

# LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL



## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2015

Minutes of the Leominster Annual Town Meeting held at the Council Offices, 17 West Street, Leominster, HR6 8EP on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 commencing at 7:00pm

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllrs Norman (Mayor), Bartlett, Barton, Gibson, Lacey, Marsh, Mifflin, Rumsey and Thomas.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Brig Peter Jones CBE (Outgoing Mayor), Cllrs McCaull and Stone (Herefordshire Council Ward Members) and seven members of the public.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting a minutes silence was observed in respect of the late Joan Thwaites who had recently passed away.

### 1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Cllr Norman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced all the Members of the Town Council present.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Davies, A Pendleton, R Pendleton and Rosser.

### 3. MINUTES

The meeting **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014 be adopted and signed as a correct record.

### 4. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE OUTGOING TOWN MAYOR

Brig. Peter Jones CBE presented the annual report as outgoing Town Mayor. He outlined the work undertaken by the Town Council over the past year including taking on and keeping open the four toilets in the town, undertaking additional services such as grass cutting, taking over the management of the Friday Market and setting up an in-house Environmental Team responsible for street cleaning as well as many other duties.

The outgoing Mayor thanked Councillors for their support over the past year and wished them well. A copy of the full report is attached in appendix one.

Cllr Norman thanked Brig Jones CBE for being such an active Mayor. The Council had faced a challenging year and he had helped it meet those challenges.

## **5. QUESTIONS**

The Mayor then invited questions from those present.

### ***Mr Collier***

Mr Collier thanked the Mayor for his efforts over the past year. There had been issues in 2014 regarding grass cutting in the town and throughout Herefordshire. Concern was expressed that local residents had lost funding which should have been spent in Leominster but due to the service cutbacks had not been. He was pleased to see that responsibility was returning to Leominster to be managed locally.

He expressed concern that local residents were unaware of what both the Town Mayor and the Town Council were doing due to a lack of communication. He urged Council to consider developing a newsletter and consider other forms of communication to help keep residents informed.

He was assured that the Town Council was keen to support the newly launched Leominster News and had contacted those involved expressing a desire to support the publication both financially and by providing regular copy.

Mr Collier expressed concern that the CCTV in Leominster was not being utilised to its full potential and that the Town was not receiving value for money. He had visited the CCTV control room in the past and had been concerned by what he had seen regarding the low priority level Leominster received. A number of incidents had occurred recently which had not been captured on CCTV when there were cameras in the vicinity.

He was assured that the matter was under review through the Market Towns Forum and that his concerns would be passed on. Leominster Town Council would strive to obtain a better level of service.

Consideration was given to the range of additional services being undertaken by the Town Council. Every effort would be made to continue to improve service delivery but there was significant financial pressure and the continuation of the annual transitional grant from Herefordshire Council which amounted to over £40,000 in 2014/15 was not assured so there may be further financial challenges ahead. Herefordshire Council would be required to make a further £30 million worth of savings over the next five years.

Concern was expressed regarding the poor state of the roads and streets in the town centre. Assurances were given that the Town Council was aware of the issues and was committed to pursuing improvements to the public realm.

### ***Mr Verity***

Mr John Verity of the civic Society thanked Council for keeping to two toilets at the Grange and Central car park open, observed that the grass maintenance at the Grange was good and that the website was being kept up to date. He warned that further devolvement of services was bound to happen with 122 assets in Leominster alone having been identified by Herefordshire Council as being suitable for sale or disposal.

### ***Mrs Ann Evans***

Mrs Evans requested that additional seating should be provided in the town centre. She also suggested that consideration be given to pedestrianizing Corn Square.

Concern was also expressed regarding large and heavy Lorries accessing the town centre delivering to local businesses whilst at the same time causing significant damage to the roads, pavements and some buildings.

Other related issues included the access of the May Fair and the requirement to remove all the street furniture when the Fair was on. Additional street furniture would add to the overall costs.

A request was made to erect additional brown tourism signage to help direct visitors to the town centre and other attractions within the town. This would be pursued.

Concern was also expressed regarding the poor state of some shop fronts and the amount of rubbish left in doorways. There was an issue regarding collecting rubbish from private land and the Town Council gave a commitment to consider some innovative ways to help deal with the issues raised including the possibility of setting up a small grant pot to help local shopkeepers redecorate and maintain their shop fronts as well as liaising with landlords when shop units became vacant.

## **6. SUMMARY AND CLOSURE**

The Mayor of Leominster thanked everyone for their attendance and assured those present that their comments had been taken on board.

Among the challenges ahead where the continued issue of funding and how to address the cuts that would be imposed over the next few years. It was crucial to develop strong partnerships to help meet the future challenges and the Town Council would act as enabler to help provide support.

The Mayor paid tribute to all the volunteers involved in various projects and organisations throughout the town especially Leominster in Bloom and the Sunday Litter pickers.

Among the items Council would be considering over the next year were looking at the way car parking charges were levied, smartening up the town's buildings, and focusing on partnership development.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:02pm.

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**MAYOR OF LEOMINSTER**

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**DATE:**