

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton
PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023
HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA
VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. B. Baynham (Mayor), D. Edwards, J. Gray (via video link), L. Firth (via video link), J. Poster, F. Preece, T. Owens, L. Abecasis, M. Price, A. Van Huls, J. Wilding, M. Williams.

Apologies: Cllr. R. Bamford (Deputy Mayor).

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

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. L. Firth, contractor on project re. planning application 23/1249/HH.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Members heard from Dr. Simon Chapple of Shropdoc and Ms Natalie Mclaughlin, Practice Manager of Presteigne Medical Centre following the recent take over of the surgery by Shropdoc. Members were pleased to hear of improvements being made and Cllr. Baynham thanked both for attending. The Clerk would write a formal letter of thanks.

MIN 4233 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th August, 2023 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4234 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Leisure Centre: Cllr. Baynham reported on a meeting arranged to discuss the monies leftover from previous fundraising for the centre. She added that the formal County Council consultation was now closed and the results were being collated. Members were reminded of the need to continue to encourage use of the centre.
- (2) Gravel, Ligne Barn: The Clerk reported that she had consulted with Mr. Close and he felt there was sufficient gravel on the site, particularly given that due to the current spate of vandalism it was getting thrown into the grass causing problems for the mowers. It was agreed not to proceed with laying extra gravel at present.
- (3) School Buses outside John Beddoes Campus: The Clerk confirmed she had reported that there were again vehicles leaving their engines on while waiting at the school. The school had agreed to monitor.
- (4) External Audit: Members noted that there had been nothing received from the Wales Audit Office as yet.

MIN 4235 FINANCE

- (1) Donations: The following donation was confirmed (as agreed April 2023).

Sleeping Dragon Fund (as previously agreed)	£300.00
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- (2) Payments: The following payments were approved –

B. Baynham (refund Mayor's Expenses)	£177.61
Mrs T.A. Price	£1495.00
HM Revenue & Customs	£586.51
NEST Pensions (direct debit)	£139.37
T. Lloyd-John	£654.23
N. Close	£60.00
N. Close	£176.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£345.89

Presteigne Building Supplies	£23.66
HSBC (Bank Charges) – Treasurer Acc)	£8.00
HSBC (Bank charges) – Meadow Acc)	£8.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Post Office Ltd (debit card payment - stamps)	£72.10

(3) The following receipts were noted:-

Powys County Council (2 nd precept payment)	£24,312.60
Heritage Lottery (grant refund)	£264.15

(4) Payment towards Presteigne Library Service: Members considered the current situation and agreed to pay the £1000 requested for the current year. Payments for future years would be considered at each budget setting providing the current level of service was maintained.

MIN 4236 PLANNING

Cllr. Edwards left the room for the duration of the following item due to her position on the County Council planning committee.

(1) Planning applications: The following planning applications were considered –

23/1306/TRE Grid Ref: E: 331415 N: 264589 Proposal: Works to trees within a conservation area
Location: The Vine, St David's Street, Presteigne. Resolved no objections be raised.

23/1304/TPO Grid Ref: E: 329473 N: 266616 Proposal: Works to tree subject to a Tree Preservation order
Location: Green Acres, Norton Manor Park, Norton Presteigne. Resolved no objections be raised.

23/1277/FUL Grid Reference: E:331376 N: 264462 Proposal: Change of Use of Mixed Use Building to A3 Use Class (Part Retrospective) Site Address: 11 High Street, Presteigne. Resolved no objections be raised.

Cllr. Firth was placed in the waiting room for the duration of the following item.

23/1249/HH Grid Reference: E:331556 N: 264410 Proposal: Construction of a single storey garden studio Site Address: 9 Harper's Lane, Presteigne. Resolved no objections in principle to a garden studio but concerns regarding the proposed size and therefore the Council requests that it be restricted for use as an ancillary building tied to the main property thus ensuring it could not become a separate dwelling.

Cllr. Firth returned to the meeting.

23/1342/REM Grid Reference: E:331249 N: 267628 Proposal: Section 73 application to vary condition 2 of planning permission 22/1871/HH in relation to approved plans Site Address: Westering, Stonewall Hill, Presteigne. Resolved no objections to the application but the Council would not like to see it become a separate dwelling in the future.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.

(2) Planning Decisions: The following decisions were noted:-

- 23/055/HH – Lower Ackhill, Presteigne: Approval.
- 21/0881/RES - Phase 2 Jack's View, Norton: Approval.
- 23/0938/FUL – Former Depot, Presteigne: Approval.

(3) Bute Energy/GreenGen Project: A Community Benefits Officer had now been appointed to liaise with local Councils on the proposed fund and how it would be used.

(4) Planning Enforcement Update: Members noted that this was ongoing.

(5) Non Statutory Consultation on Proposed Substation and Overhead Line – Vyrnwy Valley to Lower Frankton: Resolved to make no comment at this stage.

(6) Notification of Planning Appeal, The Woodyard, Broadaxe, Presteigne: Noted.

MIN 4237 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: Members noted that the bat walk had been successful and had made a small profit so no funding would be required from the Town Council. The Clerk would write and thank Mr. Harling-Bowen for organising the event.

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

- Nature Reserve Project Update: Cllr. Poster reported that the grass paths were now mown and that he was currently working on clipping the edge of the gravel pathway. Work was being done on recording the butterfly population. Cllr. Abecasis reported receiving concerns about high grass adjacent to property boundaries and Cllr. Poster informed Members that this had been considered at a Climate Crisis meeting and allowing residents to mow up to one metre from their boundaries had been mentioned. Agreed this be added to the October agenda for consideration by Council.
- Meadow Area and Local Places for Nature Grant: Application successful.
- Wildlife in your Ward Project: Agreed to accept the offer of a free survey.
- Confirmation of National Forest Status Application: Application now submitted.
- Pond Update: Members discussed the problems with the ponds failing to hold water and the possible solutions. Concerns were raised that not providing the ponds and only having seasonal ones meant that the grant specification was not being met. It was agreed therefore that with time running out to complete the project a special meeting should be held on 27th September to make a decision on the option to be followed and for the agreed option to be commissioned urgently. In the meantime the Clerk was asked to apply to the Heritage Lottery for an extension until March 2024.

(3) Report on Site Meeting re speed limit, Coombe Corner: Cllr. Baynham reported that she and the Clerk had attended a meeting on site to discuss progressing the speed limit request from local residents. All present had been positive and there had been collaboration between the Authorities on both sides of the border. It had been agreed to investigate introducing a 40mph speed limit and Herefordshire would now assess the evidence to see if the proposal fitted with Department of Transport criteria. Traffic monitoring strips would be installed on both sides of the border by Herefordshire (with the permission of Powys County Council). Members considered the siting of the speed limit signs on the Powys side and the Clerk was requested to ask the Powys Traffic Engineer if it could be placed further towards Presteigne than currently planned, at the end of the Broadheath straight, before the corner.

(4) Review of Grass Verge Cutting Arrangements: Members considered the three options outlined in the papers provided and all were invited to give their views. Following a discussion the following was proposed by Cllr. Preece and seconded by Cllr. Owens –

All grass verges to revert to the normal County Council cutting regime with the exception of the area of grass bank below the Warden which could continue to be managed for wildflowers. Following a vote this proposal was passed by six votes to five.

Cllr. Edwards pointed out that there was no reference to Norton and she was asked to bring a proposal to the October meeting.

MIN 4238 NORTON

(1) Community Trust Update: Work progressing well. A successful Harvest Lunch has raised £1500 for the project.

(2) Annual Fireworks: To be organised this year by the Norton Sports Committee for the Community Hub. In future the Hub would take over the organising of the event.

MIN 4239 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: The Clerk reported that a quote for the new part for the urinal had now been received and was £330 plus labour to fit. Members agreed that the Clerk go ahead and commission the work.

(2) Allotments: Incident at allotments/Went's Meadow: Members noted with concern the recent incident. The Clerk had reported it to the police. The email from the PNAA was noted but felt there was little they could do if no one was willing to become one of the necessary officers to run the group. The further meeting was noted and in the meantime the Clerk was asked to write to all tenants advising them of the situation and reminding them of the need to hold insurance cover for their plots.

(3) Meadows:

- Review of Management Plan, Eddie's Meadow: Agreed that the Clerk ask the Community Payback Officer to arrange to cut back the briars and blackthorn suckers at the top of the site and to also ask if they would remove the docks. Members would review progress in due course. In the meantime the plan would be held in reserve. It was noted that there was a large number of docks on part of the new Nature Reserve and Cllr. Poster agreed to review these.
- Review of Hedge Management Options following Site Meeting: Members considered the document supplied. Members considered the document provided and agreed to adopt it

subject to the main cutting time being changed from the end of February to November/December. Cllr. Wilding pointed out that there would need to be one change to the detailed yearly cutting schedule provided.

- Update on further vandalism: The Clerk reported a number of incidents of vandalism in recent weeks. The police had been informed.
- Use for 'In the Body Day' 8th October: Agreed.
- Presence of Himalayan Balsam: Noted. It was felt there was little that could be done but the Clerk was asked to contact Wye Usk Foundation for advice on possible treatments.
- Blight on Orchard Trees: Noted. No action to be taken.
- Use for Oktoberfest by Herefordshire Expedition Group – 30th September: Agreed. Noted no onsite parking.
- Cover for Inspections 18th to 29th September: Members would email the Clerk with their availability.

(4) Community Storage Update: Members considered the detailed proposal and agreed to put it on hold for the time being.

(5) Grant Application – Table Tennis/Container Storage: Agreed that the Clerk discuss with Cllr. Wilding in order to submit a grant application.

MIN 4240 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Update on current situation – Presteigne Memorial Hall: Cllr. Baynham reported that a further online meeting was scheduled for the following week and she agreed to update Members after that had taken place.

(2) Youth Matters Update: Cllr. Abecasis would be meeting students during the current term.

(3) Annual Fireworks/Bonfire: Update: No organisation had come forward so there would be no event in Presteigne in 2023.

(4) Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday: Clerk would contact Rev. Hollinghurst to ask what was intended for 2023.

(5) Condition of Community Tables and options for repair: Agreed to order replacement pins to enable the existing tables to continue to be used.

(6) John Beddoes Campus: Agreed that the Clerk arrange a meeting with representatives of the Council and the School to discuss current issues or concerns. Members to email the Clerk with any questions they had.

(7) Wales Audit Office: Consultation on Fee Scales/Ranges: Noted. Resolved no comment be made.

(8) Review of Working Group Protocol: Approved unchanged.

(9) Welsh Ombudsman's public consultation on "Our Equality Plan 2023-2026: Noted. No comment to be made.

MIN 4241 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards:- No RAAC in any Powys buildings.

Issue with grass cuttings now resolved.

Concerns over safety of schoolchildren under the new travel arrangements.

Cllr. Baynham:- Nothing further to report. All discussed under Town Council business.

MIN 4242 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) 20 MPH Signs: Cllr. Owens reported an issue. Cllr. Baynham confirmed that this has been dealt with.

MIN 4243 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS ITEMS

Due to the confidential nature of the business on this agenda, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) members of the public will be excluded during discussion of the following items

MIN 4244 STREET CLEANING CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

Members heard that the current cleaner no longer wished to continue. It was agreed that the Clerk advertise for a self-employed person to carry out the work and also see if the Community Payback team could be asked to do so. She would also ask if the County Council was willing to be contracted to provide street cleaning services.

The meeting closed at 9.47 pm.