

DOLGELLAU TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Dolgellau Town held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at the Free Library, Dolgellau at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Ywain Myfyr – Mayor
Councillor Bob Gunton – Deputy Mayor
Councillor Branwen Rhys Dafydd; Ray Peters; John Cadwaladr; Nia Evans; Jo Checkley; Sion Edwards; Dyfrig Siencyn; Peter Jones; Peter Barnes; Heilyn Williams (Planning item only); Jo Checkley; John Raghoobar.
Mr Rhys Williams – Clerk

C.1.2024-2025 PUBLIC SESSION
No member of the public present.

C.2.2024-2025 APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence received from Councillors Heilyn Williams.

C.3.2024-2025 DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST PERTAINING TO ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE MEETING
No declarations received.

C.4.2024-2025 TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 5, 2024
The above minutes were accepted and confirmed.

C.5.2024-2025 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. **Officer from the Elderly Department Councillor Bethan Williams**
Reported that the above officer has recently changed jobs.
Bethan Roberts will be the Council's point of contact from now on.

2. **Lease for the Football field to the Football Club - Presented:** Informed that the Lease is now active.
Resolved: Accept the information

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

3. **Felin Uchaf Wildlife Garden**
Presented: Copy of the Agreement via Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn signed on 01.07.2023
Resolved: Accept the information.

4. **Pen y Banc footpath**
Presented: No progress at the moment. Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn reported the process for registration is a long one, but has pressed on Gwynedd to prioritise the matter.
Resolved: Accept the information.

5. **Permanent Memorial – Penmaen Lake**
Presented: No progress at the moment, but the matter is with the Chief Executive of the National Park.
Resolved: For the Mayor to also write to the Chief Executive of the National Park and for the Town Council to write to Mr Peter Watts

6. **A470 path between Cwt Gwyn / Ffridd Arw Wood to Tanyfron**
Presented: Update from Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn explaining he has asked for a speed restriction of 30 M.P.H. as well as walkers signs along here.
Resolved: Accept the information. Keep on the agenda.

7. **Parking problems between HSBC bank and the Hospice Shop in the Square**
Presented: No progress to date. The matter will be receiving attention following the local consultation.
Resolved: Accept the information.

8. **Community Involvement Programme**
Presented: Update on various action points from the October 2023 Council meeting, being:
 - i) **Arrange an inspection to set up specific Notice Boards for the Council:**
Presented: Feedback from the Clerk that he is processing a request for pre-planning advice prior to full planning application.
Resolved: Accept the information.

 - ii) **New twinning signs**
Presented: Quote received for £141.00 each for the 2 x new signs.
Resolved: Accept the quote and place an order. Councillor Peter Barnes is co-ordinating this.

9. **The County's Residential Parking Scheme**
Presented: No progress on this to date.
Resolved: Accept the information

- 10 **Curtains for the Free Library.**
They will be put up shortly
Resolved: Accept the information. The Mayor and Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn to review the empty rooms, and financial account. The building to share projector for the building.

C.6.2024-2025

FINANCIAL SITUATION

The financial situation was received from the Clerk including confirmation the application for repayment of VAT for the year 2022-2023 has been accepted by HMRC. Initial arrangements for an independent audit for the year 2023-2024 are also in hand.

C.7.2024-2025

SESSION FOR SHARING INFORMATION AND REPORTS

1. Reports from Town Council members

i) **Councillor Ywain Myfyr (Mayor)**

Had a recent meeting with Joe Simpson – Active North Wales. The project is targeting local residents to be more active by using 'placed based approach'. The theme is to see what is strong in the area and listen to residents in order to hear what they want to develop to be more active. Over the next few weeks Joe will arrange dates to bring local residents together to map out assets for the

community and start to understand more of what the community wants to be more active.

I am pleased to be able to announce the Football Club along with Byw'n Iach Gwynedd Council are presenting an application to Football Association of Wales for an all-weather pitch to replace the current field on the Bro Idris School site. The new field will be the same size as the current one with a 2G surface and new LED floodlights. The club is hopeful the application will be approved. This development will be an asset for the town, and in considering the recent weather it will be used a lot.

In regard to the weather, several have noted that a lot of the town's drains are overflowing when it rains, which is almost daily. It would be good to see the County Council clearing these drains in all areas of the town.

Dolgellau Town Centre Scheme

I recently received the following information from Rhian George regarding this scheme:

'A note to update you on the development of the Town Centre Scheme for Dolgellau. As you know, we went out to tender for the work, but only one tender was returned, but the tender did not reach the requirements.

In light of this we have sent the brief out again to tender, and there is much more time to apply, with the closing date of 19 April, in light of this I will send an invite for the week 22 April for scoring the tenders.'

Carnival

I have received information from Annabelle-Louise Roberts that the carnival committee have opened a bank account – despite this I don't have the bank details.

Resolved: Write to Gwynedd Council regarding the problems with gutters in the town and around the town overflowing. Copy to the County Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn.

- ii) **Councillor Branwen Rhys Dafydd** – actioned on getting prices for curtains for the Free Library at £730 each.
Resolved: Accept the information.
- iii) **Councillor Bob Gunton** – attended training on being a Chair and sources of grants via One Voice Wales. Waiting for quotes for a new artificial Christmas tree for Christmas 2024
- iv) **Councillor John Raghoobar** – feedback on a trip to his homeland (Trinidad). Update explaining that he will not be standing at the next election.
- v) **Councillor Nia Evans** – work on 'Lle yn y Dref' continues to go from strength to strength. Also had the opportunity to visit the new units at the old school house, Arran Road – good quality. Need to promote app to report dog fouling problem. Session on 'Lle yn y dref' not going ahead on 02.05.2024.

- vi) **Councillor Jo Checkley** – new flowers have been put out in the town. Attended a recent meeting of Dolgellau Partnership.
- vi) **Councillor John Cadwaladr** – volunteered with 'Lle yn y Dref', and attended a meeting of Trustees of Dr Daniel Williams.
- vii) **Councillor Ray Peters** - need to set up new safety bollards along Ffordd y Gader / Bodlondeb - the Clerk and the member to contact Gwynedd Council.
- viii) **Councillor Sion Edwards** – continues to look into grant sources for the new Skate Park. Beer festival in the town this weekend and a darts competition to be held on 28.04.2024.
- ix) **Councillor Peter Barnes** – undertaken a lot of clearing old advertisements / banners in the town. Referred an enquiry regarding parking near Bont Llanelltyd to the Llanelltyd Community Council.
- x) **Councillor Peter Jones** – the Council agreed to discuss Mr David Wright, Bodlondeb's letter regarding re-building part of the wall near Ffynnon Fair wood.
Resolved: commission the work to close the gap in the wall, via 3 prices.
Concern regarding the date the Spar shop / local Post in Heol Plas Isaf will open.
Resolved: Write a letter to the company A.F. Blackmore on this.
BT Digital Voice programme causing concerns locally.
Resolved: Encourage Lle yn y Dref to action on this.

1 **Reports from Gwynedd Councillors**

i) Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn

The tax for 2024-2025 has now been set - an increase of 9.4%. Gwynedd received the worst settlement in Wales. Discussions and consultation about to start regarding the financial plan for the next 3 years, including consideration of what activities are unaffordable to maintain.

On a more positive graduates note, the Council's graduate and apprenticeship scheme is a success. The new housing estate on Arran Road has been named 'Dol Sadle'.

Looking forward to working with the new First Minister in the Senedd along with the new Minister for North Wales, Mr Ken Skates. Concerned about the economic situation of some counties in the north with Anglesey likely to get a Free Port and Wrexham and Flint areas to received future investment areas.

Questions / Comments:

Need to look at the wording of the Council Tax letter in order to explain the payment better?

The no entry signs at the entry of Del Sadle look ugly?
 Why is Dolgellau not getting funds for the arts? – The money comes from the 'levelling up' fund only for slate quarry areas.

II) Councillor Linda Morgan (Written report)

Town Council Report for April meeting 2024 - by Councillor Lind Morgan, Dolgellau South

I have attended various Communities Scrutiny meetings.
Discussed Safety Partnership (Gwynedd and Anglesey)
Flood Strategy and Grass Cutting
Attended a Zoom Meeting with Meirionnydd Area Forum
Discussed Cwmni Egino, Gwynedd Regeneration Framework and Condition of Roads
I asked questions on the Dolgellau Area Action Plans
Had answers via e mail.

What is happening with the Local Information Centre? It is down as Operational. Is it going to open again? Not seen Jo for a while, hope she is ok.

Attended various Care Community Meetings
Community Toilets

There was a problem with The Royal Ship Hotel toilets no longer on the list not sure what happened, but they are the best Community Toilets I have visited, and people were using these facilities every day and they have 2 posters in the Entrance of the hotel. I contacted Gwynedd Council this is now resolved so in Dolgellau we have St Mary's Church and the Royal Ship Hotel providing this very important Service.

Housing

Common Housing Allocation Policy - Over 3 years 1700 public sector tenancies have been let through its use.

2346 are on the Register. This is very high
27 a week presenting themselves as homeless**

But latest data given to us in February shows **between 70 and 100 people present as homeless in Gwynedd monthly figures gone up since last meeting re Housing.

On 31st December 2023, 217 were housed in emergency accommodation in the county.

For you to see all the information you need to look on Gwynedd Council website ok. NB Figures change
They helped 1029 homeless 22/23

We need a lot more Social Housing built especially in Meirionnydd. This was mentioned by a few Councillors at the last meeting. This is quite a challenge, despite the good work by Gwynedd Council we need a lot more houses built to cope with the waiting list for housing.

Buy to Let Scheme

18 houses have been purchased to date with another 6 in the Process of being purchased.

Since 2021 (these figures given to us February 1st)

241 social houses built.

202 empty Properties back to use

32 units for homeless have been built or in the Process of being built.

64 first time-buyers grants.

633 home adaptations.

Bus Stop

Contacted the Highways re request for Bus Stops at top of Bridge on the Barmouth Road. They are now in place and will be very useful for people living in the Northern area of the

town. So, people can now catch the Barmouth, Bangor Bus here save walking to town and the same on the way back they can request to stop here.
The Bus Stops are on the main road by the Infant School near the steps.

Pavements

Contacted Highways re the condition of the pavement along Aran Road up to the bridge, it is in very poor condition, very uneven and holes, high risk of someone falling. Had a reply and it has been inspected and they will start work on it soon.

Bus Stop Eldon Square

I have requested for the road signs on the road to be repainted like the ones in Caernarfon to make the area more clear as a Bus Stop and to discourage people parking there with cars and vans etc.

Had a reply they will work on it soon. I also asked for White Zebra crossing lines to be painted on the narrowest part of the Square from HSBC over to Siop Blodau to try and encourage people to cross safely as you know the road in Eldon Square is very wide. This has been passed on to another Department re safety, I hope you will support this request when it comes to you.

Dog Mess

Re complaint in Finsbury Square and Love Lane etc etc I requested a Warden to check and asked for signs and bags. I have placed a sign in Finsbury Square and 2 in Springfield Street and placed bags for the owners to pick up. What we need is more information re times areas type of dog to help the Dog Warden.

Any resident or Town Councillor can pass on a complaint to Gwynedd Council through their website. The more information they have the better. If you want me to send an e mail just contact me with the details. Mr Simpson is very prompt with dealing with these complaints.

Church

Attended a Service at St Mary's Church to celebrate the new ministry of Rev'd Dr Carol Roberts as Ministry Area Leader and Priest in Charge of the Bro Cymer Ministry Area also present was The Most Rev'd Andrew John Bishop of Bangor and 15 other Clergy. It was a lovely Service. And good news for Dolgellau.

Bins

Complained again re the Bins alongside Boots Shop and opposite the Royal Ship Hotel as you know they are unsightly and not kept tidy not fair on the Businesses they should be placed back behind the Crosby Buildings where they can be stacked tidy. This is where they usually are.

Flowers

What has happened to the town flowers? Disappointing not seeing the Daffodils on March 1st. I hope Jo and Sion are ok.

Businesses

Nice to see the Fork, Cork & Feathers open in Lion Street. I Visited them on their First day of opening to welcome them to

Dolgellau. A wonderful new Deli and Wine shop, lots of Local Welsh food. I hope they will be very successful with their new venture.

Dd's Bakery are moving over to The Old Lighthouse Shop I will visit them when they move this week.

Nice to see The Hunky Dorey Shop moving into the old Manweb Shop. I have visited them. They are very busy, a very interesting shop.

No news on any of the many empty Properties in the Town yet. Old Dd's, Siop Y Cymro, Old Tourist Information Centre, Barclays Bank, Val Wilkins Old Shop, Old Natwest Building, Steakhouse Building, Old J V Morgan Shop etc

There are 4 Businesses for Sale.

I presented a Petition to Gwynedd Council asking for "An extension to the hour free parking restrictions within Dolgellau Town to allow 2 hours free parking. The current 1 hr parking is unfairly restricting Local residents and visitors from being able to have long enough time to use the businesses within the town. Local retailers are struggling to attract footfall and have already suffered loss of trade due to extended road closures and the relocation of the Post Office to the Eurospar, which is taking people away from the town Centre. Allowing visitors more time to park will be a positive message that Gwynedd Council are supporting Local Businesses to create a vibrant town Centre, a town Centre that will attract visitors and effectively support its Local community"

I had 99 signatures from Business people, this was done following a meeting in October with the Chief Executive of Gwynedd Council Mr Gibbard who met me in Eldon Square. I asked him about the parking. I did not have a reply so I Resolved to do the petition as I was speaking on behalf of the Local Businesses in Dolgellau. The Petition was presented to GCC at the last meeting. I have not had a reply yet, but hope to hear something soon.

We have lost 22 businesses in the last few years 4 are for Sale at the moment and we have many empty properties in the town. We have 62 Businesses who have signed the Petition as they are very concerned of their future. I hope you will support me with this request.

Food Table Catholic Church

This is going well and they are providing a very valuable Service, which is a great help to many. I have sent a card of Thanks to Fr Victor Walter and the volunteers.

Resident Parking

This is ongoing, residents have had letters. I will follow this up next week.

Attended various Zoom meetings

It was sad to see Siop Y Cymro close, this was due to low footfall. Despite Mr Pete Young taking on more work to help his income it was not enough and he had to close the Shop. I gave a Picture and Thank you card to Mr Pete Young for his Service. It was a Newsagent in 1900 and Mr James took it over followed by Llion.

Mr Ernest Evans (Ernie) used to deliver the papers and he did this for over 20 years. I have sent him a Card of Thanks for his Service, so many people are missing him it is an end of an era.

As you all know we now have a new Fflecsi Bus Service which is going well.98% of the people I have spoken to are happy. I have the leaflets in Martin's Shop if anyone wants one. I have handed them out to people who are interested and the meeting went well.

The number to phone is 03002340300

This is the number to book a bus

The call Centre is open from

Mon-Sat 7am – 7pm

And Sunday 9am – pm

The Buses are very smart and a lot smaller so can possibly pick you up from outside your door.

C.8.2024-2025 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Listed Building Consent for replacement windows, external door and rear extension

Erw Gain, 2 Park Row, Dolgellau. LL40 1SE

Application Type: Listed Building Consent

Application Number: NP5/57/LB383

Grid Reference: 272635 317758

NO OBERVATIONS