

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 28th September 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

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 and Projects & Grants Officer.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Stone.

29/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Preece (Leave), Cllr Marshall (Work)

30/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Murdoch - Allotments

31/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

32/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

33/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 27th July 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when social distancing regulations are lifted by central government.

34/20 CLERK'S REPORT

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- a) That Light Switch On Event and the Through the Wardrobe Event will be cancelled this year but alternative ways of organising a virtual event are currently being investigated.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to go ahead with a pared down Civic Service on 25th October 2020. The service will be held at The Priory with social distancing measures in place and not include dignitaries as in previous years.
- c) Remembrance Sunday – the clerk has been liaising with the Royal British Legion regarding the arrangements. The parade will not take place this year but a meeting to finalise details of the service is planned for early October.
- d) 11 Corn Square Boundary Wall – The Secret Garden wall has a large crack and has an amount of movement when pushed. The car park spaces adjacent have been barriered for the safety of car park users and Herefordshire Council has been notified. The Town Council Foreman will carry out a closer inspection as soon as possible.

- e) Depot Works – Depot works are nearly complete and quotes are being sourced for a security alarm.

35/20 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 29th July 2020, 10th August 2020 and 7th September 2020 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 14th July 2020 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 7th September 2020 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 20th July 2020 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein.
- Cllr. Thomas, Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 19th August 2020 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein.

36/20 FINANCES

- (a) **Accounts Paid and Invoices for Payment** – It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices for August - September 2020, as outlined on the payment statement provided.
- (b) The Income & Expenditure Report and budget notes for Month 5 were noted.
- (c) Following discussion, it was requested that the clerk set up meetings of the Budget Task and Finish Group to work on the Forecast Sheets to begin shaping the 2021/22 budget.
- (d) The clerk has received the Herefordshire Council request to consider the forecast expenditure and precept requirements for the coming financial year. As their staff are still working remotely, it was requested that the precept requests for 2021/22 are submitted by **31st December 2020**.
- (e) NALC is currently reviewing the model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to incorporate COVID-19 measures. An update will be provided when the new model documents have been received.

37/20 REPORTS

The following reports were received;

Cllr Bartlett – Community Centre Verbal Report – The council noted the report including that the Community Centre has held its first socially distanced meeting for 1st September 2020, the therapists are returning to the health centre and that training had been taking place at the Community Centre.

Cllr. Rumsey – Shopmobility Verbal Report – Then council noted that Shopmobility is still closed as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. An emergency number is available and displayed at the premises and outside operation is currently being considered.

Leominster South Ward Report

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Leominster West Ward Report

September Report from Councillor Felicity Norman (Cabinet portfolio – Children and Families)

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Leominster North & Rural Ward Report

Council noted the verbal report below.

Balfour Beatty Update

The second verge cut took place earlier this month and I hope our grit bins remain unscathed ! The annual cycle of refilling grit bins for the winter has also started and I have been sent a list of locations covered. Please let me know of any grit bins not filled. Let's hope for a mild winter but not a wet one after last year's flooding.

The A44 in Mill Street was temporarily closed last weekend for tarmac repair work on the level crossing, very much needed. It is now much improved. Meanwhile there will be a further closure on the 3rd and 4th of October weekend due to track renewal works. There will be inconvenience but it is necessary work. Please continue to report potholes or blocked drains to Balfour Beatty by phoning 01432 261 800 or going on the Council website.

Fly tipping

There has been an epidemic of fly tipping recently even though the household refuse sites are open in Hereford and all the market towns. Five fly tipping collections have taken place recently in Leominster and on September 9th there was a serious incident in Brimfield with car tyres and building materials dumped by Brimfield Village Hall. No evidence of the identity of the culprits has been discovered. Residents are understandably angry and the situation has not been helped by the slow response of Balfour Beatty. The incident was reported the next morning to Balfour Beatty and later to the Community Protection team. The rubbish has still not been cleared a fortnight later in spite of repeated requests. The problem is that leaving the fly tipping just encourages more of the same. There needs to be zero tolerance of fly tipping by Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty with much greater urgency in removing the debris and prosecuting the offenders.

MINUTES

Meanwhile there is now an appointments system to ease the queues at the recycling centres, convenient for some but others just will not bother. Residents can book a slot 4 times a fortnight.

Coronavirus developments

The gradual lifting of many restrictions during the summer has been welcome but the sharp rise in cases recently and renewed restrictions announced this week has dismayed us all. The success of the Eat Out to Help Out initiative, the reopening of the HALO swimming pools and the return of local team sports all raised morale after the earlier lockdown. We can only hope that the latest measures will help control the spread of the virus and prevent the return of a more significant shutdown with all the dire economic and social consequences it might entail. We can all help by social distancing, using sanitiser and wearing face coverings when required but also by keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours and on those living alone. Supporting our local economy is also vital in Leominster and our villages by using our shops, cafes and pubs when they all follow the correct protocols. Many like The Roebuck in Brimfield have gone the extra mile with home deliveries and takeaways all through the crisis. The Roebuck Shop is also a delivery point for the Leominster Food Bank. Parish magazines also reappeared during the summer and the Leominster News has been printed throughout to their great credit.

Schools

The return to school has been the most important step forward in September. Many children had not been at school since March with their education seriously disrupted, although the majority of schools had stayed open for key workers children. Some classes and groups have been sent home to self-isolate but the majority of local children(92% last week) are attending school and a higher proportion have returned to school in our county than nationally. If testing could be more widespread and results quicker it will help all our schools to stay open which is in the interests of all children and their parents too. I am missing my duties as a governor of Earl Mortimer College, zoom meetings are just not the same as personal contact. My thanks to the dedicated teachers there and in our primary schools like Kimbolton.

Loft Insulation Scam

Herefordshire Council is advising people not to engage with cold callers. Residents are being phoned and offered visits to change their loft insulation. Trading standards are warning them not to fall for this false advice. Residents interested in loft insulation or energy efficiency measures can call 0800 677 1432 or the Keep Herefordshire warm website at www.keepherefordshirewarm.com.uk

The Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline is 0808 223 1133. Please report suspicious calls to Trading Standards or if necessary The Police.

High Street Heritage Fund

It is good news for Leominster that the Council Cabinet confirmed in July that work can begin on developing projects outlined in this national scheme. Projects will be delivered over 4 years and the grant funding will help regenerate high streets and make Leominster more attractive for residents, businesses and visitors. It is a great opportunity for the town and there will be many opportunities to get involved. Well done the Town Council !

Lord Lieutenancy

This month has seen the retirement of Lady Darnley who has served as The Queen's representative in Herefordshire since 2008. She has been an outstanding Lord Lieutenant, tireless in attending military commemorations and recognising

voluntary and community work. She has hosted many Royal visits to the county and I am sorry that due to current circumstances her retirement is so low key. Her successor is Edward Harley from Brampton Bryan and I am sure he will be just as active and involved having served as Deputy Lieutenant. We wish Lady Darnley well in her retirement.

Reverend Mike Kneen will also be much missed as he bows out this month. Leominster will not be the same without his cheerful and ebullient presence in The Priory and around the town. Like past generations of clergy he has wide outside interests and always gives sound advice. The Dean will also be missed when he retires from Hereford Cathedral in January. He was my chaplain when I was chairman of Herefordshire Council and his prayers and short sermons always seemed to hit the nail on the head. My Best wishes to Michael Tavinor.

Meetings

Herefordshire and Town and Parish Council meetings are all via Zoom and this will probably continue into the foreseeable future but I am always happy to meet residents, socially distanced, even if it is for a chat in the garden as long as national regulations allow. 1984 or 2020? My phone number, landline of course. 01584 711 227.

John Stone Leominster North and Rural

Leominster East Ward Members Report

Cllr Jenny Bartlett, Ward members report 28th September 2020

Council noted the verbal report below.

August is generally a quiet month at Herefordshire Council as it is at Town Council with fewer meetings to allow for well-earned holidays.

Market Towns Economic Investment: I am really pleased to see these projects taking shape with initial meetings with all town councils have taken place. This is the money agreed by Council in February's budget. This is a great opportunity to kick start some projects in Leominster, suggestions so far have included opening up the additional employment land adjacent to the Enterprise Park referenced in the core strategy and Neighbourhood plan, and encouraging a 'travel lodge' style hotel on the edge of town to boost the tourist trade.

Parish Summit second session:

Involved with preparations for the second part of the parish summit which are taking place as locality meetings over the next week. The parishes are grouped by Primary Care Network (PCN) localities. As part of the new NHS Sustainable Transformation Plan for our health services in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, the PCN's are the most local level of care in the community. Talk Community are now much more focussed on locality working with the roll out of the Health Hubs across the county and parish locality meetings will become more frequent.

Council meetings:

Herefordshire Council held its postponed Annual Meeting in September to re-elect the Leader and Chairman of the Council, as well as the chairs and vice chairs of the scrutiny committees.

Scrutiny Meetings:

Much of my time has been involved in the culmination of task and finish groups reporting to scrutiny and scrutiny committee work programming.

The Adult and Well Being Scrutiny committee have considered the Suicide Prevention Strategy which was adopted by Council last July.

I have also attended meetings of the Herefordshire Mental Health Forum.

The Audit and Governance Committee agreed the recommendations of the Re-Thinking Governance Task and Finish Group. The main recommendation is for Herefordshire Council to move to a hybrid Committee model to encourage more member participation in decision making.

The General Scrutiny Committee agreed the recommendations of the Waste Contract Task and Finish group. This is a multi-million pound contract that will need to be replaced in 2023 when existing contract ends.

All member briefing:

A workshop on transport seminar with a panel of speakers who presented a range of local transport topics and solutions and approaches across the country. A chance to compare Herefordshire Councils approach with other local authorities.

Talk Community ward members and officers meetings:

With the general reduction in covid-19 cases and easing of restrictions over summer, the weekly meetings had reduced to fortnightly. Herefordshire Talk Community's and the Town Councils help lines are still running but are needed less frequently now. Hopefully the upsurge in cases in the last fortnight is being monitored to respond to any upsurge in a need for more help again.

Leominster in Bloom Plant and Craft Fair:

A great event held on The Grange in glorious sunshine, safely run and a much needed chance to enjoy ourselves.

38/20 MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Council noted the following Mayoral appointments attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

- The SIL virtual AGM was attended on Zoom.
- The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Rumsey for his help to ensure that the market is a safe place for residents and visitors.

39/20 RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

A presentation was carried out by David Inman, Director of the Rural Services Network, before the meeting. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to subscribe to the Rural Services Network and that Cllr Bartlett would represent Leominster Town Council at the meetings.

40/20 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to set up a sub-committee to look at the Assets of Community Value Register and clarify what is already registered and put forward recommendations for the register.

41/20 ROAD NAMEPLATE PROVISION

It was **RESOLVED** that the Budget Task & Finish Group should include a small budget for these requests in the 2021/22 financial year.

42/20 REPAIR OF PIPE AT ALLOTMENT SITE

Following a thorough investigation of the flooding issue, the contractor submitted a quote of £1250+VAT to repair the collapsed pipe. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation and request that the work be carried out as soon as possible.

43/20 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) Councillor sabbatical – The request for a six month sabbatical was presented and it was proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Rosser and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the request was approved.

(b) Consideration of advice regarding banking - Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Thomas and seconded by Cllr. Rosser and unanimously **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the clerk to transfer part of the current account balance into the savings account that runs alongside the current account.

(c) Democratic Assistant Role – Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Herschy and seconded by Cllr. Thomas and unanimously **RESOLVED** to advertise for a Democratic Assistant as soon as possible.

(d) Devolved Asset Update – The clerk and Cllr. Bartlett updated council and it was **RESOLVED** to ask Herefordshire Council for more information regarding the asset before arranging a site visit.

(e) Ginhall Green Easement Update – Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Bartlett and voted 12 for, 1 abstention to **RESOLVE** that the matter should return to the land agent and a new solicitor should be appointed.

44/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 30th November 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours either remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP depending on social distancing regulations being relaxed by central government.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21:23pm.

MAYOR:

DATE: