

Cyngor Tref Llanandras a Norton PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 2024 HELD AT NORTON COMMUNITY HUB, NORTON, PRESTEIGNE AND ALSO VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING

Present: Cllrs. T. Owens, (Mayor), A. Van Huls (Deputy Mayor), B. Baynham, D. Edwards, F. Preece, M. Price, J. Wilding, C. Ross, A. Ramsay and J. Ramsay.

Apologies: Cllr. C. Kirkby.

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. Preece, re. discussion of candidate sites in Local Development Plan, personal friend of landowner - site 247.

Cllr. Wilding, re. discussion of candidate sites in Local Development Plan, landowner - sites 233 and 290.

MIN 4381 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st August, 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 4382 UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ITEMS

(1) Fire Retardant Paint Treatment, New Barn: The Clerk confirmed that the stage had been treated and added that a second coat was hopefully to be completed the coming weekend.

(2) Surface of MUGA: The Clerk confirmed that following the recent rain the surface had been re-checked and was still not felt to be slippy. Cllr. Baynham asked if the condition of the surface would form part of the annual inspection and the Clerk confirmed that it would. The annual inspection was due soon. Cllr. Owens advised the newer Members that the Council set aside a sum each year for holding in reserve for larger repairs to the MUGA, including replacing the surface in the future.

(3) Complaint re. condition of Gazebos: Cllrs. Edwards and Wilding confirmed that the gazebos had been well aired and dried at the recent Norton Show and felt that there was no further action needed. Cllr. Ross confirmed that Sheep Music had used some of the gazebos recently and they had been fine. Thanks noted to Norton Show Committee for their work to clean and dry the gazebos.

(4) Reminder re Online Reporting: Members noted the link for direct online reporting of highway, pavement and footpath issues.

MIN 4383 FINANCE

(1) Donations: No donations this month.

(2) The following payments were agreed –

Highground Maintenance Ltd	£449.69	MEADOW ACC
Mrs T. A. Price	£1588.64	
HM Revenue & Customs	£601.58	
NEST (Direct debit)	£146.30	
T. Lloyd-John	£667.23	
N. Close	£88.00	
N. Close	£208.00	MEADOW ACC
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00	
HSBC (bank charges)	£8.00	MEADOW ACC

T. Owens (expenses – Mayor)	£89.90
PHS (services to both toilet blocks)	£171.90
High Street Grant Payments 1	£2184.00
British Gas Lite (Wilson Terrace Toilets)	£16.72
British Gas Lite (Wilson Terrace Toilets)	£17.01
EDF Energy (Hereford Street Toilets)	£42.28
RB Landscaping	£789.60 MEADOW ACC
Lyreco (office supplies)	£58.68
High Street Grant Payment (2)	£3651.90

The Clerk advised that she had received petrol receipts relating to the Nature Reserve and had also been advised that two tarpaulins had been booked to the Council at PBS. The Nature Reserve did not have a current budget allocation and no authorisation for the expenditure had been sought. She asked for authorisation to refund the receipts and to pay for the tarpaulins once the invoice arrived. Cllr. Owens stressed that no spending should be undertaken without prior approval of the Council or, between meetings, of the Clerk. Members were concerned that anyone should be spending Council money without permission. It was agreed that the costs be approved in this instance but that when confirming this the Clerk stress that in future approval must be sought in advance. Cllr. Baynham asked that it be noted that due to her concerns about unauthorised spending she was abstaining from the vote.

R. Rimington (refund fuel – nature reserve) £23.80

(3) Mayor's Expenses/Allowance: Cllr. Baynham confirmed that she wished to spend the remaining balance of her expenses on planters etc for the Memorial Hall. She would decide whether to transfer the balance in her fund (£217.65) direct to the Hall Committee or whether planters would be purchased and donated to the Hall. She would liaise with the Clerk to arrange.

(4) Receipts: The following receipt as noted –

Powys County Council (precept 2nd payment) £25,250.00

(5) Christmas Lights: The inspection costs of £245 plus VAT for a check of the current lights was approved. The Clerk would arrange.

