



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 16th February 2021

To: All Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:
Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh, Norman, Rumsey,
Sutcliffe, Thomas and Williams.
(Copies to other Councillors for information)

NOTICE OF MEETING

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020, you are hereby summoned to attend an online meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** to be held on **Monday 22nd February 2021** commencing at **19:00 hours** via 'Zoom' on the following dedicated link:

Meeting ID: 850 4081 2620

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 as provided for in Standing Orders. The public can request the password from the clerk to allow participation.
- 5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 14th December 2020.
- 6. CLERK'S REPORT**

To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.
- 7. FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS**
 - (a) Income and Expenditure Report**
 - To consider the Income and Expenditure report up to the end of January 2021 (Month 10) and additional budget notes.
 - (b) Accounts Paid and Outstanding Accounts for Payment**
 - A list of accounts paid relating to the months of January and February 2021 as attached.
 - (c) Committee Report**
 - Please see the attached Committee update report.
 - (d) Budget Consultation Report 2021/22**
 - To consider the report attached.
- 8. 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".

 - (a) Grant Report**
 - To consider the attached grant applications
 - To consider a report of grants awarded in the last financial year
 - To consider a report on Youth funding
 - To appoint a Task & Finish Group to work with the Projects & Grants Officer to review the Grant Application Form

(b) CAB Report

- To consider the two attached CAB Reports outlining CAB provision between the start of lockdown and the end of 2020. In-person appointments have not been offered since March 2020, due to Covid restrictions. Instead, Leominster residents were encouraged to access CAB support via phone. During this time, phone appointments were provided by advisors from a variety of CAB branches – not just CAB Shropshire.
- The 'Key Stats (3)' report provides information on support given to Leominster clients from CAB Shropshire advisors only in the period 15/01/20 – 09/12/20. Only two wards are listed at the top of the report, as no residents from Leominster East or Leominster West were supported by CAB Shropshire during this period. By comparison, 'Key Stats (4)' report provides a summary of support given to Leominster clients from all CAB branches during the period 23/02/2020 – 06/01/2021.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on Monday 26th April 2021 at **19:00** hours, either remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP subject to social distancing regulations being lifted by central government.

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 14th December 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via 'Zoom'.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh, Norman, Rumsey, Sutcliffe, Thomas (19:15) and Williams.

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk

FG37/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

FG38/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Norman – Member of The Civic Society

Cllr. Marsh – Member of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

FG39/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

FG40/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

FG41/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 26th October 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

FG42/20 CLERK'S REPORT

- Committee noted that the only item in the Clerk's Report was about a potential devolved asset and that this would be added to the confidential items section of the meeting.

FG43/20 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) Income and Expenditure Report

- Committee noted the report up to the end of November 2020 (Month 8 – not final due to the end of month accounts not being complete at the time of the meeting).

(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 end of the month of November 2020.

- (c) **Committee Report** – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED**;
- To note the report;
 - To note that a meeting of the Budget Task & Finish Group is scheduled for 21st December 2020 at 1:30pm to discuss the results of the public consultation that ends on Wednesday 16th December at midnight.
 - To feedback Herefordshire Council related comments from the Budget Consultation through the appropriate channels.

FG44/20 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 applications, the Committee **RESOLVED**:
- To allocate a grant of £529.62 to Leominster Civic Society towards providing name plaques for local bridges as part of a wider interpretation project.
 - To allocate a grant of £935.00 to support the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust to deliver activities funded by the ‘Building Better Opportunities’ project at Kingston Court.
- (b) **Staff Update** – Committee noted the verbal update on staff activities including the secondment of the Administration Assistant to Leominster Museum as Part Time Curator.
Committee noted that an appraisal of the Clerk would be carried out following the next meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee on 18th January 2021.
- (c) **Budget Consultation** - Following discussion, committee noted that the Budget Consultation (both online and hard copy) will end at midnight on 16th December 2020 and the results would be circulated to councillors.
- (d) **J&P McCaull and E. Stanley Holland Charities Update** – The Clerk updated committee on both charities. Meetings will be arranged in the New Year.
- (e) **Licencing at 11 Corn Square** – The Clerk updated the committee on the transferring of the licence for 11 Corn Square.

Potential Devolved Asset (from Clerk's Report)

The Clerk informed committee that a condition survey had been received and that a site visit would be arranged as soon as possible.

FG45/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 22nd February 2021 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 20.29 hours.

CHAIR:

DATE:

2020/21 Month 10 Budget Notes

These notes are intended to accompany the budget reports for the end of month 10 of 2020/21 financial year. Comments on expenditure and income are listed by budget heading and cost centre.

101: Administration – Central Costs

4012: Software, IT and Support

- Expenditure includes end of year external accounting support for 2019/20 financial year.
- Overspend projected by the end of the financial year. No potential cost reductions have been identified, however external accounting support costs are anticipated to be reduced in subsequent years.

4014: Website

- Will be an area of overspend, due to changes required to adhere to government accessibility guidelines from 23rd Sept 2020. Will require contingency budget listed under 4900 to cover the cost of a new accessible website.

4030: Phone

- Expenditure includes costs for setting up remote phone access for office staff during COVID-19 lockdown.

4048: Subscriptions

- Subscriptions renew at the beginning of the financial year except SLCC membership which is due January 2021. Overspend anticipated.

4050: Insurance

- Insurance cover renews at the beginning of the financial year. This includes vehicle cover, buildings and contents, employer's liability and public liability. Possible overspend due to additional equipment being purchased eg. Chipper.
- Additional Ellis Whittam insurance may be required for H&S and Employment legal cost currently being investigated. This will lead to an overspend.

4900: Contingency

- Please see 4014 above.

105: Corporate Management

4130: Accountancy/Corporate Governance

- Expenditure is high at the beginning of the financial year, as it includes end of year accounting support.
- Overspend is now evident but costs should be lower in 2021/22 as a result of staff training.

4135: Legal and Professional

- Approx. £1000 of costs listed under this code to date are legal fees in relation to planning matters that are due to be reimbursed this month and legal work for New Depot lease. There will be an overspend on this budget.

125: Corn Square

4180: Cleaning

- Costs are still anticipated to be high for the remainder of this financial year, due to COVID-19 requirements. £800 has been moved over from cost centre 125-4180 to 202-4180 to cover remainder of the financial year for cleaning materials and COVID-19 PPE at the new depot.
- Budgeted increase for 2021-22.

1403: Income Flat

- Unlikely to reach budget due to cancellation as a result of national lockdown. Bookings cancelled for December to the end of February.

4187: Repairs and Renewals

- Repair work undertaken while LTC Office and TIC closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- As a result of a fire risk assessment that took place at the end of August 2020, further essential works have been identified and are currently being costed.
- Anticipated overspend due to work Fire Risk Assessment works required in the cellar and additional electrical work required.

130: Tourist Information Centre Income

- Month 10 figures show income to the end of January 2021.
- TIC ceased fully trading from 2nd November – 2nd December for second lockdown and January 5th 2021 until at least the end of February.

4028 & 1519: Green sacks purchase and income

- Green refuse sacks are being sold on request from Herefordshire Council. Sale cost includes purchase costs, plus a small subsidiary to cover cost of sales. Sale price is consistent with other local retail outlets.

201: Open Spaces

4006: Uniforms

- We are still chasing up a refund on unsuitable uniform items but this will be an area of anticipated overspend as it covers staff other than the Environmental Team.
- Refund agreed but not paid to bank account yet and is being chased.

4320: Vehicle Maintenance

- Anticipated overspend due to age of vehicles.

4321: Vehicle Fuel

- Mowing the town verges is now complete and the spend should now drop for the remainder of the year.

4355: Tree Management

- Includes emergency works on trees on Town Council properties. A tree survey is currently taking place, so this is an area of anticipated overspend. Tree surveys are required on a regular basis.
- Tree survey complete and no major issues, some work can be completed in house.
- £5000 agreed for next year's tree budget to allow for more maintenance to be carried out.

202: Depot

4180: Cleaning

- £800 added from 125-4180 for materials for the remainder of 2020/21 and this includes COVID-19 PPE requirements.
- Recommended to increase budget for 2021-22 as a result of extra materials required as a result of COVID-19.

4187: Repairs & Renewals

- Works required in order to make new depot space suitable for Environmental Team requirements. This will be an anticipated area of overspend to ensure that the new depot is compliant with Health & Safety guidelines.

4188: Fixtures & Fittings

- Again, works required on the new depot for Health & Safety compliance has led to an overspend.

203: Allotments

4025: Miscellaneous

- Includes subscription for the new allotment management software.

4300: Maintenance

- There will be an overspend as the drainage pipe repair has been addressed. Further works to clear the area by the middle car park will be required – there will be an overspend here.

205: Market

1402: Income – market

- Market income now showing but as we have gone into a 3rd lockdown only essential traders are allowed onto the market which will mean a drop in income for December, January and February. Also, January farmers market was cancelled but February's market was able to proceed.

250: Economic Development

4023: Newsletter

- Costs have increased, so this is expected to be an area of overspend for 2020/21.

4375: CCTV

- Includes total payment for 2020/21.

4380: Festive Lights

- Includes annual payment, plus costs for removal of lights required for essential tree work to take place. Further costs were incurred in advance of Christmas 2020 due to work required to update infrastructure for efficiency and safety reasons.

Finance Committee

Date: 16th February 2021

Title: Committee Report

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with a full report relating to all current Committee matters.

Contact Officers: Julie Debbage

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the report be noted;
- 1.2 To consider HALC/NALC subscription invoice 3.6;
- 1.3 To ratify proposed expenditure items 3.6,3.7 and 3.8;
- 1.4 To appoint an interview panel for the recruitment of the Environmental Services Supervisor.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates members on Committee matters and identifies items that require a decision.
- 2.2 The responsibilities of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are contained within the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation. These include monitoring the Council's finances, recommending the annual budget and overseeing project development.

3. COMMITTEE REPORT

- 3.1 *Precept Request*
 - The precept request agreed at the last meeting of the Full Council on 25th January 2021 has been returned to Herefordshire Council along with the budget breakdown table – please see attached.
- 3.2 *Capital Projects*
 - The Signage Project is in its final stages with just one finger post to be installed at The Priory, a visitor information board to be installed at the COOP store and four interpretation boards to be installed in The Grange and Pinsley Mead.
 - Work to the Secret Garden continues with the utility block having the kitchen fitted and the building insulated before the sanitary ware is installed.

- 3.3 *High Street Heritage Action Zone*
- The steering group has met with the new Project Manager and an initial meeting of the Public Realm sub-group has been held to identify the way forward with regards to public consultation, design and tender.
- 3.4 *Cultural Consortium Programme*
- A funding application has been submitted and the decision regarding the funding is awaited.
- 3.5 *Market Town Economic Development Project*
- Following the meeting with businesses and the town council a vision has been suggested by Rose Regeneration following consultation and sub groups have been set up to focus on developing projects for Tourism, Car Parking and Skills.
- 3.6 *HALC Subscription*
- The request for the HALC/NALC subscription 2021-22 has now been received and is broken down as follows:
HALC Affiliation Fee -£180
HALC Subscription Fee -£1,320
HALC Subscription Fee (over 3,000 population) - £240
NALC Subscription Fee – £669.14
Total: £2,409.14+VAT
- 3.7 *Leominster in Bloom*
- A request has been received from Leominster in Bloom to sponsor the planting of a bee hive planter in Corn Square at a cost of £500 to include compost and plants.
- 3.8 *Electrical Works to 11 Corn Square*
- A quotation to rectify faults found on recent Electrical Condition Report carried out the premises has been received from the electrician carrying out the report. This totals £1,140. Detailed information has been requested.
- 3.9 *The new Town Council Website*
- The new website is currently being populated by office and tourist information centre staff. A link will be forwarded for councillors to view and it is hoped that it will go live on 1st March 2021.
- 4.0 *Environmental Services Supervisor Vacancy*
- The recruitment for the post went live on 1st February 2021 is advertised on our website, Hoople, Indeed and CTP RightJob portal (for use by ex-service personnel). The closing date for applications is 21st February 2021. An interview panel will need to be appointed. At this point, it is anticipated that the interviews will be held via Zoom.

Leominster Town Council 2021/22 Budget Consultation Report

Background

Aim

The Leominster Town Council 2021/22 Budget Consultation questionnaire sought to inform Town Council decisions on spending and strategy, by consulting residents on both their experiences of Town Council services and their priorities for future investment.

Methodology

The Leominster Town Council 2021/22 Budget Consultation was launched on 11th November 2020. Residents were invited to complete an online questionnaire, with hard copies of the survey available by post for those without online access. The consultation end date was initially set as 25th November 2020, however the Council voted to extend the deadline to 16th December 2020 in order to provide additional opportunities for resident engagement, following the end of the second national COVID-19 lockdown on 2nd December 2020. Participation was also incentivised, with survey respondents offered the chance to enter a prize draw to win a Christmas hamper provided by the Leominster Tourist Information Centre.

The consultation was advertised via the following channels:

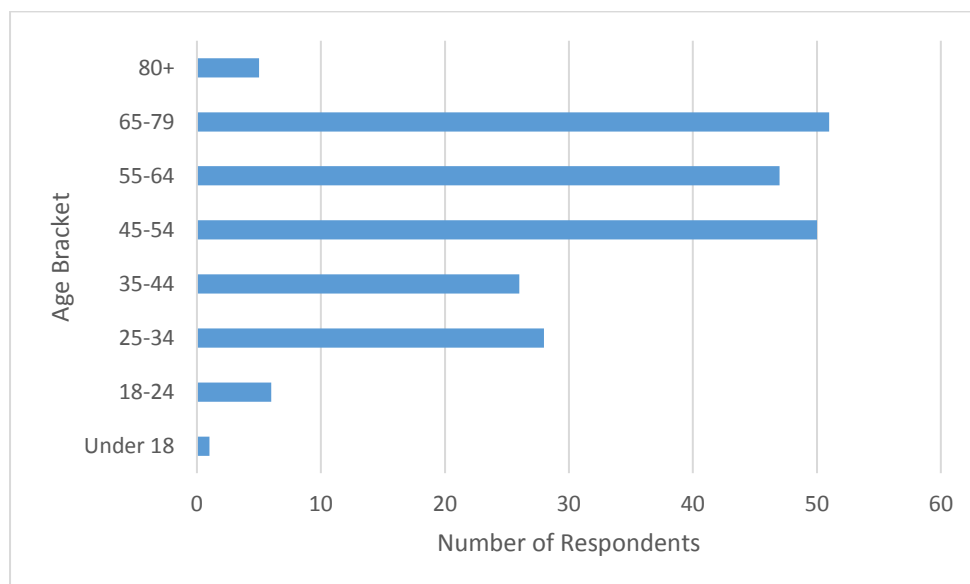
- Leominster Town Council website
- Leominster Tourist Information Centre social media accounts
- Posters displayed in the Tourist Information Centre windows and Town Council notice boards
- Email distribution to local organisations and community groups
- Promotional flyers distributed with Tourist Information Centre 'click and collect' orders
- Information stands and Councillor presence at the weekly market on Friday 4th December 2020 and farmers' market on Saturday 12th December 2020.

The Hereford Times also reported on the consultation deadline extension and Christmas hamper draw, which is believed to have significantly contributed to the number of residents taking part (see <https://www.herefordtimes.com/news/18911527.one-lucky-person-herefordshire-town-win-hamper-christmas>)

Response

A total of 272 survey responses were received by the deadline of midnight on 16th December 2020. The vast majority of responses were submitted online, with only 3 responses returned in hard copy. Graph 1 (below) outlines the distribution of respondents by age group. The majority of respondents were aged between 25 and 79 years. The lower response rate in the 80+ bracket may be a result of decreased online access in that age group, combined with the need to self-isolate as a result of increased COVID-19 vulnerability.

Graph 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group



Findings

Resident Experiences

Respondents were asked to rate Leominster Town Council services and amenities using the following scale: ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘acceptable’, ‘poor’, ‘very poor’, ‘service not used’. Table 1 ranks Town Council services according to the percentage of respondents who indicated that they used the service and rated their experience as being either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.

Table 1: Services and Amenities Ranked by Positive Rating Response

Service/Amenity	Percentage of Respondents Rating as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’
Running the Friday market, Farmers market, speciality markets	72.6
Allotments	65.4
Christmas lights	57.6
Emergency Response (Flooding, COVID-19)	56.3
Grass cutting, looking after trees and wildflower areas at the Grange, Sydonia Park and Ginhall Green	55.8
Street cleaning in the town centre	52.2
Litter picking in the Priory churchyard and parks	50.6
Play equipment at Sydonia Park	48.8
Play equipment at Ginhall Green	36.2
Maintaining town verges	33.1
Play equipment at the Grange	28.7
Management and maintenance of key local footpaths	25.2
Public toilets in Central carpark	21.8
Public toilets on the Grange	17.5

Table 2 ranks Town Council services and amenities according to the percentage of respondents who indicated that they used the service and rated their experience as being either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

