

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 26th September 2022 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Marsh (Mayor), Williams (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Hanna (19.35), Herschy (19.05), Jacquet, Melia, Murdoch, Norman, Smith-Winnard, Sutcliffe (19.02) and Thomas.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk, Democratic Services Officer.

ALSO PRESENT: Ward Cllr Stone, a police representative and two members of the public (one member co-opted onto the Council).

HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Prior to the meeting a one minute silence was observed to pay respects to HM Queen Elizabeth II following her death on 8th September 2022.

55/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council for Cllr Marshall (Medical) and Cllr Rosser (Illness). Apologies were also received from Cllr Hanna who had advised that she would be late. Cllr Hanna joined the meeting at 19.35.

56/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made:

- Cllr Norman – Confidential Items – Footpath book

57/22 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensation had been received.

58/22 CO-OPTION

Two prospective candidates applied to be co-opted on to Leominster Town Council following the resignation of 2 previous Councillors. No election had been called.

One candidate was present at the meeting and gave a brief personal statement during the meeting. Following the completion of the personal statement, Council **RESOLVED** to formally co-opt Sarah Melia on to Leominster Town Council to represent the North Ward.

(Proposed: Cllr Williams, Seconded: Cllr Norman Unanimous).

59/22 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Two members of the public were present (one member co-opted onto the Council). The following matters were raised:

- A member of the public advised that the Leominster Area Polish Society has discovered the burials of 6 more Polish soldiers in unmarked graves at Leominster Cemetery, bringing the total number of unmarked graves to 18.

A Polish Remembrance Service will be held at Leominster Cemetery on Sunday 6th November 2022.

- A member of the public advised that an illustrated talk on The Ivington Princesses is being held, at Leominster Library, on Friday 18th November 2022 at 7pm.

60/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 25th July 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record. (Proposed: Cllr Murdoch, Seconded: Cllr Bartlett Unanimous).

61/22 POLICE REPRESENTATIVE

Council noted the following update from a representative from the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT):

- Operating under the Community Charter, the SNT are facing 3 main issues in Leominster:
 - Drugs – during the past 6-10 months the SNT has executed 4 warrants resulting in 1 negative outcome, 2 potential ongoing prosecutions and a County Lines case where the individual is in prison awaiting sentencing.
A number of people have also been arrested, in the town, leading to a number of prosecutions;
 - Anti-social behaviour – a number of youths, in the town, have received Community Orders. The SNT set up a problem-solving plan for a group of 12 youths, ensuring that the team was in continual engagement with them. This resulted in an end to the anti-social behaviour. The SNT has also given talks in schools.
The SNT organised a Police Super Bowl at the Grove which was attended by 60 children that had been nominated. The event included breakfast, 2 games of bowls and lunch supplied by Morrisons. The event was very successful and the SNT hopes to arrange a further event in the future;
 - Traffic issues – the SNT are continuing to monitor traffic issues on Barons Cross Road and the old Hereford Road. The SNT held a meeting with residents at Mill Street to discuss issues. They also monitored the traffic along Mill Street and established that there was minimal speeding.
- A member of the SNT obtained funding to hold a series of self-defence classes for local women;
- A police van was used to hold week long surgeries in Corn Square and outside B&Q;
- The SNT has been promoting property marking;
- The SNT worked with Trading Standards to investigate illegal tobacco trading in the town;
- Rural Crimes Operations are in place to check that farms and machinery are safe;
- 2 protests, regarding social care in Herefordshire have taken place, without any issues arising;

- The SNT has tried to increase the number of foot patrols in the town, but this has been difficult due to the low number of staff and the need to cover a number of villages;
- There have been a number of burglaries in the town centre, including the Old Priory. The SNT believe that the burglaries are drug related;
- Communities can keep up-to-date with the latest news from the PCC by signing up to Neighbourhood Matters – a new community messaging service;
- The Action Fraud website provides details of the latest scams;
- Issues should be reported by dialling 101 or online through the West Mercia Police website. Emergencies should be reported by dialling 999.

62/22 BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT - PUBLIC APOLOGY

Council noted that the matter had been deferred from the Full Council meeting on Monday 25th July 2022. Cllr Preece has since resigned and the matter is closed.

63/22 CLERK'S REPORT

Council noted the following Clerk's Report:

- **Ivington Harvest Festival** – the Ivington Harvest Festival will be held at Ivington Church on Sunday 9th October 2022. The clerk is on annual leave and will be unable to attend. Councillors should email the clerk to confirm whether they will be attending. Councillors will need to arrive by 10.30am for robing and the service will commence at 11am. The Sergeant at Arms and 2 Mace Bearers will also be attending.

64/22 FINANCES

- (a) **Accounts paid and invoices for payment** – It was **RESOLVED** to ratify the payment of invoices for July, August and September 2022, as outlined on the payment statements provided.
(Proposed: Cllr Jacquet; Seconded: Cllr Murdoch
Unanimous).
- (b) **Income and Expenditure Report Month 5** – Council **RESOLVED** to accept the Income and Expenditure Report for Month 5 and accompanying notes.
(Proposed: Cllr Bartlett; Seconded: Cllr Smith-Winnard
Unanimous).

It was suggested that the Council considers installing solar panels on the Central Car Park toilets when they are rebuilt.

- (c) **External Audit** – Council noted the result of the External Audit for 2021/22. It was also noted that the External Auditor noted that the Smaller Authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2022/23, for the exercise of public rights, since the notice regarding the period was not published before the start of the period. However, proof that it was published on 29th July 2022, on the Town Council website, was sent to the External Auditor and they have

authorised a note to be published with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit stating that the date of publishing on the form was an error and that it was published on 29th July 2022.

- (d) **Precept** – Council noted that the Town Council has received the second part of the precept, in the amount of £299058.50.
- (e) **Movement of funds** – Council **RESOLVED** to move two thirds of the current account balance into the linked instant access savings account.
(Proposed: Cllr Hanna, Seconded: Cllr Jacquet Unanimous).

Council noted that the Finance Assistant will undertake a weekly check to ensure that there is sufficient money in the current account.

The clerk will investigate opening 2 new bank accounts in order that Councillors can approve payments from home and to spread the risk of money held in each account.

- (f) **SAAA Central External Auditor** – Council **RESOLVED** not to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements.
(Proposed: Cllr Thomas, Seconded: Cllr Murdoch Unanimous).

65/22 ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

Council considered the update report and following discussion they

RESOLVED:

- To note the report;
- To congratulate Leominster in Bloom for its gold award and a volunteer's regional award;
- To note that a sign on Bridge Street has been removed and this has been reported to the Civic Society;
- To note that a meeting has been held with the Herefordshire Council Tree Officer to clarify which types of annual maintenance can be carried out within the conservation area. The ginkgo trees have been numbered and necessary maintenance works have been undertaken;
- To note that tree planting, in the empty tree pits around the town, commenced on 26th September 2022. Cllr Williams will attend the tree planting in Broad Street at 10am on Friday 30th September 2022. An article promoting the trees will be published in Leominster News.

(Proposed: Cllr Smith-Winnard, Seconded: Cllr Williams Unanimous).

66/22 COMMUNICATION & EVENTS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

Council considered the update report and following discussion they

RESOLVED:

- To note the report;

- To note that the clerk will circulate details regarding the Polish Remembrance Service;
- To note that scaffolding will be erected outside the Rankin Club by Thursday 29th September 2022 and will remain for 5 to 6 months. The Friday Market and Farmers Market will continue to operate whilst the scaffolding is in place. (Proposed: Cllr Thomas, Seconded: Cllr Herschy Unanimous).

67/22 OLD PRIORY ASSET TRANSFER

Council noted the following verbal update from the clerk regarding the Old Priory:

- The transfer of the Old Priory, from Herefordshire Council to Leominster Town Council, was completed on 12th September 2022;
- Temporary parking and ownership signage has been erected. The signage includes contact details;
- There have been issues regarding drainage, a gas leak and an abandoned car;
- A meeting has been arranged with tenants on 30th September 2022 to discuss how to deal with unauthorised parking;
- Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent has been obtained to put up a noticeboard and a bench has been provided for the Food Bank;
- The clerk met the solicitor to review leases. A new tenant will be leasing a storage unit w.e.f. 30th September 2022;
- The clerk is awaiting approval of a grant for a feasibility survey.

68/22 OLD PRIORY WORKING GROUP

Council **RESOLVED** that the Councillors that formed the Old Priory Working Group are reinstated to oversee future procurements.

(Proposed: Cllr Hanna, Seconded: Cllr Norman Unanimous).

69/22 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Council **RESOLVED** to sign up to the civility and respect pledge.

(Proposed: Cllr Bartlett, Seconded: Cllr Thomas Unanimous).

70/22 BUDGET WORKING GROUP – CONSULTATION UPDATE

Council noted that the first public engagement session took place at the Friday Market on 23rd September 2022. A further session is scheduled to take place at the Farmers Market on 8th October 2022.

To date 10 paper copies of the survey have been submitted and online responses are being recorded through Survey Monkey. Staff and volunteers have been issuing surveys to visitors to the TIC.

Council noted the suggestion to produce a questionnaire for non-residents for future consultations.

71/22 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Council **RESOLVED** to co-opt Cllr Melia to sit on the Environment & Services Committee.

(Proposed: Cllr Bartlett; Seconded: Cllr Williams
Unanimous).

72/22 HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Thomas to be the Health & Safety Councillor representative.

(Proposed: Cllr Norman; Seconded: Cllr Davies
Unanimous).

73/22 HALC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Hanna to sit on the HALC Executive Committee.

(Proposed: Cllr Sutcliffe; Seconded: Cllr Norman
Unanimous).

74/22 TREE OFFICER

Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Davies to be a tree officer.

(Proposed: Cllr Herschy; Seconded: Cllr Hanna
Unanimous).

75/22 MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Council received the following appointments attended by the Mayor:

- Thursday 28th July – Opening a new shop – Motif – in Drapers Lane;
- Saturday 6th August – Party in the Park on the Grange;
- Sunday 7th August to Thursday 11th August – Lugg adventure for Mayoral charity including social at the Lion Ballroom and canoe launch;
- Wednesday 31st August – Barons Cross Let's dance event at the Community Room;
- Saturday 3rd September – Leominster Food Fayre with entertainers in Corn Square;
- Sunday 11th September – Proclamation of King Charles III at Hereford Cathedral, followed by Leominster Town Council's proclamation event in Corn Square;
- Monday 12th September – Visiting local nursing homes to distribute condolence books for HM Queen Elizabeth II;
- Tuesday 13th September – Dying to drive event, run by the emergency services and ELY trust, for year 11s at Leominster Police Station;
- Friday 16th September – receiving ECHO's weaving of the Leominster knot (to be used in the Civic Service), West Street;
- Sunday 18th September – Service of Remembrance for HM Queen Elizabeth II at the Priory;
- Saturday 24th September – Westfield School fete.

Council received the following appointments attended by the Deputy Mayor:

- Tuesday 23rd August – Melody Dance Company Summer camp at Earl Mortimer College;

- Saturday 3rd September – Stourport on Severn Carnival.

76/22 REPORTS

The following reports were received:

Leominster North Ward Report from Ward Cllr Stone

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

The following additional points were raised:

- Cllr Stone advised that he would be happy to sign the civility and respect pledge;
- Cllr Stone welcomed the new bins, benches and picnic benches in the town. He advised that the Parish Council are trying to obtain a bus shelter at Brimfield using s106 funding;
- Cllr Stone congratulated Leominster in Bloom on its Gold award;
- Cllr Stone advised that he was looking forward to attending the Polish Remembrance Service;
- Cllr Stone provided a verbal update regarding the Ofsted report following its inspection of Herefordshire Children's Services:
Ofsted has amended its rating from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Inadequate'. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has confirmed that immediate action was taken on all the issues raised by Ofsted. A three-year plan has been introduced, all cases are being reviewed and revisited and the caseloads for social workers has been halved. There have been problems regarding the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly foster carers. Herefordshire Children's Services are working very hard to make improvements as quickly as possible although sustained improvement will take time.

Leominster South Ward Report from Ward Cllr Marsh

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

The following additional point was raised:

- Cllr Marsh advised that Leominster Food Bank require volunteers to help with collecting food from supermarkets and to help with deliveries. Anyone who can spare time once a fortnight should contact the Food Bank.

Leominster West Ward Report from Ward Cllr Norman

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

The following additional point was raised:

- Cllr Norman said that the recruitment of more permanent staff at Children's Services will help to improve the situation. Recruitment has been a major issue and existing staff require support to ensure that improvements are made.

A number of Councillors raised concerns regarding the levels of phosphates in the River Wye and Lugg and how the new 'Phosphate Credits' system will work. Cllr Marsh will find out more details about the scheme.

Leominster East Ward Report from Ward Cllr Bartlett

The council noted the report contained in the agenda.

The following additional points were raised:

- Cllr Bartlett advised that as 'No Wrong Door' has closed, HVOSS are looking at being an enabler of youth services around the county. HVOSS has published a youth report which has identified a number of gaps including lack of funding and transport. It is hoped that there will be more youth provision around the county;
- Talk Parish will be holding a s106 event on 12th October 2022. An event regarding 'reducing carbon together' is due to be rescheduled for end October 2022.

Cllr Stone and Cllr Norman left the meeting at 20.57 hours.

77/22 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.

Cllr Herschy left the meeting at 21.05 hours and returned at 21.07 hours.

(a) Grant Applications – Following consideration of the grant applications Council **RESOLVED**:

- To allocate a grant of £300, from the General Grant budget, to the Royal British Legion, for expenses incurred in respect of the Remembrance Parade. Council requested that receipts are submitted to support the expenditure; (Proposed: Cllr Bartlett; Seconded: Cllr Williams
For: 11
Cllr Norman had left the meeting at this stage and Cllr Herschy was not present when the vote was taken).
- To request further information from Leominster Community Choir regarding their grant application. Council noted that there was a discrepancy on the application form and required confirmation of the number of weeks rent that the grant was to cover. (Proposed: Cllr Bartlett; Seconded: Cllr Hanna
For: 12
Cllr Norman had left the meeting at this stage).

(b) Shop Front Grant Scheme – Council noted that 19 grants had been awarded and **RESOLVED** to extend the Great Places to Visit Shop Front Grant Scheme, from the General Grant budget, to 2 further shops that had expressed an interest.

(Proposed: Cllr Thomas; Seconded: Cllr Smith-Winnard
For: 12

Cllr Norman had left the meeting at this stage).

MINUTES

(c) **Footpath Book** – Council requested further information prior to considering commissioning a footpath book as part of a pre-order from the TIC. Council also advised that they would want the walks to be available on the Town Council website.

(d) **Cost of Living Crisis** – Council considered measures to assist the cost of living crisis. Council noted the following:

- The budget consultation includes a question to find out what support the public need. The results will be shared with Talk Community;
- Other local councils are offering signposting to relevant services;
- Talk Community are rolling out warm spaces in libraries and some Talk Community hubs;
- The clerk is investigating the possibility of using the Council Chamber as a warm space for events such as film screenings;
- The clerk will collate a list of warm spaces available in Leominster for publication on the Town Council website and Leominster News;
- The clerk will check on the availability of any grants.

Cllr Smith-Winnard left the meeting at 21.36 hours and returned at 21.37 hours.

(e) **Confidential Staffing Report** – Council noted the confidential staffing report and **RESOLVED** to action the recommendations, of the report, in respect of:

- A change to the role and job description of 2 members of staff;
(Proposed: Cllr Murdoch; Seconded: Cllr Smith-Winnard
For: 12
Cllr Norman had left the meeting at this stage);

Cllr Melia left the meeting at 21.44 hours.

- Changes to the hours of two members of staff;
(Proposed: Cllr Herschy; Seconded: Cllr Jacquet
For: 11
Cllr Norman and Cllr Melia had left the meeting at this stage);
- Investigating the employment of casual market staff;
(Proposed: Cllr Herschy; Seconded: Cllr Jacquet
For: 11
Cllr Norman and Cllr Melia had left the meeting at this stage).

78/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Council noted that the next Town Council Meeting would be held on Monday 28th November 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 21.49 hours.

MAYOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

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