

Town & Around O Gwmpas y Dre

September 2023



The 'Eyes of Ruthin' since 2003 from the Ruthin & District Civic Association

Taking it from the Top

**We asked
Denbighshire's Chief
Executive Graham
Boase for his views on
the contemporary
issues facing Ruthin...**

***T & A:** Ruthin people often say that public administration is its 'major industry'. What is the future of County Hall in the era of flexible working? There is also a feeling locally that the (political) leadership has moved its base to Rhyl, rather than previously at Ruthin*

GB: Even before the pandemic, the County Council knew that it held too much office accommodation, with large buildings in Ruthin, Denbigh and Rhyl, as we had already begun exploring options for flexible working i.e. home working or hybrid working between office and home. This was in order to make us more efficient and more attractive as an employer.

The pandemic forced most council business to move online, and we were able to react quickly to this requirement. Post pandemic we continue to promote flexible working and most meetings (internal and public) remain online. Both

County Councillors and staff are working well flexibly, it saves money and time and reduces our carbon footprint.

Of course staff still need to attend offices and there remains the need for face-to-face meetings.

For us its now all about the most appropriate place for these meetings to take place.

Cabinet can meet at any location. With the majority of Cabinet Members now living north of the A55, there's a certain logic to using the Rhyl office for more Cabinet/Lead Member related meetings. That said the monthly Cabinet meetings, the County Council meetings and Scrutiny Meetings, which are all public meetings are still held in County Hall Ruthin. I still have my office in County Hall, and the Leader and Cabinet retain their offices there, too. The leadership therefore has not moved their base to Rhyl but we are just all working more flexibly.

It's too soon to determine what impact this may have on our office accommodation, including County Hall in Ruthin. We continue to assess the accommodation we need. The important point is we know we have too much of it across the County so the key issue for us and our communities is what to do with our surplus. We cannot simply pull out of a building and leave it empty. That



would still cost the Council money and it would be a wasted, and deteriorating asset. We therefore need to find alternative uses for the office accommodation we no longer need.

We've made no decisions yet what to do, but we are working with public sector partners to see if they need any of our surplus office space, but most of

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Open Doors 2023

Once again, the Civic Association hosts September's Open Doors. The dates later this month are Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th September, 2023.

As usual, a myriad of properties will be available to view.

Details are available at: opendoorsruthin.org.uk. The site is updated as and when there are amendments.

Of particular note are:

- Gorphwysfa (Saturday only), now Ruthin's oldest dated residence
- See and hear about the town artefacts on display on Sunday at the Old Courthouse (booking required)
- Revisit The Old Gaol, open again this year

Please check the website, left, for opening times, events and the few instances where charges will apply.

There is a rare opportunity on Sunday to see the Town Council's artefacts, together with various speakers available to interpret their history & context.

Details and booking instructions at opendoorsruthin.org.uk

Free car parking on Saturday only.

■ Town artefacts, p7



New to T & A?

For the first time, copies of Town and Around are available free at most of this year's Open Doors venues.

If having picked up a copy of Town and Around for the first time you like what you see, please consider supporting the Ruthin and District Civic Association in its work by becoming a member.

Membership these days remains a very reasonable £10 (or £15 joint). Details are on page 11.

We are always looking for help and support from people with an interest in heritage and related issues. And for Open Doors, too.

If you feel you can help in this or any way, why not get in touch with the Secretary. His contact details are also on the rear page.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Civic Association event: see p12 | Annual General Meeting: p11



View from the Chair



For quite some time, I have been concerned about the amount of building work being carried out in properties known to have historic value.

In some cases, I worry that our conservation heritage is being eroded, quietly and

incrementally. We know of projects that have come close to disaster but for last minute intervention and this should not be the case.

The planning application currently seeking alterations to the former Castle Park Café (latterly the Ocean Pearl restaurant) is an example. There are concerns that the application for a side window ignores the heritage nature of the building. If that's correct, on this occasion, we have been able to react to this early. We were less

fortunate with the 2011 ceiling incident during the refurbishment of Wetherspoon's.

Is it time therefore that Denbighshire County Council carries out a conservation appraisal?

I do intend asking the question more formally and if anyone has similar concerns, I would ask that they contact me in order to raise any issues.

I am aware that Flintshire County Council has a build and repair grant to assist those people who own such properties. Not being aware of any similar entitlement in Denbighshire, I am wondering whether there is a similar scheme here and, if so, whether this should probably be advertised more effectively. If not, could it be considered.

Sometimes, those altering buildings no doubt try to circumnavigate the rules but

on other occasions owners are unaware of their responsibilities or may not know who to contact for help and advice.

Chris Evans, Denbighshire's Conservation Officer, is very knowledgeable and approachable, and will assist no doubt if issues are brought to his attention. I intend therefore to raise this issue in the very near future.



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Lack of 20/20 Vision on Enforcement



By the time you read this, the welcome and civilising new 20 mph default urban speed limit will shortly be in place.

In the UK, there have been two approaches to 20 mph. There are area-wide schemes, converting all (or most) roads to 20 that can include high streets. Then there have been those targeting just specific streets or areas around schools.

Only in Wales will we see a national approach. It is to be hoped that this will genuinely encourage more active travel such as walking and cycling. Above all, we hope that this will help to make the town centre a more pedestrian-friendly place.

One area missing from the 20 mph debates is enforcement. This falls within the purview of Amanda Blakeman, the Chief Constable. She has said that she will deploy her limited 'physical policing assets' (which we take to mean her officers) to the areas of highest harm.

This will likely mean that Ruthin town centre and possibly every other main or residual road in the district will rarely see enforcement. Yet, enforcement

seems to be a key to the success of the change.

Currently, we have seen regular-ish enforcement on Ffordd Glasdir on the A525 and at a spot near Galltegfa on the B5105. Neither are known for their high number of crashes.

The Chief does say, however, that this 'doesn't mean we will be ignoring the 20 miles an hour [limit], but I want to see [an] evidence-based approach in relation to where I prioritise resources.'

■ As we anticipate the reduction in urban traffic speeds, so we are seeing more e-scooters whipping around town, on streets but usually on pavements. The speeds at which their uninsured riders travel are truly hazardous to pedestrians. There needs to be enforcement of these, as well. Vehicles will be restricted to 20 mph on urban roads but e-scooters in pedestrian areas can run at any speed they like. A case of no joined up thinking?



Quayle Award

The winner of the Civic Association's 2022 Quayle Award is the restoration project at St Dyfnog's Well, Llanrhaeadr. The presentation of the award will be made at the AGM in October.

The holy well was a site of pilgrimage and healing. It was at its height in the 16th to 18th centuries. It was during this period that the sunken stone bath is believed to date. So popular was the well that donations from pilgrims paid for the famous ornate Tree of Jesse window in nearby St Dyfnog's church.



The well fell into disuse, then disrepair. In 2012, locals raised concern at its state. There followed a preservation society to raise funding to safeguard the historic site's future. Work on site & in the adjacent woodlands began in 2018 and completed in 2022. This was largely thanks to funding from Cadwyn Clwyd & the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The project has conserved the well bath & basin, bridges and walls, using traditional methods; improved the woodland for visitors with a new accessible path; improved the woodland's environment to help the site's fauna; and installed an interpretation board to help explain the history of the site.

The site is on North Wales' Pilgrim's Way.

Blooming Ridiculous at otherwise Blossoming Wildflower Sites

Our relatively new verge-side and public wild flower meadows are beginning to show results. Several sites are maturing well. That on Mold Road, at the entrance to Parc Brynhyfryd, for instance, continues to show considerable promise.

But the wildflower spaces have their critics. There is not universal approval. In fact, we now detect a hardening of attitudes towards these eco-friendly sites. True, they may not always look tidy. Then again, nature is not neat, orderly and spruce. Neither is life.

The Civic Association supports the County Council's biodiversity aims and the creation of wild flower meadowland. It's worth remembering why these sites were created. They are to reverse what is otherwise an alarming reduction in pollinators. When viewed alongside the use of pesticides in agriculture, we can often seem powerless in this sphere but the sites at least try to redress the balance. The County Council has declared not only a response to the climate emergency but also recognises an ecological emergency.

It seems, however, that these laudable aims are not enough to secure public approval for wildlife meadows.

Perhaps, therefore, we should also consider the human benefits of such re-wilding. One is the greater retention of water within the ecosystem. Another is a reduction in the local impact of excess heat through global warming within and adjacent to such sites.

If that isn't enough, we're given to understand that house prices (in England, where they are well ahead in

this area) actually improve directly as a result of wilding. So, on a more selfish level, those of us within reach of such wild sites may actually feel slightly better off as a result of the Council initiative.

Left Hand, Right Hand? Issues to be Addressed



After spraying in early July, with wild flower meadow in middle ground

In spite of the positives associated with re-wilding, there remain issues that the County Council needs to address. Those responsible for grass cutting as opposed to wild flower management, for example, seem to take the path of least resistance. Some of the more basic biodiversity suggestions seem too difficult for operatives to consider.

And, was mid-August just a little too early to cut the wild flower sites back? There were still plenty of flowers and insects wanting to feed on them.

More alarmingly was the late spraying this year of what we assume to be herbicides along the kerb-line adjacent to at least one major site. The

joint between the footway and carriageway this year was allowed to grow significant weeds. We're not sure whether this was a good or bad thing but before being sprayed they were allowed to bloom. This, in turn, attracted pollinators such as bees. Bees do not distinguish between blooms that have been sprayed or not. They continued to feed off the blooms, even after spraying.

This seemed to be somewhat self-defeating and in one fell swoop would have had a negative impact on the very pollinators that the County Council and we all should be willing to encourage and preserve.



Rogue wallflower on Erw Goch

Update on Rhos Street and other Vacant Heritage Properties

The **Rhos Street main school site, building and playground** remain sold to Adra subject to planning permission for housing. Readers may recall that the application was halted, in July 2022, owing to the concerns of the highways authority (the Trunk Road Agency). The purchaser is now undertaking a viability exercise to determine whether the development is financially viable if the existing building is retained. This follows community concerns raised regarding the original proposals. There is a modified application anticipated this calendar year for a revised residential scheme.

The **former school field** is, of course, now being managed by the County Council's Countryside Service as an open space and ecological improvement site, with access off Llanrhydd. The former temporary classrooms off Llanrhydd, now demolished, has enabled improved access to the hospital and surgery under

the recent building programme. There remains a plot of land that the County Council intend to market once the sale of the main site is completed. We can



Unsure future for former Ysgol Llanfair building

expect this to terminate in housing of some description.

The **Rhowl school site** has sold, subject to planning permission. The proposed developer has advised the County Council of an imminent forthcoming application for a residential

scheme.

The **former Llanfair school field** has been transferred to the Community Council for community use as an open and ecological space.

Discussions regarding **Llanfair school building** have been ongoing with the Community Council regarding possible community use but, realistically, there are no viable options or need for such a facility. The building will be marketed and any decision to sell will include a consultation.

As regards the former **Mount Street surgery** (less of a heritage site, of course), the

County Council has now relinquished any interest in the site that was to be a land swap for the new car park area adjacent to the hospital. We understand BCUHB is in discussions with alternative registered social landlords regarding potential development.

'Best Place in Wales? It Might be for Some'

Ruthin continues to be the best place to live in Wales. A Civic Association member unwittingly mentioned this good news to a worker at her home. The response was surprising. 'Best place to live? It might be for some' came the response.

Since then, our member spoke to several others in less well paid jobs and this seemed to be a strong consensus, particularly because of the lack of decent rental property for those on lower incomes.

So many previously rented properties these days seem to be converted into holiday lets or dwellings for the better off.

A couple of recent searches for rental properties in Ruthin resulted in a choice or no more than one or at most two being available. These tended to be beyond the price of lower paid workers. One was even *reduced* to £427 per week.

Has this conundrum ever been considered in the future plans for the town and district?

To a degree, yes. Last month, the new Clwyd Alyn Glasdir development completed. The final tenants have moved in to the 60 or so properties. They are able to live in superior accommodation at reasonable prices. The average rent for a two-bed dwelling is £127. This was the price recently of a one-bedroomed flat in the town centre. Maintenance is obviously taken care of by Clwyd Alyn's contractors and this at

the appropriate juncture will include planned replacements for kitchens and bathrooms.

In particular, it is Clwyd Alyn's aim is to tackle fuel poverty through the use of innovative design during building and greener technology during the running of each home.

A Clwyd Alyn spokeswoman has



confirmed that all properties are currently let to people who previously live no more than five miles from Ruthin or have a strong connection to the town (e.g. employment, caring for local relative, etc.).

Though a significant step, this only addresses in part the conundrum that is appropriately priced rental accommodation.

Denbighshire County Council from April 2025 is now proposing new Welsh Government powers to increase council tax premiums on second and partly

empty homes to 150 per cent.

This is alongside the Welsh Government's new rules requiring holiday lets to be occupied for at least 182 days of the year, up from the previous threshold of 70 days. If owners cannot meet that target, they face these council tax premiums of up to 300 per cent of standard rates.

This may therefore release more property onto the housing and rental markets for locals who need them. But critics in the Vale of Clwyd believe that the issue is far less acute here than in the North West of Wales or on the coast.

Our member's research, though unscientific, may contradict this.

Tourism continues as a major source of economic well-being in the Ruthin area and we need suitable accommodation. Farmers encouraged to diversify by converting outbuildings say that they face ruin.

Tim Bonner of the Countryside Alliance was quoted in the Daily Telegraph recently saying, 'Any policies that have a significant impact on tourism

could end up being more harmful than the housing problem they are seeking to address.' Locally, Denbighshire is saying that the scheme will 'help encourage empty properties to become available again... [which] will in turn add to sustaining and improving our county's economic health'.

Clearly the issues are too complex for a single, all-embracing policy where there are tensions between two facets of the economy. The tourist economy needs support. So, too, do lower income workers who service that sector...

10Years Ago

In the autumn of 2013, work began on Ruthin's art trail.

It was designed by Lucy Strachan and Fred Baier. The trail would eventually comprise a dozen or so 'spy holes' and dotted around the town centre about two dozen secret figures.

One of its objectives was to lure people from the Craft Centre into the town.

Once there, it tried to encourage visitors to look around them and to get a better feel for the town. There was an accompanying audio guide.

10 years later and the trail is still available to follow via an interpretation panel on the Square. The website no longer works. You occasionally find people peeping through the secretive holes.



How We Covered...

A spring 2003 edition of the Free Press felt that Ruthin had been 'left behind' 30 years after Mold 'muscle in' and seized the initiative at the formation of Clwyd County Council.

We questioned whether we had been 'left behind'. Commercially, Mold was thriving but actually we felt that Rithin was just different from Mold.

In other words, we had qualities that Mold hadn't: our streetscene, history, physical environment, annual festival... and an increasing reputation as a centre for the visual arts.

Ruthin still maintained a diversity in shopping. Tesco had yet to arrive.

We concluded that Ruthin was a rather unusual small town with much to shout about. We felt that Ruthin could hold its head up just as high as our neighbour 11 miles to our east.

And, in a twist of fate now 27 years ago, Mold no longer holds the local government grip it once did.



Edwards Enquires

Five more questions on Ruthin by Roger Edwards. No prizes other than the satisfaction of getting them right. Answers are on p12.

1. Which Ruthin chapel was at one time nicknamed 'Capel Cwrw' (lit. 'Beer Chapel')?

2. Where, on the outskirts of Ruthin, are Owain Glyndŵr and his men alleged to have hidden the night before his assault on Ruthin in 1400?

3. What is currently sited on Dol y Twr, the field known in more recent times as the Showfield?

4. On the outskirts of which village was Coch Bach y Bala fatally shot in 1913?

5. Which former Ruthin School pupil became the first speaker of the House of Commons to be impeached, in 1695?

Previous questions (and answers!) were published in the March and June 2023 issues: v.gd/radca

A Call for Level Heads on Square 'Levelling Up' Project



County Council Leader Jason McLellan considers the displays at the Old Gaol

At somewhat short notice, in July we were treated to a consultation on the levelling up projects in and around Ruthin. This took place at the Old Gaol.

Impressive initial plans for **St Peter's Church**, under the care of honorary project manager Julie Lloyd Owen, were both visionary and pragmatic. The prospect of a flexible and adaptable space with mezzanine is most welcomed. Plans included 'pilgrim accommodation'.

Similarly, those for **Nantclwyd y Dre** were fine. These included improved space for the myriad of volunteers at the house and garden, and visitor accommodation to help make the site more sustainable.

It was nevertheless felt that the plans thus far for **Cae Ddôl** lacked imagination. Had the County Council taken into account previous Ruthin Future consultations and reports on this? Was

there a likelihood of integrating the otherwise disparate green strips to create the visionary Clwyd linear park?

In spite of much preparatory and investigatory work, you don't need to be eagle eyed to notice that the work on the

The **Peers Memorial** incorporating the town clock has yet to start. In spite of this being a relatively 'quick win', the town has now missed the window of opportunity and the earliest this will start is now April 2024. Key to the project will again be the appointment of the right conservation architect and the County Council is urged to ensure its procurement rules are sufficiently flexible to appoint a knowledgeable, qualified and ardent specialist.



Castle Street pinch-point

St Peter's Square

As for the **Square**, there was little to see at the consultation. The project manager and the principal engineer were both nevertheless available to answer questions and did so willingly. We were able to glean that cost inflation was expected to dent the overall scheme.

We can expect a formal consultation but till then it is likely that the scheme will revolve around a one-way traffic system up Well Street and down Market Street, with Clwyd Street being two-way. The road network will need to adapt to the actual firm scheme.

There was strong support for the removal of the roundabout. But what of a shared space or pedestrian friendly environment? We shall have to wait and see.

The removal of the hated roundabout is by no means a foregone conclusion, though.

Cost considerations may result in abandoning the Castle Street part of the scheme. This in the Civic Association's view would be a mistake: Castle Street is

integral to the Square, is our most impressive street and needs something to reduce traffic speeds to allow shared access for pedestrians where the footways are limited and limiting. The Castle Street improvements need not stretch all the way to the castle (though this would of course be desirable).

Local historian Gareth Evans has already raised concerns about archaeology on the Square. With the Levelling Up opportunity, he wants a proper analysis. Fiona Gale is also behind such an approach. She notes that the Square is the least developed area of Ruthin and one of the earliest inhabited areas yet to be explored thoroughly.

Whether a thorough archaeological investigation will provide answers is unknown, of course, but both recognise that the County Council must try. Evans suggests that the first market on the Square was c.1290 but, more importantly, the first pre-conquest Welsh settlement would have been around c.1150.

■ Cae Ddôl, p8



St Peter's Church

Errata: Old Gaol

We're grateful to Philippa Jones who manages the Old Gaol site for pointing out some inaccuracies regarding the Spring 2023 edition of *Town and Around*. We are happy to set the record straight.

Our statement that the Old Gaol had closed for 'over four and half years' was untrue and gave a misleading impression as to the work that the Denbighshire Heritage Service does throughout the year. It was nevertheless true that the Old Gaol closed in October 2019, as it

would normally. It is only to the public from April to the end of September.

During this normal closure, essential maintenance was scheduled, the staff welcomed off-season tour groups and filming projects such as the one we mentioned.

Owing to the pandemic, the Old Gaol was unable to open to the public as normal in April 2020 but did so in July 2020 as soon as the Welsh Government lifted restrictions

regarding visitor attractions.

As for the flood, the 2021 and 2022 seasons were greatly affected but the Gaol did open to allow visitors to explore the outside areas of the site, with a free guided tour. This was to keep a presence in the town and offer any visitors a bonus, if limited, experience.

So far it seems this season has been very successful and is a testament to all of the hard work that was done during the previous challenging three years.

Graham Boase, from p1

them are in the same position as us i.e. they have surpluses. But there have been some successes and I'm pleased to say that some of the community health staff employed by the local Health Board occupy a part of County Hall.

Finding other solutions will not be easy, and we would welcome comments from the local community about how best to utilise the surplus office space in County Hall.

T & A: The Levelling Up funding is for the front of the Old Gaol only (no. 46 Clwyd Street). What is to happen to the archive part of the building in the light of the heritage lottery fund bid not crossing the line?

GB: We have been successful in attracting £10m of Levelling Up Fund for Ruthin and surrounding area. This is great news for the town and I'm really pleased with how we are working with the Town Council and other local community groups.

In terms of the Old Gaol we were unsuccessful with a substantial Heritage Lottery Bid which was designed to bring together both Denbighshire's and Flintshire County Council's archives into a new purpose built building next to Theatr Clwyd, Mold. This would have secured the investment needed to preserve our growing archive collections under the controlled atmospheric conditions they require, as both our site and Flintshire's in Hawarden are running out of space and require significant investment themselves. The new project would also have secured major improvements to how the archive collection could be electronically accessed, including links to our libraries.

Without the Heritage Lottery Funding, or some other equivalent funding, this project is at risk. It's a set back. But there remains a need for investment given the issues with the existing archive sites in Ruthin and Hawarden. Both councils are searching for other funding streams, including the possibility of the Welsh-specific (rather than UK) Heritage Lottery Funding. If this isn't successful, Denbighshire and Flintshire may need to rethink the joint building project and find a smaller or cheaper more local solution. This would not necessarily be in Ruthin, but all options will need to be considered.

Denbighshire and Flintshire have however committed to a joint Archive Team, which is managing both sites. This joint working will be unaffected by whatever happens with the joint building project.

T & A: Why aren't the opening times of Ruthin's main attractions co-ordinated? One closes once a week on a Monday; one closes once a week on a Tuesday; and the third opens Thursday to Saturday only

GB: This is a fair comment and something that we will look into. Not all

these facilities are managed under one team, so it may just be historic opening hours that have never been coordinated. The Craft Centre is managed by the arms length company that the Council has set a number of our 'leisure' facilities across the Council. The company is called Denbighshire Leisure Ltd and is solely owned by the County Council. The way Denbighshire Leisure Ltd are able to manage the Craft Centre is controlled in the main by the Arts Council for Wales, as they provide significant funding for the Centre.

On a broader point, I welcome the opportunity to get feedback such as this from the community.

T & A: Ruthin is justly proud that the Sunday Times sees us as the best place to live in Wales. Allied to opening times issue, there is some frustration that the County Council hasn't capitalised on this one-off opportunity to promote Ruthin

GB: There can be no better place for visitors to stop for a couple of hours and lose themselves in the town, its environment and shops. The County Council continues to seek ways to try to persuade those visiting the Clwydian Range and Vale of Clwyd to go that little bit farther into Ruthin, to include Ruthin as part of their day out, or link Ruthin as part of a wider experience. Denbighshire continues to favour the regional North East Wales approach to tourism marketing and this is well developed. Bringing more visitors into Ruthin should perhaps not be seen as a one off opportunity but a long term approach.

T & A: The old Ruthin chestnut is that money flows into Rhyl but not Ruthin. Obviously, there's Levelling Up but other than that, the perception is that Rhyl gets more than its fair share of the cake

GB: We worked hard to secure £10m of UK Levelling Up Funding for the town and hinterland and there is other funding that has been secured via the Shared Prosperity Fund. We are also working with Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL) and the Town Council on the proposed Velodrome project, which is being funded by Sports Wales (at circa £2m). DLL also manages the Ruthin Craft Centre, an excellent facility that any town in Wales would be pleased to have. The Craft Centre is subsidised by the County Council via DLL and the Arts Council for Wales. We have also worked with Grŵp Cynefin on the £12.2m Llys Awelon project, currently under development on the former Awelon site.

It should therefore be clear that we have worked with partners to secure significant investment in Ruthin and we at the County Council are all really pleased to have helped secure that level of investment for the town. We are also proud that at the town being named by The Sunday Times this year as the best

place to live in Wales.

Rhyl, on the other hand, is a larger town than Ruthin, so just on a per capita basis it does have more money spent on it than Ruthin. But, of course, Rhyl has suffered over the last 30 years as have most British seaside resorts. In terms of the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. Rhyl has the two most deprived wards in Wales, so rightly we have worked hard in securing significant sums of regeneration funding for the town, which we think is starting to pay dividends.

It must be noted that most of this funding, be it for Ruthin or Rhyl, is not coming from Denbighshire but from the EU, UK Government or Welsh Government and is targeted towards specific set criteria. Denbighshire has an excellent track record of securing such external funding.

We are very aware that Ruthin has an active community and has produced a Ruthin Future document. We want all our towns in the county to have similar long-term community/place plans such as Ruthin's and we are committed to working with the communities of Ruthin to deliver on Ruthin Future and the aspirations for the town.

T & A: There are concerns that Levelling Up has been presented as a fait accompli and that there is little room for heritage organisations such as the Civic Association, who have been campaigning on-and-off for 30 years about traffic on the Square. Whether perception or not, there is a view that there is no community engagement

GB: Levelling Up remains very new. We continue to feel our way. We have much experience of working with European funding and with Cardiff Bay but partnering with the UK government is new to us. It's actually a different way of working and we are learning as we go.

Currently, there has been little opportunity to involve the wider community but work is ramping up fast. We have already started discussions within communities on the detail of the proposals. We fully accept we need to engage with the town, its residents and community groups as we value their input and look forward to doing so. In the meantime, we have regular discussions with David Jones MP, and the Town Council on the Levelling Up projects and there is considerable involvement of the three County Councillors, who have of course been democratically elected by the community to represent them in such matters.

If the Civic Association require a specific briefing on the Levelling Up projects we would be more than happy to accommodate that.

More from the chief executive in the next issue.

■ Levelling and engagement, p5

■ Rhos Street and empty heritage buildings update, p3

Welcome Back Old Friends

After a considerable gap, we say 'croeso nôl' to two community-based websites that add colour to the local area

■ Ruthin Weather

» ruthinweather.org.uk

With our appalling weather this summer, what an excellent year to relaunch Ruthin Weather.



Ruthin Weather was previously active from 2006. It closed in March 2015, as the family running it relocated from Graigfechan to near Wrexham. Having now moved back, they've reintroduced the site, forecasting the weather from their home at Llanfwrog.

The current site gives hourly predictions for several hours and one day ahead. It's perhaps slightly less comprehensive than previously but if the predecessor is anything to go by it will see development that we trust will bring back all its former glory.

Some browsers don't seem to render the site fully or properly.

■ The Ruthin Blog

» rhuthun.blogspot.com

This vanished from the airways in 2011 or 2012, even before Ruthin Weather exited. Since, it has been available free to subscribers only. At some point this year (we suppose), it was again brought back into full public view.

The blog is run by 'Non Liqueur', whose identity apparently remains unknown. Writing in Town and Around, the late Hafina Clwyd said, 'Non's reports on the goings on, the misdemeanours and quiddities of Ruthin [are] always a good read whether you agreed with them

or not. He (or she) had his finger on the pulse, no doubt about that.'

Today, you can

expect the usual topics: shops, petrol prices, parking, Glasdir, education... and newer controversies such as 20 mph and dogs in cafés. And Chilly Cow's Italian connection (and Welsh faux pas).

In terms of immediacy, the blog is now well-and-truly out-gunned by

Facebook but the blog's strengths are nevertheless three-fold:

- The posts are more considered than the average Facebook comment and usually balanced;
- They are more 'long-form' in nature; and
- It acts as a remarkable and searchable repository of ordinary Ruthin life since 2005, by

subject. To do this, move from the tablet or phone to the web version (link at the foot of the blog's page) to see a list of themes.

Missing, however, is the facility to leave comments. These were once always integral and of considerable interest. The blog seems a little misshaped without them.

Given the cut and thrust of Facebook, perhaps Non is being sensible in disabling this facility.

This on the very blog that gave its name to the Fans of the Old Ruthin Blog Facebook page.



Artefacts

As part of Open Doors 2023, on Sunday September 10th, some of the previously rarely seen town's artefacts will be on display.

Moreover, we aim to have a number of speakers who can illuminate the relevance of some of the pieces and perhaps place them into the context of their time.

Booking is required and you can get information via opendoorsruthin.org.uk.

The artefacts are in the care of the Town Council. They include:

- A 17th century James I communion cup, a gift of Hugh Myddelton;
- A Victorian silver presentation trowel inscribed 'for the laying of the first stone at the new buildings at Ruthin Grammar School; and
- A George V presentation silver serving tray.



Grounds for Optimism at Cae Ddôl Park

**Heather Williams writes
on the formation and
shaping of Cae Ddôl
park**



Now some 15 years old, much of the woodwork needs attention

We take for granted the fact that we have a lovely park in Ruthin, Cae Ddôl. Originally the park was part of the Castle estate but in 1897 the owner William Cornwallis-West gave it to the people of Ruthin for use as a recreation ground, to mark queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

Prior, the Ruthin Flower Show, which was formed in 1887, was holding its shows in the Castle grounds, together with sheep dog trials. Cornwallis-West was very involved with the event and held the office as the Flower Show's President. With his good connections in high society, in 1904 H.R.H. Princess Louise of Schleswig- Holstein, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, presented the prizes at the Show being held in Castle Park.

The Ruthin Show was originally held on the last Thursday of August and attracted well known horse riders including David Broome and Harvey Smith. It later changed the Show day to the 3rd Saturday in August. In more recent years it has moved to the Ruthin Farmer's Auction site, which is a better site if the ground is wet and helps to reduce the costs eg. hiring marquees, and also has more parking space.

The first playground equipment for children at Cae Ddôl was provided by Ruthin Town Council in 1952. The equipment originally included a roundabout, known as a 'witch's hat'. However most of the equipment has not changed much in looks since then (a bit like Trigger's broom!)

Since then, the Town Council has always been concerned about what happens in the park and wants to play its part in enhancing facilities for the town's residents. After years in the pipeline, Ruthin's £72,000 skate park was opened in spring 2007 following an all-important lease being signed at last between the Town Council and Denbighshire County Council (DCC took over legal ownership and overall responsibility for the park on local government reorganisation).

Children have paddled in the river over the years, but there was also a paddling pool in the park. In 2009, however, the County Council was forced to remove the pool, owing to safety concerns. The County Council organised a residents' meeting to decide how to allocate £25,000 for alternative play equipment in the park (which was called 'participatory budgeting', something that seems to have faded away i.e. involving residents in decision making). Over 30 ideas were submitted. In the end it was decided to construct a pirate's play-ship by the former paddling pool and also a zip wire.

The river flows more or less straight through Cae Ddôl now, but originally there was a large curve in the river in which the lake was created. The lake is a haven of wildlife and is a place where residents watch with eager anticipation for the swans to breed their cygnets each year. However, there have been problems with the appearance of the lake. In 2010, the Town Council & Cadwyn Clwyd contributed £110,000 to clean it up. Waterside planting, along with viewing and pond dipping platforms, were also created. A new liner was also installed to help keep up summer water levels. Unfortunately, as we have seen recently, it looks like more work needs to be done again to clean up the lake.

The rugby club, which had reformed in 1960, secured a permanent home at Cae Ddôl in 1969, with a new club house constructed in 1991. Work is now progressing with significant refurbishment and extensions to provide better changing facilities and facilities for spectators.

In the autumn of 2021, Denbighshire County Council, as part of its work on climate change, organised a woodland creation project to help the council achieve a carbon zero goal by contributing to the amount of carbon absorbed. Trees such as beech and oak were planted, as well as smaller trees to create a hedgerow in the park to forming a boundary between the rugby ground and main public park. County Council staff worked with volunteers to carry out the planting of 1,500 trees. One of the volunteers was the Mayor of Ruthin for 2021/2022, who encouraged the planting of trees in Ruthin during her term of office.

Last year the Ruthin Future event organised by the Town Council invited people to give feedback on ideas for the development of Cae Ddôl area. As a result Cae Ddôl is now included as one of the projects in the Levelling Up Fund. Denbighshire County Council will shortly be carrying out further consultation and then we expect to see some changes over the next couple of years to enhance the park further.

● Levelling Up concerns at Cae Ddôl
p5

Walk in the Park for Public Spaces

**With our own Cae Ddol
soon to benefit from
Levelling Up funding,
Heather Williams takes a
wider approach when
considering parks, with
the story behind urban
public parks, including
some local ones**



Cae Ddôl

In 1843, a private Act of Parliament was passed allowing a local authority to use public money for the first time to create a public park that could be used by everyone.

It is generally acknowledged that the Wirral's Birkenhead Park was the first publicly funded civic park in the world. The design for this park was drawn up by the great landscape architect Joseph Paxton, who landscaped the grounds of Chatsworth House and also designed the



Crystal Palace for the 1851 Great Exhibition. On Easter Monday in 1847 it was officially opened, with thousands of people attending the ceremony. In 1917, the park was used to host the Welsh National Eisteddfod, which was the occasion when the 'Black Chair' was posthumously awarded to the poet Hedd Wyn.

Frederick Law Olmsted, an agricultural engineer & landscape architect from the United States, visited the park shortly after it opened and was suitably impressed. He coined the term 'The People's Garden'. Birkenhead Park was influential of his design of Central Park in New York, which is now one of the most famous urban parks in the

Public Parks continued

world.

The heritage of many parks enriches our urban experience and there are some relatively local ones in North Wales which have an interesting history.

One of the locations in Denbigh Open Doors (16 -17 September) is the Dr Evan Pierce Memorial Garden in Vale Street. Dr Evan Pierce was a coroner, JP, alderman and five times the Town Mayor, as well as an advisor to Queen Victoria. He donated land, which was opposite his front door, where a statue of him on top of a 72 feet high column was unveiled in 1876 to commemorate his efforts in the 1832 cholera epidemic, during which 10 per cent of local residents died. In front of the column are two fountains presented by Dr Pierce to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. The garden was restored in both 2007 and 2022, and has planting typical of the Victorian period.



Dr Evan Pierce Memorial Garden

Bailey Hill Park in Mold was originally a motte and bailey castle dating back to the Norman de Montalt family in the late 11th/early 12th century. Subsequently the Mostyn family acquired the ruins of the castle and created a pleasure ground on the site, with woodland walks. Lady Augusta Mostyn sold the site in 1870 to the Town Council for use as a public park. Subsequently, the Council added tennis courts and a bowling green. Recently, thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the park has undergone significant restoration.

Finally, a bit further afield is Happy Valley in Llandudno. This was originally a quarry but, in 1887, Lord Mostyn donated the site to the town of Llandudno to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. An ornate drinking fountain, decorated with a sculpture of the Queen marked the opening of the park. Two miniature golf courses, a putting green and a popular open air theatre were also built. Welsh National Eisteddfodau ceremonies were held here in 1896 and 1963 with a traditional stone circle marking the place.

So, if you can, take a walk in a park to make the most of the legacy of the Victorians.

Now as a grandparent he is again pushing buggies around town, Peter Daniels suddenly realises there's a problem and pleads...

... Please Give us Back our Pavements

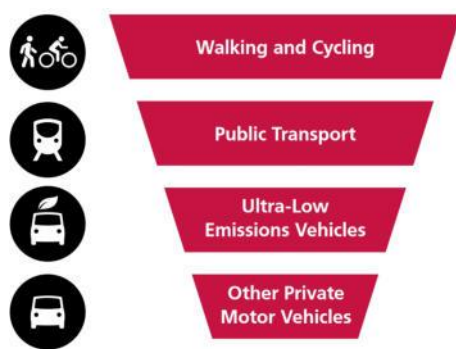
Pavement parking creates difficulties for many people who have to squeeze past vehicles thoughtlessly parked.

These include those with a visual impairment, people with guide dogs, people who have to rely on a wheelchair for mobility... and parents (and grandparents) with pushchairs.

Pavements are not officially called 'footways' for nothing.

Pavement parking in Ruthin has proliferated. Now, this is a knotty problem. Things may be different in quieter residential areas. In the town centre, an ill-parked vehicle that has bumped up the kerb can cause problems. Ruthin's footways are narrow enough without this additional constraint.

Being forced out into the road with or without a buggy compromises a walker's safety.



What's really interesting is that governments of every hue talk about prioritising active travel (e.g. the use of walking for everyday business). This, after all, is one of the reasons why we are about to see a blanket 20 mph default urban speed limit.

In Wales, the *Llwyd Newydd* transport strategy document actually ranks mobility in the following priority order: walking & cycling—public transport—low emission vehicles—other vehicles. Notice that the car is relegated to third and fourth place.

Writing in 2019 in Local Transport Today, consultant and London street design adviser John Dale called the toleration of pavement parking an inversion of this hierarchy. In fact, he called it hypocrisy. In other words, behaviour that contradicts what we claim to believe.

He puts it like this. Pavement parking is tolerated because the disbenefit to the official highest priority users (those on foot) isn't considered sufficient reason to upset the official lowest priority users (those in their

motor vehicles).

When it comes to obstructions on the footway, there's little action or enforcement, if any. Yet, unobstructed sidewalks are surely as likely to encourage journeys on foot in town centres just as much as a reduction in traffic speeds.

Pavement parkers probably don't think twice and they also probably don't park on the pavement out of malice. But it is nevertheless interesting to note that about half of motorists when asked accept that pavement parking causes difficulties but continue to do it anyway.

Wales unlike Scotland proposes no outright ban on pavement parking (as you find in London) but expected this autumn will be guidance for local authorities to deal with unnecessary obstructions to people using the pavement.

How effective this will be remains unclear. A survey conducted in 2020 in Wales found that 83 per cent of people in Wales viewed pavement parking as a problem.

Walkers are in the majority. You can bet, however, that any crackdown would be treated in the media and on social media as another infringement of motoring liberties.

In the meantime, let's all please note that pavements are for pedestrians, not parking. This alone would make a tangible difference to walking around town.

And we all know that people on foot spend money in town. There are no drive-throughs in Ruthin.



Castle Fortifies Tourist Links with Town

We all know how important the Castle Hotel & Spa is to the town's economy. This season, The Castle has promoted activities in Ruthin much more

This summer, Ruthin Castle Hotel actively marketed what Ruthin has to offer to visitors, from civil war and royalty, to crime, punishment and magnificent mediæval buildings.

One of the offers has been to explore Ruthin with a one night 'History and Heritage' package. This newly launched offer included a bottle of prosecco on arrival, two course evening dinner in the historic Tafarn restaurant, overnight accommodation and a full Welsh breakfast. Visitors could also choose tickets and enjoy entry to one of two fascinating local historical attractions, both multiple winners of the 'Wales Hidden Gem' tourism awards: the intriguing Ruthin Gaol or, alternatively, the magnificent Nantclwyd y Dre & gardens.

The hotel has received lovely

feedback from its many guests enjoying this break and posted comments on social media which included:

'This is a really good experience, very interesting and worthwhile doing'

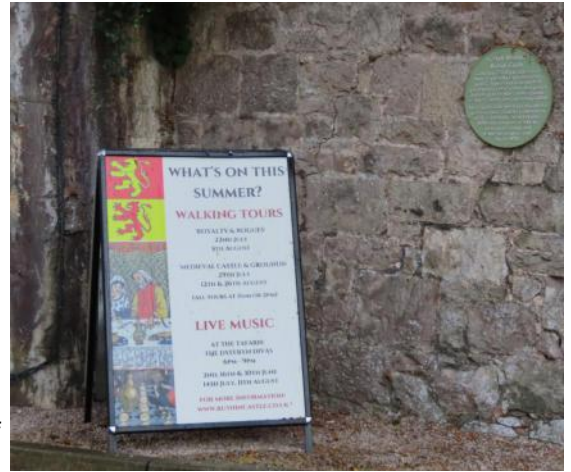
'Included was a free pass. If you wanted to go to both you were given a discount on entry. We actually went to both—well worth a visit—so interesting and informative'

This offer has been so successful that the hotel has extended it to include the month of September.

The other offer promoted was a choice of two walking tours on a range of dates. One was the 'Mediæval Castle and Grounds' led by Fiona Gale from the Ruthin Castle Conservation Trust focusing on the history of the Castle itself. The other, 'Royalty and Rogues' led by Heather Williams from Heritage Tours North Wales, explored the town with interesting tales.

Again the hotel posted feedback from the tours:

'The Ruthin tour was informative, fun, and



very interesting. Very knowledgeable and illuminated our day. It was a good pace and thoroughly absorbing. Can wholeheartedly recommend'

It's great to see that the relatively new owners Amaze Hotels (who bought the Hotel in 2019) are now working in partnership with local attraction providers to promote the heritage of our wonderful town. It's a symbiotic relationship that benefits all parties, not least our visitors.

Excerpts from a Modern History

This autumn, our Secretary Peter Daniels plans to publish his history of modern Denbighshire. Here, we take several excerpts from it, from 1998

In November 1998, something truly bizarre occurred in connection with the village of Betws Gwerfil Goch, also in Edeirnion. A statement within a letter released by the Corwen Pavilion Fund said, 'The Corwen Pavilion Fund would like to make it clear to all that although Betws GG may be going over to another county authority they will still be involved with the future of the pavilion as they are still in the area within Edeirnion'. That 'other authority' was supposedly Conwy county borough council. No one now knows (or will admit to) where the Pavilion Fund's strange statement emerged. Neither Denbighshire nor Conwy had any knowledge of such a transfer. The clerk to the community council refuted the rumours as 'totally unfounded'. He wondered whether they started because Betws was likely to join with Clawddnewydd and Clocaenog to form the new Denbighshire electoral division of Efenechtyd. Perhaps someone mistakenly felt that Efenechtyd was in Conwy rather than Denbighshire.

In 1998, Denbighshire began a

consultation for impressive plans to convert much of the former railway line north of Ruthin to Rhyl into a 17-mile recreational cycleway. This had leisure and commuting benefits. This would have been a significant asset for residents and for visitors alike. Much of the land was well away from the highway and this meant that it was safer and healthier for cyclists. It was also flat. The scheme was scuppered by a small number of landowners who had bought part of the railway after it had finally closed in 1965. They feared rural crime. To potential users, their selfishness robbed the county of a thriving alternative to the car. The National Farmers' Union vowed to fight 'tooth and nail' against it. The Clwyd Community Routes Association said that the path was in line with government policy. 'Surveys have shown that cyclists are the biggest contributors as tourists to local economies', they argued. Inevitably, the landowners won the day.

When in 1998 the debate about a replacement for Ruthin's county offices began, The Democratic Alliance of Wales with its stronghold in Prestatyn called for the HQ to move to Prestatyn, with a ready-made solution in the form of the soon-to-be-vacant Kwik Save HQ (a site unused and deteriorating since it closed soon after). At the opposite extreme, campaigners for a boundary review in Llangollen called for the building to be in their town. They said, 'If councillors and officers really believe in treating all towns

equally and giving value for money, why not provide employment opportunities in Llangollen?'

In addition, in 1997, Denbighshire purchased Trem Clwyd at Canol y Dre, Ruthin, initially for education staff and later for those in planning and, when the department was much larger and of a higher stature, economic development. It also had substandard education offices at Llanrhydd in Ruthin, including for the schools library service. Early plans to use capital receipts from the sale of land at Smithfield in Denbigh to redevelop the Ruthin as well as the Denbigh site proved impossible (and in any case met with political opposition from Denbigh councillors). The development gain from the Denbigh sale for use by the Argyll Group as an 18,000 sq ft Safeway store did contribute significantly towards the building of Denbigh's Caledfryn, which opened in October 1998 (to protests outside from farmers' wives who felt the supermarket chain treated farmers unfairly). The plan to build in Denbigh was welcomed by most Denbigh residents, though the design certainly was not and neither necessarily was the chosen site. There was a minority voice claiming somewhat implausibly that the site would lose the town the potential for coach parking. However improbable that sounded, the lack of coach parking was said to damage visitor numbers and therefore the town's economy.

Civic Association Annual Report 2022/23

The September 2022 Open Doors was a resounding success. This for what are obvious reasons was the first such event since 2019. It was one of our busiest ever and may I thank the property owners who took part, Fiona Gale who co-ordinated the event and Heather Williams and Kathy Daniels who joined me on the organising sub-committee. May I again thank the Town Council for its support and grant towards the event. The Town Council really sees the value of Open Doors in bringing in much needed footfall into the town. As I write this, preparations are almost now complete for 2023's event (see page 1).

In collaboration with the 2021/2022 High Sheriff of Clwyd Civic Association member and Ruthin resident Zoë Henderson, we successfully organised an awards evening in December for some of our unsung heroes. This was a joyous and busy evening, during which time volunteers, key workers and long-standing shopkeepers were able to be recognised for their contribution to the town and district. The diverse recipients included a council street cleaner John Andrew Jones, long-standing Brownies leader Beth Taylor, long-standing youth football coach Wynne Davies, two community car service drivers including Eifion Hughes, school crossing patrol Jeanette Edwards and two local shopkeepers Carol Edwards of Gayla House and Jan Thomas of Wayfarer whose businesses have both been operating for over 50 years.

The former railway crane at the Craft Centre was restored in 2021/22 but it was in March 2023 that we could finally celebrate the project with a short ceremony. To complete the picture, two interpretation panels adjacent to the site were installed that month, giving a potted history of the crane itself and the railway in Ruthin. Thus was finally concluded a most successful project that saw not only the restoration but much public interest in matters railway in the town. In my 2021/22 report I thanked those involved

including sponsors and funders but may I once mention the help and support of Rob Price and the project manager Fiona Gale.

You will note from this edition of Town and Around that the 2022 Quayle Award was bestowed upon the Llanrhaeadr well refurbishment. May I thank those involved in the process, namely Menna Jones, Kathy Daniels and Kay Culhane. This will be formalised at the 2023 AGM.

Now that Levelling Up funding for Cae Ddol, the Peers Memorial, St Peter's Church and St Peter's Square is finally beginning to become apparent, the Civic Association is trying to maintain a watching brief as the welcome projects develop. We do have some reservations but, generally, it is too soon to understand fully what is likely to happen. We are aware of some tensions between sundry interested parties and that level of debate is welcome. We are urging formal public consultation as soon as possible.

With its mix of news, views and articles of more general interest, 2023 is the 20th anniversary of Town and Around. During 2022/23, founding editor and regular contributor Derek Jones felt unable to continue his usual column for T & A. We gratefully acknowledge his association with the publication from its inception.

In 40,067 words during the Civic Association year, Town and Around continued to be the most tangible part of the Civic Association's work, with its usual mix of interesting and relevant articles. This is now generally accepted by those who read it as an important part of the local community, with much praise from members and non-members alike. Its editor is our secretary, Peter Daniels.

We should never assume that the current officers are the best people to do what they do. In spite of the increasing standing of the publication, the editor is more than willing to stand aside if there are those within the community who can develop and build upon Town and

Around's recent success. This does guard against the publication being seen as 'samey'. There remains a continued plea for material or ideas for publication.

During the year in T & A, we highlighted that Mondays seemed to be a popular day for visitors yet often a number of key businesses were closed on that day. Alongside reporting our estimate of 57 per cent of vehicles travelling through town without stopping, during busy periods we roughly calculated that as many as 70 per cent of traffic on the Square was simply recirculating trying to find parking (whether that was for a recognised space or not). We highlighted the importance of 20 mph in urban areas well before this filtered into the public consciousness. Among the general interest articles were those complementing the station project on our former station masters and Dr Trevor Hughes's views.

Above all, however, we focused on our and the community's grave concerns about the Rhos Street School site development. This issue has not gone away (see p3).

We have continued to make various attempts at trying to persuade someone to come forward to consider planning applications on the Civic Association's behalf. None has felt able to do so. This is the second full year of trying. We now concentrate on major applications only (such as Rhos Street). If any member or reader feels able to consider planning applications, they would be warmly welcomed. Please contact the Secretary (details p12).

Finally, may I thank the 2022/23 Committee for their help, support and contributions during the year. They were Anne Roberts (Chair), Heather Williams (Vice-chair), Robert Williams (Hon. Treasurer), Steve Beach, Kay Culhane, Kathy Daniels, Menna Jones, Rob Price and Peter Daniels (Secretary).

Anne Roberts MBE
Chair, 2022/23

Membership & Subscription Information for 2023/24

Subscriptions to the Association for the year 2023 to 2024 fall due on September 1st. We are again pleased to announce that despite rising costs they will remain at the same level of £10 for individuals and £15 for joint/family membership. This means that they will have remained at the same level for the previous 10 years.

In order to mitigate the new bank charges imposed on us by the HSBC, if you are able to pay your subscription either by standing order or direct bank transfer then that would be helpful. However we do understand that not all members would wish to do this and therefore we are still more than happy to receive subscriptions by cheque.

Enclosed with this edition of Town & Around is a renewal of membership form

for existing members who do not yet pay by Standing Order and for any prospective new members who would like to join the Civic Association. Please return to the Honorary Treasurer, RADCA, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin, LL15 1SL

The form is available to those who don't pay by standing order.

Bank Details for anyone wishing to pay by bank transfer are as follows:

- Bank: HSBC Ruthin
- Sort Code: 40-39-1
- Account No: 81137514
- Account Name: Ruthin & District Civic Association
- Reference: Please put your surname and postcode

For any queries please email the Treasurer at: ruthincivic@btinternet.org or Ruthin 704998.

Regarding our **data protection policy**, may we draw members' attention to the

notice on our website. There is no change to it.

Notice of AGM 2023

The Civic Association 2023 AGM will be held at 7 p.m. on October 12th, 2023 at The Old Courthouse. We shall send the minutes of the 2022 AGM as usual by email.

2023 AGM Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on October 13th, 2022
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's Annual Report (above)
5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts
6. Election of Officers & Committee for 2023/24
7. Any Other Business
8. Conferment of Quayle Award 2022
9. Guest speaker: to be confirmed

Seen in Passing...



The former Montecito building on the Square is now rather pink. It's new fashionable colour seems to have raised a few eyebrows. As was the case with the infamous Purple Shop (now the Coffee Cabin), some are questioning whether its colour is suitable at the heart of our conservation area where other buildings are less intrusive—including both neighbouring properties (painted by the same people). Others are more relaxed about it. We've contacted the County Council's Conservation Officer for advice.



Postcards of Ruthin have sometimes been hard to find. Associated with the summer art exhibition in The Old Courthouse, we did notice this suite of fine views of Ruthin. They're not cheap but the quality's excellent.



If you're reading a hard copy of Town & Around, the picture above is definitely one you'll need to see online in colour. On p3, we mentioned the importance of the County Council's re-wilding project. Here are some tangible results. Rarely spotted but enjoying a good year in 2023 is the

Cinnabar caterpillar. We see five of them on now a single ragwort plant which, alongside other flora is now permitted to grow.



The final Ruthin roundabout at last has a sponsor, that mid-way along Ffordd Glasdir, at the entrance to Taylor Wimpey's market housing. Ingenuously, Williams Estates has it. What better location for an estate agent to promote itself than outside a large housing estates with mobile families?



With the completion of the adjacent Clwyd Alyn estate, thoughts turn to what will happen to the compound. An acre will it seems transfer the County Council for use as a mini-forest and outdoor space for the two primaries.

This summer, work on the proposed dwelling immediately next to Nantclwyd y Dre has begun, with ground works. This was a significant planning application that was initially of concern, owing to its height. The approved plans reduce the impact.



One-out-of-five-rated Charcoal Grill has been closed for refurbishment all summer but without any obvious works in evidence. It joins two other buildings on Well Street with misted windows. We understand this month that Corwen Carpets will move to one of them from premises at the former Ruthin News. Corwen Carpets' second premises (Tedi's Beds) closed some time ago.



**Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun a'r Cyleh
Ruthin & District Civic Association**

Town & Around is published quarterly by the Ruthin & District Civic Association. It is available from Ruthin Library and on townandaround.org.uk. It is delivered free to Civic Association members

Editor: Peter Daniels

Layout & Design: Peter Daniels

We welcome articles, contributions, suggestions and letters, in Welsh or English

Please send them to the Secretary at cymru@clwyd.org or Coedlan, 25 Stryd y Brython, Ruthin, LL15 1JA

The deadline for the next edition is November 16th, 2023

Thanks are due to this quarter's contributors: Peter Daniels, Roger Edwards, Anne Roberts and Heather Williams; and with the help of Kathy Daniels, Graham Boase, Gareth Evans, Fiona Gale, Menna Jones, Dorinda Kostravenglis and David Lorey

Views expressed by contributors are their own and neither necessarily reflect those of the Civic Association nor those of their employer

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Ruthin & District Civic Association

Civic Association Event

'Protecting Ruthin & District's Unique Heritage'

7 p.m. at The Old Courthouse,
September 27th

In association with the September Ruthin Future event, guest speaker Chris Evans, Denbighshire's Conservation Officer, will give a talk on approaches and efforts to protect the area's unique built environment

Free but bookable: members will receive joining instructions by email (or phone 704256 if not online)