



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 18th May 2021

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

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend the Annual Town Council meeting of Leominster Town Council which will be held on **Monday 24th May 2021** commencing at **19:00 hours** in the John Abel Room at Grange Court, Pinsley Road, Leominster HR6 8NL.

Julie Debbage

Julie Debbage
TOWN CLERK

AGENDA

- 1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE 2021/22 CIVIC YEAR**
To ratify the decision made, at the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 27th July 2020, that Cllr. Rumsey be elected Mayor of Leominster for 2021/22.
- 2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**
To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of office from the newly elected Mayor of Leominster.
- 3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE 2021/22 CIVIC YEAR**
To ratify the decision made, at the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 27th July 2020, that Cllr. Marsh be elected Deputy Mayor of Leominster for 2021/22.
- 4. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**
To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office from the newly elected Deputy Mayor of Leominster.

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk as it is usual for the grounds upon which apologies are tendered also to be recorded. Under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.

7. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

To consider requests for dispensations (must be notified in writing).

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)

To receive questions and statements from members of the public as provided for in Standing Orders.

9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 5th May 2021.

To note the draft minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 19th April 2021. These will be formally adopted at the next Town Meeting to be held in April 2022.

10. CLERK'S REPORT

To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.

11. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

To appoint the following Committees in line with the Council structure to assist in conducting the business of Council:

- Planning & Highways Committee
- Environment & Services Committee
- Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Communications & Events Committee

12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To appoint members to sit on the following Committees.

- Planning & Highways Committee (9 plus Mayor and Deputy Mayor)
- Environment & Services Committee (9 plus Mayor and Deputy Mayor)
- Finance & General Purposes Committee (9 plus Mayor and Deputy Mayor)
- Communications & Events Committee (7 plus Mayor and Deputy Mayor)

- 13. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**
To consider the appointment of Council representatives to represent Leominster Town Council on Outside Bodies.
- 14. INSURANCE COVER**
To confirm the Annual Insurance cover for the Parish Council for the next year which will be provided by Zurich Insurance.
- 15. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**
To ratify Council's annual subscriptions to the National Association of Local Councils, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the National Association of British Market Authorities, plus any other subscriptions as considered appropriate.
- 16. FINANCES**
Accounts paid and invoices for payment – To receive an accounts paid and invoices for payment statement relating to April 2021.
- 17. MAYORAL CHARITY FOR 2021/22**
Announcement of the Mayor's Charity for 2021/22.
- 18. REPORTS**
To receive reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies (verbal), Herefordshire Council Ward Members (text and verbal) and the outgoing Mayor (verbal).
- 19. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**
Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and Full Council is, therefore, recommended to resolve "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 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

At the time of publication there were no confidential items to consider.

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Extraordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 5th May 2021 commencing at 18:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

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

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Projects & Grants Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

01/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

02/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Bartlett, Marsh, Norman – Herefordshire Council members
Cllr Marshall – Herefordshire Council employee

03/21 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Committee **RESOLVED** to grant dispensations to Cllrs Bartlett, Marsh, Norman and Marshall to participate in discussions and to vote on matters arising.

04/21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present. No matters were raised.

05/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 29th March 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record when social distancing regulations are lifted by central government.

06/21 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) Potential Devolved Asset

Committee considered the acquisition of a devolved asset from Herefordshire Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Norman that Leominster Town Council:

1. Declare an interest in the community asset transfer of the potential devolved asset to Leominster Town Council;

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2. Welcome the support offered by Herefordshire Council officers to complete the business case and set up a working party to complete an outline business case by the end of May;
3. Seek agreement for access to all tenanted areas to check their condition;
4. Urge Herefordshire Council to ensure due diligence for the transfer of this important asset by allowing Leominster Town Council an appropriate period for the completion of the full business case.

The proposals were put to a named vote and agreed unanimously.

For: Councillors Thomas, Rumsey, Bartlett, Davies, Herschy, Marsh, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Rosser, Smith-Winnard and Williams.

Against: None

Abstentions: None

Committee **RESOLVED** to set up a working party, of Cllrs Thomas, Marsh, Murdoch and Davies, to complete an outline business case by the end of May 2021. The clerk will arrange a meeting for week commencing 12th May 2021 to discuss next steps and will write to Paul Walker (CEO Herefordshire Council) to invite him to visit Leominster and arrange a site visit.

07/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 24th May 2021 commencing at 19:00 hours in the John Abel Room at Grange Court, Pinsley Road, Leominster HR6 8NL

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 19.23 hours.

MAYOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL



LEOMINSTER ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2021

Minutes of the Leominster Annual Town Meeting held virtually via Zoom on Monday 19th April 2021 commencing at 7:30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Thomas (Mayor), Rumsey (Deputy Mayor) (19.46), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh, Murdoch, Norman, Rosser, Smith-Winnard, Williams, Williamson (19.40)

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Stone (Herefordshire Council Ward Member) and 3 members of the public.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Democratic Services Officer

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Cllr Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Herschy.

3. MINUTES

Cllr Bartlett pointed out that there was an error on page 6 and requested that it was changed to show that she was the Mayor.

Subject to the correction of the error, the meeting **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting held on 8th April 2019 be adopted and signed as a correct record.

4. ANNUAL REPORT

Cllr Thomas presented Leominster Town Council's annual report for 2019/20 and 2020/21. He outlined the work undertaken by the Town Council and thanked everyone for their support.

A copy of the report is attached.

5. **QUESTIONS**

Questions were invited from the electors present.

Signage

The Town Council was congratulated on the installation of the signage interpretation boards. It was felt that these would be of benefit to tourists and residents as they are very informative.

The Royal Oak Hotel

Concern was expressed regarding the poor condition of The Royal Oak Hotel. It was stated that over the past 3 years the building has been deteriorating rapidly and concerns were raised regarding the preservation of the building – which is Grade II listed – and the risks it poses to the safety of the public. The elector wanted to know what was happening with the building and whether the Town Council had any concerns.

It was explained that the building was the responsibility of Herefordshire Council.

Cllr Rosser advised that the matter would be raised at the next Planning & Highways Committee meeting and Herefordshire Council would be contacted for any comments.

High Street Heritage Action Zone

An elector queried why they were unable to find any information on the HSHAZ on the Town Council website.

It was explained that a new Town Council website has just been implemented. A summary of the HSHAZ and an action plan will be included on the website.

The clerk presented the following questions that had been received from an elector prior to the meeting:

Derelict building at the rear of the Priory

Q: When will the council do something about the derelict building on the picnic area at the rear of the Priory which is currently fenced off as being unsafe. It is totally overgrown with trees and shrubs. Are you hoping it will fall down and thus disappear into history. By the way the fence is broken at one side and obviously a meeting place for undesirables judging by the amount of rubbish left behind. I have not taken photos on this occasion maybe someone should physically have a look.

A: The building will be part of the Pinsley Mead and Grange Masterplan which is due to commence shortly.

Maintenance of streets and pavements

Q: I would like to ask what action has been taken in the last twelve months by the council to the relevant authorities regarding the maintenance and repair of our streets and pavements. Clearly no appreciative response has been received as I can see no maintenance whatsoever having taken place. This should surely be a persistent on going topic for this council to pursue.

A: It was explained that the condition of roads and pavements is regularly reported to Herefordshire Council who are responsible for the maintenance. There is insufficient funding available to carry out many repairs and the priority this year will be drainage.

Cllr Marsh advised that she would attend the next Planning & Highways Committee meeting to demonstrate how to report road defects on the Balfour Beatty website.

6. SUMMARY AND CLOSURE

Cllr Thomas, Mayor of Leominster, thanked the Town Council staff and volunteers for their work, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Thomas thanked the clerk for her excellent organisation and for taking on numerous tasks, and the Projects and Grants Officer for her work in obtaining grants for various projects.

There being no other business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:35pm.

MAYOR OF LEOMINSTER:

DATE:

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING REPORT 2019/20 & 2020/21**INTRODUCTION:**

This past year has been a very different year as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen three national lockdowns. Leominster Town Council, like some councils didn't change mayors, so I became Mayor for a second year. There were no public functions and the Town Council quickly began to work and hold meetings remotely, which worked very well.

How Leominster Town Council, the Leominster COVID-19 SOS Group, Community Wheels, Food Bank and volunteers came together to help during the Covid Emergency was fantastic and shows that people in this town care about others. There is now a better community spirit and we came together to help each other. One of the most interesting parts of last year was when the High Sheriff, Patricia Thomas, came to Leominster for a socially distanced visit to the Tourist Information Centre, Leominster Museum, Grange Court, Forbury Chapel to meet the About Face Theatre Group and on to the Foodbank to see all the good work supporting residents in need.

As I have been Mayor for two years, I have summarised the achievements of the town council by committee.

BULLET POINTS:**Full Council 2019/20**

- Hosted The Rifles Freedom of the Town Event;
- Successfully applied for Heritage Action Zone funding in association with Herefordshire Council;
- Facilitated Team Leominster weekly operational meetings and monthly tactical meetings;
- Secured an Open Spaces Grant from Herefordshire Council to purchase mowing equipment to enable the Grounds Team to begin verge maintenance in town;
- Oversaw the Remembrance Day commemorations, in partnership with the Royal British Legion Leominster Branch;
- Provided Christmas Lights and the Christmas Tree for the Town;
- Organised the Christmas Light Switch On Event;
- Oversaw other Civic occasions during 2019/20.

Full Council 2020/21

- Contributed to the upgrade of CCTV provision in the Town Centre;
- Worked with Leominster COVID-19 Volunteer Group, Community Wheels and Herefordshire Council to support vulnerable residents to obtain medication and shopping supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included setting up a virtual work platform so that these organisations could work together, providing a telephone contact line 7 days a week and organising volunteers to support residents;
- Moved to remote meetings on Zoom with funding acquired from the Fastershire Keep Connected Fund;

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- Continued to facilitate weekly Team Leominster operational meetings and monthly tactical meetings remotely;
- Working towards our Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award;
- Representing Leominster by engaging in county initiatives eg. The Market Town Investment Plan;
- Launching a new accessible Leominster Town Council website;
- Oversaw a very different COVID safe Remembrance event;
- Provided the Christmas Lights and Christmas Tree in the town centre;
- Continued to administrate two local charities.

Environment & Services Committee 2019/20

- Continued to undertake footpath maintenance under the P3 scheme;
- Continued to undertake limited Lengthsman duties under the Herefordshire Council scheme;
- Supported Leominster in Bloom to gain the Gold Award by carrying out watering of planters and spraying/street cleaning;
- Introduced a business waste recycling scheme in 2019/20 with Binit Ltd as the main partner;
- Commencement of the Grange Open Space Master Plan consultation with a topographical survey;
- Undertook playground inspection in house;
- Located a new Depot from which the extended Environmental team can operate more easily;
- Continued to provide over 100 allotment plots for local residents;
- Provided help support and sandbags during the February flooding.

Environment & Services Committee 2020/21

- Continued to undertake footpath maintenance under the P3 scheme;
- Successfully gained a grant for £10,240 to enable drainage works in the rural areas of the parish that have been affected by flooding;
- Refurbished and relocated the Environmental Team into the new depot;
- Kept the allotments open during the COVID-19 pandemic and offering flexibility with inspections and rent collection;
- Continued support for Leominster in Bloom including watering, spraying and planter sponsorship;
- Enabled the public toilets on Central Car Park and The Grange to remain open for residents albeit in a reduced capacity to enable additional sanitisation, within COVID-19 guidelines;
- Continued verge maintenance with COVID-19 precautions to keep staff and the public safe.

Finance & General Purposes Committee 2019/20

- The provision, under a Service Level Agreement, of a part time curator for Leominster Museum;
- Overseen staff recruitment via the Personnel Sub-Committee;
- Carried out a budget consultation with residents;
- Budget development for 2019/20. Final increase was 4.1%;

Provided Grant support for the following organisations:

Citizens Advice Bureau	£8000.00
LDCA Community Centre	£8,000.00
Replacement bus service	£1,500.00
Leominster Festival	£1000.00
Window Competitions	£250.00
Duke of Edinburgh Licence fee	£1050.00
Leominster Priory Holiday Club	£900.00
Children's Events	£500.00
LARC	£7000.00
HVOSS children's art sessions	£920.00
Polish Memorial Service	£200.00
Free Parking Small Business Saturday	£1,079.00
Shopmobility	£1,000.00
Everybody Dance	£982.00
Veterans Project PPE	£270.00

Finance & General Purposes Committee 2020/21

- The provision, under a Service Level Agreement, of a part time curator for Leominster Museum until December 2020;
- Carried out a budget consultation with residents at the weekly market and via Survey Monkey;
- Overseen staff recruitment via the Personnel Sub-Committee;
- Budget development despite a large decrease in the precept. The final increase was 4.25%.

Provided Grant support for the following organisations:

HVOSS Youth activities	£3000.00
New Leaf Youth activities	£3500.00
Walkers are Welcome	£100.00
Community Wheels	£775.00
Civic Society	£529.62
Herefordshire Wildlife Trust	£935.00
Leominster Meeting Centre	£1000.00
Leominster Polish Society	£600.00
LARC	£7000.00
ECHO	£907.00
NILS	£250.00
LDCA Community Centre	£8,000.00
Citizens Advice Bureau	£8,000.00

Communications & Events Committee 2019/20

- Continued to oversee the Friday Market and the monthly Farmers Markets;
- Continued to manage the Tourist Information Centre providing information to visitors, an opportunity for local producers to sell their products and to promote local tourist focused businesses;
- Provided the Stables Gallery, an opportunity for local artists to showcase their work;
- Overseen the final elements to the holiday flat including the fire safety works, a new gas supply and final furnishings. The flat opened in June 2019;
- Supported the Small Business Saturday with the provision of free car parking in Leominster funded by Leominster Town Council;
- Put on the third “Through the Wardrobe” event in the Secret Garden;
- Hosted the Christmas Light switch on event.

Communications & Events Committee 2020/21

- Continued to oversee the Friday Market and the monthly Farmers Markets;
- Continued to manage the Tourist Information Centre and enabled allotment payments to be taken by phone to comply with COVID-19 regulations;
- Completed the LEADER funded Signage Project including new Welcome Signage, Visitor Information Signage, new fingerposts and interpretation signage around the town;
- Developed a Cultural Programme with partners to run alongside the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project;
- Created “Through the Wardrobe” windows instead of an event due to social distancing regulations;
- Held weekly and farmer’s markets when able, for essential items during the pandemic restrictions;

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- Enabled the Tourist Information Centre to trade as click and collect and became a distributor for Herefordshire Council Green Waste bags;
- Obtained grant funding from the Herefordshire Community Foundation to enable local organisations to work quickly and collaboratively to support those in desperate need by procuring one central shared database for volunteer and support data. This has allowed us to connect vulnerable residents with a range of different support services, in a joined-up and holistic way;

Planning & Highways Committee 2019/20/21

- Submitted comments on planning applications to Herefordshire Council;
- Submitted comments on licencing applications;
- Submitted comments on tree works to trees in the Conservation area or with Tree Preservation Orders attached, to Herefordshire Council;
- Councillors have made site visits for applications for building works and site visits by the Tree Officers for works to trees;
- Continued to report defects to Balfour Beatty and lobby Herefordshire Council regarding highway and parking matters;
- Considered a possible Neighbourhood Plan Review;
- Started the process to set up a Community Speedwatch Group;
- Been involved in the consultations of local Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's).

The next year, as we emerge from the pandemic following the government road map will see lots of exciting projects such as:

- The early projects of the High Street Heritage Action Zone such as town Wifi and footfall counters for the town;
- The design and consultation of the Re-imagination of Corn Square and the wider public realm;
- Grants to restore historic buildings within the Conservation Area;
- A cultural programme of events to run alongside the Heritage Action Zone;
- The continuation of the Grange Masterplan project with refurbishment of the play area as a priority;
- Projects coming from the Market Towns Investment Plan;
- The refurbishment of The Grange and Central Car Park Public Toilets.

Ward Report for Annual Meeting from Cllr Trish Marsh: May 2021

We have high level changes at Herefordshire Council with the arrival of Paul Walker as Chief Executive. He has been a CX in Cumbria, so knows rural issues well. Recently he has worked in West London, leading a cross borough approach to green recovery. Cath Knowles is now Interim Head of Children's Services after a highly critical judgment by Justice Keehan of the authority's handling of a complex case involving a family in care. We will be working with national agencies and an Independent advisor as we audit all live cases and ensure our culture and practice is fit for purpose.

Locally we have new joint Heads at Leominster Primary School; Helen Lynch and Helen Rees have been promoted from the senior management team to take over from Tim Mamak, who has worked tirelessly on risk assessments and protocols to allow the school to run safely. It is great that the school crossing patrol is once again operating to encourage parents and children to walk to school.

Westfield Special School celebrate their 50th anniversary this year: they are due for a major rebuild, as their current buildings are not up to modern standards. Westfield take students from age 2 right up to 19, working closely with groups and businesses in the town as their pupils prepare for transition to adult life. Herefordshire Council will be consulting shortly on whether to continue SEND Sixth Form provision in Leominster and where to rebuild.

Other important news: our GP practices in Westfield Walk hope to move to a purpose built centre with more space. The surgeries are far too small for the population of the town, have limited parking and no room to deliver many primary care services the practices want to provide to their patients.

All patients of the Marches and Westfield surgeries are invited to give their views via a short survey on [Online survey](#). You can also find the survey on the surgery websites, under the 'News' tab. The results will help inform major investment in the town and in all our health. So please take 10 minutes to fill the consultation in!

Balfour Beatty have recently run briefings on their annual public realm programme for this year, with a specific session for the parishes around Leominster. Once again the overall spend is down due to funding constraints. This year there will be a focus on drainage, footways and structures such as bridges. Resurfacing will continue whenever funds are available – central government pots often appear at short notice.

Payment support is changing for farmers post Brexit: an increasing proportion of payments they receive will related to provision of public goods, including access, biodiversity and animal welfare. The current direct payments will be entirely phased out by 2028. We hope this switch will incentivise appropriate use of manure to prevent run off into our rivers. Poor agricultural practice is one of the contributors to the high phosphate levels in the Lugg – and these levels are currently blocking housing construction locally. The Council is working actively with many agencies and Powys, upstream, to find solutions. Partner include Welsh Water, who are investing in upgrades of sewage works in the next few years, including Leominster.

Congratulation to Leominster Foodbank, which has recently become a charitable incorporated organisation or CIO. They are now based at the Old Priory in Leominster, alongside ECHO and the Dementia Meeting Centre. The Foodbank have had a very busy year and their many volunteers have responded magnificently to the increased level of need – and several changes of premises. As well as their

normal service they have run regular food shares with fresh food supplied by supermarkets and have also provided holiday packs for families whose children

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qualify for Free School Meals. They will shortly be opening a Community Money Advice Connect Centre to help clients deal with their financial issues. Volunteers are sought to help with roles relating to this. Leominster is a town where many are on low wages and/or with zero hours contracts so this will be a great practical help in guiding people to support.

Keep an eye on out for further updates and news on my facebook page, Cllr Trish Marsh.

Cllr Jenny Bartlett Leominster East Ward Members Report May 2021

It is great to see the Annual Town Meeting back again after last year's cancellation due to covid and lock down. Whilst it is good to see familiar faces around the table instead of around a zoom screen, there are still major hurdles to cross for parishes and local authorities to hold large public meetings.

The town is rapidly opening up again and lots of groups are going ahead with events that have been postponed for so long. I was really happy to attend Swan Brewery's Tasting Day and 5th birthday celebration in April as part of the first covid relaxations to hospitality outdoor events.

On Saturday 22nd May I am looking forward to the Leominster in Bloom Plant Sale on the Grange (weather permitting) or in Corn Square if the Grange is too wet.

This month Herefordshire Council officially welcomed the new Chief Executive Paul Walker into his new post and he brings a wealth of experience with him that will be greatly valued.

Talk Community

Talk Community has come into prominence during covid as part of Herefordshire Council's, parishes and community group responses to supporting residents through the pandemic. Following the successful launch and rebranding at last month's Parish Summit, the new website has now gone live. The new website incorporates all the original WISH signposting and information, but is now much easier to use. The new website can be found here [Talk Community Directory](#)

Congratulations to Leominster Food Bank for becoming the latest Talk Community Hub in the county and they will soon be offering as a money and advice centre from their new home at the Old Priory. The foodbank has come a remarkably long way in the last year in importance and visibility. I was privileged to attend their AGM and listen to how they have grown, as well as their plans for the coming year.

Planning is ongoing now for the next Parish Summit in summer and I hope to have the details for my next ward update.

Re-thinking Governance

The task and finish group work continues on the constitutional and operational changes needed to improve scrutiny functions, member development and training and public engagement in council meetings. This is taking up quite a bit of time but it is important that we get it right. All the scrutiny committees hold regular public meetings and welcome questions and scrutiny topic suggestions.

Adult & Wellbeing Scrutiny committee

The scrutiny committee has been busy over the last couple of months looking at and making recommendations on a number of strategies and service providers. The carer's strategy now identifies five priorities: carer's voice; carers in the community; services offered to carers; carer's wellbeing; and financial. It also identified two over-arching themes: 'think carer' and 'carers and technology'.

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The new mental health provider, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust took over from 2gether NHS in April 2020, right at the start of the lockdown. This was an opportunity to hear from the new provider as well as from MIND who are working at the local level with GP's, community groups and Talk Community Hubs. Very appropriate as last week was Mental Health Awareness week and there is a growing acknowledgement that covid is affecting the mental health and stress levels of a number of our residents.

Draft Local Housing Strategy Consultation

There is an ongoing consultation about housing needs in the county so please do take part as this affects all of us. The need for a safe, warm and affordable home is central to all our lives. Through our local housing strategy, we can consider how the housing systems are working in Herefordshire, what we need to do to plan to meet current and future needs and demands, and how best to deliver our housing-related services. [Draft Local Housing Strategy consultation – Herefordshire Consultations](#)
The consultation is open until Friday 11th June and every bodies input is valued.

Replacement tree on Bargates

The tree that was critically damaged by a tractor and plough at the Bargates traffic lights last month had to be removed as it was too badly damaged to recover. I have agreement from BBLP that they will replace the tree in November during the 'tree planting season'. This is really good news and a great response to our demands that we replace trees on the highway if they have to be removed.

Cllr Jenny Bartlett, East Ward
01568 368509