

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GAOL AND COURTHOUSE COMMITTEE OF
BEAUMARIS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 PM IN THE TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Councillor A N Gough
Councillor A J V Grant
Councillor K M Jones
Councillor H Mattocks
Councillor L J Roberts
Councillor M G Sarsfield
Councillor S Zalot

**The Project Officer was in attendance
Assistant Administrator was in attendance**

APOLOGIES: The Town Mayor Councillor C J Theakston
The Deputy Mayor Councillor R A Jones
Councillor J A Rowlands

Councillor H Mattocks took the Chair

17.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18.0 REPORT ON SEASON

The Chairman reported on the season for the Gaol and Courthouse. Both visitors attractions had opened on 4 May 19, missing the Easter holidays in April. It has been a very good season, with visitor figures for the Gaol increased by 55% and the Courthouse is up by 57% against the same trading period of 2018.

The Gaol and Courthouse will be transferred to Beaumaris Town Council at the end of November 2019. The delay was due to the transfer of the Castle car park and establishing whether the current contractors would bring it back to a satisfactory condition. The contractors have given Anglesey County Council the undertaking that they will be leaving it in a satisfactory condition and Anglesey County Council have given us, Beaumaris Town Council the undertaking that they will be handing it over to us in a good condition. The Project Officer will be managing this closely. The Castle car park will be handed over to Beaumaris Town Council at the end of March 2020, dependent on the finished Flood alleviation works. The parking tariffs need to be set for cars and coaches. Management of the Castle car park needs to be decided, with options for manning it or using ticket machines. Beaumaris Town Council will have a 5 year lease.

Publicity and advertising initiatives had included:-

- Large banners positioned in key locations in the town.
- Bargain Hunt had filmed in the Gaol on 20 October, the programme is scheduled to go out in early 2020, with a 5 minute feature of the Gaol at the beginning of the programme. Some 2 million viewers watch this popular programme. Bargain Hunt had decided to film at the Gaol as a result of the highly positive comments from Trip Advisor, and had chosen this location above others on Anglesey.
- A member commented on the highly positive management of the social media pages for the Gaol and Courthouse, featuring appealing stories and highlighting very interesting events.

- Telimon a local company had filmed a paranormal night in the Gaol, which will be shown via the internet, this is a hour long programme. Telimon would like to do more filming in 2020.
- The Gaol has held 5 paranormal events, and is scheduled to run a further 5 in 2020.
- Bookings for school trips in 2020 have been taken.
- The Project Officer suggested that Beaumaris Town Council may want to run its own paranormal events in year 3 (2021), rather than through 3rd party organisers.
- Press interview on 18 November 19 with 'Landscape' Magazine as part of a feature on Conwy, Caernarfon and Beaumaris. Photos were taken of the Gaol and staff were interviewed for the feature. Article to be published in Jan/Feb 2020.
- Press Interview opportunity. 'Cheshire Life' have also approached the Gaol and Courthouse to do a feature sometime in 2020.
- BBC Travel and Sunday Time Travel correspondent interview in September 2019, feature to be published in early 2020, 50,000 online subscribers.

19.0 REPAIRS CARRIED OUT

The Project Officer reported on the repair work in the Gaol and the specific work carried out in the camera room which had a black ceiling. Damage had been caused to the ceiling by the old lead gully splitting above it. A newly replaced gully had been fitted. Broken slates were replaced with reclaimed Welsh slate, the ceiling has been replaced and the walls in the room repainted with lime white wash paint, and the ceiling is now completed. The woodwork will be repainted using standard gloss paint. That room will then be put back into use.

There has been some electrical work carried out in the Gaol and Courthouse.

A member commented on the impressive Halloween afternoon event in the Gaol, and believed the aged style and character of the building added to its authenticity. The Halloween Castle Players evening was a highly successful set of events.

20.0 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Project Officer reported on the financial performance of the Gaol and Courthouse, including visitor entrance fees, school trip fees, paranormal events, souvenirs and book sales. YTD revenues were £96,225.00.

The expenditure year to date includes salaries, VAT deduction, advertising, maintenance, shop stock and the World Pay PDQ card machine costs. YTD expenditure is £62,648.00. Future running costs were estimated to be £1,800 and are in line with forecasted plans.

Rates estimates had provided £20,000 towards repairs and upkeep of the Gaol and Courthouse.

Net income YTD £33,577.00

21.0 PLANNED WINTER PROJECTS

The Project Officer reported on the plans for winter projects for the Gaol and Courthouse, they included:

Gaol

Paint the entrance hall with lime wash paint and standard gloss paint, a like for like re-decoration.

- Reception area. This will require a full re-vamp. Paint the walls and ceiling. Replace the display cabinets with ones from the Castle and replace the carpet. A new till will be required along with new lighting.

- The camera room was the original Governors sleeping quarters. It is proposed to revert this room to the original Governors sleeping quarters, adding to the appeal of the visitor experience. Furniture has been identified. The Museum of Wales has the original handcuffs used by Governor John Jones, which will be made available to us on loan. These handcuffs were used at first hanging in Beaumaris Gaol.
- Paint the walled area around the cast iron stairs new wing. Lime wash paint will be used in this area.
- Clean all the guttering and roof gully's. Weeds are growing on the roof and gullies causing problems. It has been noted that there are some slipped slates, which will be repositioned.
- Exercise area by tread mill.
 - Haulfre Gardens have agreed to tidy this area up as an active community project, the labour will be free, material will be supplied by Beaumaris Town Council, this will start in January 2020. They will re-edge the grass area, weed all the path areas and add new stone chippings to the paths. Beaumaris Town Council will put up a plaque in recognition of Haulfre's community efforts to support the Gaol.
 - There are 2 lots of planters outside the Gaol entrance, kindly planted and donated by Haulfre Gardens. The Project Officer will be showing Haulfre Gardens around the Gaol and Courthouse as a way of thanks, and seeks to continue the community partnership.
 - The Project Officer highlighted 4 further facilities like Haulfre on Anglesey, and the 'Menshed' initiative run on Wednesdays, where items of garden and other outdoor furniture can be restored. This would be a possible further community initiative to consider.
- Cleaning of ivy on the back walls of the Gaol has started, the top parts also need attention.
- The shop area will require re-stocking for the 2020 season.

Courthouse

- Finish painting the outside walls of the Courthouse.
- The large window will require refurbishing, including window shutters which require painting. Standard gloss paint will be used for this. Specialist contractors to be sought to do this work.
- Some lime plastering will be required on walls inside the Courthouse.
- Need to tidy the visitor reception area.
- Investigate the heating boiler to see if it can be repaired. The Project Officer has been advised that the flue is leaking and that it should be straight forward to repair.
- A new till will be required.
- The shop area will need re-stocking for the 2020 season.

Members wished to record their sincere thanks for the incredible efforts and achievements of the Project Officer and the team in regard to the management and maintenance of the Gaol and Courthouse.

22.0 FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The Chairman made a suggestion for a tea and coffee refreshments area. It was suggested that a log cabin on the grassed area opposite the tread mill area could be the refreshments facility. This would be an idea for 2021, increasing revenues and further adding to the visitor experience.

An investigation had looked at the possibility of changing the cast iron down pipes in the Gaol. Potential costs for doing this are in the region of £35 to £40k.

2020 season.

- Set entrance fees for 2020.
- A discussion about how to run and manage the Castle car park considered, manning it or ticket machines, does it require a barrier?
- Gaol and Courthouse entrance fees, joint tickets to other visitor attractions and facilities in the Town, perhaps a 'day trip to Beaumaris' ticket.
- What are the current charges for the Gaol and Courthouse? The tariff was read out.
- It was noted that human interaction. i.e. visitor guides were essential for good visitor experience
- Dedicated meeting about costings for Gaol and Courthouse and the Castle car park
- A member offered to share research on visitor charges at other attractions in the North Wales area.
- Consider attracting the coaches with free parking and or free lunch.
- Cruise Ships
- Staffing levels for 2020 season. Human interaction is important, bringing the experience to life. The Governor (a volunteer) has been a great success this year, and also the staff visitor guides. A decision needs to be made about more volunteers and the potential need for more staff. Staff uniforms are now in period custom, new ones to be considered for the 2020 season.
- Design and print new entrance tickets for Gaol and Courthouse.
- Fibre internet service is now installed and available in the Gaol, giving live streaming for companies like Telimon and speeding up card transactions which is essential.
- Domain name, webpage and email address for the Gaol and Courthouse.
Suggested names:-
- beaumarisgaolandcourthouse@beaumaris.co.uk
- beaumarisgaol@courthouse.com
- Opening times for 2020. 10am – 5pm, 7 days a week. The Project Officer has proposed the same opening times. When should the opening season start?
- A member suggested February half term opening 17 February 2020.
- Year 3 for all year round opening.
- All year round season.
- Gaol and Courthouse booklet currently printed in-house, low cost, proved very popular. Year 3 to produce a professionally published piece.
- Education pack for schools produced by a visitor guide. This will be sent out to schools in North Wales.
- After a presentation and tour for Cruise Wales at the Gaol and a follow up meeting in Caernarfon, Beaumaris Town Council have been advised that they have been added to the Cruise visit itinerary for the 2020 season. Beaumaris Town Council have been approached by Excursions Ltd who represent 5 cruise liners visiting the UK to arrange bookings for June, July and August next year.
- Price for group tickets needs to be fixed.
- Welsh regalia to welcome coach parties, organise an or liaise with associated events around town.
- The public toilets has a detrimental effect on visitors coming to Beaumaris.
- Refurbishment of public toilets.

- Public toilets by Castle are owned by Anglesey County Council by the Castle. There was a question about when the asset transfer would occur.

Recommendation to Council:-

Proposed, seconded, carried unanimously to seek a status report on the refurbishment of the public toilets.

Recommendation to Council:-

Proposed, seconded, carried unanimously to confirm details of the asset transfer of the public toilets by the Castle.

Recommendation to Council:-

Proposed, seconded, carried unanimously to have a meeting in January to discuss and make recommendations for the 2020 tariffs and pricing structures for the Gaol and Courthouse and Castle car park charges, date to be set.

The Chairman thanked all committee members for their help and support in the running of the Gaol and Courthouse since opening in May 2019.

NEXT MEETING TBA 2020.

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm

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Chair
Councillor H Mattocks

Date