

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH FEBRUARY 2025 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, A. Ramsay, J. Wilding, C. Ross, F. Preece, B. Baynham, N. Rogers and J. Ramsay.

Apologies: Cllrs. L. Harling-Bowen, M. Price.

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.

MIN 4438 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January, 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4439 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Bike Track: Cllr. Owens reported that he had chased the parent involved but had as yet heard nothing back. It was agreed that such a project was, in any event, better carried out in the drier months.
- (2) Orchard Pruning Day: Cllr. Kirkby reported that this had been very successful with all the trees being pruned. The prunings would be chipped in the coming days and if time permitted the recent windfall branches nearby would also be done.
- (3) Clerk's Report: Items mentioned were included on the agenda.

MIN 4440 FINANCE

(1) Donations: The following donation request was considered - Request from PACDG to support room hire for ECO4 talk – County Cllr. Kenyon-Wade: Agreed to meet the cost up to a total of £25. Monies to come from the Climate Crisis Fund.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Mrs T.A. Price (pay)	£1630.80
HM Revenue & Customs	£627.49
NEST	£150.64
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£449.69 MEADOW ACC
T. Lloyd-John	£421.49
N. Close	£240.00
N. Close	£136.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00 MEADOW ACC
Highline Electrical Ltd	£360.00
Welsh Water (Hereford Street)	£237.50
JJW Ltd (Lights, Norton)	£192.00
British Gas Lite	£14.65
High Street Grant	£2738.75
High Street Grant (2)	£1015.00
William Protheroe Ltd (Norton Milestone)	£325.00
EDF Energy (Hereford Street)	£96.62
Councillor Allowances (2)	£416.00

(Cllrs. Baynham and Kirkby)

(3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted –

Lottery Community Fund	£20,000.00
Powys County Council (repayment High Street Grants)	£21,514.74
Allotment Rent	£168.00
PACDG (refund small Christmas Trees)	£156.00

(4) Website Advertising Information: Members noted the advertising income information as follows - Current cost £26.00 per year, subsequent adverts at half price. Total Renewal Income for 2025 was £273.00. Total adverts thirteen.

(5) Request for refund of cost of batteries for the lights on the small Christmas Trees: Members felt that the request for a refund should be directed to PACDG which had received the balance of the CONNECT monies.

(6) CONNECT Comment re. Transfer of Balance to PACDG: Members noted the reply that the monies had been given to PACDG as much of it had been obtained through the running of the recycling centre, a project which had involved PACDG as volunteers to keep the site tidy. The Clerk was asked to comment to PACDG that given these monies the Council hoped that the monies would not all be given away but held to cover future PACDG projects.

(7) Mid Border Arts Proposal to Charge Town Council for Room Hire from April: Members discussed the proposed charges from April and the situation regarding the grant given to the organisation each year. It was noted that approximate annual costs, if agreed to, would be between £400 and £500 depending on the length of meetings. It was noted that no amount had been allocated in the budget for room hire. It was agreed to consider other options for a venue for future meetings and review further in March.

(8) Request for donation from Climate Crisis Fund and for permission to use nature reserve for Spring Nature Trail event on 12th April – Presteigne Little People's Nursery: Use of the nature reserve was agreed together with a £250 donation from the Climate Crisis Fund.

(9) Renewal of Green Bin for Guerrilla Gardeners (£60): Renewal of the green bin was agreed from general reserves.

(10) Budget Setting: Cllr. Wilding raised concerns over the use of free reserves towards the 2025-26 budget feeling the precept should have been raised to some degree. Comments noted.

MIN 4441 PLANNING

(1) Planning applications: The following applications were considered -

25/0110/FUL Grid Reference: E:331536 N: 264264 Proposal: Change of use of ancillary domestic summer house to holiday let Site Address: 43 Hereford Street, Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2AT. Resolved to make the following comment - the application states that 'Having lived in Presteigne over the last summer we have noted that there is steady flow of tourists in the town but a shortage of short stay affordable accommodation in or close to the town centre.' Members were of the opinion that there was currently sufficient holiday accommodation. Other than this the Council had no comment to make.

25/0199/TRE Grid Ref: E: 331511 N: 264279 Proposal: Felling of a sycamore tree Location: Appletree Lodge , Hereford Street, Presteigne LD8 2AT. Resolved no objections be raised.

25/0203/REM Grid Reference: E:332402 N: 263963 Proposal: Section 73 application to vary condition 2 of planning permission 24/0871/FUL in relation to reduction in size of building following ground investigation Site Address: Unit 1 Presteigne Mill, Presteigne, LD8 2HG. Resolved no objections be raised.

(2) Planning Decisions: The following decision was noted: -

24/1382/HH, Fairview Stonewall Hill Presteigne: Approval 29th January.

MIN 4442 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: Cllr. Harling-Bowen had submitted a written report as he was unable to attend the meeting and this included updates as follows -

- Discover Parks: Discover Parks had announced that it is planning to open a dark sky holiday park at Rockbridge in April. This will be complete with dark sky lighting, astronomical telescope and observatory. Cllr. Harling-Bowen had agreed to take light pollution readings once the project is complete. This represents a significant example of inward investment into the Community as a direct result of Presteigne obtaining International Dark Sky Community status.

- Dark Skies Corridor: Cllr. Harling-Bowen has held meetings with Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (RWT), Elan Valley Trust and has contacted Dwr Cymru. RWT have agreed to develop a project plan and are looking for suitable grant funding.
- Commission for Dark Skies: Cllr. Harling-Bowen has made contact with the Commission for Dark Skies, they are point of contact for all things dark skies in the UK which will provide support or advice going forward with the ongoing project delivery plan.
- Christmas lighting: Cllr. Harling-Bowen had contacted three suppliers and is awaiting final quotes. Noted that the Blachere quote if implemented would require changes to the Town's Christmas lighting power supply. He had discussed community involvement with Discover Parks and their owners are community minded. Their marketing manager has agreed to discuss the new lights with the owners and there is a possibility some support may be provided.
- The involvement of the Secondary School in dark skies education was noted, particularly as education was an important part of the ongoing project plan.

Cllr. J. Ramsay reported that a change had been needed to the draft dark sky signage but that this was now done.

(2) Climate and Environment Update: Cllr. J. Ramsay reported the following matters –

- November 2023 Council report not yet updated.
- Landscape/Woodland Investment Grants available.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: The Clerk confirmed that all work was now complete and the businesses paid. The final invoice would go to the County Council before the end of the week.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Members had all received the full report and appendices for consideration. Cllr. Kirkby had reviewed the report and consulted with the Ramblers' Association. It was agreed that, given the closing date for comments was the day of the next Town Council meeting, he draft a reply to the consultation which the Clerk would circulate to all for comment before submitting to the County Council.

(5) Car Parking: Cllr. Baynham reported that she had been invited to a Car Park Review Working Group meeting the next week and suggested that any discussion was deferred until the March meeting when she could report on that meeting. This was agreed. She had supplied the Clerk with financial data from recent years and this would be circulated to all. Cllr. Kirkby asked that at the Working Group meeting she raise the general under use of the High Street Car Park and the possibility of Asset Transfer to the Town Council.

(6) Pollarding of Trees, Station Road: Cllr. Kirkby felt that the trees were becoming very overgrown and needed pollarding. This had not been done for a number of years and branches were becoming over-sized, making pollarding increasingly difficult. It was agreed that the Clerk raise this with the Highways Department.

MIN 4443 NORTON

(1) General Works: Cllr. Wilding reported that the milestone works were complete and he had the stone ready for re-siting. The first bench had been completed and the second was currently drying out before being restored/re-treated.

(2) Other Matters: New heaters had been installed in the Community Hub.

MIN 4444 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: Toilet roll thefts were continuing. The Clerk was asked to see if the cleaner could vary her times on site to try to establish the times the thefts were taking place.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were considered:

- County Council Grant Update: The raised beds and picnic bench were now ordered and the County Council expected delivery in late March. It was agreed that plot 36 not be re-let for the time being.
- Need for new supporting fence posts, riverside fence: Agreed that Cllr. Wilding arrange for a contractor to install posts to support those that were wobbling/insecure. Agreed also that the final four posts be removed from the skateboard fence (subject to RoSPA not raising any issues) and also to remove and re-instate the surface of the redundant gate post. Cllr. Wilding added that the one post at the Knighton Road entrance was rotted and it was agreed that this too be replaced. It was also noted that the willow work to reinforce the river bank near to the weir had largely failed. Members would look on site when next there.
- Untidy Plots/Possible Deposit Scheme for new tenants: Tenants of the plots identified as being particularly untidy had been contacted and advised of the need to tidy their plots. Cllr. Preece would

re-visit the site to check for any plots that still needed attention. Cllr. Wilding raised the possibility of introducing deposits for new tenants. Following a discussion it was agreed to commence taking a deposit for all new tenancies but in order to not create a bar to access that the deposit be set at the equivalent of one year's annual rental.

Cllr. Edwards joined the meeting at this point.

- Clearance for Vacated Plots: It was hoped that the introduction of a deposit scheme would reduce the need to clear vacated plots.
- Update from Allotment Association: Members noted the email from the Allotment Association and the intention to call an extraordinary general meeting to wind up the Association due to a lack of interest.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

- Update - café bar/storage: Cllr. Kirkby provided a brief update on the project. He had been in touch with the planning department and planning permission should be issued very shortly Sheep Music had set up a Just Giving page to raise the remaining £5000 needed for the project. One of the existing sheds would be removed in early March and he asked for permission to store a small amount of material in the storage container temporarily. This was agreed. He proposed that soil from the new building site be placed by the lower humps on the bike track so it could be used as part of the bike track improvements if these went ahead and again this was agreed.
- Meadow Use Request 12th June to 21st June – Nicole et Martin: Agreed.
- Meadow Use Request Powys Radnor WI – 9th August: Agreed.
- Plans/jobs for Meadow Work Day: Members agreed that the Spring Work Day be on 26th April. They noted the list of potential tasks supplied by Mr. Graham. Whilst noting the suggestion that the car park field have an extra cut at this time they confirmed that the present arrangements should continue, i.e. one cut to be carried out around a week before the town carnival.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: Cllr. J. Ramsay reported that there were no pressing problems or decisions needed at present and gave a general update as follows –

- Pond plants arriving 21st February and a work day was planned at the weekend to put these in place. The Clerk asked that he remind the volunteers of the need to confirm the names and details of who was on site and when, as previously discussed.
- The Danger – Ice signs were now up on site.
- Tree Group willing to assist Cllr. Baynham with identifying trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders. Cllr. Baynham reported that she had discussed possible trees with an officer at the County Council and he had recommended that the landowners be spoken to in the first instance and before taking any formal steps.

Cllr. J. Ramsay also reported that the removal of the beech tree at St. Andrew's was not imminent as the Church Warden was seeking a professional opinion on the need for complete removal.

(5) Storage Container - Request to keep and store flag poles (from former CONNECT): Agreed.

MIN 4445 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Deferred to end of Meeting.

(2) Secondary School – John Beddoes Campus: Deferred to end of meeting.

(3) Draft Powys Sustainable Resource Strategy: Consultation: Members encouraged to review the consultation and respond online. The need to register in order to submit comments was noted.

(4) Reintroduction of Council Surgeries: Cllr. Kirkby reported that he had been approached about re-starting Council Surgeries as part of the monthly Farmer's Markets. Around half of Members indicated a willingness to attend surgeries and it was agreed to re-start surgeries on a trial basis. Cllrs. Kirkby and Preece would attend the first surgery.

(5) Changes to Fire Service: Cllr. Owens reminded Members of the drop in event the next day in Whitton. Following feedback received from this and other events a formal engagement process would take place.

(6) Email from Presteigne Royal British Legion re. VE Day: Members noted the email from the Royal British Legion regarding events to celebrate VE Day. Cllr. Baynham agreed to get in touch with the Memorial Hall Committee to see if it would be interested in holding a celebratory event. The possibility of a Church Service was also considered. Members agreed general support for the Royal British Legion Matter to be discussed further at the March meeting.

(7) Update re. Presteigne Agricultural Show Trophies: These were due to be returned to the Presteigne Branch of Lloyds Bank for collection and Cllr. Owens had arranged for them to be stored/displayed in the Judges' Lodgings. He confirmed that appropriate insurance cover was held.

(8) Closure of Lloyds Bank/Cashpoint Update. Members agreed to send a letter of thanks to all staff and one also to the longest standing staff member. Members noted the undertaking from Lloyds Bank to maintain the current cashpoint until a new LINK cashpoint was installed in the town.

(9) Guerrilla Gardeners – email re. plans for planters in town: Noted. The Clerk had advised them to get in touch with Cllr. Baynham as the County Councillor.

(10) Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru - Policy and Practice document in preparation for the 2025 Electoral Review Programme – Consultation: Noted. No comments made.

MIN 4446 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

No separate reports this month.

MIN 4447 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, commercial nature of the following items.

MIN 4448 LEISURE CENTRE REVIEW

Cllr. Baynham had met with Officers at the County Council and discussed the review and the situation at the East Radnor Centre. It was agreed that the Working Group meet again on Monday 10th March, 7pm at the Day Centre to consider possible actions/next steps.

MIN 4449 SECONDARY SCHOOL

Cllrs. Baynham and Edwards provided an update on recent meetings held to discuss falling roll numbers on the Campus. It was agreed that Cllrs. Baynham, Edwards, Owens and Wilding meet the Portfolio Holder and the Director of Education to discuss the situation. It was also agreed that the Clerk write to the Headteacher and the Chair of the Governors expressing concern at the falling pupil numbers and asking what was being done to address this problem.

MIN 4450 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) County Council Budget Setting Meeting: 20th February.

(2) Bench, Went's Meadow/Ligne Garden: Agreed that Cllr. J. Ramsay could arrange a repair.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm