

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER 2024 HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. T. Owens, (Mayor), A. Van Huls (Deputy Mayor), D. Edwards, C. Kirkby MBE, F. Preece, J. Wilding, C. Ross, A. Ramsay, N. Rogers, L. Harling-Bowen and J. Ramsay.

Apologies: Cllrs. M. Price, B. Baynham.

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. A. Ramsay, re proposal for cafe/bar/storage, Trustee of Sheep Music. NB Dispensation in place allowing full discussion and vote.

Cllr. C. Ross, re. proposal for cafe/bar/storage, Trustee of Sheep Music. NB Dispensation in place allowing full discussion and vote.

Personal and Prejudicial:

Cllr. A. Ramsay, re planning application 24/1455/LBC, owner of property and planning application 24/1359/TRE - related to neighbour of property.

Cllr. J. Ramsay, re. planning application 24/1455/LBC, related to owner of property and 24/1359/TRE - neighbour of property.

Cllr. C. Kirkby, re planning applications 24/1598/HH and 24/1455/HH, friend of both applicants.

Cllr. F. Preece, re. planning application 24/1598/HH - neighbour of property.

Declarations of Office – Cllrs. Rogers and A. Ramsay: The Clerk would arrange to meet in person in order for the necessary forms to be witnessed and signed.

Prior to the start of the meeting Members heard from Mr T. Mullett who had approached the Council about becoming the Town Crier for Presteigne. Mr. Mullett had previous experience as the Town Crier for Hereford and was hoping to become a Town Crier for the area. He confirmed that if the Council supported his request there would be no cost to the Council at all and he would not be expecting expenses. Cllr. Owens thanked Mr. Mullett for attending and advised that the Council would consider his request at its December meeting.

MIN 4402 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

The Minutes of the Climate and Environment Committee meeting held on 28th October, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4403 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

(1) Car Parking: Cllr. Kirkby reported that an initial reply had been received from the Portfolio Holder citing the need to continue to receive car park income in order to support the general shortages in the County Council budget. He pointed out that the matter had been raised because Powys' own review indicated that the Shopper's Car Park was particularly under utilised and so there would be little if any budget impact. The Clerk advised that a further email had been received earlier in the day from the Portfolio Holder. She would circulate this to all and include a formal item on the December agenda.

(2) Trees and Potential Tree Protection Orders: Cllr. Kirkby asked if Cllr. A. Ramsay had sent the tree photographs to Cllr. Baynham and it was confirmed that this had been done. The Clerk would agenda for review/update at the December meeting.

MIN 4404 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month. The letter of thanks from Presteigne and Norton Community Trust was noted.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Highground Maintenance Ltd	£449.69	MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1926.12	
HM Revenue & Customs	£808.70	
NEST (Direct debit)	£181.02	
T. Lloyd-John	£654.23	
N. Close	£64.00	
N. Close	£220.00	MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00	
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00	MEADOW ACC
High Street Grant	£3572.10	
William Protheroe Ltd (war memorial)	£650.00	
Eighteen73 (website hosting)	£252.00	
Mrs T.A. Price (travel expenses)	£38.70	
SLCC Enterprises Ltd (conference fee)	£39.00	
British Gas Lite (Wilson Terrace Toilets)	£16.02	
JRB Enterprises Ltd (dog bags)	£1260.60	MEADOW ACC
One Voice Wales (training – new Councillor/chairing)	£40.00	
EDF Energy (Hereford Street)	£59.26	
High Street Grant	£3572.10	
Wallgate Ltd (soap for units in toilets)	£120.43	
Border Janitorial (toilet rolls)	£94.68	
J & P Turner (planters – Mayor’s Allowance)	£369.96	
Bucknell Nurseries (daffodil bulbs)	£96.00	
High Street Grant	£1414.00	
Amazon (refund T. Price)	£3.99	

c) Interim Audit: Members noted the completion of the mid-year internal audit. No issues had been raised.

d) Inspection of Invoices: Cllr. Owens confirmed that this had been done with no matters to raise.

e) Review of Money Market Investments: Members considered the matured/maturing accounts and it was agreed to re-invest both (Capital of £50,000 in total) for a three-month period. The Clerk would arrange.

f) Receipts: The following receipts were noted.

John Beddoes Trust Fund (twds costs of cleaning war memorial)	£250.00
Powys County Council (refund re. High Street Grant)	£9256.70

A letter of thanks to be written to the Trust Fund.

g) Notification of S137 limit 2025/26: Noted as £11.10 per elector.

h) Update - Ring Fenced Capital Receipt: The Clerk explained that she kept a specific record of capital spending in order for such spending to be set against the original receipt and reduce the amount of the reserves restricted to capital spending. Over time this would reduce to zero.

i) Mayor’s Allowance/Expenses 2024/25: Agreed that for the current year approval be given for a virement of the £1000 Mayor’s Allowance to Mayor’s Expenses.

MIN 4405 PLANNING

Cllr. Edwards left the room for the duration of the following item due to her position on the County Council Planning Committee.

Cllrs. J. Ramsay, A. Ramsay and C. Kirkby were placed in the waiting room for the duration of the following item.

(1) Planning applications: The following planning application was discussed –

24/1455/HH Grid Reference: E:331476 N: 264421 Proposal: Demolition of existing lean-to utility and construction of single storey kitchen/dining room. Site Address: Hafod, Broad Street, Presteigne, LD8 2AD. Resolved no objections be raised.

Cllrs. J. Ramsay, A. Ramsay and C. Kirkby returned to the meeting.

24/1504/TRE Grid Ref: E: 331379 N: 264626 Proposal: Removal of a boundary Laurel shrub and Holly tree, and the crown raise of a Yew tree and Dawn Redwood tree Location: The Rectory, St David's Street, Presteigne LD8 2BP. Resolved no objections be raised.

24/1567/FUL Grid Reference: E:331461 N: 264311 Proposal: Removal of Lloyds TSP fascia signs and ATM Site Address: Lloyds Tsb Bank Plc, High Street, Presteigne, LD8 2AU. Resolved to object to the application until a replacement ATM was installed.

24/1568/LBC Grid Reference: E:331461 N: 264311 Proposal: Removal of Lloyds TSP fascia signs and ATM Site Address: Lloyds Tsb Bank Plc, High Street, Presteigne, LD8 2AU. Resolved to object to the application until a replacement ATM was installed.

Cllr. C. Kirkby was placed in the waiting room for the duration of the following item.

24/1598/HH Grid Reference: E:331825 N: 264037 Proposal: Two storey rear & side extension to existing dwelling Site Address: 4 Greenfield Road, Presteigne, LD8 2AY. Resolved no objections be raised.

Cllr. C. Kirkby returned to the meeting.

Cllrs. A. Ramsay and J. Ramsay were placed in the waiting room for the duration of the following item.

24/1349/TRE Grid Ref: E: 331233 N: 264564 Proposal: Removal of a mixed species hedge Location: 1 Wherby Cottage, Presteigne, LD8 2DD. Resolved no objection be raised.

Cllrs. A. Ramsay and J. Ramsay returned to the meeting.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the meeting.

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

24/1196/TPO Trees at John Beddoes Campus – Approval.

24/0689/HH Garrison Cottage, Church Street, Presteigne – Approval.

24/1106/HH 4 Greenfield Road, Presteigne – Refused.

Cllrs. Preece and Rogers joined the meeting at this point.

MIN 4406 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: The Working Group had met and put forward the following recommendations: -

Purchase of 5 A3 notice boards: As an interim measure for display within the town, Went's meadow and Norton. These would be purchased and erected as soon as possible, photographed and the photograph sent to DSI as evidence of compliance with their IDSC guidelines. Agreed.

Production of a formal dark sky policy: Agreed Cllr. Harling-Bowen contact Leigh Williams at Powys County Council for its policy so that it could be reviewed for amendment and adoption by the Town Council.

Christmas Lights: The Clerk advised that she felt the overall renewal/replacement of the Christmas Lights was not something that fell under the remit of this Working Group but agreed that it should have input into the type of lights to be purchased. Cllr. Kirkby did not agree with the advice given and following a short discussion it was agreed that the Dark Skies Working Group investigate possible lighting alternatives for the replacement of the current lights including identifying a suitable dark sky compliant replacement. It was agreed that the quotes for installation of lights in future years be put on hold for the possible purchase of new lights to be explored. The Clerk explained the current position with regards the lights in 2024 – issues had arisen with sourcing replacements for the broken strings, the removal of some of the anchorage points and the scaffolding on some sections of High Street/Broad Street. The scaffolding was in the process of being removed and the installer would then return to continue the installation. The removal of the anchorage points on Radnor Buildings meant that the lights here could not be put in place but would hopefully be re-purposed to cover the broken strings in High Street.

Council Website: Agreed that the website be updated to include a section on dark skies. It would contain the town dark sky policy and suitable information on dark skies for visitors and residents. The Clerk would obtain a quote for a more detailed web page from Orphans Press which

hosted the website so it could be considered. The alternative would be a simpler page which the Clerk could set up.

Engagement with residential, retail and restaurant lighting: Working Group to explore in more detail at its next meeting in order to produce a recommendation to the Council. Contact could, for example, be through a mailshot or targeted letters.

Budget Allocation: The group recommended that in January the Council agrees a budget allocation within dark skies for suitable Xmas lighting, signage (including interpretation boards), delivery (as required in the Presteigne and Norton DSI Dark Sky Community application delivery plan) and publicity (including events, flyers, website and social media). Agreed that this be considered when setting the Council's next budget in January 2025. Working Group to agree draft figures for consideration.

Dark Sky Community Group: Agreed that a Presteigne dark sky community group be established to assist with sky quality measurement, publicity and education.

(2) Climate and Environment Update:

Reports on any Meetings/Conferences attended: Cllr. J. Ramsay reported on his recent visit to the Presteigne Sewage Works. He also informed Members that the reserve had been mentioned recently by the National Forest for Wales.

Recommendations of Climate and Environment Committee as follows –

Hedge Cutting: to ask that the hedge cutting on the Meadow be reviewed and to recommend that hedges 1 and 4 not be cut this year and hedge 2 be cut on the inside (by the Community Barn). See later agenda item.

Hedge Cutting, Eddie's Meadow: to recommend that the inside of the hedges be left uncut. Review of hedge management: See later agenda item.

Wildflower Project (provision of a budget for a contractor to cut the wildflower areas as part of the nature reserve budget in 2025/26). Noted that the Sites and Buildings Committee would prepare a draft budget when it met on 27th November.

Use of the tractor equipment at the Norton Churchyard: Cllr. Wilding reported that the Community Payback team was continuing to cut all areas needed and that there was no current need for use of the equipment. No further action needed.

Dissolving of Committee: Agreed the Committee be dissolved and replaced by a working group.

Update to last Climate Action Report: Agreed that the Working Group suggest updates to the Council's last climate report (made in November 2023).

Request that the Council suggest plants for the Leominster roundabout in 2025: Members noted that sponsorship by Radnor Hills was already agreed. Cllr. Preece proposed that arrangements be left the same, this was seconded but amended by Cllr. J. Ramsay to include the suggestion of plants to enhance biodiversity. This was agreed and Cllr. J. Ramsay would supply the Clerk with suggestions to discuss with the company and it was also agreed to supply the sponsor with the Council's biodiversity policy.

Upgrading of EV Charging Points: Agreed that the Clerk approach Powys County Council to ask that the electric vehicle charging points be upgraded.

Tree Group: Agreed that the Council give permission for the Tree Group to apply for a £1000 grant for pond plants.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: The Clerk gave a brief update on the progress of the grant works. Members agreed that the High Street was looking good where works had been completed. All projects were on course to complete before the 31st December deadline.

(4) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Kirkby reported on the current position regarding the application. The Officer had indicated that she would need to assess the information provided in the witness statements

before deciding on whether any additional information would be needed. Cllr. Kirkby stated that he was aware of residents that had been in touch with the County Council as they believed they had relevant information but had not received any follow up from the County Council. He added that there was as yet no indication of time scales for the re-consultation or for the subsequent Committee meeting.

(5) Reply from Natural Resources Wales re flood defences/Lugg Bridge: Members noted the reply from Natural Resources Wales as follows, '*We are currently working with our appointed designers and the owner of the affected property, with a view to submitting a planning application for the replacement river wall and property early in the new year. As you correctly stated in your email, working in the river when the water levels are high not only makes the work more difficult but also more dangerous. In addition to the river levels, we also need to consider wildlife, particularly fish. We have been working with our NRW colleagues in the consenting / licensing team to agree the best time of the year to undertake the in-river work and suitable working methods to ensure the welfare of the fish and water quality. Our current programme shows the river wall being constructed in May 2025, but I would like to highlight that this is subject to obtaining the necessary consents.*' Members were pleased that there now seemed to be a plan in place.

(6) Kington Roundabout: The Clerk reminded Members that Cllr. Baynham had asked that this item be deferred as she was unable to attend the meeting this month. Cllr. J. Ramsay asked to make Members aware of some information, this being that Mr. P. Smith had agreed to sponsor the roundabout and that he (Cllr. Ramsay) was willing to organise volunteers to do the work. This information was noted. The Clerk added for the record that she had, as requested, obtained a quote from Caring for God's Acre for looking after the roundabout in 2025. This was £350. Information noted and the matter would be discussed at the December meeting.

MIN 4407 NORTON

(1) General Works: Milestone with Stone Mason for refurbishment. Agreed that Mr. Close be asked to commence restoring the wooden benches subject to the allocated reserve held (and retaining an amount to cover the stone mason's work).

(2) Report on Annual Bonfire/Fireworks: A very successful event had been held and approximately £650 profit had been made. Thanks were noted to all the volunteers.

MIN 4408 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences - Cleaning and Painting Quotes to be discussed at Sites & Buildings Committee on 27th November.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were discussed –

- Surrender of one tenancy/arrangements for clearance of plot: Agreed that the Clerk arrange for Mr. Bennett to strim the plot before it was re-let.
- Update re plot markers@ Cllr. Van Huls had provided Cllr. Preece with some plot markers. He would obtain more so that all thirty-six plots could be marked formally. Cllr. Preece would arrange for these to be put in place in due course.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed –

Hedge Management 2024: Cllr. Wilding explained his suggestions for the 2024 cut, noting in particular that if the hedges were left as suggested by the Climate & Environment Committee it would mean all falling due for a cut in the same year meaning there would be no berries remaining for wildlife in that year. Cllr. J. Ramsay noted the suggestions made but asked that Cllr. Wilding meet with him on site to discuss. Agreed that this should happen and that Cllr. Wilding should proceed to instruct the contractor as agreed at the discussion. The hedges on Eddie's Meadow would also be considered.

Cutting of one area of Eddie's Meadow (as part of annual hedge trimming): Agreed. Cllr. Wilding to arrange. Blocked drain, scout hut car park: Agreed no action needed. Clerk to report back to Council if it became a problem.

Annual Play Inspection Report: It was agreed that the Clerk approve the ongoing repeat booking of the inspections with the Play Inspection Company. Cllr. Kirkby had attended the review on site and reported that generally all was in good order although some works were needed. These would be looked at in more detail at the Sites and Buildings Committee meeting but included – the replacement of the rotten posts in the skateboard park fence, removal of the redundant gatepost at the skateboard entrance, attention to some of the concrete joint areas and regular, possibly monthly, sweeping of the MUGA to remove loose debris/moss from the surface. Agreed the Clerk seek a quote from the strimming contractor to see if it could be included in his works.

Bike Track - Update: Cllr. Owens confirmed that he had met with the boys and one of the parents to discuss what could be done. He had stressed the need for tools to be properly stored away all the time and had discussed the digging/holes off the bike track which the boys stated had not been done by them. He had discussed the possible reinstatement of the landing areas and it had been agreed that the parent with a suitably qualified driver be permitted to carry out works on site. If felt appropriate at the time a Councillor would supervise the works. Cllr. Kirkby suggested that liaison also take place with Mr. Graham who had historical knowledge of the site. Cllr. Owens would check that there were no costs to this work before it proceeded. The Clerk reported complaints about young persons biking up High Street the wrong way and also biking around the town at night with no lights. It was agreed that this was a police matter. The Clerk would make the local police aware.

Review of decision café bar/storage: Following the expiry of the six-month period Cllr. Kirkby had brought this matter back to Council for a review. He explained that, given the Town Council now had its own storage, the design of the proposed building had been adjusted and was now 7.5m long, reduced from 9m. He referred Members to the full report which had been circulated with the meeting papers and in particular to the three main intended functions for the intended building, these being - the storage of equipment, principally for Sheep Music and the Carnival Committee, the provision of a servery for either a bar or food as required, saving the huge effort required to build and dismantle a bar for each event and providing secure overnight security for stock and the opportunity to purchase new equipment within the grant application to help with putting on events on the meadow. Sheep Music had agreed to refund the Council the cost of the planning application. Cllr. Van Huls felt the gravelled area was perhaps too extensive and Cllr. Kirkby confirmed that this could be reduced to remove the area above the proposed new building if felt appropriate. Cllr. Wilding raised a number of points which were – clarification that the ownership of the building and equipment would rest with the Town Council, the need for SUDs provision as part of the planning application (potential cost approx. £1000), concern over the wooden floor/decking as a possible fire risk, feeling a concrete floor would be better, and the need for full financial management, including the need for formal quotes etc subject to the Council's financial regulations. Cllr. Kirkby agreed to take these points on board if the project went ahead. He confirmed that if the grant application was unsuccessful the project could not proceed but asked for Council commitment to the requested £3000 contribution to the project costs should it be successful. This could be met initially from reserves which could be replenished by budgeting for the cost in 2026/27. This would avoid budgeting for the project in January and the project then being unable to go ahead if the grant application was unsuccessful. Cllr. Kirkby then proposed that the project go ahead with the commitment of £3000 towards the project, initially from reserves. This was seconded by Cllr. A. Ramsay. A vote was then taken, there were six votes in favour and none against with the remaining Members abstaining. The proposal was therefore carried.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: The following matters were noted –

- General: Cllr. Ramsay had nothing to report other than to note the discussion on a draft budget to be held at the Sites and Buildings Committee meeting.
- Dogs on reserve: Members noted the email from member of the public and it was agreed that Cllr. J. Ramsay make contact with the dog walker to ask that they refrain from walking their dogs on the site.
- Access gates onto Nature Reserve: Agreed that these were historic accesses and that as the site was open access no further action be taken.

(5) Wilson Terrace Play Area: The following matters were noted –

- Broken/missing Zip Wire Seat: County Council was taking steps to replace.
- Update re. new bin: Highways depot was reviewing the need for a bin given the desire to promote recycling.
- Climbing net, City Unit: This was due to be replaced due to a manufacturing issue.
- New toddler seat: Was held in store and should be fitted at the same time as the new zip wire seat.

MIN 4409 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Cllr. Edwards reported that she was part of the Scrutiny Committee which had considered the report and that it had concluded that there was insufficient information provided. The report was due to go back before the Cabinet at the end of the month. The preferred option in the report was to retain pools in the five main towns only. It was agreed to keep the matter on the agenda and the Clerk to also ask Cllr. Baynham for as much information as possible. It was thought to be too early for a public meeting but the Clerk reminded Members that a Working Group was already in place and consisted of all

Members of the Council so it could meet as it was felt to be needed. The Clerk was asked to seek as much information on the current costings and equipment replacement schedule condition as possible. Once this was received the Working Group could meet to discuss next steps.

(2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: Cllr. Edwards was pleased to report that the Cabinet was meeting on 10th December to confirm the transfer of the trusteeship. Expression of interest for the car park areas of land could then be commenced. The Committee then hoped to open the Hall in February 2025.

(3) Town Crier: Agreed to seek a reference from Hereford City Council and to discuss further at the December meeting.

(4) Appointment of Replacement Town Council Representatives/Memberships –

- Primary School Governor: Cllr. D. Edwards.
- PACDG: Cllr. L. Harling-Bowen.
- Local Development Plan Working Group: Cllr. Rogers

(5) Telephone Kiosk, Station Road: Noted that as requested last year this had now been re-painted by BT and a new 'telephone' sign has been requested

(6) Christmas Lights Check: Deferred. See above under Dark skies.

(5) Sustainable Powys – County Council Meetings: Reminder – noted. Request to be part of joint letter to PCC from Beguildy Community Council: Agreed Council would consider this but would wish to see the letter before confirming.

(5) Christmas Lights Installation Quotes: Deferred. See under dark skies above.

(6) Letter from Welsh Parliament re. covid enquiry: Noted. No comment.

MIN 4410 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Edwards reported on the following –

- Leisure Centres: Much time was currently being spent on the review papers.
- Best Kept Garden, Council Houses: Won by a Presteigne tenant.

MIN 4411 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Possible Dangerous Trees, River Lugg : Cllrs. Wilding and J. Ramsay to assess when looking at the hedge management. Noted that the trees were on the opposite bank so were not the responsibility of the Town Council.

(2) Pound Lane Traffic Direction: Request for item to be on the December agenda.

(3) Remembrance Sunday: Members noted that this had been well attended.

(4) Presteigne Fireworks: Members noted their congratulations to Sheep Music for a very successful event.

The meeting closed at 9.38 pm