

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton
PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024
AT THE GREEN ROOM, ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA
VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. Baynham (Mayor), Preece, Price, Ramsay, Baynham.

Outside Representatives: Mr. R. Rimington, Mr. G. Graham, Ms R. Bamford, Ms. S. Robson.

Apologies: Cllrs. Price and Kirkby.

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 and the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016.

Personal: None.

Personal and Prejudicial:

Cllr. B. Baynham, related to current toilet cleaner/possible contractor for 2025-26, re. quotes for toilet cleaning in 2025-26.

MIN SB8/24 ALLOTMENTS

(1) Report by the PNAA Representative: Ms. S. Robson provided a short written report on the allotments over the current year so far. She advised that there had as yet been no AGM and that the Association was again very low on numbers with just three people actively involved in the running of the Association although more were members. A meeting of the Association would be held in the New Year when a decision would be made on whether to continue.

Untidy Plots: The issue of untidy and neglected plots had been a source of concern over the year despite the Clerk having been in touch with a number to ask that the plots be tidied or in the event of illness at least be covered over for the time being to prevent weed spread to other plots. Cllr. Preece and Price had visited the site during the Summer and identified a number of plots needing attention but due to indistinct boundaries had been waiting to install new plot markers so the tenants could be contacted. The Clerk advised that one of the plots involved had now been surrendered by the tenant and would be stripped prior to re-letting.

Access over Pedestrian Bridge: The repairs needed to the pedestrian bridge were discussed and the Clerk reminded Members that the Council had decided not to repair it when it was discussed earlier in the year. She had also received comments from some tenants that they preferred the access to be via the car park although Ms. Robson felt very strongly that it should be repaired and the access re-opened. The matter would be raised again at Council.

Path behind Plot 1: Ms. Robson advised that this was increasingly being used and access to the Meadows then being made via plot 1 and over the allotment site. Cllr. Baynham would make enquiries as it was believed the gap in the fence from the road was the responsibility of highways.

Rent Review: Ms. Robson felt there should not be any rent increase and the Clerk advised that none was due this time.

(2) PNAA Raised Matters: The following matters to be taken to Full Council –

- Untidy Plots;
- Need for repairs to the Pedestrian Bridge;
- Path behind plot 1 and the problems with pedestrians accessing the Meadows via that plot.

(3) Action on Untidy Plots: Cllr. Preece explained that the Council was aware of a handful of plots that had not been fully or properly tended over the year and that this would be reviewed again with a view to serving notice in February should no improvement be made.

- (4) Review of Work/Maintenance Plan for 2025-26: The Community Payback Team had continued to trim the paths and this had worked well. To continue in 2025.
- (5) Expenditure 2024-25 to date: Members noted the expenditure to date which was higher than normal due to the replacement of the main gate to the site. A rent review was not due this year.
- (6) Update on request for leanto/shed: The Clerk reported that this had been resolved as the tenant had been able to obtain a shed with a wider door.

Ms. Robson left the meeting at this point.

MIN SB9/24 NATURE RESERVE

(1) Siting of new benches: The new benches provided by Cllr. Baynham from her Mayor’s expenses were on site and currently not fixed in one position. It was felt that this was meant the locations could be changed and there were no immediate plans to fix them in a permanent spot although this might be considered in future.

(2) Current Situation re ponds and possible grant for additional plants: Ms. Bamford reported that the ponds had held water during the Summer although levels had, understandably dropped somewhat. A grant was available through the County Council for additional pond plants, the plants would be ordered and delivery arranged by the County Council. Ms. Bamford felt that around £350 worth of plants could be requested. It was agreed that this was a good idea. Full Council had already confirmed agreement.

(2) General Update: Ms. Bamford reported as follows –

Bug Hotel built by Primary School.

Grass cut and raked from the Wildflower Areas.

Problems with the Paths that were getting overgrown and the possible need to carry out work to them in the future either by updating it as a whole (approx. £3000) or by filling up the existing path (approx. £500).

Community Payback continue to weed the entrance. Agreed the Clerk continue to ask for this periodically and Ms. Bamford would advise if it needed doing between visits.

National Forest Signage not yet in place.

Tool Sharing: Ms. Bamford reported that they were currently borrowing some tools from the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust and the Tree Group wanted to know if the Trust could borrow the Town Council equipment (users would be members of both the Reserve volunteers and the Trust volunteers so would have the expertise needed. Full Council would need to consider and the Clerk would check with the insurers to see if this was possible.

Weeding of thistles carried out.

Successful BioBlitz day and if possible another to be held in 2025.

Dogs accessing the reserve: Ms. Bamford felt this was not a big problem but some dogs were being walked on the site.

Access by Mobility Scooters: This was reported as not being a major problem but to ensure full access for all it was possible to remove one panel. That panel would be reused on the site.

(3) Home for water tank: Ms. Bamford confirmed that this was no longer needed and it could be sold/stored. To be considered by Full Council.

(4) Draft Budget for 2025/26: Cllr. Ramsay circulated a draft budget for the Reserve in 2025-26. This was discussed in some detail and it was agreed to recommend a budget of £900 in total plus a request for £250 funding for the bioblitz day being requested under the Council’s climate crisis grant scheme.

Draft Budget for 2025-26	Nature Reserve	
	2024-25	Draft 2025-26
Including £350 to set aside for periodic expenditure	0	350
Including £550 for path improvements	0	550
		900

Ms. Bamford left the meeting at this point.

MIN SB10/24 WENT’S AND EDDIE’S MEADOWS, MUGA, FOOTBALL PITCH

(1) Grass Cutting Review: Generally it was felt that the contractor was doing a good job although it was noted that the banks near the barn had not been strimmed. The Clerk had asked the community payback team to do this as it was not part of the main contract. She would check to see why it had not been done and Full Council could consider if it wanted the areas included in the new grass cutting contract.

- (2) Quote for various strimming works: Deferred to the Full Council meeting as no quote yet supplied.
- (3) Quotes for grass cutting: Members were disappointed at the lack of interest in the new contract despite one new contractor being interested enough in being taken around the site. Members agreed to recommend that the contract be renewed with Highground Maintenance Ltd for a two year period covering 2025-26 and 2026-27.
- (4) Review of Items from June meeting:-
 Completion of works to barbecue: Completed. Thanks to Mr. R. Rimington for arranging.
 Reinstatement of sunken paving slabs: Completed by contractor.
 Completion of improved access from Mill path: Completed for cost of materials only by local contractor, Mr. R. Bennett.
 Completion of repairs to wooden bridge, Lower Went's Meadow: Completed by contractor.
- (5) Maintenance Plan for 2025-26. To include –
 Use of bottom corner of field for grass cuttings etc: Agreed that the spread of these cuttings was something to be addressed at a future work day and with the help of a mini digger or similar.
 Mowing of back/car park field 2025: Agreed to recommend that the Clerk ask the Carnival/Volunteer if they would cut the field again prior to carnival day.
 Movement of the mowing line in Lower Went's meadow to closer to the hedge by the new path: Agreed to recommend that this adjustment be requested with the contractor.
 Remove short length of hedge by mill (going from the steps towards the ERDC) to open up the official footpath: The general feeling was that this was not necessary as the field was open access and removal of any hedge unnecessarily was to be avoided. Agreed to review in the Spring.
 Plan for mowing on Eddie's meadow: Deferred for Full Council as Cllr. Kirkby had been going to organise volunteers. One area to be part as part of hedge cutting contract this Autumn.
 Work day 2025: Agreed in principle. Date to be discussed in the Spring.
- (6) Quotes for 2025 Tree Survey: Agreed to proceed with Mr. J. Cromar. Mr. Graham asked if the recommendations of the arboriculturist could override the insurance requirements and the Clerk advised that she did not believe the Insurers would agree to this unless the inspector was able to guarantee his views and the Council would be covered under that insurance. She agreed to investigate in case this would be possible.
- (7) Rospa Inspection Report: The report was noted. No major issues to report but a number of minor matters including –
- General mole issue creating issues with ground clearance around the outdoor gym equipment,
 - Need to sweep the MUGA regularly to remove loose grit and any moss to reduce slippiness (agreed to recommend that the Community Payback team be asked to do this as the strimming contractor did not have time to add this to his regular strimming).
 - Need to support the rotten stakes on the skateboard fence with new posts and remove the redundant gatepost.
 - Some issues with the joint areas of the skateboard bowl and surrounding path.
 - Some rotten sleepers to replace.
- (8) Community Barns: No major works needed at present.
- (9) Grant Applications/Projects: The following two projects were discussed -
 Brilliant Basics Funding (from April 2025): To provide disabled access paths on the Went's Meadow site.
 Café/bar/storage project: Full Council had now confirmed this project could go ahead and Cllr. Kirkby was working on a grant application and a planning application.
- (10) Report on Vandalism Issues: The current year had had fewer issues with vandalism.
- (11) Report on work of Community Payback Team: The Clerk reported that the team was a big help with work on the Meadows. This would hopefully continue in 2025-26.
- (12) Trees and debris adjacent to Withy Beds: Problems adjacent to the With Beds had been reported to the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust. Mr. Rimington would speak to them to remind them. Thanks noted to Mr. Graham and his brother for clearing the debris backing up at Lugg Bridge during the recent floods.
 Maple Tree, Ligne Garden: Mr. Graham asked if he could cut back the broken branches in the tree and remove those that had fallen. It was agreed to accept this offer with thanks.
- (13) Bike Track and works by young people – Update: Nothing to report although Mr. Graham confirmed his agreement to assist where possible.

