

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 16TH MAY 2024 HELD AT THE JUDGE'S LODGINGS (MAYOR MAKING) AND THEN THE EAST RADNORSHIRE DAY CENTRE, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

Apologies: None.

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: None.

The first part of the meeting was held in the Courtroom at the Judge's Lodgings.

MIN 4334 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Cllr. Baynham opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. She then spoke for a short while on her year in office which had been very busy and had passed very quickly. Two major successes during the year had been the completion of the Nature Reserve Project and the achievement of Dark Sky Community status. She thanked Mr. Harling-Bowen, Mr. Asfuroglu and Powys County Council (particularly Street Lighting Officer, Leigh Williams) for all their help with the project. Of note also were the Awards from One Voice Wales, winning the best sustainability category with the Dark Skies Project and receiving commended awards in the Annual Report and Environmental categories.

She went on to thank those Councillors that had left the Council over the year, these being Ms Bamford, Ms. Grey, Mr. Poster and Mr. Firth. She added her thanks to the Clerk for her help and support over the year. Cllr. Ramsay was formally welcomed to the Council and Cllr. Kirkby was welcomed on his return. Cllr. Baynham concluded by wishing her successor good luck for their term in office and invited nominations for Mayor/Chairman for 2024/25.

Cllr. Owens was proposed by Cllr. Wilding. This was seconded by Cllr. Preece. There were no other nominations and Cllr. Owens was elected unanimously.

Cllr. Owens completed his formal acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk. He thanked Members for his election and Cllr. Baynham for her work during her term as Mayor. He added that he was looking forward to the year ahead and that he hoped all Councillors would work together to meet the challenges of the coming year.

MIN 4335 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR AND VICE-CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Cllr. Owens then invited nominations for Deputy Mayor. Cllr. Van Huls was proposed by Cllr. Baynham and seconded by Cllr. Edwards. There were no other nominations and Cllr. Van Huls was elected unanimously.

Members then removed to the East Radnorshire Day Centre to continue business. Cllr. Abecasis left the meeting at this point.

MIN 4336 REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

The following Memberships were agreed –

SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Cllrs. Baynham, Preece, Price, Kirkby and Ramsay.

Outside Representatives for Meadow Matters: Richard Rimington, Gareth Graham.

Outside Representative for Allotments: Susan Robson.

Outside Representative for Nature Reserve agreed and to volunteer group to be approached to fill this place.

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllrs. Baynham, Edwards, Wilding, Vanhuls and Owens.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Renamed from Climate Crisis Committee. Terms of reference to be updated as follows –

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 that the Committee could proceed to consider suggestions for the terms of reference of the Committee in May 2025.

Membership to be - Cllrs Baynham, Edwards, Ramsay and Kirkby.

Plus two outside representatives – Jenny Mottershead, Kate Van Den Ende

The Clerk would confirm with the outside representatives.

To continue as a Committee for a further year and to be reviewed again in May, 2025.

LDP WORKING GROUP: Cllrs. Baynham, Price, Edwards, Abecasis.

LEISURE CENTRE WORKING GROUP: To comprise all Members of the Council. Outside Representatives as needed.

DARK SKIES/INTELLIGENT LIGHTING WORKING GROUP

Cllrs. Baynham, Kirkby, Ramsay. Outside Representative: Leigh Harling-Bowen.

ALLOTMENT LIAISON MEMBER: Cllr. Preece.

YOUTH REPRESENTATION MEMBER(S): Cllrs. Owens and Abecasis.

MIN 4337 REVIEW OF APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The following representatives were agreed -

Presteigne Primary School

Cllr. Williams.

One Voice Wales

Cllrs. Owens and Van Huls.

East Radnorshire Care

Cllrs. Edwards and Van Huls.

Presteigne and Norton Community Trust - Cllrs. Edwards, Kirkby, Van Huls and Wilding.

Warden Guardian Foundation

Cllr. Kirkby.

MIN 4338 REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

(1) Standing Orders: Confirmed unchanged. The serving of the summons to attend meetings was re-confirmed.

(2) Financial Regulations (including direct debit and internet banking policy): Confirmed unchanged.

(3) Other Policy Documents: Council Complaints Procedure, Data Protection, Freedom of Information Documents, social media Policy and Staffing related policies: All confirmed unchanged.

(4) Continued adoption of the revised Code of Conduct (under Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016): Confirmed.

(5) Remuneration payments to Town Councillors: The following payments would be available in the municipal year May 2024 to April 2025:

- An annual sum of £156 per year per Member, paid in arrears (mandatory).
- An annual sum of £52 per Member for expenses, paid in arrears (mandatory).
- To continue to reimburse the cost of travel expenses incurred for travel on Council business outside the Community Council area.
- To refund the cost of care expenses up to the current stated approved cost per month (mandatory)
- The payment of the Mayor/Chairman's Allowance as per the budget allocated plus a separate budget for expenses.

(6) Grant Awarding Policy/Procedure: Confirmed unchanged. Name of Climate Crisis grants to be changed to 'Climate and Environment' Grants.

(7) Annual Report 2023/24: The Clerk confirmed that she would soon be drafting the report and invited articles from Members.

MIN 4339 MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Member attendance records for 2023/24 were duly noted. Cllr. Owens congratulated those who had achieved 100% attendance over the year.

MIN 4340 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Members noted that the general power of competence was now available to eligible Councils subject to this being declared at the annual meeting. Unfortunately, although two of the three conditions had been met, as less than two thirds of the Council had been formally elected it was not possible to use the power at present.

The Annual Meeting was followed immediately by the ordinary business meeting.

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY BUSINESS MEETING HELD ON 16TH MAY 2024 HELD AT THE EAST RADNORSHIRE DAY CENTRE, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. 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, C. Kirkby and J. Ramsay (via video link).

Apologies: Cllr. 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: None.

MIN 4341 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cllr. Kirkby requested an addition to the April Minutes and following a vote this was agreed. The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th April, 2024 were therefore approved with the addition of the following to Minute 4330(6) 'The Council had received four letters of support for the project from Sheep Music, the MBA, the Carnival Committee and from Rory Bennett. Cllr Kirkby also reminded the Council that they had included the project in 'The Presteigne Town Investment Plan' prepared by Rose Regeneration and adopted by the council in April 2023. As well as the building the project also includes the purchase of some £6,000 of useful equipment for putting on events on the meadow'. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4342 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Warden Guardian Foundation: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the new path was now complete.
- (2) Return of the Sleeping Dragon: Cllr. Baynham asked that congratulations to Mr. Pete Smith and all his helpers be noted. It was agreed that the Clerk write a letter of thanks.
- (3) Paving Slabs, Broad Street: Still not cleaned from Assembly Rooms to Judge's Lodgings.

MIN 4343 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month. The letters of thanks from Presteigne Community Garden and Powys Citizens Advice Bureau were noted.

(2) Payments: The following payments were approved –

Mrs T. Price (salary)	£1887.41
(inc allotment hours for 2023-24)	
HMRC (Tax/NI)	£775.04
NEST (Pension)	£146.30 DIRECT DEBIT
T. Lloyd-John	£654.23
N. Close	£20.00
N. Close	£152.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Highground Maintenance	£449.69 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Knighton Men's Shed (insect hotels) (climate crisis fund)	£90.00
Artisan Print (Fold Farm)	£12.79
Artisan Print (Fold Farm)	£35.76
Amazon (graffiti spray) (refund T. Price)	£13.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
EDF Energy (final bill – Wilson Terrace)	£32.98
British Gas Lite (first bill – Wilson Terrace)	£16.52
Presteigne Building Supplies	£230.47 MEADOW ACCOUNT
EDF Energy (Barn)	£20.45 MEADOW ACCOUNT
EDF Energy (Hereford Street)	£63.20
HSBC (Bank charges – Treasurer)	£8.00
HSBC (bank charges)	£10.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Information Commissioner (data registration)	£35.00

- M. Wood (tree felling) £150.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
- (3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted: -
- | | |
|--|------------|
| Powys County Council 1 st Precept Payment | £25,252.32 |
| Allotment Rent | £140.00 |
- (4) Internal Audit: The report of the internal auditor was noted. No issues had been raised.
- (5) External Audit/Annual Return and Governance Statement: Member considered and approved the Annual Return and Annual Governance Statement for submission to the External Auditors together with associated papers.
- (6) The following Bank Balances as at 4th May 2024 were noted as:
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Treasurer | £47,583.99 | Money Manager | £33,845.68 |
| Meadow | £7076.78 | | |
| Warden Reserve | £1038.83 | Capital Reserve | £126.07 |
| Money Market Account (1) | £20,204.94 | Money Market Account (2) | £31,000.00 |
- (7) Bank Signatories: Confirmed unchanged.
- (8) Bank Transfers: The following bank transfers were agreed -
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Treasurer Account to Meadow Account | £11,275.00 | Annual Precept amount |
| Treasurer Account to Meadow Account | £1739.79 | VAT Refund |
- (9) Money market Account: Members noted that the previous account (£20,000 plus interest) had been re-invested in a new five month money market account to September 2024. The Clerk would review the Council's current balances to see if a further account could be opened in order to maximise interest.
- (10) Balance of the Mayor's expenses for 2023/24: Deferred to June.

MIN 4344 PLANNING

- (1) Planning applications: None this month.
 (2) Planning Decisions: None this month.

MIN 4345 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

- (1) Dark Skies Project Update: Members noted the proposed sign locations and thanks were made to Cllr. Edwards for obtaining the what3words locations. The Clerk would ask the Highways Department if these locations would be possible and the costs. The Clerk reported that it was unlikely the existing reserve for dark skies would be enough to purchase and install signs at all the suggested locations. Once costs had been obtained final locations would be agreed. The Clerk added that the sign wording needed to be amended to include 'International' and also the Dark Skies logo. Further permission from Welsh Government was being sought for this.
- (2) Climate and Environment Update: The following matters were discussed –
 Locations for hedge/wildflower signs (grant project): Agreed unchanged.
 Possible solar panel grant for Public Toilets: The Clerk reported that the time scale for this was extremely short and that it wasn't likely to be possible to apply. In addition the fund would not accept premises run on a one-year licence so this excluded the Hereford Street site. Cllr. Owens suggested that it might be useful to obtain quotes in any event in case a further fund became available to install panels at Wilson Terrace. Members expressed disappointment at the short time scale for this grant scheme.
 Appointment of a representative on the Pethau Bychain Meetings (green network for Town and Community Councils): Agreed to appoint Cllr. Ramsay.
 Places for Nature Top Up Packages: The Clerk had spoken to the Secondary School and the Head of Campus would be meeting with Keep Wales Tidy on Tuesday 21st May. Cllr. Ramsay agreed he would attend.
- (3) Clatterbrook Footpath: Members noted the reply from County Council Officer which was '*The contractor sent me photos of the new steps on the end of the bridge on Thursday (18th April) and all the barriers were removed then. When on site, myself and the contractor discussed the section (which the Town Council had requested be stoned) and decided not to surface this section. The only bits of the path which have had imported stone is along the fence, where we have had to essentially build up the ground to provide the new path.*'
- (4) Update re. Fold Farm DMMO Application: The Town Council comments had been submitted together with a final total of 63 witness statements. The Ramblers Association had also made a submission based on technical aspects of the draft report. The Officer had confirmed safe receipt and had indicated that she would need to interview some, if not all, of the new witnesses. Members were concerned at the time this would take and the Clerk was asked to request an updated time line for determination of the application.

(5) Presteigne Car Parking Arrangements: Members considered the Clerk's report and discussed the possibilities for the future management of the car parks. It was agreed that the matter be deferred for the time being and re-visited once the County Council's own review was final.

(6) Further damage to Lugg Bridge: Members noted that another stone had been dislodged from the bridge. The Clerk had reported it,

MIN 4346 NORTON

(1) Community Trust Update: Work continued to progress and a formal opening was planned for 29th June. Cllr. Wilding reported that the community payback team were not in the area as often as in 2023 but that he had been in touch to ask that they continue with the grass cutting in the churchyard.

MIN 4347 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: Nothing to report.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were discussed –

Update on Vacant Plots: Just plot 36 remained empty and was awaiting the raised beds applied for from the grant fund.

Replacement parts/pump: Agreed more cost effective to purchase a new pump rather than the various parts needed. The existing pump would have some parts that could be kept for re-use.

Update on Rent Payments: One existing tenant had still not paid their rent despite numerous reminders by email, phone and letter. It was agreed that the Clerk proceed to formally evict the tenant so that the plot could be re-let.

Update on the grant for raised beds etc: No time scale had yet been provided.

Temporary closure and consider repairs to pedestrian bridge onto site. (also closure of second bridge on Lower Went's Meadow): Cllr. Wilding reported that some repairs were needed to the allotment bridge but that it was not needed for access to the site. The other bridge was in worse repair but again was not essential. Both bridges had been temporarily closed and it was agreed that this continue until the Sites and Buildings Committee could review the situation.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed.

Use Request for 8th June – Fitness Day/Music (private instructor): Agreed.

Use Request for 29th May – Create Play Session (commissioned by PCC): Agreed

Use Request for Powys Radnor Federation WI Murder Mystery/Picnic: 16th August: Agreed.

Update on Work Day: A detailed account was contained in the Clerk's report. Two important items had not been completed – the graffiti on the new bar (The Clerk had asked Mr. Close to attend to this) and an area of sunken paving needed attention. Cllr. Wilding believed that this area may be due to rat tunnels and added that this seemed to have stemmed from the pile of soil left from the new barn construction. He offered to arrange for removal of the soil and Members were in agreement with this. Sites and Buildings Committee to review works still not complete.

Date for the next Sites and Buildings Committee: Clerk to arrange.

(4) Nature Reserve: Agreed that a full report be made to the Sites and Buildings Committee which was due to meet in the near future.

MIN 4348 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Cllr, Baynham reported that an update was imminent.

(2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: Cllr. Baynham reported on the most recent matters concerning the Hall. The County Council had sought legal advice on various aspects of the proposed transfer. She explained that for the time being the Officer at the County Council intended to concentrate on the transfer of the Hall itself with the transfer of the car park land parcels to follow. Cllr. Edwards had attended a recent meeting of the Committee but there had been no progress on the EOI submitted to the County Council. Members were very concerned that matters were still not progressing at any pace and it was agreed that the Clerk arrange a meeting between the Town Council and the Committee to discuss how the Council could further help progress the transfer.

(3) EMERTS/Air Ambulance Update. Members noted the document produced by Builth Wells TC for One Voice Wales. The letter from Wales Air Ambulance Charity regarding the closure of the Welshpool base was noted with disappointment.

(4) Further Reply from WAST re. response times/first responders: Members had all received a copy of the reply. Cllr. Owens would review the letter and if he felt it was needed would compose a further reply.

(5) Sustainable Powys Briefing Notes: Noted.

(6) Broadband Update and Report on Meeting 13th May with County Council: The Clerk had attended this meeting and reported that the new Officer had promised to push forward the completion of the Town Wifi project. She had stressed the Council's disappointment with the progress of the scheme so far, with the refusal by highways of the parking sensor project and the general lack of publicity for the scheme.

Letter from resident of Slough Road: The Clerk had received an email requesting information on the current situation for the improvement of broadband in the area. She had been told by Openreach that Presteigne should be upgraded by 2026. Cllr. Van Huls believed that the area in question should already be able to access good speeds. The Clerk would provide him with the address so he could check.

MIN 4349 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Baynham reported the following: -

Conclusion of her year as Chairman of the County Council.

Formation of an Independent Group of Councillors at County level. This combined the separate independent groups previously in place and the Group now formed the official opposition on the Council.

Highways Department Budget very tight.

Problems with school budgets were likely in coming years.

Overall the County Council was very short of money and difficult years were expected in the future.

Cllr. Edwards had nothing further to add.

MIN 4350 COUNCIL VACANCIES

No applicants in April and further notices had been posted.

MIN 4351 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Presteigne Primary School: Members were disappointed to learn that the Headteacher had handed in his notice.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm