



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

APPLICATION PACK – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

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1. OVERVIEW OF LEOMINSTER

- 1.1 Leominster is the largest of the five market towns in Herefordshire with a population of around 11,700. It is situated in the north of the County, just off the A49. Its history is based around the ancient Priory of Saint Peter and Saint Paul and its traditional markets.
- 1.2 Herefordshire is a large rural county with a population of approximately 191,000, spread across an area of 218,000 hectares. It has a population density of 0.87 per hectare, the fourth lowest in England.
- 1.3 There is a Leominster market, which is operated by the Town Council, every Friday in Corn Square and various special markets throughout the year. These include the regular Farmers' Market held on the second Saturday of each month. Local food and drink are an important part of the economy and Leominster takes great pride in still being able to source so many of its needs within 30 to 40 miles around the town.
- 1.4 There are many traditional cafes and pubs in the town centre alongside a good range of independent retailers, many specialising in antiques, something Leominster is renowned for. Leominster is the start of the popular 'Black and White Trail', with a number of timber-framed buildings in the town centre. Of particular note is the highly popular Grange Court, built by John Abel, the King's carpenter, in 1633.
- 1.5 The 'Black and White Trail' runs through North-West Herefordshire, from Leominster to Kington. There are hundreds of timber-framed buildings along the trail, as well as some wonderful churches that reflect the long history of the area. There are records of people and events going back to Domesday.
- 1.6 Leominster's prosperity was built on the wool trade, especially from the locally bred Ryeland sheep. The Ryeland is one of the oldest English sheep breeds, going back seven centuries when the monks of Leominster bred sheep and grazed them on the rye pastures, giving them their name. The historic Priory Church of St Peter and St Paul is intrinsically intertwined with Leominster's heritage, and both it and Grange Court grace the wonderful open space known simply as The Grange.
- 1.7 Leominster was shortlisted in 2017 as one of the Sunday Times "Best Places to Live" and has won a gold award for its Leominster in Bloom entry in the Heart of England in Bloom competition for the past three years. In 2019 the Leominster in Bloom Group was awarded the Queen's Award for Volunteers, the MBE for voluntary organisations.
- 1.8 In 2020 Leominster was one of sixty-nine towns in England to be awarded funding from the Historic England High Streets Heritage Action Zone. Leominster's High St Heritage Action Zone Scheme was developed in close partnership with Herefordshire Council and will be delivered over the next four years, providing a boost to the local high street.

2. OVERVIEW OF LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

- 2.1 Leominster Town Council has 16 councillors, all of whom are volunteers. Councillors serve on a range of committees and outside bodies. The Council has a grants programme and endeavours to support the local community as much as it can.
- 2.2 The Town Council also provides around 100 allotments on its site in Ginhall Lane. The land is on a long lease and this will be one of the matters that the new Town

Clerk will need to review, including the negotiation of a new long term lease extension.

- 2.3 Over the past four years a number of services have been devolved to Leominster Town Council from Herefordshire Council. These include public conveniences, the operation of the markets, public open spaces and play areas.
- 2.4 The Town Council also took the Leominster Tourist Information Centre in-house at the beginning of April 2016 and has enhanced its street cleaning service and support for Leominster in Bloom. The Friday Market has continued to be developed, alongside a number of other events.
- 2.5 In April 2019 the Town Council took direct responsibility under licence for the management and maintenance of all local authority owned verges, play areas and open spaces.
- 2.5 In order to manage the verges and open spaces the Town Council set up a Direct Labour Force. This became operational in April 2019.
- 2.6 In June 2019 the Town Council completed the refurbishment of the “Servants Quarters”, a holiday flat located at 11 Corn Square. The flat is an addition to the Tourist Information Centre offer and compliments the holiday accommodation available locally.
- 2.7 The following Standing Committees are appointed by the Town Council:
 - Finance & General Purposes Committee
 - Planning & Highways Committee
 - Environment & Services Committee
 - Events & Communications Committee
- 2.8 In addition to the main Committees, a number of Task & Finish Groups have been appointed, to oversee budget development and specific Council projects.
- 2.9 The Town Council recently declared a Climate Emergency and is beginning the process of developing an Action Plan for the Council. It will also input into the town’s response to the Climate Emergency through Transition Leominster.
- 2.10 The Town Council works closely with organisations, service providers and community groups operating within Leominster. It facilitates ‘Team Leominster’, a forum for enabling collaboration, sharing of resources and opportunities, and the exchange of information and skills. The forum has two tiers – the Operational Group meet weekly to discuss incidents taking place on Leominster’s streets on a day-day basis, while the Tactical Group meets monthly to develop strategic responses to reoccurring or complex issues that are identified by either the Operational Group or the wider community.

