

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MEETING

Minutes of the Leominster Town Meeting held at the Royal Oak Function Room, Leominster, HR6 8EP on Thursday 17th November 2015 commencing at 7:00pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Norman (Mayor), A Pendleton (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Barton, Evans, Marsh, R Pendleton, Rumsey and Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Stone (Herefordshire Council Ward Member), fifteen members of the public and Miss Phillips (Hereford Times)

1. WELCOME

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 Cllr McCaull and Gill Ding.

3. MAYORAL ADDRESS

Cllr Norman thanks those who had attended the meeting. She explained that it was important to understand what the Town Council was trying to achieve on behalf of Leominster especially with regard to saving services that would be lost due to financial cutbacks.

The Town Council was endeavouring to keep residents informed of its plans and the calling of this meeting was part of that process. The agenda included an overview of the draft five year business plan and budget of the Town Council. There was serious concerns regarding the level of cuts which would affect essential services such as youth provision, care, public transport and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

4. NEW WEBSITE

The meeting received a presentation on the new website which had been commissioned by the Town Council. The new site was expected to go live by the end of the year.

A number of comments were made including the need to promote the new website, the requirement for community focus, the inclusion of an events calendar and possible access for community groups. In general the new website and its appearance was well received.

5. DRAFT FIVE YEAR BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLAN

The meeting received a presentation outlining the draft budget and business plan for Leominster Town Council from 2016 through to 2021. There was still a lack of clarity regarding items such as the current transitional grant and the expected cuts to be made by Central Government so the document was a work in progress.

It was expected that the way business rates were distributed would be altered and those changes would be implemented in 2020. The Town Council was unlikely to be affected as it did not receive any support from businesses.

The Revenue Support Grant had been significantly altered and first indications were that the previous transitional grant received by the Town Council would be discontinued in 2016. Trying to plan ahead for an area that required significant services but which had a low population and a low income economy was challenging.

The presentation included the purchase and projections for 11 Corn Square, increased staffing requirements, street cleaning and grounds maintenance services, additional devolved services being taken on and future public toilet provision.

6. QUESTIONS

Leominster Town Council was requested to support the continuation of the 490 bus service from Leominster to Ludlow. Many people relied on the bus service and its retention would help the local economy. The Town Council was keen to support the retention of the service and was hoping to develop links with neighbouring parishes.

Social isolation was a big issue in rural communities and it was possible that community transport schemes may also lose their funding.

It was suggested that contact be made with the Tenbury Transport Group as they had been successful in saving an important bus service that crossed three counties.

The meeting was informed that Herefordshire Council had submitted a bid to Central Government to become a stand alone county with devolved powers. Further information was on its website. Cornwall had already submitted its bid.

The Mayor thanks Councillors and staff for all their work and for everyone's attendance and closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

TOWN MAYOR:

DATE: