



## LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

### FULL COUNCIL

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

To: All Members:  
Councillors Rumsey (Mayor), Marsh (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Herschy, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Preece, Rosser, Smith-Winnard, Sutcliffe, Thomas, Williams and Williamson (1 Vacancy).

### NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a special meeting of the Leominster Town Council to be held on **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 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. 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.
- 2. 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.
- 3. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**  
To consider requests for dispensations (must be notified in writing).
- 4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)**  
To receive questions and statements from members of the public.

**5. END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2020/21**

- (a) Annual Internal Audit Report** – To consider the Annual Internal Audit Report.
- (b) Annual Governance Statement** – To consider the formal adoption of the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21. Please see attachment.
- (c) Annual End of Year Accounts** – To approve the Council's 2020/21 End of Year accounts. Please see supporting document.

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Leominster Annual Town Council meeting on 24th May 2021.

**7. CLERK'S REPORT**

- (a)** To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.
- (b)** To agree a date for the Personnel Sub-Committee to carry out the Clerk's Annual Appraisal.

**8. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

To consider appointing additional members to sit on the following Committees:

- Planning & Highways Committee (4 vacancies)
- Environment & Services Committee (1 vacancy)
- Finance & General Purposes Committee (2 vacancies)
- Communications & Events Committee (3 vacancies)

**9. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance Committee 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".

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

## LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Annual Town Council Meeting held on Monday 24th May 2021 commencing at 19:00 hours in the John Abel Room at Grange Court, Pinsley Road, Leominster HR6 8NL.

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

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Town Clerk, Democratic Services Officer.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Ward Cllr Stone and 1 member of the public.

### **08/21 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE 2019/20 CIVIC YEAR**

Council ratified the decision made, at the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, that Cllr. Rumsey be elected Mayor of Leominster for 2021/22.

### **09/21 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Council **RECEIVED** Cllr. Rumsey's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the newly elected Mayor of Leominster.

### **10/21 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE 2019/20 CIVIC YEAR**

Council ratified the decision made, at the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, that Cllr. Marsh be elected Deputy Mayor of Leominster for 2021/22.

### **11/21 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Council **RECEIVED** Cllr. Marsh's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the newly elected Deputy Mayor of Leominster.

### **12/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Marshall (Work) Cllr. Parris (Personal) and Cllr. Preece (Work).

### **13/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

### **14/21 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

No requests for dispensation had been received.

**15/21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)**

There were no questions from the member of the public.

**16/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

Council **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021. These would be formally adopted at the next Town Meeting to be held in April 2022.

**17/21 CLERK'S REPORT**

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- The Everybody Dance rig has been installed in The Secret Garden. There will be a 2 week programme of events involving local schools;
- The government has launched the Welcome Back Fund to support the return to high streets safely and help build back better from the pandemic. The proposed budget per market town is £20000. Funding is available for the following activities:
  - provision of hand sanitiser stations;
  - signage to ensure safe flow of people in market town centres; and
  - maintenance of public conveniences (toilets) including new temporary facilities (toilets) provision in market town centres.
- The clerk has emailed Building Control regarding concerns raised in respect of the condition of The Royal Oak.

**18/21 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

Council **RESOLVED** 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

**19/21 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint the Members listed below to sit on the following Committees:

**PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE (11 MEMBERS)**

Cllr. Rumsey (Mayor)  
Cllr. Marsh (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. Bartlett  
Cllr. Herschy  
Cllr. Rosser  
Cllr. Thomas  
Cllr. Williams  
4 vacancies

**ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE (11 MEMBERS)**

Cllr. Rumsey (Mayor)  
Cllr. Marsh (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. Bartlett  
Cllr. Davies  
Cllr. Herschy  
Cllr. Murdoch  
Cllr. Norman  
Cllr. Smith-Winnard  
Cllr. Sutcliffe  
Cllr. Williamson  
1 vacancy

