

**Cyngor Tref Llangollen Town Council.**

**Agenda.**

**20.08.2024.**

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| <b>1. Croesawiad a chyhoeddiadau Faer y Dref.</b>   | <b>Town Mayors welcome and announcements.</b>  |
| <b>2. Datganiadau gan y cyhoedd.</b><br>I dderbyn datganiadau oddiwrth y cyhoedd ar faterion ar yr agenda.  | <b>Statements from the public.</b><br>To receive statements from the public on matters on the agenda.  |
| <b>3. Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb.</b><br>I dderbyn, ystyried a derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb.   | <b>Apologies for absence.</b><br>To receive, consider and accept apologies for absence.  |
| <b>4. Datganiadau o Fuddiant.</b><br>I dderbyn unrhyw ddatganiadau o fuddiant ar eitemau ar yr agenda.  | <b>Declaration of Interest.</b><br>To receive any known declarations of interest in items on the agenda.   |
| <b>5. Cofnodion.</b><br>Awdurdodi'r Cadeirydd i lofnodi cofnodion cyfarfodydd blaenorol y Cyngor Tref a gynhaliwyd ar 18.06.24, fel cofnod cywir.   | <b>Minutes.</b><br>To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meetings of the Town Council held on 18.06.24, as a correct record.  |
| <b>6. Adroddiadau Clerc y Dref.</b><br>I dderbyn adroddiadau a gyflwynwyd gan yr Clerc y Dref ac ystyried yr argymhellion ynddo. Mae adroddiadau yn ddogfennau gwaith ac felly nid ydynt wedi'u cyfieithu. Ymgynghoriad Cyhoeddus ynghylch Asesiad o'r Agen am Doiledau Cyhoeddus yn Sir Ddinbych | <b>Town Clerk's Reports.</b><br>To receive reports submitted to the Town Clerk and consider the recommendations therein. Reports are working documents and are therefore not translated.<br>Public Consultation Denbighshire's Public Toilet Needs Assessment. |
| <b>8. Ceisiadau Cynllunio.</b><br>I ystyried ceisiadau cynllunio a gyfeiriwyd at y Cyngor a gwneud unrhyw benderfyniadau angenrheidiol arno.  | <b>Planning Applications.</b><br>To consider planning applications referred to the Council and make any necessary decisions thereon.   |
| <b>a) 03/2024/1124</b><br>Fron, Abbey Road.<br>Gosod system wresogi o dan y llawr a gwaith cysylltiedig (Caniatâd Adeilad Rhestredig)   | <b>03/2024/1124</b><br>Fron, Abbey Road.<br>Installation of under floor heating system and associated works (Listed Building Consent)  |
| <b>b) 03/2024/1127</b>  | <b>03/2024/1127</b>  |

Tir i'r De-orllewin o, Bryn Oerog  
Lleoli 15 caban gwyliau, uned toiled/cawod  
a gwaith cysylltiedig.

Land South-West of Bryn Oerog,  
Siting of 15 no. holiday cabins, toilet/shower  
unit and associated works.

**c) 03/2024/0134**

**Ailymgynghori.**

Bryn Howel Cottage, Trevor.

Codi estyniad deulawr i'r ochr ac estyniad  
unllawr yng nghefn yr annedd, addasiadau  
a gwaith cysylltiedig.

**03/2024/0134**

**Re-consultation.**

Bryn Howel Cottage, Trevor.

Erection of a two-storey extension to side  
and a single-storey extension to rear of  
dwelling, alterations and associated works

## **AGENDA ITEM 6**

**REPORT: Public Consultation Denbighshire's Public Toilet Needs Assessment.**

**AUTHOR: Town Clerk**

**REPORT FOR: Decision**

### **1. Summary.**

1.1 To consider a response to Denbighshire County Council Consultation on a Public Toilet Needs Assessment.

### **2. Background.**

2.1 Members are aware that the potential closure of the public conveniences in Llangollen has already generated significant local concern and has resulted in a call for the Town Council to consider the implications of such a closure. It was accepted that public toilets are considered important in supporting tourism, local events, and the overall quality of life for residents and visitors and therefore consideration was given to the views of local residents, businesses, and community groups to understand their views and expectations regarding the potential closure of public toilets in Llangollen.

2.2 Notwithstanding the above, at the Town Council meeting held on the 21 May 2024 Members agreed that given the levels of losses in the operation of the public toilets were considerable, and as they would require an increase in the Town Council's annual budget of over 57% to fund this was not justifiable in the current economic climate. Members therefore resolved that neither taking ownership nor covering the full cost of Denbighshire County Council running and maintaining the public toilets would be feasible for the Town Council. This is the current corporate position of the Town Council, and any alteration would be subject to clause 7 of standing orders.

2.3 Further to that decision, on the 30 May 2024 there was a submission by Mr. Holt of a notice/petition to convene a Community Meeting which after checking the trigger threshold had been met, a public notice was posted on Town Council Website and Social Media of a Community Meeting: to be held on the 6 August 2024 in the Town Hall to address residents and the business community's concerns related to Denbighshire CC proposal to transfer ownership and operation of Llangollen Public Conveniences in Llangollen with potential for closure.

2.4 As the meeting was called by the community it was not a Town Council meeting and therefore if there were any actions required by the Town Council this will have to be presented in a report to a future meeting of the Town Council. Members present were simply observers, they could comment but it would be on an individual basis and not representative or an expression of the views of the Town Council.

2.5 The meeting was well represented there was an attendance sheet for attendees to sign on arrival but there is no way to identify if all present were on the electoral register of the community. The key outcomes of the meeting were:

- To investigate funding options
- That the transfer of the public toilets should be linked with the transfer of Market Street carpark
- To complain that there were no County Council representatives present at the meeting.
- These actions would be taken forward by the meeting convener.

### 3. Denbighshire's Public Toilet Needs Assessment.

3.1 Subsequent to the initial statements made by Denbighshire County Council on potential closure of Public convenience it funded across the County, they are now carrying out a needs assessment for the public toilets in Denbighshire. Under the requirements of Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, the County Council are required to develop and publish a Public Toilet Strategy. The Strategy should identify how it has assessed the need for public toilets in Denbighshire, and how it will manage this need.

3.2 The County Council has emphasised within its Consultation document that there is no legal requirement for the Council itself to provide public toilets, however, the Council is required to:

1. Provide evidence that it has reviewed the needs of the local population.
2. Develop a strategy that evidences how these needs are being met, or will be in the future, for example through Community Toilet Schemes.

3.3 The County Council stresses that **no decisions** have been made to close toilets anywhere in Denbighshire at this stage and a report will be taken to a Scrutiny Committee in the autumn before Cabinet are asked to make any decision. This Consultation will end on 15 September 2024. The process is via an online questionnaire which is posted on the County Conversation page and is again geared to single responses as is indicated by the options offered on the questionnaire landing page.

Which of the following best applies to you?

Note: if you feel you fit more than one category, please complete the questionnaire for each category that applies to you, as the questions you will be asked in the rest of this survey will depend on the answer you give to this question. Please select one option only.

I live in Denbighshire

I work in Denbighshire

I am a visitor/tourist to Denbighshire

I am a Denbighshire County Councillor, Member of a City, Town or Community Council, Ailed y Senedd or Member of Parliament

I am a representative of an organisation which supports people with disabilities or other needs which impacts their toilet use

I own or work for a business in Denbighshire and I would like to find out more about the Community Toilet Scheme  
Other.

- 3.4 Clearly individual Members are free to complete the questionnaire, but a Town Council response will need to be formally resolved. This will not influence previous resolutions made by the Town Council which remain in place. There is an option to submit comments in writing to Denbighshire County Council instead of using the online questionnaire.

#### **4.0 Why do public toilets matter**

- 4.1 Whilst the Public Health Act 1936 gives local authorities a power to provide public toilets, it imposes no duty to do so, and this lack of compulsion, together with a perception of nuisance associated with them, has arguably resulted in a steady decline in the provision of public toilets in recent years.
- 4.2 Public toilets however matter, for a variety of reasons. The lack of toilets or restricted opening times can result in street fouling of which the Town Council staff have direct experience in that the curtilage of the Town Hall has been subjected to this type of activity when the current toilets are closed.
- 4.3 Additionally, a lack of public toilets results in certain groups feeling anxious about going out. Older people, for example, do not readily leave their homes without the reassurance that they will have access to public toilets, which can lead to individuals deliberately dehydrating themselves which can cause ill-health, with consequent burdens on the NHS. Older people rely on public toilets, being more likely to suffer from conditions such as incontinence, urgency and prostrate problems as they age.
- 4.4 Disabled people and their carers also lack the freedom to leave their homes without the reassurance of adequate toilet facilities being available. People who have Colitis or Crohn's Disease, diseases that can strike at any age, can experience the sudden and uncontrollable need to use a toilet and having an 'accident' in public is every patient's worst fear and can have a devastating effect on their ability to undertake everyday activities such as going to work, shopping or socialising. An estimated 10 million people in Britain have disabilities and more than one third of people aged over 50 are registered as disabled in some way.
- 4.4 For people with profound and multiple learning disabilities the absence of suitable provision such as the Changing Places toilets, prevent many from travelling into town centres and spending money, a direct support to the local economy. Public authorities are required by the Disability Equality Duty to consider all sectors of the society they serve.
- 4.5 Tourists and visitors also rank the availability of toilets high in their lists of reasons why a location is worth visiting. If you are a visitor and there on a temporary basis,

provision of toilets becomes absolutely fundamental, most journeys start and finish with people going to the toilet. There are therefore direct benefits to local authorities providing public toilets, of which tourism is one. Investment in good toilet provision has been shown to increase retail turnover, tourist numbers, and economic growth.

- 4.6 Denbighshire’s tourism figures have seen a rise for 2023 in comparison to the previous year. The latest STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures show that the total visitor numbers for Denbighshire in 2023 reached 6.39 million, an increase of almost 6% (5.9%) in comparison to 2022 figures. The data also shows that the number of day visitors to the county for 2023 was 4.72 million, a 7.5% change when compared to 2022. The total economic impact of tourism was £736.05 million, a jump of 17.1% on the previous year.
- 4.7 Commenting on these statistics Councillor Jason McLellan, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Economic Growth & Tackling Deprivation said:  
“Denbighshire has both stunning coastal areas as well as scenic rural patches, which allows it to be a very well-rounded offer for tourists, who travel far and wide to come and visit our beautiful county. Once again, we welcome increased tourism figures for Denbighshire year on year, which demonstrate the importance of tourism to the local economy, and the bounce back the tourism industry has achieved after a difficult few years.”
- 4.8 Llangollen plays a significant contribution in attracting a large number of tourists due to the significance and attractiveness of the town and the heritage of the town and surrounding area. Key visitor attractions include:
- the world-famous International Musical Eisteddfod, which takes place every year during the second week of July and attracts averaging 40-50,000 visitors per annum
  - Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS averaging 333,000 visitors per annum
  - Llangollen Railway – The only standard gauge heritage railway in North Wales
  - with 100,000 visitors per annum
  - Castell Dinas Bran averaging 40,300 per annum
  - Plas Newydd open daily from April to September averaging per annum
- 4.9 Additionally landscape attractions within the vicinity of Llangollen include the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Horseshoe Pass and the Panorama support an active and growing outdoor activities sector which account for many thousands of visitors each year.
- 4.10 The visitor economy not only makes a direct contribution to a local economy but also provides an invaluable indirect economic impact through supporting businesses in the supply chain. Its wide reaching remit helps create attractive places to both live and work in addition to wider benefits to local communities; an

increased choice of facilities such as places to eat out, local shops, events and exhibitions, as well as conservation of local heritage and the natural landscape.

- 4.11 Llangollen is no different with tourist making a significant contribution to the diversity of the retail offer in the town and a vibrant café culture. Therefore, any actions that could affect or hinder the development of tourism should be resisted.

## **5. County Council priorities and services.**

- 5.1 The overall ambition of Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Strategy 2017 – 2022: a prosperous Denbighshire is to ensure that Denbighshire is a place where residents and businesses are well connected and resilient; where young people have opportunities for affordable housing and acquire skills and jobs to lead successful and fulfilling lives and where we all enjoy an attractive and protected environment. To achieve this, the County Council will support economic growth and a healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

- 5.2 In terms of the economy the County Council's Economic and Community Ambition Strategy 2013-2023 recognises that tourism accounts for 10% of employment in Denbighshire and that the County Council aim to address the issues and challenges, and make progress towards achieving its strategic outcomes for maximising opportunities for tourism sector growth the County Council strategy focuses on the following areas:

- Outdoor and activity tourism
- Food and drink tourism
- Welsh language, culture and heritage
- Work with accommodation providers to improve the quality and quantity of visitor accommodation across the county
- Work with tourism businesses generally, with a particular focus on tourism skills development
- Develop a Denbighshire Events strategy, integrating both major and local events

- 5.3 In addition, the County Council has identified that traditional town centres are at risk from changes in consumer habits. The trend across the UK is a decline in town centre retail, largely due to out of town and online retail opportunities. Lower access to personal credit also impacts as incomes have been squeezed in the current financial circumstances. Town Centres therefore need to become multi-purpose, more than merely retail areas, offering opportunities for leisure and entertainment, as well as for living and working.

- 5.4 In respect of the strategic outcomes for maximizing opportunities for growth to provide for town centres and the high streets of the future the County Council strategy focuses on the following areas:
- Develop initiatives for empty shops – including visual improvements, temporary uses and securing permanent new tenants
  - Develop initiatives to promote and assist independent retailers

- Promote diversification and introduce new, non-retail uses which will help support the future vitality and viability of town centres and improve the evening economy
- Review parking/traffic management in all towns and consider changes that will promote economic sustainability or growth.

5.5 Given that the County Councils strategic plans and strategies it is difficult to equate the decision to close the public toilets in Llangollen in the light of the impact that the decision could have on the local tourist economy and the continued viability of the high street. The actions appear to be counterintuitive.

## **6. Community Toilet Schemes.**

6.1 Whilst these schemes are being promoted by the County Council as a possible solution to offer an alternative approach to the provision of public toilets, there are problems connected with them. These toilets are not suitable for large numbers of visitors needing the toilet at the same time. Why would a restaurant put up with 50 people getting off a coach and ploughing into their cafe with no return to the business for use of its facilities?

6.2 These facilities will be open only when the business is open; this means 10am until midnight in some pubs but means far shorter opening hours in other establishments. The Service Provider/Proprietor also retains the right in exceptional circumstances to refuse a member of the general public admission to their premises and/or use of their toilet facilities. This means that the toilets are not public in the same sense that municipal toilets are public; the scheme's toilets are open to the public, provided that the service provider is prepared to accept them.

6.3 Therefore Community Toilet Schemes should be seen as an extension and enhancement to the existing public toilet provision within an area and not as a replacement.

## **7. Recommendation.**

7.1 It is recommended that the observations once considered by Members should be forwarded to DCC as the Town Councils consultation response before 15 September 2024.

## **8. Reasons for recommendation.**

9.1 To respond to the consultation before it closes to comments.