

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH JULY 2024 HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. T. Owens, (Mayor), A. Van Huls (Deputy Mayor), B. Baynham, D. Edwards, F. Preece, M. Price, C. Kirkby MBE, J. Wilding, C. Ross and J. Ramsay.

Apologies: Cllr. A. Ramsay.

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.

Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Completed by Cllr. Ross and witnessed by the Clerk.

Cllr. Owens welcomed Cllr. Ross to the Council.

MIN 4364 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the annual and ordinary meetings held on 19th June, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Clerk advised that if Members wished a recorded vote to be noted in the minutes then that request needed to be made at the time the vote was taken.

MIN 4365 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Places for Nature Garden: Cllr. Baynham had not as yet had the opportunity to ask if the John Beddoes Charity would provide additional plants for the site at the Secondary School.
- (2) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Kirkby felt there should have been a formal agenda item for this item. He confirmed he was willing to help organise interviews with the additional witnesses and expressed concern at the tone of the letter sent to witnesses. Cllr. Baynham confirmed that this was a standard letter that needed to incorporate all the formal procedures that might be involved. Cllr. Kirkby asked that the Clerk continue to press for any additional information from the landowner and also that she ask for a progress report on the replies from the new witnesses.
- (3) Traffic Calming Measures, Norton: The Clerk confirmed that she had no information as yet.
- (4) Moles: Cllr. Ramsay stated that Summer was not the best time to attend to the moles. The Clerk confirmed that the contractor had been booked and that other than the setup fee there were no further charges unless any moles were caught.
- (5) New Benches, Nature Reserve: Cllr. Baynham had been in touch with a contractor about fixing the two benches purchased with funds from her Mayor's expenses on the site. The bench donated by Mr. Mockler was on site but also waiting to be fixed into the ground. Agree no further action for the time being and it was agreed that the two benches to be moved on to the site.
- (6) Grass Cutting, Went's Meadow: Cllr. J. Ramsay asked that his concern over the decision to make no changes to the grass cutting arrangements be recorded.
- (7) New Barn Treatment with Fire Retardant Paint: The Clerk was asked to check whether the stage had been treated. She believed it had as it had been part of the instructions given, but would confirm.
- (8) MUGA Surface: The Clerk had inspected this and there did not appear to be a problem currently. It was agreed that the matter would be reviewed again following the ROSPA inspection in late August/September.

(9) Bike Track: Cllr. Kirkby raised this item and stated that he had not instructed the works on the track that had been carried out before the June meeting but had discussed matters with the young persons on the site. The Clerk explained why it was necessary to keep her informed of such matters so she could then report to the Council for decisions on any suggestions made. Cllr. Preece had been contacted by Cllr. Kirkby regarding storage of the tools that had been left on site. Cllr. Owens stressed to Cllr. Kirkby that storage on the allotments was not an option. Matters remained unchanged and were as confirmed at the June meeting – some minor strimming and digging permitted. No access for a mini digger. Members willing to consider a plan for larger changes if one was supplied.

(10) Nant Mithill Wind Energy Park: The Clerk advised that the full planning application was now expected at the end of the Summer.

(11) Norton Hub: The Clerk confirmed that the Hub Committee was pleased to accommodate the June and September Council meetings in the recently completed Hub. There would be no charge.

MIN 4366 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month. The letter of thanks from East Radnorshire Care was noted. The Clerk would circulate.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Highground Maintenance Ltd	£ 449.69 MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1588.84
HM Revenue & Customs	£601.38
NEST (Direct debit)	£146.30
T. Lloyd-John	£641.23
N. Close	£8.00
N. Close	£108.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00 MEADOW ACC
Amazon Uk (refund T. Price - batteries for toilets)	£19.17
Amazon UK (refund T. Price)(batteries)	£9.73
One Voice Wales (training module 1 – J. Ramsay)	£20.00
R.B. Landscaping (covering allotment plot)	£36.00 MEADOW ACC
Presteigne Building Supplies	£10.93
Presteigne Building Supplies	£130.05 MEADOW ACC
British Gas Lite (direct debit)	£10.75
EDF Energy (Hereford Street)	£45.24
EDF Energy (Meadow Barns)	£21.76 MEADOW ACC
One Voice Wales (training module 2 – J. Ramsay)	£20.00

(3) Mayor's Expenses/Allowance: Cllr. Baynham reported that following the purchase of the benches there was approximately £478 left in the expenses from her year in office. She stated that she would consider allocating the remainder as donations to local groups and would provide details at the next meeting.

(4) Budget Update to the end of June, 2024: Noted. Cllr. J. Ramsay asked if training on finance matters could be provided by the Clerk for new Members. The Clerk would arrange this.

(5) Receipts: The following receipt was noted:-

Powys County Council (electricity H'fd Street Toilets)	£170.58
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MIN 4367 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 –

24/0871/FUL Grid Reference: E:332402 N: 263963 Proposal: Erection of a building containing two workshop units (B1 & B8) over an existing concrete yard area Site Address: Unit 1 Presteigne Mill, Presteigne, LD8 2HG. Resolved to support the application but to request that any lighting on the site comply with the town's dark sky status - as per the lighting policy supplied to the County Council. In addition Members noted the concerns of Environmental Health as the site is currently served by a septic tank.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.

(2) Planning Decisions: No decisions this month.

(4) Update re. Units on Industrial Estate: Member noted that Welsh Government was in the process of chasing up the various purchasers to understand their timescales on the development of the plots.

(5) Local Development Plan Update: The Clerk had attended the recent briefing by the County Council and provided a brief update.

MIN 4368 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: The following matters were discussed –

Signage: The Clerk reported that Welsh Government would require any signage to be bilingual. Given the time it was taking and with the concerns the Clerk had over potential costs it was agreed to consider placing a sign at the entrance to Went's Meadow. In the meantime the Clerk would proceed to discuss signs on the road entrances with the County Council.

Grant Application: The Clerk explained that of the several funds identified Mr. Harling-Bowen felt that Awards for All was the best option for an application for funds for the filming proposed. The Clerk added that it might be possible to also apply for extra monies to fund a dark sky event/evening and Members agreed that if possible this should be done. It was suggested that funding for signage could also be included and the Clerk would see if this could be added.

Request for Volunteers: Agreed that Mr. Harling-Bowen could place an item in the Community News asking for volunteers to help with the ongoing needs of the project.

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

No new date as yet for the cancelled Climate and Environment Committee Meeting.

Powys Town and Community Councils Climate Event: The Clerk advised that this was expected to be similar to that held in 2023 and was hoped to take place in October. Agreed not to pledge any funds to support the event at this stage but to wait to find out the cost to attend.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: The Clerk reported that some works had started and that she had produced a claim form for use for the businesses to claim the monies due. She asked for delegated authority to pay claims as they were agreed rather than waiting for the next Council meeting and this was agreed.

(4) Reply from NRW re. Toxic Waste Fire at Old Depot: Members noted the reply from the Environment Agency which stated 'There was a small waste wood fire on site. Unfortunately, this spread to new building materials containing plastic which is likely to be the source of the burning plastic smell. Advice and guidance has been given to the site owner regarding what can and cannot be burnt in the open.'

(5) General PCC Grass Cutting on Verges: Cllr. Baynham reported that the County Council continued to carry out three cuts per year at present. She had reviewed some of the areas of previous concern and asked for some adjustments. She felt that the cutting was now appropriate but asked that Members look when out and about and let her know of any ongoing concerns. Cllr. Preece had received a complaint about the lack of cutting at Orchard Close but the site had been cut in line with County Council policy.

(6) John Beddoes School Field – footpath/dog fouling issues: Cllr. Baynham reported that there had been no real progress with the re-routing of the footpath and outlined a proposal for re-routing the path. It was agreed that she arrange a site meeting with the school and the footpaths officer to discuss a way forward. Cllr. Baynham also reported a complaint about dog fouling on the field despite the Town Council providing bags for dog owners to use.

MIN 4369 NORTON

(1) Community Trust Update: Official opening had been very successful. Various events planned. Agree to remove the item from the agenda now the project was complete.

(2) General Works, Norton: Cllrs. Edwards and Wilding had not yet had the opportunity to remove the milestone and best kept village sign for restoration.

(3) Unsafe Wall: The Clerk had written to the resident who had replied stating that the wall had been checked and was safe.

MIN 4370 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences - Update re painting of Hereford Street Block: The Clerk confirmed that the contractor appointed had now withdrawn. She would seek new quotes for the work.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were discussed -

Rent owed on plot 19 to be written off.

Request for Lean-to: Resolved. The tenant would instead fit double doors to her shed.

Site Inspection: Cllrs. Preece and Price to carry out a site inspection over the next few weeks.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Review of use of site particularly the New Barn: Confirmed with no changes for the time being. The Clerk advised of the current VAT position, having sought advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Quote for repair of pedestrian bridge and repair of sunken paving at old Barn: Agreed. Clerk to confirm to the contractor.

Use Request Family Fun Day – 7th August: Agreed.

Use Request Play Radnor – 23rd July (PM), 30th July, 6th August, 13th August, 27th August: Agreed

Condition of Picnic Bench, Eddie's Meadow: Cllr. Wilding volunteered to supply new timber for the legs. He would liaise with Cllr. J. Ramsay and if possible they would fit the new legs to the bench. The condition of the memorial bench on the site was also raised and Cllr. Baynham proposed that she buy a further bench from the balance of her Mayor's Fund and the memorial plaque could be transferred to the new bench. This was agreed. The Clerk would order the new bench.

Review of hedge management: No changes at present but to be further reviewed after the cut in the Autumn/Winter of 2024.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: The following matters were discussed –

Volunteer Registration Forms now completed and handed to the Clerk for safe keeping.

Risk Assessments completed. Cllr. J. Ramsay would supply copies for the Clerk to keep on file.

Working Parties continue to weed, mow, control docks, thistles and nettle.

Pond plants appear to be succeeding.

Volunteers looking at sources for other oxygenating plants.

Pallets donated for school to make a hibernaculum.

Clerk had asked community payback to weed entrance.

Community payback to be asked if they would repaint the gate.

Possible noticeboard (approx. cost £101). This would allow regular updates to be posted. Cllr. J. Ramsay to look at possible funding.

Gate Access to Reserve: This was an existing access. Clerk to register to avoid a right of way being created as advised by Cllr. Wilding.

(5) Oak Trees on John Beddoes School Field: Cllr. J. Ramsay reported that the relatively recent TPO for trees on the field did not appear to be showing on the County Council systems. Clerk/Cllr. Baynham to ask for this to be done.

MIN 4371 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Members were advised of the Sustainable Powys proposals being put forward and which would involve services being centred on four main hubs in Brecon, Newtown, Llandrindod Wells and Welshpool. Cllrs. Baynham and Edwards were attending briefing meetings at the County Council but had nothing to report as yet. It was agreed that a Working Group meeting be arranged over the Summer with all Councillors being invited and to discuss what, if any, services the Town Council would be willing to consider taking over. Cllr. Baynham was asked to obtain more information on costs for the previous three financial years and for the most recent condition survey.

(2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: A report on the transfer of the trusteeship was due to go to Cabinet at the County Council on the 30th July

(3) Prospective Closure of Lloyds Bank: Agreed that the closure was very unlikely to be prevented but that the Clerk reply to the email from the Bank stressing the need for 24 hour access to a cashpoint, to ask where that cashpoint would be located and to also ask for more information on the community banking arrangements that would be put in place. Cllr. Owens to call into the branch to ask about the challenge cups believed to be in storage from the former Presteigne Show.

(4) WinCare Fall Rescue Kit Training Pack: Cllr. Kirkby explained that he had attended a training session on this and that the company had also donated two kits for use in the town. These were to be sited on the walls of the Old School and the Day Centre.

(5) Christmas Lights: Agreed that the Clerk contact the lights installer to ask that the lights be inspected as soon as possible in order for any necessary replacement bulbs or light strings to be costed.

MIN 4372 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards reported the following:

- Many meetings on the forthcoming budget pressures. Cllr. Owens suggested a freeze on non essential recruitment as an immediate measure.
- Attendance at a meeting at the Penybont Depot which had confirmed capital works on the Slough to alleviate the flooding issues near the Primary School.
- Attendance at a site meeting in Norton to discuss parking issues.

Cllr. Baynham reported the following:

- Works done to the culvert at Lugg View.

- Review of Bus Routes – requested a bus route to Leominster and a direct route to Llandrindod Wells.
- Attendance at meetings on the budget pressures at the County Council.
- Site Meeting at Primary School to discuss flooding: Officer had agreed that the new ponds were most unlikely to have caused the flooding which had been a long-standing issue. The drains would be surveyed to identify any problems.

MIN 4373 CASUAL VACANCIES

Members noted the resignations of Leon Abecasis and Mark Williams. Cllr. Wilding expressed concern at the loss of two further Members. He was concerned that there had been some recent actions which had led to some Members feeling pressurised and uncomfortable. He added that this was tantamount to bullying. Cllr. Owens stressed that all Members should be able to voice their views freely at meetings.

The Clerk explained the process for filling the vacancies and advised that the initial notices had been put up earlier in the evening.

It was agreed that should no formal election be called then the Clerk could proceed to advertise for applicants for co-option with a closing date at the end of the first week of September. The Clerk would also advise the Primary School that Mr. Williams was no longer a Councillor and that a replacement would be appointed in due course.

MIN 4374 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

- (1) Letter of Congratulations: Letter to be written to the Carnival Committee.
- (2) Retirement of David Christopher; Letter of thanks and congratulations to be written on his retirement from the Fire Service.
- (3) Fire Station Open Day on 20th July.
- (4) Warden Guardian Foundation Renewed Green Flag Award: Letter of congratulations to be sent.
- (5) Sheep Music: Fireworks event on 2nd November.
- (6) Norton Fireworks Event: 27th October.
- (7) Wales Air Ambulance Meeting: The Clerk advised that she was arranging a meeting with one of the Directors and the Public Affairs Officer on behalf of her smaller Councils and that any Town Council Member was welcome to attend. She would circulate details.
- (8) Condition of Gazebos: The Clerk reported that the Carnival Committee had expressed concern at the condition of the gazebos. Members agreed that this had most likely stemmed from them being put away damp and the old sixth form building being damp. Cllrs. Edwards and Wilding suggested that the gazebos be left up for a few days around Norton Show to allow them to fully air etc. Members would review again after that event.
- (9) Replacement of Pads/Batteries for Defibrillators: The Clerk advised that she was expecting the Ambulance Service to withdraw the provision of free replacements and asked that she be given authority to purchase pads and batteries as needed. Several of the units needed new pads in mid August and one unit would need replacement batteries. Members agreed that the Clerk proceed to purchase supplies as needed.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm