

# RHAYADER TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2014 AT 6.30PM AT THE OLD SCHOOL CWMDAUDDWR

### THOSE PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor J. Stuart				
Councillors	J. Connelly	W. Davies	D.O. Evans	M. Lloyd	C. Walton
	C.R. Davies	C. Evans	J. Humphreys	L. Price	G. Williams
County Cllr.	K. Curry				

Prior to the meeting Mr. Alastair Knox, an officer of PCC discussed with Councillors matters of concern with & the consequence of PCC's stipulated conditions of transfer if RTC were to assume management of toilet facilities in Rhayader & Cwmdauddwr.

Initially local Councils were led to believe that rates would not be levied on the buildings, now it extremely likely that they will. RTC assumed that the fabric of the buildings & the services etc would be retained & maintained by PCC & facilities would receive appropriate refurbishment prior to handover. Very recently it had been made clear that PCC's intention is that the buildings will be transferred in their entirety and no work will be undertaken prior to handover.

It was suggested to Mr Knox that RTC were of the opinion that they could indeed considerably reduce the running costs below the present figures provided by PCC. However to assume total management responsibility for the fabric of the buildings as a fully repairing lease holder throughout their life span coupled with the liability for rates would necessitate an extremely large percentage rise in the Town Council's Precept requirement. This would seem particularly onerous because it is strongly believed that the Dark Lane toilets are used more by the travelling public than they are by local ratepayers.

Throughout discussions Mr. Knox repeatedly stated that decisions had already been taken by PCC on the terms of transfer of toilets to local councils.

Councillors reaffirmed that RTC does passionately want to keep Public Toilets open, but were dismayed at the seemingly intransigence of PCC approach which could prove to result in their closure.

Mr. Knox was requested to make the new Portfolio Member aware of RTC's concerns and to seek a meeting between the Member and RTC as a matter of urgency. Mr. Knox was thanked by the Chairman & left.

**1. APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. E. Narborough, J. Jones & D. Jones.

### **2. AGENDA ITEMS:**

#### **2.1 Public Toilets.**

It was resolved that the Clerk ring the new Portfolio Member, Cllr. John Powell, to seek a meeting at his earliest opportunity to discuss the issues concerning RTC i.e. a preference to be a tenant, not to manage the assets and that the facilities should not be liable to rates. Councillors were willing for this to be done independently to the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January if necessary. **Clerk to telephone as above.**

It was further resolved to issue a press release informing the public of the present situation in negotiations between RTC & PCC about the possibility of RTC assuming responsibility for toilet provision in Rhayader. **Cllr. Stuart, in conjunction with the Clerk to prepare a Press release & forward it to RTC's local press reporters.**

#### **2.2 Finance & Assets Sub Committee report.**

Cllr. Stuart gave a summary of the business discussed at the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The cost and implications of assuming responsibility for public toilet provision in Rhayader & Cwmdauddwr had been discussed. Sub-committee members were concerned about the implications arising from accepting a fully repairing lease and the unknown additional cost involved if PCC does decide to levy rates on the facilities. A

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14<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## AGENDA ITEMS (CONT)

provisional estimate of the costs was passed to the Council. The Sub-committee offered an initial recommendation to set the Precept at £28,375 with the proviso that this may need to be adjusted with regard to Toilet costs. A breakdown of the figure was passed to the Council.

The Sub- committee will meet in February to discuss Asset Management.

### 2.3 Precept Rhayader Town Council 2014/2015.

Councillors agreed with the recommendations for the Precept made by the Finance & Assets Sub Committee but because of the uncertainties involved with adoption of the Toilets, deferred adopting them until the meeting set for 21<sup>st</sup> January.

### 2.4 Investment of funds.

Councillors had not been able to source any suitable investments for the funds in Sports Hall & Reserve & Maintenance Accounts at present jointly held in a NatWest account. The money now attracted very little interest and could be moved to HSBC which would also attract little interest but allow a simpler transfer when suitable investment is found. However NatWest had informed the Clerk that it is likely that they will be offering investment plans, which will available to Councils, around the end of the financial year. Consequently it was resolved to leave the funds with NatWest until March to see what offers transpire.

**In the meantime Cllr. Connelly to continue to seek suitable investment opportunities.**

## 3. CORRESPONDENCE:

**3.1 Paul Watson: Welsh planning system & sustainable development questionnaire.** It was resolved that the this should be completed by the Clerk. **Clerk to complete & return the questionnaire.**

## 4. PLANNING

Cllr Curry declared an interest in all planning matters & left the room.

The following applications were discussed:

**4.1 P2013 1228** for Householder: Location of nineteen solar panels on roof of barn (retrospective) at Nannerth Ganol, Cwmdauddwr, Rhayader, Powys.

**4.2 P2013 1229** for LBC: Location of nineteen solar panels on roof of barn (retrospective) at Nannerth Ganol, Cwmdauddwr, Rhayader, Powys.

There were no objections – recommend approval. **Clerk to inform PCC.**

## 5. URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr. C. Evans had been approached by a member of the public who was pleased to note that PCC had cleared the drains on the mountain Road, but disappointed that there was no intention to repaint road markings. They also had concerns about PCC's stated intention to close the road whilst work is carried out on the bridge near Abergwngu without providing an alternative route/crossing. Councillors expressed concern that this would also badly affect emergency service provision. Cllr. Curry reported that he was already urgently seeking contact with Ian Harris in an attempt to resolve these problems.

Cllr. D. Evans expressed concern at the lack of coverage in local press of RTC's meetings etc. when compared to those of other local Councils.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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