

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton
PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 6TH JUNE 2024
AT THE GREEN ROOM, ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA
VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. Baynham (Mayor), Preece, Price, Ramsay, Kirkby.

Outside Representatives: Mr. R. Rimington, Mr. G. Graham (via video link), Ms R. Bamford.

Apologies: Ms. S. Robson,

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 and the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016.

Personal: None.

Personal and Prejudicial: None

MIN SB1/24 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Cllr. Preece was proposed by Cllr. Kirkby, duly seconded and elected unanimously.

MIN SB2/24 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Cllr. Price was proposed by Cllr. Baynham, duly seconded and elected unanimously.

MIN SB3/24 NATURE RESERVE

- (1) General Update: Ms. Bamford gave a detailed report on recent work by the volunteers which included –
- Production of a work plan;
 - Pond plants re-planted, clumps to be separated as they grow;
 - Marginal areas seeded/planted and seemed to be germinating;
 - Grass management included four larger seeded areas of wildflowers than the management plan due to the wildflower grant;
 - The 2000 tree whips had had the grass cleared from around them and any dead whips had been re-planted;
 - Keeping the paths cleared was proving challenging but the sides were now being mown to prevent long grasses falling onto the paths;
 - National Forest Signage not yet arrived: Clerk had had an email on this recently updating on production but would chase for a time scale.
 - The Scout's Squirrels Group was working with one of the volunteers to produce a hibernaculum;
 - A volunteer was talking to the school about bird boxes;
 - Tree Survey thought to be due soon. Agree to incorporate with the main Council tree survey in Spring 2025;
 - Felling of Tree – this had been done on an urgent basis as it appeared to be in danger of falling. Ms. Bamford pointed out that the Management plan indicated that the leaving of main trunks standing should be considered and this had not been done. The Clerk confirmed that the contractor (who had attended at short notice) had been asked to leave a safe height of trunk if possible. Mr. Rimington stated that he thought that due to the slope of the tree/area this would not have been possible but the need to consider doing so in future, was noted. Cllr. Ramsay was concerned that the volunteers had not been further consulted on the actual felling of the tree. The Clerk stated that contractors were employed by the Council and as such volunteers should not be issuing instructions. The request to leave a trunk, if safe to do so, had been passed on but had obviously not been possible.

Cllr. Price pointed out that if there was a health and safety issue then urgent action was required and that the Council would always need to take immediate action to resolve the issue.

- The Clerk reminded Ms. Bamford that the community payback team could be asked to assist with some minor work if needed and asked that she be contacted if the team could help in any way.
- Bioblitz day was successful although the need to encourage more young people to attend was noted.
- A 'Friends of Coed Llanandras' Group was being considered.

Cllr. Ramsay added the following items –

- Ponds – water still running through to the bottom pond but that water was no longer flowing out from the bottom pond. Both ponds were maintaining the water levels at present.
- Benches – the bench previously donated was now on site. Cllrs. Baynham and Ramsay had not yet met on site to agree the locations for the two benches from the Mayor's Fund. The type of base was discussed and it was agreed not to have full concrete bases. Mr. Rimington suggested fixing the benches to concrete blocks. Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk seek quotes for siting the benches on wooden sleepers.
- Insurance Requirements: Cllr. Ramsay queried the need for volunteers to register when on site and the Clerk confirmed that this was needed to comply with the Council's Insurers. She added that she had made enquiries with a neighbouring Council that not only required written confirmation when on site but also required all volunteers to fill out a registration form. This could be done before or immediately after any activity on the site. Ms. Bamford asked if brief visits to check on plants etc needed to still be recorded. As this could be done by anyone accessing the site and required no equipment etc it was noted that this would not be necessary but of course this would mean any such visits would not be covered under Council insurance for volunteers as the person was accessing the site as a visitor. It was agreed that volunteer registration forms be produced for the volunteers to complete.

Cllr. Baynham asked if the issue regarding disabled access for larger mobility scooters had been resolved and it was confirmed that this was being monitored but had so far only been a problem for one person.

Ms. Bamford left the meeting at this point.

MIN SB4/24 ALLOTMENTS

- (1) Request for a 'lean to' for attaching to a shed: There was some concern that this would reduce the available cultivation area too much but it was equally felt that the Council should try to support the tenant as much as possible. It was suggested that the communal shed could be used and Cllrs. Preece and Price would meet on site to review how possible this would be. The Clerk would ask for more details on size/design etc for Full Council to consider. She would also ask the PNAA for its view.
- (2) Update on Grant Items for Plot 36: The Clerk had as yet not been able to get any timescale for this and suggested that the plot be covered for the time being. It was agreed to recommend that the plot be strimmed and covered and the Clerk would get a price from Mr. Bennet for the work.
- (3) Closure of Wooden access bridge/possible repairs: The Clerk was asked to make sure that the bridge access was fixed closed and it was agreed to leave with no further action for the time being. The Clerk would ask the PNAA for its view on repair/removal.
- (4) Report from the PNAA representative: Ms. Robson had submitted a written report as she was unable to attend. This was as follows - *It has been a very slow start to the growing season due to the weather but we 'dig on'! The Association has just been 'ticking over' while we awaited plot holder's names and contact details. We will provide information on the association along with insurance details they may need. It is hoped that we can build up some community spirit when all have been contacted. The front of the community shed has been painted with blackboard paint so messages can also be left on matters relating to the group. A full inspection of the perimeter fence was completed in April and any breeches were repaired but we still have a few rabbits on site, which remains a problem! The Community Payback Team have made a first cut of all the paths and communal areas, which we are very grateful for. The small wooden access gate has been closed off awaiting repairs to the foot bridge hopefully this will happen soon. Whilst, I am informed, that all the plots (bar No36) have been allocated for this year there are several that are still overgrown which does have an 'knock on' effect to the joining plots.*

The Clerk reported that a large number of plots had changed hands this time and that this, together with an empty waiting list meant that several plots had only just been re-let. It was agreed that new tenants should be given time to get their plots in order.

MIN SB5/24 WENT'S AND EDDIE'S MEADOWS, MUGA, FOOTBALL PITCH

(1) Grass Cutting Review: The Clerk reminded Members that the current grass cutting contract would expire at the end of the season and that she would be seeking quotes for one and three year contracts from late Summer. Mr. Graham stated that he was happy with the current cutting regime subject to the grass banks adjacent to the two barns being strimmed on roughly a monthly basis. It was agreed that the Clerk ask for this to be done. Cllr. Ramsay asked about the process for making changes to the current regime – it was on the agenda for the current meeting. He was not able to give any details on what he was proposing. He was advised that the far 'car park' field was cut by a volunteer approximately a week to ten days before the annual Carnival. Only the paths were cut under the main contract. Cllr. Baynham proposed that there was no change to the present arrangements and this was seconded by Cllr. Price. Cllr. Kirkby felt that Cllr. Ramsay should be given the opportunity to submit suggestions for change and so the proposal was amended. This was agreed. The Clerk was asked to add an item for the Full Council June agenda for Members to consider whether to review the current regime.

(2) Improvements to access to Meadow from Old Mill footpath: It was noted that a resident had already approached the Council and agreed to alter the present stepped access on to the Meadow from the Mill footpath. Cllr. Kirkby and Mr. Rimington stated that this would, however, not be fully DDA compliant due to the gradient. A longer, alternative route that would more easily comply had been suggested by Cllr. Ramsay and it was agreed that Mr. Rimington would produce a specification for the proposed path so the Clerk could seek quotes for the work. The resident still to be allowed to go ahead with his proposed improvements.

(3) Update re. treatment of New Barn with Fire Retardant Paint: The Clerk reported that this was in hand and due to start very shortly with the painting being carried out by the Community Payback team.

(4) Refurbishment of the path from Scout hut to allotments: Agreed that Mr. Rimington would produce a specification for the work needed and the Clerk would then seek quotes.

(5) Report on Work Day: Mr. Graham gave a short report on the work day. A priority job to complete was the repair of the area of sunken paving slabs. Cllr. Wilding to be approached about this work. The removal of thorn saplings in the Scottleton Road entrance needed to be done but this would be a Winter job to be done in due course. Mr. Rimington asked for a budget of up to £150 to produce a bespoke barbecue insert for the barbecue at the old Barn and this was agreed for recommendation to Full Council.

All other jobs could wait until Spring 2025.

(6) Condition of Wooden Pedestrian Bridge: The temporary closure was noted but the Committee agreed that if at all possible then repairs should be carried out and the Clerk was asked to contact Mr. Bennett for a quote on a full repair.

(7) Pile of Top Soil: The Clerk confirmed that as agreed at the May Full Council meeting a local farmer had been contacted and had agreed to remove the top soil.

(8) Surface of MUGA: Cllr. Kirkby stated that the surface of the MUGA was becoming slippery and needed attention. The Clerk would make enquiries on how this should be treated.

MIN SB6/24 TOILET BLOCKS

(1) Report on year to date: Some minor vandalism and the theft of toilet rolls continued but was not as prevalent as over the Winter months. She added that the Council benefitted hugely from having such dedicated and hard-working contractors (cleaner and handyman) and who would attend to resolve any problems at very short notice and carried out their work to a high standard.

(2) Update re internal painting:

Hereford Street: Started but not completed. Clerk to chase for completion over the next few weeks.

Wilson Terrace Internal and External painting: Waiting for the Community Payback team to have time to complete.

MIN SB7/24 URGENT INFORMATION.

(1) Fallen Tree over River: Mr. Graham reported that a tree had fallen and debris was building up against it. It needed removing as it could increase the flood risk to areas upstream. It was thought that this was the responsibility of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust and the Clerk would report it.

(2) Use of New Barn: Cllr. Baynham stated that she had asked that this be reviewed at the June Full Council meeting.

(3) Local Places for Nature Garden at High School: Cllr. Ramsay reported that under a top up grant the School was receiving a bench and additional plants.

(4) War Memorial: Cllr. Kirkby felt that the Memorial was due a proper clean. He agreed to check the current condition and report back to the Clerk. A quote could then be sought for Council consideration.

Summary of Full Council Decisions Required –

Nature Reserve:

To confirm that volunteer registration forms be produced by Clerk for completion.

To note the further reminder for volunteers to notify the Clerk when they were on site.

To agree that quotes to be sought for the siting of the new benches on wooden sleepers.

To note work generally in hand and no immediate problems although the paths were difficult to keep clear.

To note trees on site to be included within the next full tree survey.

Allotments:

Progress on Lean-to Request: Cllrs. Preece and Price to check the Communal Shed for accessibility and Dimensions of requested lean-to to be requested for Full Council consideration.

To agree that Plot 36 be strimmed and covered.

To agree no further action on Pedestrian Bridge. Clerk to check it was fixed shut for the time being.

PNAA to be asked on need for bridge.

Meadows:

To consider a review of the grass cutting regime.

To consider obtaining quotes for a fully DDA compliant path from Lower Went's Meadow to the New Barn.

To consider obtaining quotes for repair/renewal of the path from the Scout Hut to Lower Went's Meadow.

To note the fire-retardant paint shortly to be applied to the new barn by the Community Payback team.

To note the need for a repair to the sunken area of paving by the Old Barn.

To agree a budget of up to £150 for the replacement of the community barbecue.

To consider obtaining quotes for a full repair to the wooden pedestrian bridge.

To consider condition of MUGA surface and possible solutions.

Toilets:

To confirm that the Clerk chase work on Hereford Street Toilets.

To note that painting of Wilson Terrace is on list for Community Payback team.

General

To review condition of War Memorial and agree quotes be sought for a full clean.

Fallen Tree, Withy Beds, Clerk to report.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.