

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH MARCH 2022 HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. F. Preece (Mayor), D. Edwards (Deputy Mayor), D. Davies, T. Owens, C. Kirkby MBE, B. Baynham, C. Ruby, N. Rogers. R. Bennett, K. Van Den Ende, R. Bamford (via video link).

Apologies: Cllrs. Smith and Wilding.

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

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 4023 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 16th and 23rd February, 2022 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Staffing Committee were deferred to be taken in confidential session.

MIN 4024 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Lease on Assembly Rooms: Cllr. Kirkby reported that Mid Border Arts had now seen and returned the lease for the building and was awaiting a response. He also confirmed that the lift was now finished.
- (2) Norton Bus Stop: Cllr. Owens asked if the new timetables were in place and the Clerk stated that she understood the new cases were still on order.
- (3) Planning Conditions – Knighton Road Development: The Clerk confirmed that there was nothing in the conditions relating to a pedestrian crossing.
- (4) Green Waste Bin: The Clerk confirmed that this had been ordered but despite chasing it had not yet arrived.
- (5) Information on PAVO Localities Funding: As previously circulated.
- (6) Town Clock: Now working.
- (7) Business Rates on Libraries: The Clerk confirmed she had chased this with One Voice Wales but had not yet received any response.
- (8) Gully Sucker: Members reported several drains in need of clearing in Norton. The Clerk would request a visit to clear all the drains in the village.
- (9) Idling Buses at Secondary School: No reply as yet.
- (10) Wilson Terrace Play Area: Members were very pleased with the new roundabout and reported that it was having a lot of use. They felt though that a specific toddler swing would be useful instead of one of the two normal swings and the Clerk was asked to speak to the Officer to see if this could be done.
- (11) Defibrillator Training: Cllr. Kirkby reported that this would now be on 28th March at 6.30pm at the Fire Station.
- (12) Radnorshire Arms: Members noted that more work was being done and it did not appear that any further planning applications had been submitted. The Clerk was asked to contact the County Council and ask that an officer check to make sure all was in order.
- (13) Election Nomination Papers: The Clerk would be attending County Hall on 21st March. Anyone wishing her to take their papers to let her know.

MIN 4025 FINANCE

(1) Donations: The request from Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod was refused. The letter of thanks from Hope House Children's Hospice was noted.

(2) Payments: The following payments were approved –

HAGS SMP Ltd (parts MUGA)	£36.00 MEADOW ACC
Pump International Ltd (parts)	£50.34 MEADOW ACC
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£319.57 MEADOW ACC
Powys County Council (green waste bin)	£39.00
(Refund - T. Price)	
Caring for God's Acre (roundabouts in 2021)	£360.00
Mrs T.A. Price	£1724.90
(salary inc allotment hours/pay award arrears)	
HM Revenue & Customs	£794.92
NEST (Pension contributions)	£156.94
Mrs. T. Lloyd-john	£354.49
Mr. N. Close	£224.00 MEADOW ACC
Mr. N. Close	£68.40
Presteigne Building Supplies	£43.14
Presteigne Building Supplies	£260.19 MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. Price (refund postage)	£1.83
JRB Enterprises Ltd (dog bags)	£261.60 MEADOW ACC
HSBC Bank Charges	£8.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC Bank Charges	£10.00

The Clerk asked if the additional charges for cheques received for allotment rent should be separated out and allocated to the costings for allotments and this was confirmed.

(3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted –

Allotment Rent	£644.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
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(4) Website Income and Expenditure: The existing advertisers all received a renewal letter in November plus at least two reminders. Income for the year is £403 and four advertisers did not renew and have now been removed from the site.

Annual hosting charges were £192 (inc. VAT which cannot be reclaimed while charging for adverts).

Advertising in Broad Sheep costs £40 per year.

(5) Final Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel: Members had all received a copy of the report and noted in particular that the £150 annual allowance payment as to continue to be mandatory. It was agreed that the remuneration/expenses to be paid in 2022-23 would be unchanged and be as follows –

- £150 per Member annually (mandatory)
- Care Costs (mandatory)
- Travel Expenses for out of area meetings etc. (optional).
- Chairman/Mayor's Allowance and expenses (optional).

(6) Annual Subscription - Zoom Video Conferencing Software: Members approved the taking out of an annual subscription at an approximate cost of £120.

(7) National Salary Award: Members noted the salary award for Clerks had now been agreed as 1.75% (in line with that predicted and budgeted for). Payment of the appropriate arrears was included in the above salary payment.

(8) Application to the PAVO UK Community Renewal Fund (localities initiative): Cllr. Owens and the Clerk explained the digital technology they had investigated to improve hybrid meetings and also the limitation on the capital funding available. The Clerk believed there was another fund that was becoming available that would allow application for a higher amount. After discussion Members agreed that the Clerk apply to the PAVO fund for monies for basic equipment including a laptop for use just at meetings. The Clerk and Cllr. Owens would liaise on exact software.

(9) Town Council Debit Cards: Members approved the application for a debit card for each of the Council's current accounts (Treasurer and Meadow).

(10) Update of Financial Regulations: Agreed that the regulations be update to include reference to the Council's internet banking policy.

(11) The following bank balances (as at 8th March) were noted –

Treasurer Account	£49779.61	Meadow Account	£16,624.72
Warden Reserve	£1,017.19	Capital Account	£30,652.96
Money Manager	£3,235.83		

I) Risk Assessment and Asset Register: The Clerk responded to a question from Cllr. Kirkby explaining that guidance now did not ask for assets to be devalued over time. Both the risk assessment and Asset Register were approved as previously circulated.

MIN 4026 PLANNING

- (1) Planning applications: No planning applications this month.
- (2) Planning Decisions: The following decisions were noted –
21/2075/HH 20 Castle Road, Presteigne: Approval 8th February.
21/2123/HH 58 Warden Close, Presteigne: Approval 17th February.
- (3) Planning Enforcement Query re. occupancy of holiday property: The Clerk confirmed that this had been submitted as requested.

MIN 4027 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

- (1) Dark Skies/Lighting: Cllr. Baynham confirmed that work on the street lights in Presteigne would start shortly. She added that she had also been contacted by a BBC Wales live reporter interested in doing an item in Presteigne when the project was complete. The Clerk relayed the request for any monies raised for the project via further fund-raising activities be held by the Town Council. Members felt that the Presteigne and Norton Trust should continue to hold any such monies as it did the monies held from the GoFundMe page.
- (2) Climate Crisis: Cllr. Bamford provided an update as follows –
 - Nature Reserve Grant Update: Cllr. Bamford was pleased to confirm that the grant application had been successful. The Clerk had requested three quotes from Solicitors to act for the Council on the land purchase and it was agreed to appoint Dilwyn's Solicitors of Llandrindod Wells to act for the Council on the purchase.
 - Consideration of Response to Presteigne Woods Forest Resource Plan: Members considered the response drafted by members of the Tree Group and agreed the response subject to the inclusion of a statement on the need to ensure sustainable local timber production rather than importing supplies from abroad.
 - Next meeting of Climate Crisis Group: None planned at present. Membership would be reviewed at the annual May meeting and Cllr. Bamford suggested that the Working Group should possibly be made into a formal committee. The Clerk would add this to the May agenda. The Clerk also explained the differences between a working group and a committee for the benefit of newer Members.
 - Tree preservation Orders and County Council Website: Cllr. Baynham reported that the TPO process for an oak tree on the boundary of the secondary school field was ongoing. Cllr. Van Den Ende explained her research into the information available on the County Council website and Members considered the suggestions included within the Clerk's report. It was agreed that the Clerk write to the County Council as follows –
 - To request Powys County Council to consider having a designated Tree Officer.
 - To ask that the process for making a TPO be clearly shown on PCC's website.
 - Information about existing TPOs to be made freely available to everyone. The Town Council was aware that other Councils have an instantly accessible digitised map showing their tree data. Cllr. Van Den Ende added that the Woodland Trust currently had funding available via its Emergency Tree Fund to provide such designated Tree Officers.
- (3) Welsh Water Sewage System Upgrade: Members noted the replies from both Welsh Water and Powys County Council on the situation regarding phosphate levels and stripping at the sewage plants. The matter seemed to be in hand. No further action. The claim for compensation for the works on the Meadow had now finally been agreed at £8500. It was agreed that this would be added to the Meadow bank account and not split between that account and the general reserves.
- (4) Welsh Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 -Consultation: Resolved no comment be made.
- (5) Grass Cutting Arrangements 2022: Cllr. Baynham reported that there would be minor changes to the arrangements for 2021. She would circulate the maps after the meeting. In response to a question she confirmed that there would be three cuts per year as in previous years. Members then considered arrangements for the two roundabouts for 2022. Following discussion it was agreed to appoint Caring for God's Acre to look after the two roundabouts for a further year and to re-assess before 2023.
- (6) Fold Farm DMMO Application - Update on Complaint: Members noted the reply received which it was agreed ignored the fact that the application should have been determined prior to the start of the covid

pandemic. While matters were so delayed the route was effectively blocked and inaccessible. It was felt that there was no other recourse other than to now proceed to submit a complaint to the Ombudsman on this issue. The Clerk would do this as soon as possible.

(7) Presteigne Woods Resource Plan 2022 Consultation on land managed by Pryor and Rickett Silviculture Ltd: Resolved no comment be made.

(8) Parking alongside existing spaces Hereford Street/Greenend: Members considered the recent comments from a resident on the issues caused by people parking right on the corner opposite the Assembly Rooms making it dangerous for any vehicle and impossible for larger vehicles to pass. Cllr. Baynham had investigated the possibility of bollards such as currently at the end of High Street and had been informed that this was not possible. The Traffic Warden had been asked to specifically check that area, in particular where access to Green End was affected. Members felt that there was an additional issue for access by emergency services and the Clerk was asked to contact the Fire Service to ask if it could look at this and indeed on access to all parts of the town on a future training run. The Clerk was also asked to contact the County Council and again repeat the need to remove the two parking spaces opposite the Farmer's Arms.

(9) Update on Request for Crossing, Warden Close: The Clerk reported that the request for a crossing had been refused for several reasons. These being insufficient numbers of pedestrian movements, the narrow footways wouldn't meet the minimum width for a controlled crossing, the existence of a pedestrian refuge and excellent visibility in both directions.

(10) Reply from Welsh Water re. repair in Broad Street: Members noted the reply received and although it was still felt that the inconvenience had not fully been addressed it was agreed to take no further action.

MIN 4028 NORTON

(1) Norton Community Trust Update: Cllr. Edwards reported that a fund-raising committee had now been set up and would be holding events shortly. Other matters were progressing.

(2) Defibrillator at Norton Manor Park: Members noted the further information supplied and considered the request for the Town Council to take over responsibility for ownership, inspections and maintenance. After some discussion Members agreed to do so. Members felt though that any further group fund-raising to site additional units should be advised of the need to carry out regular checks and fund maintenance/replacement costs as needed.

(3) Community Speedwatch: Members noted that training had now been arranged for 31st March. The resident's email on Speedwatch and alternatives as included on the Clerk's Report was noted.

(4) Reply re. Speed Indicator Signs, Norton: Members noted that the County Council did not fund the provision of these signs and that the cost was between £3000-5000 plus ongoing maintenance costs. It was agreed that this could be considered as a new project in December.

MIN 4029 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: Members noted that the Wilson Terrace Toilets would re-open at the beginning of April. Sites and Buildings Committee to further consider extending the opening times of this block in due course. The purchase of a new emergency light fitting for the Hereford Street site was agreed.

(2) Allotments: Members noted the following -

- One further plot surrendered.
- Rent letters now issued to all tenants.
- Repairs to Fence/Boards now completed. Thanks noted to Cllr. Bennett.

(3) Meadows: Members agreed the following -

- Rust on one item of outdoor gym equipment: Repair agreed.
- Amended date for use – Nicole et Martin. May not June: Noted.
- Fixing of Wire to Decking, Ligne Garden: Members were pleased that this had been completed.
- Mole Problem: The contractor had been abused by residents on site and was unwilling to return,
- Gate Repair Update: The gate did not reach across the full gap and would need a post and rail section to one side to enable it to reach. The Clerk reported that a neighbour had indicated that the gate had not functioned for over ten years. It was therefore agreed to remove the gate from the site and keep it for the time being. If there were no further comments it would not be re-instated.

- Rat Problem: Members noted the additional cost of £50 to hire the correct fittings etc for the heras fencing. The contractor had now been on site and would review progress in two weeks.
 - Harrowing: Noted as completed. Contractor informed.
- (4) Adopt a Bench: Members noted the public notices were up and a press release done. No one had come forward at present.
- (5) Withy Beds Boardwalk: Members were pleased to learn that work was complete and the Clerk informed them that the path and also been improved all the way back to the allotment car park.
- (6) Boulton Weir: Members noted that CPAT had indicated that the weir could be left without remedial work and that photographs had been taken for the record. Members agreed that the revetment work costed by the Wye Usk Foundation and included within the 2022-23 budget be commissioned to take place at the next appropriate time subject to the necessary permits being obtained.

MIN 4030 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

- (1) Town Wifi Update inc SMART Towns meeting: The Clerk reported that the first three units were due to be installed any day but that signed agreements were still awaited from three sites and the Judge's Lodgings had now confirmed that the installation of a unit on the outside of the building would not be possible. Telemat were looking at other possible locations in Broad Street. The SMART Towns meeting had been interesting but very focussed on larger towns.
- (2) Community Broadband Scheme Update: The Clerk reported that the total number of registrations had now passed half of the total needed to proceed. A concern was the withdrawal of the Welsh Government funding but the company had confirmed that at present it was still proceeding using the UK funding which was presently still available.
- (3) Further Letter from James Evans MS: It was agreed to invite Mr. Evans MS to meet the new Council after the May elections.
- (4) Storage Arrangements – Town Council Documents: As a next step it was agreed that the Clerk ask the Judge's Lodgings would be interested in taking some of the old documents and accounts.
- (5) Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Update: Cllr. Baynham reported that matters were still proceeding.
- (6) Response from Ambulance Service re. calling of First Responders: Members noted the reply received.
- (7) Consultation - Auditor General's Work Programme: Resolved no comment be made.
- (8) Powys Digital Inclusion Project - Request to meet to discuss digital inclusion needs and opportunities in Presteigne and Norton: Agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the Officer. Any Member wishing to attend to contact the Clerk.

MIN 4031 TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY

March Surgery Matters: Cllr. Bamford had attended. The following matters were discussed -

- Clearing up after flooding, Lugg View: Cllr. Baynham reported that the Highways Department had attended the Monday after the floods and then returned later to deal with a small area that needed to be done by hand. She was able to confirm that no water had entered any of the properties.
- Audibility at Council Meetings: Members were aware of the issues involved with hybrid meetings and again confirmed that improvements were constantly being sought. Cllr. Owens pointed out that even if the system in the meeting room was perfect it would still be subject to the broadband connection at the home of those attending virtually.
- Comment on One Way System, Hereford Street: Noted.
- Bright Lights causing light pollution: Members noted this. Cllr. Bamford had informed the resident that future stages of the Dark Sky Project would look at private lighting arrangements.
- Parking near to Primary School: Members acknowledged the concerns but could not see any solution.

Agreed not to hold an April Surgery due to purdah.

MIN 4032 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Baynham reported the following –

- Council Tax increase set at 3.9%
- Full Council Elections on 5th May, 2022.
- Ukraine Refugees: County Council had designated officer to co-ordinate the response to the crisis.

MIN 4033 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Community Group Fair: Cllr. Kirkby suggested that it would be useful for the Council to have a table at the fair if it went ahead.

MIN 4034 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS ITEMS

Resolved under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following business because of the confidential nature of the item.

MIN 4035 RECOMMENDATIONS OF STAFFING COMMITTEE AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 23RD FEBRUARY 2022

(1) Minutes of Staffing Committee 23rd February 2022: The Minutes of the meeting were approved and would be duly signed by the Chairman. The Clerk confirmed that the full confidential note would be retained on the staffing file for future reference and that the full papers would be supplied to the new Staffing Committee when it met in November, 2022.

(2) Recommendations of Staffing Committee: The following recommendations were agreed -
Review of Hours paid to be carried forward to November Staffing Meeting.
Members to be reminded to only contact the Clerk at weekends if essential.
Provision of Mobile Telephone to any future Clerk to be noted.
Need for Emergency Contacts List.

The meeting closed at 11 pm.