

THE councillor quoted in last week's front page story about the bid to oust Denbighshire County Council leader Rhiannon Hughes from office quoted Cllr Tom Hodgkinson when we should have said Hodgson. We apologise for the error.

Mixed response to seafront scheme

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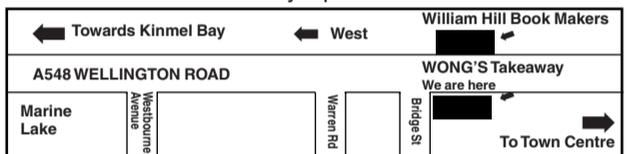
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The proposed seafront scheme development and (below) an aerial view of the site as it is now

What do you think?

Give us your views about the proposed seafront development by clicking on the link at the Journal's website. www.rhyljournal.co.uk

By **TERRY CANTY**
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PROPOSALS for Rhyl's new-look seafront received a mixed response when they were unveiled this week.

The plans, which went on display at Rhyl Town Hall yesterday, drew both praise and criticism from around 60 members of Rhyl's business community during a special preview on Monday night.

The Ocean Plaza scheme, which includes plans for apartments, a supermarket, bars, cafes and restaurants, a leisure complex, offices, 3.5 star hotel and public promenade and entertainment space, was outlined by directors from Manchester-based developers Modus.

The company's planning director, Mike Ralph, said the £60million plans which will go for planning permission with Denbighshire County Council this week, were the culmination of 18 months of behind-the-scenes work. Negotiations with landowners to enable the proposed development which will replace Rhyl's Ocean Beach Fun Fair, the current car boot sale site, The Schooner, and the former Esso service station, to go ahead according to Mr Ralph had proved challenging.

He said: "It has not been an easy site in terms of land assembly...but it's a development we are excited about."

Developers Modus, who are currently overseeing regeneration projects in Warrington, Crewe and Wigan, are experienced at redeveloping brown field sites for future use.



The centrepiece of the proposed Ocean Plaza development is a new Asda supermarket, which will create part of the development's expected 750 jobs and will signal the closure of Asda in Kinmel Bay. News of the arrival of the new supermarket together with offices and residential property drew some criticism.

"More apartments and an Asda...that's the big plan!" said local businessman Mark Macauley. "I don't see how it's going to bring day-trippers and holidaymakers into the area. We need an attraction - it would make more sense to put an ice rink in there."

Another local businessman and property developer, Les Hughes, said: "I can't believe we are going to put offices on Rhyl's promenade. This is one of the finest beaches in the country and Rhyl needs offices on its seafront like a hole in the head."

Cafe owner, Pauline Skipton, who claimed she is struggling to make a financial success of her business in Wellington Road, said she was

"fearful" of proposals for new restaurants and cafes. "It's going to cripple us and other restaurants and cafes in the town," she said.

Others were excited at the prospect of such an ambitious project. Boatman, John Pover, said: "I think the scheme looks very good and will be beneficial to the development of the marina which will hopefully take place."

Rhyl Business Group vice chairman, Barry Mellor, said: "A development like this will bring in the other developers we need for the marina. It is a catalyst for us."

Rhyl Business Group chairman, Ian Eldred, said: "This is a bold development. This sort of scheme gives investors confidence Rhyl is a growth town. Rhyl has a choice - either it can remain in the past or can look forward to the future."

"Yes there are pluses and minuses to the plans but I am very strongly of the opinion that this level of investment is what's needed in the town," said added Mr Ralph. "We think it has a great opportunity here."

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