

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JUNE 2024 HELD AT NORTON COMMUNITY HUB, NORTON, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

Apologies: Cllrs. C. Kirkby, L. Abecasis.

In Attendance: Mrs T. Price, Town Clerk.

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. co-options to fill two vacancies, related to applicant for the Presteigne Ward.

MIN 4352 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the annual and ordinary meetings held on 16th May, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Sites and Buildings Committee meeting held on 6th June, 2024 were approved as true and accurate record, subject to the removal of the word 'picnic' at the top of page 4, and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4353 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

(1) Letter from Wales Ambulance Service: Cllr. Owens reported that he had reviewed the most recent reply and did not think any further correspondence would be of use.

(2) Visit Wales Entries: Dark Skies and Nature Reserve added. Thanks were noted to Cllr. Ramsay for pictures of the reserve.

(3) County Council Briefing: The Clerk had attended this via Teams on 22nd May. The briefing included a demonstration of the My Powys account including the new school transport facility, the new procurement and contracts website for local businesses/contractors, an update to various planning services and advance notification of a second climate conference in September. The presentations provided had been circulated. Cllr. Baynham encouraged Members to sign up for accounts to view their Council Tax and also for ease of reporting issues such as potholes. Cllr. Edwards reported that the live updates on school transport were, while good, having problems due to areas of poor signal.

MIN 4354 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month. The letter of thanks from Wales Air Ambulance was noted.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Sleeping Dragon Fund (from 23-24 Mayor's Allowance)	£300.00
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£ 449.69 MEADOW ACC
EDF Energy (Meadow)	£18.16 MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1588.64
HM Revenue & Customs	£601.58
NEST (Direct debit)	£146.30
T. Lloyd-John	£667.23
N. Close	£84.00
N. Close	£276.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00

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Property Repair Systems (fire retardant paint)	£1591.24 MEADOW ACC
Wales Audit Office (audit 2022/23)	£200.00
Pump International Ltd	£325.74 MEADOW ACC
British Gas (Wilson Terrace)	£16.33
EDF Energy (Hereford Street)	£43.68
CLAN CIC (Bioblitz event)	£220.70
(agreed from Climate and Environment Grant Monies)	
Border Janitorial	£94.67
Dell UK (laptop etc)	£756.13
T. Owens (refund zoom April 2021 to March 2022)	£172.68
J & P. Turner (benches) (from 23-24 Mayor's Allowance)	£550.00

(3) Mayor's Expenses/Allowance: Members noted that the two benches had been delivered and Cllr. Baynham was arranging for their installation from the balance of her fund.

(4) Money Market Account: The second account had now been renewed at 4.03% interest.

(5) Receipts: The following receipt was noted –

Allotment Rent	£25.67 MEADOW ACCOUNT
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(6) Quotes for cleaning of Presteigne and Norton War Memorials: The Clerk had obtained a quote for each memorial. Members agreed to not proceed at present but to include the Memorials on the Town Walk for a review of the need for a full clean.

(7) Bank Transfer: The following transfer was approved –

£472.24 from the Meadow account to the Treasurer account

(to cover the allotment hours (inc employers NI) paid to the Clerk in May).

MIN 4355 PLANNING

Cllr. Edwards left the room for the duration of the following items due to her position on the County Council Planning Committee.

(1) Planning applications: The following planning application was discussed –

24/0689/HH Grid Reference: E:331549 N: 264609 Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory and extension to rear and change of the parking arrangement to the front Site Address: Garrison Cottage, Church Street, Presteigne, LD8 2BU. Resolved no objections be raised.

24/0767/HH Grid Reference: E:331192 N: 264446 Proposal: Single storey ground floor extension to create sitting room with cloakroom Site Address: 42 Castle Road, Presteigne, LD8 2EB. Resolved no objections be raised.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.

(2) Planning Decisions: The following decision was noted –

23/0975/REM Sutton Barn and 16 Sutton House, High Street, Presteigne: Approval.

(3) Nant Mithil Energy Park: Cllr. Williams had attended the exhibition held by Bute Energy in New Radnor on 8th June and explained his concerns about the proposals. He agreed to circulate more information if required. As part of the discussion it was noted that he had already submitted an objection in a personal capacity – he was therefore considered to be pre-determined and placed in the waiting room for the remainder of this item.

Following a detailed discussion it was agreed to submit the following comments: -

1. Can visual images be produced showing the views from Presteigne town, Norton Village, Stonewall Hill, near Knighton and the Offa's Dyke path above Norton/off the B4355 Knighton to Presteigne Road. Could this be done as soon as possible and sent to the Council please.
2. Can the full impact of the development on tourism be assessed, particularly in the light of the area relying heavily on tourist income and with little alternative.
3. Can a full cumulative impact assessment be produced and released for comment as soon as possible.
4. Community Benefits - the area of benefit and administration has changed in proposals already. A firm, fully defined scheme needs to be confirmed before the full planning application is submitted. A clearly defined area of benefit needs to be drawn up. Presteigne and Norton residents will almost certainly be visually affected by the development but have not yet been invited to join talks on the suggestions/proposals. Why not?
5. Thinking ahead - why can the cables not be put underground thus minimising the impact over a huge area of Wales and its residents.

It was agreed that once the visual images were produced the Council would consider holding a public meeting to make residents aware of the proposals.

(4) Reply re. Industrial Units: Members noted the reply from Welsh Government indicating that delays had been due to the need for a phosphates permit. Given the permit had been issued over twelve months ago it was agreed that the Clerk respond asking when building was expected to begin.

MIN 4356 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: Member had received a summary of the documentary proposal and considered the options. It was agreed that the Clerk investigate the grant funds identified and bring the matter back to the July meeting for the Council to consider submitting an application for funding. Cllrs. Owen and Baynham had been filmed for French television earlier that week. Members noted the article in Camping and Caravanning Magazine

(2) Climate and Environment Update: The following matters were discussed –

Appointment of outside representative to Committee: Agree to approach Hilary Rimington.

Update re top up scheme for Nature Garden at Secondary School: Cllr. Ramsay had attended a site meeting at the School. Following that meeting the Clerk advised that due to the cost of the proposed bench very little funds were left for plants and it was proposed to plant herbs. The School would also sow some seeds. Cllr. Baynham suggested that the John Beddoes Trust might donate towards plants and agreed to ask if it would do so.

Next Committee Meeting 26th June.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: The Clerk confirmed that the grant had been awarded although the formal paperwork had yet to be issued.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application Update: The Officer had confirmed her intention to interview witnesses in coming weeks preferably by Teams where possible, probably in July. After that, she would need to assess the evidence, update the report and re-consult, due to the volume of additional evidence supplied. She expected it to be the end of September by the time that she had reviewed consultation responses and she did not think it likely that she would be able to take the report to Committee before October. It was agreed to ask Cllr. Kirkby if he would facilitate the interviews by setting up a teams link at a Presteigne venue.

(5) Email from 20sPlenty re Welsh Government site for feedback and letters of support. Letter from Ken Skates MS, Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport re 20mph limit: Member had all received the various emails. It was agreed that no changes were needed in Presteigne but it was agreed to ask that Norton revert to 30MPH. The Clerk was asked to contact the Police and Crime Commissioner to find out how speeding fines were spent and whether there was any funding for the speed indicator signs. She was also asked to contact the Highway Authority to ask what traffic calming measures would be suitable for Norton.

(6) Footpath Issue: 'Chicken Lane': Members noted the comments from a Stapleton resident. It was agreed to refer them to their own local Council (Stapleton) to push for action by Herefordshire Council.

(7) Toxic smoke Incident: Members noted the recent incident and that the resident had already been advised to contact Environmental Health immediately for any further incidents. No further action at this stage.

MIN 4357 NORTON

(1) Community Trust Update: Members agreed they were very pleased with the venue and it was agreed that the Clerk ask if it would be possible to hold the June and September meetings in Norton in future.

(2) General Works, Norton: Cllr. Edwards had been in touch with Mr. Close to discuss possible renovations to the two village benches, the best kept village sign, the kiosk and the village milestone. Cllr. Wilding was willing to remove the sign and milestone to enable renovation. Mr. Protheroe would renovate the milestone at an estimated cost of £100. It was agreed to commence the works in stages to ensure it would fit within the budget.

