

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 29th November 2021 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rumsey (Mayor), Marsh (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Hanna, Herschy, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Preece, Smith-Winnard, Sutcliffe (19:03), Thomas, and Williams.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Stone, a member of the press and 4 members of the public.

69/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

70/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Thomas declared that he knew Chris Cooke, an applicant for Co-option.

71/21 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

72/21 CO-OPTION

Two prospective candidates applied to be co-opted on to Leominster Town Council following the resignation of a previous Councillor. No election had been called.

Each candidate gave a brief personal statement during the meeting. Following the completion of the personal statements, a vote was taken as to which candidate to appoint. Council **RESOLVED** to formally co-opt Virginie Jacquet on to Leominster Town Council to represent the South Ward.

Cllr Jacquet signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was received by the Proper Officer.

73/21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were four members of the public present. The following questions were raised:

- Leominster Town Football Club – The club has recently suffered a lot of antisocial behaviour at their pitches on Bridge Street, next to the sports centre. There is also an ongoing issue with dog fouling on the pitches, with only one currently being fenced off. The club don't have any men's changing facilities at the moment and would be interested in a transfer of the building on site if possible so that it can be developed to provide improved facilities. Cllr. Rosser will supply the clerk with contact details for the club.

- Ducking Stool – A member of the public raised concerns to the Town Council on the use of the Ducking Stool to promote the built heritage of Leominster. At a time when women and girls are experiencing high levels of violence, why are local tourism organisations utilising this as a method of attracting visitors to the town? Does the community want to be promoted like this at a time where male violence against women and girls is receiving national attention and government promises of it being addressed in various ways? Following a discussion, it was suggested that the issues could be addressed by the interpretation materials that accompany the ducking stool and related literature could be used to highlight this ongoing issue. It was suggested that the Cultural Consortium Programme of cultural events in the town could also be used to raise awareness. The town clock also displays a ducking stool and it was pointed out that as it is currently broken and the maker is no longer trading, it was likely to be part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone Corn Square and public realm improvements. The clerk will investigate this further.
- A member of the public raised concerns about the condition of the Royal Oak Hotel and the road conditions on West Street, Broad Street and High Street. The clerk had reported concerns to building control at Herefordshire Council was suggested that the public realm improvements may cover some of these areas but that issues should be reported to Herefordshire Council through Balfour Beatty.

74/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 27th September 2021 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

75/21 CLERK'S REPORT

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- Christmas lights – Several complaints have been received regarding the Christmas lights about both faults and quality. The faults are reported as soon as we are aware. The recent stormy weather and vandalism have both contributed to lights being out but the main entrance lighting on South Street didn't work from the beginning.
- Through the Wardrobe – The clerk asked for volunteers to help manage the event.
- Christmas meal – Anyone wishing to attend would need to pay £5 deposit to the clerk to secure the booking.

76/21 FINANCES

- (a) **Accounts Paid and Invoices for Payment** – It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices for September, October and November 2021, as outlined on the payment statements provided.

- (b) **Income & Expenditure Report Month 7** – Council **RESOLVED** to accept the Income & Expenditure Report for Month 7 and accompanying notes.
- (c) **Budget Update** – A verbal update was given to committee by the clerk and the Chair. It was noted that the tax base had increased by 197 for 2022/23 and a number of options for the precept request were outlined. This will be submitted at the next Full Council meeting on 24th January 2022 following the final meeting of the Budget Working Group.
- (d) **Transfer of bank account balances** – It was **RESOLVED** to move a portion of the bank account balance to the savings account with the Finance Assistant setting up a monthly check to ensure that there are enough funds in the current account to cover expenditure. It was also **RESOLVED** that the clerk would check the amount that the bank guarantees and research opening another account to spread the risk.

77/21 GRANTS

- (a) **Welcome Back Fund** – Council noted that the delivery of the first project, the Through the Wardrobe Free Event, had begun and would be completed by the end of December.
- (b) **Great Places to Visit Fund** – Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to sign the Deed of the Service Level Agreement for the Great Places to Visit Fund.

78/21 CULTURAL CONSORTIUM MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the agreement for signature.

79/21 MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Model Publication Scheme.

80/21 REPORTS

The following reports were received:

Leominster North Ward Report from Ward Cllr Stone

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Cllr. Stone also recommended that the council push for a vaccination site in Leominster, possibly at the testing centre in Broad Street, with the Director of Public Health. He also said that the Keep Herefordshire Warm scheme is still running and that the Grayson Perry Exhibition in Hereford runs until 18th December 2021.

Leominster South Ward Report from Ward Cllr Marsh

The council noted the following verbal report below.

Covid jabs: Councillors' efforts to secure more local options for boosters and other jabs continue. The first pop up in Leominster on 21 November was nearly overwhelmed with cars coming from miles around and long queues, luckily the day was dry. The full 1,000 doses supplied were given. We are pushing the NHS for

more provision, including indoor queueing and appointment options. We were assured by the NHS on 11/11 that:

“more options via local pharmacies will deliver an increase in weekly capacity in Herefordshire by c2000 doses over the next 3 weeks” ... We will be “working with practices to manage capacity and provide phone support for people who have questions about vaccines and vaccination. Elgar House will also be increasing daily throughput capacity by 150 per day with the specific aim of supporting walk-ins.”

The NHS system and the HC Grab a jab page are the best places to access current options. First and second jabs are being offered at Elgar House, Hereford. Please encourage people to take up the jab provision to protect themselves – we know that rates in Herefordshire remain high. I am aware that for some the vaccination programme remains contentious. However, the fact that the majority of patients in NHS Intensive Care Units are now unvaccinated shows the strong protective effect of the vaccines.

Events in Leominster: The Christmas lights are now on and the tree looks festive already. We look forward to the outdoor and well-spaced Victorian Fair in Leominster on 11th December till 3pm. This includes the Farmers Market. Parking will be free that day. Outdoor Friday markets continue in Leominster, including one planned for Christmas Eve.

There’s a lot going on! To find out more and keep up to date with developments its worth keeping an eye on the Herefordshire Council News page. Leominster News and the Hereford Times are also well worth a read - there have been regular good news stories about our town lately including Wetherspoon’s loos winning an award!

Supporting local businesses: Herefordshire residents and visitors can benefit from exclusive discounts, deals and loyalty schemes, across the county, simply by downloading the LoyalFree app. The aim is to help support economic recovery in the county, by encouraging people to stay, shop and spend locally across our historic market towns and villages. The app is free to download and use and features a great range of deals and loyalty schemes with independent retailers across the county. The app also includes some fantastic trails, to encourage more people to get out and about in Herefordshire, including walking and cycling, art galleries, gardens, castles and even dog friendly coffee shops plus a local events section. Herefordshire Council has introduced the app, in partnership with award winning provider,

Free mental health support as part of Covid recovery plan: A new service delivered by Kooth offers free, anonymous and 24/7 digital mental health support with no referrals or thresholds to meet: see HC website’s news section for more information. For anyone going through a challenging time, we would encourage you to seek support. Our team of experienced counsellors and wellbeing practitioners is here to help you when times are tough, and will be on hand to listen when you need to talk to someone.

One-on-one counselling sessions with fully qualified wellbeing practitioners are available 365 days a year, from midday to 10pm on weekdays, and from 6pm to 10pm on weekends and holidays. Sessions can be booked in advance or accessed via drop-in instant text-based chats. Qwell’s users will also have access to an

extensive range of self-care and psychoeducational materials, peer-to-peer support via moderated forums, and personal tools such as an online journal.

As part of the grant funding for its Covid-19 recovery plan, supporting economic recovery and improving wellbeing in the county, Herefordshire Council has commissioned Qwell, a new service that will provide free digital counselling and emotional support to adults aged 19 years and over.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread detrimental impact on health and wellbeing. The recent Herefordshire Community Wellbeing Survey 2021 revealed that 28% of respondents had reported high levels of anxiety with 33% admitting they were doing less exercise and 30% were sleeping less well than the previous year. In addition, 32% of people had experienced a drop in household income. With many adults reporting a significant decline in mental health, it is now more important than ever to ensure access to high quality digital mental health tools.

Qwell is delivered by Kooth - the UK's leading digital mental health and wellbeing platform and is accredited by the British Association of Psychotherapy and Counselling. The service will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Access is via computer, tablet or smartphone - with no waiting lists or referrals necessary - enabling people to access care immediately and at a time that is convenient to them.

Council considers ambitious new recycling and waste plans: Changes to the way we provide the county's recycling and waste collection and waste disposal services are on the way.

With tough new national environmental standards on the horizon, keeping things as they are now, is not an option. We received over 3,600 responses to our consultation earlier in the year. In response, 86 per cent said 'more needs to be done to reduce rubbish and increase recycling'; while 60 per cent accepted 'the need to change the current rubbish and recycling system'. Over half (56 per cent) of residents favour a separate food waste collection.

From late 2023, we are proposing an alternate three-weekly collection service: paper and card on week 1, plastic, cans and glass on week 2 and all other residual waste on week 3. There will be a new weekly food waste collection service and a fortnightly seasonal garden waste collection service.

As is currently the case, we will work with managing agents, resident's associations and people who live in flats to ensure they have a service that reflects their needs but provides maximum opportunities for them to recycle. For very large families, or for people with medical needs, we will continue to offer additional waste capacity as we do now.

Cabinet have agreed to re-advertise the service to the industry. Cabinet have agreed to extend the present waste and recycling disposal contract for a further five years. Savings on the cost of this will help pay for the new collection service. The disposal contract extension will also secure immediate environmental benefits. These include a 95% reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill from 20% to just 1% from April 2022, alongside steps to ensure all recycled materials can be audited and traced if being sent outside Europe.

Cllr. Marsh also informed the council about the Herefordshire Council pre-paid £15 card to be spent at local businesses.

Leominster West Ward Report from Ward Cllr Norman

MINUTES

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

Leominster East Ward Report from Ward Cllr Bartlett

The council noted the verbal report below.

October saw the welcome return to participating in Leominster's civic services. In October I was pleased to be able to join fellow councillors at the Ivington Harvest Festival Service. The church at Ivington looked lovely as always. To be on the covid safe side, we were unable to partake of the usual harvest lunch and auction, but there was still a fantastic range of cakes, preserves and local potatoes available for a small donation. Our Town Civic Service in the Priory Church was also a welcome return again this year.

In November the Polish Remembrance Service took place the Sunday before Remembrance Sunday, and both events were again well attended.

The Herefordshire Destination Business Improvement District ballot is being held in November 2021. Should the ballot be successful, the Business Improvement District (excluding Hereford City Centre, which has an existing Business Improvement District) will implement a 5-year business led programme to support the growth of the tourism and retail across Herefordshire. Tourism and hospitality is a critical part of our local economy in Leominster and a major part of our towns economy.

Free swimming lessons at HALO pools during October and school half term were again a great success and fully subscribed. During the summer 5521 children enjoyed a free swim, with 1309 families attending and 1115 repeat visits, plus the adult swimming lessons continue to be a great success. In addition, over 3000 youths have signed up to the free gym membership at HALO for years 11, 12 and 13.

Keep Herefordshire Warm - This autumn's energy price rises have added an additional worry for a lot of people trying to stay warm this winter. It is vital that people can afford to stay warm and healthy in their own homes. By phoning 0800 677 1432, a team of trained energy advisors at Keep Herefordshire Warm can offer free energy efficiency advice that ranges from simple changes you can make, to helping you access grants for insulation or heating. They may be able to help you reduce your energy bills, switch to a cheaper energy tariff or supplier, or offer a free home visit to advise on ways to save energy. More information on grants and advice can also be found on Herefordshire Councils website -

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

A new digital Mental Health service has been launched in the county. The new service is delivered by Kooth and will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Access is via computer, tablet or smartphone - with no waiting lists or referrals necessary - enabling people to access care immediately and at a time that is convenient to them.

To find out more access their website - <https://www.qwell.io/>

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Herefordshire Christmas Holidays and Food Programme - This Christmas, Herefordshire's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) is offering free activities to the most vulnerable children in our local communities.

Parents and carers of a child aged between five and 16 and who is eligible for benefits-related free school meals, will be able to book up to 16 hours of free activities for their child to enjoy during the festive break.

Twelve providers have currently signed up to deliver the Christmas HAF programme, which means there are over 850 free places available and a wide range of exciting activities for children to choose from. Some of our activities will include provision for children with SEND or additional needs.

Every child that attends an activity session will receive a free nutritious meal.

Information about the Christmas HAF Programme is available on the [Talk Community website](#) and the online booking system will open on Monday 29 November.

This is your last chance to see Grayson Perry's The Vanity of Small Differences at Hereford Library. A fantastic opportunity to see A series of large scale tapestries created by one of the country's leading artists. It is well worth a visit, and at a modest £5 entry fee plus free buses on the weekend make this a much more widely affordable experience for people. The exhibition closes on Saturday 18th December.

81/21 MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Council received the following appointments attended by the Mayor:

20th November 2021 Bromyard Christmas Light Switch-On

20th November 2021 Leominster Safer Neighbourhood Team meeting

26th November 2021 Stourport Christmas Illuminations Switch-On

Ward Cllr Stone, the member of the press and the members of the public left the meeting.

82/21 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items to be discussed included the consideration of exempt information, Full Council **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

(a) Staff Review – Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to action the recommendations of the staff review in respect of:

- Changes to the line management of some staff from January 2022;
- Adjustment of salary scales from April 2022;
- The recruitment of a freelance Business Project Officer from January 2022 to March 2022, funded by the Welcome Back Fund, supported by Herefordshire Council, to encourage people back to the High Street and support economic recovery in Herefordshire following the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

83/21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 24th January 2022 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20.54 hours.

MAYOR: _____ **DATE:** _____