

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH MARCH 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, L. Harling-Bowen, M. Price C. Ross, F. Preece, B. Baynham.

Apologies: Cllrs. J. Ramsay, N. Rogers, J. Wilding.

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:

Cllr. F. Preece, trustee of Presteigne Scout Group, re. request from Scouts to site a storage container adjacent to the Scout Hut.

Personal and Prejudicial:

Cllr. C. Ross, applicant for planning application, re. application reference 25/0359/HH,

MIN 4451 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th February, 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to one change to Minute 4442 (1) – draft dark sky signage ‘in progress’ not ‘now done’ and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4452 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Pollarding of Trees, Station Road: No reply as yet. Clerk would chase.
- (2) Former Agricultural Show Trophies: Cllr. Owens reported that these had now been returned and would be kept in the Judge’s Lodgings as previously discussed. Twelve trophies in total had been received.
- (3) Bench, Ligne Garden: Confirmed that this would be repaired by a volunteer.
- (4) Bench in Withy Beds: Cllr. Kirkby reported that this had been destroyed but that he had put a resident in touch with Radnorshire Wildlife Trust as they were willing to provide a new bench.
- (5) Meeting with High School: Confirmed for 10th April, 2pm.

MIN 4453 FINANCE

(1) Donations: The following donation was confirmed -

Presteigne Little People’s Playgroup	£250
(as agreed February 2025, from Climate Crisis Fund)	

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Mrs T.A. Price (pay)	£1631.00
HM Revenue & Customs	£627.29
NEST	£150.64
Highground Maintenance Ltd	£449.69 MEADOW ACC
T. Lloyd-John	£382.49
N. Close	£292.00
N. Close	£164.00 MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00 MEADOW ACC
EDF Energy (July-January)	£215.95 MEADOW ACC
A. Jervis (orchard pruning)	£122.00 MEADOW ACC
Powys County Council (green waste bin)	£60.00

British Gas Lite (Wilson Terrace Toilets)	£13.23
Presteigne Building Supplies (Norton Benches)	£12.68
EDF Energy (February)	£17.64 MEADOW ACC
EDF Energy (H'fd Street Toilets)	£87.11
Mrs T. Price (refund stamps)	£62.40
Artisan Print (posters – work day)	£19.84 MEADOW ACC
Presteigne Baptist Church (refund A. Wake)	£25.00

(3) Receipts: The following receipts were noted –

Allotment Rent	£504.00
Allotment Plot Deposit	£28.00
Powys County Council (High Street Grant)	£3753.75

(4) Review of Asset Register: Members had all received a copy of the Asset Register with the meeting papers. Agreed as circulated.

(5) Review of Risk Assessment: Members had all received a copy with the meeting papers. Agreed as circulated.

(6) Final Report of Independent Remuneration Panel: Members noted the final report of the Remuneration Panel. Members noted that the mandatory amounts payable remained unchanged and confirmed that for 2025/26 the following would be payable –

- Member Working from Home Payment £156.00 (mandatory)
- Member miscellaneous Expenses £52.00 (mandatory)
- Refund of Care Expenses (mandatory)
- Travel Expenses (outside area) (optional – Town Council Policy)
- Mayor/Chairman's Allowance (optional – Town Council Policy)

(7) Council Insurance: Members noted that due to the structure of the new barn the options for insurance cover at renewal would be limited and that one company had declined to provide a quote for cover when the current policy expired in the Summer.

(8) New Website: Members considered the report provided and the three quotes submitted. Following a discussion on the merits of each and the drawback of using company specific software (option 3) it was agreed to accept the quote from Parish Council Websites (option 2). Following a suggestion from Cllr. Kirkby it was agreed that the new site would primarily be for Council information, that advertisements no longer be provided on the new site and that a single page of local information would contain links to other groups/organisations in the area rather than separate pages for each. The existing site would remain live until the end of the current hosting agreement (towards the end of 2025).

(9) Reply from PACDG re CONNECT monies: Members were pleased to note that the organisation was carefully considering the use of the monies received and had already earmarked some to cover bank charges and for a notice board refurbishment in Norton. It had confirmed that it was considering using the remaining monies for their own projects but would be monitoring the spend over the coming months.

(10) Renewal of Money Market Bond (£50,000): Agreed that the Clerk re-invest in a six-month money market bond subject to this being the best option at the time of investment. The Clerk was authorised to invest for a shorter period of time if she felt this was a better option.

(11) Future Venue/Budget for Room Hire in 2025-26: Members considered the options provided on the report and discussed various possibilities. It was agreed to increase the number of meetings in the Norton Hub to once each quarter, subject to this remaining free of charge and to accept the offer of the Day Centre, free of charge for the remaining meetings. As the Centre was unavailable on a Wednesday it was agreed to move meetings to the third Monday of each month subject to the Members not present at the meeting being available. The Mayor-Making would continue to be held in the Judge's Lodgings. The Clerk would make the necessary arrangements and if a Monday was not possible then the decision would be reviewed at the April meeting.

(12) Nature Reserve Budget for 2025-26: Members had all received details of the request however it was not possible to delegate authority to a community group for the spending of Council monies. There was also concern over how the budget would then be monitored. It was agreed that for small amounts the Group could approach the Clerk for permission to spend and the Clerk was given delegated authority to agree this. For the larger elements of the budget then the Group would need to put a proposal to the Council, with

quotes if needed, for a decision to be made. The Clerk would advise Cllr. J. Ramsay so he could notify the group.

MIN 4454 PLANNING

Cllr. Edwards left the room at this point due to her position on the County Council Planning Committee. Cllr. Ross left the room having declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application.

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

25/0359/HH Grid Reference: E:331570 N: 264494 Proposal: Erection of replacement garden shed Site Address: 3 Church View, Broad Street, Presteigne. Resolved no objections to this application providing there is no development into accommodation at a later date.

Cllrs. Edwards and Ross returned to the room.

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

24/1598/HH 4 Greenfield Road, Presteigne: Consent 18th February.

MIN 4455 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: Cllr. Harling-Bowen provided a brief update as follows –

- Presentation recently given to Talgarth Town Council.
- Discover Parks Open Day later in April.
- Further presentation at Trefonnen School.
- Replacement of Christmas Lights: Report being produced for consideration at a future meeting.
- Visit to Presteigne by journalist to write a piece on dark skies (in association with Dark Sky International).
- Dark Skies Working Group working on a short documentary with CPRW on the process of Presteigne and Norton obtaining dark sky status. £3000 grant money had been obtained from the Ashley Foundation and further monies was being provided by CPRW.
- Visit by Jane Dodds confirmed for 1st May. Cllr. Preece to ask if a room at the Radnorshire Arms could be used to provide a meeting point.
- Conference Report: The following topics were covered –
 - The launch of the Good Practice Guidance on dark skies (I've attached a page from the Guidance showing dark sky areas, including Presteigne and Norton) (also see <https://www.gov.wales/dark-skies-guidance>)
 - Dark skies and light pollution
 - Biodiversity and Resilient Ecological Networks
 - Designated landscapes, character and tranquillity
 - Understanding lighting standards
 - Retrofitting existing lighting with dark sky compliant lighting and;
 - An International perspective.

(2) Climate and Environment Update: In his absence Cllr. J. Ramsay had reported the following –

- Nov 2023 Council report update in process.
- County Council Open Space Assessment: needs to add the new Nature Reserve. Noted as already done.
- County Council Green Infrastructure Mapping - This requested proposals of even very small spaces on a Green Infrastructure Suggestions map. Deadline 17th April. Agreed that Cllr. J. Ramsay convene the Climate and Environment Working Group to consider this in early April

(3) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Kirkby reported that as agreed at the February meeting comments had been circulated to all Members, some small amendments made and then formally submitted to the County Council. There was as yet no Committee date but meetings were held on a three week schedule. The Clerk confirmed that the Officer was unwilling to commit to a date until all the latest comments had been reviewed. Cllr. Kirkby added that the Rambler's Association had also submitted detailed further comments. He asked whether the Town Council would be able to speak at the Committee meeting and it was agreed that this would be checked and that if this was possible Cllr. Kirkby be appointed to speak on behalf of the Council.

(4) Car Parking: Cllr. Baynham had recently attended a County Council Working Group meeting and a paper was now being prepared to go to the Cabinet for consideration. She added that it was expected that all car parks would revert to allow short stay parking (resulting in a reduced shorter stay charge to that currently available in the long stay car parks) and that the suggestion of a short period of free parking was discussed but not any possible asset transfer.

