

LLANDRINDOD WELLS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 16th December 2014 in Committee Room A, County Hall

Present: Cllr E Worgan, C Rouse, S Dorkenoo, P Hill, G Price, C Carmichael, W Francis, A Bridgman, R Houghton, R Coleman, S Millington, J Green, S Meredudd, J Williams,

Apologies: Cllr C Bailey

Absent: None

TC 128/14 The Chairman informed members of the sad passing of former Chairman, Mayor and Town Council member Ken Richards. She commented that Ken had Llandrindod Wells in his heart and the town would miss this great advocate. Members and visitors stood for a minutes silence in memory of Ken.

A memorial service to remember Ken's life will be held on Tuesday 23rd December 2014 at 2.30pm in the Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod Wells.

TC 129/14 **Minutes**
The minutes of the last meeting held on 18th November 2014 were confirmed and signed.

TC 130/14 **Clerk's Report/Information from Meeting:**
TC 121/14 Trunk Road Speed Limit Review
Cllr Price & Cllr Dorkenoo prepared the Council's response which was submitted by the Clerk via email and post prior to the closing date.

TC 121/14 Flashing Speed Matrix Signs
The Chairman is in the process of arranging a meeting with Alan Davies of Powys County Council to discuss moving forward with this project.

TC 128/14 Station Crescent Public Toilets
Powys County Council were informed following the last meeting of the Town Council's wish to proceed with a Community Asset Transfer for this building. This has been passed to their Properties Department. The Clerk had received confirmation that a valuation had now been established and confirmation from Cty Cllr John Powell that the Community Asset Transfer process would be completed by 31st March 2015.

TC 131/14 **Chairman's Announcements**
I do enjoy build up to Christmas, as long as it doesn't start to early! The lunches with friends, Christmas services, school children singing and Santa on his sleigh touring the town, and even a glass of mulled wine on the drive with Santa and the Round Table boys.

"We had a very enjoyable town council Christmas dinner at the Golf Club, and I had much fun looking around the stalls at the Christmas fayre choosing little gifts for the "big Town council pass the parcel". Everyone got something.

Whilst we participate in all the celebrations taking place we must remember those less fortunate. So it has been with great pleasure that I have made a number of donations to local charities and appeals that I hope will go a little way to making Christmas a little bit special. Within our area Powys has 130 children identified as “in need” who will get little or nothing at all this Christmas. Of these children, 60 live in Llandrindod Wells, and so £100 has gone to the Social Services Santa appeal, to provide gifts for children in Llandrindod Wells.

Events attended

19th November - Presentation at the Legion for contribution to WW1 commemoration events and monies raised for the Flanders memorial. Lovely presentation of the design and building of the memorial

29th November - Jane’s Christmas fayre. Another successful Christmas fayre and possibly one of my luckiest days of the year, I won 3 prizes, and whilst Santa had a civic welcome he wouldn’t let me sit on his knee.

3rd December - Lions Christmas charity lunch. This is always a very busy and successful lunch and for me starts the buildup for Christmas.

4th December - “Thumbs up” club Christmas sing-a-long at the Dance Centre, to raise funds for a trip in the new year for children with learning needs and disabilities.

7th December - Our Town Council Christmas dinner held at the golf club. Good food and good company.

9th December - Welsh Carol concert at the Presbyterian church Ithon Road. A lovely evening of carols and songs from local schools. There were some very tired little ones!

10th December - In the company of Chris Rouse and Cath Carroll judging of the shop windows. It was wet and cold a little like last year really, but no falling roof tiles (Jeff will know what I mean!).

1st Haydn Lewis

2nd Radnor Travel Services

3rd Alpha Care

Most humorous – Marina Gallery

Highly commended: Evans and Jones, and Junk n Disorderly

I would like to thank you for all your support this year, and to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

TC 132/14

Correspondence

a) Royal British Legion – Thanks

Letter of thanks to Chairman and members for assisting and participating with Remembrance Day events.

b) Powys County Council Highways – Waterloo Road/Tesco

Email from Tony Caine as follows:

Further to your individual enquiries requesting that a pedestrian refuge should be located at the crossing point across Waterloo Road at the top of Cadwallader Way.

I have reviewed the work undertaken when assessing the construction plans for the Tesco development which included the tracking of an articulated vehicles around the bend.

Due to the tightness of the bend, the road width was required to be widened to cater for the safe passage of vehicles and on inspection of the tracking there would be insufficient room between the vehicle outlines of the opposing flows in which to position a suitable pedestrian refuge.

I appreciate that the road is wide on the bend requiring a longer crossing time but unfortunately we are not able to provide a refuge that would effectively reduce the crossing of the road in to two separate manoeuvres.

Should pedestrians not feel comfortable crossing the road at this point there is a further dropped kerbed crossing point between the accesses to the former Council Laboratory and the Builders Merchant where the road reduces back to a standard width.”

Cllr Price had received a similar response in his role as County Council and has written back to challenge the decision and request evidence behind the information provided.

Cllr Williams suggested that as an alternative PCC could look at extending the pavement on the railway side to assist pedestrians, members supported this.

Resolved: to write to PCC to request that the pavement be extended.

c) Powys County Council Outdoor Recreation – Town Hall Pond

Email as follows:

Anthony Holt and I (Health & Safety Advisor) met this morning at the fountain by the Town Hall.

“Following discussion it was noted that there have been no reported incidents or accidents involving the pond to date and that the fitting of a grid over the pond would likely be seen as an overzealous application of H&S and could cause more problems than it will solve.

We did agree there are things that can be done to heighten its visibility and even further improve visibility in the surrounding area:

∅ Power washing the outer edge of the pond which will clean the concrete and provide a contrasting colour to the brick paving making the edge easier to identify.

∅ If the above is not sufficient, then the up stand of the outer ring could be painted white

∅ The brick paving should be cleaned/scrubbed so it doesn't present a slip hazard.

∅ Areas of the brick paving that have sunk, or pose a trip hazard should be addressed.

Ø It would also be worth looking at the lighting in the area to see how visible the pond is at night; however, it is also noted that the pond area is not part of any evening/night time thorough fair for pedestrians.

With regards to the missing bowl, I have been in contact with Mr Chris Watson who made the statue and bowl back in the early 90's and he advised he will be willing to make another statue, I am currently collating quotes to see how much it will cost to refurbish the fountain and pond works. I will be in touch shortly to update you with my findings."

Cllr Coleman felt that the initial request to PCC was to bring the pond up to an acceptable standard. Cllr Dorkenoo felt that a local business may wish to sponsor this, which could reduce the cost of maintenance. Members were not in favour of the outer bowl being painted white, this would be passed back to PCC. Cllr Houghton felt that the pond should either be covered with a grille for safety or filled in.

Resolved: To await further information from PCC once they have established costs. This matter to be discussed at the meeting with PCC officers on 12th January 2014.

d) Knighton Town Council – Devolved Services

Email as follows:

Knighton Town Council were very concerned at the content of this e mail from many different propectives and asked that I contact yourselves with the intent of sending a delegation of chairs/representatives to meet the Leader of Powys county Council to "air" our views. I wondered if there is interest in this delegation from your council?

Cllr Price felt the Council should support Knighton Town Council as he felt that the residents of Llandrindod Wells would be taxed for services which are being used by residents of surrounding towns and villages. He felt the costs would be borne by the towns rather than the smaller communities.

Cllr Millington felt that the Town Council should negotiate its own deals as an individual town and have its own discussions with PCC.

Resolved: to write to Knighton Town Council to suggest a pre meeting to discuss a way forward prior to meeting with PCC. Cllr Worgan, Carmichael and Meredudd to attend.

e) Powys County Council – Community Delivery of Services

Email from Jeremy Patterson pointing out the services PCC is likely to wish to transfer to the Town Council. Members were surprised to see that Llandrindod Wells has been identified as a 'pilot town' and the suggestion that a senior officer has been appointed as a direct liaison.

The Town Council has not been contacted regarding being a 'pilot town' and has received no notification of the senior officer appointed.

Resolved: to write to PCC to point out the Council's surprise about being designated as a 'pilot town' and to ascertain why it has not been informed about the senior officer appointed as liaison.

Cllr Coleman suggested that once discussions commence it would be important to engage with residents to identify which services are viewed as priority to them. This could be an opportunity for a 'Meet Your Councillor' session. Members to look into this once information has been received from PCC.

A small Task & Finish Group will be appointed once information is received from PCC.

f) Powys County Council Outdoor Recreation – Trefonnen Play Area, Nelson Street Play Area, Lant Avenue Play area, Lake Park Play Area

Cllr Hill declared an interest in this matter and left the room whilst discussions took place.

Letter approaching the Town Council to take over responsibility of the above areas.

Cllr Price felt he would not like to see the Town Council take over these areas and questions the actual responsibility and ownership of one of these site.

Resolved: to leave this matter for further discussions on 12th January 2015.

g) Powys Dance - Trustee

Invitation for the Town Council to appoint a Trustee. Cllr Meredudd wished to appoint a Trustee.

Resolved: not to appoint a Town Council Trustee.

TC 133/14 Applications for Financial Assistance

a) **Dod Town Extreme** – Application for grant towards legal costs related to Community Asset Transfer.

Resolved: to award a grant of up to £1000 from 2014/15 towards the legal costs. Invoices to be sent to the Town Council for settlement.

TC 134/14 Representatives Report

None.

TC 135/14 Planning Applications

a) **P/2014/1043** – Full: Change of use of land to car lot at P1-21 Ddole Road Enterprise Park for Skye Instruments Ltd. **No objection.**

b) **P/2014/1081** – Full: Installation of external ventilation extract and intake units and ducting to rear of property at Albion House, Temple Street for Mr & Mrs F & N Vieyra. Cllr Williams declared an interest in this application and left the room whilst discussions took place. Cllr Rouse has spoken to the neighbours at the Cottage who confirm that they are in regular contact with the applicant and have no objections to this application. **No objection.**

TC 136/14 Accounts for December 2014

The accounts as listed were approved and signed by the Chairman.

TC 137/14 Precept 2015/16

A proposal was made to request a precept of £139937 for 2015/16 equating to

£60.31 (a reduction of 9p per household.) This was carried unanimously.

Resolved: to adopt the budget/precept as above for 2015/16.

TC 138/14

European Christmas Market & Switch On Cancellation

Cllr Green declared an interest in this matter and left the room whilst discussions took place.

Some members were disappointed to see the article in the Mid Wales Journal on 28th November 2014 in response to the Town Council's decision to cancel the event scheduled for 30th November 2014. The response to the Town Council's press statement was credited to Jeff Green, a member of the Town Council.

Cllr Green had subsequently issued an email to members of the Town Council stating he had not been responsible for the quote, and confirmed that this quote was from Sue Green.

Cllr Meredudd commented that the email from Cllr Green was marked confidential. The Clerk pointed out that this was to allow Cllr Green the opportunity of explaining and discussing the issue with members, as he refuted the information in the article in the Mid Wales Journal on 28th November 2014, however, Cllr Green had declared an interest and had left the room. This email had been omitted from the pack issued to the press for this reason.

Cllr Rouse – "I feel that it is a question of perception, at how this is perceived by members of the public when reading the newspaper. It states that the spokesman for the Llandrindod Wells Chamber of Trade & Tourism Mr Jeff Green, but I feel that people will know that as he has been Mayor and a member of Town Council for sometime people will know he is a Town Councillor. I feel it does bring into question the respect for the democratic process under which we work and loyalty to colleagues that have made that decision. There is also the question of the further email that we know has gone out to businesses in Llandrindod asking them to join in a letter, which personally I feel quite strongly about because I have built up strong links with traders because I have had so much contact with them over the last year, I feel it really muddies the waters as to what we are really about. Initially there has always been some misunderstanding as to who was Town Council and who was County Council and I hope that I have moved that forward so that people have an understanding of this. I feel this is a retrograde step and has set us back and it is very much on the perception of how this has come about."

Cllr Francis confirmed he had spoken to Jeff in the Library and suggested he read the newspapers, but he did not tell him anything at all about the content which prompted his email. "My own feeling is that there has been disappointment on various sides over the cancellation, people have passed on now over what happened over the Christmas market and we should be looking at next year and see how we could make it better. Maybe we could invite the Chamber to run a Christmas Market next year. It is a difficult situation and I think there is some muddying between the Chamber and the Town Council and local traders and this is what's caused the problem. I would prefer to let sleeping dogs lie and pass on to other things."

Cllr Hill – "lots of people have come and talked to me about the cancellation of the market and everyone has been very positive about the way Town Council reacted to

a difficult situation.

I was at the meeting when it was discussed to cancel it because it would not have been an European Christmas Market, it would just have been an ordinary market and I really think that the Town Council is held in good esteem over this as I don't think I've heard one negative remark, people are glad to see the Town Council moving forward, I'm proud to be a member of the Town Council as I think everybody works very well and put the people of Llandrindod first. However, I certainly would not agree with Cllr Will's suggestion of inviting the Chamber of Trade to organise something next year."

Cllr Williams – "when I read the article I found it very disappointing that the Chamber chose not to speak to us before making a public statement. As with Cllr Chris, I have spoken to several traders around the town who have said that if we did anything other than a European Market then that would be a big letdown, that's what they had been looking forward to. Trying to put something together at the last minute wouldn't live up to the expectations of the traders and the people of the town. I find it odd that this is quoted from the Chamber of Trade when a member of the Chamber of Trade did not know anything about it until they received an email from Sue Green encouraging them to write to the Town Council. This trader was in total agreement with the decision of the Town Council. At the end of the day I can't see how this is helping the Chamber by putting this in the paper and the only loser here is the town. They are having a go at the Town Council when we only did what was right for the town, the big loser in all this is our town and it's very disappointing."

Cllr Coleman – "I want echo the sentiments of Cllr Williams. When we had the report that the European Market had pulled out, the Clerk spent 2 days and a night trying to generate other stallholders to come and she has an extensive database having organised a previous beer festival and events. As Chris and John have said, I have spoken to lots of people in the town including traders and not one person has said they felt we made the wrong decision. The word being used is disappointed, and it is when so much work had gone into organising this by Councillors, the Clerk and other people, schools, bands and organised choirs for which would have been a lovely community event and the European Market let us down. If we had tried to go ahead with the few stalls that the Clerk had organised, we would have lost any good faith for future events. Anyone I have spoken to thinks we made the right decision. To hear the Chamber of Trade say that off the top of their head they could have rounded up 12 stalls when we know there was already an event in Newtown, Hay, Winter Fair and Builth Christmas Fair, all other local stalls were already booked up or preparing their stock. I don't think it would have been possible for the Chamber to magic up stalls. Furthermore the person who is quoted in the newspaper was at the Festive Lighting Committee and didn't vote against our decision, he was later at the Town Council meeting and didn't vote against the decision to cancel, the very next day we read in the paper that he, as spokesman for another organisation stating that we made the wrong decision."

Cllr Meredudd – "He says in his letter that he did not make these comments and should not have been credited to me, you can't have anything more definite than that."

Cllr Price – “This has been and gone and we need to move on.

To be honest I am not surprised, this isn't the first time we have been discussing this individual and in future I expect there will be something similar. I know the individual has said they didn't make the comment, that's his word. If he feels he has been misquoted there is an avenue he needs to approach and I'm sure the newspapers will accept this.

I know the newspapers are normally very accurate with what they report. We can talk about this forever and ever and we need to move on. The only person that I think he needs to apologise to is the Clerk, she is responsible and I know the work Jane has gone through going from our meeting and spending hours in the office of her own time to make sure that this was cancelled properly and I think not many would do that. If we, outside this room ever bump into this individual, should be pointing out that he needs to apologise to our Clerk.”

Cllr Rouse – “it's back to the perception of what the public make of an article accredited to Jeff Green as the public have not seen his email saying it wasn't him.”

The Clerk addressed the Council regarding approaches which had been made to her by local residents on the Saturday of the Christmas Fayre and over the following week. Many people had shown their disappointment at the response to the article and felt that the main issue with this is the public perception of the blurred lines and distinction of roles relating to Cllr Green. The Town Council is not permitted as a body to take action against an individual member. The Clerk referred to the subsequent email sent to businesses within the town, copies of which had been passed to the Clerk asking specific questions of local traders.

Cllr Francis suggested that the Council await further correspondence, should it arrive, prompted by the Chamber of Trade & Tourism email.

The Chairman invited everyone join her for a Christmas drink and wished everyone present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 20th January 2015 at 7.00pm, Committee Room A, County Hall

Signed **Date**