

# PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL



**ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**



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# CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

## Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to the second annual report 2022/2023, which we hope will provide you with an insight & information of activities of the members of Presteigne and Norton council throughout this year, as well as ongoing and future plans for the benefit of the community.

It is fair to say this has been a challenging year for us all on many levels, though we are fortunate indeed to live in the rural idyll, we are even more fortunate to have a community which looks out for others, and indeed for those outside our community who face problems we can barely comprehend, you have big hearts, and we as a Council are extremely proud to represent you.

On a personal note it has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Mayor & Chair of the Council, seeing the community organising and supporting so many events post pandemic has been heart warming for us all I'm sure.

There have been some major projects with the purchase and continuing work on the land purchased to become a nature reserve - Coed Llanandras - by the Town Council, the great tree give away, and much more work on going by Council Members

Can I take this opportunity to remind everyone that our monthly meetings are once more open to the public, and are also available via the new hybrid meeting, links for this, as well as up coming agenda, previous minutes and general updates for events, business and local attractions can be found <http://presteigne.org.uk/>

Best Wishes to all

Deb Edwards, Chairman and Town Mayor 2022/23

# ABOUT THE COUNCIL

Town and Community Councils are known as the first tier of local government, the tier closest to the residents they represent and consisting of local people working to benefit the local area.

## **The Town Council is consulted on –**

Planning Applications and the Local Development Plan

Tree Works

Comments on County Council formal policy changes e.g. street lighting, affordable housing and changes to play areas, grass cutting, street cleaning etc.

Some Welsh Government formal policy changes e.g changes to Council Tax, second homes legislation.

## **It works on projects to benefit the local area –**

### **Currently ongoing Projects -**

Small Grant Fund for local community groups.

Provision of community defibrillators and their ongoing maintenance.

Presteigne and Norton Dark Skies.

Creation of new Nature Reserve.

### **Some of our completed Projects have been –**

Purchase of zip wire for Wilson Terrace Playground.

Contribution towards new roundabout, Wilson Terrace Playground.

Purchase of new play equipment for Lugg View Play Area.

Securing land for an extension to Presteigne Cemetery.

Refurbishment of Town Benches (generously sponsored by a local resident)

Presteigne and Norton Town Investment Plan.

Campaign to secure investment and improvement by Welsh Water to the Presteigne and Norton Sewerage Infrastructure.

### **Town Council Sites and Buildings –**

The Council does not have an office but holds its monthly meetings upstairs in the Assembly Rooms. It has one part time paid Officer, the Clerk to the Council, Tracey Price.

It runs –

Eddie's Meadow and the former reservoir ground adjacent to the Warden.

Went's Meadow, skateboard bowl, outdoor gym and multi-use games area.

Community Barn, Went's Meadow.

Wilson Terrace Toilets.

Hereford Street Toilets.

Thirty-six small Allotment Gardens.

New Nature Reserve adj to Warden Road.

## Member Attendance 2022 - 23

	Possible	Actual Attended	%
<b>NORTON WARD</b>			
Cllr. Deb Edwards	13	13	100
Cllr. Lewers Firth	8	5	63
Cllr. Andre Van Huls	8	5	63
Cllr. John Wilding	8	7	88
<b>PRESTEIGNE WARD</b>			
Cllr. L. Abecasis	13	9	69
Cllr. Rose Bamford	13	12	92
Cllr. Beverley Baynham	13	12	92
Cllr. Juliet Grey	10	8	80
Cllr. T. Owens	13	13	100
Cllr. Jem Poster	10	10	100
Cllr. Fiona Preece	13	11	85
Cllr. Mark Price	10	6	60
Cllr. Mark Williams	13	13	100

# Your Town Council Members in 2022-23

## **2022/23 MAYOR, CLLR. DEB EDWARDS (NORTON WARD)**

Telephone: 01544 260074 or 07794 351569

Email: [cllr.deborah.edwards@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.deborah.edwards@powys.gov.uk)

Deb says 'I have had the privilege to have been raised in this beautiful part of the world and have been lucky enough to gain employment locally and so to be able to stay and live here.' She worked for many years for the Royal Mail and so physically knows Presteigne and Norton well. She previously trained and engaged in the hospitality industry within the area. She hopes that residents will find her approachable, friendly and helpful.

Note: Deb was also elected as County Councillor for the newly formed Llangunllo with Norton Ward in May 2022.

## **2022/23 DEPUTY MAYOR, CLLR. BEVERLEY BAYNHAM (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Email: [cllr.beverley.baynham@powys.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.beverley.baynham@powys.gov.uk) Telephone: 07976 928039

Cllr. Beverley Baynham has been a councillor since 2008 and was Mayor for the first time in 2013. She is a traditional local farmers daughter who grew up in the area and attended school in Presteigne. She originally joined the council as she wished to put something back into the local community, and over time has worked on numerous community projects. She has two children and works as the Chief Officer for a local charitable organisation in the private care sector. She has particular interests in facilities for children, affordable housing, the community and financial issues.

She is presently an LEA Governor of Presteigne Primary School and Newtown High School, representing the interests of the John Beddoes Campus.

In January 2014 Beverley resurrected Presteigne Carnival which ceased almost 20 years before, it turned out to be a huge success and has continued as a wonderful annual community event. Happy that the Carnival was once again established Beverley relinquished her role on the committee.

Beverley is qualified to Level 5 in NVQ's and Level 3 in the Association of Accounting Technicians. She considers herself to be a hardworking, enthusiastic and approachable Councillor.

In May 2017 Beverley was elected as County Councillor for Presteigne and Norton. During the term of office, she was Chairman of Powys County Council.



Beverley says – ‘As an elected Councillor for the Presteigne Ward of Presteigne & Norton Town Council I carried out duties to the best of my ability represented the residents in a fair and appropriate way. For the period I was also the elected County Councillor for Presteigne & Norton. I attended monthly full council meetings and sat on the Staffing Sub-Committee and Dark Skies Working Group, some of these were online and some were in person when Covid allowed. I was involved with the culmination of the cemetery extension, which is a fantastic achievement for the Town Council and the town. I was also involved with the town wi-fi project and the grass cutting schedule to encourage bio-diversity. I continued to serve on the following outside organisations: John Beddoes Trust Fund, Newtown High School Governing Body, Presteigne Primary School Governing Body, Judges Lodging Museum Trust Powys, Powys Community Health Council and East Radnorshire Day Centre. I continued to support and assist the residents with a variety of issues. I have always considered the role a huge privilege and take my responsibilities very seriously and always try to do the best for the residents and the community.’

Note: Beverley stood again at the 2022 County Council elections, and was re-elected for the new Presteigne Ward.

## **CLLR. LEON ABECASIS (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Email: [leonabecasis@gmail.com](mailto:leonabecasis@gmail.com)

I moved into Presteigne 15 years ago and I have never felt more at home than I do here, that is down to the wonderful people who live and work here. Me and my partner Annemarie have been working at The Salty Dog for the past 11 years and during that time; I have been involved in; fundraising for the Presteigne Little People Play Group, organised (along with the members of Connect) The very successful Presteigne Food and Flower Festivals and the Christmas Fair, fought the ongoing fight against the town parking charges and the adoption of the recycling centre, which helped to raise a substantial amount of money for the community, all this whilst cooking some scrumptious food.

## **CLLR. ROSE BAMFORD (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Telephone: 07538 548020

Rose grew up in Presteigne and attended John Beddoes, later followed by a degree in silversmithing and jewellery at London Metropolitan University. Presteigne has a great sense of community and she is keen to bring people together to work to protect our vital services and organisations. Rose has run her own business in Presteigne for the last 12 years. She has been involved in a range of community groups, including the carnival, fireworks and Presteigne Players, Rainbows, Presteigne and Norton Community Trust and Sheep Music which she organised in 2009. Her last five years on the council have seen her help to focus the council on the environmental issues that we face and

establish a Climate Action Group, a Tree Group, which has planted a small woodland and arranged events to raise awareness, and overseen the successful grant bid for a new nature reserve in Presteigne. She is looking forward to continuing to develop the Council's response to the Climate and Ecological Crisis.

NOTE: RESIGNED SEPTEMBER 2023

### **CLLR. TREVOR OWENS (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Email: [t.owens.pntc@gmail.com](mailto:t.owens.pntc@gmail.com) Telephone: 07910 072825

Trevor has lived in or around Presteigne and Norton all his life. He has enjoyed long associations with the football, cricket and Young Farmers Clubs and has also been MC at the Town Carnival. He works for the BBC and has been in the media world for over 30 years.

### **CLLR. JEREMY POSTER (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Email: [jemposterpntc@gmail.com](mailto:jemposterpntc@gmail.com)

Co-opted onto Council July 2022.

Note: Resigned October 2023

### **CLLR. FIONA PREECE (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Email: [fiona.preecepntc@gmail.com](mailto:fiona.preecepntc@gmail.com)

Cllr Fiona Preece has lived in Norton and Presteigne all her life. She joined the Town Council because she would like to work to help all clubs and organisations in the area. She currently helps to run Presteigne Cubs, and she is also involved at district level for Scouting in Radnor. She considers herself a hard worker and tries to be an approachable councillor. She currently works for Powys County Council. Since the Radnorshire Arms closed she has been liaising with the VSCC to help with their visits to Presteigne each October and in particular with the anniversary celebrations in 2019. She considers herself a hard worker and tries to be an approachable councillor.

### **CLLR. JOHN WILDING (NORTON WARD)**

Cllr. Wilding is a farmer and builder and lives in Norton. His family has lived in Norton for over 90 years. He has served as a Town and Community Councillor for 18 years and has served as Mayor for three terms of office.

## **CLLR. MARK WILLIAMS (PRESTEIGNE WARD)**

Mark says - I've lived in or just outside Presteigne for almost 40 years during which I've engaged in many community activities including as a trustee and active member of Sheep Music (including as its chairperson), active involvement in ensuring that off-road rights of way are maintained, high street stewarding during Covid lockdowns, a panto regular, writing for and distributing Broad Sheep, helping manage Presteigne Screen, editing the Brecon & Radnor Express, volunteering at the Repair & Share Cafe, and volunteering at the town library. I hope all of this underlines my love of and commitment to this remarkable little town and my long-held ambition to become a Councillor.

I am especially interested in three areas of life in Presteigne: maintaining and developing cultural activities; ensuring that local retailers can survive and serve the needs of our community; that local services and housing benefit the *entire* community, not just the better-off.

Following his first year in office Cllr. Williams has added the following reflections -

As a relatively new Councillor it took me many meetings to become acquainted with the background to, and history of many of the responsibilities we have and issues we faced, indeed after a little over a year this remains the case in some cases. However I always feel welcome and valued, have enjoyed the process and feel that in some respects I have contributed usefully to the work of the Council, whilst not always agreeing with its democratic conclusions.

**MAYOR FOR 2023-24 IS CLLR BEVERLEY BAYNHAM**

**DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2023-24 IS CLLR ROSE BAMFORD (Resigned Sept 2023)**

# Council Memberships 2022-23

## **SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE**

Cllrs. Bamford, Preece, Firth, Gray and Price. Outside Representative for Meadow Matters: Richard Rimington. Outside Representative for Allotments: Karen Lewis. Outside Representative for Meadow Matters: Gareth Graham. Outside Representative for Meadow Matters: Colin Kirkby. STAFFING COMMITTEE Cllrs. Baynham, Edwards, Wilding, Vanhuls and Owens.

## **CLIMATE CRISIS COMMITTEE (Formed Sept 2022, previously a working group)**

Cllrs Poster, Gray, Bamford and Firth. Plus two outside representatives to be appointed. NB Nature Reserve Project to be managed by this Committee until completion.

## **LIBRARY SERVICE/ASSEMBLY ROOMS WORKING GROUP**

Cllrs. Williams, Abecasis, Bamford, Baynham. (Note - reduced to four Members)

## **BROADBAND WORKING GROUP**

Cllrs. Owens and Edwards.

## **GRANT AWARDING POLICY WORKING GROUP**

Cllrs. Baynham, Wilding, Williams, Price.

## **LDP WORKING GROUP:**

Cllrs. Baynham, Firth, Edwards, Abecasis.

## **DARK SKIES/INTELLIGENT LIGHTING WORKING GROUP**

Cllrs. Baynham, Williams. Outside Representative: Leigh Harling-Bowen.

**ALLOTMENT LIAISON MEMBER:** Cllr. Preece.

**YOUTH REPRESENTATION MEMBER(S):** Cllrs. Bamford and Abecasis.

## **REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

Presteigne Primary School Cllr. Preece.

One Voice Wales (2) Cllrs. Edwards and Baynham.

East Radnorshire Day Care Centre (2) Cllrs. Edwards & Vanhuls.

Presteigne Trust (4) Cllrs. Bamford, Edwards, Vanhuls. One vacancy.

Warden Guardian Foundation Cllr. Bamford.

PACDG Cllr. Williams

# Reports from Committee Chairs

## 2022-23

### **Sites and Buildings Committee: Chair Cllr. Rose Bamford.**

Main items over the year were:

**ORCHARD PRUNING:** An orchard pruning training day was arranged. The trees had been left for a few years and were getting out of condition and shape. Many volunteers turned up to help and get the work done although the plum trees were left to be pruned in the summer.

**GRASS MEADOW AREAS:** Grassed areas were reviewed and advice taken on creating wildflower meadow areas. A grant has now been applied for to do allow us to do this.

**WILDLIFE POND:** The wildlife pond at the bottom of Went's meadow had become very overgrown so a contractor was asked to come and remove the trees that were overhanging it and clear out the build-up of vegetation. Happily many newts and other pond life were found in it later in the year once it had recovered from the work.

**HEDGE MANAGEMENT:** A new hedge management plan was produced by members of the Climate Crisis Committee with the emphasis on managing the hedges for biodiversity. This is currently under review by Full Council.

**EDDIE'S MEADOW:** A new biodiversity management plan was commissioned for Eddie's Meadow and is now being considered by the Full Council.

### **Climate Crisis Committee: Chair Cllr. Jem Poster**

During the past year I've been privileged to be involved, both as Councillor and as Chair of the Climate Crisis Committee, with the establishment of Coed Llanandras, the town's new nature reserve. This initiative has created a valuable space for wildlife and an important educational resource for local schools; it has also brought together a substantial number of volunteers from the town and beyond, helping to foster a deeper sense of community.

I've been able, in council meetings, to map out the links between local matters and wider environmental concerns, and feel that, while there's plenty of work still to do, Presteigne and Norton Town Council is ahead of the curve on many of the crucial issues.

### **Staffing Committee: Chair Cllr. John Wilding**

The Council has just one employee, the Town Clerk.

All other works are carried out by contractors.

# ANNUAL ACCOUNTS SUMMARY AND INFORMATION

The Town Council raises most of its funds through the Council Tax. It sets a budget each January for the forthcoming financial year (April to March).

2022-23 Spending summary (full accounts on the website)

2022-23	£
Administration	31,656
Grants/Donations	16,660
Member's Allowances/Expenses	1,376
Public Toilets	9,669
Running of Went's Meadow etc.	12,162
New Nature Reserve (fully grant funded)	210,358
2022 Elections	2,395
Misc. inc works to river weir	13,161
Total	291,560

In 2022-23 a household in a Band D Council Tax property paid £54.00 (in total) over the year towards the Town Council costs. This figure was unchanged from 2021-22.

The Council retains some funds each year to meet emergency spending and to allow for occasional one-off costs (such as larger repairs, full elections, projects).

The Council also applies for grants where possible to provide facilities of projects for the town and surrounding area.

# SMALL GRANTS

The grants/donations awarded in the year were to –

Air Ambulance	300
British Legion (Remembrance Wreaths)	60
East Radnorshire Care	2000
Knighton & District Leg Club	100
Memorial Hall	1250
Mid Border Arts	1250
Norton Community Trust	5000
Norton Sports Committee (Fireworks)	200
PACDG	250
1st Presteigne Guides	0
Presteigne Festival	1250
Presteigne Fireworks Display (Sheep Music)	500
Presteigne Little Peoples Playgroup	0
Presteigne & Norton Community Support	250
The Judge's Lodging Trust Ltd	2000
Powys CAB	200
Radnorshire Wildlife Trust	250
The Samaritans	250
Wardens Guardian Foundation	250
Youth Project	1000
Presteigne & Norton Floral Art Society - NEW	200
Allocated for Miscellaneous	500
	<b>17,060.00</b>

Any group or organization wishing to apply for a small grant should contact the Clerk for more information.

Note: In order to be considered for inclusion in the budget for the following financial year please apply by 1<sup>st</sup> January i.e., for a grant in 2024-25 you will need to apply by 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

# **DARK SKIES PROJECT**

In the UK today less than 10% of the population can enjoy a truly dark sky. Light pollution affects health, wildlife and energy consumption.

Following an approach to the Town Council from a local resident the Council has been working with the resident, a lighting designer and the County Council to investigate the possibility of applying for dark sky status for Presteigne and Norton.

The benefits of dark skies are –

To preserve the environment and protect the natural behaviour of nocturnal wildlife.

To enjoy the full experience of our night skies and to see our stars.

To appreciate the character and beauty of the natural landscape.

To protect our health and well-being.

Our dark skies application has now been submitted and feedback from the International Dark Skies Association is awaited.

# **COMMUNITY ULTRA FAST BROADBAND PROJECT**

In the February 2022 the Council, working with Broadway Partners, a rural internet provider, sent letters to all properties in its area to gauge interest in bringing ultra-fast (min 100mb) fibre to the premises broadband to Presteigne and Norton and surrounding rural properties.

After the required number of registrations was received the project was put to the Broadway Partners Board for approval to continue and this was given.

Unfortunately Broadway Partners went into administration and the Presteigne and Norton area project cannot proceed.

The Town Council continues to work with Powys County Council to try to secure full fibre connections for all who request them in our area.



# ADOPT A BENCH

In 2021/22 the Town Council launched an Adopt-a-bench appeal for residents to look after a bench and keep it tidy. If you'd like to help please contact the Clerk.

# CREATION OF NATURE RESERVE

The Town Council obtained grant funding to create a new woodland nature reserve to become part of the National Forest of Wales and create a designated place for nature on the edge of town. The purchase and set up costs are fully funded with the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Welsh Government. A suitable field was found and with the help and expertise of The Woodland Trust, Natural Resources Wales, CADW, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust and many local experts and enthusiasts a plan was made.

The grant fund encourages a mosaic of mixed habitats and the proposal is to create areas of open grassland, wild-flower meadow, ponds, native tree woodland as well as maintaining the currently registered area of Historic Parkland Garden vista with more of the specimen arboretum trees planted to replace the ones that have been lost. The grassland will be mown annually and encouraged over time to become a wild-flower meadow. A wide native species hedge along the field boundary and groups of native tree planting will cover the rest of the field creating corridors for wildlife and links with surrounding woodland, bringing part of the National Forest into the town.

The project will help Presteigne address climate change by storing carbon and will be managed as a nature reserve with help from members of the community to create and maintain it.

The project is well underway and will be complete in the Autumn of 2023.



# TOWN WIFI

In July 2021 the Town Council was approached by the County Council to establish its interest in providing free wifi in the town centre.

Thanks is due to the following for continuing to site the units –

The Salty Dog

No. 46 Wine Bar

The Old School (Presteigne Youth Project)

The Royal Oak

Powys County Council – Assembly Rooms

In addition to providing the free wifi the system will also provide visitor data (numbers/length of stay etc) which can be supplied to businesses and used to provide supporting information for grant applications etc.

The system is now up and running and available for use for both residents and visitors when out and about in the town.



# HOW CAN THE COUNCIL HELP YOU?

The Town Council is interested to know what you want from your Council.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for future projects please do get in touch or if there is an issue that needs attention, please let us know.

Please note that the following matters fall under the County Council and as such the Town Council can lobby for action or change but it has no power to insist!

County Council matters are –

- Highways including road surfaces and potholes
- Street sweeping
- Refuse and Recycling
- Road Signs
- Verge grass cutting
- Council Housing
- Education
- Social Services
- Planning

The PCC switchboard number is 01597 826000

Details of how to contact your County Councillor can be found on their website - [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/findmycouncillor>

## **A Summary**

Presteigne and Norton Town Council covers Presteigne Town, Norton village and surrounding areas.

It is made up of thirteen Councillors and has one paid part time officer, the Clerk to the Council.

Members during 2022-23 were –

Deborah Edwards (Chairman/Mayor)

Beverley Baynham (Vice-Chairman/Deputy Mayor)

Leon Abecasis

Rose Bamford

Lewers Firth

Juliet Gray

Trevor Owens

Jem Poster

Mark Price

Fiona Preece

Andre Van Huls

John Wilding

Mark Williams

## **Contact Us**

Tracey Price, Clerk to the Council

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*Annual Report 2022-23*

