

# Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. B. Baynham (Mayor), T. Owens (Deputy Mayor), M. Price, D. Edwards, A. Van Huls, F. Preece, C. Kirkby MBE, J. Ramsay (via video link), L. Abecasis, M. Williams (via video link).

Apologies: Cllr. J. Wilding.

In Attendance: Mrs T. Price, Town Clerk. One member of the public.

Prior to the start of the formal meeting Cllr. Baynham announced that the Council had been successful in the recent One Voice Wales national awards, winning the Sustainability Category with the Dark Skies Project and receiving commended awards in the Annual Report and Environmental categories.

She also reminded Members of the need to ensure that the Clerk was kept advised of the work of any volunteers and that records needed to be provided each time volunteers were on any of the Council sites with details of names, addresses, times on site and work to be carried out. Without this any volunteers would not be covered by the Council's insurance.

Declarations of Interest: Members were requested to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests they may have in matters to be considered at the meeting in accordance with the terms of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct Order) (Wales) Order 2008.

*Personal: None.*

*Personal and Prejudicial:*

*Cllr. Ramsay re planning applications 24/0285/LBC and 24/0284/FUL, owner of land adjacent to application site therefore any decision made could affect his well-being or financial position.*

### **MIN 4324 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Climate Crisis Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2024 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

### **MIN 4325 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

(1) Flooding, Slough Road: Cllr. Baynham reported that the Highways Department had now carried out investigations in the area and had identified an issue with run off into a soakaway. It was hoped to carry out some capital works in the Summer holiday period to alleviate the problem.

(2) Warden Guardian Foundation: Cllr. Kirkby had attended the recent AGM and gave a short report. He praised the support and assistance given to the Foundation by the County Council Officer responsible for the site.

(3) Sign at Maes Corton: A replacement had been promised but was not yet in place. The Clerk would chase.

(4) Return of the Sleeping Dragon: To return to the site on 27<sup>th</sup> April at 3pm.

(5) Welsh Water Phosphate Permit: It was noted that this had been granted.

(6) Clearance of Pathway, Back Lane: This had been cleaned and tidied by the Guerrilla Gardeners after the Clerk forwarded a request from a resident. Thanks had been sent from the Town Council

### **MIN 4326 FINANCE**

(1) Donations: The following precepted donations were confirmed:-

East Radnorshire Care	2000
Mid Border Arts	1500
Norton Community Trust	2000

PACDG	250
Presteigne Festival	1250
Presteigne & Norton Community Support	250
The Judge's Lodging Trust Ltd	2000
Powys CAB	200
The Samaritans	250
Youth Project	1000

Members also confirmed that the donation to the Wales Air Ambulance also be paid as precepted.  
Wales Air Ambulance                      £250.00

Application to Climate Crisis Grant Fund – Presteigne Community Garden: Members considered the application for £249.00. Members noted that the group had formed a Community Interest Company but were concerned that the site was not easily accessible for those on foot. It was felt that efforts Cllr. Kirkby proposed that the donation be agreed and this was seconded by Cllr. Ramsay and agreed unanimously subject to the group being asked to look at ways of improving access to the site.

Presteigne Community Garden                      £249.00

(2) Payments: The following payments were agreed:-

One Voice Wales (conference fee – Cllr. Baynham)	£60.00
One Voice Wales (annual membership)	£582.00
Society of Local Council Clerks (membership)	£288.00
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£345.89 MEADOW ACC
Microsoft (email storage)	£19.99
EDF Energy (Hereford Street Toilets)	£94.51
EDF Energy (Meadow)	£22.03 MEADOW ACC
Artisan Print (printing for Fold Farm footpath)	£15.25
Mrs T. A. Price	£1588.84
HM Revenue & Customs	£601.38
NEST (Direct debit)	£146.30
Wallgate Ltd (soap for toilets)	£99.98
J. Wilding (refund high security lock)	£30.00 MEADOW ACC
T. Lloyd-John	£447.49
N. Close	£104.00
N. Close	£128.00 MEADOW ACC
RB Landscaping	£648.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00
HSBC (bank charges)	£9.93 MEADOW ACC
Zoom (annual subscription)	£155.88
Amazon (wood stain for Barn)	£19.99 MEADOW ACC
L. Stephens (internal audit fee)	£92.00
C. Kirkby (refund of expenses)	£27.00

(3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted:-

Allotment Rent (£168.00 in 23/24, £28 in 24/25)	£196.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Powys County Council (final sum - wildflower grant)	£2601.97
HM Revenue & Customs (VAT refund)	£9030.11

(4) Money Market Bonds: It was agreed that the Clerk re-invest the bonds in further three or six month accounts depending on the interest rates available at maturity.

(5) Annual Accounts 2023/24: Resolved that the annual accounts be approved.

(6) Internal Audit: Members noted that the accounts papers were currently with the internal auditor. The Clerk advised that the audit was complete and that the full report would be presented to the May meeting.

(7) VAT return for 2023/24: Noted as submitted.

(8) Independent Remuneration Panel Information: Members noted that the annual return to the IRP had been submitted.

(9) Budget Update to end of March 2024: Members noted the update as provided.

(10) Review of Year End Project Balances: Members reviewed the year end balances and allocated reserve information. It was agreed that the surplus from the Tree Hub project be transferred to the Climate Crisis Grant Fund and the balance of £100 in the footpath repairs fund be returned to general reserves. The

free reserve balance was at three months expenditure and this was considered adequate given that allocated reserves were in place for ongoing projects.

(11) Purchase of Laptop: Agreed that the Clerk proceed to purchase a new laptop within the budget allocated.

(12) Mayor's Expenses/Allowance: Cllr. Baynham advised that she hoped to use her Mayor's Expenses in part to purchase two two-seater benches and asked if these could be sited on the Nature Reserve. This was agreed and Cllr. Baynham asked Cllr. Ramsay if he could meet her to discuss their exact locations on the site. She added that with the remaining monies she intended to make a donation to the Sleeping Dragon Fund. The Clerk would purchase the two seats and advise Cllr. Baynham of the balance remaining.

(13) Tree Group Community Engagement Day: It was agreed that the Tree Group could organise this event on behalf of the Town Council on the Nature Reserve. The Council would provide funding of £200 plus 45p per mile travel expenses for the event.

## **MIN 4327 PLANNING**

(1) Planning applications: The following applications were considered:-

*Cllr. Edwards left the room for the duration of the following items.*

24/0262/HH Grid Reference: E:331414 N: 264389 Proposal: Installation of an air source heat pump Site Address: Corner House (The Cottage), 53 High Street, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2BE. Resolved no objection be raised.

*Cllr. Ramsay was placed in the online waiting room for the duration of the following two items.*

24/0285/LBC Grid Reference: E:331281 N: 264546 Proposal: Retention of the erection of a timber frame outbuilding and renovation of an existing outbuilding to form a manager's cottage. Site Address: Radnorshire Arms Hotel, High Street, Presteigne, LD8 2BE. Resolved to make the following comments -

The application appears to relate to two developments and the Council feels it would have been clearer for two separate applications to be made. Members agreed the following - Timber Frame Outbuilding: The Council is disappointed that this has been applied for retrospectively; otherwise no objections. Manager's Cottage: the Council is disappointed that this has been applied for retrospectively; the retrospective nature means no professional bat or reptile survey was carried out prior to development; application says no reptiles but area is known as a slow worm site; the comments of Natural Resources Wales regarding the connection for foul flows from the development were noted. Other than the above comments the Council has no objections providing the Built Heritage Officer is satisfied.

24/0284/FUL Grid Reference: E:331281 N: 264546 Proposal: Retrospective application for the erection of a timber frame outbuilding and renovation of an existing outbuilding to form a manager's cottage. Site Address: Radnorshire Arms Hotel, High Street, Presteigne, LD8 2BE. Resolved to make the following comments - The application appears to relate to two developments and the Council feels it would have been clearer for two separate applications to be made. Members agreed the following - Timber Frame Outbuilding: The Council is disappointed that this has been applied for retrospectively; otherwise no objections. Manager's Cottage: the Council is disappointed that this has been applied for retrospectively; the retrospective nature means no professional bat or reptile survey was carried out prior to development; application says no reptiles but area is known as a slow worm site; the comments of Natural Resources Wales regarding the connection for foul flows from the development were noted. Other than the above comments the Council has no objections providing the Built Heritage Officer is satisfied.

*Cllr. Ramsay returned to the meeting.*

24/0338/FUL Grid Reference: E:330723 N: 264464 Proposal: Erection of a holiday chalet, extension to drainage field and installation of new private treatment plant Site Address: Holiday Chalet at Harp Meadow, Warden Road, Presteigne, LD8 2NL. Resolved to comment that the application states it is not a new build although it is. Also to note that there is a mature oak tree sited on the opposite side of the lane but whose roots may reach across onto the site. Care should be taken to not damage the root system. Otherwise no objections.

*Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.*

(2) Planning Decisions: No decisions this month.

(3) Email from Llandrindod Wells Town Council requesting support in a request for a referendum on wind turbine developments in Powys: Cllr. Baynham made Members aware that the request had already been refused by the Chief Executive of the County Council who had stated that the consultation process was in the hands of Welsh Government and that the role of the County Council

was to provide technical advice/comment. Under the circumstances Members suggested that an approach to Welsh Government would be more appropriate. The Clerk would write to the Llandrindod Wells Town Council with this suggestion.

#### **MIN 4328 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT**

(1) Dark Skies Project: Members noted the update in the Clerk's Report on the intention of the Secondary School to include Dark Skies education within its science lessons. With regard to the dark sky signage the Clerk had now received a draft of the sign approved by Highways but the officer had requested what3words details for the potential locations before a more accurate estimate of costs could be obtained.

(2) Climate Crisis Matters: Members considered and agreed the following recommendations from the Climate Crisis Committee -  
Confirmed the attendance of Cllr. Ramsay at future Climate Crisis Stakeholder Group Meetings.

Agreed that a review of the name of the Committee be considered at the Annual Full Council Meeting in May 2024.

Agreed that the following changes to the Terms of Reference be considered at the Annual Full Council Meeting in May, 2024 –

Membership – 2: Clerk to amend wording to clarify that 'Members' related to Members of the Town Council not Committee Members.

Responsibilities – 12: Add reference to solar panels and wind turbines.

Agreed to a review the full terms of reference at a future Committee meeting for consideration by Full Council in May 2025.

Noted the update on progress of nature reserve project. (Now managed under Sites and Buildings Committee).

Noted the Committee request for an updated hedge management policy.

Appointment of a representative on the Pethau Bychain Meetings (green network for Town and Community Councils): Deferred.

Places for Nature Top Up Packages: Deferred.

(3) High Street Grant: The Clerk provided a brief update to the project and advised that around eleven businesses had indicated that they wished to be part of the application. She hoped to finalise the application early the following week.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Kirkby reported that he had obtained a further 58 witness statements (with two more expected) and had also drafted a supplementary document for further submission to the County Council. Members were pleased to learn of the additional statements and agreed that the additional response to the draft report be submitted. Cllr. Baynham would hand deliver the witness statements to County Hall the following week.

(5) Presteigne Car Parks: Deferred to the May meeting.

(6) Lugg Bridge Repair Update: Repair had now been completed.

(7) Request for additional works, Clatterbrook Footpath: The Officer had replied to the request for further works as follows 'the funding for the contractors is all allocated, they are currently making some steps to go on the end of new metal and plastic bridge and then that will be them finished on the works at Presteigne.' The Officer would like to carry out some additional works but this would be with volunteers at some point in the future. Cllr. Kirkby stated that there was a further section that would benefit from stoning and the Clerk was asked to contact the Officer to ask if this could be done.

(8) Update on Cleaning of Pavement Slabs, Broad Street This should have been done but Cllr. Kirkby reported that the section from the Assembly Rooms to the Judge's Lodgings had not been cleaned. The Clerk would report this.

(9) Wilder Marches Consultation Project: Noted.

(10) Forest Management - Pryor & Rickett Silviculture Ltd; Consultation: Noted. No comment to be made.

## **MIN 4329      NORTON**

(1) Community Trust Update: A very successful open day had been held with many visitors to view the new facility. The foul water connection was now complete and much of the work was now complete. There would be an official opening in June. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr. Edwards arrange for the June Council meeting to be held in the new Hub. A letter of congratulations would be written to all those involved in the project.

(2) Weed Clearing; Thanks noted to Cllr. Edwards for clearing the pavement/roadside edges of weeds.

(3) Speeding in the Village: Cllr. Edwards reported that there had again been some complaints about this.

## **MIN 4330      SITES AND BUILDINGS**

(1) Public Conveniences: The following matters were discussed:-

Need for extra clean at Wilson Terrace Toilets: Agreed for an additional morning's work to provide a full Spring clean.

Update re toilet roll thefts: This had reduced for a time but had now re-started.

Recent graffiti in Hereford Street: This had largely now been removed.

(2) Allotments – The following matters were discussed –

Update on grant: Request submitted to County Council. Members agreed that they were happy for a composting area to be added to the request.

Completion of car park works: Completed successfully.

Update on vacant plots: Several had been re-let. Plot 36 remained vacant pending the grant application for raised beds and there was one further plot still to let. The Clerk would publicise that plot to try to get it let in the next few weeks.

Weed proof Covering: The PNAAs had raised this for vacant plots. Members agreed not to act yet but to re-consider in May.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Request from Grass Cutting Contractor to change mowing regime: Members were disappointed that the current regime was not working but noted that this was the third year of the contract. It was agreed to change the mowing arrangements to every seven to ten days at the increased cost. Cllr. Ramay asked if mowing arrangements on the site generally should be reviewed. Cllr. Baynham replied that there were already areas left unmown on the site but that the remaining area was mown to provide an amenity area for football, dog walking etc.

Cutting of Back/Car Park Field: The Clerk had spoken to the Carnival Committee and the volunteer was willing to cut the field again in June prior to the Carnival.

Update on work day: Cllr. Preece update Members on the Work Day and approval was given for the purchase of stone (approx. £110) and refreshments for the volunteers.

Use Request MBA 26/27<sup>th</sup> July: Agreed.

Use by Chatterbrook WI 11<sup>th</sup> July (6-8pm): Agreed.

Request for works to improve access to bottom area of Meadow: Members noted the generous offer to improve the access and agreed that this work be done and to fund the purchase of the necessary stone at an approximate cost of £150.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: Cllr. Ramsay reported on matters on the Reserve and that work was continuing. It was agreed that the site be added to the regular inspection list for the Council's sites. The Clerk would arrange this. The Clerk had brought for information the signs purchased as part of the wildflower grant and it was agreed that the larger round signs would be placed on the Nature Reserve with Cllr. Baynham liaising with Cllr. Ramsay over the exact locations and the small set to be placed on the Meadow. Cllr. Preece to keep those signs and possible locations to be considered when on site during the work day that weekend. Mr. Close would be asked to install if not done as part of the work day.

(5) Update re purchase of storage container: This had arrived on site but was not in position due to the wet condition of the ground.

(6) Community Storage/Bar Project: Cllr. Kirkby had investigated and if the project went ahead then planning permission would be required whatever the size of the proposed building. There was therefore no advantage in adjusting the size. With regard to funding he said that in the past the Town Council had contributed 10% (approx. £3000 in this case) of the cost of projects on the site but that he had identified grant funds that would provide most of the funding needed together with donations/crowd funding as needed. The Clerk advised that any commitment of funds would need to be on a future agenda so Members could give it full consideration.

Members then considered in some detail whether to proceed with the project. Cllr. Kirkby proposed the project go ahead, this was seconded by Cllr. Ramsay and proceeded to a vote. There were four votes in

favour of the proposal and five against. Cllr. Baynham did not cast her vote and the motion was defeated. The project would therefore not go ahead.

At this point Cllr. Kirkby indicated that he was extremely disappointed with the outcome of the vote and that he no longer wished to serve on the Council. He announced his resignation from the Council and left the meeting.

**MIN 4331      CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS**

- (1) Leisure Services Review Update: Nothing to report at present but information expected shortly.
- (2) Memorial Hall Update: Cllr. Baynham reported on the most recent updates from both the County Council and the current acting Hall Committee. The formal expression of interest form had been completed by the Committee but more information had been requested including a formal constitution and terms of reference. The most recent emails from the Committee were read to the meeting. Members noted the request for the support of the Council in obtaining confirmation of the County Council intent to transfer the additional areas of land (BT site and old play area) and to ask for a timeline for the transfer of these areas and agreed that the Clerk should do this. This item would be on the agenda again in May for a further update.

Due to the length of the meeting the remaining agenda items were deferred until May.

**MIN 4332      COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

None made.

**MIN 4333      URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION**

None.

The meeting closed at 10.06pm.