(14) Budget Consideration for 2025-26: Members considered the budget for the coming year and the new projects currently put forward for the path improvements (£3000) and the new storage building (£3000). Either of both of the projects could be funded from free reserves. Recommendations agreed were –

Draft Budget 2025-26

Went's and Eddie's Meadow	2024-25	Draft 2025-26
Weekly Inspections (inc defib checks)	1650	1500
General Maintenance	1500	1500
Dog Bags	1750	2000
Grass Cutting/weed killing	3600	4699.65
Professional Inspections (Rospa & Tree Survey)(240 & 1125)	225	1365
MUGA / New Barn Reserve	2000	2000
Allotments (funded via rental income)	0	0
Utilities	350	350
Misc.(to include bank charges)	200	200
Projects (£3000 paths, £3000 storage building)	0	from reserves
	11,275.00	13,614.65

Full Council to be advised that the Committee would be happy if the MUGA reserve amount was not allocated in 2025-26.

MIN SB11/24 TOILET BLOCKS

- (1) Report on year to date: The Clerk gave a short update on the year so far. Toilet roll thefts continued to be a problem at the Hereford Street site.
- (2) Quotes for painting of Hereford Street Toilet Block: Members considered the quotes received but felt that there was insufficient information on materials plus a large variation in the quotes received and decided to refer the matter to the Full Council to decide. Agreed to also recommend that the cost of the work be met from the allocated reserve for toilets.
- (3) Review of Cleaning Arrangements: Members were very satisfied with the current arrangements. No changes proposed.
- (4) Further Maintenance Work: The Wilson Terrace Toilet Block was on the list for the Community Payback team to paint inside and out in the Spring of 2025. No other items to consider for 2025-26.
Cllr. Baynham left the meeting at this point having declared a prejudicial interest in the following item.
- (5) Quotes for cleaning 2025-26: Agreed that given the high standards of the present contractor and, having reviewed the quote provided for the next two years, the Committee would recommend that the quote from Ms. T. Lloyd-John be accepted for the forthcoming two years, 2025-26 and 2026-27.
- (6) Budget Consideration for 2025-26: Given the level of allocated reserve held for the toilet blocks and in view of expected budget pressures overall it was agreed to recommend a draft budget of £10,000 with additional expenditure being met from the reserve held.

Draft Budget 2025-26	Toilets	
	2024-25	Draft 2025-26
Balance of expected expenditure approx £2000 to come from allocated reserve.	10,000	10,000

MIN SB12/24 URGENT INFORMATION.

- (1) None.

Summary of Full Council Decisions Required –

Allotments:

To note the report of the PNAA and it's possible disbanding in the New Year.

Review of need to repair the pedestrian bridge;

Review of untidy plots with a view to serving notice on those not tidied/cleared by February.

To contact the Highways Department at the County Council re the missing fence by the bridge which was leading to the allotments being used as a short cut onto the Meadow.

Community Payback team to be asked to continue the regular strimming on the site and the adjoining car park.

Nature Reserve:

To note the general update.

Storage or disposal of water tank as no longer needed.

Agreement to remove one panel from the entrance gate to provide access for disability scooters.

Consideration of possible tool sharing with the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust.

To agree that a further bioblitz day be held at a cost of approx. £250. Funds to be taken from the Council's Climate Crisis Grant Fund.

To consider the proposed draft Budget for 2025-26

Meadows:

To note and agree the proposed maintenance items for 2025-26 and the plan for another work day during the year.

To accept the recommended quote for grass cutting in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

To accept the recommended quote for the tree survey in 2025-26.

To note the findings of the Rospa Report and action the matters listed in the Committee Minutes. Note: The strimming contractor was not able to undertake the sweeping so an alternative will need to be found.

To note the Committee support for the two proposed projects – disabled access paths and the new storage building.

To note that Mr. Graham would cut up and remove the broken/fallen branches on the maple tree, Ligne Garden.

To consider the proposed draft budget for 2025-26.

Toilets:

To review and appoint a contractor to carry out the painting of Hereford Street Toilets in the Spring of 2025.

To accept the recommended quote for toilet cleaning on both sites for 2025-26 and 2026-27.

To consider the proposed draft budget for 2025-26.

Note: All budget amounts will remain provisional until the budget setting in January.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.