

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2021 HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING UNDER THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (CORONAVIRUS) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

Present: Cllrs. T. Owens (Mayor), F. Preece (Deputy Mayor), D. Edwards, R. Bennett, D. Davies, J. Wilding, C. Kirkby MBE, P. Smith, C. Ruby, B. Baynham, N. Rogers.

Apologies: Cllrs. R. Bamford, L. Veary.

In Attendance: Mrs T. Price, Town Clerk. Kerem Asfuroglu, Dark Source. 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:

Cllr. D. Edwards, Trustee of Norton Community Trust, re. re. planning application for Norton Community Trust

Cllr. J. Wilding, Trustee of Norton Community Trust, re. planning application for Norton Community Trust.

Personal and Prejudicial:

Cllr. R. Bennett, related to residents and to a business owner in High Street, re. grants etc High Street due to Covid-19.

Prior to the start of the meeting Members received an update from Kerem Asfuroglu of Dark Source on the lighting trial in High Street and Broad Street. Work had been carried out in early March and had included a night time lighting survey, an aerial survey of the Assembly Rooms and the installation of trial lighting to two lights in Broad Street and three in High Street. Members were reminded that 95% of the changes needed to become Dark Sky compliant would be made by the County Council as part of the overall lighting review and that this would also achieve an estimated 50% in energy costs. One concern was the location of many of the lights in the High Street close to the buildings rather than extended out into the street – this produced light spill on to those buildings and solutions were being considered. Due to a shortage of appropriate 2200 kelvin lamp fittings it had been decided to use 2700 kelvin in the town centre and 2200 in the remainder of the town. Cllr. Kirkby asked whether there had been any progress on using PIR sensor light fittings and Mr. Asfuroglu stated that these tests were still to do.

Cllr. Owens thanked Mr. Asfuroglu for attending the meeting and for his work to date.

MIN 3866 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2021 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 3867 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS AND CLERK'S REPORT

(1) Missing Bin, St. David's Street: Still not replaced.

(2) Weather Vane, Radnorshire Arms Garage: Presently stored at County Council Depot at Penybont. Cllr. Smith would collect so it could be stored locally.

(3) Fold Farm Footpath: No progress but Cllr. Kirkby reported that he had obtained a further map which he would submit to the County Council as evidence.

(4) Zip Wire: The press release and photograph had been completed and Cllr. Owens reported that the associated facebook post had been viewed by over 1500 people. He asked that thanks be noted to the Clerk, Cllr. Kirkby and Steve Gealy from the County Council in achieving the re-siting of the installation to obtain the extra length.

(5) Exterior Lights, Front of Hereford Street Toilets: The Clerk reported that as these lights were on the same circuit as those to the rear it had not been possible to switch them off yet but that the possibility of separating the two was being investigated.

(6) Local Walks: Maps of each route were now on the website but the page would be improved further when Cllr. Owens had time to assist the Clerk with the final adjustments.

(7) Proposed Bollards, Scottleton Street: Cllr. Baynham to be asked for an update.

(8) New Post Box: Thanks were noted to Cllr. Edwards for asking Royal Mail to replace the post box on Scottleton Street, Presteigne. This had now been done.

(9) Council Clerk's Practitioner's Conference: This took place on zoom on 23-25th February and the Clerk had attended the following sessions – governance toolkit for Councils, Ramblers Association, Smaller Council Networking, the Use and Misuse of Information (GDPR/FOI etc), Community Engagement, the new Local Government and Elections Act in Wales, Accessibility in relation to documents and website plus several sessions from motivational speakers.

(10) Fly Tipping outside Cemetery: This has now been dealt with. Thanks to Cllr. Kirkby for assisting.

Cllr. Baynham joined the meeting at this point.

MIN 3868 FINANCE

(1) Donations: None this month.

(2) Payments: The following payments were approved –

NEST (direct debit)	£130.06
Mrs T.A. Price (salary)	£1561.70
HM Revenue & Customs	£675.24
Mr. N. Close	£122.50 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Mr. N. Close	£31.50
T. Lloyd-John (toilet cleaning)	£354.49
Highground Maintenance (grass cutting)	£319.57 MEADOW ACCOUNT
EDF Energy (Hereford Street Toilets)	£62.44
Arrow Plant & Tool Hire (cherry picker)	£242.40
Mrs T.A. Price (expenses)	£32.20
XMA Ltd (ink toner)	£195.74
Mrs T.A. Price (refund – stamps)	£33.96
C. Davies (mole control)	£305.00

(3) Asset Register: Members considered the Asset Register and approved it subject to clarification of the breakdown of the improvements to Upper Went's Meadow.

(4) Risk Assessment: Approved unchanged.

(5) Bank Balances: The following bank balances as at 7th March were noted –

Warden Reserve	£1242.07	Capital Account	£30649.84
Money Manager	£ 31232.59	Allotment Account	£3321.41
Meadow Account	£ 14909.93	Treasurer Account	£44081.93

(6) Receipts: The following receipts –

Allotment Rent £728.00 Allotment Account

Latest figure to be advised at meeting.

(7) Payment to CONNECT for erection of the 2020 Christmas Lights: It was agreed that the sum of £780, being the balance remaining in the budget, be paid to CONNECT.

CONNECT £780.00

Cllr. Edwards joined the meeting at this point.

(8) Bank Transfer: Members approved the transfer of £297.77 from the Allotment Account to the Treasurer Account to cover the cost of the Clerk's additional hours.

(9) Allocation for the purchase of tables (£375): The Clerk reported that Mid Border Arts had confirmed their intention to purchase tables from their own budget and so there was no longer any need to purchase the tables budgeted for in the current year. Following discussion Members agreed to vire half the amount (£187.50) to free reserves and the remaining half to be donated to Mid Border Arts towards the costs of purchasing the tables.

(10) Final Report of Independent Remuneration Panel: Cllr. Kirkby raised concerns over the taxation of the allowance despite it being seen as a reimbursement of costs and expenses. The Clerk clarified that the taxation issue was not one for the Remuneration Panel but was being discussed between One Voice Wales and HM Revenue and Customs. Cllr. Kirkby also felt that Members

should consider further the optional recommendations and asked that the matter be placed on a future agenda for further discussion.

(11) Financial Regulations: Members noted the amendment to note the internet banking policy and approved the updated regulations.

MIN 3869 PLANNING

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

21/0272/HH Grid Reference: E:331507 N: 264121 Proposal: Erection of single storey side extension Site Address: 27 Townend, Presteigne. Resolved no objections be raised.

21/0362/LBC Grid Reference: E:330456 N: 267257 Proposal: Internal and external works and alterations in association with change of use of redundant church to create a community hub Site Address: Former Church Of St Andrew, Norton, Presteigne. Resolved to support the application.

21/0361/FUL Grid Reference: E:330456 N: 267257 Proposal: Change of use of redundant church to create a community hub including internal and external works and alterations Site Address: Former Church Of St Andrews, Norton, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2EN. Resolved to support the application.

Application for full and listed building consent – Awning for the Salty Dog, High Street: Resolved to support the application.

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

DIS/2018 /0057, 1, 2 & 3 Castle Dyche Scottleton Street Presteigne: Split Decision, 18th February. (some but not all conditions discharged).

20/2135/FUL, Unit 1, Broadaxe Business Park, Presteigne: Consent 8th March.

20/2134/FUL Unit 5, Presteigne Industrial Estate, Presteigne: Consent 8th March.

MIN 3870 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Active Travel Routes Update: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the County Council felt that a sign at the start of the route was not necessary but had agreed to consider pavement markings to indicate the commencement of the shared use. The Clerk would write to the Active Travel Officer to indicate support for this.

The Area Traffic Officer had confirmed the consultation on a one way trial had now concluded and the order has been placed for the required work to change the road to a one way system. Due to current restrictions/limitations (Covid) the County Council was unable to provide an indication at this time as to when the work will be undertaken but it was expected to be in the very near future.

(2) Dark Skies/Lighting: In addition to the discussion at the start of the meeting it was agreed that the Clerk write to Welsh Government to commence discussions on the lighting on the Industrial Estate. The Clerk was also asked to discuss with Cllr. Bamford which lights on the Estate might be in private ownership. Cllr. Smith mentioned approaching private properties identified in the lighting survey and this was noted for future action.

(3) Climate Crisis: Cllr. Kirkby reported that a further meeting was to be held on 1st April to further consider options for the tiny forest project. One small site near to the Warden had been identified and the Clerk was asked to write to the owner to see if they would be interested in selling it to the Council. The Working Group was hoping to submit a grant application in the autumn.

Members also noted thanks to Cllr. Bamford for the successful installation of the Wildlife Garden.

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

(4) Covid-19 Measures and High Street Grant Update: Members noted that although the planning application for the one property had been submitted time was running out given the grant money could not be drawn down without the submission of invoices for the awning purchase.

Cllr. Bennett was returned to the meeting.

(5) Welsh Water Sewage System Upgrade: Cllr. Kirkby asked if the Clerk would ask the County Council to press for the re-opening of the play area prior to the Easter holidays.

Members also noted the concerns raised by Welsh Water over several trees opposite Boultibrook and noted that the County Council had served a removal order on the owners.

Cllr. Bennett reminded Members that the fence cut through at the bottom of the meadow would need replacing in due course.

A plan of the works was to be posted by Welsh Water adjacent to the Norton site.

(6) Road Condition Stocken/Stonewall Hill: Cllr. Owens reported on the action carried out since the February meeting. The Clerk had chased the Herefordshire Portfolio Holder and also been in further contact with Fay Jones MP. She had again reported the condition of the road via the Hereford Council website and Balfour Beatty had responded saying it had filled one pothole. Cllr. Owens had twice been on site and had measured the road width at its narrowest point for Fay Jones' Office and also to obtain what three worst locations for the worst length of road which ran from Stocken farm pool to the top of the bank near the layby. Cllr. Owens confirmed he was willing to write as Mayor to press the need for urgent carriageway works. Cllr. Baynham felt that although both the Town Council and she herself were trying very hard to get something done it was appropriate that the residents raise their concerns with the Councils, at both Parish and County level, that were responsible for the length of road in question. Members checked the line of the border and it was felt worthwhile that the Clerk check with Powys County Council over exact responsibilities given concerns over the poor state of the roadside ditches. Cllr. Smith suggested that the Fire Service be asked to travel the route during a practice run in order to be sure access was available in an emergency and added that if not this would add extra pressure for repairs to be urgently done. Members felt access was more problematic for smaller vehicles but agreed that the Clerk contact the Fire Service to ask. Members also suggested that the residents contact Sustrans, given the road was part of a national cycle route.

(7) Litter & Fly-tipping Prevention Plan for Wales Consultation: Noted. No comment to be made.

(8) Use of Footpath by Horses/Cyclists: Members noted the concerns raised by a resident over the use of one particular footpath that had been recently used by horse-riders and cyclists: • SO 308640 to 307634 (Slough Road to Cold Harbour). Members noted that Welsh Government had been looking at opening all footpaths to horse riders and cyclists but this would be in the future. In the meantime they asked that the Clerk refer the matter to the County Council.

(9) Work at Presteigne Cemetery: Cllr. Kirkby provided an update on the work which had now commenced and which was expected to take 6-8 weeks once the weather improved enough for machinery to get on the ground. During the recent gales the security fencing had blown over onto nearby gravestones and the County Council had been made aware.

(10) Felled Tree, Warden: Members noted that although the Clerk had made initial contact with Welsh Water to arrange a site meeting the County Council had requested that the matter be left with them in order for appropriate compensation to be secured.

MIN 3871 NORTON

(1) Norton Community Trust Update: The planning application had now been re-submitted and a decision was awaited.

(2) Litter Picking: Members asked that their thanks to the regular litter pickers be noted.

MIN 3872 SITES AND BUILDINGS MATTERS

(1) Public Conveniences: See Min 3867(5).

(2) Allotments: Cllr. Kirkby explained that the Meadow was one of three sites being considered for a youth allotment plot and suggested that the matter be deferred until a decision had been made on the preferred site.

(3) Meadows:

- Chain Harrowing now completed.
- Contractor employed to deal with problems with moles and numerous mole hills.
- Use by Adventure Cinema: Postponed and to be re-arranged in 2022.
- Wall, Ligne Garden – Cllr. Bennett had checked on site and work was needed. He would look in more detail and report back to Council in due course.
- New Welsh Government legislation affecting play areas - Smoke-free Premises and Vehicles (Wales) Regulations 2020: Noted. The Clerk would purchase further no smoking signs for her two public toilets. Cllr. Baynham thought that a written policy was needed and the Clerk agreed to check this.
- Next Sites and Buildings Committee Meeting due in April. It was agreed that this be a site meeting following appropriate social distancing.
- Thanks were noted to Mr. G. Graham for his work in tidying and pruning the trees on the site. The Clerk would write to formally thank him.

(4) Worthy Beds: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the County Recreation Officer had identified possible grant funding to renew the boardwalk and asked Members to note that it was likely the County Council would

approach the Town Council about taking over responsibility for the site once the lease to the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust expires.

MIN 3873 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Mayor's Chain: Cllrs. Kirkby, Baynham and Owens had met to discuss possibilities and Cllr. Baynham had made an initial approach to the County Council regarding the now redundant Radnorshire Chain. Cllr. Kirkby had approached Fattorini about repairing and updating the current chain and a response had just been received. The Clerk had previously obtained some estimates for a replacement. It was agreed that the working group meet again to review the information now held and also if possible to also view the Radnorshire Chain and consider it for suitability.

(2) Reply re. Census and Completion of Forms: Members noted the reply on help available as follows *'The field workers are due to be appointed within the next few weeks, but it seems there has been a lack of recruitment issue. Currently the situation with Covid restrictions is causing some concern and the ONS have to be flexible to meet the situation. Whilst it is anticipated that a full workforce will be employed that is not to say that there will not be a call for volunteers to carry out certain tasks. As you can appreciate, I am guided by the HQ on this matter and currently I have not been asked to take on board volunteers to carry out the work.*

It was always my intention to carry out what are referred to as Completion Events - sessions in Halls or the such, to help those in the community who are struggling to complete the forms. The current restrictions however mean that no such events are likely to take place. Were such events to be held then I would be pleased to have volunteers to help in the set up. Currently we are told to only consider online/virtual completion events, and I am in discussion with Powys CC and Ceredigion CC regarding what form those should take.

I would be pleased however if you as a local authority were prepared to be available to signpost members of the community as to where help can be gained from now on. A booklet has been issued on "Need help completing your census questionnaire".

(3) Judge's Lodging Trust: Cllr. Owens had attended a recent meeting and reminded Members that a survey was underway and if possible the Trust would appreciate it if as many as possible could complete it. Cllr. Kirkby stated that the Trust was looking for more local Board Members and asked Members to consider if they were interested in this. Anyone interested could contact Cllr. Kirkby to discuss what the role involved.

(4) Reply from Welsh Government Minister and Kirsty Williams AM on NHS pay: Replies had been received from both the Minister and Kirsty Williams AM and were noted. The Clerk informed Members that Welsh Government had that day announced a bonus payment for NHS workers.

(5) Presteigne Trust: Cllr. Kirkby reported that he was in the process of arranging the AGM for 22nd March at 7pm. Cllr. Veary was preparing the annual accounts.

MIN 3874 TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY

No surgeries currently held.

MIN 3875 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Baynham reported the following matters –

- Council Tax increase set at 2.9% down from the 3.9% originally planned.
- Period of Purdah starting on 22nd March and ending on 6th May.
- Meeting to be held for Powys Councillors on Climate Change and Planning for a Sustainable Future.
- Current Vaccination Numbers for Powys had been received from the Powys Teaching Health Board.
- County Council has written to the Government suggesting a £20 increase for Carers Allowance to bring it in line with the £20 increase in Universal Credit.
- Garage at Radnorshire Arms now for sale.
- Weathervane from Garage was at Penybont Works Depot. See MIN 3867(2).

MIN 3876 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Grass Cutting, Went's Meadow: Members had received a copy of the plan produced by Cllr. Bamford and agreed that the grass cutting areas be amended accordingly. Cllr. Bamford to be asked for more detail on the reason for leaving the circles within the orchard and the cutting here would be reviewed at the next meeting.

(2) Town Benches: Cllr. Kirkby reported that Mr. John Kendall had offered a donation to cover the costs of re-furbishing and painting the benches and cleaning the concrete bases. Members were very pleased to learn of this. Mr. Close would carry out the work and Cllr. Bennett agreed to assist with transporting the benches as needed.

MIN 3877 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS ITEMS

Due to the confidential nature of the following business, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) it was resolved to exclude members of the public during discussion of the following agenda items.

MIN 3878 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING GROUP REPORT

Members considered the recommendations of the working group and the following items were agreed –

- Contract for installation and removal of 2021 Lights to be offered to Highline Electrical.
- Contract for anchorage testing to be offered to Highline Electrical.
- Clerk to write to the property owners to advise them that the testing would be taking place.
- Working Group to meet again in the early Autumn to consider possible additional lights for the 2022-23 budget. Clerk to check if lights would be possible on the by pass.

Cllr. Bennett had spoken to Mr. Felgate, as a very valued lead volunteer, to inform him of the recommendations of the Working Group and to ask for his continued involvement.

Cllr. Wilding and Cllr. Bennett would discuss the arrangements for the lights in Norton.

MIN 3879 STAFFING

Members considered the draft disciplinary and grievance policies as circulated and both were approved without any change.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm.