

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES FROM THE CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 28th OCTOBER 2024 IN THE GREEN ROOM, ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BROAD STREET, PRESTEIGNE AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present:

Cllrs. J. Ramsay (Chairman), D. Edwards (Vice-Chairman), L. Harling Bowen and C. Kirkby MBE.
Outside Representatives Ms. K. Van Den Ende, H. Rimington.

Apologies: None.

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

1/24. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Due to the resignation of Cllr. Poster it was necessary to elect a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Nominations were invited by Cllr. Ramsay. Cllr. Ramsay was proposed by Cllr. Edwards and seconded by Cllr. Kirkby and elected unanimously.

2/24. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2024/25

Cllr. Edwards was proposed by K. Van Den Ende, seconded by Cllr. Ramsay and elected unanimously.

3/24. UPDATES ON PREVIOUS MATTERS

Hedge Management: Cllr. Ramsay and Ms Van Den Ende had looked at the hedges, specifically hedges 1,2 and 4. The hedges were generally growing well and it was agreed to recommend that of these three hedges just the inside of hedge two by the Community Barn needed cutting this time. The Clerk explained that she and Cllr. Wilding had met the contractor in 2023 and that Cllr. Wilding would be meeting him this time to go over the schedule for this year. Cllr. Ramsay asked that he also attend if this could be arranged. Ms. Van Den Ende advised that the infill planted was growing well. Cllr. Wilding had been in touch with the Clerk to suggest the hedge cutting contractor also cut a section of Eddie's Meadow and the Committee was generally in favour of this. The Sites and Buildings Committee would review the hedge management at the end of November and make a recommendation to the Full Council.

The Committee then considered the hedges in Eddie's Meadow and whether the internal hedges here could also be left. The Clerk would check the current arrangements and agenda an item for Full Council to review.

Wildflower Project: This was now complete and had been very successful considering the poor weather. More locally sourced seeds had been sown and the volunteers were considering a Spring cut. Cllr. Harling-Bowen suggested purchasing equipment to mechanically cut the areas and it was explained that the Council did own equipment. Cllr. Harling Bowen then asked if the equipment could be used at Norton Church. Concerns were raised regarding insurance, training and breakages and the Clerk would investigate further. The possibility of using an outside contractor to cut the wildflower areas on the reserve was put forward for possible consideration when setting a budget for the Nature Reserve at the November Sites and Buildings Committee.

4/24. VALIDITY OF COMMITTEE AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Cllr. Baynham had asked for this item to be on the agenda and her email to Cllr. Ramsay was read to the meeting. It outlined concerns that the Committee was concentrating on smaller matters rather than items such as solar panels for Council or other buildings.

The Committee considered the need for a formal committee and the Clerk explained the difference between a formal committee and an informal working group. After some discussion it was felt that a working group would provide more flexibility for meeting and could still submit written reports to the Council for consideration. The Committee would be dissolved. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that this request be put to Full Council for a decision.

Cllr. Kirkby left the meeting during the discussion on this item.

5/24 TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

There was no decision made on this given the recommendation above but it was agreed to recommend that the first task of the Working Group (if formed) would be to review the Climate report of November 2023 and submit updates to that report.

6/24 WEED KILLING TREATMENTS

Ms. Van Den Ende was concerned at the use of weed killer on Council land. The Clerk stated that there had been no weed killing treatments for approximately two years but that any use was approved by the Council with some treatments being necessary in order to protect the tarmac surfaces of the car park/MUGA and comply with RoSPA recommendations. She added that she had discussed the use of flame blowers being used instead of weed killer but the contractor did not use this method and had advised that they felt the use of gas made it a poor choice for the environment.

7/24 MANAGEMENT OF ROUNDABOUTS

Leominster Roundabout: The Clerk advised that sponsorship of this island had been renewed with Radnor Hills for 2025. Ms. Van Den Ende expressed concerns that it was not managed to maximise biodiversity and was unhappy at the type of plants used and at the regular mowing. Any suggestions to put to the sponsor would need to be agreed by Full Council. The Clerk pointed out that the roundabout was County Council property and that ultimately would be a decision for Cllr. Baynham and the County Council. It was agreed to ask that this be an agenda item at the November meeting.

Kington Roundabout: The Clerk explained the previous sponsor was unable to continue and that Cllr. Baynham was looking at options to present to the November Full Council meeting. She added that the Council had asked that she get a price for 2025 from Caring for God's Acre.

8/24 POWYS CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Cllr. Ramsay had attended this conference. There would be a further event on 7th December. Cllr. Harling Bowen was running a dark skies workshop at the event.

9/24 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

MS. Van Den Ende was concerned that the charging points in the Hereford Street Car Park were slow and becoming obsolete. She felt they were in need of upgrading. The Clerk would discuss with Cllr. Baynham as these charging points belonged to the County Council.

10/24 COUNTY COUNCIL STAKEHOLDER GROUP REPORT

Cllr. Ramsay had attended a meeting on 7th October.

11/24 COMMITTEE BUDGET

Not discussed due to the proposal to dissolve the Committee.

12/24. URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Dark Skies Working Group: A meeting date was to be arranged in the next few weeks.

(2) Grant for Pond Plants: Ms. Van Den Ende reported that an opportunity had arisen for the Tree Group to apply for £1000 of oxygenating plants for the ponds at the reserve and asked for permission to apply. The grant was through the County Council which would purchase the plants and arrange for the delivery. The Tree Group would deal with the planting. She asked for permission for the group to go ahead. Provisional agreement was given but this would need to be confirmed at Full Council in November.

13/24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No date discussed given the recommendation to dissolve the Committee.

Summary of Full Council Decisions Required –

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).

Hedge Cutting, Eddie's Meadow: to recommend that the inside of the hedges be left uncut.

Wildflower Project: To suggest the provision of a budget for a contractor to cut the wildflower areas as part of the nature reserve budget in 2025/26.

To ask that the Council consider allowing the use of the tractor equipment at the Norton Churchyard.

To recommend that the Committee be dissolved and replaced by a working group.

To recommend that, if formed, the Working Group suggest updates to the Council's last climate report (made in November 2023).

To ask the Council to consider suggesting plants for the Leominster roundabout in 2025.

To recommend that the Council approach Powys County Council to ask that the electric vehicle charging points be upgraded.

To recommend that the Council give permission for the Tree Group to apply for the £1000 grant for pond plants.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm.