

Ruthin Town and Around O Gwmpas y Dre



Local news, comment and features, published quarterly by Ruthin and District Civic Association, Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun a'r Cylch

September 2017

Open Doors – Access to Heritage Ruthin's Celebration is welcomed by Miles Anderson

Once again September arrives with its promise of welcoming visitors and residents alike to enjoy and participate in Opening the Doors of a host of historic and iconic buildings in and around Ruthin, and having a unique chance to step inside to explore their hidden treasures. And you can join us on a walking tour with a knowledgeable guide, and learn about lives and times past - gone but not forgotten!



In past years we had to wait for the last week in September to sample the delights of Ruthin's Open Doors but this year we have moved up to the 'pole position' with the weekend of 2nd and 3rd September being reserved for Ruthin town's buildings, tours and events. It's only then a short wait to participate in the delights of those sites that fall under the orbit of Ruthin and District Civic Association's extended reach beyond the town's boundary to its villages where more rural doors will be opening on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th of September

In town it is not only churches, chapels and castles – actually only one of the latter! – that are open, but historic buildings, shops, homes, the Old Gaol and Archives and there will be at the Craft Centre an opportunity to 'Make a Craft Journey' with a studio ceramics and modern design valuation day. There will also be tours including a first for the Ruthin Pub Tour. It will probably be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see behind the modest façade of The Royal Oak on Clwyd Street.

Moving on only a short week and the second half of Ruthin's Open Doors is even more of a treasure trove of delights. Being more rural in its setting it is hardly surprising that this weekend we are offered an opportunity to visit a farm, the prestigious Rhug Estate farm. As well as a couple of gracious hall houses, Plasnewydd at Llanfair D.C. and Nantclwyd Hall – here it is only the gardens that surround the hall that are open. Other especially noteworthy sites include an old railway station, now a B&B, a pottery, an old rectory, a redundant church specially opened for this occasion, and an opportunity to see the famous Jesse window in St Dyfnog's Church, Llanrhaeadr Y.C.

The starting point for both weekends has to be Ruthin Library, well worth visiting in its own right, where booklets with all the information can be picked up. Please note carefully opening times, any restrictions and the necessity of pre-booking some visits and tours – but most important, take advantage of participating in this wonderful celebration of Ruthin and District Association's Open Doors.

Celebrating 25 years in a beautiful home

Librarian, Carys, tells Miles Anderson of developments

On the 12th October 2017, Ruthin library will celebrate a significant move of location just 25 years ago. Up until October 1992 the library services for Ruthin were dispensed from Portakabins in the courtyard of the erstwhile old Ruthin gaol at 46 Clwyd Street. What could there not be to celebrate in a move from such an inappropriate location to the splendour of its current home in Record Street?

Finding a suitable use for the old courthouse was very necessary. By their nature, law enforcing premises have always been splendid, imposing buildings. What better use could be found for it than a library? It would signify a move from the incarceration of miscreants to the enlightenment, through knowledge, of the citizens of the town!

This might sound a little high-flown, but today some of the most regular visitors the Ruthin's library these days, besides those wishing to extend their knowledge through reading, are people needing help in accessing through the internet educational needs, job and career opportunities, local authority information and opportunities to broaden and enhance their lives.

Reading is still the primary service of our library. Even today with more people reading books on Kindle for recreational leisure reading, there is a constant daily flow of books in and out over the counters of Ruthin library.

It was a pleasure to meet with Carys one afternoon to hear how the last 25 and more years have been for her as our only local librarian to have worked here continuously over this period. It was also a pleasure to hear that those employed in Ruthin library derive much pleasure from working in such a pleasant environment and being able to help so many of our citizens in their daily lives.

Although Carys was able to tell me of the many changes that had transpired over this period, it is even more surprising how much of the original objectives our library are still the same today as they were 25 years ago.

In the early days back in the Portakabins this had been the headquarters of the Glyndŵr library services. The later move from Clwyd to Denbighshire, that involved the taking over of a substantial financial deficit, meant that money was lacking for new books for a period.

More recent changes, with so many services having to be accessed on-line, are a mixed blessing. Development plans on hard-copies that used to be available to view in the upper floors of the library now can only be seen in Ruthin via the internet. On the other hand researching documents and educational tracts rather than ordering the necessary books can be quickly printed off and passed on the enquirer.

Ystafell Hafina dedicated to the memory of ex-chair of the Ruthin and District Civic Association, Hafina Clwyd, is being ever more used for meetings, discussion groups and lectures. It is not surprising that this lovely room centrally located and adjacent to a public car park is so popular. And whilst making reference to Hafina it is good to see that Ruthin library is much dedicated to encouraging the use of the Welsh language, something that she sought to promote throughout her life.

The children's section is today busier and busier. Through the summer various projects to get children reading both in English and Welsh are

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part of the library programme. In the old days libraries were places where a sepulchral silence was expected to be observed: today you will frequently hear a squeak of delight from the children as they are excited by the unfolding of their story.

We wish Ruthin library a very happy 25th anniversary and look forward to their celebrating a golden anniversary in 2042.

HOMES AND CASTLES

Derek Jones considers how people in a town once dominated by a castle may now give a very different meaning to the phrase 'pulling up the drawbridge'



'We devote a lot more time to studying the battles and wars of history than to considering that history really consists of centuries of people going about their daily business, eating, sleeping, and merely endeavouring to get more comfortable...'

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As always, this year's Open Doors will focus on buildings which have been part of the public life of Ruthin: churches, chapels, the library, the Craft Centre, the former prison, and of course the castle.

It's noticeable that all these are public buildings. I didn't mention Nantclwyd y Dre, which of course was formerly a private house, but, once it had acquired heritage status, it became, to all intents and purposes, a public building, leaving only Rose Cottage to fly the flag for private life; but that's not on the programme for this year.

I wonder how we would answer a statement by the popular historian Bill Bryson, who wrote in his *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*: 'We devote a lot more time to studying the battles and wars of history than to considering that history really consists of centuries of people going about their daily business, eating, sleeping, and merely endeavouring to get more comfortable...'

Applied to Ruthin, Bryson would obviously single out the Castle, as an example of our continuing passion for battles and wars – though he would also be bound to notice local interest in books, archives, crafts, sport and worship. He concludes that 'most of the key discoveries of human life can be found in fabric of the houses in which we live'.

In that spirit, I recently took a 'slow walk' in the area of Erw Goch, Bryn Rhydd and Maes Cantaba. They were built, I gathered, at different stages from the 1960s onwards, which explains the fact that the estates are anything but monolithic. Their layout follows the lie of the land, and the house styles and frontages are very varied. There are open views up to the Clwydians and down, across the town, to St Peter's.

I passed a few local people and exchanged pleasantries about the weather. Nobody, I was pleased to say, seemed to think that I was 'casing the joint'. On the other hand (and this where my reference above to 'pulling up the drawbridges' originated) I noticed that most owners had provided a wall or hedges to mark off their gardens from curious passers-by. The exception was Maes Cantaba where the handsome pointed gabled houses have neither frontage, hedges or walls. As for the insides of all the houses on my walk, they were impenetrable!

From a wholly different time and place, I remembered a few sentences from a wonderful novel set in Trinidad, where he was born, by V.S. Naipaul. *A House for Mr Biswas*. After a lifetime of self-education and searching for independence, Mr Biswas was 'struck again and again by the wonder of being in his own house, the audacity of it: to walk in through his own front gate, to bar entry to whoever he wanted, to close his doors and windows every night, to hear no other noises except those of his family, to wander freely from room to room, and about his yard...It was stupendous'

Ruthin's High Streets – 2017

Miles Anderson considers the changes and continuities

'Resilience' is the word that comes to mind when looking at Ruthin's high streets today!

The town's and villages' communities continue to be drawn to visit the shopping streets of Ruthin despite out-of-centre supermarkets and the delights of shopping on-line – they must be doing something right.

For a start it is a sign of an ageing population that we can continue to support two pharmacies as well as the one at Plas Meddyg.

But putting health matters to one side the other continuations that draw locals in must include those shops of a long standing local individuality. Amongst them one we must mention is the hardware emporium, Kings on Well Street. It continues to defy so called modernisation and carries an incredible stock of everyday household and domestic items that would be hard, if not impossible, to purchase elsewhere. At the risk of failing to acknowledge other longstanding shops, we must mention, for example Da Vinci's delicatessen famous far and wide for the excellence of its food and drink, and down Clwyd Street, Threads carries a huge range of haberdashery. Then just higher up, the excellence of the range of goods for children young and old in the Harris's Toy Shop is quite exceptional.

Perhaps less surprisingly we continue to have two local family butchers. There has traditionally been a sort of repartee, almost backchat, that tends to flow across the butcher's chopping board that could never be replicated in a supermarket. This atmosphere of social interaction seems to spread amongst those customers waiting for that individual choice of perhaps "Just two sausages, please" – no multi-packs here!

There are other longstanding reasons for coming into town. The library, for one, offers information, a chance to order a special book, and admire the latest display. One particular thing you will find in the library is a comfortable seat, a table to sit at and even a selection of newspapers.

For those of us with the reading habit, besides the library there is just off the square Janet's bookshop. This too is a source of information having amongst other listing, details of the offerings at Theatr Clwyd, well displayed copies of recent publications and once again a sociable atmosphere.

So much for the continuities of reasons to visit Ruthin's high streets; what then of the changes in our habits that rather than shopping still bring us into town? Meeting for a cup of coffee is nothing new, and yet today cafes have filled many slots in the high streets vacated by other and are daily well patronised. This seems to have become almost a way of life for some of our locals and once again the opportunities to socialise is one of the appeals that draws people in as well as the offer of a cup of something infinitely superior to a spoonful of instant coffee in a mug. Again here there are tables and chairs to sit at and newspapers to browse. In some cafes they are frequently filled with groups of mothers and babies.

The conclusion thus far is that our high streets offering opportunities to socialise. A number of recently opened antique and bric-a-brac shops offer opportunities to browse. All this would seem to be born out to an extent, but does not offer a full explanation for this 'resilience' we first commented on, there is more to this trend.

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But what of recent events? The Old Court House on St Peter's Square is reputed to be generating a few enquirers – it is so well located and of a reasonable size to appeal to potential entrepreneurs. The premises recently occupied by the Aga Shop on Clwyd Street shows signs of developing into a fashion shop, but how many such women's clothes shops can a town the size of Ruthin support? New boutiques such as the laundrette, the Sweet Shack and the hat shop et al continue to spring up, but how long they will last, who knows?

We have to conclude that, though Ruthin's high streets are destined to continue to be occupied by merchants wishing to trade in 2017, as they did in the middle-ages. The tendency will be not to trade in goods but in services. Many people coming into Ruthin to do business today will not bring shopping baskets to carry home the their daily foodstuffs, but rather will be armed with their credit cards be accessing services, cafes, libraries, computer services, banks, solicitors, estate agents, doctors, even calling at the County Offices to renew their bus passes.

In the long run what is important is that the high streets should adapt to the needs of the people of 2017 – and this is what they appears to be doing – and successfully!

Quayle Award for the Lord's Garden

Robert Hughes welcomes this presentation to a lovely garden

The Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre and the Heritage Services Department of Denbighshire County Council are delighted to have received the Quayle Award at a ceremony to mark the occasion in the lovely gardens on the third of July 2017. The Lord's Garden has been totally restored and now includes a variety of different aspects of horticulture which together make an extremely interesting and peaceful place to visit. The Heritage Services Department was awarded a significant grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the old garden which, in recent years, had become totally overgrown and neglected.

