

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton
PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST FEBRUARY 2024
HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA
VIDEO CONFERENCING

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

Apologies: Cllrs., L. Abecasis, (Six-month absence for Cllr. Abecasis approved October)
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.

Declarations of Acceptance of Office were duly signed by Cllrs. Kirkby and Ramsay.

MIN 4302 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January, 2024 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4303 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Grassed Area at Site of Sleeping Dragon: Cllr. Baynham had looked at the area and spoken with Mr. Smith. If spare seed was available then the site would be harrowed and sown.
- (2) Kington/Corton Roundabout: Cllr. Baynham confirmed that in accordance with the decision made at the budget setting meeting a sponsor had been found to tend and plant the Corton roundabout.
- (3) Information from Welsh Ambulance Service: The Clerk had still not received any reply but would chase up a response.
- (4) Congratulations on Honour: Members noted that this was to the Deputy Mayor of Ligne not the Mayor as previously advised.

MIN 4304 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month.

(2) Payments: The following payments were agreed:-

Welsh Water (barn)	£9.78 MEADOW ACC
Welsh Water (H'fd Street)	£277.54
Welsh Water (W/T)	£14.63
Highline Electrical (removal of lights)	£360.00
Wales Audit Office (audit fee 21-22)	£495.00
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£345.89 MEADOW ACC
Chemassist	£406.80
Mrs T. Lloyd-John	£421.49
Border Janitorial	£94.67
Clean My	£38.30
NEST (pension contributions)	£146.30
Mrs T.A. Price	£1579.20
HM Revenue and Customs	£611.02
N. Close	£12.00
N. Close	£172.00 MEADOW ACC
EDF Energy	£129.29
EDF Energy	£27.69 MEADOW ACC
JJW Ltd	£600.00

(3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted:-

Website Advertising £52.00

Allotment Rent £276.00 MEADOW ACC

(4) Update re replacement website: Members noted the quote from Orphans Press for the updating/transfer of the site using new software. It was felt that this was very high and it was agreed that the Clerk request a further quote from Parish Council Websites (J. Langley). The existing site would be fully supported until the end of 2024 so the matter was not urgent.

(5) Review of Asset Register: Noted and approved as circulated. The Clerk confirmed that she monitored the expiry dates of the pads and batteries of the Council defibrillators.

(6) Review of Risk Assessment: Noted and approved as circulated. The Clerk confirmed that the adopt a bench scheme had not been very successful with only a small number of the town benches being looked after under the scheme.

MIN 4305 PLANNING

(1) Planning applications: The following application was considered:-

24/0079/FUL Grid Reference: E:332402 N: 263963 Proposal: Erection of a building containing two workshop units (B1 & B8 use) over an existing concrete yard area Site Address: Unit 1, Presteigne Mill, Presteigne, LD8 2HG. Resolved to support the application but with the added comment that the Council felt that the development should comply with the most recent regulations regarding surface water drainage/SUDS.

(2) Planning Decisions: No decisions to report this month.

MIN 4306 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project: Members noted that Mr. Harling Bowen had been approached for information on the project by Arte TV, a French and German channel. The working group had been postponed as details on permitted signage was awaited from Welsh Government. Cllr. Kirkby indicated he was willing to attend future Working Group meetings and this was agreed. Cllr. Baynham confirmed that the project had been put forward for the One Voice Wales National Awards, together with the most recent Council Annual Report.

Several concerns were raised about the current street lighting in Prestmede and Warden Close. This was noted to be a matter for the County Council street lighting team, not the Dark Skies Project and would be added to the list for a planned forthcoming site meeting.

(2) Climate Crisis Matters: Agreed that new Councillors Kirkby and Ramsay be appointed to the Climate Crisis Committee to fill the current vacancies.

(3) Pothole Problems: Cllr. Williams reported on the large number of deep potholes in and around Presteigne in both Herefordshire and Powys. He agreed to make a list, with pictures and locations for the Clerk to forward to the relevant Ward Councillors. Locations to be included in particular were The Rodd, Stansbatch to Pembridge, Presteigne to Shobdon and Discoyd. Cllr. Baynham would look at Stocken Lane as it was believed there were also a number of potholes in that area. The Clerk reminded Members that potholes, surface problems etc could be reported direct online and added that multiple reports were very effective in getting action.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application Update: Members had all received a copy of the Officer's report in respect of the DMMO application. Cllr. Williams stated he was very disappointed with the report and had a number of concerns at comments included within it. Cllr. Kirkby agreed that the report was very disappointing and added that he had many concerns about the contents and views expressed in the report. It was agreed that Cllr. Kirkby draft a response for consideration at the March meeting.

(5) Resident(s) Complaint – Parking and Flooding Slough Road: Cllr Baynham confirmed that the County Council had been asked to come to clear the drains and to review the problem but she had not as yet had any response. The Clerk would chase the Officer in charge for a progress report. With regard to car parking in and around the school it was felt that action was needed as cars were sometimes backing up as far as the by pass well before the actual pick up time. Cllr. Baynham reminded Members that a short term (half hour) pass was available free of charge from the school but that very few parents had taken advantage of it. The Clerk would contact the school to see what was being done to discourage inconsiderate parking/queuing and to ask how the Council could help.

(6) Car Park Charges: Members noted that the County Council review of parking and charges was due to conclude in March. Cllr. Kirkby pointed out that the usage level of the Shoppers Car Park was the lowest in the County at 11% and that it made no sense to continue to charge for that site given the associated costs (hire of ticket machine etc). The Clerk was asked to request the rental cost for the ticket machine so that the Town Council could assess the profitability of the site and so consider a possible future asset transfer request in the future.

Cllr. Williams left the meeting at this point.

- (7) Transforming Towns Grant – Presteigne High Street: Update: A meeting with the County Council and those traders interested had been arranged for 4th March in the Green Room at the Assembly Rooms at 6.30pm. Seven people had expressed an interest so far. Cllr. Baynham had suggested requesting funding for the pavements and this would be explored with the grant officer.
- (8) Temporary closure of Footpath PR1809(A) Clatterbrook for improvement works: Members were pleased to note the planned works.
- (9) Condition of pavements following contractor works: Cllr. Kirkby raised concerns that the damage from the electrical fire had still not been properly repaired and the Clerk was asked to contact the County Council to press for the contractor to do the work needed. Members noted the complaints regarding the slipperiness of the pavements in Broad Street. This had already been reported and the Clerk would do so again.
- (10) Street Lighting, Broad Street: The street lighting officer was due to come to Presteigne and would be meeting residents on site to discuss a solution.
- (11) Electricity Supply Interruption: Cllr. Baynham reported that the power would be off at the Hereford street toilets between 10am and 2pm on 22nd February.
- (12) Places for Nature Leaflet: Agreed that some minor grammatical/typographical amendments could be made following the meeting. Reference to Corton Roundabout to be removed as this was now to be managed by a sponsor. Allotments to be added and reference in the list of groups to be made to the Warden Guardian Foundation and the Guerrilla Gardeners. A final copy would be produced for approval before printing. Members noted the tight timescale for final invoices to be submitted to the Grant Officer.

MIN 4307 NORTON

(1) Norton Community Trust: First open day expected to be held in April. The building was unlikely to be ready for use for a Council meeting in March as expected so meetings would continue to be held in the Assembly Rooms for the time being.

MIN 4308 SITES AND BUILDINGS

- (1) Public Conveniences: All the new toilet roll dispensers were now fitted.
- (2) Allotments – The following matters were discussed –
- Vacant plots: Two currently vacant with no one on the waiting list.
 - Grant for raised beds, rainwater harvesting/compost area etc: The Clerk explained that there was a grant available for approximately £2000 to provide some of the listed items. It was agreed she consult the PNAA to see if it had a preference for what items were requested.
 - One recent act of vandalism on the site.
 - Quote for replacement main gate to site and new post: Agreed to proceed.
- (3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –
- Use by Carnival – 11th to 14th July: Noted.
 - Bulk order placed for dog bags: Noted.
 - Quote for repair to car park entrance: Agreed to defer in order for Cllr. Wilding to review.
 - Approval for purchase of fire-retardant paint for the new barn: Agreed the Clerk proceed to order the paint for applying in the Spring.
 - Next pruning of Community Orchard: Planned for the coming weekend.
 - Meadow Work Day: planned for April. Mr. Graham had supplied Cllr. Preece with a list of tasks that needed doing. Cllr. Preece would liaise with Mr. Graham to arrange.
- (4) Nature Reserve: The following matters were discussed –
- Donation of Bench: Agreed to accept the donation of a bench with thanks. Mr. Close to be asked to install on the site in due course.
 - Ponds: Cllr. Ramsay reported that the ponds were filling up and would be monitored over the coming months.
- (5) Grant Application Update: Members were disappointed to learn that the grant application for outdoor games, table tennis etc had been unsuccessful and Cllr. Wilding suggested that the Council proceed immediately with the plan to purchase a further container rather than delaying until the new financial year. An allocated reserve had been confirmed at the January budget setting meeting together with an additional £1000 included within the budget for 2024/25. Cllr. Kirkby opposed this proposal so a vote was taken. The proposal was carried with eight votes for and one against.
- Cllr. Kirkby asked that the previous proposal for a community storage unit/pop up bar be added to the March agenda for further consideration.

MIN 4309 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Services Review Update: Nothing to report at present.

(2) Memorial Hall Update: Members noted that the Clerk had, as requested written to the Portfolio Holder to request that the County Council, as the current Trustee, re-open the building but this had been refused although a promise had been made to ask the Officers to push the ongoing legal matters forward as a matter of urgency. Cllrs. Edwards and Ramsay had attended a meeting of potential committee members the previous Monday and it seemed the committee were struggling to obtain copies of recent condition surveys and reports. The Clerk was asked to contact the Hall Secretary to ask what documents were needed so she could request them. Cllr. Baynham would chase the officers to see how the legal work was progressing and the Clerk was asked to reply to the Portfolio Holder stressing that as Trustee the County Council could not shirk its responsibility to run the Hall if it believed it could not devolve this to a committee.

(3) Request for Additional Bench near High Street: Cllr. Van Huls had been approached about this. Members were unsure where an additional bench could be sited and it was agreed that this be added to the list for the August Town Walk.

(4) Review of Polling Districts and Places: Agreed to remind the County Council that it had agreed to re-instate a polling place in Norton once a venue became available. It was noted that the Presteigne polling place was the Memorial Hall and the Clerk was asked to inform the Officer that it was temporarily closed.

(5) Future of Mid Wales Air Ambulance Base: It was agreed that the Clerk write re-iterating the earlier comments of the Council namely the need to retain the Welshpool base due to the lack of a major hospital, long travel distances to Accident and Emergency Departments etc.

(6) Town Wifi Update: The Clerk reported that two units were currently not working and the two units for the Assembly Rooms building had still not been fitted. She did now have access to the data obtained through the system which would be useful for grant applications/organisations etc in the future.

(7) Visit to Secondary School: Cllr. Owens had recently attended the school and spoken with students. He would circulate his notes to all for information.

(8) Mid Wales Tourism App: The Clerk had received no response from CONNECT. Cllr. Baynham suggested that the matter be raised at the meeting with traders on 4th March and this was agreed.

MIN 4310 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards reported the following:-

- Sign at Hares Green to be made safe/replaced.
- Post Box at the end of Home Farm Lane: Post office had agreed to replace.

Cllr. Baynham reported the following:-

- Sustainable Powys Drop in Session: To be held in Knighton Community Centre on 5th March from 10am-12 noon.

MIN 4311 CASUAL VACANCIES

The Clerk had not as yet had a reply from the Elections Office regarding the calling of a formal election and so at present the Council could not proceed to start the co-option process.

MIN 4312 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

Other than the Climate Crisis Committee which had already been dealt with it was agreed to defer these appointments until the vacancies were filled.

MIN 4313 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Missing Name Sign, Maes Corton: Cllr. Preece reported that the sign was missing. Cllr. Kirkby added that the oak trees had not yet been replaced. The Clerk would contact the Housing Association and report both matters.

(2) Broadband: Cllr. Van Huls reported that matters continued to progress.

The meeting closed at 9.53 pm.