3. FINANCES AND SERVICES

- 3.1 Leominster Town Council raised a precept of £557,574 for the 2020/21 financial year, with further income generated from various Council services.
- 3.2 With this income the Town Council provides the following services:
 - Allotments at Ginhall Lane
 - Public toilets at Central car park and Grange Park.

- Open Spaces: The Grange, Pinsley Mead, Millennium Green/ Community Orchard, Priory cemetery, Sydonia, Ginhall Green, Booth Memorial Garden
- Play areas: The Grange, Sydonia and Ginhall Green (x2)
- Markets: weekly Friday markets, monthly Farmers' market plus specialist and charity stalls
- Tourist Information Centre at 11 Corn Square
- Christmas lights for the town
- CCTV in partnership with Herefordshire Council and West Mercia Constabulary
- Street cleaning in the town centre
- Verge cutting
- Free advice for residents through the Citizens Advice Bureaux (alternate Wednesday afternoons, plus telephone advice)
- Supporting Civic life: Mayor, Town Crier and special events
- Comments on planning applications and responding to consultations
- The 427 bus service from Stoke Prior, in partnership with neighbouring parishes
- Leominster in Bloom: watering and maintaining annual display, investment in open spaces
- P3 Footpath Maintenance Scheme: strimming footpaths, repairing and replacing stiles, general maintenance
- Regular inspections of play areas and equipment
- Support with funding and development of town-wide projects

3.3 Over the past few years the Town Council has delivered the following projects and events:

- A Royal visit and community fair in May 2018
- Hosting Armed Forces Week for Herefordshire in June 2018
- Narnia themed end to the Christmas lights switch-on in the Secret Garden
- Refurbishment of the play equipment at Sydonia and new outdoor gym equipment for adults
- Gold for Leominster in Bloom, a joint effort supported by the Town Council and many businesses across the town
- Taking over the mowing of verges and residential areas
- The Old Stables Gallery at 11 Corn Square, providing a display space for local artists
- Citizens Advice Bureau drop in sessions on a bi-weekly basis, funded by the Town Council, helped local people with debt write offs and benefit claims
- Funding activities for young people and youth services research
- Leominster Food Fair
- The adoption of the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan, following a successful referendum result.
- A LEADER funded heritage signage project in the centre of town
- Partnership work on the Leominster High St Heritage Action Zone Scheme.

4. THE TOWN COUNCIL'S VISION

4.1 Leominster is an attractive place to live, work and visit, with a high level of social, environmental and economic well-being.

5. THE TOWN COUNCIL'S MISSION STATEMENT

5.1 Leominster Town Council is committed to improving and enhancing the Town of Leominster in a sustainable manner, and will work together with all sectors of the community to provide benefit for all.

- 5.2 The Town Council will continue to strive to make significant improvements within the local community by working closely in partnership with other organisations. These organisations are key contributors and represent the diversity of the local community and include voluntary, business and public sectors.
- 5.3 Local authorities now have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas and this will enable Leominster Town Council to become much more responsive to the community's priorities.

6. THE CORE VALUES IN PURSUING COUNCIL'S VISION

- 6.1 The core values in pursuing the Town Council's vision are:

Services:

- 6.2 Leominster Town Council will deliver services to meet the needs of its residents that are:
- High quality, value for money and affordable;
 - Targeted to meet specific requirements where possible;
 - Delivered in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner and fully embracing equal opportunities;
 - Planned within properly managed capacity and resources, coupled with a regime of continuous improvement.

Test of Competency

- 6.3 Leominster Town Council will measure its competency through SMART:
- Specific – target a specific area for improvement.
 - Measurable – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
 - Assignable – specify who will do it.
 - Realistic – what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
 - Time-related – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.
- 6.4 The Committees of the Town Council provide a regular oversight on Town Council functions and regularly review and monitor progress. Regular financial health checks are also carried out.

