



# LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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29 November 2023

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL** to be held on Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Jacobean Room, Ledbury Town Council, Church Lane, Ledbury for the purpose of transacting the business shown in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Angela Price PSLCC, AICCM, MIWFM  
Town Clerk

## FILMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public are permitted to film or record meetings to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner. Whilst those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording, or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record or broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending under the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018

## A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interests**

To receive any declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

*Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Ledbury Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.*

*(Note: Members seeking advice on this item are asked to contact the Monitoring officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting)*

**3. Nolan Principles**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

**4. To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 23 November 2023 (Pages 882-895)**

**5. To consider questions/comments from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 3(e) and 3(f)**

*“Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting”*

**FINANCE**

**6. Council Insurance renewal quotes (Pages 896-901)**

**7. Recommendations from Other Committees (To Follow)**

Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee – 6 December 2023

**GOVERNANCE**

**8. Review of Internal Processes and Systems (Pages 902-929)**

**9. Terms of Reference (Pages 930-937)**

- i. Environment & Leisure
- ii. Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee
- iii. Planning, Economy & Tourism Committee
- iv. Resources Committee

**GENERAL**

**10. St Katherine’s Square (Pages 938-945)**

**11. Smart Water (Page 946-959)**

**12. Correspondence from Ledbury Hunt (Pages 960-971)**

**13. Date of next meeting**

To note that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for 25 January 2024

**14. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting**

**15. Future provision of burial grounds (Pages 972-977)**

**16. Mortuary Lease (Pages 978-991)**

**Distribution: - Full agenda reports to all Councillors (13)  
Plus file copy  
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Local Press (2)  
Library (1)  
Police (1)**



**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

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**PRESENT:** Councillors Chowns, Furlonger, Harvey, Howells, l'Anson (Town Mayor), McAll, Newsham, Morris and Sinclair

**ALSO PRESENT:** Angela Price -Town Clerk  
Charlotte Barltrop – Minute Taker  
Julia Lawrence – Deputy Town Clerk  
2 Members of the public

**C138. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for were received from Councillors Bradford, Eakin and Hughes.

**C139. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Harvey and Morris declared a pecuniary interest in Item 24, Bye Street Toilets.

**C140. NOLAN PRINCIPLES**

The Mayor read out the Nolan Principles.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Nolan Principles be received and noted.**

**C141. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER AND THE RECONVENED MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2023**

The Clerk provided updates in respect of the following minute numbers:

**C101. Landscaping by the Masters House**

- a. **That the inclusion of the railings are for Health & Safety purposes due to the future use of the space as an event space and therefore persons unfamiliar with the ledge and drop. The planning has taken several years to develop and pass.**
- b. **The installation of electricity was hoped to be part of the Phase 1 installation; however, there was a shortfall in funding which meant that the ducting and pits could be installed with the hope for the supply to be fitted in Phase 2 should funding be available to complete.**

**C104. Road Signage Review – That Herefordshire Council officers had advised that this has been agreed and will be funded from S106 monies.**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 28 September 2023 and the reconvened meeting held on 11 October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

## **C142. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

To receive reports from Ledbury Ward Members:

- i. Councillor Harvey
- ii. Councillor Peberdy
- iii. Councillor Simmons

Councillor Harvey spoke to remind members that the Herefordshire Council Budget Consultation Roadshow will be present at the Ledbury Market House on Saturday 25 November between 9am and 2pm. She requested that this be advertised by LTC via Social Media channels.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Ward Reports be received and noted.**

## **C143. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor made the following statement:

“It was great to see so many people attend my Civic Service. From our invited guest list of 54 there were 43 acceptances including a Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the High Sherriff, 6 Mayors and Deputy Mayors, the Chairman and Leader of Herefordshire Council and the Commander of HMS Ledbury. However, 4 Ledbury Town Councillors did not respond to the invitation and 4 others declined. Thanks to the presence of mind of the Deputy Mayor, who suggested that the congregation remain standing for the declaration etc. any embarrassment over there being so few Councillors in attendance was averted and I would point out that in the last meeting I had expressed my disappointment at the lack of Councillor support at public events.

My consort and I attended the Lord Lieutenants curry lunch at the Shiva Barracks in Hereford with the Hereford and Worcester ACK, and it was lovely to come across Liam, John Masefield's head boy, who read out the Nolan Principles at my Civic Service as one of the cadets “on parade”. Once we had discovered who he was under the camouflage paint!

At the last meeting I mentioned our hedgehog House competition and the winning houses have now been installed in a corner of the cemetery and we look forward to spotting activity on the web cam (Autumn Watch).

The Commander and crew of HMS Ledbury joined us for a very successful litter pick around the town.

We attended the High Sherriff's Celebration Service in the Cathedral. I opened the Mop Fair, which was great fun except for the dodginess of my ride on the dodgems!

Our Remembrance Services, alongside our fully restored War Memorial were well attended but sadly 4 Ledbury Councillors again did not support/respond to the invitation.

Last night was the Food Bank AGM, a few statistics:

Ledbury Food Bank is supporting 150 different households every month, more than 110 households seeking support already this year and 300 households have been supported this year. In 2001 £21,000 was spent on food, for year ending 31 October 2023 more than £74,000 has been spent. However, the food bank has maintained its' financial position.

I am looking forward to switching on the Christmas lights, many thanks to the Council Staff for organising and also to my Christmas Coffee morning, which is to take place on Friday, 1 December."

The Mayor also raised that Colwall Parish Council had contacted Ledbury Town Council to ask for a representative to attend a meeting with Sir Bill Wiggin, MP, regarding GWR to discuss the issues with their service. Councillor Sinclair stated that he would be happy to volunteer to attend this meeting which would take place in the New Year.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Mayor's Communication be received and noted.**
- 2. That Councillor Sinclair represent Ledbury Town Council at a meeting with Colwall Parish Council, GWR and Sir Bill Wiggin, MP.**

**C144. TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF STANDING ORDERS 3(E) AND 3(F)**

**No questions were asked.**

**C145. TO RECEIVE MOTIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9**

**No motions were received.**

**C146. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2023 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN**

Councillor Sinclair stated that he had a big problem with the minutes and what is written under staff protection matters because I have been named and it states that there is a need for .....to be in place and it was agreed that Councillor Hughes would be the point of contact for me until such time that the ongoing issues have been resolved. He asked how many emails had been exchanged, when these emails had been sent and when the last email had been sent. He went on to say that he had been named a number of times in the paperwork and that it looked like an attempt to discredit him by those who may have something to hide. He said that he realised that there is no paper but that he would urge those present to think very carefully before voting. He asked “are you really in receipt of the facts or have you simply been told that I am the bad guy who needs to be stopped? Because I assure you that there are people in this room tonight that have something to hide and it’s not me.”

The Clerk stated that on the minutes of Resources the Full Council Committee could choose refer that minute back to the Resources Committee for further consideration and review or they can consider if they would like to do something here and now.

Councillor Harvey questioned as to whether the Committee was dealing with the accuracy of the minutes or the content of the minutes.

The Clerk stated that as the item is within the minutes Councillor Sinclair was within his rights to question the item.

Councillor Howells asked whether the minutes were factually accurate as to what was said.

The Clerk affirmed that they were.

Councillor Howells stated that the minutes should be accepted as an accurate record.

The Clerk raised that there was advice later in the agenda which the Members may need to consider in respect of the minute in question and that the minute could be changed subject to new information being provided.

Councillor Harvey stated that there are two separate points which are being raised. First, are the minutes an accurate record of what happened in the meeting and secondly, are there matters pursuant to the decisions made there which need to be given further consideration, which is a separate matter. She asked if the accuracy of the minutes could be dealt with and then, at the right point in the agenda deal with the second matter.



Councillor Morris proposed that the minutes are an accurate record of the meeting. Councillor Chowns seconded the motion.

Councillor Sinclair stated that he had been accused on public record of doing something and I am being sanctioned for this. Where is the evidence? Was evidence presented to this Committee for them to make that decision or was it just hearsay?

Councillor Chowns stated that there was no physical evidence.

Councillor Sinclair stated that he had been found guilty with no evidence. He went on to state that this was unacceptable.

The Chair stated that there is nothing in the minutes which states that in any way and asked Councillor Sinclair where he was reading the information which he was speaking to.

Councillor Sinclair read an extract from the Resources minutes which stated: "Staff Protection Measures Members were requested to give consideration to possible staff protection measures being put in place to protect staff from unwelcome, persistent communications from both Councillors and members of the public. It was noted that there was a need for something to be in place currently and it was agreed that Councillor Hughes would be the point of contact for [Councillor Sinclair] until such time ongoing issues could be resolved." He asked Members to clarify what he was being sanctioned for in this section of the minutes.

Councillor Chowns stated that he had understood that the persistent and regular contact with the Clerk and other members of staff were causing distress.

Councillor Sinclair asked for evidence of this and stated that he had been found guilty on hearsay.

The Clerk disagreed with Councillor Chowns understanding of the reasoning as the report had come through other meetings whereby some members had requested that Resources give consideration to whether there was a need for this, it was purely about whether there was an overall need for this. There were no direct accusations made in the report which was presented.

Councillor Sinclair requested to know why he was named as someone who had to go through Councillor Hughes.

Councillor McAll stated that this is simply a case of the Council moving to look after a member of staff and that there are no sanctions in the minutes as this was not discussed.

The Chair stated that this is also a separate paragraph stating that Councillors, plural, and members of the public and that does not refer to [Councillor Sinclair].

Councillor Howells made a short statement about the actions of Councillor Sinclair and how they have reflected upon Ledbury Town Council in the past. He proposed that the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting which had taken place and that the other matter be referred back to Resources to consider.

Councillor Harvey requested that the discussion be held over until the item which is pertinent later on in the minutes before making the decision to refer the minute back to the Resources Committee. (Item 17)

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held on 5 October 2023 be received and noted.**

**C147. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING, ECONOMY & TOURISM COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 OCTOBER AND 9 NOVEMBER 2023 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning, Economy and Tourism Committee held on 12 October and 9 November 2023 be received and noted.**

**C148. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2023 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 2 November 2023 be received and noted.**

**C149. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Policy and General Purposes Committee held on 16 November 2023 be received and noted.**
- 2. That it be noted that an extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee to consider business not completed at the meeting on 16 November had been scheduled for**

**Wednesday, 6 December and that a Budget Monitoring/Grants meeting will be held on Monday, 4 December.**

**C150. TO RECEIVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT NOVEMBER 2023 (FINAL)**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the invoices for Payment for November be approved for payment in the sum of £6,038.40 plus VAT.**

**C151. NOTIFICATION OF 2022/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2023**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the notification of the 2022/23 Local Government Services pay agreement 2023 be received and noted.**

**C152. COUNCIL INSURANCE**

**a. RENEWAL QUOTES**

The Clerk advised Members that she was still waiting on one more quote in respect of the buildings and contents insurance. Members agreed that this item should be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of Full Council scheduled for 7 December 2023 when it is hoped the remaining quote will be received.

**b. CYBER SECURITY INSURANCE**

Members discussed whether the inclusion of Cyber Security Insurance and Terrorism Insurance was prudent in the current digital age. It was suggested that as well as the Cyber Security Insurance, the Clerk investigate as to whether third party companies which the Council works with hold the relevant Insurances to cover should a breach occur.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That that the Clerk pursue Cyber Security Insurance quotes.**
- 2. That the Clerk pursue Terrorism Insurance quotes.**
- 3. That the Insurance quotes, including Terrorism and Cyber quotes be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of Full Council, scheduled for Thursday, 7 December 2023.**

**C153. CEMETERY CCTV QUOTES**

Members were requested to approve a contractor in respect of the supply and installation of a new CCTV system at Ledbury Cemetery.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That company 1 be engaged to undertake the installation of a new CCTV system at the Cemetery.**
- 2. That the £2,000 of the cost of the new CCTV system at the cemetery be funded from the Earmarked Reserves, with the remaining £550 being taken from the general reserve.**
- 3. That the remaining £8,000 in the CCTV earmarked reserve be made available as match funding for the new CCTV at the Recreation Ground.**
- 4. That Officers be instructed to appoint the successful company to proceed with the works to supply and install a new CCTV system at Ledbury Cemetery.**

**C154. INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT**

Members were requested to give consideration to the Internal Auditors interim report, following his recent visit to the council offices, noting the observations provided and the suggested responses and actions provided by the Clerk, where appropriate, and to make resolutions on those observations where required.

Councillor Harvey noted that a number of the observations within the report related to processes not being done in the office in accordance with Finance Regulations, reminding Members that previously it had been agreed that staff would read the relevant policies and procedures and sign them annually to confirm that they had refreshed their reading of these documents. She noted the comments provided by the Clerk and asked why this had not been happening?

Item B1 – The Clerk advised that whilst these two invoices had been presented to Council for approval, there had been an oversight in respect of signing of by officers. She advised that all staff are aware that all invoices received either in the mail or via email, must be given to the Clerk in the first instance, to ensure that these are checked and approved as correct and the goods or services having been received.

Item B2 - The Clerk stated that arrangements had been made for the repayment of this amount.

Item B3 - The process will be reviewed to ensure that the powers under which grants are awarded is formally recorded in the minutes. It was also noted that the budget line “unspecified grants” should be amended to read “Section 137 grants”, due to the Council not having General Power of Competence as a result of less than two thirds of the council being “elected”.

Item B4- This item relates to B1 above.

Item C1 - Councillor Harvey suggested that this item be referred back to the Resources Committee, but that advice needs to be sought regarding the Council's obligations as an employer in terms of protecting its staff.

Councillor Harvey noted that she had previously had distancing conditions applied to her whilst there was a dispute outstanding as to whether she had breached the Code of Conduct and that was argued as being necessary for the protection of staff as an employer. She noted that she had been able to operate as a member of Council with those measures in place and that they fell away once the issues had been resolved. She suggested that advice was requested from the HR providers regarding this issue.

Councillor l'Anson stated that the advice which had been received from the Council's HR advisors has not been sufficient as the company has no experience of working with local government organisations. She stated that the Council is suffering without the support of a NALC membership and advised that Ledbury Town Council join.

Members requested information as to whom had advised to join NALC, it was suggested that NALC advice in the past had not been sufficient. The Clerk informed Members that both the Internal Auditor and the Monitoring Officer had advised the joining of NALC to assist with advice and support.

