



## LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

### FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

To: All Members:  
Councillors Marsh (Mayor), Williams (Deputy Mayor), Bartlett, Davies, Hanna, Herschy, Jacquet, Marshall, Melia, Murdoch, Norman, Rosser, Smith-Winnard, Sutcliffe and Thomas (1 vacancy).

### NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Leominster Town Council to be held on **Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022** commencing at **19:00 hours** in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

***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. CO-OPTION**  
To consider co-opting one Councillor to fill a vacancy in the North Ward.
- 5. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)**  
To receive questions and statements from members of the public.

- 6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- 7. CLERK'S REPORT**  
To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.
- 8. FINANCES**

  - (a) Accounts paid and invoices for payment** - To receive an accounts paid and invoices for payment statement. Please see supporting documents.
  - (b) Income and Expenditure Report Month 7** - To consider the Income and Expenditure Report for Month 7 and accompanying notes. Please see supporting documents.
  - (c) Draft Budget 2023/24** – To review the draft budget proposals for 2023/24. Please see supporting documents.
- 9. BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT**  
To note the Budget Consultation report. Please see supporting documents.
- 10. WELCOME BACK FUND**  
To note that the funding applied for, through the Welcome Back Fund, has been received.
- 11. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**  
To consider appointing additional members to sit on the following Committees:

  - Planning & Highways Committee (3 vacancies)
  - Finance & General Purposes Committee (2 vacancies)
  - Communications & Events Committee (1 vacancy)
- 12. CCTV REVENUE FUNDING 2023/24**  
To consider the request, from Herefordshire Council, for the contribution towards CCTV in Leominster for 2023/24. Please see supporting documents.
- 13. CIVIC AWARDS** – To consider the procedure for determining the recipients of civic awards.
- 14. MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS**  
To receive an update on Mayoral appointments attended by the Mayor.
- 15. ARMED FORCES COVENANT GOLD AWARD**  
To review the criteria for applying for the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award.

**16. REPORTS**

To receive update reports from:

- Representatives on outside bodies (verbal)
- Herefordshire Council Ward Members (text and verbal)

**17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and Full Council 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) **Staffing Report Update** – To consider employing freelance support for Town Council projects from January – March 2023 and to receive a verbal update from the clerk.
- (b) **2022-23 National Salary Award** – To note that the LGA have come to an agreement on the new pay scales for 2022-23 to be implemented from 1 April 2022.
- (c) **HSHAZ Communications & Projects Update** – To receive a verbal update from the clerk.

**18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Town Council meeting will be held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

## LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Leominster Town Council Meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

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

#### **60/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leominster Town Council meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> 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;

## MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)

- 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Cllr Williams will attend the tree planting in Broad Street at 10am on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> 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;

**MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)**

- 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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. 30<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022. A further session is scheduled to take place at the Farmers Market on 8<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> July – Opening a new shop – Motif – in Drapers Lane;
- Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August – Party in the Park on the Grange;
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August – Lugg adventure for Mayoral charity including social at the Lion Ballroom and canoe launch;
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August – Barons Cross Let's dance event at the Community Room;
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September – Leominster Food Fayre with entertainers in Corn Square;
- Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September – Proclamation of King Charles III at Hereford Cathedral, followed by Leominster Town Council's proclamation event in Corn Square;
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September – Visiting local nursing homes to distribute condolence books for HM Queen Elizabeth II;
- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September – Dying to drive event, run by the emergency services and ELY trust, for year 11s at Leominster Police Station;
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September – receiving ECHO's weaving of the Leominster knot (to be used in the Civic Service), West Street;
- Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September – Service of Remembrance for HM Queen Elizabeth II at the Priory;
- Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September – Westfield School fete.

Council received the following appointments attended by the Deputy Mayor:

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

- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

**(d) 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).

- (e) 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).

- (f) **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.
- (g) **Cost of Living Crisis** – Council considered measures to assist the cost of living crisis. Council noted the following:
- a. The budget consultation includes a question to find out what support the public need. The results will be shared with Talk Community;
  - b. Other local councils are offering signposting to relevant services;
  - c. Talk Community are rolling out warm spaces in libraries and some Talk Community hubs;
  - d. The clerk is investigating the possibility of using the Council Chamber as a warm space for events such as film screenings;
  - e. The clerk will collate a list of warm spaces available in Leominster for publication on the Town Council website and Leominster News;
  - f. 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.

- (h) **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 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Chamber, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

**MINUTES (AGENDA Item 6)**

There being no other business the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.49 hours.

**MAYOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ward Councillor report Leominster North & Rural November 2022**

Flood Alleviation Scheme

It is already a year since the work to raise the embankment along the River Lugg was completed by the Environment Agency and opened by Bill Wiggin MP and Councillor Trish Marsh in torrential rain! Many trees were planted too. The result is that 380 properties in The Mallards and Ridgemoor areas are better protected against flooding. Unfortunately the second scheme to repair the flood wall along the Kenwater in Osborne Place has been delayed for ecological reasons. Work will now commence in May 2023. Temporary flood defences have been installed for this winter and I attended a site visit with Trish Marsh in October. The EA assured us that water levels will be closely monitored and residents have been notified of the delayed work in house to house visits. There is inevitable inconvenience to residents with all this activity but in the long run local properties will be better protected. I hope the flood defence work will be carried out as quickly as possible, but in the meantime my thanks to the Environment Agency for their significant investment to alleviate flooding in this part of Leominster. They are keeping us informed.

Meanwhile the drainage work carried out by Balfour Beatty at Stanley Bank Kimbolton on the C1055 has been tested for the first time during the recent spells of heavy rain. The new drains are taking the water off the road into a pipe in the adjoining field. So far so good! I will be keeping an eye on this low-lying junction in the next few months and the main point is to stop the new drains there becoming silted up. The C1055 was closed to traffic for 6 weeks in 2020 due to flooding there so the new drainage scheme is very welcome.

Balfour Beatty update

Our ward is currently without a locality steward due to illness and we wish Lee Fishwick a speedy recovery. It is important that residents continue to report blocked drains (especially at this time of year), potholes and fly tipping. Defects can be reported on the Council website or by phoning Balfour Beatty on 01432 261 800. A post code or map reference does help locate the problem as does a photo. Please don't wait for someone else to report a defect and contact me if nothing happens! Grit bins should now be full and the gritters will be out when the temperature drops. Let's hope for a kind winter.

Some good news. The General Lengthsman Grant for Parish Councils is being reinstated. This will be of great assistance to Kimbolton, Brimfield and other villages which operate the lengthsman scheme using their annual precept. The grant will be £250,000 per year for 5 years spread across the county. It can be spent on C and U roads and will go some way to allowing parish councils to do some of the minor work BBLP won't get to due to the historic funding situation. The parish lengthsman has to be registered with Balfour Beatty. On resurfacing, we look forward to progress in the town centre in the New Year following resurfacing in other market towns. I was delighted to see the footways around The Grange resurfaced courtesy of the Town Council.

Herefordshire Census results 2021

Some headline figures from the 2021 Census.

1. The total population is 187,000 residents living in 82,000 households, a slower growth rate than expected.
2. The average age of Herefordshire residents is 48 (40 nationally). Hereford South West is the youngest area and Cradley and Colwall the oldest (65 or over).
3. 9 out of 10 residents were born in the UK. Almost half those born elsewhere were born in Eastern European countries. So Herefordshire is overwhelmingly British born.
4. One third of households is made up of persons living alone (half aged over 65).
5. 11% of households had at least one member who was a military veteran. Above the national average. 9,600 residents have served in the UK Armed Forces.

All these figures are interesting but not surprising and highlight the challenges ahead with social care provision in the county and attracting businesses and higher paid jobs.

Warm Spaces

The Council is working with libraries and other community partners to create a number of warm spaces across the county this winter as people face the rising cost of living and higher energy bills. These are safe spaces to go to warm up, see a friendly face and get support. 15 at least had been registered recently but many more are likely to come on stream. The success of this and similar initiatives very much relies on volunteers. Villages like Brimfield, Orleton and Kimbolton have regular coffee mornings and all these gatherings, much missed in the lockdowns, help to offset isolation as well as providing a warm space. You can find out more on Talk Community's webpage.

Remembrance Sunday

I was pleased to attend the Service of Remembrance at The Priory and the wreath laying at the cenotaph. It was good to see the local organisations represented and so many children taking part as well as the many residents who were present in wheelchairs. The balmy weather and sunshine must have increased the numbers too. Brimfield's service in the afternoon was also well attended. The annual Remembrance service at the Polish war graves at Leominster Cemetery reminded us again of the support given by the Poles in the Second World War when Britain stood alone. There are now 18 Polish graves all well looked after and many thanks to Joe Cocker for his tireless research and to the new chair of the Leominster Area Polish Society. The war in Ukraine reminds us how precarious life still is in Europe 77 years on and how we cannot take peace for granted. We owe so much to our armed forces past and present. Lest We Forget.

And Finally..... I hope we will all support our local shops, cafes, pubs and small businesses in the busy weeks before Christmas, especially with no Covid restrictions this year. They helped us during the 3 lockdowns. I am looking forward to the Christmas trees, lights and carol services to brighten the darkest

**AGENDA Item 16**

time of the year. Many residents will be struggling financially this year but I hope the energy support measures and the food vouchers for pupils eligible for free school meals will all help. Many thanks to the Leominster Food Bank and to those who donate in and out of the town. Thanks too to my fellow ward councillors and the Town Council, Julie and the staff for all they have done this year to enhance the community in Leominster and my best wishes to everyone for a happy, safe and peaceful Christmas.

John Stone Leominster North and Rural 01584 711 227



## **November Ward Report from Councillor Felicity Norman**

After a very mild Autumn, it does now seem that winter is with us after the first frost, and lots of rain. After such a dry summer, the rain is welcomed by gardeners and farmers, although the ground is still rock hard a few inches down, and much of the water is pouring off the surfaces and into our rivers. Ploughed fields without a cover crop will lose much of their precious topsoil, and add to the pollution already damaging the Lugg, the Wye and other local rivers. Ecologically aware farmers are taking steps to avoid this, but many others still have a long way to go.

**The Local Budget** - Like other Local Authorities, Herefordshire Council faces a financial crisis, with cuts to funding, and inflation, putting careful budgeting and our ability to provide essential services at risk. The budget gap is estimated to be at least £22 million and Leader Councillor David Hitchiner has written to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, outlining the dilemma we and other local authorities face, and calling for a far more realistic settlement that recognises the challenges in providing essential care for adults and children, while also meeting our other responsibilities. Herefordshire is a low earning county and it is clear that many of our residents will face severe hardship over the coming months, with rising costs in food and energy. As a rural area, the costs of travel and transportation add to these pressures and make the delivery of essential services even more difficult.

We need a realistic funding package, and greater certainty for the future, to enable us to provide the services needed by all, and greater support for those hit hardest by the current crisis.

There will be a Budget consultation in Leominster in the Friday market on 2 December from 10 – 2, and also online.

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations>

***We all need to add our voices to the concerns expressed by the Leader, through our MPs, and direct to the prime minister.*** Leader's letter in full.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/news/article/1453/financial-crisis-in-local-government>

**Hereford Transport Hub** - Herefordshire Council is now consulting on the proposed new transport hub, centred on the railway station in Hereford. This has implications for us all, as increasingly the cost of driving is becoming prohibitive and many of us are considering giving up our cars and using the bus or train. At present the services are pretty limited, with little connectivity between the different modes of travel, and very poor conditions for those walking or cycling into town from the station. Do make your views known, as the more we can improve the conditions for bus and train users, the more chance there is of increasing the users of these services, and thus taking pressure off the roads, and reducing travel costs.

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations>