

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH MARCH 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, A. Van Huls, J. Wilding, F. Preece, C. Kirkby MBE, J. Ramsay.

Apologies: Cllrs. L. Abecasis, M. Williams.

Further three-month absence for Cllr. Abecasis approved at meeting.

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:

Cllr. D. Edwards, re school transport changes , employed by a school bus contractor.

MIN 4314 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st February, 2024 were approved without amendment. The Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4315 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

- (1) Pothole Survey: The Clerk confirmed that due to ill health Cllr. Williams had not as yet started on the report.
- (2) Flooding, Slough Road: Cllr. Kirkby asked if the drain had been cleared and if not could this be chased. Regarding the water in and around the school Cllr. Baynham confirmed that she had requested a site meeting with the Officer concerned and would report back once this had been held.
- (3) Car Park Charges: The Clerk confirmed that the County Council owned the car park machines and that she had been told it was not possible to provide costings for individual car parks. She had requested total cost details for car parks in Powys and this had been received earlier in the week and would be on the April agenda. Cllr. Kirkby felt that a request should be made to the County Council for free car parking or an asset transfer to the Town Council. Cllr. Baynham stated that this would need to be a formal agenda item and it was agreed to add it to the April agenda for discussion. The Clerk would be attending the presentation of the car parking review document on 26th March and would report back to the Council in April.
- (4) Sleeping Dragon: Due to be replaced on site on 27th April.
- (5) Clatterbrook Footpath Works: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the bridge was now installed and other works were ongoing. He added that there was an additional section that needed re-stoning and he had asked that this be done while contractors were on site. It was agreed that the Clerk write to confirm this request.
- (6) Street Lighting: Cllr. Baynham reported that a site meeting had been held and that the Street Lighting Manager had identified solutions. Works would take place over the next few months.
- (7) Places for Nature Leaflet: Circulated to Members. Cllr. Edwards pointed out that there was no mention of Norton and this was noted for any future documents.
- (8) Bench for Nature Reserve: Donation of bench confirmed and would be sited in the Spring.
- (9) Visit to Secondary School: Cllr. Owens had not yet circulated his notes but would do so.
- (10) Mid Wales Tourism App: Cllr. Baynham confirmed that this had been raised at the meeting with the High Street traders and there had been no interest. The Clerk had confirmed this to the project manager.
- (11) Warden Guardian Foundation: Currently no representative following the resignation of Cllr. Bamford and left vacant pending the return to a full complement of Councillors. Agreed that Cllr. Kirkby attend the AGM on behalf of the Town Council.
- (12) Maes Corton Estate: The Clerk confirmed that the sign and oak trees would be replaced.
- (13) Went's Meadow Diary: Members noted the need to refer applications to use the Meadow to the Clerk.

MIN 4316 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month. Members noted the email from PACDG regarding insurance costs of £166 but confirmed that the donation for 2024/25 would remain at £250 as per the budget.

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

Highground Maintenance Ltd	£345.89 MEADOW ACC
EDF Energy (H'fd Street Toilets)	£46.34
EDF Energy (Meadow)	£11.03 MEADOW ACC
RB Landscaping (allotment gate)	£354.00 MEADOW ACC
A. Jervis (orchard pruning)	£105.00 MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1579.20
HM Revenue & Customs	£611.02
NEST (Direct debit)	£146.30
T. Lloyd-John	£395.49
N. Close	£16.00
N. Close	£152.00 MEADOW ACC
Powys County Council (green waste bin) (for guerilla gardeners)	£50.00
S. Jones Containers Ltd	£3481.20
Wildflower Grant - School Sign Shop	£133.20
O. Rimington	£500.00
O. Rimington	£800.00
Clicied	£67.68
Naturescape	£293.99
Lazy Dog Tools Ltd	£339.60
Naturescape	£195.99

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

Allotment Rent	£312.00 MEADOW ACC
Powys County Council (wildflower grant)	£477.15
NB grant overspend of £1.17 noted.	

(4) Final Report of Independent Remuneration Panel: Members noted that the mandatory amounts payable remained unchanged and confirmed that for 2024/25 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)

The Clerk confirmed that due to a change in the descriptions for the two basic payments it was no longer necessary for these to go through the payroll.

MIN 4317 PLANNING

(1) Planning applications: None this month.

(2) Planning Decisions: The following decisions were noted:-

23/1420/HH Millfields, Hereford Street, Presteigne – Approval 26th February.

23/1421/LBC Millfields, Hereford Street, Presteigne – Consent 26th February

23/1735/FUL Western Way, Broadaxe Business Park, Presteigne – Approval 4th March.

(3) Industrial Land Plots sold by Welsh Government: Cllr. Wilding raised concerns that three plots, although sold, remained undeveloped despite there being a condition that building commenced within a specified time scale. The Clerk was asked to contact Welsh Government to ask for an update on the situation and also to ask about any future development plans for Presteigne.

MIN 4318 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project: The following items were discussed:-

- Signage/locations: Cllr. Kirkby reported that the working Group had agreed the sign wording to be Presteigne and Norton Dark Skies Community and that the preferred locations were on the road entrances to the town/village with the intention of utilising the existing town name

sign posts. The Clerk had asked the County Council for approximate sign costs and whether the proposed locations would be allowed but had not as yet had a reply.

- Proposed Spring Bat Walk: Agreed to guarantee the event against loss.
- Commendation by Astronomer Royal noted.
- Sheep Music hoping to link 2024 bonfire with Dark Skies. Matter to be discussed by at the next working group meeting.
- Cllr. Ramsay agreed to replace Cllr. Williams on the Working Group.
- Entry on the Visit Wales website agreed.
- Need for production of Annual Report: Not needed for at least twelve months. The Clerk would check when exactly the first report would be needed.

(2) Climate Crisis Matters:

- Next Committee Meeting 3rd April.

(3) High Street Grant: Cllr. Baynham reported on the meeting with traders which had been well attended. Cllrs. Edwards and Owens had also attended. Overall the meeting was felt to be positive and information had been circulated to those still interested. Traders now needed to obtain quotes for the works required and also to check whether any planning or conservation area consents would be required.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Members had all received a copy of the draft responses compiled by Cllr. Kirkby and agreed that they were happy that they be submitted immediately. In addition, Cllr. Kirkby reported that he was in the process of seeking additional witnesses/path users for submission to the County Council. Members agreed that an item could be placed in the Community News and on Presteigne History Project page asking further witnesses to come forward. Cllr. Kirkby added that some documentation was only available from London and it was agreed to meet the costs of obtaining a copy of this as evidence. An extension for comments had been granted until the end of April and this would allow time for the further witness statements to be obtained and submitted.

(5) Broad Street Pavings Slabs: Although a clean had been promised this had not yet taken place. The Clerk would chase the matter up. The repair needed following the electrical fire in High Street had been completed.

(6) Reply from Welsh Ambulance Service: Members had all received a copy of the response received. Cllr. Owens had written a number of follow up questions/comments which Members had all seen. It was agreed that these should be collated into a letter of response. The letter to include in particular – a request for details on the timing of the original telephone calls to 999 and also to reiterate that in the absence of any current First Responders that the Fire Service Co-responders should be made available in the interim.

MIN 4319 NORTON

(1) Community Trust Update: The sewage connection could now be connected and an open day was therefore planned for Easter Monday. Cllr. Edwards reported that some bookings were already in the diary.

(2) Presteigne and Norton Community Trust Meeting: 18th April.

(3) Norton Sewage Works – Phosphate Permit: Clerk to check but it was believed this had been issued. Cllr. Ramsay to circulate a link to information on the monitoring of phosphate levels in the river.

MIN 4320 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: The following matters were discussed:-

Painting of Hereford Street: Some initial work had now been carried out.

Theft of Toilet Rolls: This had recommenced recently.

(2) Allotments – The following matters were discussed –

Further consideration of quote for allotment car park: Agreed to accept the quote and that the Clerk commission the work as soon as possible. Payment to come from the allotment reserve.

Vacant Plots: Three currently vacant. Agreed that if not let by 25th March then the plots be offered to the existing tenants for one year only at half rent. If not then the plots would need to be covered over for the time being.

Grant Update: Confirmed that the Clerk request two raised beds for plot 36 to provide an accessible plot for the less able and a picnic bench for siting by the communal shed.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Arrangements for Community Work Day: Cllr. Preece confirmed as 20th April.

Use of Field for Parking, 23rd March: Cancelled as ground too wet.

Update re community payback/purchase of fire-retardant paint: The Clerk reported that the supervisor was no longer working in the area and so she had delayed purchasing the paint

to await further instructions from Council. It was agreed that the paint not be purchased until the availability of the payback team could be confirmed. The Clerk was also instructed to ask the paint manufacturer if the paint could be applied using a sprayer. She would also chase up the Community Payback Manager for details on what works might be possible during 2024.

Purchase of Bee Houses for Eddie's Meadow: Agreed that three could be purchased at £30 each.

Work on Eddie's Meadow and Volunteers: Cllr. Kirkby reported that volunteers were willing to carry out the grass cutting/invasive weed removal as per the new management plan. Cllrs. Baynham and Wilding reminded the meeting that it had been agreed to not implement the full plan as Members believed there should be as little as possible intervention. At the time the volunteers locally had felt they did not have sufficient numbers to carry out the extra works. It was agreed that the volunteers could proceed providing they had a suitable way of disposing of the grass cuttings. Cllr. Kirkby would check and report back to Council. The Clerk stressed that any volunteers must notify her prior to going on site with names, work done, item spent etc. Without this there would be no cover under the Council's insurance. Cutting of Paths, Eddie's Meadow: Cllr. Kirkby stressed that this needed to be done. The Clerk would ask if the Community Payback team could carry out periodic cutting of the paths.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters:

Cllr. Ramsay reported that volunteers continued to work on site and the Scout 'Squirrels' had also been on site assisting. The ponds continued to establish although their ability to retain water over the drier months would need to be assessed in due course.

National Forest Network Meeting: Cllr. Ramsay had attended this on behalf of the Council. He felt it had been a worthwhile meeting and that support/information would continue to be available through the group.

Entry on the Visit Wales Website: Agreed. Clerk would submit.

(5) Update re purchase of storage container; Now ordered. Cllr. Wilding would site the container on arrival.

(6) Community Store/Bar Project: At the request of Cllr. Kirkby the original drawings had been re-circulated. A discussion on the need for planning permission took place and Cllr. Kirkby asked that the Council fund a planning application for the building. Cllr. Wilding felt that the design could be modified given the Council would shortly have a storage container on site for its larger items and also that any re-design/re-sizing could possibly remove the need for planning permission. Cllr. Kirkby was asked to conduct more research into the maximum possible size that could be built without needing planning permission and Members would then review whether or not they wished to go ahead with the project. Cllr. Baynham stressed that this project was entirely separate to the storage container purchased and that even if this project went ahead it would not directly affect the siting of that unit.

MIN 4321 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Services Review Update: Nothing to report at present but information expected shortly.

(2) Memorial Hall Update: Cllr. Baynham had received an email update from one of the Committee Members that evening but had not yet had chance to read it. The Clerk would circulate to Members for information. Cllr. Baynham stated that the County Council wished to complete the transfer of the Hall to the new Committee as soon as possible however the separate parcels of land would be done separately as they did not form part of the Trust. Cllr. Owens felt very strongly that all the areas should be transferred at the same time. The matter would be kept on the agenda for the time being.

Cllr Edwards left the room for the duration of the following item having declared a prejudicial interest.

(3) Future Education Provision in Presteigne: Cllr. Baynham reported that the present Head had been re-deployed to another school that was currently in special measures. In the interim Ms Craddock-Bennett had overall responsibility for the John Beddoes Campus. She added that the introduction of a through school for Presteigne was still the intention although, at least initially, this would probably be over the two existing sites.

Bus Routes and School Catchments: Cllr. Wilding expressed concern that some students were being directed towards other High Schools when they would have formerly been given transport to John Beddoes. Cllr. Baynham had checked with the school transport section and been told that there had been no recent changes. She would check to see if there had been any over the previous years. She would circulate the information she had received.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.

(4) Wales Air Ambulance Review: Committee decision date had been delayed for a week but the recommendation was to close the Welshpool base.

MIN 4322 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards reported the following:-

Attendance at the Have Your Say Consultation in Knighton.

Attendance at a recent Local Development Plan Meeting.

Cllr. Baynham had nothing to add this month.

MIN 4323 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Co-Option: Closing date was 31st March.

(2) Lighting at Radnor Hills Site: Cllr. Baynham would approach the company to ask if it was possible to adjust the lighting.

The meeting closed at 9.52 pm.

DRAFT