(3) Unsafe Wall: Members reported a wall that appeared as though it might be unsafe. The Clerk was asked to write to the owners to ask them to confirm that they believed it to be safe or if work was planned.

(4) Community Speedwatch: Cllr. Edwards reported that she had six volunteers willing to be part of the scheme.

MIN 4358 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: Hereford Street was still not finished. Clerk was asked to chase for it to either be completed or for the current contractor to withdraw and for a replacement to be sought.

(2) Allotments: Agreed that, when the notice period expired for the tenant being evicted, the plot to be let free of charge for the remainder of the year.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed -

Cover for Regular Inspections – 29th June to 10th July: Clerk would contact Members for availability.

Need to move rope further from path adjacent to wildflower area: Clerk to check with mowing contractor for distance rope needed to be moved.

Action on moles: Clerk to arrange a contractor to attend.

Permitted usage of Meadow and New/Old Barns: Agreed that the Clerk would prepare a summary of the current situation for review.

Use request Pentre farm CIC 23rd July – pop up farm/craft activity: Agreed.

Use Request for Picnic, East Radnor Ramblers 4th September: Agreed.

Use Request for Fitness Day (private instructor) 3rd August: Agreed.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: All matters listed under (5)

(5) Recommendations of the Sites and Buildings Committee meeting held on 6th June.

Nature Reserve:

Volunteer registration forms be produced by Clerk for completion: Already produced and with Cllr. Ramsay to arrange completion and return to the Clerk.

Further reminder for volunteers to notify the Clerk when they were on site.

Quotes to be sought for the siting of the new benches on wooden sleepers: Cllr. Baynham had this in hand.

Work generally in hand and no immediate problems although the paths were difficult to keep clear.

Trees on site to be included within the Council's next full tree survey.

Allotments:

Progress on Lean-to Request: Cllrs. Preece and Price had checked the Communal Shed for accessibility and there was a step meaning that was not possible. The Clerk had requested dimensions of requested lean-to for Full Council consideration.

Agreed that Plot 36 be strimmed and covered: Clerk would arrange.

Noted no further action at present on the Pedestrian Bridge. Entrance was now fixed shut for the time being. PNAA had been asked and would prefer the bridge to be repaired. Cllr.

Wilding indicated that one tenant had spoken to him and was pleased that that access was now closed. Agree to seek costings to repair the other bridge on Lower Went's Meadow first and then re-consider any repair to the allotment bridge.

Meadows:

Review of the grass cutting regime: Proposed by Cllr. Preece and seconded by Cllr. Price that no changes were needed. A vote was taken all in favour apart from one vote against the proposal. Therefore no changes to be made and the Clerk would commence the process for seeking new quotes in due course.

Agreed to obtain quotes for a fully DDA compliant path from Lower Went's Meadow to the New Barn once the specification was produced by Mr. Rimington. Noted that this did not represent a firm commitment to creating the path – this would be subject to a review by Full Council once quotes were received. Noted that to complete the path a section of hedge would need to be removed.

Agreed to obtain quotes for repair/renewal of the path from the Scout Hut to Lower Went's Meadow once the specification was produced by Mr. Rimington. Noted that this did not represent a firm commitment to these works – this would be subject to a review by Full Council once quotes were received.

Noted that the fire-retardant paint had now been applied to the lower sides of the new barn by the Community Payback team. Some paint was left over and the Clerk had asked that the team re-visit to apply a further coat in due course.

Need for a repair to the sunken area of paving by the Old Barn: Clerk to seek a quote from Mr. Bennett.

Budget of up to £150 agreed for the replacement of the community barbecue.

Full repair to the wooden pedestrian bridge, Lower Went's Meadow: Clerk to seek a quote from Mr. Bennett.

Condition of MUGA surface and possible solutions: The Clerk had sought advice and options suggested included treating with iron sulphate or rock salt. However she added that having asked Mr. Close to check the surface he could see no current problem, possibly due

to the dry weather. Agreed no further action for the time being and the Clerk would ask the Highground Maintenance for their view/advice and report back to Council.
Delegated Authority: Cllr. Owens reminded Members that no individual Councillor could authorise any work/activity on Council property and that any queries or suggestions should be referred to the Clerk for consideration (if works were very minor) or for her to add to a future agenda for full Council permission. Recently unauthorised work had been carried out on the bike track involving the removal of turf and dislodging of stones (causing issues for the mowers). Cllr. Ramsay stated that two young people had contacted Cllr. Kirkby for permission and also wanted to bring a mini digger on site. It was again stressed that such requests needed to be made to the Clerk and Members felt the use of a mini digger on Council property was unwise and in the case of the bike track not suitable as Cllr. Wilding believed the mounds were largely stone and therefore use of a digger would cause a problem. Members confirmed that minor strimming could be carried out and some minor spade work only. Members were very willing to consider any plan for changes/improvements should one be produced. The Clerk was asked to contact Cllr. Kirkby to ask for the relevant contact details so the situation could be explained.

Toilets:

Work on Hereford Street Toilets: Clerk to chase as work was now well overdue.
Painting of Wilson Terrace - on list for Community Payback team.

General

Condition of War Memorial: See under Finance.
Fallen Tree, Withy Beds: Clerk had reported.

MIN 4359 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

- (1) Leisure Centre Update: Nothing to report at present.
- (2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: Members were pleased to learn that a report to Cabinet was now being prepared to go to the meeting on 30th July. All Members were concerned at the length of time the process was taking but agreed to wait until the outcome of that meeting. An item on the Hall would be included as an urgent item on the August agenda.

As Cllr. Williams had to leave the meeting shortly it was agreed to proceed to the co-options and return to correspondence.

MIN 4360 COUNCIL VACANCIES- CO-OPTIONS

Cllr. Ramsay left the room during the vote for the Presteigne Ward.

The following were chosen for co-option on to the Council: -

Presteigne Ward: Alex Ramsay.
Norton Ward: Curtis Ross

Cllr. Williams left the meeting at this point.

MIN 4361 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS (CONTINUED)

- (3) Retirement of Dr. Johnson, Presteigne Medical Centre: Members noted that Cllr. Owens had written to Dr. Johnson on his retirement.
- (4) Safety of Lithium-ion batteries: Letter requesting support for Bill increasing safety measures: Agreed to support the proposed Bill.
- (5) Local Bus Network Retendering: Consultation on routes/times: Cllr. Baynham had made some responses on this matter and would report further to the July meeting.
- (6) Summer Police Priorities: Agreed to raise a neighbour dispute in town and also misuse of the school field at night.
- (7) SMART Towns Wales and MWT App for Businesses Update: The Clerk had attended a morning event as an update on these two items on 5th June. Regarding SMART towns and the Town Wifi network – the Town Council was still waiting for the two units on the Assembly Rooms to be installed and the Clerk had again been in touch with one of the Community Broadband Officers at PCC to try

to push for this to finally happen. Much of the SMART town stuff was probably not applicable for Presteigne as it was a relatively small town but the capturing of visitor data/dwell times etc would be useful for events organisers/tourist attractions and the intention is that this data will be freely available to all who wish to use it. There will be another level of data which will include emails and which will only apply to those who actually log on to the wifi – discussions are ongoing as to who to and how this information will be shared. Given the correct consents it could be used for promoting events/offers in shops etc. Presteigne is one of the first towns to have the town wifi operational. Newtown TC is just identifying locations for units; Brecon is mid-way through the process.

Mid Wales Tourism attended and gave a presentation on the app that was discussed at Town Council earlier in the year. Many towns in Powys are now engaging with the process and the registration of businesses is underway. The Clerk had discussed an in person visit from the Officer responsible for our area and who would visit the shops to give them an opportunity to sign up. It will also be possible to register events. The app is free currently and so as good a time as any to sign up. The option to create a town voucher scheme would still be possible. Members agreed the Clerk could to businesses advising them of the planned visit so at least they are aware of the opportunity. The new app has now been named IMI Wales.

MIN 4362 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

None made due to length of meeting.

MIN 4363 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Fire Station Open Day – 18th July.

The meeting closed at 10.12 pm