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (11 MEMBERS)**

Cllr. Rumsey (Mayor)  
Cllr. Marsh (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. Bartlett  
Cllr. Davies  
Cllr. Marshall  
Cllr. Murdoch  
Cllr. Norman  
Cllr. Sutcliffe  
Cllr. Williams  
2 vacancies

**COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS COMMITTEE (9 MEMBERS)**

Cllr. Rumsey (Mayor)  
Cllr. Marsh (Deputy Mayor)  
Cllr. Murdoch  
Cllr. Smith-Winnard  
Cllr. Sutcliffe  
Cllr. Thomas  
3 vacancies

**20/21 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint the following Council representatives to represent Leominster Town Council on Outside Bodies:

<b>OUTSIDE BODY</b>	<b>APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES</b>
Market Towns Forum (3 positions)	Cllrs. Rumsey and Marsh, 1 vacancy
Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (1 position)	Cllr. Rumsey
Leominster District Community Association (2 positions)	Cllr. Thomas, 1 vacancy
Leominster Festival Committee (1 position)	Cllr. Bartlett
Shopmobility (1 position)	Cllr. Rumsey
Grange Court Management Group (LARC) (1 position)	Vacant
Leominster in Bloom (2 positions)	Cllrs. Marsh and Murdoch
Fairtrade Group (1 position)	Cllr. Norman
Leominster Town Football Club (1 position)	Cllr. Rosser
S&A produce Liaison Group (2 positions)	Cllrs. Marsh and Thomas
Janice & Peter McCaull Trust (Positions appointed to 2023)	Cllrs. Norman, Rumsey and Thomas, Town clerk
Armed Forces Covenant	Cllr. Thomas
P3 Footpath Officer	Cllr. Herschy
Tree Officer	Cllr. Smith-Winnard
HSHAZ	Cllrs. Rumsey, Thomas, C&E chair, Town clerk, Projects & Grants Officer
Herefordshire Green Network	Cllr. Sutcliffe
Rural Services Network	Cllr. Bartlett
ECHO Vol. Group	Cllr. Smith-Winnard
Potential Leominster Business Group	Cllrs. Sutcliffe and Thomas

**21/21 INSURANCE COVER**

It was **RESOLVED** that annual insurance cover for the Town Council for 2021/22 currently provided by Zurich Municipal Insurance be confirmed.

**22/21 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Council **AGREED** to ratify Council's annual subscriptions to the National Association of Local Councils, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks, the National Association of British Market Authorities, Hereford Green Network, Rural Services Network and any other subscriptions as considered appropriate.

**23/21 FINANCES**

**Accounts paid and invoices for payment** - It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices relating to April 2021, as outlined on the payment statements provided.

**24/21 MAYORAL CHARITY FOR 2021/22**

Cllr. Rumsey announced that he would be supporting 2 charities during his mayoral year:  
Services For Independent Living and Marches Family Network.

**25/21 REPORTS**

The following reports were received from the Herefordshire Council Ward Members:

**Leominster North Ward Report from Ward Cllr. Stone**

Council noted the following report:

It will be good to see everyone again in person in Grange Court on Monday. I fully endorse the tribute from The Mayor on behalf of the people of Leominster upon the death of HRH Prince Philip and I mentioned his outstanding service in my Councillor's report in this month's Leominster News. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is not the least of his many achievements, benefitting thousands of young people.

My thanks to the Mayor Cllr Clive Thomas for his two years of service during difficult and exceptional times and for chairing all those zoom meetings. I think he deserves a break! I shall have an opportunity to congratulate the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor after they have been elected. Many thanks to Julie Debbage for all she has done as Town Clerk this year, taking over just as we went into the first lockdown but handling everything so efficiently and always being so cheerful and ready with help and advice. Nothing is too much trouble.

**Flood alleviation schemes**

These have been going ahead to improve the River Kenwater flood wall in Osborne Place and at The Mallards. I have been trying to arrange a site visit with Toby Whitehouse of the Environment Agency to view the scheme creating a new flood embankment along the River Lugg which is due to be completed this month. It has not been possible to arrange so far due to adverse weather but I am particularly interested in landscaping and tree planting there. Nearly 300 properties should be better protected due to this work in The Mallards and Ridgemoor and I hope to report further on both schemes at the next Town Council meeting. Flooding was a major problem in Leominster historically as the excellent board outside Broad Street car park reminds us. The town is in a much better situation now but with the climate emergency we cannot afford to relax and this is why I welcome the two schemes being carried out by the Environment Agency.

### Balfour Beatty update

Road repairs remain a sore point for many residents in and around Leominster and although Balfour Beatty are catching up on some of the backlog of potholes and blocked drains from the winter they have not been helped by the late frosts and the high rainfall levels we have experienced this month. I have been arranging socially distanced parish tours with Lee Fishwick, Leominster North locality steward and will let local Town Councillors know when a tour is arranged in Leominster. In the meantime please report potholes and blocked drains on Herefordshire Council website or phone Balfour Beatty on 01432 261 800 to report the defect. Please give the exact location to avoid wasting time searching for it. A photo also helps. Keeping on top of Herefordshire's 2,000 miles of roads is a major challenge as Council budgets continue to be squeezed. Please also report fly tipping whenever and wherever it occurs. Just leaving it encourages other to dump more rubbish. This anti-social activity needs to be addressed and in my view the enforcement is too weak and the penalties too lenient.

### Covid roadmap and vaccinations

This week has seen the welcome reopening of hotels, restaurants, theatres, cinemas, museums and much indoor hospitality. Cafes and pubs have done a great job with outdoor hospitality but it is more enjoyable to drink your tea or coffee indoors when the rain is lashing down. There has been a buzz again in the market towns since shops and hairdressers reopened in April. The advice is to proceed with caution during this third stage of the roadmap. I enjoyed my first visit to the barber since December on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

The week ending May 8<sup>th</sup> saw Covid case rate in Herefordshire at 24.9 cases per 100,000, a decrease on the previous week, although cases are bound to fluctuate from week to week. Hospital admissions also remain thankfully low. The successful vaccine roll out continues with the NHS inviting people aged 37 and over to book their jab. Over 100,000 Herefordshire residents have received their first dose and many their second dose of the vaccine. Who would have believed a year ago that over 36 million people would have received one of three effective vaccines?. It is really important that people attend their second dose appointment. Vaccines are ordered according to the booked appointments to make sure the right vaccine is available for you at the right location on the right day. Many thanks for the efficient operation at Bridge Street Leominster and to the many cheerful and willing volunteers on hand to assist.

Regular rapid testing is now available to everyone and localised outbreaks such as at a fruit farm are actively managed. Test kits can be obtained at pharmacies. Due to low attendance the Leominster Testing Centre for people with symptoms in Broad street car park will be replaced with a mobile testing unit which will be rotated between Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.

It will be good to see small numbers of spectators at cricket and football matches and at other outdoor sports soon, but many restrictions will stay in place as the virus has not gone away and the Government needs to keep following the medical and scientific data. It is always going to be a difficult balance as we emerge from three damaging but necessary lockdowns.



Herefordshire 24/7 Mental Health Helpline

The number has changed to Freephone 0808 196 9127. Available to people of all ages and provides support and signposting to anybody struggling with mental health problems. Mental health awareness week was last week with the theme of connecting with nature. Country walks and outdoor activity was encouraged which improves mental and physical health.

Finally

Many thanks to all the local groups and organisations who have helped us through the lockdowns from the displays brightening the town from Leominster in Bloom, Community Wheels for providing essential transport, the Leominster News for publishing every month and the Food Bank which has helped so many families and individuals. Let's hope we can soon enjoy the anniversaries and services in The Priory and the social events that keep the community together and even some summer holidays and staycations in the months ahead.

### **Leominster South Ward Report from Ward Cllr. Marsh**

Council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Cllr. Marsh added that the council should encourage residents to participate in the online survey in respect of the proposed new doctors' surgery. The clerk will check if there is a link on social media (Facebook) which can be notified to local residents.

### **Leominster West Ward Report from Ward Cllr. Norman**

Council noted the following report:

**Looking back at my 2019 report**, reminds me of how much has changed since then. At the time I was commenting on the early days of the new Council, and the range of events I was attending as deputy leader and as Cabinet Member for children and families.

There have been hardly any of those opportunities this past year, which has seen all our activities severely limited by Covid, and few if any events have been taking place. As we now cautiously move out of lockdown, we look forward to having more visitors and to more public events being organised with sensible precautions in place.

**The Council and public alike** have been shocked and disturbed by the findings of a recent court judgement strongly critical of Herefordshire Children's Services, and their work with families with children in care. Immediate action is being taken, beginning with an assessment of current cases, which has indicated that there is no immediate cause for concern. However, further external reviews will follow, including a thorough, independent review of our Children's Social Care Services to get to the root of any problems and to highlight the changes needed.

My focus is on ensuring we make the changes needed to give us all confidence in our Children's Services and the legal services we work with. Some changes have taken place within the service, including the resignation of the Director and the appointment of an interim Director, Cath Knowles, a qualified and registered Social Worker, to provide professional experience, leadership and assurance for the coming months. Our Social Workers continue to do their best, often in very difficult

## MINUTES (Agenda Item 6)

circumstances, to support families and protect vulnerable children in our community. We will ensure our staff have the support they need and the confidence and commitment to report any concerns as we make significant and lasting improvements.

My intention is that we not only address the immediate issues of concern but that in the longer term we work towards providing an excellent service that we can be truly proud of. We are working closely with, and receiving support from the LGA, Ofsted, the DfE and other regulators, and will be setting up an Improvement Board to coordinate and monitor the changes needed.

**Phosphates in the River Lugg** continue to delay any significant development in the north of the county, including the large development at Barons Cross Camp. We are working with the planning officer to challenge the current plans, and get the best possible quality housing, open spaces, play area, planting and access.

**Leominster Improvement Plan and the Heritage plans** continues to progress, although frustratingly slowly. Lots of interesting ideas coming forward, but putting them into practise will be a challenge, especially at the rate things seem to be moving. Both have huge potential benefits for the town, and in spite of delays, will significantly improve the town centre, making it an attractive destination for both visitors and residents, and boosting the local economy.

**The long awaited replacement** of our two doctor's surgeries, and the development of a health hub for the town, is coming a step closer with the commitment from the NHS to provide the necessary funding. This is a great opportunity to improve both capacity and conditions for patients and employees with a new, state of the art building, and we hope that the delays caused by the phosphates will not seriously impact on this development.

Cllr. Norman added that the council should make the public aware of what the current system is regarding Covid vaccinations. The clerk will write to the Wye Valley Trust to find out who is currently organising the roll out of the vaccinations.

### **Leominster East Ward Report from Ward Cllr. Bartlett**

Council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Cllr. Bartlett added that she had been chasing up queries regarding The Royal Oak. Cllr. Bartlett advised that the enforcement notice on the building has lapsed and that another building inspection needs to be carried out as the building is dangerous.

Cllr. Bartlett also added that she will be attending a Rural Services Network meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to find out how other councils are dealing with health and wellbeing issues.

**Cllr. Thomas (outgoing Mayor)**

Council noted the following report:

By the time you read this I will have handed over to my deputy on May 24, but there will not be the usual mayor making, as current restrictions will not allow this, but the council hope to hold the ceremony in September.

I have been mayor for two years and took part in several functions during the first part of 2019. Then we went into lockdown, when everything went into lockdown, and everybody had to stay at home and work from home if possible. This was when the Town council came into its own.

Thanks to our exceptional town clerk, and her staff, the telephone lines were diverted to mobiles and as part of the Covid-19 response, along with Marina Morris of Leominster Covid-19 response, and Community Wheels ,Leominster food bank and in excess of 100 volunteers maintained a service delivering prescriptions, medications, shopping and food parcels to members of the public who were not able to go out.

For a small town the community spirit came into play. Our new young friends, who moved in one month before the pandemic, did our weekly shopping. THANK YOU to all the volunteers and our staff who answered the phones 7 days a week, including the evenings, and the Town council did the administration and kept the records.

We managed to perform one civic function which was in the brief interlude between the two lockdowns. We hosted a visit of Patricia Thomas, the High Sheriff, and she visited us for all day visiting many businesses, shops, food bank and several charities.

**26/21 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**CLERK'S REPORT**

Council noted the following confidential items from the Clerk's Report:

- The clerk has received a request to attend a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021, with Ward Councillors and Herefordshire Councillors, to discuss the potential devolved asset;
- The Projects & Grants officer has completed a draft to tender for a grant, from Historic England, to complete a feasibility study on the potential devolved asset.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20.10 hours.

**MAYOR**

**DATE:**

# LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

### 1. **Scope of Responsibility**

- 1.1 Leominster Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 This Statement explains how the Council has complied with the requirements under the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements.

### 2. **The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes for the direction and control of the council and its activities through which it accounts to and engages with the community.
- 2.2 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and up to the date of approval of this new statement. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities each financial year to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.
- 2.3 The publication of this Annual Governance Statement confirms that Leominster Town Council has undertaken a review of governance arrangements in order to satisfy itself that all appropriate processes and procedures are in place.

### 3. **Purpose of the System of Internal Control**

- 3.1 The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives but aims to identify and prioritise risks and the likelihood of them being realised and the impact thereof and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

- 3.2 A system of internal control has been in place at Leominster Town Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

#### **4. The Governance Environment**

- 4.1 Governance mechanisms are in place for the following purposes:
- Focusing on the purpose of the Council and establishing and monitoring the achievement of the Council’s objectives and assessing performance;
  - Facilitating policy and decision making;
  - Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations;
  - Embedding risk management as an activity of the Council, including how leadership is given to the risk management process, and how staff are trained or equipped to manage risk in a way appropriate to the Council and their duties;
    - Seeking to ensure that continuous improvement occurs in the way the Council exercises its functions including regular training sessions for members and officers;
    - Ensuring Value for Money – the Council is constantly seeking to ensure that its resources are used economically, effectively and efficiently;
    - Utilises staff and management innovations and the findings of external agencies and inspections to help drive improvements;
  - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
  - Continuing improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as required when seeking to achieve value for money;
  - Arrangements are in place to research residents’ views and consult on policies and proposals of the Council;
  - Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour. The behaviour of councillors in particular is regulated through a Code of Conduct. In addition, Herefordshire Council has the duty of maintaining high standards of conduct in public office through its Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee roles, and arranging training on ethical matters for parish and town councils.
  - Ensuring employees comply with Council policies on conduct and behaviour;
  - Ensuring policy and decision making are facilitated by a clear framework of delegation set out in the Council’s Standing Orders;
  - Dealing with comments and complaints relating to service;
  - Ensuring the financial management of the Council and reporting on financial management and in particular integrating the following financial management principles within the system of internal control:
    - Compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are regularly reviewed.
    - Compliance with budgetary procedure requirements
    - Segregation of financial responsibilities
    - Management supervision

- Accountability of staff as budget holders
- Monitoring of budgets for over and underspends.
- Regular periodic reviews and financial reports
- Regular reports showing actual expenditure and income against forecasts for reporting on and reviewing financial performance
- Clearly defined budget setting and capital expenditure guidelines
- Regular monitoring of reserves/balances
- Compliance with formal project management disciplines
- Compliance with risk management procedures
- A robust approach to insurance and claims management.

4.2 Risk Management and Internal Audit:

- Management of risk: The Council has an established Financial Risk Management Policy.
- During the year the Internal Auditor reported to the Town Clerk. All reports are considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- The Council has a health and safety policy, which includes the carrying out of risk assessments and provides an on-going training programme to ensure continuous improvement of its practices and procedures.
- The Council retains the services of an external Health & Safety Advisor.
- The Council also retains the services of an independent internal auditor.
- The Council takes fraud, corruption and maladministration seriously.

5. **Review of Effectiveness**

- 5.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.
- 5.2 The review of effectiveness is guided by the work of the Town Clerk who has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the development and maintenance of the governance environment. The Council is also equally guided by the work of their independent Internal Auditor and comments made by their external auditors.
- 5.3 The process agreed by the Council which is applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of governance arrangements, including the system of internal control includes:
- Distribution of monthly schedule of payments to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for scrutiny and comment.
  - The Finance & General Purposes Committee receives all internal and external audit reports.
  - Reporting on any issues relating to value for money to ensure use of resources in an economical, effective and efficient way.
  - Approval through the relevant Standing Committees of budget plans, the subsequent collation of comments for policy guidance at the Town Council meeting on the setting of the budget and any Precept requirements for the following year.

**AGENDA Item 5(b)**

- Responsibility through the Finance & General Purposes Committee for receiving regular reports on work in progress and to be programmed for the future on internal audit and external audit functions.
- Where any recommendations are made either by the Internal Auditor or the external auditor suggesting improvements to the effectiveness of the systems of governance and internal control, a plan of action will be agreed with the Town Clerk within a reasonable period to address weaknesses and to ensure agreed action is undertaken.

5.5 Having implemented risk management as part of their Corporate Governance arrangements the Council will continue during 2021/22 to develop these risk management arrangements to ensure they are sufficiently embedded and effective.

5.6 The Council will also co-operate during 2021/22 with any internal or external audit work and will address any weaknesses and also consider implementation of any recommendations which may affect improvements within these areas of activity.

**6. Significant Governance Issues**

6.1 Should the Council receive from their independent Internal Auditor or from their external auditors or any other agency a report on any matter which is considered to be one of significant corporate governance and/or internal control, such matters will be reported to and will be personally investigated by the Town Clerk who will submit a report to the Finance & General Purposes Committee as soon as practicable on the implications thereof to seek guidance and instruction on any action to be taken.

**7. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

7.1 Leominster Town Council has ensured there is a sound system of internal financial control and has taken the following actions:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Actions taken</b>
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for preparation of the accounting system	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Accounts have been prepared according to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.  Bespoke accounting software has been used (Rialtas RBS)  Monthly financial reports have been submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Full Council for scrutiny.  One internal audit has been undertaken during the financial year.

	Yes	No	Actions taken
2. We maintain an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		A financial Risk Register was reviewed, updated and adopted on 27/07/2020.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or on its finances.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		All Council activities and expenditure have been delivered through the powers and duties held by Local Councils and the relevant statutory provision.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		All Council meetings are open to the public.  Members of the public are encouraged to attend Council and Committee meetings and there is an opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of Council business.  All agendas are published in full on the Council's website.  The Town Council developed a Corporate Strategy and a Medium Term Financial Plan in 2018, which outlines the Councils aims and objectives.  The monthly financial reports presented to Full Council and the Finance & General Purposes Committee are published on the website as part of the relevant agenda.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this smaller authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		A Financial Risk Register was adopted in July 2020.  An Internal Controls document was adopted by Council on 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2016 and is reviewed as required.  Insurance cover was reviewed and updated in 2016. The final year of the 3 year agreement is 2022/23.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Financial healthchecks were undertaken by Microshade Ltd.  Internal audit carried out by Iain Selkirk.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Following the 2019/20 internal and external audit the item mentioned was corrected and



	Yes	No	Actions taken
			council noted that no further action would be required.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Council did not receive any insurance claims during the year. Any claims received are dealt with by the Council's insurer, Zurich Municipal.
9. The Town Council is not sole manager of any Trust Funds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Not applicable.

**8. Approval of Statement**

8.1 This statement is to be approved by the Full Council on Monday 28th June 2021 when authority was granted for the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign.

Town Mayor :.....

Town Clerk:.....

On behalf of Leominster Town Council