

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH MARCH 2023 HELD AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. D. Edwards (Mayor)(part), R. Bamford, T. Owens, M. Williams, J. Poster, F. Preece, A. Van Huls, L. Abecasis, L. Firth, M. Price.

Apologies: Cllrs. B. Baynham (Deputy Mayor), J. Gray, J. Wilding.

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

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:

Cllr. F. Preece, Chairman of Presteigne Scouts, re request to erect patio shelter at Presteigne Scout Hut.

Personal and Prejudicial: None.

As Cllr. Edwards had been delayed and the Vice-Chairman Cllr. Baynham was unable to attend Cllr. T. Owens opened the meeting and acted as Chairman until Cllr. Edwards arrived.

Cllr. Owens welcomed Guest Speaker James Hitchcock, Chief Executive of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust who spoke on the importance of nature and the need to urgently safeguard and encourage nature. He also answered Member's questions and indicated a willingness to work with the Town Council on any potential projects in and around Presteigne and Norton. Cllr. Owens thanked Mr. Hitchcock for attending.

MIN 4170 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th February, 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman signed the Minutes as such.

The Minutes of the Climate Crisis Committee meeting held on 22nd February, 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the addition of 'and also to rake and clear grass' to item 8 and the Chairman signed the Minutes as such.

MIN 4171 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS AND CLERKS REPORT

- (1) East Radnor Leisure Centre: The Clerk had initially had no reply and had chased for a response. A holding response had then been received saying the suggestion would be passed on up to the Manager but that it was not likely to be simple to do.
- (2) 4G Telephone Mast: The Clerk reported that the proposal was not proceeding for the time being.
- (3) Uneven Play Mat, Wilson Terrace: This had been reported and action requested to re-lay it.
- (4) Conifer Branches: Removed by Mr. Close as discussed at the February meeting.
- (5) Disabled Access in High Street: The Clerk had again written for more details but had not as yet received a reply.
- (6) Attendance by Welsh Ambulance Service: Re-arranged for the April Council meeting. Cllr. Preece would inform the co-responders.
- (7) Pond Work, New Nature Reserve: Cllr. Williams asked for clarification on the pond work carried out which Cllr. Bamford provided.

MIN 4172 FINANCE

(1) Donations: The item on the Sleeping Dragon was deferred to the April meeting given the absence of Cllr. Baynham. No other donations.

(2) Payments: The following payments were approved –

Mrs T.A. Price	£1498.40
HM Revenue & Customs	£583.11
NEST Pensions (direct debit)	£139.37
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£345.89 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Presteigne Building Supplies	£214.80 MEADOW ACCOUNT
T. Lloyd-John	£382.49
N. Close	£35.00
N. Close	£238.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
J. Cromar (tree survey – Meadows)	£870.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Amazon (refund T. Price – batteries)	£16.99
Artisan Print (A3 copies)	£9.60
HSBC (Bank Charges Feb – Treasurer Acc)	£8.00
HSBC (Bank charges Feb) – Meadow Acc)	£10.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Items below relate to Nature Reserve -	
Powys County Council (gateway to nature reserve)	£1337.20
Presteigne Gates Ltd	£288.00
Bucknell Nurseries	£811.25
R.B. Landscaping	£9378.00
Paramount Plants	£442.50
Amazon (refund Cllr. Poster)	£17.30
O. Rimington (design work/refund leaflet printing)	£571.42
O. Rimington (design work – gate)	£320.00
META (translation)	£59.04
A. Dodgson (refund compost)	£31.96
Artisan Print	£73.27
CLAN CIC	£100.00
Amazon (refund R. Bamford)	£41.99
Amazon (refund R. Bamford)	£16.80
Amazon (refund R. Bamford)	£14.72
Presteigne Building Supplies	£421.46
Artisan Print	£16.87
Artisan Print	£7.16
A. Davies	£350.00
J. Stevens	£125.00

(3) Email from PACDG re reduced insurance premium: The Clerk reported that the group had contacted her as their insurance premium was less than expected. The Council had in the past given £250 to cover the insurance for the group and had again set aside £250 in the 2023/24 budget. Members agreed to still contribute the £250 to the group.

(4) The following receipts were noted:

Allotment Rent	£728.00 MEADOW ACCOUNT
Donations Community Engagement (Nature Reserve)	£131.08
Website advertising	£26.00

(5) Risk Assessment: Members noted the risk assessment as circulated and approved it without change.

(6) Asset Register: Members noted the Asset Register as circulated. The Clerk answered a question from Cllr. Williams on the valuations included. Approved without any changes.

MIN 4173 PLANNING

(1) Planning Applications:

23/0236/FUL Grid Reference: E:331636 N: 263551 Proposal: Proposed erection of a dwelling and all other associated works. Site Address: The Wood Yard, Broadaxe, Presteigne, LD8 2LA. Resolved no objections be raised.

23/0302/FUL Grid Reference: E:330218 N: 267405 Proposal: Proposed demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of detached house including formation of access and associated works (resubmission of

22/1968/FUL) Site Address: Oxenbrook Cottage, Norton, Presteigne, LD8 2EN. Resolved no objections be raised.

(2) Planning Decisions: No decisions reported this month.

MIN 4174 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies/Lighting Update: The working group met in early March and Cllrs. Baynham, Williams and the Clerk were taken quickly through the draft application which was very near to completion. A possible Dark Skies Festival in the Autumn was discussed and Mr. Harling-Bowen had several talks/events in mind already. The County Council had seen the proposed lighting policy and is in principle willing to add this to its own lighting policy as an Appendix – this will mean that future developments will need to refer to the policy and should ensure that the lighting continues to conform into the future. It was noted that events and education were the weakest aspect of the application and will need ongoing input. An ongoing monitoring programme of light readings will also need to be in place and Mr. Harling-Bowen is willing to do this. Baseline readings were taken originally plus further sets since.

The application process could take some months as once submitted the IDA may well come back with comments and questions. Since the meeting calculations on the carbon and financial savings had been carried out and these are estimated as 4.5 tonnes of CO2 reduction per year. 54kw saving per night. 19,710kw per year. The study solely focuses on street lighting, signage is not taken into account. If the cost was taken as 0.33p per kWh, it would result in a £6,500 saving per year. The Clerk added that the projected unit cost for the County Council had since been confirmed as 42p per unit, increasing the estimated saving to £8278.

The Clerk added that the updated draft application had been received that evening and it was agreed that she would circulate it the next day for comment. It was agreed that she collate any comments and that subject to these she approve the application for submission.

(2) Climate Crisis/Nature Reserve Update:

Nature Reserve Update: Cllr. Bamford reported the following –

- Community Engagement Weekend held and successful.
- Large number of Trees planted.
- One hundred and fifty people had subscribed to a mailing list to be kept informed.
- Various Photographs of prominent and important local trees taken free of charge by Mr. A. Ramsey and now printed and on display in the Assembly Rooms. Possible future use to produce a calendar.
- Future events – tree planting 26th March and pond planting 23rd April.
- Ponds now filling with water nicely.
- Possible purchase of two-wheel tractor type machine and various attachments to assist with ongoing maintenance. Agreed subject instead of cut and collect machine subject to lottery approval. Shed adjacent to site available for storage. Clerk to look into possible insurance costs.
- Opening Day 3rd June.

Tree Hub: One hundred and eighty-nine trees given out so far in March.

Climate Crisis Committee Recommendations –

Promotion of the Council Climate Crisis Grant Fund: Noted. Item to be placed in Community Newsletter and online.

Recommendation that dogs not be allowed on the new Nature Reserve: Cllr. Poster outlined the reasoning for this proposal and it was agreed unanimously. Cllr. Poster had drafted some provisional wording for temporary signage which was agreed. Permanent signs would be purchased in due course.

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for the new Nature Reserve: Noted with no further comments.

Review of the management of Council owned hedges: Members agreed that the Committee carry this out and that a report to be presented to Council at the July meeting. Sites and Buildings Committee to be invited to comment at its next meeting.

Changes to the trial mowing arrangements at the Community Orchard/Below the Bike Track: Agreed to cease the trial area around the community orchard but to leave the area below the bike track unmown for the coming year. Contractor to be asked to mow around the edge adjacent to the path.

Letter re Eddie's Meadow: Members agreed the reply as drafted. A copy of the original management plan would also be sent.

Management plan for Eddie's Meadow: Agreed that Sites and Buildings Committee and Climate Crisis Committee to review.

(3) Thanks for 20 – Support Campaign Information: Noted.

(4) Review of Bus Routes/Stops/Electric Bike/Car Grant Scheme: Members noted that Cllrs. Baynham, Edwards and the Clerk had met John Forsey of the County Council to discuss bus routes and the current stops in Presteigne. The following matters were discussed -

- By pass shelter to be cleaned.
- Low usage of the Sergeants Bus and problems with connections e.g. to Llandrindod or Hereford.
- Lack of a direct bus to Llandrindod.
- Hereford Street stop currently on the wrong side of the road – to be moved.
- Townend Stop – bus stop markings to be put on road, stop to be marked.
- Remove old timetable box in Station Road.
- Timetables to be supplied for Clerk to circulate.
- Timetable for x11 to be put at bypass shelter.
- Possible introduction of electric bikes via grant fund.
- Possible electric car share.

(5) Complaint re Condition of Verge/Shrubs, Station Road: The Clerk had reported this to the County Council which had not felt there was a problem. She had then contacted the Guerrilla Gardeners and they had kindly agreed to tidy the area. Members reported that this had been done. The Clerk was asked to thank the Gardeners for their work.

(6) Update re works to High Street: High Street - Members noted the works to be carried out before the end of the month. One Way Hereford Street – Members noted that this was to become permanent. The Clerk was asked to report that the speed cushions near to Clatterbrune were deteriorating at the edges.

MIN 4175 NORTON

(1) Norton Community Trust Update: Cllr. Firth reported that works were on hold pending the attendance of the appointed archaeologist who was due in mid-April. More grant applications had been submitted. Cllr. Bamford added that Cllr. Wilding had re-joined the Presteigne and Norton Community Trust.

MIN 4176 SITES AND BUILDINGS MATTERS

(1) Public Conveniences: Two blockages had been promptly cleared during the month and there had been no need to close the facilities at any point.

(2) Allotments: Rent coming in well. There were still a number of people on the waiting list.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Use for Carnival 6-9th July: Confirmed.

Letter from resident re Eddie's Meadow management: Noted. See under Climate Crisis Committee.

Work of Warden Guardians on former Reservoir and Eddie's Meadow: Members were pleased to accept the offer of ongoing help from the Warden Guardians for both Eddie's Meadow and the old reservoir ground.

De-Silting of Pond, Lower Went's Meadow: Members were pleased to learn that this had been done.

Clearance of prunings/tree cuttings – Community Orchard/Far Field: Members noted that a large pile of cuttings remained and considered the suggestion of the hire of a wood chipper. It was agreed that the pile be left until the Autumn when another attempt could be made to dispose of them.

Vandalism at Old Barn: Noted. The Clerk confirmed that the police had been informed.

Tree Survey Report: Noted. Sites and Buildings Committee to review.

Use by Chatterbrook WI 13th July: Confirmed.

Report on Community Orchard: Noted. Sites and Buildings Committee to review.

MIN 4177 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Town Wifi Update: A site meeting should by now have been held to discuss the siting of the two units on the Assembly Rooms. The Clerk would push for a unit on the Memorial Hall which could be connected at a later date once the Hall had a broadband connection.

Cllr. Edwards joined the meeting at this point and took the Chair.

(2) Community Broadband Scheme Update: Members noted that Broadway Partners was intending to proceed in Presteigne and Norton on a commercial basis and that surveying was currently planned to start in the early Autumn.

- (3) Invitation to St. Andrew's Church Service for King's Coronation – Sunday 7th May at 11am: Noted.
- (4) Winding of Town Clock: Members noted the misunderstanding concerning the winding of the clock and were pleased to note that there was in fact a regular clock winder in place plus a back up in case of holiday/sickness. They were also pleased to learn the clock had recently been serviced although a return visit was needed to correct a problem with the hourly chimes.
- (5) Final Report of Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales: Members noted the final payment levels for 2023-24. Those who had been on the Council for some time were aware that due to the previous wording of the £150 payment allocation it was necessary to put it through payroll. The wording this year had been changed and it is now termed a working from home allowance, so, in the Clerk's opinion, should be non-taxable and able to be paid outside payroll. The Clerk was waiting for confirmation from One Voice Wales/HMRC. Due to it being a larger amount the Mayor's allowance will need to continue to be paid through payroll. The annual £150 had been increased to £156 and in addition there is to be a 'cost of consumables' payment of £52 per year (or reimbursement can be made on receipts).
- All other optional or compulsory payments are unchanged and those available to Presteigne and Norton Town Councillors for 2023/24 are -
- Care costs to attend meetings (mandatory)
 - Travel costs (45p per mile) (optional)
 - Mayor's Allowance/Expenses (optional).
 - Annual Working from Home Allowance of £156 per year (mandatory)
 - Expenses Allowance £52 per year (mandatory)
- Payment is made in or around January to those Members that have not declined it.
- (6) Town Investment Plan Update: Members had only received the plan that day and the Clerk was instructed to ask for additional time for comments to be submitted. They were however concerned at the query on the need for affordable housing and the Clerk was asked to reply immediately stressing that the Council felt very strongly that there was unmet need for such housing. Subject to any comments received the Clerk was authorised to agree the plan as circulated.

MIN 4178 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The Clerk read the following report from Cllr. Baynham: -

Powys County Council set its budget two weeks ago and agreed a rise of 5% in council tax. Cllr. Baynham did not support that budget and voted to abstain however the majority of Councillors voted for the budget, and it was passed.

As a member of the Employment Committee she had recently been a member of the interview panel to appoint both a Head of Children's Services and a Head of Adult Services. Both very important roles within the council.

She had supported Cllr. Wilding as Vice-Chairman of the Memorial Hall Management Committee by liaising with County Council Officers recently to discuss statutory testing with a satisfactory outcome.

Several Highways issues have been attended to over the last month and unfortunately due to the weather last week the recycling collection did not happen but crews will take any extra recycling this week.

Finally an apology for the mix up regarding the clock on the Assembly Rooms.

Cllr. Edwards added that local businesses able to apply for a business rates reduction should do so by 30th March and that Keep Wales Tidy were holding litter picking events over the coming fortnight if anyone wished to be involved.

MIN 4179 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

- (1) Bunting left by old HSBC: Cllr. Abecasis reported that bunting here had not been removed. The Clerk advised that this was not the Council's bunting and Cllr. Abecasis would contact the Carnival Committee.
- (2) Bin/Signage at top of St. David's Street: Cllr. Abecasis reported that the resident had asked to discuss these and possible/change removal. He would contact Cllr. Baynham as these were County Council items.

- (3) Dead Tree, Nature Reserve (backing onto Castle Road properties): Cllrs. Bamford and Poster would take a look.
- (4) Standing Water: Cllr. Edwards had reported this at the far end of Home Farm Lane. Clerk to also report.
- (5) Possible Fly Tipping, Discoed: Cllr. Edwards to check and report if needed.
- (6) Possible Coronation Event: Cllr. Edwards asked that anyone interested in helping with an event please get in touch with her.

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.