

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 25th November 2019 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Thomas (Mayor), Rumsey (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Herschy, Marsh, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Parris, Preece, Rosser, Smith-Winnard, Sutcliffe and Williams.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Stone and two members of the public.

73/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Williamson (illness).

74/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

75/19 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

76/19 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)

Council was thanked for supporting the Polish Memorial service and for providing a grant towards its cost.

77/19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meetings held on 30th September 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

78/19 CLERK'S REPORT

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- (a) Planning & Highways Committee Meeting 2nd December** – Following consideration, it was agreed that the next Planning & Highway Committee meeting scheduled to be held on 2nd December 2019 be cancelled. The next meeting would be held on 16th December 2019 at 18:00 hours.
- (b) CCTV Contribution 2020/21** – Council noted that the requested contribution from Leominster Town Council towards CCTV in Leominster for 2020/21 would be £11,034.17. This figure had been included in the draft budget. The CCTV infrastructure was scheduled to be upgraded commencing April 2020.
- (c) Cardboard Recycling Scheme** – Council noted that an update on this initiative would be provided at the Environment & Services Committee to be held on 20th January 2020.

79/19 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council approved the minutes of the following meetings held and ratified the decisions and recommendations made:

- Cllr Rosser, Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held on 7th & 28th October and 18th November 2019 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein;
- Cllr Rumsey, Chair of the Communications & Events Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Communications & Events Committee held on 12th November 2019 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein;
- Cllr Murdoch, Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 28th October 2019 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein;
- Cllr Herschy, Chair of the Environment & Services Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Environment & Services Committee held on 18th November 2019 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein:

80/19 FINANCES & POLICY

- (a) **Accounts Paid Statement** – It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices for October 2019, as outlined on the payment statement provided, amounting to £2,254.02, inclusive of VAT, and for November 2019 to date, as outlined on the payment statement provided, amounting to £63,243.85, inclusive of VAT.
- (b) **Budget Development 2020/21** – Council noted the following update on the progress of developing a budget for 2020/21:
- Budget consultation events had taken place on the Friday Market on the 8th and 22nd November 2019;
 - Consultation leaflets had been available at the Tourist Information centre and online;
 - A good response had been received to date;
 - The budget consultation exercise would close on Friday 29th November 2019;
 - A review of the consultation feedback would be considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 16th December 2019 following which the budget would be revised and submitted to Full Council for approval at its meeting on Monday 27th January 2019.
- (c) **High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund** – Council noted the following update on the progress of this initiative:
- Herefordshire Council is leading the project and working in close partnership with Leominster Town Council;
 - The project proposal was currently being drafted and would be submitted by 6th December 2019. It was a very tight deadline and the initiative needed to meet the funding guidelines;

- The project outline would then be checked and reviewed both regionally and nationally to ensure it met the funding criteria;
- As the project was developed there would be an opportunity for Leominster Town Council to input into the initiative;
- A further update would be provided at the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

81/19 REPORTS

Council noted the following Ward Councillor reports:

Ward Report Leominster North & Rural – Cllr John Stone:

Balfour Beatty update

I am pleased to report that the damaged safety railings on Mill Street by the level crossing have been replaced at last! The long delay was mainly due to the need for permission for the work from Network Rail but whatever the reason the footway is now safer for pedestrians and this entry point to the town looks cared for rather than neglected so there is relief all round. I am still trying to get the white lines painted at the mini roundabout between Mill Street and Bridge Street. There has been recent white lining elsewhere in the town but this junction is heavily used and dangerous and I will continue to follow up with Balfour Beatty. The same applies to the pelican crossing on Bridge Street which is still not working at full strength.

I attended the Balfour Beatty briefing at Thorn on November 8th. They are pulling together the annual plan for 2020-2021 and it looks as though their revenue budget will be similar to this year after 5 years of budget reductions. They have now purchased a velocity patcher and over 14,000 defects have been repaired. The patcher carried out repairs on roads in Little Hereford and Kimbolton earlier in the year. We were informed that a tree survey is to be carried out in North Herefordshire and bridge repairs were highlighted. Herefordshire has 784 bridges and 3,380 km of public rights of way.

Winter preparations are also in full swing with grit bins being refilled and a number of early gritting runs which cover 30% of the county road network. The briefing showed just how extensive is Balfour's remit in Herefordshire in year 7 of their contract. Please continue to report defects on the Herefordshire Council website or by phoning Balfour Beatty on 01432 261800

Flooding

There were 100 call-outs during the weekend of October 26th and Hereford experienced some of the worst flooding for years. There were many road closures and these were repeated during a second bout of flooding on November 14th. The Fire and Rescue service rescued nearly 100 people in 43 incidents with many cars stranded. The River Teme peaked at its highest level in Leintwardine. The Environment Agency reported that £18m has been spent on flood defences in Herefordshire since the 2007 floods protecting thousands of homes as a result. We are grateful to all the emergency services for their work during the recent flooding and hope that the weather will be kinder during the coming winter months.

I have recently joined the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board and will report back. I am also looking forward to the proposed work by the Environment Agency along the River Lugg to protect properties in the Ridgemoor Road area from flooding. There are also 7 Natural Flood Management schemes in progress across the county funded by Defra.

Minor Injury Units

There is local dismay over the “temporary” closure of the units in Leominster and Ross-on-Wye community hospitals over the winter months. The reason given is to help deal with winter pressures and provide extra support at Hereford County Hospital. The same happened a year ago. I have joined other councillors in an attempt to scrutinise this decision in a special one day review meeting in Hereford. The meeting has been postponed due to the General Election. What we need are facts and figures so that we can understand the closure decision better and reassurance that temporary closures will not become permanent. Meanwhile I hope local residents will ring NHS 111, visit their pharmacy or contact their GP surgery if they need assistance. All other services at the 2 community hospitals will carry on as normal according to the Wye Valley NHS Trust. I hope progress will continue over the re-location of GP surgeries in Leominster which should enormously enhance health services in the town and surrounding area.

Council Budget

The budget meeting of Full Council is not until February but Council tax looks set to be increased by 4% to achieve a balanced budget with 2% of the increase ring-fenced for adult social care. Social care is the biggest pressure point in the Council budget and it is disappointing that this issue that we face every day in Herefordshire is hardly being mentioned in the current Election campaign. It is not going to go away.

Remembrance Sunday

It was a privilege to attend the annual Remembrance Service with the Town Council and hundreds of residents at The Priory on November 10th and the rain held off too. The number of young people taking part was striking and everyone noticed the turn-out of the cadets. The previous Sunday saw the Polish Remembrance Service at Leominster Cemetery and congratulations to Joe Cocker for his work in organising this event which is becoming better attended every year. The Polish contribution in the Second World War cannot be underestimated. They were our staunchest allies in the early stages. It is fitting that the Polish graves have been beautifully restored and we are paying this civic tribute to and with the Polish community every year. Lest We Forget.

Finally, my best wishes to Town Councillors and all staff for a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councillor Felicity Norman, Ward Member – Leominster West

Events and meetings attended

- Carbon Zero Britain – talk based on work by the Centre for Alternative Technology
- Service of welcome at the Priory for Year 7 at Earl Mortimer College

- Launch of the Children and Young Peoples Plan in Hereford
- Meetings with Health watch
- Visit to Care farm at Wharam, near Hereford
- Ivington Harvest Festival and lunch
- Breakfast meeting with Archbishop Justin Welby at the Green Dragon, Hereford
- Herefordshire Council Climate Emergency Seminar
- Schools Forum
- Leominster Civic Service
- Barons Cross community event with Wildplay and other organisations
- Polish service of Remembrance
- Opening of new premises for No Wrong Door for young people in Hereford
- Presentation to the town council about progress on new premises for our doctor's surgeries
- Marches Family Network AGM
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Remembrance day
- Herefordshire Schools Safeguarding conference
- LGA Childrens and Young people leadership seminar, Warwick
- Herefordshire Schools Leadership conference
- CLD (Counselling, Learning, Training) Trust 25 year celebrations
- Leominster in Bloom AGM
- Luctonians, presentation of the Queens Award for Voluntary service
- Meeting of ward members with HC officers to discuss the further steps needed to access Heritage High Street funding for Leominster
- Herefordshire Council Budget Consultations
- Leominster town council budget consultations

Ward Issues

New applications have come in for the Barons Cross Camp site, and for West Winds off Cholstrey Road. Still no decisions on McDonalds or on the poultry house application at Stagbatch.

No further information on the phosphate levels in the River Lugg, and the resulting halt to development.

Still no sign blocking HGV access to Ginhall Lane and Green Lane through Pierrepont road.

The order served by Community Protection team on the landowners of the Barons Cross Camp site and on Stonewater has had results and most of the literally tons of rubbish has been removed.

Another order has been served at Hillview, Buckfield, which will, we hope, lead to large amounts of rubbish being removed from the site. This has been an ongoing nuisance for residents.

Leominster South Ward report – Cllr Trish Marsh

There is a lot of looking ahead just now as we are drafting the Council's Corporate Plan for the next four years. Already thought is being put into the new waste contract, due for renewal in 2023. We're looking at how tech can help support the elderly and vulnerable in their own homes more safely. And at increasing tourism, which could be a real boost to the economy as staycations become more popular.

Happily the council is in reasonable financial health despite continued cuts over the past decade. This is especially important as demand for social care services for children and adults continues to rise. And of course there is always a need for road maintenance, which topped the first round of public consultation priorities, just ahead of protecting the environment. Plus so many other important things that would benefit from support!

We'd like your views on what is important as we move into the second round of consultation on the budget. We are particularly looking at how best to invest capital assets, largely accrued from the sale of Council small holdings by the last administration, over the next four years to make the most difference to the county. So we would appreciate your views on proposals for housing, new ways of supporting the elderly, responding to climate change and more.

You can find the budget consultation online at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ambition>. It's open till December 4th. Decision making is also on the move on Wednesday 27 November at 6pm with a meeting of the Council's Cabinet in Leominster Library. Another chance to see how council decision making works –you're most welcome to come. We'll be making decisions from cradle to grave: Marlbrook Primary School to the Dementia Strategy plus a 6 month overall performance report.

Flooding has raised many questions locally and nationally about how best to manage water with increasingly intense rainfall. The Council plans to extend funding for natural flood schemes which aim to increase absorption of water upstream to reduce the speed of runoff and modulate flow. This of course will require partnership working with the Environment Agency and land owners. To me this seem the right approach – and one that fits well with Herefordshire's natural environment. There will be a meeting on 10/12 at Kimbolton Village Hall from 6.30pm on the current Cheaton/Ridgemor brook scheme.

Leominster East Ward report Cllr Jenny Bartlett

- I have attended a series of members briefings on the three directorates – Economy and Place, Children and Families, Adults and Wellbeing.
- Attended the day long workshops on Climate Emergency and Herefordshire Councils Response and action plans.
- I have also attended a meeting of the Health and Well Being Board and LGA Peer Review meetings.
- I have had an opportunity to meet the front line staff in Adults Services and hear about the fantastic work they do day in and day out.

- Meeting with the Cabinet member Cllr Harrington and Steve Burgess Head of Transport to discuss Leominster and wider public bus services. There is additional money in the emerging budget to protect existing services.
- Spent a day at Plough Lane looking at IT strategy's and solutions for the future delivery of services and supporting people.
- I was impressed with the Children and Young Peoples showcase event and range of groups and their services on offer. Well done to Liz Womack and the Town Council stall she hosted.
- There have been a number of scrutiny quarterly and public meetings recently, looking at 'One Herefordshire' Integration of health and social care services in the county. I have also attended wider integrated health meetings in Malvern. More recently we have taken a first look at the draft budget for the directorate. The Herefordshire Budget consultation is still open and I would urge everyone to have their say.
- In October we also had a full Herefordshire Council meeting and I was very happy to support a unanimously passed motion for a review of our Governance models and Cabinet style operating system.
- During this very wet weather I have raised the issue of severe field run off compromising the water quality of Cheaton Brook with the Environment Agency and asked them to investigate. The Cheaton flows into the River Lugg which is an SSSI and home to our local otters.
- I have had attended our Leominster Area Polish Society Meetings and was pleased to see such a great turn out at the Polish Remembrance Service and community events in the afternoon. It was good to see their presence and wreath at the towns Remembrance Service the following week.
- I attended a great thank you party at the Leominster Meeting Centre to celebrate their National Lottery Community Funding that will see them safely through the next few years supporting people living well with dementia. They have some great plans coming up.
- I met the Vicarage Street Residents Association and Stonewater to look at parking along the wall as well as issues with dumped cars and the safety of the car park retaining wall.
- We have finally had a meeting with the economy team to go through the next stage of the High Street bid. Fingers crossed everything progresses smoothly.

Council expressed some concern that the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday 27th November 2019 at the Library had not been well publicised. This was noted.

82/19 MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Council noted the following Civic Engagements:

- Christmas Lights Switch On – Saturday 30th November 2019 at 4pm;
- Victorian Street Market – Saturday 14th December 2019 at 11am.

Council noted the following Mayoral appointments attended by the Mayor.

- Monday 14th Oct – Meeting of Leominster Community Committee
- Tuesday 15th Oct – Meeting of Task and Finish Group for Signage

- Wednesday 16th Oct – Meeting of S/A Liaison Committee
- Friday 18th Oct – Leominster Festival Meeting
- Friday 18th Oct – Meeting of Town Mayors at Hereford City Hall
- Saturday 19th Oct – Mayors Dinner at Bromyard
- Sunday 27th Oct – Town Councils Civic Service at the Priory
- Sunday 27th Oct - Silver Sunday at Kingsland with bluebird care.
- Sunday 3rd Nov - Polish Remembrance Day at Leominster Cemetery plus talks pm at Community Centre
- Sunday 10th Nov - Remembrance Sunday at Priory and Cenotaph
- Monday 11th Nov - Cenotaph Remembrance (11th of 11th)
- Monday 11th Nov - Leominster Community Committee
- Tuesday 12th Nov - Communication and Events Committee
- Thursday 14th Nov - Interviews for the post of Town Clerk
- Sunday 17th Nov - Hereford Christmas lights switch on
- Thursday 21st November – Roger Albert Clark Rally start in Broad Street, Leominster

Many people have asked about the clock at the bus station after several e-mails I have been told that Herefordshire Council does not have enough money in the budget at the moment to repair it.

The bus time tables for buses in the town were incorrect and a new timetable for the town buses is being printed by Lugg Valley and will be available in the TIC.

My Deputy, Cllr John Rumsey and Liz Rumsey, have also covered quite a lot of functions and I am very grateful to them both.

Thanks were extended to Cllr Rosser for all his efforts recently during the flooding issues experienced locally.

83/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 27th January 2020 commencing at 19:00pm at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

84/19 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items to be discussed included the consideration of exempt information, Full Council **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

- (a) **Appointment of Town Clerk** – Council noted that interviews to fill the position of Town Clerk had taken place on Thursday 14th November 2019.

It was proposed by Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Norman and **RESOLVED** to appoint Mrs Julie Debbage as Town Clerk to Leominster Town Council.

The position was full time and she would commence on Salary Scale SCP37. An additional increment would be awarded following the successful completion of the thirteen week probationary period.

Thanks were extended to all those who sat on the interviewing panels.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20:04pm.

MAYOR

DATE: