

Carmarthen Civic Society-Executive Committee
Minutes of Meeting held on 9th January 2019
At Richmond Park Football Club, Priory Street, Carmarthen

Present: (in alphabetical order) Nigel Evans, Wendy Evans (Treasurer), Peter Hughes-Griffiths, Huw Iorwerth (Secretary), Jeremy John, Carole Jones, Jonathan Lewis, Iris Owen, Brian Rowlands, Molly Thomas, Mary Thorley (in the Chair)

Apologies: Linda Jones, Janice Powers, Julie Rees, Trefor Thorpe, Lee Whatley

Personal: i) There were no declarations of pecuniary interest; ii) Mary explained that Linda had asked her to chair the meeting in her unavoidable absence; iii) Molly reported on her recent visit to see Shirley who would welcome visitors.

1. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January were approved.

2. Arising:

- **Great British High Street Awards:** Carmarthen had not won an award in their category but the hard work by the Chamber of Trade had generated positive publicity for the town.
- **Guildhall:** A letter was received from the Chief Executive in reply to the Society's request that RCAMW be allowed to record the building before any development work could proceed in the Guildhall. Mr James stated that Condition 6 of the planning decision notice required the recording of architectural elements of the scheme. Discussions had already occurred between the Local Planning Authority and the applicant's agent with regards meeting this requirement.

Huw informed members that Richard Goodridge had presented the Society, via Sally Bere, with copies of measured drawings of the building made by RGH Dunton in June – August 1974. These had been retrieved from a skip on the occasion of the court's closure. The County Archives had expressed interest in having copies. Huw stated he would arrange this and also look into the viability of having smaller copies made for other possible uses.

3. Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to report.

4. Treasurer's report:

Wendy reported that the No 1 account balance stood at £1,136.43, with no outstanding bills, while No 2 account held £315.50. £42 had been raised by the raffle at the Christmas Dinner and there was £190.17 earmarked within the No 1 account for gardening work.

Reference was made to the need to keep existing members informed of the work of the Society and to send new members a welcome letter. Huw stated that he circulated information to those members whose email addresses were known. Circulation by mail, as occurred for the AGM, incurred considerable costs in postage and copying. As no formal programme was drawn up for the year ahead and events were arranged on an ad hoc basis, no printed programme had been prepared. He would, however, co-ordinate with Wendy to ensure that new membership applications were suitably acknowledged. He drew attention as well to the Society's website and Facebook page which publicised the work of the Society. It was **AGREED: to discuss at the March meeting communication with members.**

5. Reports from sub-groups:

- **Green spaces:** Molly reported that she had met Alan Bowen of Awaydays Coastcare who was keen to take over responsibility for maintaining the flower bed between Wilkinsons

and the Falcon Hotel car park. She would arrange to join the volunteers during their initial work to give guidance on existing planting and care. The Town Council had, as requested, removed the sign stating the Society's involvement.

- **Town appearance and image:** Brian reported that there was a considerable reduction in the amount of illegal parking in Nott Square and Guildhall Square since the police moved into their new premises in the Guildhall. Peter, however, said he would pursue with the police the question of finding an alternative to parking their own vehicles at the front of the Guildhall building.

Concern was expressed at the recent closure of the flower shop in King Street and threatened closure of other businesses in the area. It was suggested that although there was a footfall of about 25,000 per week, too many shops were offering similar services and that the level of business rate was causing difficulties. It was noted that business rates were set nationally; the subsidy the county council was able to give new businesses was limited to two years.

Nigel drew attention to an issue that had arisen affecting St Peter's Church. Refuse bags containing clothing and other personal items were being strewn across the graveyard. Investigation had shown that the bags were ones left outside charity shops and were being targeted by scavengers. As this was happening overnight and collections from the shops were not until early morning, there did not seem to be an easy solution.

Attention was also drawn to the unsightly appearance of the Capitol cinema block and to the danger from tiles falling from the Penlan Workhouse roof.

- **Publicity, marketing:** Members were pleased to learn that the Society's new website was now live. (www.carmarthencivicsociety.co.uk) However, Iris drew attention to the need to review the Welsh translation which had been provided by the automatic Google translation service. She had sent Julie a part revision and was working on a further section. She also enquired whether the initial work done by Margaret before her final illness was still available. Enquiries would be made with her family regarding access to her computer and, in particular, to the collection of photographs stored thereon and intended to be included on the website.
- **Landmark buildings (including Planning):** The decision of the Planning Inspector in respect of the appeal by the owner of the Penlan Workhouse against the Enforcement Order was awaited. No information was available about the progress of the planning application by Lidl to develop a store on the former police station site adjoining the Bulwarks Ancient Monument.
- **Riverside:** No further information to report.
- **Blue plaques:** Huw stated he would arrange a meeting shortly. Assistance and advice was being given to other organisations in respect of plaques to commemorate the founding of the Gorsedd and the first head of the Girls' Grammar School.

6. Programme of meetings:

Huw reminded members that Louise Austin had been invited to talk at the February meeting on the Tywi Gateway project. Nigel offered to ascertain whether St John's Church was available as a venue. Failing that enquiries would be made with the Registrar's office. Mary stated she would obtain a title for the talk from Louise Austin prior to publicising the event.

7. Civic Society Awards:

Huw reminded members that arrangements had not yet been made to present the inaugural David White Award. Discussion followed on whether to continue with the method adopted in the last year of presenting individual awards at regular intervals during the year or to hold only one ceremony at which all awards were presented. **It was AGREED: that a Members' Evening be held in May each year at which, inter alia, any awards could be presented.**

8. Regeneration Forum:

Huw stated that he had been asked to chair a sub-group of the Forum to review aspects of the Masterplan and to bring forward priorities of schemes which could be taken forward quickly. Interest had been expressed in proposals to identify sites for further murals in the town, for improving the environs of the railway station as one of the key gateways to the town and to provide guidance on standards of design for signage on commercial premises in the Conservation Areas.

9. Any other business:

- Details were received of a lecture on Henry V11 and Tudor Wales to be given by Nathan Amin at St Peter's Church on Saturday 19th January.

PLEASE NOTE

Date of next meeting: Next Executive Committee meeting will be on Wednesday **6th March 2019** at 6pm. On **Wednesday 6th February** at 6pm there will be an open meeting at St John's Church for members of the Society and the general public, when Louise Austin, manager of the Tywi Gateway Trust will speak on "The Tywi Gateway Project at the Bishop's Park Abergwili".