

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016 – 2017

INTRODUCTION

Every year the outgoing Mayor of Leominster presents a report at the Annual Town Meeting, which is being held on Wednesday 30th May 2017 in the new Council Offices, 11 Corn Square. The report summarises the main business that was transacted by the Town Council throughout the preceding year.

This report is presented by Cllr Angela Pendleton, Mayor of Leominster for the 2016 – 2017 Civic Year.

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/17 has been another busy and challenging year for the Town Council with a number of significant changes and projects being implemented during the year.

In May 2016 a new Administration Team and a new Environmental Team Supervisor were appointed. Liz Womack was appointed as Office Manager, Lena Dhanso as Administration Assistant and Julie Debbage as Environmental Supervisor. In February 2017 Rachel Williams was appointed as Financial Assistant.

Open Spaces and Public Conveniences

The final asset transfers of the various open spaces and play areas were completed in July 2016. These included Ginhall Green, Pinsley Mead, the Grange and Sydonia.

The Grange Pavilion was also included and this is still being leased to the Pavilion Community Interest Company.

The transfers were also concluded of the Central car park toilets and those on the Grange. The bus station toilets and kiosk have still to be completed.

Leominster Town Council is now responsible for the management and maintenance of the open spaces and play areas. The main grass cutting contract is undertaken by the Parish Lengthsman, D C Gardening Services, with the bin emptying and other duties being undertaken by the Environmental Team.

Tree Planting

Under the guidance of the Mayor two Ginko bibloba serratoga trees have been planted in Etnam Street following the securing of a planting licence from Balfour Beatty. It is hoped that two further trees will be planted also in Etnam Street in due course.

Friday Market

Leominster Town Council continues to operate the Friday Market. The Market has lost a number of traders over the past year and replacements are becoming increasingly difficult to find. However, it is still a buoyant market and income generated is reinvested in town services.

11 Corn Square/ Tourist Information Centre

On 4th August 2016 the Town Council took possession of 11 Corn Square which was purchased to relocate the Tourist Information Service and the Town Council Offices, as well as providing new homes for Community Wheels and the Marches Family Network.

The Town Council appointed a dedicated team of contractors to redesign the building and carry out the significant refurbishment of the Town Council offices, the new Council Chamber together with the refurbishment of the rest of the building.

On 2nd May 2017 the TIC and the Town Council moved in and began operating from the building. Although there are still works to complete the Town Council is very pleased with the results and we all look forward to its completion.

Street Cleaning

The Town Council continues to provide a complimentary street cleaning service in Leominster Town Centre. The Environmental Team has made a significant difference to the standard of cleanliness in the streets and empty the many litter bins in the parks and open spaces on a regular basis.

Ginhall Allotments

The Town Council continues to work with the Allotment Association to improve the allotments and attract new allotment holders as well as supporting existing ones. The Environmental Team now compost green waste in bespoke composters.

The Corporate Strategy

The Town Council has developed and adopted a Corporate Strategy to help it focus on a planned investment into its services and infrastructure over the next three years. The Plan also includes Key Performance Indicators to help Council assess its progress and ensure it meets the targets set.

Leominster in Bloom

The Town Council provided support to Leominster in Bloom for its 2016 entry. It met the entrance fee, watered the majority of plantings within the town centre, which is key to a successful entry, and helped to clean the town centre.

Leominster was awarded a Silver Gilt in 2016 and with further support being provided in 2017, it is hoped that we can win Gold.

Town Council in 2016 also paid the entry fee to our local pubs namely: White Lion, The Bell, The Grapes and Dukes Head – 3 entries were awarded Silver Gilt with the Bell being awarded the coveted Gold!

The 2017 Leominster in Bloom entry is already underway and thanks must be extended to all the volunteers involved.

Christmas Lights

A new Christmas lighting scheme was introduced in 2016 which was a significant improvement on the 2015 scheme. The Town Council has entered a three year contract with LITE to provide the lighting and it will be improved annually.

Leominster News

Alice Oxenham of Oxenham Arts in the High Street has continued to publish and print the Leominster News. The Town Council submits regular updates and is very grateful to Alice for all her hard work and as outgoing Mayor I too must express my sincere thanks to Alice for The Monthly Mayor's Blog slot.

Grant Funding

The Town Council has continued to support local organisations with much needed grant funding. In 2016 organisations supported included:

- LDCA Community Centre
- LARC Development Trust
- Leominster Priory Holiday Club
- Leominster Museum
- Leominster Christmas Jubilee
- Leominster Tennis Club
- Friends of Leominster Library
- Shopmobility
- FRON Choir/Leominster Festival
- Herefordshire Family Festival
- Leominster Food Fayre
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Royal British Legion

A number of shopfront grants were also awarded to various businesses within the town to help towards the cost of upgrading their shopfronts. These included The Light Shop, Howard Moseley Butchers, Just For You and Tash at No 16. Funding was also provided for the Christmas Window Competition which was judged during the Victorian Market event.

A new defibrillator cabinet was provided for the defibrillator in West Street, a Community Wheels service was supported to help replace the previous 427 bus service and the Town Council provided youth support through HVOSS at Barons Cross and Sydonia.

Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted under Regulation 16 of the Localism Act for consultation prior to examination followed by referendum in 2015. Due to the result of that consultation and the assertion by Herefordshire Council that ***Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan*** was not in general conformity to the Herefordshire Core Strategy the plan has been delayed.

The Town Council is pleased to report that the document has been revised and is close to being resubmitted. Prior to the Regulation 16 submission, a further consultation will be held at 11 Corn Square.

Lengthsman/P3 Schemes

The Town Council fully supported these important initiatives from Herefordshire Council and has endeavoured to maintain its local footpaths to a high standard and carry out essential Lengthsman duties including pothole filling on C & U roads throughout the Parish.

In 2017 the Lengthsman scheme is has been reduced by Herefordshire Council but the P3 Footpath scheme is still in place, though we have all experienced the lack of investment in the Public Realm by the Herefordshire Council.

Civic Awards

This year Civic Awards were presented to the following people:

- Mrs Janet Tedd for her role in voluntary activities throughout the town;
- Mrs Wendy Rulton for her role in voluntary activities throughout the town;
- Mrs Cathy Griffiths for her service with the Town Cadets;
- Mr Karl Griffiths for his service with the Town Cadets;
- Mrs Dot Lloyd for her role in voluntary activities throughout the town;
- Mr Richard Brookman for his role in voluntary activities throughout the town and as Town Crier.

Conclusion

Much thought, inspiration and planning has been given to the outstanding achievements which come under the Umbrella of Leominster Town Council.

The infrastructure of a dedicated team within the office, the environmental operatives, the various task and finish groups made up of Town Councillors (all volunteers) whose work supported the Town Councillors in their decision making and provided the evidence to make these decisions.

However, all of the above services and their quality, especially, one must mention here the TIC – unique in Herefordshire showing confidence in investing in Herefordshire's largest income generator – Tourism!

All this would never have been achieved without the vision, dedication, expertise and sheer hard work of our Town Clerk – Paul Russell! who has most certainly lifted the Town Council in terms of Quality of place, Quality of Staff, Quality of Delivery of Service.

We applaud you!