Table 2: Services and Amenities Ranked by Negative Rating Response

Service/Amenity	Percentage of Respondents Rating as Poor or Very Poor
Management and maintenance of key local footpaths	43.7
Public toilets on the Grange	41.8
Play equipment at the Grange	40.0
Public toilets in Central carpark	38.6
Maintaining town verges	27.0
Play equipment at Ginhall Green	24.5
Play equipment at Sydonia Park	17.3
Christmas lights	15.5
Street cleaning in the town centre	14.2
Grass cutting, looking after trees and wildflower areas at the Grange, Sydonia Park and Ginhall Green	13.1
Emergency Response (Flooding, COVID-19)	12.6
Litter picking in the Priory churchyard and parks	12.5
Running the Friday market, Farmers market, speciality markets	5.0
Allotments	1.2

Town Council services that were rated most highly include: markets, allotments, Christmas lights and emergency response (flooding, COVID-19), grass cutting and maintenance on open spaces, and street cleaning in the town centre. The 3 items highlighted as being most in need of improvement (Central toilets, Grange toilets, Grange play area) are all amenities that have been transferred to the Town Council from Herefordshire Council in the last 5 years. It is positive to see that all 3 concerns are already being addressed in the Town Council’s capital projects programme. The ‘further comments’ field for this section of the survey particularly highlighted support for investment at the Grange, emphasising the importance of the Council’s Grange Improvement project and providing important evidence of need for funding applications to be submitted in the 2021/22 financial year.

43.7% of respondents rated ‘management and maintenance of key local footpaths’ as being either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’, however the accompanying comments indicated that many respondents understood the term ‘footpaths’ to include pavements and kerbs, which are maintained by Herefordshire Council as part of the public realm. This confusion could potentially be avoided in future consultation by using the term ‘public rights of way’ and defining it clearly. Several respondents also referenced footpaths that are outside of the area managed by Leominster Town Council. Despite the fact that introductory notes outlining the extent of Town Council services and responsibilities were provided at the start of the survey, respondent comments indicate that there are still significant levels of confusion regarding the distinction between Town Council and Herefordshire Council services. It is hoped that the new Town Council website will help to provide additional clarity for residents.

AGENDA ITEM 7 (d)

Nearly a quarter (23.8%) of comments submitted for this section of the survey were complaints regarding the poor quality of roads and pavements within Leominster town centre. All comments on local authority services will be anonymised and fed back to Herefordshire Council on behalf of Leominster residents.

Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) rated verge maintenance as being either 'poor' or 'very poor', despite the fact that 55.8% of respondents rated grass cutting on Town Council managed open spaces as being either 'excellent' or 'good'. Any specific locations identified within the survey responses will be raised with the Town Council's Environment and Services Team, who have worked hard to maintain cutting schedules throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that verges in some areas of Leominster are owned and maintained by organisations such as housing associations, which can cause confusion. The 'further comments' field also indicated that opinions are split in regards to verge maintenance, with some respondents requesting more regular cuts and others requesting that more areas are left uncut to encourage wildlife.

Dog fouling and kerbside weeds were also raised as issues of concern in the comments field. Initiatives for reducing dog fouling have been trialled by the Town Council's Environmental Team in the past, but it is recommended that these measures are revisited. Spraying of kerbside weeds is no longer undertaken by Herefordshire Council. Leominster Town Council staff spray a limited number of key routes within the town centre as part of support for Leominster in Bloom, however resources are limited. A number of respondents also indicated in the comments field that the work of Leominster in Bloom volunteers and litter picking groups is greatly appreciated by town residents.

Resident Priorities

Respondents were asked to rate Town Council services and amenities in order of priority. It is worth noting that approximately one fifth (21%) of survey respondents chose not to complete this question, suggesting that a more user-friendly method for indicating resident priorities may be required for future consultations. Percentages listed in the tables below have been calculated using only the responses of respondents that fully completed the priorities section of the budget consultation questionnaire.

Table 3 ranks Town Council services and amenities by the percentage of respondents listing that service as being either 1st, 2nd or 3rd highest priority.

Table 3: Services and Amenities Ranked by Highest Priority Rating

Service/Amenity	Percentage of Respondents Listing as a Top Priority
Street cleaning within the town centre	56.8
Maintaining and cleaning public toilets in Central carpark and on the Grange	40.4
Maintaining important public footpaths in and around the town	19.7
Maintaining play areas on the Grange, Sydonia and Ginhall Green	16.4
Watering Leominster in Bloom displays in town	16.0
Supporting activities for young people	14.1
Providing grants and support to local groups and community facilities	12.2
Friday market, Farmers market, speciality markets	10.8
Maintaining town verges	9.9
Organising events for the town (e.g. Through the Wardrobe)	8.9
Grants to support local bus services	8.5
Supporting and facilitating town projects	7.0
Running the Tourist Information Centre and supporting local tourism	6.1
Providing funding to Citizens Advice Bureau	5.2
Managing trees on the Grange, Sydonia and Ginhall Green	3.3
Civic events (e.g. Remembrance Day)	2.4
Allotments	2.4
Christmas lights	0.5

Table 4 ranks Town Council services and amenities by the percentage of respondents listing that service as being either 1st, 2nd or 3rd lowest priority.

Table 4: Services and Amenities Ranked by Lowest Priority Rating

Service/Amenity	Percentage of Respondents Listing as a Lowest Priority
Organising events for the town (e.g. Through the Wardrobe)	43.7
Allotments	41.3
Running the Tourist Information Centre and supporting local tourism	34.7
Christmas lights	30.1
Friday market, Farmers market, speciality markets	27.7
Civic events (e.g. Remembrance Day)	23.9
Watering Leominster in Bloom displays in town	17.8
Grants to support local bus services	12.2
Providing funding to Citizens Advice Bureau	11.7
Maintaining town verges	11.3
Managing trees on the Grange, Sydonia and Ginhall Green	10.8
Providing grants and support to local groups and community facilities	7.5
Supporting and facilitating town projects	7.5
Maintaining play areas on the Grange, Sydonia and Ginhall Green	5.6
Supporting activities for young people	5.2
Maintaining important public footpaths in and around the town	3.8
Street cleaning within the town centre	1.9
Maintaining and cleaning public toilets in Central carpark and on the Grange	0.9

Survey responses identified the following Town Council services as being of the highest priority: street cleaning within the town centre, maintaining and cleaning public toilets in Central carpark and on the Grange, maintaining important public footpaths in and around the town, and maintaining Town Council play areas. The low level of priority awarded to the Town Council’s allotments provision is not unexpected, given that 70% of respondents indicated that they have not previously used this service.

The Leominster Tourist Information Centre is not listed as being a high priority service, however a large proportion of respondent comments emphasised the importance of attracting additional visitors to Leominster. This may suggest that there is a lack of awareness in regards to the role that the Tourist Information Centre plays in supporting Leominster’s tourism offer and economy. Similarly, 43.7% of respondents listed town events as one of the lowest priorities for Town Council resources, yet a large number of accompanying comments requested additional events and activities for residents of all ages. This demand should be addressed, in part, by the Leominster HAZ Scheme projects and accompanying Cultural Programme.

Several respondents suggested that they felt that all services listed were of importance for the town. In future consultations it may be helpful to provide respondents with an option for indicating which existing services (if any) they feel should not receive any funding from the Town Council. Comments submitted in response to this section of the form also highlighted the continuing need to emphasise when Town Council

initiatives – such as the LEADER signage project – are funded by external sources, so that residents are clear that funding is not being diverted from other Town Council services.

Other Suggestions

In addition to the points outlined above, the following suggestions for Town Council projects or activities were raised in survey responses:

- Advertise Friday market in county-wide newspapers
- Provide a fenced-off area for exercising dogs at Ginhall Green
- Install additional Christmas lights in Corn Square
- Provide more equipment for the under 5s age group at Sydonia Park
- Arrange communal manure/wood chipping deliveries for allotment holders
- Provide a town events calendar (N.B. a What’s On page is maintained via the TIC website, but a hard copy events calendar may also be helpful for those who cannot access the internet)
- Opportunities to speak to Town Council representatives outside of working hours
- Tree planting in the town centre
- Improvements to the facades of buildings in town centre (the HAZ Scheme renovation grants project will help to address this)

Suggestions relating to street lighting, bin collection, drainage, roads/public realm, crime/policing, parking, and cycle lanes, will be relayed to the relevant authorities.

Communication Methods

Respondents were asked to indicate how they source information on Leominster Town Council services and events. A summary of responses is provided in Graph 2. Other methods mentioned in the comments section included local shops, county newspapers (e.g. Hereford Times), and word of mouth. Electronic communication methods were shown to be accessed most frequently, however the survey results indicate that hard copy communication channels remain popular. It is also worth considering the impact of COVID restrictions on the way that people choose to access information. This data helps to inform future consultation strategies and highlights importance of the Town Council continuing to engage with residents using a combination of physical and digital formats.

Graph 2: Sources of Information on Town Council Services

