



St Asaph City Council

Meeting with Representatives of NRW

Thursday 8th September 2022 at 10.30 am, at the Community & Council Meeting Room Roe Plas, St Asaph.

Present: Cllrs Hardie (Mayor), Scott (Deputy Mayor), Roberts & Williams

Also Present: Two Officers from NRW

Cllr Hardie opened the meeting and welcomed the officers from NRW to the meeting.

2022/N01 Plant!

When St Asaph was flooded in 2012, the City Council had a good relationship with NRW before and during the construction of the flood defences. This meeting was seen as a good first step to rebuild relationships.

Cllr Hardie outlined the events of the last four years, following completion of the flood defences, including the issues with the Plant! scheme:

No.	Details
I.	The City Council requested details of the number of trees planted to replace one hundred trees removed for the construction of the flood defences. ▪ Were the trees from the Plant! scheme and the Sakura cherry trees offset against the total number? ▪ How many trees were NRW obliged to plant as replacements under the planning conditions?
II.	The City Council was due to receive £37k grant funding from the Plant! scheme in March 2019. This has never materialised.
III.	In the absence of the Plant! funding, NRW were to maintain the planted trees until the funding issues were resolved. The maintenance contract was not commenced until April 2022 and is for just two years, rather than the promised five years. This has resulted in the loss of a number of trees, many of which are the rare Sakura cherry trees, which were a gift to the City Council from the Japanese Consulate.
IV.	Maintenance of the area behind the Library was only conducted for the first time at the end of July 2022.

V.	In the absence of any maintenance work by NRW, the City Council have been maintaining the land behind the Library and the trees at its own expense.
VI.	Following the City Council's letter of complaint, Cllrs Scott and Roberts and the Clerk met with NRW, at the end of August 2021. We were promised details of grant funding, which have never materialised. There was no further contact from the Ops team to resolve matters.
VII.	Apart from £6000 to plant the cherry trees, the City Council has never received any funding out of the £37k. The Council would like to know where the money has gone.
VIII.	The City Council has refused permission for the Plant! board to be installed as this would give the impression that it has received funding, which it has not.
IX.	Following this refusal, (<i>redacted – two NRW officers</i>) have now suggested that SACC can access the Plant! funding direct after all. A meeting is to be arranged so NRW can explain what is entailed and we are waiting for a reply from NRW with a date. Precise details are required before this can be put before Council.

Cllr Williams suggested that a survey should be commissioned to show the existing position, which might give some clarity.

The Mayor and the Clerk praised (*redacted – NRW officer*) for their diligence in trying to progress this project, but without back up resources, it was difficult to see it come to a successful conclusion.

2022/N02 Transfer of Land Assets

NRW had purchased several parcels of land to enable the construction of the flood defences. They were now seeking to transfer this land to partners and some land had been sold.

- a) The site near the BT building – NRW are awaiting action from BT's solicitors before the land can be transferred.
- b) Land at Cae Bach – the ownership of Spring Gardens bridge is to be resolved, which is delaying matters. Cllr Hardie explained that the City Council may be reluctant to accept this land, particularly as it is isolated from its other land holdings. Further the proximity to the water treatment works may render it unsuitable as an amenity for the public. The maintenance costs would need to be established before Council can consider.

The Clerk clarified that the City Council would need to consider whether to accept these parcels of land and a resolution of the Council would be required, should they agree to do so.

2022/N03 Handover of City Council Land following Flood Defence Construction

- b) Cllr Hardie asked about the ownership of and responsibility for the wooden fencing constructed by NRW during the flood defence work. NRW confirmed that all the fencing has now reverted to the landowner.
- c) Public access to the east side of the riverbank – NRW confirmed that they will lay some material to prevent the erosion of the riverbank. They are unable to construct a new footpath – the official footpath is along the top of the bund.

Cllr Scott asked about the footpath behind Roe Parc. During flooding, the residents had built up sandbags to save their homes, but it needed a more permanent solution.

- d) Bowling Club wall – two areas of planting had been completed alongside the wall. The fencing surrounding these should have been removed in the last few days. The area opposite the skate park is very low and brambles have been allowed to grow to prevent access to the wall. This looks unsightly and is not in keeping with the well-maintained hedge. NRW will not do any further planting here, but some shrubs could be planted as part of the Plant! scheme.

The security of the wall was raised as people have been walking and cycling along the top. NRW stated that they had erected railings to a standard specification, Cllr Williams pointed out these may not be deemed to be of adequate specification should a legal claim be made in the event of an accident as people were able to access the wall over the railings easily.

- e) Planning Conditions – these are to be discussed with (*redacted – two NRW officers*) The footpath under the bridge is to be lowered, which will increase the headroom.

2022/N04 Future Flood Protection

- a) Football Pavilion – the flooding of the football pavilion during storm Ciara was raised. NRW stated that it had been built on a flood plain and that this was not their responsibility. Their attention was drawn to the Black & Veatch Flood Consequence Assessment dated August 2016 (re: Planning Application 46/2016/0953 PF). This clearly states a number of times that the flood risk had been increased for a number of properties, including the football pavilion. NRW acknowledged that they

should have discussed this matter with the Council and property owners before the construction work, which Cllr Hardie confirmed they had not. NRW suggested that the City Council contact the Flood Forum, and also Welsh Water.

The Group requested that NRW write a letter confirming that the football pavilion will flood again and does need remedial work, this to support any grant applications the Council makes.

- b) Meeting Room – the building is lower risk from flooding – more temporary solutions may be required here.
- c) Bowling Clubhouse – Cllr Scott confirmed that no action was needed.
- d) Management of the river and the riverbanks – NRW confirmed that the river is inspected twice a year. Any fallen trees are identified and will be added to the program for removal if they are deemed to be a flood risk. They consider size and location of trees relevant to pinch points.

Management of invasive species was raised – NRW confirmed this is the responsibility of the landowners. The issue of NRW's powers and duty of enforcement as an environment agency was raised.

Cllr Roberts enquired whether there was a bore hole under the football pitch, which could be accessed for irrigation. This should be directed to NRW enquiries.

- e) Cllr Hardie enquired when the Black & Veatch report following Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis would be released to the public. Although it has been sent confidentially to Cllr Scott, he has not yet been permitted to share it with the City Council. The report was to be published on NRW's website.

The Natural Flood Management scheme just outside St Asaph was raised. NRW confirmed the matter was concluded. Dredging is not effective in most places, although it is successful on occasion.

The Community Flood Plan is the responsibility of the Community. NRW enquired whether there is a Flood Partnership Group for St Asaph as they attend such meetings for other communities.

Action Plan:

No.	Action	Who	Complete
2022/N01	Meeting to be arranged between three officers from NRW and CH and the Clerk to ascertain:	NRW	
	a) The breakdown of the trees planted and which scheme they belonged to;		
	b) A cost breakdown used for the work done so far, to include details of the relevant budget;		
	c) Which of the lost trees will be replaced at NRW's expense;		
	d) Are any funds due to the Council in respect of maintenance work they have had done, due to NRW's failure to complete the grant scheme or maintenance work;		
	e) The process for the City Council to apply for Plant! funding direct;		
	f) Should the Council apply for Plant! funding, which works will no longer be completed by NRW?		
	g) Is the Council's eligibility for Plant! funding contingent upon it accepting Cae Bach as its asset?		
	h) The impact of any application by the Council on the work to the land behind the Library		
	Survey of the current situation to be commissioned. This would enable both parties to agree the way forward.	NRW	
2022/N02	Details of BT Site and Cae Bach to be sent to the Clerk so the Council can consider whether to accept the parcels of land.	NRW	
	Details of maintenance required, including costs, to be sent to the Clerk to inform the Council's decision re: acceptance of the land	NRW	
2022/N03	Responsibility for fencing repairs – confirmed to lie with the landowners	NRW	08/09/2022
	Public access east side of riverbank – material to be laid to prevent erosion	NRW	

No.	Action	Who	Complete
2022/N03	Ascertain action to be taken to address footpath behind Roe Parc and enhance the protection of these properties	NRW	
	Bowling Club Wall – fencing to be removed around planting	NRW	09/09/2022
	Bowling Club Wall – shrubs to be planted in place of brambles – consider as part of Plant!	NRW/SACC (Depending on SACC decision re: Plant!)	
	Bowling Club Wall – more robust measures required to deter incursions onto the wall	NRW	
	Planning Conditions – to be discussed during meeting – see 2022/N01	NRW	
2022/N04	Football Pavilion - details of grant funding for flood protection to be sent to the Clerk	NRW	09/09/2022
	Letter to be sent to the Clerk confirming the football pavilion will flood again and the need for remedial action. This to support grant applications	NRW	
	Contact Flood Forum re: consultants, flood prevention measures and grant funding	JR/Clerk	
	Meeting Room – keep adequacy of building protection under review	SACC	
	Management of riverbank – statement to be sent to the Clerk re: management of the river and obstructions for publication on the Council's website and social media to reassure the public.	NRW	
	Advise the Clerk whether NRW has any enforcement powers re: invasive species	NRW	
	E-mail NRW enquiries re: possible bore hole under football pitch	JR/Clerk	
	Advise the Clerk when the Black & Veatch report following Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis will be released to the City Council, and to the Public. If it is not to be released, please advise the reason to the Clerk	NRW	

Meeting Closed at 12.00 pm.