Council to discuss Councillors' concerns about the proposed devolvement of Public Toilets to RTC.

DISCUSSIONS WITH MR. KNOX:

1. Councillors noted that, although PCC indicated that the take-over must be implemented by 1st April 2015, no sight had been given to any proposed lease or transfer documentation. Mr. Knox said that it was likely that PCC would not be in a position to issue those documents by 1st April but would issue a licence to operate which would give authority to occupy & operate until a lease or transfer could be put in place.
2. Councillors questioned that if PCC with all their resources could not have lease documentation ready by the stipulated start date, how could they possibly expect that RTC could have an adequate management structure in place by that same date. **Mr. Knox undertook to seek a (reasonable) extension to the deadline.**
3. Mr. Knox said that there were legal reasons why RTC could not fully take over the car park but rather than entering into any form of "shared" management it may be possible for RTC to have a percentage of the takings whilst PCC continue to run it. **Mr. Knox to seek a commitment from PCC.**
4. With reference to RTC's letter to PCC, Mr. Knox said that PCC had decided that it would not be cost effective for them to maintain the buildings nor would they do any refurbishing work (other than very minor urgent jobs) on the buildings prior to handover.
5. Although rates would be applicable to the toilets it was possible that PCC might undertake to pay rates on RTC's behalf. **Mr. Knox to seek a commitment from PCC.**
6. Councillors were particularly concerned that RTC would be responsible for the drains particularly since they were unaware of their current condition and where they ran. That they may run under the Dark Lane car park was a particular concern considering the possible length and because it is used by busses & large lorries as well as cars. **Mr. Knox undertook to source plans of the existing drainage systems and have them inspected by a mole camera.**
7. Cllr. Curry asked if the "deal" is identical with all councils. It appears that with the exception of Hay on Wye that is the case, the principals are identical including how the offered grants are determined.
8. Leases & transfer documents will contain a "get out" clause which will probably be applicable annually. If PCC does take a facility back councils will only be compensated for "significant" changes they have made.

Certified as a true record

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9. Mr. Knox was given a copy of the Condition Survey carried out by George Building Consultancy for RTC.

10. Cllr. Stuart suggested that as a result of local Councils assuming responsibility for toilets, PCC would likely have a redundant stock of consumables and enquired whether that could be made available to Councils as a start-up stock. **Mr. Knox agreed to look into the possibility.**

11. Cllr. D. Jones expressed concern that for a considerable time the trees by the Dark Lane toilets posed a danger to the fabric of the building and although efforts had been made to have them removed, nothing had happened to date. **Mr. Knox agreed to try to get them removed.**

12. Cllr. Lloyd remarked that the Cemetery toilets occupied only a small part of the building, the remainder was used by PCC in connection with Cemetery maintenance. It was also noted that the toilet furniture was very antiquated and no washing facilities were incorporated. However it was agreed that they remain a very necessary part of the Cemetery complex. Mr. Knox agreed that if RTC were to run them the lease would need to reflect the mixed usage of the building. It may be that PCC would need to continue provision of this facility as an integral part of the Cemetery. **Mr. Knox to investigate further.**

13. Councillors understood that some Councils were to get their grants “up front”. Mr. Knox said this would only happen if major spending on the facilities is proposed and supported by a business case.

14. If, in the 6 month period from 31st March, any offers are not taken up the “surplus” funding will be spread over those that remain.

15. Mr. Knox assured Councillors that installation of coin box entry would not adversely affect the amount of grant, but charges should be set at a generally accepted level.

16. PCC would not monitor the toilets but they would need to approve opening times to be assured that the facilities would normally be open for a reasonable length of time daily.

17. Mr. Knox indicated that statutory testing would not need to be undertaken from the day of take-over. PCC will provide advice and explain how RTC could deliver this in an acceptable cost effective manner.

18. Cllr. Walton asked if PCC would provide a hazardous waste disposal service. Mr. Knox said they would not, but informed that it is commercially available at a very modest cost.

At the conclusion of discussions Mr. Knox left the meeting.

INCIDENT AT DOLYMYNACH HOUSE

Cllr. Price reported that like all Councillors, she had been invited to the official opening of Dolymynach House. When she arrived she was ushered into a room along with the High Sheriff and other guests. Although the invitation to attend had been made by Mr Lloyd Lewis, he humiliated her by openly asking, to the room, why was she there and stated that she should not be. The shock was so traumatic that Cllr. Price was forced to leave the building.

Councillors were appalled at this treatment of the Mayor & it was resolved to send a letter of protest to the Chairman of the Dolymynach Trust about the behaviour of Mr. Lewis towards his invited guest. It was further agreed that the letter be copied to all members of the Trust.

Clerk to write as above.

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DOCUMENTATION

Two draft documents were offered for ratification by the Council: a Specification for Cleaning of Public Toilets and an Invitation to Tender.

With the aid of a projector Councillors were able to simultaneously examine each document in detail, any changes were agreed and the documents were amended.

It was resolved that the amended documents be approved.

It was further resolved that they be used in the recruitment of a cleaning contractor and the ongoing management of any toilets facilities in which Rhayader Town Council may be involved to the future.

The meeting closed at 9 p.m.

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Date