Functions and Activities

- 6.5 Leominster Town Council recognises:
- The legitimacy and integrity of the Council's functions is derived from understanding the needs of the Town, socially, economically and environmentally, as well as the needs, requirements and aspirations of its residents, customers and service users.
 - That consultation, participation and engagement in partnership with the town and the county are at the heart of understanding area and community needs and will help to focus the direction of Council's functions and activities.
 - That having direction and an infrastructure will help the Council to achieve all its aims and objectives.
 - The importance of having defined roles and responsibilities for Councillors and Officers, with appropriate structures in place which will make use of limited resources, will allow challenge and change, and promote a strong and sustainable partnership between Councillors and Officers.
 - That residents require signposting to relevant statutory authorities and other service providers to ensure that they access to support required.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 7.1 Applications must be made to Leominster Town Council, Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP. Please return all applications to Jackie Whittall, Office Manager.
- 7.2 You must include in your application information which:-
- Sets out how you meet the person specification;
 - Gives clear examples of your previous achievements which link directly to the areas of responsibility in this post;
 - Demonstrates the qualities you would bring to the role of Democratic Services Officer to Leominster Town Council.
- 7.3 Your application must be returned, either by post to the Council Office or email to j.whittall@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk, by no later than midnight on Wednesday 28th October 2020.
- 7.4 Canvassing of any Member or Officer involved in the selection process will disqualify you from being appointed.
- 7.5 If you would like further information before submitting your application, please contact the Town Clerk, Julie Debbage, on 01568 611734 for an informal discussion.

8. SELECTION PROCESS

- 8.1 The formal selection process by interview will take place during the week commencing Monday 2nd November 2020.
- 8.2 The appointment will be made by the Appointment Panel, which will comprise of Members of the Personnel Committee.
- 8.3 Candidates who are to be invited to interview will be notified by telephone by Friday 30th October 2020. Those who have not been shortlisted will be not be contacted, so if you do not receive an invitation to interview then on this occasion you have been unsuccessful.
- 8.4 A decision will be taken on appointment following the interviews as to the candidate who will be invited to take up the post.

Interview

- 8.5 Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an interview at a time to be allocated individually. The format of the interview will be sent to all successful applicants.

References

- 8.6 Formal references will be taken up in respect of shortlisted candidates.

Offer of Appointment

- 8.7 An offer of appointment will be made after the final interview.

Disabled Candidates

- 8.8 Any candidate who is disabled should please contact The Grants & Projects Officer (Liz Womack) in confidence so that reasonable adjustments can be made to the recruitment process. Liz Womack can be contacted by email on e.womack@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk or by phone on 01568 611734.

9. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

9.1 Outlined below are the basic terms and conditions of employment with Leominster Town Council. The successful applicants will be provided with full details once appointed. Leominster Town Council retains Ellis Whittam as its Human Resources advisor.

Pay

9.2 The salary range for each position is outlined in the job advertisements. Please note that part time positions will be paid pro-rata. Salary rates increase in line with the annual increase negotiated annually by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. Council will consider an annual incremental increase as appropriate that may be awarded subject to satisfactory performance.

Contract

9.3 The appointment is a permanent part time contract with an initial three month probationary period. It is subject to the National Joint Council Agreement contained within the Green Book. Contracted hours will be 16 hours per week with some evening and weekend work. Flexibility is a must.

Probationary Period

9.4 The post is subject to the successful completion of a minimum of three months probationary period. During that probationary period a series of reviews will be undertaken by the Personnel Committee, and Council reserves the right to extend that probationary period if considered appropriate.

Hours

9.5 Whilst the basic working week is as outlined in the main job description, the postholder may be required to work reasonable additional or irregular hours as necessary to ensure the proper performance of the work of the post.

Annual Leave (to be allocated pro-rata)

Holiday Entitlement	Days
Annual leave on commencement of employment (22 days + 2 statutory + Bank Holidays)	24
Additional after 5 years service (26 days + 2 Stat)	28

Notice

9.6 The appointment is subject to three month's notice on either side following the successful completion of the probationary period.

Pension

9.7 The postholder is eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Information on the LGPS will be provided to the successful candidate. If you wish to opt out of the pension scheme you must inform the Town Council on appointment.

Political Restrictions

9.8 The postholder will be expected to maintain political neutrality in relation to the work of the Council.

Code of Conduct

9.9 The postholder will be required to observe the requirements of the Council's Staff Handbook for employees and any national provisions in this respect. Any potential

conflict of interest which arises during the course of employment should be brought to the attention of the Town Council and entered in the Register of Officers' Interests.

Pre – Employment Checks

- 9.10 Any offer of employment will be subject to two satisfactory references being received (one from the present or previous employer).



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

is seeking to appoint a

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

Job Title: Democratic Services Officer

Grade: Salary band SCP 3-6

Hours per week: 16

Working pattern: Monday – Friday (includes attending evening meetings)

Accountable to: Leominster Town Council

Reports to: Line Manager, Leominster Town Clerk

Responsible for: N/A

Job Summary

To provide an efficient, effective and proactive administration service to assist the Town Clerk and support the Council's formal meeting structures. The post is part time for 16 hours per week, to include evening meetings.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

1. To arrange, attend and produce minutes for formal Council meetings, Committee meetings, working group meetings and such other meetings deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk Secretary as required.
2. To prepare, distribute and despatch agendas and minutes appropriately having regard to the Local Government Act 2000, the Access to Information Act 1985, the Local Government Act 1972 and Town Council procedures.
3. To undertake a variety of administrative duties relating to the Council's meetings structure including the development of procedures and the keeping of records.
4. To give advice to Councillors and Officers as necessary at meetings on Council policies, local government legislation and procedural matters relating to meetings.
5. To assist the Town Clerk in the development of Town Council policy documents, strategy documents and procedural documents.
6. To open tenders in relation to all Council tendering operations and to accurately record submissions.

7. To undertake day to day office and council duties including committee administration, reception, filing, answering the telephone, and dealing with general enquiries.
8. To update the Town Council website with information and documents relating to Town Council meetings, policies, tenders and other Council business.
9. To promote the principles of excellent customer care.
10. To maintain a range of files and databases relating to Council governance and business.
11. To develop and maintain effective working relationships with Elected Members and all those (external and internal) involved in Democratic Services processes.
12. To liaise with Herefordshire Council and other relevant organisations as required.
13. To ensure that service delivery complies with current regulations, accepted professional standards, the council's policies and procedures and appropriate legislation.

General Responsibilities

1. To work as a team member with the whole Town Council staff team.
2. To complete mandatory training requirements as agreed with Town Clerk, keeping appropriate records.
3. To undertake other training and CPD as agreed with Town Clerk.
4. To observe and implement all relevant safety, hygiene, health, fire safety and other statutory standards and rules.
5. To attend and participate in relevant internal and external meetings in connection with the responsibilities of this post.
6. To carry out such duties not listed above that may be reasonably requested by the Town Clerk, commensurate with the post.

Notes

1. An annual appraisal will be carried out.
2. Staff members must behave in a responsible and professional manner at all times, as representatives of the Town Council.
3. Staff must use equipment and tools responsibly and in accordance with operating instructions, reporting faults and problems to the Town Clerk
4. Staff shall communicate politely and professionally at all times with TC members, TC staff, contractors and members of the public
5. Staff shall not disclose or discuss confidential or sensitive information relating to Town Council business, its members or its staff.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Preferred
Educational qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a commitment to continuing professional development • Good general education: 5 GCSEs or equivalent including Maths and English • High level of literacy and numeracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to “A” level standard and above.
Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of ability to prioritise work, set targets, and achieve positive outcomes. • Evidence of ability to organise and manage resources effectively. • Experience in Microsoft Word, Outlook and Excel • An understanding of Health & Safety. • Experience working in a professional office environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in local government. • Knowledge and understanding of the powers and functions of parish and town councils.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent oral and written communication skills, including an ability to relate to, and communicate with councillors, staff, members of the public and contractors. • Ability to provide objective advice to councillors in a timely and coherent manner, including analytical report writing and analysis. • Experience of producing formal meeting minutes and agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand the financial and legal framework in which the Town Council operates.
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in Microsoft Office package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience producing and uploading website content.
Meetings and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience of taking minutes and compiling meeting agenda. • Practical experience of servicing committees and report writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to understand standing orders and financial regulations.
Specialist Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to operate with complete impartiality in a political environment. • Able to work on own initiative without supervision and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to undertake appropriate training to gain additional knowledge of the sector

	<p>within a small team environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to maintain good relationships with Councillors, contractors and public • Ability to deal with several different strands of work concurrently and organise work. 	
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Note: Assessment of whether criteria are met will be from the application form submitted followed by interview where appropriate. In respect of qualifications original certification will be required.