(6) Work on Presteigne War Memorial: Members were pleased to learn that the contractor could carry out the clean prior to Remembrance Sunday. The Clerk had been in touch with the local British Legion and the John Beddoes Charity and both would put the request for a contribution towards costs to their next Committee Meeting.

(7) Finance Training for Members: Members discussed the training needs and it was felt that training from the Clerk would be more relevant and useful than that from One Voice Wales. Agreed that the Clerk circulate details of the upcoming courses from One Voice Wales in case anyone was interested but that she also hold a finance briefing for new Members over the coming weeks (prior to the precept setting meeting).

(8) Budget Update to end of September 2024: The Clerk answered questions on the update. Cllr. Wilding asked if the current reserve for wildflowers/bulbs could be checked and a request to purchase bulbs for Norton be included on the October agenda. Updated project balances were normally supplied at the precept meeting and after the financial year end.

(9) Review of Internal Audit Arrangements for 2024-25: Members approved the re-appointment of Mr. Stephens as internal auditor and confirmed the audit documents as supplied.

MIN 4384 PLANNING

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

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

24/1196/TPO Grid Ref: E: 331718 N: 264017 Proposal: Removal of dead branches from Oak trees referenced within TPO 130 and T1 & T2 located on boundary of school playing field Location: John Beddoes Campus, Broadaxe, Presteigne LD8 2YT. Agreed no objections but noted that the work appeared to already have been completed.

Cllr. Edwards returned to the room.

(2) Planning Decisions: None this month.

Cllr. Wilding left the room for the duration of the discussion on all the candidate sites in Norton.

Cllr. Preece left the room for the duration of the discussion of candidate site 247.

(3) Local Development Plan: Members considered the current consultation documents and agreed to submit the following comments –

Candidate Sites:

Site 121 – Former Kayes Factory: The Town Council would welcome development on this site, which has been empty and unused for some time. It would prefer to see development on this site before any other sites in Presteigne and Norton. The site has been empty for many years and it is a brownfield site in the centre of the town. The Town Council agrees with the proposed designation of mixed use.

Site 160 – Land adjacent to Walkers Meadow: Whilst the extension of the site is logical and supported the proposed site is very large and the Council has concerns over access to the highway. There have been issues with smells from the sewage system at this end of town and the Council would like to be assured that Welsh Water have no concerns or that there are plans to improve the infrastructure.

Site 163 – Land at Slough Road: It was noted that the site borders a narrow road and therefore any development should also contain measures to address this. Traffic from the new development would need to pass the town Primary School where traffic is already congested.

Site 200 – Land at Maes Corton: No comment.

Site 233 – Mynd Road, Norton: The site does not appear to be a logical extension to the village.

Site 247 – Land at Wills View: Town Council notes that the previous site here has not yet been fully developed and utilised and feels that the existing site should be developed before further land is included as a candidate site.

Site 290 – Lands at Jack's Close: Town Council sees this as a logical development to the existing site.

Comments on sites generally – All sites should include provision for green infrastructure. The Town Council would like to see all developments including more shared ownership opportunities.

It was agreed to review the sites further following the closure of the call for additional sites and notification from the County Council of any additional sites in the Presteigne and Norton area.

Settlement Hierarchy: It was noted that Presteigne falls outside of the main towns in Powys (number 9 with seven in the top tier). Having examined the data it was agreed that the Clerk ask for a breakdown of the employment data for Presteigne and for Knighton, particularly on whether the data for Radnor Hills (presumed listed as in Knighton) included employees based/working in Presteigne. Cllr. Van Huls asked for more information on the broadband data given that two hundred extra properties were now able to connect to ultra-fast broadband.

(4) Nant Mithil Wind Energy Development: Members had received the viewpoints provided by Bute Energy. It was agreed that the Clerk request viewpoints from Went's Meadow and the top of the Warden. She was also instructed to ask that Presteigne and Norton be included in the formal planning consultation (including an in-person event) when that commenced later in the year. This was in order to make sure that residents were aware of the proposals and had the opportunity to ask questions.

Cllr. Edwards had recently attended a meeting with GreenGen which now had the necessary licence and would be proceeding with surveying land for the intended pylon route. She understood that as a licensed operator surveying work could be undertaken even if the landowner did not give permission.

MIN 4385 HIGHWAYS, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) Dark Skies Project Update: Two issues were discussed -

Signage: The Clerk advised that it was proving very difficult to obtain permissions via the County Council for signs on the highway given the need for highway signage to be bilingual. She had discussed the options with Mr. Harling-Bowen and it was felt that it might be better to have two signs only and site them at Went's Meadow Knighton Road entrance and possibly the Judge's Lodgings. This was agreed and the Clerk would liaise with Mr. Harling-Bowen over type, size and cost and report back to a future meeting. She would also check whether the Judge's Lodgings would be willing to have a sign.

Grant for Film Documentary: The Clerk advised that Mr. Harling-Bowen had not felt that a larger grant application was possible at present and wished to only apply for a grant for the documentary. He had identified a fund but Town Councils were not eligible to apply and he had asked if he could apply through CPRW. Members did not feel this was suitable and the Clerk was asked to see if she could find a fund to which the Town Council could apply. It was suggested that PAVO might be able to help identify a fund. The Clerk would investigate and report back to Council.

(2) Climate and Environment Update: The following matters were discussed –

- Next Committee meeting Items: Broadly as per the earlier cancelled meeting. Clerk had already drafted and would share with Cllr. J. Ramsay for any further suggestions.
- Local Places for Nature Top Up Grant – Update: Now completed.
- Powys Town and Community Councils Climate Event - October 2024: Cllr. J. Ramsay would attend.

(3) High Street Grant – Update: Two properties had now claimed at least part of their grant with two further claims expected in the next week. The Clerk had asked for updates from the other owners with few replies. She would chase.

(4) John Beddoes School Field – footpath/dog fouling issues: Update on Site Meeting: Cllr. Baynham had nothing to report as yet.

(5) Fold Farm DMMO Application: Cllr. Baynham reported that interviews would be taking place over two separate days both before the end of September.

(6) Email from resident re. street cleaning etc: Cllr. Owens summarised the email for Members. Cllr. Baynham stated that due to a lack of resources this was a problem for towns throughout Powys but that she would see if she could arrange a visit from the mechanical sweeper. The Clerk confirmed that the Community Payback team would not work on roadsides. The Town Council had been advertising for a self-employed contractor to carry out street cleaning duties for around twelve months but with no success. It was agreed that the Clerk reply outlining the situation and ask that the Council's advertisement for a street cleaner be put in the next community newsletter.

(7) NRW and Flood Defences, Lower Broad Street: Cllr. Owens reported that he had had conversations with the resident whose property had been affected and that he had been told that matters were now progressing. In order to carry out the remedial works he had been told that one arch of the bridge would be closed off to divert the water flow away from the repair site. The Clerk was asked to contact Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for a time scale for the works.

(8) Works to Lugg Bridge. Members noted the reply from the County Council as follows – *'As you will appreciate we have over 4000 structures in Powys and this does not score very highly at the moment in regards to making our planned maintenance list. We are now undertaking this year's inspections, after which we will produce a list of the structures which require the work to be completed more urgently. As soon as that list is completed (March 2025), I will let you know where Lugg Bridge sits. I will also speak to the local highways depot to see if this might be on their routine maintenance list. Sorry I can't give a more definite answer at this time but we can only do so much with the budgets that we're given so have to ensure that the small amount of money we have is targeted at the structures that need it the most.'* It was felt that the planned works by NRW would provide an opportunity for easy access to the bridge to carry out the areas of pointing required. The Clerk would write to suggest this.

MIN 4386 NORTON

(1) General Works: Cllr. Wilding had yet to remove the milestone and the 'Best Kept Village' sign. Cllr. Edwards confirmed that volunteers would refurbish the seats and that the area around the kiosk had been tidied. The sign and the kiosk were to be refurbished by Mr. Close (subject to sufficient funds in the allocated reserve). A broken right of way sign at the top of Mynd Lane would be reported online by Cllr. Baynham.

(2) Harvest Lunch: To take place on 22nd September.

(3) Community Hub: Committee working on upgrading the heating system.

MIN 4387 SITES AND BUILDINGS

(1) Public Conveniences: Update re painting of Hereford Street Block – The Clerk had only received one quote in so far. It was suggested she contact the contractors currently working on the High Street to see if they would be interested in quoting and report back to Council.

(2) Allotments: The following matters were discussed -

- Vandalism: The latest vandalism on the site was noted. This had taken place soon after the July meeting.
- Inspection: Cllrs. Preece and Price reported on their site inspection with several plots being in an extremely poor condition. The Clerk had been in touch with the tenants of four plots all of whom had promised to get their plots in order. Some complaints had been received from neighbouring tenants.
- Plot Markers: Cllrs. Preece and Price had had difficulty in identifying plots and the Clerk added that she too had problems. It was agreed that the Clerk look into the purchase of new plot markers and that Cllrs. Preece, Price and Wilding would meet with the Clerk on site to install new plot numbers.

- Grant: The County Council had confirmed that the grant had been awarded and that up to £2000 of equipment would be provided in due course.

(3) Meadows: The following matters were discussed -

- Parking for events: Cllr. Baynham had raised this as she was concerned at the parking near and around the site during a recent event. It was confirmed that events organisers should be encouraged to use the far 'car park' field for parking at events and that one line of cars for disabled attendees could be positioned under the trees near to the barn. It was noted that the football pitch field was not to be used without express permission. The Clerk would add this information to the application form with the note that safe and considerate parking was expected at all events.
- Brilliant Basics – possible grant application (disabled access path): It was noted that 20% match funding would be required and would need to be budgeted for. The scheme did not start until April 2025. Cllr. Wilding had made some approximate calculations and thought the costs would be around twelve to fourteen thousand pounds. It was agreed he would obtain more accurate costs in preparation for a full grant application and the Council would consider budgeting for the 20% match funding in January.
- Old Memorial Bench: Cllr. Baynham reported that the new bench had now arrived and was stored at the Day Centre. It was agreed that the old bench be offered to the Community Garden at the Rodd and that if it was possible to trace relatives of the original donor then they be asked if they wanted the plaque to be retained on the old bench or removed and given to them. Cllrs. Wilding, Van Huls and Owens would assist Cllr. Baynham to place the new bench on site and remove the old bench. Mr. Close would then fix it in place.
- Update on mole problem: The Clerk advised that ten moles had so far been caught but that the contractor would continue to work periodically over the Autumn/Winter months.
- Complaint re. Wilson Terrace Play Area: This had been referred to the Clerk after a online report had been made to the County Council. The Clerk had spoken to the resident and confirmed that this referred to the County Council Play Area. She had referred the matter back to the Outdoor Recreation Officer.
- Storage for Implements – Bike Track: Cllr. Owens introduced this item with a reminder that decisions could not be re-visited within six months. However having discussed this issue with the Clerk it had been added to the agenda due to the change in those working on the track. During meadow inspections Mr. Close and Members had noted tools and litter left on and around the track. Cllr. Ross had seen a quite large hole that had been dug which, while it was not on the regular walking areas, needed monitoring. Concern was noted that the express instruction of Cllr. Owens at the July meeting regarding storage on the allotments had been ignored and the allotment tenant visited without Council knowledge/approval. However it was agreed that storage at the allotments be happen on a temporary basis but that if any complaints were received then this permission would be immediately revoked. Cllr. Owens was willing to meet with the young persons. Cllr. Baynham felt that he should be accompanied and so it was agreed that Cllr. Owens and Cllr. Van Huls would arrange to meet with them to discuss what works would be permitted, what was currently being done and what plans (if any) they would like the Council to consider for further improvements.

(4) Nature Reserve Matters: The following matters were discussed -

- Grass Cutting: Cllr. J. Ramsay reported that the volunteers had spent a large numbers of hours raking and clearing the grass. Cllr. Wilding asked where the grass was being placed as it had been placed under the trees the previous year and this was not good for the trees themselves. Cllr. J. Ramsay confirmed that the grass was being placed outside the tree drip line as per the advice the group had received.
- Volunteer Records: The Clerk confirmed that this now seemed to be working.
- National Forest Sign: To be installed on the site.
- New Benches: The two new benches purchased by Cllr. Baynham with her Mayor's Fund were now on site.
- Ponds: Seemed to be holding water although the level of one had dropped.
- Generally: The site was developing well ecologically, surveys were ongoing and the Primary School was involved on the site.
- Future Budget: It was noted that Council would need to consider inclusion of a budget dedicated to the reserve. This would cover items such as fuel for grass cutting, replacement stone etc. This would be initially considered by the next meeting of the Sites and Buildings Committee in November/December.

MIN 4388 CORRESPONDENCE/GENERAL ITEMS

(1) Leisure Centre Update: Nothing to report.

(2) Presteigne Memorial Hall Update: Cllr. Baynham reported that she had seen a draft of the proposed legal agreement and that matters appeared to be progressing.

(3) Prospective Closure of Lloyds Bank. Cllr. Baynham reported that there had been some initial confusion over the opening hours of the Post Office with the bank stating the shop opening hours which were of course considerably longer. The Bank had been notified of this error. No location had yet been confirmed for either the proposed Community Banking facility or the new cashpoint. She added that it was vital that the cashpoint have twenty-four hour access to allow cash to be withdrawn at all times and so was located on an outside wall. Possible locations suggested at the meeting included the town library and Hereford Street Car Park (where parking would be easily available). Members discussed the benefits of a general banking hub in the town and felt this should be investigated. The Clerk would raise these issues with the bank.

(4) Meeting with Wales Air Ambulance – Report on August Meeting: Cllr. Edwards had attended and reported disappointment with the responses to questions raised at the meeting and at the lack of understanding of the concerns of those living in Mid Wales. The Clerk was asked to contact the West Midlands Ambulance Service to discuss how/if the service would cover the East Radnorshire area.

(5) Letter re Town Crier: Agreed that the person be invited to the November meeting to discuss further.

(6) Portrait of King Charles: This had been received free of charge but was larger than expected (A2). It was agreed that the Clerk approach the Assembly Rooms to see if it would be willing to display the portrait. It would be needed for any future Operation London Bridge but otherwise could remain on display.

(7) Town Wifi Update: Members noted that the units for the Assembly Rooms were now planned for installation very soon. They noted the potential costs for the Town Council once the project ended and it was agreed that this seemed excessive however a decision would be taken at the conclusion of the grant funded period. The Clerk reported that the project officer would be holding individual meetings with each town once the installations were complete. The Clerk would notify Members when a date was received in case anyone wished to attend. Data collected by the system was freely available to all and could be used by shops/community groups etc as needed.

(8) 2026 Review of Senedd Constituencies: The Commission had proposed 16 constituencies by pairing the 32 UK parliamentary constituencies in Wales. Each proposed constituency must be contiguous. Members agreed that the present system worked well and did not need changing. They also did not feel that any more Senedd Members were needed. The Clerk was asked to respond to the consultation giving these views.

MIN 4389 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllr. Baynham reported the following:

- Next Full Council – 3rd October.
- Grass Cutting – recently cut but several areas missed. She had asked that these areas be dealt with. Clerk asked to see if the Guerrilla Gardeners would tidy up Station Road.
- Litter Picking, Harper's Lane: She asked that a letter of thanks be written to the resident who regularly litter picked. She would supply the Clerk with contact details.

Cllr. Edwards had nothing to add.

MIN 4390 COUNCIL VACANCIES - CO-OPTIONS

The following were co-opted on to the Council's Presteigne Ward: -

Nicholas Rogers and Leigh Harling-Bowen.

MIN 4391 URGENT BUSINESS INFORMATION

(1) Vintage Cars: Weekend of 12-13th October.

(2) Email from British Cycling: Cllr. Owens agreed to make initial contact regarding involvement with future events and would report back to a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm