



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Tuesday 21st July 2020

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 a meeting of the Leominster Town Council to be held on **Monday 27th July 2020** commencing at **19:00 hours** remotely via Zoom.

Meeting ID: 811 1051 7109

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on townclerk@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk in advance for the meeting password.

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 2019/20

- (a) **Annual Internal Audit Report** – To consider the Annual Internal Audit Report. Please see attachment.
- (b) **Annual Governance Statement** – To consider the formal adoption of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20. Please see attachment.
- (c) **Annual End of Year Accounts** – To consider and approve the Council's 2019/20 End of Year accounts. Please see attachment.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting on 18th May 2020.

7. CLERK'S REPORT

- (a) To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.
- (b) To receive and agree the meeting dates for the remainder of the calendar year.
- (c) To agree a date for the Personnel Sub-Committee to carry out the Clerk's Annual Appraisal.

8. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

To approve the minutes of the following meetings held and ratify the decisions and recommendations reached:

- Planning & Highways Committee – 1st June, 22nd June, 13th July
- Communications & Events – 12th May
- Finance & General Purposes – 29th June
- Personnel Sub-Committee – 6th May
- Environment & Services – 11th May

9. FINANCES

- (a) **Accounts paid and invoices for payment** – To receive an accounts paid and invoices for payment statement.
- (b) **Risk Register** – To ratify the Risk Register for 2020/21.
- (c) **Income and Expenditure Report Month 3** – To consider the Income and Expenditure Report for Month 3 and accompanying notes.

10. REPORTS

- (a) To receive update reports from:
 - Representatives on outside bodies (verbal)
 - Herefordshire Council Ward Members (text and verbal)
- (b) **Website Report** – To consider a report on the future development of the Town Council website.

11. MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

To receive a verbal update on Mayoral Appointments attended by the Mayor.

12. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2020/21 CIVIC YEAR

Nominations to be invited for the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. If more than one nomination is received, then an election will be held immediately.

13. MOTION

To consider the following Motion proposed by Cllr. Norman and seconded by Cllr. Rosser at the Full Council meeting on :

On 6th March 2020 **Herefordshire Council RESOLVED:** That Herefordshire Council recognises the benefits associated with a 20 miles per hour speed limit in residential areas rather than a default of 30 mph which exists in most parts of the town and County.

There are fewer fatalities and injuries, greater survivability in traffic collisions, improved air quality, reduced fuel use and greater willingness of the population to walk or cycle – which has associated health benefits.

Many councils have or are in the process of implementing area-wide 20mph speed limits on residential and urban roads without traffic calming.

Many bodies with a remit for public health support a reduction in speed limits to 20mph on residential streets.

Area-wide 20mph limits rarely need traffic calming measures. They are an affordable way to improve health equality by creating child, disability, elderly and dementia friendly streetscapes that help reduce inactivity, obesity and isolation.

This Council requests that the executive undertakes an investigation concerning the introduction of area-wide 20mph speed limits across Herefordshire's towns and major villages.

Motion to Leominster Town Council - to support the Herefordshire Council Motion to move to 20mph on the county's residential areas.

14. 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".

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 28th September 2020 commencing at 19:00pm either remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices,

AGENDA

11 Corn Square, Leominster, HR6 8YP depending the on the lifting of social distancing regulations by central government.

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 31st March 2020 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 31st March 2020.

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.

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- 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 2020/21 to develop these risk management arrangements to ensure they are sufficiently embedded and effective.

5.6 The Council will also co-operate during 2020/21 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 2019/20

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

	Yes	No	Actions taken
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) A quarterly financial health check has been carried out by Microshade Business Consultants Ltd. Monthly financial reports have been submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Full Council for scrutiny.

	Yes	No	Actions taken
			Two internal audits have been undertaken during the financial year.
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 29 th April 2019.
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 April 2019. An Internal Controls document was adopted by Council on 22 nd February 2016 and is reviewed as required. Insurance cover was reviewed and updated in 2016.
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"/>		Quarterly financial health checks were undertaken by Microshade Ltd. Internal audits carried out by Iain Selkirk.

	Yes	No	Actions taken
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Following the 2018/19 internal and external audit the plan was formally considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee along with an update.
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 29th July 2020 when authority was granted for the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign.

Town Mayor

Town Clerk

On behalf of Leominster Town Council

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 18th May 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Thomas (Mayor), Rumsey (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Herschy (19.11), Marsh, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Parris, Rosser, Smith-Winnard, Williams and Williamson(19.21).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk.

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

01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

02/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

03/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

04/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

One member of the public was present. The following matters were raised:

- As an allotment plot holder with two plots on his third season at the allotments and after 9 weeks of dry warm weather, the plot is still wet making growing very hard. This has been happening for some time and various utilities have been on site, when will a solution be found?
- When will the Town Council brash be removed from the car park?
- When will the pothole at the top of Etnam Street at the junction with South Street be filled?
- When will the dip in the road in West Street be dealt with?

The clerk replied that a Water Contractor had been asked to carry out a camera survey to find out why the water is still flowing and this would be chased up. The other matters would be investigated and the member of the public would receive a response from the clerk as soon as possible.

05/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Minute 90/19 – it was requested that the Proposed motion regarding a 20 mph speed limit in Leominster be put on the agenda to be discussed in full at the next Full Council meeting on 27th July 2020.

Minute 95/19 – it was noted that there was no further change in the Planning and Phosphates issue in the River Lugg.

06/20 CLERK'S REPORT

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- (a) **Replacement of 11 Corn Square immersion heater and associated heating works** – Council noted that this work was required in order to ensure that the heating and hot water system was more efficient and safe. It was requested that the clerk obtain a further two quotes to cover all of the work, including replacement radiators and valves.

07/20 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council approved the minutes of the following meetings held and ratified the decisions and recommendations made:

- Cllr Prosser, Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee, presented the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee held on 3rd February 2020, 2nd March 2020 and 4th May 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 10th March 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 24th February 2020 and 27th April 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 16th March 2020 and to authorise the decisions and recommendations contained therein.

The following matters were raised:

- Minute FG44/19(a) No response had been received from the complainants regarding the complaint about The Grange open space consultation.
- Minute FG45/19(c) The wording should read 'recommend adoption by full council'

08/20 FINANCES

- (a) **Accounts Paid Statement** – It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices for April/May 2020, as outlined on the payment statement provided.
- (b) **Risk Register** – The updated Governance and Management Risk Register was presented by the clerk, with all amendments tracked. It was agreed that the clerk should identify actions for RR6 Emergency Cover before the document is adopted.

09/20 REPORTS

The following reports were received:

- (a) **COVID-19 Response Summary** – The council noted the report.

Date: 12/05/2020

On 31st January 2020, the UK recorded its first confirmed cases of coronavirus. By March 11th 2020, the global coronavirus outbreak had been declared an international public health emergency by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and by 17th March 2020 the UK Government had imposed a ban on all non-essential public access. Schools across the UK were closed from the end of the day on 20th March 2020, with limited provision provided for children of essential key workers.

On 17th March 2020, Town Council staff began working with Team Leominster partners and the COVID-19 SOS Volunteer Group to develop a co-ordinated response to the COVID-19 crisis in Leominster. The aim was to put in place a robust system for connecting offers of volunteer support with individuals who were vulnerable or in self-isolation.

The Leominster COVID-19 Community Response Scheme went live on 20th March 2020. A central telephone contact point was provided for incoming enquiries, with calls managed by staff from HVOSS Community Wheels and Leominster Town Council. Telephone lines have since been manned from 8am-6pm on weekdays and 3pm-6pm on weekends (with lines also remaining open on public holidays). Details of the Support Scheme were publicised via the Town Council website and social media accounts, with information also circulated by email and hard copy leaflets (delivered by volunteers). An initial group of volunteers were recruited by the COVID-19 SOS Volunteer Group, to provide support with grocery shopping/deliveries, prescriptions, Food Bank pick-ups, pet care, and telephone befriending. Volunteers registered with the COVID-19 Community Response Scheme were issued ID badges (designed by the

COVID-19 SOS Volunteer Group) and were offered hand sanitiser and disposable gloves – supplied by Leominster Town Council and Herefordshire Council. New volunteers were invited to register via the main helpline number.

Herefordshire Council deployed Talk Community Link Workers to support the COVID-19 Response in Leominster from 20th March 2020. A county-wide support line was launched shortly afterwards. Town Council staff have been working alongside the Talk Community Link Workers allocated to Leominster, with regular meetings taking place via video-conferencing. Calls from Leominster residents that are received through the Herefordshire Council

support line are referred into the Leominster COVID-19 Community Response Scheme via the Talk Community Link Workers.

Town Council staff have worked closely with the Leominster Food Bank to develop a system for making referrals using e-vouchers. Regular referrals are also made to other local support services, including Leominster NILS, Leominster Baptist Church, and volunteer support schemes in neighbouring parishes. Town Council staff have also made contact with all care homes in Leominster, to ensure that they have adequate supplies of PPE. Updates on local COVID-19 support and safeguarding measures are shared via the Town Council website, social media accounts and Leominster News contributions. Email updates are also circulated to Councillors and Team Leominster Partners.

In response to the need to coordinate a growing number of volunteers, Leominster Town Council staff have developed a central volunteer database that allows representatives from both the Town Council and COVID-19 Support Scheme partner organisations to securely access and amend volunteer data while working remotely. As well as storing contact details, the database also records information on volunteer availability and DBS status, which is essential given that only volunteers with DBS clearance are permitted to pick up prescriptions. We are very grateful to the Herefordshire Community Foundation and the NET Coronavirus Appeal Fund for a grant of £216 to help fund the software licences required to manage the COVID-19 Volunteer database for a 6-month period (from April – Sept 2020). An additional grant of £111.90 was received from the Fastershire 'Keep Connected' Fund, to cover the cost of telephone forwarding software for the Town Council Office phone line and an extended Zoom licence for use in Council and Committee meetings.

The Leominster COVID-19 Community Response Scheme currently has 90 registered volunteers, covering all areas of Leominster and many of the surrounding villages. Analysis of call log data has enabled us to identify areas of the town where support requirements are highest and to put in place plans for ensuring that volunteer coverage is sustained in these areas, as lockdown measures are reduced and a larger number of residents are required to return to work. Town Council staff have also been exploring ways to ensure that information about the available volunteer support is reaching those people who are self-isolating without access to computers or the internet. Support flyers are being distributed with deliveries from local supermarkets and from 18th May 2020 a bookmark promoting the Leominster COVID-19 Community Response will be distributed by local pharmacies dispensing prescriptions within Leominster and surrounding villages/parishes. Production costs for the

bookmark have been covered by a further funding grant from the NET Coronavirus Fund.

Council also noted the following Ward Councillor reports:

Leominster South Ward Report for 18 May – Cllr Trish Marsh

Things are happening both so fast and so slowly! Thank goodness for:-

- Leominster's green spaces that give nearly all of us the chance to get out safely
- Big hearted volunteers, backed by the LTC and HC helplines
- Link officers from Herefordshire Council specifically for Leominster
- Relatively low rates of infection – let's hope that stays the same as the tests increase and we get a more accurate picture
- Online platforms that help us stay in touch
- Good weather and spring.

Herefordshire is responding positively, especially as a massive 1 in 3 of our population, including all over 70s, are defined as clinically vulnerable and instructed to minimise contact with those outside their immediate household. Thank goodness they are allowed out to exercise daily – a boost for physical health! And now can receive outside visitors at a 2 metre distance to help keep spirits up. Thanks to all at home for their forbearance and thanks to all the volunteers, family and friends who are keeping them supplied with what they need. We look forward to seeing them again soon – the over 70s are so important to our many community groups, charity shops and high street businesses.

Of course we are missing the businesses on our High Street and elsewhere. I've set up a Facebook page called Leominster Independent

Shops. Several are open and many more are offering online services, so there is more going on than is at first apparent! I've increased my Facebooking in general and appreciate the local FB groups that get information out quickly to many.

I'm very glad the town council is having virtual meetings. The House of Lords, average age 70, are following our lead! Zoom turns out to be easier than I expected and, although it is a platform designed for work, is also useful for other purposes. Families and all sorts of local groups are finding ingenious ways to keep in touch. Obviously it's not perfect and some meetings with poor connections are frustrating – but it is a major help for keeping in touch. Herefordshire Council continue to strengthen their work with partners and are helping provide GPs, care homes and parish councils with PPE to reduce infection risks. Thanks to Leominster Town Council for their vital role, working closely with the community sector who organise volunteers and run the Foodbank. Helplines remain open and there is lots of useful information on the Herefordshire Council website re grants for businesses and council tax payments.

MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)

Leominster Household Refuse Site is now open 7 days a week with a queuing system round the carpark. So far it's going well thanks to people not all rushing at once and doing their best to minimise waste/compost and so on. This outbreak has given us all a chance to reflect on what is most important to us. A recent YouGov poll shows that the public feel health and wellbeing is more important than economic growth just now and a majority want the government to focus on quality of life after the pandemic has subsided. Of course it is important to have enough money to meet our needs. In Leominster that is a stretch for many people who have insecure and low paid work, which may now be at further risk. We need to combine our skills as we puzzle out what the new normal will be like and face the many challenges it will bring us. We will be working together, both at Herefordshire council level and right here, to deliver a recovery that increases quality of life, for instance better insulated homes that are cheaper to heat, and find ways to revitalise our high street, learn new skills and support our local businesses and food producers.

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

Things have changed dramatically since our January meeting, with the main focus being on addressing the Covid crisis. The two primary concerns for Herefordshire Council have been to 1.) keep council staff safe, so that 2.) we can protect vulnerable people.

Meetings have continued virtually, with Cabinet meeting at least twice a week, with officers where appropriate and with updates on the present situation for all parts of the council, and its work with the wider community. Other meetings of the planning committee, scrutiny committee etc. are also beginning to take place virtually.

Hereford Council, Leominster Town Council and our community with its network of wonderful volunteers, have come together to provide support for those in need of help with shopping, medication, information and advice, and sometimes just a reassuring chat. They have also worked with Leominster food bank to ensure that no one goes without food or other essentials, including supporting schools in their provision of free school meals for those entitled. They have all done a fantastic job, and deserve our very grateful appreciation.

Children and Families staff continue to do an excellent job, in spite of ongoing difficulties, together with our schools, foster carers, and partners in family support. Our schools and other settings continue to stay open, including over the Easter holiday, to support vulnerable children and those of key workers. This has included ensuring that children entitled to them, receive Free School Meals, as well as those facing more recent hardship, in spite of contradictory government advice and difficulties with accessing vouchers.

Staff tasked with safeguarding responsibilities, continue to visit and contact (sometimes virtually) those children and young people in our care, together

with our partner organisations who provide family support. In spite of legal changes to expectations, our staff are making every effort to work to usual standards.

Social workers and school safeguarding leads are in regular contact with vulnerable children, encouraging them to attend school, although it is a matter of concern that, although numbers are improving, far too many are still not in school, in spite of efforts being made. I am concerned about the difficulties of working at home for many children, space, quiet, lack of equipment etc. and the vulnerabilities of children who should be in school and may be exposed to exploitation of some kind. All efforts are being made to address these concerns.

Ward concerns have been few; those raised recently have included continued flytipping at Barons Cross Camp, and across the road on the A44. Also, antisocial behaviour at Buckfield, and poor footpath signing from the Rugg.

Ward Update Cllr Jenny Bartlett Leominster East

This is a very testing time for all of us and has meant that we have all had to find different ways of working. Herefordshire Council working meetings have all moved now onto online platforms such as Zoom and Webex, so this is a steep learning curve for everyone. Public meetings such as Scrutiny Committees are now gearing up to follow suit.

Herefordshire Council are providing support to residents via Talk Community, here in Leominster in partnership with the Town Council. There are business grants, help and advice as well as help with council tax available (see the newsletter for further details).

Before the lockdown I have been involved with:

- Quarterly members BBLP briefing at Kingsland Depot to hear about this year's annual plan.
- Members briefings on Planning Enforcement and Treasury Management.
- In February Full Council set the counties budget and council tax.
- In March council approved the parish precepts, H&W Fire and WM Police contributions, which taken altogether make up our combined council tax bill.
- I attended the first of the newly revamped Market Town Forum meetings at Hereford Town Hall. It is good to see these meetings have resumed.
- I am involved in two task and finish working groups, one looking at governance within the council and the other looking at the waste contract which will be due for renewal soon. As with everything they are gradually moving to online meetings to continue the work.
- The Adult and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee met to consider the NHS Continuous Health Care support for residents with complex health needs, as well as the CCG performance monitoring report.

MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)

- I also attended the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.
- The Friends of Leominster Library AGM did manage to go ahead, but unfortunately we had to cancel the Fundraiser talk by Alf Jenkins.
- Likewise the Rail users group's AGM has had to be postponed now until further notice.
- I attended the last Leominster Community Centre Tuesday Lunch club in February, as well as the last management committee meeting for the foreseeable future. The Community Centre is in good shape but like everyone this will be a financial headache. The foodbank continues to operate from here and they are doing an outstanding job across town, delivering food as well as holding 'pop up' food share events to try and make sure everyone who needs food can access it.
- I would also like to say a huge thank you to Julie, Liz, Jackie and Lena for all the work they are doing behind the scenes. A big thank you too for Mark and his merry environmental team who are out looking after our town still.
- April has been the month of full lock down. Like the town council and many others, we have been transitioning to working online via zoom and webex. Fortunately the IT people responded straight away to the challenges of remote and home working and we were up and running very quickly.
- Talk Community, Herefordshire Councils support response to covid-9 has been a huge success and the four ward members have held weekly zoom meetings with our Talk Community link workers and Town Council.
- Whilst much of my time has been taken up with the Covid-19 response, business continues apace and Herefordshire Council are now starting to hold public cabinet, scrutiny and planning committee meetings.
- I am part of two task and finish groups; one looking at our governance system within the council and the other looking at the waste and recycling contract for the county. All these meetings and workshops have been online and it does show how well we can adapt to new challenges.
- It was pointed out at the joint waste contract and climate change workshop that our travel carbon footprint had been greatly reduced through remote working, which can only be a good thing.
- Care homes are very much in our thoughts at the moment as they are rapidly becoming the 'front line' of covid-19. Herefordshire Council was one of the earliest to step up its support to care homes within our county. Daily support calls and supply of PPE to all care homes in the county has eased the risk factors they are experiencing here.
- The re-opening of the household waste recycling centre went smoothly and all credit to our officers who worked so hard to make it as safe as possible.
- The VE Celebrations on my street were a welcome distraction from the lock down and we had a wonderful socially distanced tea party along the street. Unfortunately, being Bank Holiday our weather did manage to disrupt the proceedings with rather a lot of rain at 4pm on the dot!

Ward Report Leominster North & Rural – Cllr John Stone:

Congratulations on your debut as Town Clerk, Julie in such stressful times.

Coronavirus Crisis

This has dominated everything over the past 7 weeks and Town councillors have received numerous reports and updates. Amy Pitt's latest information from Talk Community Covid-19 response is that they have so far received 3,000 phone calls, at one point 180 a day and have been in touch with many vulnerable people. The majority of requests have been for supplies and medical collections. Calls reached 180 a day but are now down to 50 a day. This weekend is the last for their telephone service but people can still phone them from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays. Phone number 01432 260 027. They are providing an invaluable service.

Here in Leominster a big thank you to the Town Council, Community Wheels, the Food Bank and the army of volunteers who have all been providing wonderful support to the community since the lockdown began. Adrian Turton and Lorna Williamson from Herefordshire Council have been liaising with everyone and dealing with requests from the various wards in and out of town. Many thanks to the 90 or more volunteers who have been collecting prescriptions, delivering groceries and other supplies and keeping in touch with those who are shielded. The Food Bank has been outstanding with 400 food bags distributed over the Easter period. Their support for families and children on free school meals has been brilliant and with so much extra need expected in the weeks ahead I hope everyone who can will continue to supply the Food Bank. They still receive regular donations from Brimfield and other villages.

One final message. Please don't delay seeking medical attention if needed. Local residents who have been attending Hereford Hospital recently tell me of the excellent treatment and attention they have received. A&E attendance has been substantially down since the outbreak began.

Household Refuse Centres

A phased re-opening started on Saturday May 9th. I received a small but steady number of requests from residents for the centres to be re-opened and Leominster and Hereford sites are open for business. So far all has gone very smoothly with a well-managed queuing system at the Leominster site. The first weekend was very quiet but there were 17 vehicles waiting to go in on Wednesday when I visited. The message remains to only go when essential and when you have unavoidable waste that you can't store safely at home. This seems to have been accepted and the much feared long queues have not so far materialised. Many thanks to Herefordshire Council and Severn Waste Services for handling the situation so efficiently and residents have appreciated the re-opening. Many of us were concerned by reports of fly tipping which might have worsened if the sites had stayed closed much longer. There is no excuse for fly tipping now. Please report fly tipping to Balfour Beatty on 01432 261800.

Balfour Beatty update

I was delighted to see the re-marked white lining at the Bridge Street mini roundabout. The lines had become so faded the roundabout was becoming very dangerous. The new white lines have made a big difference and along Mill Street too. Balfour Beatty have made the most of quieter roads and dry weather to catch up on pothole repairs and gully cleaning especially in the villages like Kimbolton and Brimfield. The jetpatcher has been out and about and I have noticed the difference. There are still large potholes that need filling in the town and I hope the locality stewards are following these up.

Several have been marked in Mill Street so I await action there. Overall the number of surface defects has sharply reduced since the wet winter so BBLP are catching up. Several road repair schemes are currently held up due to the emergency. The Government has just announced an extra £1.7b for local roads safety, priority bus lanes, air quality improvements and electric car charge points so we will wait to see how much of this comes to Herefordshire.

A49

Highways England will be closing part of the A49 overnight between May 18th and July 3rd to carry out resurfacing, drainage work and kerbing between Ashton and the OK Diner roundabout. I have all the details if anyone needs them. In addition, there will be resurfacing work on both the Leominster and Ludlow Bypasses this summer. Conspicuous by its absence is any work at the notorious Salwey Arms junction at Woofferton. Highways England just say they are monitoring it! Meanwhile work will soon be completed on the new (and totally unnecessary) petrol station near the Salwey junction. It will be an accident waiting to happen. The new right hand turning at Ashford Bowdler again nearly finished has cost £ 777.000.

Flooding issues, flood recovery funding, Bellwin money, drainage schemes. I will provide a separate special report in the next week or so.

VE and VJ Days

It was a great disappointment to be unable to commemorate VE Day on May 8th in the way we all wanted. Nevertheless the Two Minutes Silence at 11am was very moving and in Brimfield and elsewhere there was plenty of bunting on display and flags flying everywhere. I spotted several tea parties around the village with social distancing of course. There was singing and music and the whole day lifted the spirits, much needed. Many of us joined the Nation's Toast "for those that gave so much, we thank you." I hope by VJ Day in August more of the restrictions will have been lifted so that we can commemorate in a much more social and community way. Our veterans deserve nothing less. As Her Majesty said, "We will meet again."

Finally, please stay safe and well as we begin the slow lifting of some of the restrictions. My thanks to fellow Ward Members, the Town Council, Herefordshire Council officers and staff for all they continue to do for our County and our local community.

10/20 MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS AND DEPUTY MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Council noted no Mayoral appointments had been attended by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the associated social distancing restrictions.

11/20 ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

In light of new regulations and in response to disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis, councillors were requested to consider the following options in regards to the Annual Council Meeting:

- a) to hold the Annual Council meeting (remotely) on a date agreed before the end of May 2020.
- b) Postpone the Annual Meeting of the Council until May 2021

Following discussion and consideration of the two options, it was proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Davies and unanimously by the councillors and **RESOLVED** to:

Postpone the Annual Meeting of the Council until May 2021 and retain all current appointments within the council (i.e. Office of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair and Vice-Chairs of Committees, Committee membership and representation on outside bodies to continue in place).

It was then proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Parris, voted unanimously by councillors and **RESOLVED** to put the Mayor Elect arrangements for 2021 on the agenda at the next full council meeting on 27th July 2020.

12/20 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) **Civic Awards** – Council agreed that as so many people had participated in voluntary work to help support the vulnerable in the community, rather than give out individual awards, a celebration of the community work could be organised, possibly in 2021.
- (b) **Grant Funding Application** – Council **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £775 towards the costs of maintaining the Community Wheels minibus for a period of 3 months.

13/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 27th July 2020 commencing at 19:00pm 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.

MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20:50pm.

MAYOR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on Monday 1st June 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rosser (Chair), Williams (Vice-Chair), Herschy, Parris, Preece, Rumsey and Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllrs Bartlett and Marsh and two members of the public.

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk.

PH13/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

PH14/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Cllr Herschy -Trustee of LARC ref. Planning item 500989

PH15/20 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Herefordshire Council members were in attendance in an advisory role and were not involved in any decision making.

PH16/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

PH17/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public raised the issue of vehicles speeding on Hereford Road. Whilst working from home recently he had noticed that it had become a frequent occurrence and asked if any traffic calming had been considered for the road. The Chair asked Cllr. Marsh if she would like to respond and she informed the member of the public that a request had been sent to the local authority and monitoring had been carried out. The results of the monitoring indicated that heavy traffic calming measures would be required in order to ensure that traffic regulations were respected. At the time of the enquiry there was no funding available for implementing measures and a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be required. The request for a TRO was added to the Herefordshire Council list. Recently Herefordshire Council passed a motion to reduce speed limits to 20mph in residential areas, which would be easier to enforce at a county level.

A second member of the public read out a letter regarding application 201466 that outlined the reason for the application to build a rural enterprise worker's dwelling.

PH18/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on 4th May 2020 be agreed and will be signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

PH19/20 PLANNING

(a) **Planning applications** – It was **RESOLVED** to submit the following comments to Herefordshire Council:

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **200523** - Alexander And Duncan, Southern Avenue, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0QB

Description: Proposed replacement building.

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **200642** - 31 Bridge Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8DU

Description: Proposed loading bay attached to the existing building

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **201424** - 110 Bridge Street, Leominster, HR6 8DZ

Description: Pollard two ash trees, due to over shading of two gardens and trees too big for gardens.

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **200852** - Hillcrest, 143 Bargates, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8QS

Description: Reduce 3 leylandii trees by 50%.

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **201468** - Grange Court, The Grange, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8NL

Description: T1 - Austrian Pine tree to remove any hazardous dead or hanging snapped out branches. Crown thin by 20-30% removing branches no larger than 80mm, to reduce weight loading and lessen wind resistance.

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **201411** - 16 South Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8JB

Description: Change of use from shop area to two bed apartment and workshop to two bed house involving minor alterations to interior and replacement of windows and doors to the rear.

Comment: Objection – Overdevelopment.

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - 201412 - 16
South Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8JB

Description: Change of use from shop area to two bed apartment and workshop to two bed house involving minor alterations to interior and replacement of windows and doors to the rear.

Comment: Objection – Overdevelopment of a listed building

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - 201466 - Land at Stag Batch House, Monkland Road, Stag Batch, Herefordshire.

Description: Proposed site for erection of a rural enterprise worker's dwelling

Comment: No Objection

PH20/20 DECISIONS

The following planning decisions received from Herefordshire Council were noted. These were presented at the meeting:

Leominster West

Number: P200099/FH

Current status: Determination Made

Type: Full Householder

Location: 70b Bargates Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8QS

Proposal: Proposed conversion of garage to bedroom and single storey extension.

Comment: No Objection

Decision: Approved with Conditions

Leominster East

Number: P201258/PA7

Current status: Determination Made

Type: All others - Prior Approval

Location: Land West of Widgeon Hill Leominster Herefordshire

Proposal: notification of agricultural development - excavation/waste material - pond extension to hold flood water.

Comment: No Comment

Decision: Prior Approval Not Required

PH21/20 HIGHWAYS AND PARKING MATTERS

a) Highway and Parking Matters

- Leominster Public Realm – Cllr. Preece expressed concerns regarding the poor state of the public realm in the town and highlighted that the works being carried out on A49 from Ashton to OK Diner shouldn't be prioritised over the town roads. The clerk confirmed that A49 was the responsibility of Highways England and not Herefordshire Council. Cllr. Bartlett stated that it was a countywide issue and that post COVID-19

Leominster's Heritage Action Zone Scheme should progress, addressing some of the required public realm works.

- Highway Utility Covers – Cllr. Thomas had spoken to the Balfour Beatty Locality Steward regarding the defective utility covers on Barons Cross Road that had been causing a noise nuisance. Balfour Beatty would be resetting the covers, but to comply with current social distancing regulations as a response to COVID-19, their staff would be required to travel to site in separate vehicles, causing a delay to the works schedule. It was requested that the clerk invite Cllr. John Harrington, Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Transport, to the next meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee.

b) Speeding Incidents

- This was discussed during the public questions section of the meeting but it was proposed by Cllr. Rosser and seconded by Cllr. Preece and voted unanimously that the Town Council should support the move by Herefordshire Council to impose 20mph limit in residential areas. It was also suggested that the clerk should contact the Safer Roads Partnership regarding speed monitoring.

c) Cycling and Walking COVID-19 response

- On 9th May 2020 a new £2billion package was announced by central government to deliver alternative ways to travel, such as walking and cycling. This will allow councils to reallocate road space for increased numbers of walkers and cyclists and enable social distancing before the relaxing of regulations takes full effect. This would mean using cones and barriers to widen footways eg. Near to schools, reducing speed limits and introducing pedestrian and cycle zones by restricting access for motor vehicles at certain times. This would require Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and the local authority would have to consider access for Blue Badge holders, deliveries and other essential services and they would have to consult with police, emergency services and local businesses. Cllr. Thomas said that he had already spoken to several businesses regarding the matter and had received a positive response. Following discussion, it was agreed that any measure would have to be disability compliant and that the local businesses would have to be involved in the consultation process. It was proposed by Cllr. Preece and seconded by Cllr. Rosser and unanimously agreed that Leominster should be added to the list for review and a briefing from Herefordshire Council should be organised to find out more detail and discuss consultation with local businesses.

PH22/20 LICENCING MATTERS

No licencing applications had been received to consider.

PH23/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 22nd June 2020 commencing at 7:00pm either remotely via Zoom or in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, HR6 8YP depending on the lifting of social distancing restrictions by central government.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20.28 hours.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on Monday 22nd June 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rosser (Chair), Williams (Vice-Chair), Herschy (19.17), Parris, Preece, Rumsey and Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Bartlett, Ward Cllr Stone and Ward Cllr. Harrington (Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Transport)

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk.

PH24/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

PH25/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made.

PH26/20 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Herefordshire Council members were in attendance in an advisory role and were not involved in any decision making.

PH27/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

PH28/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present.

At this point the Chair proposed to bring forward item 9. on the agenda as Cllr Harrington had attended the meeting to clarify several queries for the committee.

PH29/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on 1st June 2020 be agreed and will be signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

PH30/20 PLANNING

(a) **Planning applications** – It was **RESOLVED** to submit the following comments to Herefordshire Council:

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - 201564 - South View, 3 Stretfordbury, Stoke Prior, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0LP

Description: Proposed two storey extension.

Applicant(s): Mr & Mrs Graham

Grid ref: OS 352791, 257906

Application type: Full Householder

Comment: No Objection.

- (b) **Section 106 allocation** – At the last meeting of the Market Towns Forum, the Mayor had been given a list of s106 funding that was outstanding. Whilst much of the funding was allocated to Transport and Highways projects, some funding was allocated to provide new play equipment. The Chair asked Cllr. Bartlett to explain how s106 monies are allocated and Cllr. Bartlett informed the committee that the monies are allocated at the beginning of the planning process and that it is usually an officer decision. As some projects can take a number of years to complete, sometimes the community priorities change over the years and it is not possible to re-allocate the funding. Following discussion, it was decided that the Town Council should identify a list of possible s106 projects so that these could be inserted on the portal by the Town Clerk when submitting planning comments.
- Cllr. Thomas pointed out that there was s106 money available to upgrade the play area on Ropewalk Avenue, but the access from the new estate on Westcroft, which should have been installed, hadn't been put in and there was now a house built where the access path was supposed to be. This meant that children had to walk some distance to access the play area.
- ACTION:** Cllr. Harrington to investigate the situation and update the Town Council.

PH31/20 DECISIONS

The committee **RESOLVED** that the clerk should write to the Herefordshire Council Planning Department regarding decisions made by Herefordshire Council that conflicted with the Leominster Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Cllr. Harrington was asked about whether the Phosphate issue had been addressed yet. Cllr. Harrington replied that the Environment Agency were responsible for the rivers and active management would be needed along with a change to land management practices. There is funding to provide wetlands to alleviate the issue and farming communities would need to be engaged.

ACTION: Cllr. Harrington will feed back to the Town Council following a meeting on the matter.

The following planning decisions received from Herefordshire Council were noted. These were presented at the meeting:

Leominster North & Rural

Number: P200480/FH

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions - Appeal decision

Type: Full Householder

Location: 4 Sunningdale Bridge Street Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8EH

Proposal: Proposed two storey (East) side extension and two storey rear extension.

Comment: Objection – due to size of development and the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan Objective 3. Viii: Discourage infilling of green spaces such as gardens.

Leominster West

Number: P200760/F

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions - Appeal decision

Type: Planning Permission

Location: Stag Batch House Monkland Road Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9DA

Proposal: Erection of a straw storage shed and roofing over cattle handling area

Comment: No Comment

Leominster East

Number: P200523/F

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions - Appeal decision

Type: Planning Permission

Location: Alexander And Duncan Southern Avenue Leominster Herefordshire HR6 0QB

Proposal: Proposed replacement building.

Comment: No Objection – Please bear in mind the close proximity of St. Botolphs housing estate when carrying out work

Leominster South

Number: P200725/A

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions - Appeal decision

Type: Advertisement Consent

Location: Morrisons Supermarket Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8RH

Proposal: Proposed installation of 4 no. internally illuminated fascia adverts to proposed 'Click and Collect' facility.

Comment: No Objection

Leominster South

Number: P200852/K

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Trees in Cons Area Works Can Proceed - Appeal decision

Type: Works to Trees in a Conservation Area

Location: Hillcrest 143 Bargates Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8QS

Proposal: Reduce 3 leylandii trees by 50%.

Comment: No Objection

Leominster North & Rural

Number: P201424/K

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Trees in Cons Area Works Can Proceed Appeal decision

Type: Works to Trees in a Conservation Area

Location: 110 Bridge Street Leominster HR6 8DZ

Proposal: Pollard two ash trees, due to over shading of two gardens and trees too big for gardens.

Comment: No Objection

PH32/20 HIGHWAYS AND PARKING MATTERS

a) Highway and Parking Matters

- Free Parking in Herefordshire Council owned car parks had been extended from 27th June – 24th July 2020 – Cllr. Thomas thanked Cllr. Harrington and other Herefordshire Councillors for suspending the parking charge to encourage people to shop locally and support local businesses.
- Cllr. Thomas informed the committee that the drain covers on Barons Cross Road are beginning to work loose again after being reset several times and this is causing a noise nuisance for residents, particularly at night when lorries use the road in number.
- The committee discussed the area of highway sinkage in West Street. Cllr. Bartlett explained that this is currently being dealt with by the streetworks department at Balfour Beatty.

b) Speeding Incidents

- The clerk has contacted the Safer Roads Partnership to discuss the matter further and they agreed that Leominster could be included on a list for speed data gathering once the traffic patterns return to a more stable level.
- The speed monitoring site on Barons Cross Road had been suspended for enforcement but activities have now been resumed.

c) Cycling and Walking COVID-19 response

- Cllr. Thomas enquired when the re-allocation of the road space would begin and Cllr. Preece raised concerns about the proposals on behalf of some of the businesses in town, stating that they would need to be reassured and consulted. It was discussed that there was a difference of opinion on the matter and Cllr. Parris asked if it could be clarified whether mobility scooters could enter the re-allocated road space. It was also questioned if bicycles would be safe to use the area with pedestrians.

ACTION: Cllr. Harrington to check and feedback to the clerk about the consultation and mobility scooter and bike access.

Ward Councillors Harrington and Bartlett both left the meeting at 19.49.

PH33/20 LICENCING MATTERS

The clerk brought a letter from Herefordshire Council to the attention of the Committee. It was from the Principal Licencing Officer and the Licencing Officer from Hereford Police Station requesting the Town Council's help in sharing a letter with local pubs and restaurants regarding

the utilisation of outdoor areas for pavement cafes and bars to support social distancing.

Following a discussion, during which concerns were raised regarding drinking in the streets and the consequences, it was suggested that this would be a variation of existing licences and that the letter aimed to facilitate initial discussions, with a need for businesses to submit plans so that licencing officers could make contact and offer advice. It was **RESOLVED** for the Town Council to circulate this letter to ensure that pubs and restaurants had the opportunity to discuss their requirements and plans as soon as possible.

PH34/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 13th July 2020 commencing at 7:00pm either remotely via Zoom or in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, HR6 8YP depending on the lifting of social distancing restrictions by central government.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20.17 hours.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on Monday 13th July 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rosser (Chair), Williams (Vice-Chair), Herschy (19.03), Preece, Rumsey and Thomas.

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk.

PH35/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Parris (Illness).

PH36/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declaration of Interest was made:

- Cllr. Preece ref. previous application 193458 Agenda item 7(b)

PH37/20 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL MEMBERS

There were no Herefordshire Council members in attendance.

PH38/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

PH39/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present.

PH40/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Highways Committee meeting held on 22nd June 2020 be agreed and will be signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

It was requested that the clerk should contact Cllr. John Harrington (Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Transport) to request an update on the actions allocated from the last meeting and recorded in the minutes PH30/20(b) and PH31/20.

PH41/20 PLANNING

(a) Planning applications – It was RESOLVED to submit the following comments to Herefordshire Council:

Application no & site address: Planning Re-Consultation - **201564** - South View, 3 Stretfordbury, Stoke Prior, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0LP

Description: Proposed two storey extension.

Applicant(s): Mr & Mrs Graham

Grid ref: OS 352791, 257906

Application type: Full Householder

Comment: No Objection

MINUTES (AGENDA Item 8)

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **201762** - Hivron, 29 Barons Cross Road, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8RL

Description: Proposed front entrance porch and hallway.

Applicant(s): Mr Philip Richards

Grid ref: OS 348562, 258775

Application type: Full Householder

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **201815** - 15 Church Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8NE

Description: Proposal to re-roof building, awning and associated works

Applicant(s): Ms Jill Hanna

Grid ref: OS 349695, 259144

Application type: Listed Building Consent

Comment: No Objection

Application no & site address: Planning Consultation - **202136** - Units 15-20, Croft Business Park, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0QF

Description: Application for variation of condition 2 of planning permission. 174167/F (Retrospective application for units 15-20 for B1 use). To extend the date by when footpath shall be cleared of obstruction.

Applicant(s): Kingstoke Ltd

Grid ref: OS 350045, 258247

Application type: Planning Permission

Comment: No Objection

(b) Affordable Housing Survey – Following a discussion that included a councillor raising concerns, as a number of people had complained about this matter to him, about the Phosphate issue affecting all development. It was agreed that after reading the document that accompanied the Affordable Housing Survey, that responses should be sent in to the clerk no later than the 1st August 2020.

(c.) Encroachment of garden land onto access - The complaint about encroachment on the access path between The Meadows and Oldfields Close had been followed up by Cllr. Bartlett and the committee was informed by the clerk that the access path was left when Oldfields Close was built, so that people could still get to the bridge over the river and the local footpaths. It is still currently accessible, though narrow in places and was **RESOLVED** to monitor the situation and take advice about the best course of action if the path becomes obstructed.

PH42/20 DECISIONS

The following planning decisions received from Herefordshire Council were noted. These were presented at the meeting:

Leominster South

Number: P200453/L

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions

Type: Listed Building Consent

Location: 1 Bank Court, West Street, Leominster, Herefordshire. HR6 8FE

Proposal: Proposed alterations to regularise with permission DCNC2003/1795/L (Retrospective)

Comment: No Objection

Leominster North & Rural

Number: P200874/FH

Current status: Determination Made

Decision: Approved with Conditions

Type: Full Householder

Location: The Gables, 110A Bridge Street Leominster HR6 8DZ

Proposal: Proposed free standing single storey studio in rear garden, replacing existing workshop/garage

Comment: Objection due to size of the replacement building and the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan Objective 3. Viii: Discourage infilling of green spaces such as gardens

Ref: APP/W1850/C/20/3245115

Committee noted the **Appeal Decision** received from The Planning Inspectorate regarding Land at Dukes Walk, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8AE. The notice to carry out the requirements has been extended to 9 months due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

The requirements of the notice are:

- i. Demolish the pair of semi-detached houses, as shown on the (attached) plan and marked with a cross.*
- ii. Remove from the land all building materials and rubble arising from compliance with point (i) above.*
- iii. Restore land to former condition before breach took place by levelling the ground and re-seeding with grass.*

Cllr. Hershy left the meeting at 19.39 hours.

PH43/20 HIGHWAYS AND PARKING MATTERS

(a) Highway and Parking Matters

- Concerns were raised receiving the Balfour Beatty Street Works and Road Closure list and about the lack of resurfacing work being carried out or scheduled in the Leominster area.
- Cllr. Preece informed the committee that he had received a complaint about the new Welcome sign installed on the Monkland Road as part of the LEADER signage project by Leominster Town Council. Following discussion, it was pointed out that it is in the parish of Leominster and that the old sign had been hit by vehicles several times as it was in an accident cluster site.

(b) Cycling and Walking COVID-19 response- Committee received an update from the clerk regarding the Herefordshire Council Decision.

Location	Original Proposal Consulted on	Decision
Leominster Town Centre	20MPH Zone	Proceed
Leominster Town Centre	Timed closure High Street, Corn Square, West St, South St (northern section)	Proceed but reduce area and to no longer include West Street and South Street.
All locations		Provide additional signage to encourage social distancing.

The notice of intention for the necessary Temporary Traffic Regulation orders will be published for a period of 7 days, after which the orders will be made. Works on the measures that do not require a TTRO will commence in week beginning the 20th July, with the balance of the works following in the next three weeks. An exact date will be published once the necessary arrangements for the works are in place. They will be encouraging the public to feedback using this platform and this will go live once the measures have been implemented.

Following discussion, it was requested that the Town Council would ask for a list of responses from Balfour Beatty.

PH44/20 LICENCING MATTERS

No licencing applications have been received to consider.

PH45/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 10th August 2020 commencing at 7:00pm either remotely via Zoom or in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster, HR6 8YP depending on the lifting of social distancing restrictions by central government.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20.03 hours.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Communications & Events Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12th May 2020 commencing at 11:30am remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rumsey (Chair), Murdoch (Vice-Chair), Smith-Winnard (11.38), Sutcliffe (11.34) and Thomas.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Market Officer, TIC Manager, Grants and Projects Officer (11.42).

CE01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

CE02/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Smith-Winnard – Leominster in Bloom
Cllr. Sutcliffe – Farmer’s Market

CE03/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

CE04/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present. No issues were raised.

CE05/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Communications and Events Committee meeting held on Tuesday 10th March 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when the social distancing restrictions are lifted by central government.

CE06/20 CLERK’S REPORT

The clerk had nothing to report.

CE07/20 MARKET OFFICER’S REPORT

The Market Officer presented a report updating Committee on the Leominster markets. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**

- To note the report;
- That the Friday Market should reopen on Friday 15th May 2020. This was proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Murdoch and the committee voted unanimously to reopen the Friday Market.
- That the market would be limited to 3-4 essential item traders, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Cheese/butter/pies and possibly pet food, and that a barrier system should be put in place accompanied by large advisory signage regarding social distancing.
- Toilet and handwashing facilities for traders would be provided at 11 Corn Square.
- Opening hours for the Market would be reduced to 8am-2pm.

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- To note that the Market Officer would be on site for the duration and that a Police Officer and a member of the Herefordshire Council Environmental Health Team would be on site at some point during the day.
- To note that the Market Manager would liaise with the organiser of the Farmer's Market regarding the June market.

The Market Manager left the meeting at 11.40am.

CE08/20 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Centre report was presented by the TIC Manager, Mrs Ding. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED:**

- To note the report;
- That refunds for the bookings of the holiday let and the gallery had to be made if rebooking wasn't an option;
- That a local tourism app was to be investigated by TIC staff;
- To note that the Leominster in Bloom Front Garden Competition would still go ahead later in the year and that volunteers were currently emptying planters in line with social distancing guidelines;

CE09/20 COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS UPDATE

Committee received an update from the Town Clerk.

The Grants and Projects Officer presented an update on the LEADER signage project. The interpretation signage was now a priority, with one last permission to be obtained. A draft design of the visitor information signage had been received and the pedestrian signage was currently in production, but a delivery date had not been finalised. The Welcome Signage had been delivered to the installation contractor and STAT plans from Balfour Beatty were being chased so that installation could commence as soon as possible.

Committee considered the update report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED:**

- To note the reports;
- To note that funding would not be needed from the Town Council for a COVID-19 support services bookmark, as this had been funded by a grant from the National Emergencies Trust through the Herefordshire Community Foundation;
- To note that a verbal report had been given by Cllr. Thomas, Mayor of Leominster and that a decision regarding the Party in the Park event scheduled for August 2020 would be made shortly;
- That the Town Clerk would contact the Christmas Light Contractor to discuss Christmas 2020 plans.

CE 10/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next Communication and Events meeting would be held on Tuesday 14th July 2020 at 11:30am either remotely via Zoom or in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP depending on the social distancing restrictions being lifted by central government.

There being no other business, the Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 12:11pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 29th June 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via 'Zoom'.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Marshall (Vice-Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Norman, Rumsey, Sutcliffe, Thomas and Williams.

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk

FG10/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Marsh (Illness)

FG11/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Cllr Sutcliffe: LARC
- Cllr Norman: LARC

FG12/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

FG13/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present. No issues were raised

FG14/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 27th April 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

FG15/20 CLERK'S REPORT

Committee noted the following items:

- That the clerk had obtained quotes from the lengthsman and a drainage contractor and had prepared and submitted an application including an annual maintenance plan for the 2020/21 Lengthsman/P3/Drainage Scheme at a total cost of £10,240.00 + VAT.
- That Herefordshire Council had sent out a request for Town and City Councils to help with the sale of green waste garden bags.
- That The Pavilion on The Grange will be used later in the Summer on Saturdays subject to staff being able to work safely within the social distancing guidelines.
- A working party would be organised to look at areas of 11 Corn Square that are currently let and calculate a fair service charge.
- The committee **RESOLVED** to investigate registering the bus station as a community asset.

FG16/20 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) **Income and Expenditure Report**
- Committee considered the final end of year report up to 31st March 2020 (Month 12) and the accompanying 2019/20 End of Year Budget Notes and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be ratified.
 - Committee also considered the Month 2 report and accompanying Month 2 Budget Notes and it was **RESOLVED** that the report be ratified.
- (b) **Accounts Paid and Outstanding Accounts for Payment**
Following consideration of the accounts paid and outstanding accounts for payment, Committee **RESOLVED** to ratify the payments relating to the months of April, May and June 2020.
- (c) **Committee Report** – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED:**
- To note the report.
 - That a meeting should be arranged of the Janice & Peter McCaull Trust and that the former Town Clerk should be invited.
 - That the social distancing markings outside the toilet facilities should be set at 2m unless there is a change in the social distancing guidance by central government.
- (d) **Risk Register** – Committee considered the revised Risk Register presented at the meeting and following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to adopt the risk register and monitor throughout the year.
- (e) **Project and Funding update** – Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

FG17/20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance & General Purposes Committee **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 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.

- (a) **Grants** – Following consideration of the grant report, the Committee **RESOLVED:**
- To note the report;
 - To ratify the application for payment to Grange Court for their 2020/21 grant allocation of £7000.

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- Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Thomas and seconded by Cllr. Sutcliffe and unanimously agreed to award the grant of £1000 to Leominster Meeting Centre. It was also recommended that Leominster Meeting Centre should apply again in October.
- (b) **Staff Report** – To note the verbal report given by the town clerk regarding staff activities and compliance with government regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (c) **Quotes for the upgrade of the heating system** – Committee considered the three quotes and as they differed in content due to recommendations for efficiency of the heating system, it was proposed by Cllr. Murdoch and seconded by Cllr. Norman to set up a sub-committee to analyse the quotes in more detail. The sub-committee will consist of Cllr. Sutcliffe, Cllr. Murdoch, Cllr. Williams and Cllr. Thomas.
- (d) **Ginhall Green Easement** – The committee received the report and following discussion, **RESOLVED:**
- To appoint a land agent to deal with the matter on behalf of the Town Council.

FG18/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 7th September 2020 at 19:00 which, subject to social distancing restrictions, would either be held remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.09pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on Wednesday 6th May 2020 commencing at 14:00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Thomas (Chair), Rosser, Rumsey, Murdoch and Herschy (14.10).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk

PC01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

PC02/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were made.

PC03/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

PC04/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

PC05/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 14th January 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

PC06/20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and Personnel Sub-Committee **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 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.

PC07/20 STAFFING REPORT

a) Committee received and noted a verbal staffing report from the Town Clerk regarding staff hours and tasks carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. All staff were working during the pandemic, some from home and the remainder carrying out essential works whilst complying with social distancing regulations. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the recommendation that staff members required to work from home during the COVID-19 lockdown be reimbursed with a tax-free payment of £4 per week for the period from commencement of lockdown up to 6/4/20, and £6 per week thereafter, to cover costs incurred as a

consequence of home working in line with HMRC Home Working Allowance guidelines.

- b) It was proposed by Cllr. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. Herschy and unanimously agreed to review all senior staff job descriptions and ensure that they are accurate, following consultation with staff. It was **RESOLVED** that this would take place at the beginning of June 2020, with a view to carrying out appraisals with senior staff by the end of June 2020.

Committee was presented with an update on tasks that had been completed by the Curator during the period between the Museum Partnership Review in January 2020 and the commencement of COVID-19 lockdown on 23rd March 2020. It was **RESOLVED** to review staffing hours for the Curator position when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and to develop a plan for fulfilling Museum secondment hours during the remainder of the agreed Partnership term.

It was **RESOLVED** that the staff contract template and staff handbook would be reviewed by the Town Clerk and presented at the next meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

PC08/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A suggested date for the next meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee would be circulated by the Town Clerk following the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 14.42pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Environment & Services Committee meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020 19.00 hours remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Herschy (Chair), Smith-Winnard (Vice-Chair)(19.10), Bartlett, Davies, Murdoch, Norman, Parris, Rumsey, Sutcliffe (IT issues with sound/video) Thomas and Williamson (19.19).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk and the Environmental Services Supervisor.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr. John Stone.

ES01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

ES02/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Murdoch - Allotments

Cllrs. Norman, Sutcliffe and Herschy - Trustees of LARC.

ES03/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

ES04/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ward Councillor John Stone said that he was pleased to be at the remote meeting and expressed gratitude to the Town Council for all they have been doing for Leominster during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also said that he was pleased that the Leominster recycling centre was now open to enable residents to dispose of essential items of waste and that the opening went well, with social distancing observed.

ES05/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment & Services Committee meeting held on Monday 16th March 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record as soon as the social distancing guidelines are relaxed further and normal meetings resume at 11 Corn Square.

ES06/20 CLERK'S REPORT

Committee noted the Clerk's Report containing;

- (a) **CCTV Service Level Agreement** – A new Service Level Agreement for Upgraded CCTV in Leominster. The town council will be invoiced quarterly for their contribution towards the upgrade and a visit to the CCTV office in Hereford will be arranged when COVID-19 social distancing measures have been relaxed further.

- (b) **Leominster War Memorial Consultation Report from Historic England-** A full inspection of the Leominster War Memorial was carried out by Historic England on 11th February 2020 and it is currently being assessed for listing to protect it for the future.
- (c) **BinIt Business Cardboard Recycling-** A report on the current recycling project was requested from BinIt on 4th May 2020 but had not received by the time of the meeting. A request has been sent for them to remove the cardboard recycling bins and skip from our storage point at Bridge Street Sports Centre. They have been contaminated with household waste as the recycling Centre was closed until recently.

ES07/20 COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

Committee considered the update report and **RESOLVED:**

- To note the report;
- To arrange a meeting of the Millennium Green Trust, LARC and Leominster Town Council to discuss the future of the Millennium Green land as soon as social distancing restrictions have been lifted further.
- To commission a survey from the parish lengthsman, in association with the Kimbolton lengthsman, regarding drainage issues affecting C&U roads within the parish. This will enable a plan to be submitted to Balfour Beatty in order to access new drainage funding.
- To investigate humidity in 11 Corn Square as part of the risk assessment to enable staff to safely return to work.

ES08/20 GROUNDS TEAM UPDATE

Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED:**

- To note the report;
- That the Environmental Supervisor should now begin to cut the grass and spray the weeds on the play areas that are currently closed, in readiness for the lifting of restrictions;
- For the Environmental Supervisor to contact the Town Council Footpath Officer to discuss replacing the signage on Leominster Public Rights of Way in order to ensure that paths are waymarked accurately, as there is an increased amount of usage during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

ES09/20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

- (a) **Draft Lease for premises at Croft Business Park –** The lease had been signed and returned to the solicitor, who confirmed that the keys should be available in the next two weeks. A schedule of works was submitted by the Town Council Foreman so that essential safety and security works can be prioritised, with cosmetic works to be carried out over the Winter period by the Grounds Team.
- (b) **Proposed Sewer Pipe Route across Ginhall Green –** The Committee considered the decision made at the Planning and Highways Committee meeting on 4th May 2020 to grant permission for a sewer pipe to be

MINUTES (AGENDA Item 8)

installed at Ginhall Green and agreed it was an opportunity to enlarge the Wild Flower Meadow on Ginhall Green.

- (c) **Accessible Plot provision at Leominster Allotments on Ginhall Lane (Clerks Report)** – Following discussion of a request made by a member of the public, it was **RESOLVED** that the Environmental Supervisor would investigate a suitable plot and the provision of accessible toilet facilities.

ES10/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Monday 20th July 2020 at 19:00hrs either remotely via Zoom or in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP depending on the lifting of social distancing restrictions by central government.

There being no other business, the Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 19.52 hours.

CHAIR:

DATE:

Leominster North & Rural Ward Councillor's Report**Coronavirus Update**

It has been a great relief to see shops, cafes, pubs, hairdressers and other outlets reopening over the last month and more activity in our market towns and villages. Many churches are also open again and services gradually resuming. It was a joy to attend Brimfield Church's first service on July 19th since March. We still need to stay vigilant as the virus has not gone away and respect distancing and all the other precautions we have become so familiar with. The recent outbreak on a farm near Cradley affecting seasonal workers reminds us how much care is still needed. Fortunately the Council was quick to act with all the staff on the farm tested and then isolating for 2 weeks. There has been a massive effort to ensure the safety of the seasonal workers, Council staff and surrounding community but so far no indication of community infection. The Council has an Outbreak Control Plan to deal with any local outbreaks and measures can be quickly taken to contain a local outbreak and so avoid a more general lockdown. Public Health England has stated, "Special thanks to Herefordshire Council for working round the clock with our West Midlands team to contain a complex outbreak of Covid-19 in seasonal and transient agricultural workers on a farm in their patch. Exemplary teamwork."

There has also been exemplary teamwork in Leominster over 4 months looking after the most vulnerable, especially those shielded with over 90 volunteers doing shopping, collecting medicines, dog walking and providing social contact by phone. The Leominster Food Bank has also been working tirelessly and is now helping with the foodshare scheme with supermarkets providing a range of items which residents can collect on set days, so far from Etnam Street and The Mallards, which I recently attended.

The Council has received over £ 11m from Government to meet some of the coronavirus pressures and offset some of the lost income. Most has been spent, for example ensuring all care homes have adequate stocks of PPE. Another £1.5 has just been announced by Government which will help support Council services through this challenging time.

Schools

100% of our schools have been open the last few weeks and many have been open since March to accommodate the children of key workers. The week beginning July 13th 5,396 pupils were in school, mostly years R, 1,6 and 10. This is 23% of the Herefordshire total, compared with the national figure of 16% , so this says a lot for our schools, teachers and families. As a governor of Earl Mortimer College and Kimbolton school I am impressed with the way teachers have kept in touch with most pupils with online lessons and seminars and many individual phone calls. Many children have however missed the regular school routine and I do hope they will all be able to return in September after the summer break. I welcome the Government decision recently to provide vouchers for children on free school meals during the summer break which will take some of the pressure off many families. Much credit to Marcus Rashford !

Household Waste Recycling sites

These are now open again across the county and Bridge Street reopened on May 9th. The anticipated traffic chaos did not happen and a sensible one-way queuing

system is continuing to work well. There were concerns about the level of fly tipping if the sites had remained closed. Green bags for garden waste are also becoming available again. Our household refuse collections have continued regularly during the lockdown and many thanks to all the crews who have been collecting a greater volume of refuse.

Balfour Beatty news

Balfour Beatty have continued to clear the backlog of potholes after the wet winter and made the most of the quieter roads in March and April. The jetpatcher was busy in Leysters and Brimfield among other villages filling many potholes. More funding was agreed in the Council budget for repairs to C and U roads. I will continue to press for potholes in Mill Street to be filled but am pleased with the white lining making the Bridge Street mini roundabout safer and more visible. There is still concern over the damage caused by the October and February flooding (80 roads were closed) and the funding needed for repairs. The Fownhope wall collapse and landslip are very costly to repair and there may be an impact on the highways budget elsewhere if government funding is not forthcoming.

Active Travel Measures

Government funding was announced in May to support walking , cycling and making space in our towns for distancing. All councils were eligible for this funding. Footway widening, full or part time road closures and some 20mph zones are included. The planned closures in High Street and Corn Square, although not in West Street or South Street will have pleased some and dismayed others. I fully respect the views of those who do not agree, but these areas will be open to traffic and parking in the afternoons and car parks are not far away. It should be a more comfortable experience for pedestrians and safer all round. These measures are temporary and we should monitor the situation, listen to traders and shoppers and be prepared to make changes if there are adverse effects. We need to support our shops and businesses and make Leominster as welcoming as possible. The recent free parking should have helped too.

And finally

I want to thank all the Town Council, Julie and her staff, my fellow ward councillors and everyone else who has worked so hard in these difficult months organising Leominster's response to the pandemic and helping those in need. Well done the Leominster News for publishing all the way through and thanks to Leominster in Bloom and all responsible for the planters and colourful displays across the town which have lifted the spirits. I hope when the Town Council meets again it can be face to face if it is safe to do so because wonderful though Zoom is it is no substitute for personal rather than virtual contact.

Wishing everyone a peaceful and enjoyable August.

Cllr. John Stone Leominster North and Rural 01584 711 227

Website Report

Upgrading the Leominster Town Council Website to WCAG 2.1 AA Compliancy

By the 22nd September 2020, Leominster Town Council is required to have in place a website that is accessible to as many people as possible. This includes those with impaired vision, deafness/impaired hearing, motor difficulties and cognitive impairments/learning disabilities. The standard our website must comply to as a minimum is WCAG 2.1 AA, this will mean it complies to accessibility guidelines that have been set out by the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations. This compliancy is applicable for all Public Sector bodies.

Why do we need to meet the WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standard?

Accessibility means more than putting things online. It means making your content and design clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

For example, someone with impaired vision might use a screen reader (software that lets a user navigate a website and 'read out' the content), braille display or screen magnifier. Or someone with motor difficulties might use a special mouse, speech recognition software or on-screen keyboard emulator.

Accessible websites usually work better for everyone. They are often faster, easier to use and appear higher in search engine rankings.

Most public sector websites and mobile apps do not currently meet accessibility requirements. For example, a recent study found that 4 in 10 local council homepages failed basic tests for accessibility. Common problems include websites that are not easy to use on a mobile or cannot be navigated using a keyboard, inaccessible PDF forms that cannot be read out on screen readers, and poor colour contrast that makes text difficult to read - especially for visually impaired people.

For further information on the requirements we need to meet, please visit

[Accessibility requirements](#)

What we need to do

We have to improve the accessibility statement on our current website with a pledge to improve our website. A great example of a pre-existing statement can be found at the following: <https://www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Accessibility-statement-for-Great-Aycliffe-Town-Council.pdf>

We have two options available to us to meet WCAG 2.1 AA compliancy:

- Conduct an audit of our current website and make improvements using our current website provider
- Design a new website using a different website provider

As it stands, our current website is not fit for purpose come September. Our current supplier, Intouch CRM, does not offer a WCAG 2.1 AA compliant ready to use service. Aside from not currently meeting the compliancy, the site is not user friendly - for both Town Council employees who have to upload content and for users of the website.

To make our existing website compliant, we would need to conduct an audit of the site against the regulations. This would need to be done by an external website professional and would come at a significant cost. We do not have the in house

specialism to conduct this audit ourselves. The cost to bring someone in would be circa £1000. Time constraints would also be a factor.

Alternatively, we can get a new website provider to design and host a brand new compliant website for us. I have identified three possible alternative suppliers who provide a WCAG 2.1 AA service:

- Aubergine
- TEEC
- Netwise UK

Aubergine –

<https://www.aubergine262.com/wcag-compliant-websites-for-public-bodies/>

Aubergine provide a purpose built WCAG 2.1 AA rated website package. This includes a brand new website that will be mobile friendly and is based on a proven, WCAG compliant framework. Full training on how to manage the website is also provided. They claim the site will be both easy to use and manage and will have a comprehensive functionality, including news, events, councillor profiles, services, meetings, minute and committee note downloads and anything else we would require. It is fast to set up and easy to manage. The website template will also be updated to include any new changes to the compliancy.

There are many different design options, allowing us to put our own branding etc onto the site. The site will be built using WordPress and has its own dashboard to upload content. Once the site is built, Aubergine can conduct quarterly WCAG monitoring to ensure the content we add to the site remains compliant. They also guarantee GDPR compliancy.

Aubergine are certified Crown suppliers and approved to work on .gov domains. They have created websites for other town and parish councils, the UN, and commercial companies.

To view an example of a website designed for a town council, please visit: [Example website](#)

Pricing:

One off set up: £1075 + VAT

Annual hosting and support: £299 + VAT

Total: £1374 + VAT

Optional WCAG monitoring and reports: £299 + VAT

Optional extra support: Extended annual support: £720 + VAT

Transfer of existing content to new site: £25p/h + VAT

In Person training: half day at £199 + VAT

Optional extras: Domain registration .gov = £100 per year + VAT, .com, .org, .co.uk or org.uk = £30 per year + VAT

There is a discount available for Society of Local Council Clerk members website.

TEEC -

<https://myparishcouncil.co.uk/>

TEEC are offering a free to use template that we can use if we host our website through them. They state that the template “not only helps you deliver a new and fresh looking website, but offers full compliancy to the latest WCAG 2.1 and GDPR

guidelines". The site will also be periodically refreshed to include any changes to the compliancy. We would have to build this website from scratch in house, meaning it would be fairly time consuming. They do offer more advanced packages where they can manage everything for us but I am still awaiting a response from the contact regarding pricing.

The price for hosting would be £15 per month.

Netwise UK –

<https://parishcouncilwebsites.org.uk/>

Netwise UK are a website provider who specialise in WCAG 2.1AA compliant sites for Local Authorities. They design affordable and easy to use websites that are simple to update and able to be viewed on any device. Training and support is available and they can also host the site and provide updates.

They design websites specifically for Town Councils. Therefore, any information we need to put online will be accommodated easily. The site is based on WordPress and is updated using a dashboard.

To view their demo site, please visit: [Parish Council website Demo](#)

Pricing : Website package for larger councils (includes design, the ability to in house upload content using a dashboard, virtual tour features, custom functions, full compliancy, hosting) £899 + VAT
Annual cost of updates, maintenance and support £400 + VAT

Conclusion

To conclude the current Leominster Town Council website is not fit for purpose. It needs to be fully redesigned to bring it in line with WCAG 2.1 AA compliancy. In the short term we need to add an Accessibility Statement to carry us over until we bring in a new system.

As one of the content uploaders of the current site, I would personally recommend the Aubergine system as being the one that would meet all of our future needs. We can easily transfer word content from our previous website in house. It appears to be an easy to use dashboard which would enable us to upload any content to our website quickly and with minimal fuss. Above all they offer a fully compliant service.

Jaimie Wood