The garden now includes a small pavilion which overlooks a newly planted meadow to one side and a lawn to the front. This is an ideal setting to hold outdoor concerts and possibly choral evenings. The Friends recently organised a very successful jazz evening earlier this year. This facility can be made available to other groups to organise suitable events subject to agreement with the Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre committee and, if necessary, the appropriate department within Denbighshire County Council.

The Quayle Award is presented annually by the Ruthin and District Civic Association to the owners of a property within the town or surrounding area which the Association judge to have improved and aesthetically enriched the immediate environment by good design or sensitive restoration. Professor William Quayle was a distinguished local resident who had a particular interest in the effect of architecture on the built environment. Following its restoration in 2007, Nantclwyd y Dre itself received a Quayle Award which acknowledged the quality and authenticity of the extensive works on the house and it is particularly appropriate that, on behalf of The Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre, the newly restored Lord's garden should receive this year's Quayle Award.



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News from the Villages

Alan Edwards reports from Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd

Foremost amongst the planned developments concerning Llanfair is the Proposed Development of 63 houses on land off Wrexham Road, Llanfair D.C.

This was discussed at Denbighshire County Council's Planning Committee on the 14th June, 2017. It was agreed that this would go ahead, with eight votes for and seven against. The proposed development has been of huge concern to residents, particularly the elderly. Nobody was against the development, everyone accepted that there needs to be more housing, but this particular plan increases the size of the village by 60% and is far too big.

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There are a number of conditions attached to this Application and the Developers, Pure & Commercial, will need to report back to the Planning Department and Llanfair DC Community Council before any building work can commence. There are also further concerns that this will entail interfering with a 2nd World War memorial, details below.

The proposed new Ysgol Llanfair D.C. is to be sited on the Glebe Land, Llanfair D.C. Denbighshire County Council are intending to apply for planning permission for the development of a new school building for 126 full time pupils and 18 part time pupils in Llanfair D.C., to replace the existing school building in the village. A consultation event, held on 26 June, 2017, was well attended and many concerns were raised. This matter is still at an early stage, although it seems certain that in principal the building of a new school will go ahead.



This proposal is for a Tea Room in Vestry House, which at present is under the control of St. Cynfarch & St. Mary's Church, Llanfair D.C. The White Horse public house in Llanfair D.C. is proposing to open a community tea room/small shop in the Vestry House. This has been discussed with the Church Committee and residents of the village, who have been given the opportunity to share their views. The landlord of the White Horse gave Llanfair DC Community Council an overview of the proposal, stating that it will be open 4 days a week from 10am to 5pm. The Community Council supported this proposal. The Church Committee intend to submit a planning application for "Change of Use" and has sought the comments of the Community Council beforehand.

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2nd War Memorial for Llanfair D.C.

Plans to expand a Denbighshire village involve interfering with a registered war memorial, but the 63 homes earmarked for Wrexham Road in Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd have been recommended for approval.

William Ronald Corkhill was the son of Captain Thomas and Bessie Corkhill who hailed from the village and planted the 14 trees in the late 1950s. The family owned the fields, which are subject to the planning application by Pure Residential and Commercial Ltd.

The firm want to build 18 bungalows and 45 houses and remove four of the trees which are covered by a Tree Protection Order, with the remaining 10 having to be cut back to make way for a footpath, resulting in each tree of the memorial being affected.



A plaque showing the trees, which commemorate flying officer William Ronald Corkhill, killed in action on November 17, 1940, aged 25 (Image: Alan Edwards)

Residents say interfering with it would be “morally wrong” as it is listed on the National Register of War Memorials held at the Imperial War Museum.

“Many of us have raised this and we’ve been told war memorials are not a planning issue but this is just one of a whole host of objections to the scheme. It’s morally wrong.” (ref: Daily Post June 2017)

A MECCA FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

Derek Jones introduces his first – and probably his only! - Motorcycle Notes



I haven’t yet been able to discover when exactly the Ponderosa became a mecca for motorcyclists, but its website declares that, as a café and shop, it is 31 years old and has been owned by the same family throughout.

Without question it is, by now, a notable local landmark; perhaps, when it is 50, but perhaps before, it may qualify for admission for the ranks of Open Doors. On the other hand, it has already spawned the Llangollen annual motorbike festival, held in early August.

The Ponderosa is certainly open to a vast range of motorcycles and their owners.: as the website puts it, ‘the new young riders to born again bikers, Cruisers, Tourers, Custom Trailers, Sports, brand new and vintage BSA, Triumph, ATS, Vincent...if you have two wheels, you’ll probably see it here, especially in summer time’.

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As I inferred in the by-line for this piece, I am a novice in these matters, and I haven’t, I admit, ever stopped for refreshments on this part of the Horseshoe Pass, nor inspected its landmark vehicles. It is rare, however, during opening hours, to find the Ponderosa not full of bikers, mostly still leathered up, but without their crash helmets, engaged in fervent discussion.

Is it entirely imagination to guess that they are talking to each other about the respective merits of the shiny apples of their eyes? I wonder if they have read Robert M. Pirsig’s, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, first published in 1976, and often re-issued – a ‘must read’ for those interested in popular philosophy.

It tells the story of a father and son’s motorcycle journey across north western USA, during which they converse about the meaning of life, beginning with how motorcycles actually work. I recommend it to our readers, whether or not they are bikers. Where else would you find a work of philosophy which discusses everything from the movements of tappets to the writings of Aristotle?

There is, of course, a local downside to this rhapsody. Motorbikes are noisy, especially if they do not have silencers. The noise carries from the main road up to Graigfechan, reaching a crescendo as the vehicles take corners on the Nant y Garth Pass.

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I can, up to a point, understand the thrill of speed, as J.M.W. Turner did when he hung out of the window of a Great Western Railway train at Maidenhead in order to convey the authenticity of his experience of this new technology (*Rain, Steam and Speed, 1844*), now in the National Gallery, London.

But there should be limits. Recently, I stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross the road at Cutting Corner. As I waited, a motorcyclist cut in front of me, and took off at speed. Not a cutting corner we should allow!

Housing Controversies since 1988

Peter Daniels recalls them

During the life of the Ruthin & District Civic Association and its 1988 predecessor, the Ruthin & District Association, local housing has had a history of disputation, both in town and around.

There can be nothing like the prospect of unwanted housing to rally locals in defence of their patch. Each new wave of housing is resisted by those who already enjoy the benefits of where they live. During the last 30 years or so—during the life of the Association— Ruthin and its villages are no exception.

It is of course thanks to the motor car that Ruthin has become a place where people chose rather than have to live. By the time of the formation of the Association in 1988, two (or more) car families were increasingly the norm and speculative housing developers were building to cater for those who wished to live here. This coincided with the ascendancy of Ysgol Brynhyfryd to its pinnacle some 15 years ago as one of the best schools in Wales, itself a major draw. Incremental improvements at the sewerage works also enabled development.

J E Parry (Rossett) Ltd was one builder who capitalised on the housing boom over a decade and a half. In 1976, Glyndŵr District Council refused planning permission on land at Maes Cantaba but granted it in 1982. Building began in two phases, including the second, from 1986, which tended to see larger Parry dwellings. The agglomeration of housing in this quadrant of Ruthin caused the newly formed Association to comment that, together with earlier developments at and around Erw Goch & Parc y Castell, the area was now nothing but a “blur of housing” and that the “change was not always for the better”.

There followed Parry’s 30-property development at Bryn Eryl nurseries. By now, the houses were all four bedroomed. At the time, the Beresford Adams estate agency waxed lyrical, stating that this would become one of Ruthin’s most prestigious estates.

Then came Parc Brynhyfryd, an estate of over 70 houses. Redrow had originally planned to build a more mixed development but abandoned plans because the district council wanted long phasing, which was not Redrow’s style. It fell to Parry Homes to put up medium and large four bedroom houses plus some bungalows, between 1989 and 1993. A number of district councillors railed against the development, one stating that it would be a “threat to the character of the Vale”. Another commented that the Vale of Clwyd was not a sponge that could continue to soak up everyone who wished to live here without affecting its way of life, character and environment.

A quarter of a century later, it is odd to think of Parc Brynhyfryd as being so controversial. It did, however, result in Glyndŵr considering future housing applications in terms of local needs for Welsh speakers, earned praise at the time from campaigning pressure group Cymeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg.

Meanwhile, a further controversy emerged in 1989 with plans to develop no fewer than 30 acres of land between Dog Lane and Lôn Speiriol Isaf. The whole town seemed to object to the scale of development and its impact on the culture of the town. In short, the town felt it was unnecessary. It was outside the town’s development boundary and it ignored what had been a centuries-old town perimeter.

Developments were also springing up in Ruthin’s villages. Perhaps the most controversial was the late 1980s development of land at

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Clawddnewydd Farm. The developer was from Wolverhampton and it was in the Black Country that he marketed the Trem y Coed estate vigorously. Locals felt that the housing was beyond their reach and that, again, the cultural balance of their community would suffer. There were similar concerns at Gwyddelwern's Garreg Lwyd estate.



Between Parry Homes and the present, there have been few large-scale housing developments in town. One was at Maes Hyfryd, off Greenfield Road, where between 1993 and 1995 permission was refused no fewer than on four occasions before being built, as planners felt that the development on higher ground would have an unacceptable visual impact on the town

Then, in 2007, there came by far the biggest housing controversy of all: Glasdir. This was a mixed development of flats, terraced and detached housing. Few at the time considered such a development necessary. In the early days, units proved very difficult to shift and this was largely owing to the public's perception of flooding in the area. An article in Town & Around nevertheless found these houses to be well designed, quite attractive and more than acceptable. Tragedy nevertheless struck in November 2012 with the flooding of almost the entire area and building ceased thereafter, resulting in only a partly finished estate

St Peter's restoration – Not a problem but an Opportunity!

The Rev'd Stuart Evans talks to Miles Anderson

It is very often the case that when the church roof needs restoration, this is the beginning of the end. To historic buildings, as St Peter's, the ingress of water tends to set off a chain of deteriorations that are difficult to break.

This impending disaster at St Peter's seems to have, on the contrary, been turned into an opportunity for the church's re-engagement with the local community. A movement has sprung up with a determination to bringing this church back into the central position of the town's cultural and social life as well as retaining its true roots as a place of worship.

Certainly the Open Day in July was an excellent, well attended, occasion for Ruthin's citizens and people from further afield to hear all about the proposed developments that are planned. Our warden, The Rev'd Stuart Evans, was on hand to meet people and answer questions. And, as he later reported, there was great interest in the bells' restoration as well as that of the roof. There were a surprising number of volunteers to become future regular bell ringers once the bells repairs, retuning and rehangings have been accomplished.

Stuart is fortunate to have a great team to ensure the project of the roof's restoration is successfully achieved. It will take time but gaining one of the three Heritage Lottery Funding awards in the final round before the NHL funding section for Grants for Places of Worship comes to an end, was a great achievement.

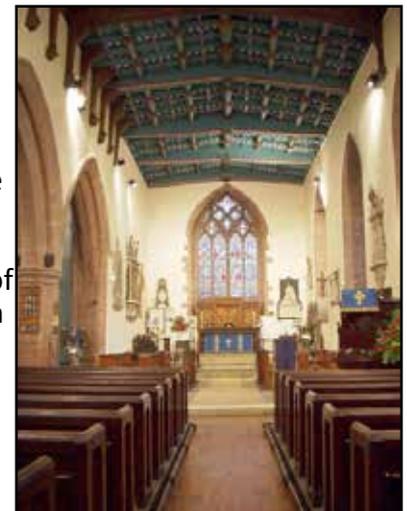
As well as formal funding applications, it is

important that funds are raised locally. This has been going well, and continues to go well, though there is much still to do. The next event will be the concert given by the Porthmwyn Male Voice Choir with the proceeds being donated to the roof repair fund. This takes place at 7.30pm on Saturday 9th September with tickets at £10 to include a glass of wine.

Talking to Stuart, he sees this restoration period as an opportunity to achieve three aims:

- 1 – Preserving heritage
- 2 – Enabling diversity of worship
- 3 – Rediscovering the earlier uses of the church interior.

He ended our conversation with a question that he would like to pose as to how people would like to see the building develop in the future. As he said, "What do you want to happen under the roof of St Peter's once its future is secured through these repairs?" Let's have answers, many of them, to this question please!



An insight into Planning and Housing in Ruthin area

Heather Williams reports

In June we had a thought-provoking presentation from Angela Loftus, Strategic Planning and Housing Manager of Denbighshire County Council. The talk proved of great interest to the audience and numerous questions were asked but below is a brief resume of the talk – in case you missed it!

Some interesting facts and figures were given. There are 5958 dwellings in Ruthin with 329 on the Council waiting list at September 2016. 81 affordable homes had been provided since 2004. (Questions were asked about the waiting list and affordable housing). In terms of house prices, Ruthin had an overall average price of £182,712 which was cheaper than nearby Rhewl (£216,143), Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd (£285,850) and Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd (£301,375). During the last year, sold prices in Ruthin were 9% up on the previous year and similar to 2008 when the average house price was £180,795 (which is the national average now).

Angela Loftus also gave us an overview of the strategic planning situation. The current Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted in 2013 needs to be reviewed. This process will begin shortly and a replacement plan, which local residents need to be involved in, will be adopted by 2021. A LDP allocates new land for housing, on which subsequent planning decisions are based. It means that the County Council can direct development to areas that it considers are most

appropriate. Not having a plan would mean that it would be hard to resist applications from developers on other sites.

A local example of the planning process in action is the decision to allocate a significant housing site at Llanfair DC in the approved 2013 LDP. Recently a planning application was submitted for 63 houses on this site. However in spite of the allocation of this land in the LDP the application is proving to be controversial to the residents in the local community. That's why it is so important that residents engage with the planning process when the draft LDP is out for consultation – at this stage residents have far more potential to have their say on where housing is allocated and the size of the development.

As previously mentioned in Town and Around, a new plan which the Welsh Government is proposing is a community plan – known as Place Plans in Denbighshire. These plans cover issues wider than land use, and should have real meaningful engagement with the community. The County Council will be preparing an on-line toolkit so that local communities can develop their own plans which can then be formally adopted by the County Council. Maybe this is something the Ruthin Town Team working with the Ruthin Town Council could take on? In other areas the Community Councils could take on this initiative.

Rhos Street School's Future

Paul and Karline Edgar ask for your suggestions

Members Paul and Karline Edgar of Rhos Street are spearheading the fight to save Rhos Street School in the face of its proposed spring 2018 closure. They had previously appealed to Cadw but received no response at all. Now, they are approaching the County Council.

They believe that there are only a handful of possible outcomes for the site. One is to see the building raised to the ground and replaced by about 80 houses. The building itself would be lost. It is an important design, as an early example of the Elizabethan revivalist style of the 1840s. Its history was traced on page 6 of December 2016's Town & Around (available at ruthincivic.org).

The other options retain the building. One is as an adjunct to Ruthin School, for its music & arts department. At the time this was mooted, this

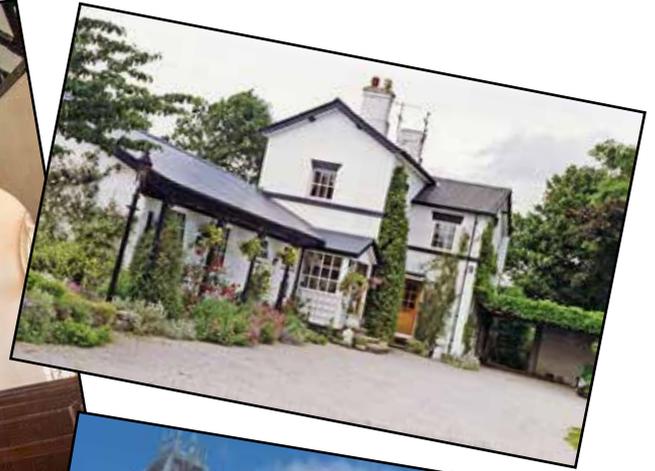
was purely speculative but, apart from retaining the structure, would see its continued use for educational purposes.

Another, put forward as part of the May 2107 local elections, would see the closure of the Mount Street medical site and its transfer to Rhos Street School. This would form a natural link with the hospital behind it.

When the site is declared surplus, the worst outcome of all would be for it to remain empty and unloved. Whatever happens, there will be obvious accessibility issues, at a narrow pinch-point on Rhos Street.

If members have any views on what they might like to see at Rhos Street, they are invited to contact the Association.

Some Open Doors places to visit



24 hour Access to Defibrillators in Ruthin

Isabel Stewart advises knowledge of accessibility to this service

Ruthin Town's 24hr, accessible Defibrillators - Automated External Defibrillators (AED boxes) - at the moment Ruthin has three 24 hour accessible defibrillators. These are sited on the outer walls of:

- Ruthin Fire Station. Park Road, LL15 1NB.
- Ruthin Decor. Wells Street, LL15 1AF.
- Ruthin Rugby Club. Cae Ddol, LL15 2AA.

There are numerous other accessible defibrillators in the town but not with 24hr. access. Once a person stops breathing there are only about four minutes before brain damage and possibly death occur. So time is of paramount importance, and knowledge of the location of these AED boxes can save vital seconds. While one person commences CPR (30 compressions, 2 breaths), if required a second bystander can collect the defibrillator. The machines are self-explanatory. Once opened the machine speaks explaining where and how to place the AED pads. It tells you when to shock the

casualty. It **WILL NOT** allow you to use shock if it isn't necessary.

First Aid Courses and Defibrillator Demonstrations are most important.

They explain exactly what to do when in a situation where First Aid is required. Many surrounding villages now have AED boxes with 24hour access, so please check around and know where they are as one day you may need to use one.

The location of the three 24hr accessible Defibrillators in Ruthin Town can now be found in the Free Press under the Emergency Numbers.



Ruthin and District Civic Association

The Association's main aims are to promote 'Civic Pride' in the town of Ruthin and its surrounding villages. We aim to promote high standards in any relevant planning processes and in encouraging architectural excellence.

We always seek to work with our local authorities and organisations in pursuit of the preservation and improvement of the town's rich history and culture. In this respect we hold quarterly members meetings as well as monthly committee meetings.

Committee members: Chair – Liz Williams, **Vice Chair** – Heather Williams, **Treasurer** – Robert Williams, **Secretary** – Peter Daniels, **Members:** Kay Culhane, Menna Jones, Anne Roberts, Harold Jones, Kathy Daniels

Events and Diary Dates for the coming months

As well as the dates for Open Doors referred to earlier - for Ruthin Town this will be 2nd and 3rd September and for the Ruthin District it will be the 9th and 10th September

We then have our Annual General Meeting and Renewal of membership is now due (Please see inserted renewal form). This year the AGM is planned to be held on Thursday October 19th at 19.00 at Awelon. After the business session the speaker, Wayne Hope, the County Council's Flood Risk Manager, will give a presentation entitled "Ruthin: a History of Flooding".

If you would be interested in becoming a member of the association or join the committee, please contact our treasurer Robert Williams, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin, LL15 1SL, 01824 704998 or ruthincivic@btinternet.com Further information, and back numbers of Town and Around can be found on www.ruthincivic.org

Ruthin Town and Around is published quarterly by Ruthin and District Civic Association. The views expressed by the individual writers are not necessarily those of the association.

We welcome letters and contributions.

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