

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL



LEOMINSTER ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2022

Minutes of the Leominster Annual Town Meeting held in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP on 4th April 2022 at 7.30pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Rumsey (Mayor), Marsh (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Hanna, Herschy, Jacquet, Marshall, Murdoch, Norman, Smith-Winnard and Sutcliffe.

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Stone (Herefordshire Council Ward Member) and 10 members of the public.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Democratic Services Officer

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Cllr Rumsey welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Preece, Thomas and Williams.

3. MINUTES

The meeting **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Meeting held on 19th April 2021 be adopted and signed as a correct record.

4. ANNUAL REPORT

Cllr Rumsey presented Leominster Town Council's annual report for 2021-22 and thanked everyone for their support. Cllr Marsh outlined the work undertaken by the Town Council and the Chair of each Committee outlined the work undertaken by each Committee.

A copy of the report is attached.

5. QUESTIONS

Questions were invited from the electors present.

The Royal Oak Hotel

- An elector advised that he attended the annual town meeting on Zoom last year and had raised concerns regarding the poor condition of the Royal Oak Hotel. He advised that he had contacted the building inspector at Herefordshire Council and considered that a repair notice should have been imposed on the building. The elector wanted to know whether any progress had been made over the past 12 months with regard to the preservation of the building.

Cllr Bartlett advised that the Town Council are working with Herefordshire Council to look at ways of improving the condition of the building. The building inspector has served repair notices on the building but they have not been enforced. The last time the building was inspected was in July 2021 when some maintenance work to the outside of the building, to make it safer, was carried out. Cllr Bartlett said that she believed that the owners of the hotel have submitted an expression of interest to the HSHAZ scheme although further details are not known. Cllr Bartlett advised that repair notices should be enforced by Herefordshire Council if improvements to the building are not made this year.

High Street Heritage Action Zone

- An elector queried why there was a lack of information regarding the progress of the HSHAZ scheme on the Town Council website. The elector has carried out research on listed buildings in the town, that are in poor condition, and advised that a number of owners are not local and may not be aware of funding available through the HSHAZ scheme.

The clerk explained that delays to the project have occurred due to the impact of COVID-19, although the timelines for the project have not changed. Town Centre Wifi is now in place and the Web-based heritage app will be launched shortly. Consultation with the public, businesses and other organisations is planned to commence in April/ May 2022.

There is a long list of expressions of interest for funding through the scheme but owners of listed buildings can still apply. Assistance is available to complete the forms if required through a consultant from Berrys.

Maintenance of roads

- An elector asked who owned the roads in Leominster and expressed concern at the way roads had been repaired.

The clerk advised that Herefordshire Council were responsible for the maintenance of the roads. Recent repairs have been temporary as the HSHAZ scheme will consider work required to roads in the town centre and works on the “Reimagination of Corn Square” is due to commence in January 2023.

Cllr Marsh advised that further funds are available through the Extraordinary Market Towns Maintenance Fund and the funding will be prioritised on town centre roads not already covered by the HSHAZ. scheme.

Cllr Stone advised that potholes should be reported on the Balfour Beatty website.

- An elector raised concerns regarding the positioning of bollards on Buckfield Road, that vehicles were regularly travelling at 40mph and that the road was used as a rat run.

Cllr Marsh advised that the issues should be raised with Herefordshire Council as they are responsible for the road and that speeding issues should be reported to the police.

Cllr Norman advised that the funding from national to local government had been drastically reduced in recent years and therefore the budget for road maintenance has been cut. Electors should consider lobbying their local Member of Parliament regarding any issues.

New housing at Barons Cross

- An elector expressed concern regarding the impact that the proposed development of 300+ houses at Barons Cross will have on local services such as doctors surgeries.

The elector was advised that planning permission has been granted for a new health centre, including a pharmacy, in the town.

Tree maintenance works

- An elector considered that recent maintenance works carried out on trees in Etnam Street and West Street was too severe.

Cllr Bartlett advised that the tree maintenance work was carried out through funding from the Welcome Back Fund. The Tree Officer was consulted and the advice given was to pollard the trees as this will extend their life. The trees had not been pollarded for 15 years.

Cllr Bartlett advised that the Town Council will be arranging to stump grind empty tree pits in the town and then plant replacement trees in the pits.

National map for defibrillators

- An elector requested that the Town Council ensures that defibrillators in the town are listed on the national database.

The clerk advised that the defibrillator in Corn Square is listed on the national database and will investigate recording other defibrillators in the town.

6. SUMMARY AND CLOSURE

Cllr Rumsey, Mayor of Leominster, thanked the Town Council staff and volunteers for their work over the past 3 years. Cllr Rumsey thanked the clerk for her excellent organisation and for taking on numerous tasks, and the Projects and Grants Officer for her work in obtaining grants for various projects.

There being no other business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:25pm.

MAYOR OF LEOMINSTER:

DATE:

DRAFT

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING REPORT 2021-22

INTRODUCTION:

This past year has been another very different year as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. I became Mayor in May 2021 with a delayed Mayor Making Ceremony in September 2021 following the relaxation of social distancing measures. Public meetings were no longer held remotely after 6th May 2021 and we, as a council, returned to relative normality.

One of the most interesting parts of last year was attending the National Memorial Arboretum to collect the Silver Armed Forces Employer Recognition Award on behalf of the town council. It was a very memorable day.

The Mayoral Charities this past year have been Marches Family Network and Services for Independent Living. Various events have been organised over the year to raise money for these very worthwhile charities and they will each be presented with a cheque at the end of my term as Mayor.

I have summarised the achievements of the town council by committee.

BULLET POINTS:

Full Council 2021-22

- Continued to support the operation of CCTV provision in the Town Centre;
- Continued to facilitate weekly Team Leominster operational meetings and monthly tactical meetings remotely;
- To deliver monthly surgeries at the Barons Cross Community Room with Team Leominster partners;
- Gained the Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme;
- Completed a business plan for the asset transfer of The Old Priory from Herefordshire Council to Leominster Town Council so that it can continue to support the local community with services such as ECHO, Leominster Meeting Centre, Leominster Food Bank and the Youth Hostel;
- Gained General Power of Competence. The town council met the criteria for eligibility with 2/3rds elected councillors and a CiLCA-qualified clerk;
- Delivered a range of projects through the £20,000 Welcome Back Fund to include a free child's, Through the Wardrobe Event at Christmas, Greening the Bus Station with new planters and Leominster Independents Day to support local independent businesses in the town;
- Gained and planned the delivery by June 2022 a number of projects under the governments Great Places to Visit Fund of £90,000;
- Continued to be part of Team Leominster, the High Street Heritage Action Zone project and the Cultural Consortium programme;
- Provided the Christmas Lights and Christmas Tree in the town centre;
- Continued to administrate two local charities.

Environment & Services Committee 2021-22

- Continued to undertake footpath maintenance under the P3 scheme;
- Recruited two new Volunteer Footpath Officers;
- Submitted a grant application for £16,813 to enable drainage works in the rural areas of the parish that have been affected by flooding;
- Continued support for Leominster in Bloom including watering, spraying and planter sponsorship;
- Continued to deliver the Business Cardboard Waste Recycling Scheme in the town centre in partnership with Binit;
- Continued to supply and maintain 117 allotments at the Ginhall Lane site;
- Trained and supported a Grounds & Environmental Trainee through the government Kickstart Scheme;
- Gained a grant of £1904 through the Herefordshire Community Foundations Get Active Green Space Fund to provide several running tracks and events in Leominster on the town council owned green spaces;
- Liaised with the Environment Agency on flood prevention works and planting/reseeding of the new bund at the rear of The Mallards;
- Produced a tree statement through the Environmental Working Group to protect the future of Leominster's trees;
- Doubled the size of the wildflower area on Ginhall Green and planted other identified verges with wildflower plugs;
- Held a number of community planting events for the Queens Green Canopy in association with the Environment Agency and Leominster in Bloom;
- Carried out a number of energy saving measures to the town council building including new wool loft insulation and the fitting of thermal blinds;
- Adopted the telephone box on Worcester Road to prevent removal and the committee are currently investigating the installation of a defibrillator;
- Continued maintenance of The Priory churchyard;
- Overseeing the repair and reinstallation of the damaged Priory gate;
- Continued the town verge maintenance programme.

Finance & General Purposes Committee 2021-22

- Carried out a budget consultation with residents at both the Friday Market, Farmers Market and via an online survey;
- Overseen staff recruitment and a staffing review via the Personnel Sub-Committee;
- Budget development by a working group with the final increase being set at 3.9% for 2022-23.
- Provided Grant support for the following organisations:

Community Centre	£8000.00
LARC	£7000.00
Leominster Meeting Centre	£1000.00
Royal British Legion	£400.00
Everybody Dance Project	£920.00

Kid Kitchen Collective CIC	£1000.00
Priory Holiday Club	£530.00
Jenny Pipes Morris	£700.00
Walkers Are Welcome	£229.60
Three Choirs Festival	£1000.00

Communications & Events Committee 2021-22

- Continued to oversee the Friday Market and the monthly Farmers Markets;
- Continued to manage the Tourist Information Centre and its activities;
- Continued to support Leominster News with our monthly pages;
- Worked in partnership with Herefordshire Council and Historic England to deliver the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme including historic building grants, a web app, free town Wifi and the beginning of the public realm consultation;
- Supported the Leominster Festival events;
- Purchased a new Tourist Information Centre website;
- Developed the Secret Garden at 11 Corn Square as an event space;
- Took over the organisation and delivery of the Victorian Street Market;
- Continued support for the Cultural Consortium Programme of events with partners to run alongside the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project;
- Managed the free “Through the Wardrobe” children’s event;
- Held weekly and farmer’s markets;
- Delivery of Leominster Independents Day, a business promotion event to support small businesses in the town as a project with funding from the Welcome Back Fund.

Planning & Highways Committee 2021-22

- Submitted comments on planning applications to Herefordshire Council;
- Submitted comments on licencing applications;
- Submitted comments on tree works to trees in the Conservation area or with Tree Preservation Orders attached, to Herefordshire Council;
- Submitted comments on proposed Public Rights of Way Diversion Orders;
- Continued to report defects to Balfour Beatty and lobby Herefordshire Council regarding highway and parking matters;
- Compiled a s106 wish list;
- Been involved in the consultations of local Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO’s);
- Submitted comments on the following consultations:
 - Minerals & Waste Local Plan Consultation
 - Local Housing Strategy Consultation
 - The Herefordshire Air Quality Monitoring Station Project
 - The Herefordshire Local Plan Spatial Options Consultation
 - The Extraordinary Market Towns Maintenance Fund
 - Moving Traffic Offences Consultation

Over the next year we will see lots of exciting projects such as:

- Completion of the High Street Heritage Action Zone projects such as free town Wifi, the web app and footfall counters for the town;
- Consultation and design of the Re-imagination of Corn Square and the wider public realm;
- Grants to restore historic buildings within the Conservation Area;
- A cultural programme of events to run alongside the Heritage Action Zone;
- The continuation of the Grange Masterplan project with refurbishment of the play area as a priority;
- The refurbishment of The Grange and Central Car Park Public Toilets;
- The delivery of a number of projects as part of the Great Places to Visit funding totalling £90,000;
- The completed transfer and renovation of the Old Priory building as a community building.

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