

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER 2024 HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

Apologies: None.

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:

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

Cllr. F. Preece, related to resident who raised the complaint, re. possible change in traffic direction at Pound Lane.

Declarations of Office – Cllrs. Rogers and Harling-Bowen: The Clerk had met both Members and witnessed the completion of the declaration forms.

MIN 4412 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November, 2024 were approved subject to the following amendments –

Page 4 – add in ‘agreed to supply the sponsor with the Council’s biodiversity policy’.

Page 5 – remove ‘as he felt appropriate’ and substitute with ‘as agreed at the discussion’.

The Chairman then duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Sites and Buildings Committee meeting held on 27th November, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the removal of ‘Mayor’ for Cllr. Baynham in the list of those present and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 3rd December, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4413 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

(1) Replacement Seat for Zip Wire: The Clerk confirmed that the seat had been received and the Officer expected to fit it in the New Year.

(2) Dog Walking on Nature Reserve: Cllr. J. Ramsay had spoken to the resident who would no longer exercise his dogs on the reserve.

(3) Dangerous Trees, River Lugg: Cllrs. J. Ramsay and Wilding had checked the trees when reviewing the hedge cutting and had seen no trees that they felt were a cause for concern.

(4) SLCC/OVW Joint Conference Report: This was a full day event held online. Topics included the ongoing Welsh Government review of Town and Community Councils, risk management with Gallagher insurance, the democratic health of the Community Council sector (few contested elections), an update on the Local Council toolkit, the work of One Voice Wales (in particular the cost of living crisis), a training update and a briefing from the Wales Audit Office.

(5) Website Advert Renewals: Letters/emails had gone out to all the current advertisers. Several have already renewed. A review of the advert charges will take place in January, to take effect from April 2025.

(6) Allotments: As usual letters would go out in late December/early January reminding tenants of the need to give notice to vacate their plots.

(7) Christmas Lights: These were put up on 2nd December but a problem with the timer meant they were not working until 6th December.

MIN 4414 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Highground Maintenance Ltd	£449.69	MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1630.80	
HM Revenue & Customs	£627.49	
NEST (Direct debit)	£150.64	
T. Lloyd-John	£447.49	
N. Close	£28.00	
N. Close	£136.00	MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£11.00	
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00	MEADOW ACC
High Street Grant	£10,383.10	
High Street Grant (2)	£4199.30	
PHS Group	£17.18	
T. Price (refund stamps)	£31.20	
Microsoft (email storage renewal)	£19.99	
Play Inspection Company	£270.60	MEADOW ACC
Highline Electrical Ltd (installation of lights)	£774.66	
British Gas (Wilson Terrace Toilets)	£18.62	
EDF Energy (Hereford Street Toilets)	£83.38	
Presteigne Building Supplies	£30.88	
Artisan Print (plans for storage building)	£31.83	MEADOW ACC
Presteigne and Norton Community Trust (refund)	£124.55	
One Voice Wales (training Cllr. Harling-Bowen)	£20.00	
Powys County Council (planning application)	£115.00	MEADOW ACC
RB Landscaping	£36.00	MEADOW ACC

(3) Review of Direct Debits: a list of the current direct debits had been included with the meeting papers. All were confirmed.

(4) New projects for 2025/26. Potential projects put forward were -

Meadow Access Paths (match funding)	£3000
Meadow Bar/ Storage	£3000 (possible use from reserves)
New Website	£5000
Christmas Lighting	£5000
Dark Skies Project	£1500
East Radnor Leisure Centre	£10,000

(5) Receipts: The following receipts were noted –

Website Advertising	£78.00
Powys County Council (re. High Street Grant)	£15,369.20

(6) Conclusion of external audit for 2023-24: Members noted the conclusion of the audit, a copy of which had been included with the meeting papers. No matters requiring action had been raised.

(7) Confirmation of new Money Market Account at 4.05%: Noted that the new account was opened for a three month period.

(8) Use of Christmas Lights Reserve for small trees for High Street (previously funded by CONNECT): Agreed to fund the 2024 trees at a cost of £156.00. The Clerk was asked to ask how much money had been given to PACDG and what it was to be used for. A letter of thanks to be sent to David Tennant-Eyles for putting the trees in place.

Cllr. Wilding reported that an invoice was due for lights in Norton for £160 plus VAT. Monies to come from the allocated reserve for Norton Lights.

MIN 4415 PLANNING

(1) Planning applications: The following planning application was discussed –
24/1682/TRE Grid Ref: E: 331565 N: 264492 Proposal: Works to mature Beech tree in a conservation area
Location: St Andrews Church, Broad Street, Presteigne LD8 2AF: Resolved to request that the applicant obtain a professional opinion on the need to remove the tree as none had been included with the application.

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

24/1471/TRE Craftsman's Mews, Presteigne: Approval.

24/1482/TRE Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne: Approval.

24/0338/FUL Holiday Chalet at Harp Meadow, Presteigne: Approval.

24/1504/TRE The Rectory, St. David's Street, Presteigne: Approval.

24/1349/TRE 1 Wherby Cottage, Presteigne: Approval.

(3) Trees and TPOs: Cllr. Baynham reported that she had obtained the current list of TPOs and had also received information/photographs on a number of other trees from Cllr. A. Ramsay. Cllr. J. Ramsay had also submitted details of a further tree for consideration. She confirmed she would be working on the list with a view to obtaining TPOs. She expected this process to take around twelve months and would notify the Clerk when the matter needed to next be included on the agenda. Cllr. Ramsay reported that the Tree Group was also looking at the trees in the area and might well identify more in due course.

MIN 4416 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: The following items were discussed -

- A3 Signs: Cllr. Harling-Bowen confirmed that all the signs were to have holes drilled. The Clerk would now order as previously discussed.
- Powys Dark Sky Policy: Cllr. Harling-Bowen had requested the latest policy from the County Council.
- Christmas Lights: MK Illuminations was able to supply quotes/suggestions for replacement lights. The Clerk reminded Members that more than one quote would be needed.
- Web Page: The Clerk had obtained a quote for an additional web page at £70 from the website host. However this was for a basic page with no design element, one the Clerk could probably do herself. She had asked for a quote for a fully designed page. Members agreed that with the possible replacement of the Council website there was no immediate rush to commission a specific dark skies page.

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

Climate Conference: Moved online due to the weather conditions. Cllr. J. Ramsay had attended.

Updating of Climate Matters Report: The Clerk confirmed that the Working Group had been asked to look at updating this and that the report in question was the update written in November 2023. It had been sent to Working Group Members.

Planning Resilience Consultation: Agreed the Clerk respond stating that the introduction of charges for Tree Protection Orders was felt to be a bad idea.

Preserving Trees Consultation: Cllr. J. Ramsay would ask the Climate and Environment Working Group to review this consultation and report back to the January meeting.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: Work on all the properties included was very near completion.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the Officer expected to work on the draft report over the Christmas period with a view to issuing it in early January. He felt that this should be the final report not a further consultation. The Clerk explained that the Officer was following a legal process and had indicated that there would be a further consultation.

(5) Roundabouts: The following arrangements were agreed for 2025 -

- Corton/Kington roundabout: Cllr. Baynham had received an offer to sponsor the roundabout and outlined the options as –
Accept the offer of the anonymous sponsor to cut and possibly plant the site;
Contract Caring for God's Acre to manage the roundabout;
Accept the offer of Mr. Smith to sponsor the roundabout (with work from volunteers).
Cllr. Rogers indicated that his family was also willing to sponsor the roundabout making four possible options. It was agreed to accept the offer of Cllr. Rogers to manage the roundabout

and to ask Mr. Smith to continue to liaise with Cllr. Baynham over the management of the grass behind the dragon.

- Greenfield Road/Leominster roundabout: Cllr. Preece felt the roundabout had been well planted in 2024. Cllr. J. Ramsay reiterated the need for the sponsor to be supplied with the Council's biodiversity policy and Cllr. Baynham agreed to do this. It was noted that the sponsor would decide on what plants would be put in place.

(6) Car Parking: Members had all received a copy of most recent email from the Portfolio Holder. Cllr. Kirkby felt that the statement over the loss of income was incorrect given the under use of the Shoppers Car Park in particular. It was agreed to keep the matter on the agenda for now but the Clerk to reply to the Portfolio Holder stating that little income would be lost and again pressing for a first hour free. The Clerk also to ask whether community asset transfers would be considered as part of the new review.

Cllr. Preece left the room for the duration of the following item.

(7) Direction of Traffic, Pound Lane: Cllr. Kirkby had been approached by a resident concerned about some near misses on Pound Lane and which he felt could be avoided by reversing the direction of traffic. Cllr. Owens reminded Members that this possibility had been discussed some time ago and the Officer had stated that it was not possible due to visibility being obstructed on the proposed exit by a bay window. Cllr. Kirkby felt that due to the increased risk of accidents at the other end of the road it was worth repeating the request and also asking if anything else could be put in place if this was not possible.

(8) Active Travel Update and re-location of Bench at top of Station Road: Cllr. Baynham reported that, following a site meeting earlier that day, the work to the Station Road junction was now not taking place and the location of the seat was therefore no longer changing. She gave a brief overview of the works that would be done and which was being funded by Active Travel Scheme monies.

Cllr. Baynham was asked if the kerb by the British Legion Club could be repaired at the same time and she agreed to ask about this.

MIN 4417 NORTON

(1) General Works: Cllr. Wilding reported that the milestone was with the stone mason. The first bench would be removed for renovation shortly.

(2) Christmas Lighting: See under Finance 4414(8)

MIN 4418 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: The Clerk reported that the toilet roll thefts were continuing and taking place most days. It was agreed that the Clerk purchase smaller, cheaper rolls to place in the cubicles and to ask the cleaner to leave the dispensers empty for the time being.

(2) Allotments: All included under Committee items below.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Quote for various strimming works around the Meadows in 2025: Accepted.

Update - Bike Track: Cllr. Owens reported that he had been in touch with the parent and was now waiting to hear from them on their plans.

Update - café bar/storage: Cllr. Kirkby reported that he had now submitted the planning application and the grant application to the lottery. Cllr. Harling-Bowen reported that a resident had contacted him regarding additional landscaping. Cllr. Kirkby responded that additional landscaping was not needed or feasible but offered to discuss with the resident if necessary.

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

- General: Cllr. Ramsay had nothing new to report.
- Dogs on Reserve: The Clerk had received an email from a resident suggesting that the ban on dogs be reversed. Members confirmed the decision that no dogs should be allowed on the site.

(5) Committee Recommendations: The following items were considered –

Allotments:

Report of the PNAA: Noted that there were now only three active members. Report noted.

Review of need to repair the pedestrian bridge: Agreed that there was adequate access through the gates from the car park.

Review of Untidy Plots: Agreed the Clerk write to the tenants of the plots already identified asking that the plots be tidied by the end of January otherwise notice would have to be given.

Missing Fence by the bridge: Members noted that this was leading to the allotments being used as a short cut onto the Meadow. Cllr. Baynham to contact the Highways Department at the County Council to ask that this be reinstated.

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

Nature Reserve:

General Update: Noted.

Storage of Water Tank: The volunteer group had confirmed that this was no longer needed. Cllr.

Wilding agreed to remove and store.

Removal of one panel from the entrance gate: This was necessary to provide access for disability scooters. This was agreed subject to the panel being reused on the site.

Tool sharing with the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust: Agreed for hand tools but more information to be obtained on the proposed arrangements for the sharing of the machinery (insurance, transport, repairs, training).

Further Bioblitz Day: Cost approx. £250. Agreed that funds to be taken from the Council's Climate Crisis Grant Fund.

Draft Budget for 2025-26: Noted. Would be considered fully at the budget setting meeting.

Meadows:

Proposed maintenance items for 2025-26 and the plan for another work day during the year: Agreed.

Recommended quote for grass cutting in 2025-26 and 2026-27: Agreed to appoint the contractor as recommended by the Committee.

Recommended quote for the tree survey in 2025-26: Agreed to appoint the contractor as recommended by the Committee.

Findings of the Rospa Report: No major issues had been found. Minor issues included the mole problem (contractor had been chased), regular sweeping of the MUGA (community payback to be asked if they could incorporate this into their work schedule) and rotten posts on the skateboard fence (Clerk to ask Inspector if the first four posts/fence length could be removed). Three trees had fallen during the recent storm. Cllr. Kirkby would ask if the local pub would clear in return for the timber. Committee support for the two proposed projects – disabled access paths and the new storage building: Noted.

Maple Tree: Noted that Mr. Graham would cut up and remove the broken/fallen branches on the maple tree in Ligne Garden.

Draft budget for 2025-26: Noted. Would be considered fully at the budget setting meeting.

Toilets:

Toilet cleaning on both sites for 2025-26 and 2026-27: Agreed to appoint the contractor as recommended by the Committee.

Painting of Hereford Street Toilets in the Spring of 2025: Agreed to appoint Mr. S Jones as the quote included more preparation works, an additional coat of paint and a one year free graffiti cleaning service.

Draft Budget for 2025-26: Noted. Would be considered fully at the budget setting meeting.

MIN 4419 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Cllr. Baynham reported that the review had been out to one side for now to allow more discussions with communities. However she warned that the threat had not gone away and work should start early in the New Year to investigate ways of saving on energy costs, reducing costs generally, promoting use etc. It was agreed that a meeting of the Working Group would be convened in the New Year, probably late January/early February. It was also agreed that the Clerk write to neighbouring Councils to ask for a pledge of financial support for the Centre. Cllr. Baynham advised that recent usage figures were up.

The Clerk was asked to ask for an entry in the Community Newsletter stressing the need for residents to use and support the Centre.

Cllr. Kirkby felt that the school was an important part of the Centre use and asked Cllr. Baynham to press for progression of the through school option for Presteigne. Cllr. Baynham advised that she did continue to discuss this with the Portfolio Holder responsible and would continue to do so.

(2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: It was confirmed that the formal transfer had now taken place and the Committee was now hoping to open for early February. It was agreed that the Clerk write and thank the Committee Members for all their efforts. It was also agreed to release the grant awarded for 2024-25 and which had been held pending the transfer.

(3) Town Crier: Agreed not to accept the offer to act as Town Crier for Presteigne and Norton.

(4) Christmas Lights - Update on installation for 2024: See 4413(7).

- (5) Sustainable Powys – County Council Meetings: Those who had attended did not feel it had been a useful meeting.
- (6) Update re contact from British Cycling: Cllr. Owens was still waiting further contact. He would chase it up.
- (7) New Enhanced Road-Based Emergency Care Service Planned for Remote Rural and Coastal Parts of Mid and North Wales: Cllr. Baynham expressed concern at the time taken for emergencies in East Radnor to be reached via a road ambulance service. She stressed the need for the Air Ambulance to operate locally and it was agreed that the Clerk respond to this effect.
- (8) Update re Cashpoint: Cllr. Baynham had contacted Lloyds Bank following the planning application to remove the existing cashpoint. The response had indicated that LINK would be responsible for installing a new cashpoint but that the current cashpoint was expected to remain until a new one was operational.
- (9) Reminder Sidney Nolan Trust Survey: Noted.
- (10) Forthcoming Meeting Dates:
- Dates for January Meetings – 15th Budget Setting, 22nd Main meeting: Noted.
 - Change of date for May meeting: Agreed to change to 14th May.

MIN 4420 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards reported the following –

Thanks to East Radnorshire Care for opening up the Day Centre during the recent power cut/storm.

Cllr. Baynham reported the following –

Trees at Clatterbrune House: One had come down in the recent storm leading to concerns over others nearby. She added that this was likely to be a civil matter for neighbours to pursue.

Road Sweeper: She was pleased to report that this would now attend once a month.

Gully Clearing Machine: She was still working on getting this to come to Presteigne.

MIN 4421 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Overgrown Land Opposite John Beddoes Campus: Members noted the reply from a friend acting on behalf of the property owner. No further action at present.

(2) Work on Meadow: Cllr. Baynham asked that Mr. Graham be formally thanked for his work on the Meadow and in particular his recent tidying of branches from the maple near Ligne Garden.

(3) Lighting at Fire Station: Cllr. Harling-Bowen reported that in his capacity as Dark Sky Co-Ordinator he had been contacted as the light was being left on continuously. Following contact this had been addressed and the problem resolved.

MIN 4422 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 following items.

MIN 4423 STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllr. Wilding briefed Members as Chairman of the Staffing Committee.

The following matters were agreed:-

- Annual Appraisal noted.
- Clerk's hours unchanged.
- Payment of Hours worked for Allotments: Arrangements unchanged.
- Draft Budget Recommendations –
Annual Salary including employer's pension and national insurance payments £30,643 with any balance to come from free reserves
Training: to come from existing allocated reserve.
- No additional Staff to be appointed.

The meeting closed at 9.48 pm