(5) Review of 20mph Limits: Members noted there were no changes proposed for Presteigne but that a change was proposed for Norton with an increase of the speed limit back to 30mph on the Northern approach to the village to the pedestrian sign and on the Southern approach to just North of the junction with Caefelyn.

(6) Complaint re lack of lighting, Hereford Street Car Park: Members noted the comments made. Cllr. Harling-Bowen had obtained details of dark sky compliant lighting that could be used either on the toilet block or on the car park. Members did not feel that any change to the current toilet lighting was appropriate, particularly given the dark sky status of the town. They also felt there were sufficient areas in the car park with ample lighting and that users could park in those areas if they were concerned. The Town Council was also not responsible for the car park itself and Cllr. Baynham felt that adding additional lighting was unlikely to be a priority. It was agreed however that the Clerk pass on the resident comments and the lighting details Cllr. Harling-Bowen had obtained.

(7) Various Highways Complaints re Slough Road: Members had all received a copy of the email regarding a number of issues along Slough Road. Cllr. Baynham stated that the potholes should now be filled but accepted that parking outside the school was a problem. She agreed to ask if a small number of passes for the Shoppers Car Park could be provided to school staff. The Clerk would also ask the School to remind parents about considerate parking and about the availability of passes for the Shoppers Car Park to cover the morning and afternoon drop off and pick up periods. Item to be on the agenda for an update in April.

MIN 4456 NORTON

(1) General Works: The two benches had now been completed and the refurbished milestone was back in place. The budget for the year was now spent. Cllr. Edwards had cleaned the kiosk and removed the historic Minutes from the kiosk due to slug damage/damp. It was agreed that for the future a notice be placed in the kiosk advising of where the Minutes could be accessed and how to obtain a hard copy if necessary. Cllr. Baynham suggested a QR code be added to the notice and it was agreed that this be done.

(2) Telephone Kiosk: Cllr. Edwards reported that the one bottom corner of the door was rotting and needed attention. The Clerk was asked to get an estimate from Mr. Close for a repair.

(3) Norton Churchyard: It was noted that this was looking very tidy.

MIN 4457 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences:

- Toilet Roll Thefts: Seemed to be reducing.
- Disabled Lock, Wilson Terrace: Clerk to ask Mr. Close to look at this given the high cost of a replacement lock.
- Opening for Spring/Summer: The Clerk reported that she had had to open the toilet block at Wilson Terrace early (due to the availability of the contractor) and asked for agreement to ask the cleaner to start work earlier in the year than normal. Members agreed that the Cleaner be asked to work an additional two-three hours to cover the additional period.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were considered -

- Complaint re. rabbits entering through perimeter fence: Clerk to ask PNAA to carry out its annual inspection and to report on any materials needed.
- Request for siting of storage box on Allotment Plot: Agreed on a temporary basis.
- Update re deposits: The Clerk reported that the first deposit due had now been paid. She had also carried out some research on the charging of deposits generally and a number of other Councils did charge deposits. Deposits would be listed separately on the allotment register.
- Update re PNAA: Members noted that the PNAA had now obtained sufficient members to continue for the current year.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

- Update - café bar/storage: Cllr. Kirkby provided an update as follows –
 - Planning permission obtained. A condition was included which asked for three trees to be planted to replace the one that needed to be removed and trees had been sourced free of charge by Ms. Bamford. The Clerk was asked to formally thank Ms. Bamford.
 - Initial work had started pm 1st March with the one shed being removed and some wood now stored in the Council's container on site.
 - Groundworks to start on 7th April.
 - Soil removed now not to be taken to below bike track but would be used between the new barn and the proposed building.

- Fund-raising page now set up by Sheep Music and currently £2725 of the £5000 needed had been raised. Clerk would check to make sure the page was on the Council's social media pages.
 - Update – Brilliant Basics Grant (paths): The Clerk confirmed that the detailed submission had been provided to the County Council which had now submitted the full grant application. Cllr. Baynham reported that she was still trying to arrange a meeting with the County Council Officer regarding the short length of path at the Mill end of the footpath. The Clerk would provide Cllr. Kirkby with a copy of the submission.
 - Request from Scouts to site 20ft storage container: Members were concerned that the proposed site would be very visible and also at the need for a container of the size proposed. The Clerk was asked to reply asking if alternative storage could be considered (smaller container/wooden shed) and also if the storage could be sited behind the Scout Hut where it would be less visible or possibly adjacent to the Council's current storage container.
 - Cllr. Kirkby suggested that he assess the need for storage of not only the Scouts but also the Norton Hub (which had approached the Council about storing some items in the Council's storage container. This was agreed. He would report back to a future meeting.
 - Use Request – Regular Fitness Classes on Tuesday Evenings: Agreed however it was noted that not all regular users donated towards the upkeep of the building or electricity costs and the Clerk was asked to write to all users reminding them that donations were encouraged and that if donations were not made then a formal charge for use would have to be considered.
 - Eddie's Meadow Bench: Old bench now removed and new bench could now be put in place.
- (4) Nature Reserve Matters: Cllr. J. Ramsay had given a general update via email as follows –
- All tasks in hand: pond plants planted; Spring tasks will include upgrade of the gravel access path.
 - Tool sharing agreed to be too administratively complex, will not be pursued.
 - The mature Crimean pine in the primary school grounds, a major visual feature of the landscape adjacent to the reserve, has been drastically cut, apparently on safety grounds as advised by the County Council.
- (4) Renewal of Electrical Certificate – Norton Kiosk: Members noted the quote received and asked that a further quote be obtained.

MIN 4458 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: The Working Group had met again and discussed possibilities and suggestions for maximising revenue and also for areas of the finances that needed more information. Cllr. Baynham read the list compiled from the meeting and it was agreed that the Clerk circulate this for Members to add additional comments prior to Cllr. Baynham submitting it to the County Council.

(2) Report on Fire Service Webinar: Cllr. Kirkby had attended this webinar and gave a short report on matters discussed and questions raised. He had asked if there were any proposals to close local stations and had been told not at present although it had later been advised that nothing was 'off the table'. It had also been stressed that the number of times attendance had been needed at wild fires had greatly increased and Cllr. Kirkby had suggested that special crew be trained to deal with these instances. Cllr. Baynham confirmed that County Councillors had also obtained a briefing from the Fire Service.

(3) Christmas Trees on Shops 2025: The Clerk advised that the volunteer who had previously installed the trees was no longer willing to do so. Agreed that this be considered when discussing the renewal of the Christmas lights later in the year.

(4) VE Day: Cllr. Baynham had spoken to the Memorial Hall Committee and it had agreed to hold a street party style celebration on 11th May. Cllr. Owens stated that he would consider providing a donation towards the event from his Mayor's Allowance.

(5) Report on March Town Council Surgery: Cllrs. Preece and Kirkby had attended and had received just two visitors but with a number of issues raised. One issue (loud exhausts) was a police matter and the Clerk would pass on the details to the police. The other matters related to highway and footpath issues and the Clerk would report these to the County Council and provide Cllr. Baynham with details.

The Clerk reminded Members to make the public aware of any matters the responsibility of the County Council as had been done at the March Surgery.

Cllr. A. Ramsay agreed to attend the April Surgery.

The Clerk had received a message from the Farmer's Market organisers regarding a table for future months with the smaller room now being run by the Memorial Hall Committee. Cllr. Kirkby advised that he had been told that a table would be available each month.

(5) Senedd Constituency Review Final Determinations: Members noted the final decision on the new constituency which would include Brecon and Radnor.

MIN 4459 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Baynham reported the following –

- New Political Group in the County Council, the Reform Group.
- Many potholes filled locally in recent weeks with some exceptions and she was meeting with the Highways Officer shortly to discuss those remaining.
- New Bus Shelter in Presteigne.
- Attendance at Social Care Workshops.
School Catchment Review with Cllr. P. Roberts and Director of Education provided with a tour of the John Beddoes feeder primary schools.

Cllr. Edwards reported that she too was chasing multiple pothole repairs.

MIN 4460 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Warden Guardian Foundation 27th March. Cllr. Kirkby could not attend. Cllr. Owens would try to attend.

(2) Community Banking Provision: Cllr. Kirkby advised that sessions would take place on Tuesdays in the Assembly Rooms. The Clerk would put details on the Council's social media pages.

(3) Sheep Music Grant Application: Cllr. Kirkby advised that the group was submitting a grant application for new equipment and it was agreed that the Clerk write a letter of support.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.