Members agreed that the Clerk should contact HALC, the Herefordshire branch of NALC, and Hoople to present their businesses to Ledbury Town Council in order that Councillors may be able to understand what they can offer Ledbury Town Council.

Councillor Sinclair asked what other body the council could go to if they were not a member of NALC. The Clerk advised that for councils this is the only body available. The Clerk advised that HALC have access to legal experts in respect of local government matters.

Councillor Sinclair suggested that consideration should be given to rejoining NALC but that due to issues experienced in the past, conditions be implemented to ensure that guarantees are given by them when providing advice, and that everything is done in writing. Councillor Howells seconded this as a proposal with the addition of NALC being invited to meet with Councillors to discuss what they can offer the Council should they decide to rejoin the association.

Councillor Harvey asked if Hoople could be explored in respect of providing HR Services to Ledbury Town Council. The Clerk reminded Members that they are currently in a 7-year contract with their current provider and that there are still 2-years remaining on the contract.

Item D2 - That this item be dealt with via an Extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and General Purposes Committee to be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 6 December.

Item I1. That the process has been amended to avoid further issues.

Item M1. Councillor Harvey enquired as to what determines the dates. The Clerk informed her that the law determines the dates. It was then discussed that, should the report not be available in time to be published, a statement be made to that effect and be posted with an expected date, thus ensuring that this is not included in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Members noted the observations within the report and provided responses as detailed above.**
- 2. That the Clerk arrange for HALC and Hoople to present to Ledbury Town Council and advise on what they can offer Ledbury Town Council in respect of HR and governance advice.**
- 3. That the Clerk review the current HR provider contract to identify any “get out clause”.**
- 4. That the advice received from Citation be provided to the Resources Committee.**
- 5. That the Clerk revisit the relevant processes in order to avoid the issues detailed within the report.**
- 6. That an Extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and General Purposes Committee will be held on 6 December at 7.00pm and that item D2 will be included on the agenda.**

**C155. DISQUALIFICATION OF COUNCILLOR DUE TO NON-ATTENDANCE**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Clerk write to Councillor Briggs to advise him that due to his non-attendance he is therefore disqualified as a Councillor of Ledbury Town Council and that all information relating to Councillor Briggs be removed from the Council’s website and his Council email be closed.**
- 2. That the Clerk notify Herefordshire Council of the vacancy due to Councillor Briggs being disqualified.**

**C156. CO-OPTION**

**RESOLVED:**

**That a further round of co-option take place between in early 2024 and that the Clerk advise Herefordshire Council of the intent to undertake the process and obtain the relevant forms.**

**C157. INTERIM REVIEW OF PORTFOLIO'S**

**RESOLVED:**

**That Members agreed that the current portfolios held by Councillors should remain in place.**

**C158. LEDBURY WAR MEMORIAL UPDATE ON COMPLETION OF WORKS**

Members were advised that the final cost of the works to the War Memorial was considerably less than the original quote from Ian Bishop.

Concerns were raised that the vases situated on the War Memorial are being used as litter bins as they are being left empty for long periods. It was suggested that the Clerk approach the RBL to discuss, whether tasteful fake flowers or fresh flowers could be placed in the vases at the relevant points in the year to reflect the various pertinent dates.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Members received and noted the information provided within by O'Brien Price and Caroe and Partners.**
- 2. That Members agreed to approve the progress payment to Ian Bishop in the sum of £12,435.24 plus VAT, noting that this is the final payment.**
- 3. Members agreed to approve the re-filling of any voided joints in the paving in the spring and before Remembrance Day 2024, at a cost of £500 on each occasion, totalling £1,000, to be included in the 2024/25 budget.**
- 4. Members received the practical completion certificate.**
- 5. Members instructed the Clerk to send a message of thanks to both Ian Bishop and Caroe and Partners for their work on the War Memorial.**
- 6. That the Clerk discuss the usage of the flowerpots on the War Memorial with Ledbury RBL to ensure that they do not remain empty for long periods of time.**

**C159. OUTSIDE BODIES**

No reports were received.

#### **C160. OFFICER REPORTS**

- i. Town Clerk
- ii. Deputy Clerk
- iii. Community Development Officer

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Officer reports were received and noted and that officers be thanked for the information provided within.

Councillor Sinclair left the meeting at 9.05pm.

#### **C161. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(x)**

#### **RESOLVED:**

To suspend Standing Order 3(x) for a period of fifteen minutes to enable the remaining business of the agenda to be completed.

#### **C162. BYE STREET TOILETS**

Councillors Morris and Harvey left the room whilst this item was discussed.

Councillor Sinclair raised concerns that the suggested projected spend within the report may be too low and that the figure may be closer to £30,000 p/a.

After further discussion Members agreed that Option 4, the Hybrid option, would be the best way forward but that this should be reviewed after a period of 6 months, with a “get out clause” added to any agreement in case the costs spiral beyond those projected.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Option 4, a hybrid model, be agreed, with a “get out clause” at six months being added to any agreement.
2. That the Clerk investigate possible sponsorship for the toilets.

#### **C163. REQUEST FOR VIEWS FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES IN RESPECT OF TALK COMMUNITIES**

Members discussed whether it would be a good idea to organise a meeting to include the other Market Towns and discuss the feeling with regard to Talk Community.

#### **RESOLVED:**



1. That Members provide feedback regarding Talk Communities to the Clerk via email.
2. That other Herefordshire Market Towns be asked to provide their comments in respect of their experiences of Talk Communities.

**C164. SMART WATER**

**RESOLVED:**

That this item be deferred to the Extraordinary meeting of Full Council scheduled for 7 December at 7.30pm.

**C165. REQUEST TO SUPPORT “ZERO HOUR”**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Members agreed to move a motion to support the Climate and Ecology Bill.
2. That the Clerk be instructed to prepare a press release informing that the Council support the Climate and Ecology Bill and writes to Sir Bill Wiggins MP requesting that he publicly support the Climate and Ecology Bill.

**C166. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the next meeting will be an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council scheduled for 7 December 2023.

**C166.FUTURE PROVISION OF BURIAL GROUNDS**

**RESOLVED:**

That this item be deferred to the Extraordinary meeting of full Council which is to be held on 7 December at 7.30pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.17pm.

Signed .....Dated .....  
(Town Mayor)



Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

## **COUNCIL INSURANCE RENEWAL QUOTES**

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information in respect of quotes received for Council Insurance for both buildings and contents, cyber security, and Terrorism.

### **Detailed Information**

The attached provides quotes received from three insurance broker companies in respect of insurance for Ledbury Town Council. The quotes include all council buildings (Council offices, Market House, Cemetery Chapel, and Mortuary), contents of all buildings, Cyber Security and Terrorism insurance.

Members will recall that at their meeting on 23 November 2023 it was agreed that costs for Cyber and Terrorism insurance should be included for consideration going forward.

The quotes attached provide a 1-year renewal and a 3-year contract; having a 3-year contract will help with budget setting and therefore officers would recommend that Members give this option serious consideration, especially in the current financial climate.

Copies of all paperwork received in respect of each quote is held in the Clerks office should any Member wish to review it ahead of the meeting.

### **Recommendation**

Members are requested to give consideration to the attached information and agree which quote to accept in relation to the Council insurance and that they agree either a 1 or 3-year contract accordingly.



## INSURANCE QUOTES 2024/25

**Broker no. 1**

**Commercial Combined (excluding Buildings & Business Interruption)**

**Option 1 - 1-Year Replacement**

Annual Premium	£2,846.00
Insurance Premium Tax	£341.52
Policy Administration Fee	£45.00
<b>Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£3,232.52</b>

Contents/Terrorism	3,232.52
Buildings	15,316.32
Cyber	345.25
<b>Year - Total</b>	<b><u>£18,894.09</u></b>

**Option 2 - 3-Year Long Agreement**

Year 1 Annual Premium	£2,741.71
Insurance Premium Tax	£329.01
Policy Administration Fee	£45.00
<b>Year-1 Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£3,187.60</b>

**Buildings**

Annual Premium	£13,675.29
Insurance Premium Tax	£1,641.03
<b>Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£15,316.32</b>

**Optional Stand Alone Policies**

Cyber Insurance                      Awaiting

<b>Limit</b>	<b>£250K/£1k</b>
Premium	£308
Insurance Premium Tax	£36.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£345.25</b>

Terrorism Insurance                      To add to above premium £40.41 plus IPT p/a

**Broker No. 2**

**Commercial Combined (includes buildings)**

**Option 1 - 1-Year Replacement**

Annual Premium	£14,862.94	Buildings and contents combined
Insurance Premium Tax	£1,783.56	
<b>Overall Amount</b>	<b>£16,646.50</b>	

Buildings/Contents	16,646.50
Cyber	487.20
Terrorism	483.63
<b>Year - Total</b>	<b><u>£17,617.33</u></b>

**Option 2 - 3-Year Long Agreement**

Year 1 Annual Premium	TBC
Insurance Premium Tax	TBC
<b>Overall Amount</b>	<b>TBC</b>

Buildings insurance includes impact cover for the Market House

**Optional Stand Alone Policies**

**Cyber Insurance**

<b>Limit</b>	<b>£250K/£1K</b>
Premium	£435
Insurance Premium Tax	£52.20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£487.20</b>

**Terrorism Insurance**                      £483.63 p/a

**Broker No. 3**

**Commercial Combined (excluding Buildings & Business Interruption)**

**Option 1 - 1-Year Replacement**

Year 1 Annual Premium	£3,484.06
Insurance Premium Tax	£418.09
Policy Administration Fee	£50.00
<b>Year-1 Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£3,952.15</b>

**Option 2 - 3-Year Long Agreement**

Year 1 Annual Premium	£3,484.06
Insurance Premium Tax	£418.09
Policy Administration Fee	£50.00
<b>Year-1 Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£3,952.15</b>

**1-Year Buildings**

Annual Premium	£13,675.29
Insurance Premium Tax	£1,641.03
<b>Overall Amount Due</b>	<b>£15,316.32</b>

**Optional Stand Alone Policies**

Cyber Insurance	807.12
Terrorism Insurance	424.04

Buildings	15,316.32
Contents	3,952.15
Cyber	807.12
Terrorism	424.04
<b>Year - Total</b>	<b><u>£20,499.63</u></b>





<b>EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL</b>	<b>7 DECEMBER 2023</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 8</b>
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

## **INTERNAL AUDITORS REVIEW OF INTERNAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS**

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with guidance as to how to proceed in respect of the Internal Auditors review of Council’s internal processes and systems, which was commissioned by Council at a meeting held on 3 August 2023.

### **Detailed Information**

At the meeting of Council held on 3 August 2023 Members agreed to request the Internal Auditor, IAC Auditing, to undertake a standalone review of the Council’s policies and procedures in respect of the following:

- Corporate Governance – (standing orders/financial regulations/committee terms of reference/minutes)
- Procurement
- Human res
- Corporate communications (use of website/social media)
- Burials

Following the review the report was submitted to a meeting of Council held on 11 October 2023, at which it would appear no proposal was made or formally voted on in respect of actions to be taken.

However, having reviewed the minutes and recording of that meeting it would appear that there was discussion around the report being shared with the Committee Structure Task & Finish Group, as well as the Clerk being asked to provide a supporting report giving details.

Attached is a list of comments from the Auditor with officer responses from the Clerk and suggested actions and timescales for these actions. Below are further responses to the list of recommendations provided within the Internal Auditors report for consideration, with officer suggestions in red.

1. The Council, as a body, must clearly and comprehensively define the Terms of Reference of its committees.

**It is anticipated that this will be an outcome of the review of the Council’s Committee Structure which is currently in progress – anticipated completion date May 2024.**

2. The Agenda of committee meetings should be set so that each committee only considers matters for which it has clear authority under its Terms of Reference.

Following the review of the Terms of Reference via the Committee Structure Task & Finish Group it is anticipated that it will be clearer as to which committee is responsible for what – anticipated completion date May 2024.

3. Items outside of a committee's Terms of Reference should not be considered by a Committee unless a specific delegation of that item has been agreed by prior resolution of Full Council.

Again, this should be clearer following the completion of the Committee Structure Review.

4. The Council should specifically consider how the process for the tendering of works and services should operate and the extent to which this should be formally delegated to Committees.

Local Government organisations are required to either advertise tenders via an on-line portal "Contract Finder" or via the press. Standing Order 18(d) provides a process for procurement via the tender process, however following the review of the Committee Structure this should be reviewed to ensure it is in line with any changes to Terms of Reference etc.

5. The Council should consider how it intends to obtain ongoing third-party advice, training, and guidance on the corporate governance of the Council.

The Clerk has been asked to contact NALC/HALC and Hoople to meet with Council to advise what they can offer Ledbury Town Council.

The Auditor has stated that the Council do not maintain a formal record of councillor training – this is inaccurate there is a record of training of councillors. To date current councillors have been provided with on-line links to undertake Code of Conduct training, however not all Councillors have provided confirmation that they have completed this training, and other general councillor training was provided on 11 September 2023, but not all councillors attended.

6. As part of the review of third-party advice the Council should consider how it might interact with the National Association of Local Councils and how this might impact the Councils relationship with the County Association.

Refer to no. 5 above.

7. The Council should consider whether it wishes to participate in the Local Council Award Scheme or whether it wishes to establish some other formal quality criteria for the delivery of its services.

This is an aspiration of Ledbury Town Council, however there are a number of improvements that need to be in place ahead of applying for this.

To achieve a foundation award a council must demonstrate that it has the documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. It must also have policies for training councillors and officers and is building a foundation for improvement and development. It is unlikely that this will be achieved without the support of NALC/HALC and therefore Members are urged to give serious consideration to rejoining NALC who will be able to offer support, policies, training and much more to help Ledbury Town Council achieve Local Council Award standards. – anticipated timeline should be considered before the end of this Administration (May 2027).

8. The Council should consider how it may identify and implement best practice in corporate governance and process, for example by consulting other similar sized councils or councils who have experienced similar challenges.

Webinars provided by NALC can offer insights into the experience of other councils in relation to different projects. Councillors need to be more aware of these sessions and attend on-line webinars.

Also, SLCC Conferences often include presentations from councils who have undertaken projects that Ledbury Town Council are planning to do or that would be of interest. It is essential that officers provide feedback from conferences on subjects that may relate to planned business of this council.

### **Recommendation**

1. That Members give consideration to the information provided within this report and attached information and make further comments and recommendations where appropriate.
2. That Members agree a timeline for implementation of the elements relating to this report.



Ledbury Town Council

## Review of Internal Processes and Systems



IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd

27th September 2023

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# Background

Ledbury Town Council nominally has 18 Councillors, split equally between 3 wards, Ledbury North, South and West. In May 2023 there were no elections held for the town council due to a shortage of candidates. 10 Council positions were filled without contest leaving a balance of 8 vacancies. As at the date of this report the Council has 13 Councillors, including 3 co-opted. The Council has historically struggled to attract sufficient candidates for elections and also needed to co-opt Councillors after the 2019 elections.

The Council has suffered adverse publicity in recent years, with national news media coverage of a court judgement in 2018 and more recent coverage related to renovation works on the War Memorial.

In addition the Council has over recent years experienced significant turnover of staff. The Town Clerk is the only member of the Towns administrative team with experience of working in the local council sector with most staff having work experience from the private sector.

During the course of this review the Clerk advised that the Council is keen to address the challenges it faces and wishes to obtain guidance on how it may do this and this report is intended to contribute toward this.

# Scope of this report

The Council in 2021 commissioned a review of Corporate Governance and has requested an additional review of its Internal Process as a means of measuring how the Councils current practices meet local government standards or best practice.

The agreed areas subject to this review were;

- Corporate Governance (standing orders / financial regulations / committee terms of reference / minutes)
- Procurement
- Human Resources / Personnel
- Corporate Communication (use of website/social media)
- Burials



# Key Conclusions

The Council faces a number of challenges in seeking to improve its internal process and performance. These include;

- Unclear and incomplete Terms of Reference of sub-committees
- The limited availability of external support and guidance
- The difficulty in identifying and implementing 'best practice'
- The amount of training undertaken by Councillors and staff
- Difficulty in attracting potential Councillors
- The limited engagement of the Council with the local electorate

# Specific Recommendations

1. The Council, as a body, must clearly and comprehensively define the Terms of Reference of its Committees.
2. The Agenda of committee meetings should be set so that each committee only considers matters for which it has clear authority under its Terms of Reference.
3. Items outside of a committee's Terms of Reference should not be considered by a Committee unless a specific delegation of that item has been agreed by prior resolution of Full Council.
4. The Council should specifically consider how the process for the tendering of works and services should operate and the extent to which this should be formally delegated to Committees.
5. The Council should consider how it intends to obtain ongoing third party advice, training and guidance on the corporate governance of the Council.
6. As part of the review of third party advice the Council should consider how it might interact with the National Association of Local Councils and how this might impact the Councils relationship with the County Association.
7. The Council should consider whether it wishes to participate in the Local Council Award scheme or whether it wishes to establish some other formal quality criteria for the delivery of its services.
8. The Council should consider how it may identify and implement best practice in corporate governance and process, for example by consulting with other similar sized councils or councils who have experienced similar challenges.
9. The Council should consider how it will interact with the local community through the use of social media. As part of this review the Council should specifically consider how it interacts with other significant local social media groups.

10. The Council should review how it publishes and distributes its newsletter and put in place measures to quantify the readership and reach of the newsletter.
11. The Council should review and update it's website
12. The Council should review the arrangements it has in place for external HR support and for support of the website. As part of this review the Councils should consider whether it is receiving the required services set out in these agreements.
13. The Council should put in place a formal training plan for Councillors
14. The Council should put in place a formal training plan for staff.
15. Where possible guidance issued to staff should be made available in written form.

# Corporate Governance (standing orders / financial regulations / committee terms of reference / minutes).

## Powers

Local councils, including Town and Parish Councils, operate under a particular legal regime and may only undertake actions for which they have a legal 'power'. This contrasts with how an individual may act, as an individual may legally undertake any act unless it is proscribed by law.

It is possible for a Town Council to take the same legal powers as an individual, through the adoption of the General Power of Competence, but to do this a Council must have two thirds of its Council elected, a condition that Ledbury Town Council cannot currently satisfy.

The Town Council does have a qualified Clerk, which is another of the criteria for adoption of the General Power.

Without the ability to act under the General Power of Competence the actions of the Council are more constrained, as actions that would be permitted under the GPC may not be permitted under the more limited powers that the Council operates under. It is important therefore that Councillors are fully aware of the limited Powers under which the Councils operate when exercising their functions.

## Training of Councillors

The Council does not have a formal training programme in place for Councillors or a formal induction programme.

It is understood that Councillors have undergone online Code of Conduct training with the Monitoring Officer, and that Councillors have been provided with copies of the Good Councillors Guide published by NALC. The Clerk is working with Councillors to develop their knowledge and understanding of the local council sector and the role of Councillors.

The Council does not maintain a formal log or record of the training Councillors have undertaken.

For historical reasons the Council is not a member of the County Association and therefore cannot be a member of the National Association of Local Council or part of Local Council Award Scheme.

The Council does not have direct access to the training and support provided by the County Association and NALC. It is understood that the Council may be able to access some training resources provided by NALC on payment of a fee, but the general advisory support provided by NALC to member Councils is not available.

Some of the Town Councillors have other relevant experience, either due to their previous role as a town Councillors, as a Councillors with other authorities, such as the County Council. It is not clear the extent of this knowledge within the Council and how it may be relevant to the particular circumstances of the Town Council. Experience gained at larger authorities may not always directly apply to local councils who operate under a different legal framework.

In the absence of access to the resources of the County Association and NALC the Council has made some limited use of third party consultants but this is not a permanent ongoing support arrangement. The Council has not retained an external advisor to provide ongoing guidance on Best Practice.

## Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Council adopted the current NALC versions of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in May 2023, these were provided as hard copy during the visit. The copies on the website, although the same, being those approved in 2022.

The adoption of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were included as agenda items on the Annual Meeting of Full Council on 11th May 2023.

This regular Council review and approval of its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and the use of the current versions of the Model documents is a notable improvement on the previous practices at the Council.

## Terms of reference of committees

The Council has in place Terms of Reference for the four sub-committees of the Council

- Resources Committee
- Finance Policy and General Purposes Committee
- Planning Economy and Tourism
- Environment and Leisure

It is understood that the Council is reviewing the Committee Structures and that this is being done internally without the use of External Advisers. Given the absence of potential guidance on this from either the County Association or NALC, and the limited training provided to Councillors, it is unclear what model or 'best practice' the Council will refer to when conducting this review.

It was noted that the Council has not formally published Committee Terms of Reference on its website.

Copies of Committee Terms of Reference were provided to the auditor during this review, but it was not possible to formally verify that these are the versions currently in place as they were not dated and did not record a Minute Reference under which they were adopted by Council.

## Approval of Committee Terms of Reference

The Council's Standing Order<sup>4</sup> d) states

*The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:*

*i. shall determine their terms of reference;*

.....

*vi. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee*

Council Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 11th May 2023 record Council approval of the new committee structure and lists four Committees

- a) Environment and Leisure Committee
- b) Finance, Policy and General Purposes Committee
- c) Planning, Economy and Tourism Committee
- d) Resources Committee

The Resources Committee is also referred to, in the same Minutes, as 'Resources and Personnel Committee'.

It was noted that the meeting of 11th May 2023, at which the existence of sub-committees, and the membership of sub-committees and their Chairs, were determined, does not record Council formal review and approval of the Committee Terms of References as set out in Standing Order 4 d) i)

The Terms of Reference of the Finance, Policy and General Purposes Committee was recommended to Council by the Committee at its Meeting held on 1st June 2023 (Min Ref F6). The Agenda of Full Council 29th June included, as item 8, '*To receive and note the draft Minutes of a meeting held on 1st June 2023*'. Minutes C35 record that these were 'received and noted'. It is not clear from these Minutes that the Full Council specifically determined the Terms of Reference of the F, P and GP Committee as required by its Standing Orders.

It was noted that none of Committee Terms of Reference provided during the audit review include provision for any Committee to determine their own Terms of Reference, either under delegated powers or by way of recommendation to Full Council.

It was not possible, from a review of Minutes, to establish how the Council has complied with its Standing Order 4 d) i) in respect of approval of the Committee Terms of Reference for the other Committees of the Council approved at the meeting of 11th May 2023.

The Council may recall the lack of clear Terms of Reference for Committees was an issue specifically raised in the Governance report of 2021.

## Compliance with Committee Terms of Reference.

It was noted that the Finance Policy and General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference do not refer to

- reports of the Internal or External Auditor, or
- the review of the Annual Accounting Statements.
- GDPR
- The review of Risk

However it was noted that all these items were included on Agendas for F,P and GP Committee meetings of June and July 2023, subsequent to the Council meeting of 11th May.

It does not appear, from a review of the documents available, that agendas of sub-committee meetings are consistent with terms of reference for Committees as established by Full Council. The consideration of items, by sub-committee, which are not within the Committees Terms of Reference, was specifically raised as an issue in the Governance audit of 2021.

## Procurement

The Council has set out the basic framework in respect of procurement in two key documents, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Council has adopted the NALC model Financial Regulations and model Standing Orders.

## Tenders

Standing Orders set out, in Standing Order 18 - Financial controls and procurement the arrangements that apply in respect of the tender process of the Council.

Standing Order 18 vi states that *'tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or by a committee of sub-committee with delegated responsibility'*

It was noted from a review of the Committee Terms of Reference that they do not refer to the consideration of Tenders, either by delegated powers or recommendations to Full Council. It is understood that, in practice, consideration of Tenders is a matter that is



commonly referred to Committees. This practice therefore does not comply therefore with either the Councils Standing Orders or Committee Terms of Reference.

Financial Regulations cover procurement within two regulations, Regulation 10 - Orders for work, goods and services and Regulation 11 Contracts.

## Orders for good and services

From a discussion with council office staff it was clear that staff were aware of the need to raise purchase orders and for these to be authorised either by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. Staff were, however, not aware of the specific requirements as set out in Financial Regulations 10.3 or 11.1 h).

Staff knowledge of the purchasing process did appear to be well understood and it was clear that consistent verbal instructions had been provided to staff. It does not appear, however, that members of staff have been provided with any written guidance or instruction as to how they should operate the procurement process.

Council staff also advised that they had been told that, where possible, they should seek to procure locally, but it is not clear that this is a formal policy of the Council. It is unclear how this requirement is consistent with the Councils Financial Regulation 10.3 which states 'All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.' It is unclear whether, for example, staff are to seek to procure locally even if they may obtain better prices elsewhere.

# Human Resources / Personnel

## External Support

The Council uses two external providers in respect of employment services, Citation HR under a long term contract for general HR provision, and Worknest (formally Ellis Whittam) for Health and Safety. It is unclear why there are two providers in use (the Contract for Citation was not reviewed as part of this audit).

Citation HR website makes numerous references to 'businesses' and 'SMEs' but does not make reference to the provision of services to the public sector. Worknest are established providers of HR services to the local government, used by many local councils and this is clearly referenced on their website.

It is unclear, based on the nature of the providers, how the Council would obtain specific local council HR advice if it were to need this as part of an organisational review.

## Staff Training

There is currently no formal training programme in place for staff. The Council has supported training financially and this does not appear to be a specific budget constraint on the provision for training. Staff confirmed during the audit that they had received elements of training however there did not appear to be specific identification of training needs for individual members of staff.

It was noted during the audit the administration staff in the office were relatively new in post and did not have prior experience of working in a local council, either a town or a parish. It should be expected that staff new to the Local Council sector will have specific training requirements in respect of the new roles in the public sector.

# Corporate Communication (use of website/social media)

## Responsibility

The responsibility for Corporate Communication at the Town Council results clearly with the Town Clerk. It is understood that individual Councillors may interact with media, such as the Press and social media, on a personal basis, however, all matters relating to the Council as a body are handled by the Clerk, if necessary by consultation with the Mayor.

## Staff resources and training

Staff at the Council were fully aware of the need to gain the Clerks approval for any items published on the website or on social media and there does not seem to be any operational challenges in obtaining this. Staff may, on occasion, be asked to draft documents, such as press releases, but these are always to be subject to review by the Clerk.

The Council is fortunate in having a member of staff who is very familiar with websites and digital marketing, as lack of technical familiarity can often be a barrier for Councils when managing their website. The time required for websites and social media is understood to be a relatively small proportion of officer time, with the member of staff responsible also having responsibility in respect of other tasks such as Minutes and weddings.

In addition holding an NVQ in digital marketing the staff member responsible for the website has also had training on GDPR (the General Data Protection Regulations). Staff generally were not aware however of the Model Publication Scheme issued by the Information Commissioner's Office or the Transparency Code. It is understood that the Town Clerk is aware of these requirements.

## Website

There were a number of adverse comments raised during review about the Councils website. It was commonly felt that the website does not perform well, examples were cited of pages not appearing, or returning an error when requested, and of search results not working properly.

These comments were made both in respect to the end user experience and in terms of the administration of the 'back end' of the website, in particular the need to upload documents to the website and duplicate files which are held on the councils drives and folders.

Anecdotally the auditor has experienced similar issues, particular when researching Council Minutes. Other issues identified during the review include the difficulty in adding website URL links of specific documents (such as a Minute) to emails, which make it more difficult and time consuming for email recipients to navigate to the relevant document.

It was noted, from discussions with staff, that they were not aware of the extent of the services to be provided by the website providers under the agreement with the Council. It does not appear that Council staff have received specific training on the use and administration of the website.

There was a general consensus that the website is overdue for an update and / or refresh.

## Social media

In addition to the website the Council also uses Social Media including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The Council has 1.1K Facebook followers and approximately 300 Twitter followers. It was noted that a local town Facebook group has around 12k followers. The town council posts on an ad hoc basis to this group.

Most of the social media posts created by the Council consist of third party content, for example from the Police. Council staff estimate that perhaps only 5% of the content posted by the Council is original content. A review of the Council's Facebook postings indicated that responses to any posts were very infrequent which would seem to suggest a low level of engagement with the content published.

It was noted that the Council does not formally monitor its interactions on social media, for example the number of followers. The Council also does not monitor traffic on its website, such as the number of visitors and pages viewed.

## Newsletter

The Council publishes an electronic newsletter which is posted to the Council's website. At present the council does not maintain a mailing list for this newsletter and does not offer the facility for people to 'subscribe' to the newsletter. As the Council does not have in place a facility to monitor its website traffic it is unknown how many, if any, visitors read the published newsletter.

# Burials

A review was conducted of the Council's burial system. This was a high level review and, as such, did not include an audit of individual items. Generally the system in place appears to work well, given the relatively small number of burials which take place on an annual basis.

Staff have received some training, although there does not appear to be a formal training plan in place

The Council has a burial ground in use and has responsibility for and disused burial ground. It is understood that the historic arrangements by which the Council assumed responsibility for the disused burial ground is currently being clarified as the historical records on when and how this happened and not currently available.

It is understood that the existing burial ground will reach capacity within the foreseeable future and that the council is taking initial steps to explore the possibility of obtaining additional land for burials.

## REVIEW OF INTERNAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS

Auditor Comment E29	Officer Response	Action required	Time scales
<p>Training of Councillors - no formal training programme in place for Councillors or a formal induction programme</p>	<p>Currently there is no formal training programme in place for Cllrs - this could be improved with the assistance of NALC. There is a formal record of training that councillors have taken - however not all Cllrs have provided confirmation that they have completed the on-line Code of Conduct training and therefore this is not up to date</p>	<p>Clerk to draft Councillor training programme Councillor training record to be updated - email sent to all cllrs asking them to confirm what training they have attended since May 2023 elections</p>	<p>1. Cllr training record to be updated as priority 2. Cllr training policy to be drafted - Clerk to contact other councils to see if they have a policy that could be amended for Ledbury - policy to be provided to PF &amp; GP meeting in January</p>
<p>In the absence of access to the resources of the County Assciation (HALC) and NALC the Council has made some limited use of third-party consultants but this is not a permanent ongoing support arrangement. The copuncil has not retained an external advisor to provide ongoing guidance on Best Practice</p>	<p>Following the Interna Auditor's Interim Report in November 2023 Members agreed to invite NALC/HALC to meet with Council to discuss what they can offer and what guarantees they provide in respect of the advice they provide.</p>	<p>Clerk to contact NALC and Hoople to invite them to present to Council</p>	<p>Presentations to be given from both organisations in early 2024</p>
<p>Copies of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations on the website, are those approved in 2022.</p>	<p>These are approved at the Annual Meeting each year and following that meeting the version on the website should be replaced with the newly approved version</p>	<p>2022 versions to be replaced with 2023 versions</p>	<p>Clerk requested that 2022 versions be replaced with 2023 versions</p>

Terms of Reference not dated or minute reference to show that these were adopted at Annual Meeting	Terms of Reference were deferred at annual meeting due to agreement to review committee structure.	Current Terms of Reference should be presented at next full council meeting for approval - new Terms of Reference to be produced following Committee Structure review	Terms of Reference to be included on the EO Full Council agenda (07.12.2023) for approval
Agendas of sub-committee meetings are not consistent with the Terms of Reference of Committees as established by Full Council	Officers should refer to Terms of Reference when setting agendas to ensure reports are being submitted to the correct meeting	Clerk & Deputy Clerk to prepare all agendas in line with Terms of Reference	Immediately
Committee Terms of Reference do not refer to the consideration of Tenders	Terms of Reference and Standing Orders need to be reviewed to ensure that the method to manage the opening and consideration of Tenders is consistent	Clerk to provide a report to meeting of FP & GP on how best to manage tenders for consideration by Members	Jan-24
Staff unaware of specific requirements in respect of orders for goods and services as set out in FR 10.3 or 11.1(h)	All staff are asked to read the Council's governing documents and policies regularly and therefore should be aware of these FR's	All staff to be provided with copies of SO's and FR's and asked to confirm when read	28.11.2023 - email sent to all staff with copies of documents attached with request for written confirmation of them having read and understood the contents



<p>The Council uses two external providers in respect of employment services, Citation HR under a long-term contract for general HR provision, and Worknest (formally Ellis Whittam) for Health and Safety. It is unclear why there are two providers in use (the Contract for Citation was not reviewed as part of this audit).</p> <p>Citation HR website makes numerous references to ‘businesses’ and ‘SMEs’ but does not make reference to the provision of services to the public sector. Worknest are established providers of HR services to the local government, used by many local councils and this is clearly referenced on their website. It is unclear, based on the nature of the providers, how the Council would obtain specific local council HR advice if it were to need this as part of an organisational review.</p>	<p>Currently LTC are 4 years into a 7-year contract with Citation for HR services and part way through a 5-year contract with Worknest, which expires in December 2024. Both of these contracts were set up prior to the Clerk starting with LTC in 2019 and had she been in post she would have recommended that Council work with one or two companies that provide HR support for local councils (Worknest or Peninsular) due to the difficulty to align HR with Local Government. Staff training is considered via the annual appraisals and staff are aware that they can discuss possible training opportunities with their line manager. There is a staff training policy in place which was considered at a meeting of the FP &amp; GP Committee in March 2023, and is awaiting approval by Council. The Clerk is CiLCA qualified and the Deputy Clerk is due to undertake this in 2024. The Deputy Clerk, CDO, Admin and Receptionist have all undertaken the ILC A qualification and the Accounts Clerk is due to sign up to FiLCA</p>	<p>Line managers to be asked to discuss training with all staff and establish what training is required. Plans have been put in place for all office based staff to undertake sector specific training.</p>	<p>Training Policy to be included on agenda for EO Full Council 07.12.2023 for approval. Interim Appraisal process December 2023 and to be reviewed at all subsequent appraisals.</p>
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<p>Staff generally were not aware of the Model Publication Scheme (MPS) issued by the ICO or the Transparency Code</p>	<p>A copy of the MPS is available on the council website and staff should be familiar with all council policies and governing documents on the council website.</p>	<p>Line managers to ensure all staff are reading all policies annually. A reminder should be sent to all staff at the beginning of each year for staff to read and confirmation understanding of council policies and governing documents</p>	<p>Deputy Clerk to send email out to all staff every January with link to policies and governing documents and requesting confirmation that staff have read and understood these documents, in writing. January 2024</p>
<p>Website needs updating/refreshing</p>	<p>It has been recognised by Councillors and staff that the website is in need of improvement - recently the agenda/minute page has been improved - however no feedback has been received from Members on this new page design</p>	<p>Further improvements are required on the website and it has been agreed that the Clerk will review starting with the Financial information pages to provide a similar look to that of the agenda/minutes pages</p>	<p>Immediately to be completed by end of 2024</p>
<p>Council does not formally monitor its interactions on social media</p>	<p>Staff do look at these figures but they have never been reported formally to a committee - as the Website sits with the Finance Committee suggest a regular report be provided to this committee going forward</p>	<p>Clerk to ensure report added to FP &amp; GP agendas detailing interaction figures</p>	<p>January 2024 onwards</p>

Newsletter subscription

Currently the Newsletter is just published on the website and shared on social media - consideration has been given to including a facility on the website for people to subscribe to this newsletter so that they will automatically receive a copy when published

Clerk to contact Advansys to ask about having a subscription facility on the website

Dec-23



## **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**QUORUM** – The quorum of the Resources Committee shall be agreed by the committee and recommended to Full Council for agreement.

The Resources Committee Quorum will be 3

**MEMBERSHIP** – The Membership of the Resource Committee will comprise of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Chairs of all Standing Committees, which currently are Environment and Leisure, Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee and Planning, Economy & Tourism Committee.

In the event that a Chair of one of the Standing Committees is not available they will request their Vice-Chair to attend as their substitute.

In the event that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is also a Chair of a Standing Committee, they will attend the Resources Committee in their role of Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the Vice-Chair of said Committee will be asked to attend the Resources Committee for the Municipal Year in place of the Chair.

In the event that a Councillor is Vice-Chair of more than one Committee and the meeting is likely to be inquorate the meeting will be rearranged for an alternative date.

### **UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

1. To receive information in respect of sickness absence figures in respect of all council staff
2. To receive information on the training and development of all council staff and councillors
3. To monitor the implementation of the Council's appraisals scheme, enabling all staff to be appraised on an annual basis
4. To ensure that all staff contracts are compliant with legislation
- 5.. To make decisions on the Training and Development budget process for staff and Councillors
6. To receive and consider applications for vacant posts within the Town Council, in respect of Senior post i.e. Clerk & Deputy Clerk and to interview successful shortlisted candidates
7. To appoint Appeals Panels as required noting members' independence to any given situation
8. To be responsible for monitoring Health and Safety through a standing agenda item, keep under review staff working conditions and ensure that all policies/procedures are being implemented

### **BY WAY OF RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL OR THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

1. To review and make recommendations concerning amendments to or introduction of new policies and procedures in accordance with legislation and agreed legislations
2. To make recommendation on requests for vocational training.

3. To give consideration and make recommendations on general staffing and establishment issues, staff structures, working patterns and associated budget implications
4. To contribute to the formulation and implementation of the corporate plan, making appropriate recommendations
5. To consider and make recommendations on requests for job evaluations
6. To make recommendation on the appointment of all Senior Council staff
7. To feed into the annual budget setting cycle

## **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**QUORUM – The quorum of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee shall be agreed by the committee and recommended to Full Council for agreement.**

**The Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee Quorum will be 3.**

#### **UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

1. To monitor the keeping of the Council's accounts and generally to have the management of the financial affairs of the Council including regular budget monitoring and the approval of in year virements.
2. To determine applications for financial assistance through the grants process.
3. To authorise expenditure in respect of recommendations from Working Parties in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
4. To make decision in respect of the use of reserves and review and determine the Reserves Policy.
5. To review and determine the Council's Investment Strategy annually.
6. To make in-year decisions to authorise orders and contracts for new works, goods, or services outside of existing budget provision taking into account budget monitoring and reserves policy.
7. To review and determine arrangements for insurances in respect of the Council's activities.
8. To investigate the recovery of monies due to the Council, not falling within the remit of any other committee.
9. To carry out the powers and duties of the Council with regard to advertising and publicity in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
10. To promote and maintain good public relations with all local stakeholders, and with regional and national agencies.
11. To receive and approve revised, updated or newly drafted policies recommended from other committees or officers.
12. To draft the financial and economical policies of the council considering where appropriate the recommendations of other committees and officers.

13. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee will attend the meetings of other council committees to explain why the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee has rejected a recommendation/proposal put forward by that committee.

### **BY WAY OF RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL**

1. To review and make recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the Council's work, its use of resources, and standard levels of service provided.
2. To draft and finalise the Council's four-year Corporate Plan including the consideration of recommendations of any Committee in regard to the Corporate Plan before it is submitted for approval of Council.
3. To consider and make recommendations regarding any other matters concerning or affecting the town which do not fall within the terms of reference of any other committee.
4. To make recommendations concerning the levying of precepts by the Town Council.
5. To make recommendations concerning applications to Government Departments for sanction on the borrowing of money in relation to matters coming within the parameters of the Council.
6. To make recommendations regarding loans required by the Council
7. To submit for approval of the council draft capital and revenue budgets and proposals for supplementary estimates.
8. to review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Council making recommendations where appropriate.
9. Give initial consideration to all matters affecting the town passing through Parliament, local authorities, and public bodies, unless delegated to another committee or working party.
10. To make recommendations on the collection and legal proceedings for the recovery of monies due to the Council, not falling within the remit of any other committee.



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**QUORUM – The quorum of the Environment & Leisure Committee shall be agreed by the Committee and recommended to Full Council for agreement.**

**The Environment & Leisure Committee Quorum will be three.**

#### **UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

1. To monitor the administration of the day to day running of the Market House, Painted Room, Cemeteries and Community Facilities under the control of the Council.
2. To be responsible for the maintenance of the vehicles and machinery, in connection with the Council services.
3. To implement the works programme of the Council in respect of the Market House Hall, Cemeteries and Community Facilities.
4. To authorise the Clerk to carry out all the of the Councils statutory functions with regard to the Cemeteries in line with the Council's responsibilities as a burial authority.
5. To review the fees in respect of the Cemeteries and Market House, subject to not exceeding an increase above the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
6. To monitor the Climate Change Declaration.

#### **BY WAY OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL OR THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.**

1. To consider public representation relating to the provision of services provided by the Council in respect of the Environment and Leisure and to make recommendations where appropriate.
2. To contribute to the formulation and implementation of the corporate plan, making appropriate recommendations.
3. To make recommendations regarding the purchase of vehicles in connection with the Council's services
4. To make recommendations on any increase in the fees in respect of the Cemeteries and Market House with exceed the CPI.
5. To make recommendations on the expenditure of monies in respect of services/purchases of goods or equipment etc. for the Halls, Cemeteries and Community Facilities which exceed its budget allocations.

6. To make recommendations on any repairs and expenditure in respect of the Listed Buildings under the Council's Management.
7. To feed into the annual budget setting cycle.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **PLANNING, ECONOMY & TOURISM COMMITTEE**

#### **UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

1. To comment on all planning applications submitted by the Local Planning Authority with delegated powers to forward such comments as expeditiously as possible to the Authority
2. To make observations relating to applications for public entertainment, street trader stall, dredging, justices' and other similar licences
3. To make representations in relation to Local Development Plan proposals and other statutory planning documents prepared by Herefordshire County Council
4. To make representations when thought fit on planning appeals and to appoint a delegate to attend planning inquires and Herefordshire County Council Planning Meetings as and when required
5. To comment on other planning related issues, such as proposed new community woodlands, pre-application consultations on telecommunications masts, proposed post office closures and the provision of public payphones
6. To comment on proposed tree preservation orders, public footpath diversions, and street name suggestions, etc.
7. To alert the Local Planning Authority to any alleged development control breaches in Ledbury
8. To comment on all planning applications concerning conservation specifically within the Ledbury area
9. To make representations, where relevant, in relation to Section 106 revenue collected by the Local Authority

#### **BY WAY OF RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL OR THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

1. To make recommendations on any issues that have a financial and or staffing implication for the Town Council
2. To make recommendations regarding opportunities to encourage investment in the Town
3. To make recommendations on policies in support of local business
4. To contribute to formulation and implementation of the corporate plan, making appropriate recommendations.



<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>	<b>7 DECEMBER 2023</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 10</b>
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

## **ST KATHERINES SQUARE**

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to ask Members to give consideration on what, if any agreement Ledbury Town Council would like to enter into with Herefordshire Council in respect of managing the newly created square adjacent to St Katherines and the Masters House.

### **Detailed Information**

Members are aware that the development of the square outside of the Masters House is almost completed. Council have previously had various discussions as to whether they wish to manage this space and further to those discussions a meeting was held with Herefordshire Council Estate’s Manager and the St Katherines Project Manager.

As a result of those conversations it was agreed that the Estates Manager would provide information on the following options:

- Community Asset Transfer – Attached
- Lease – a lease will give full management control of the space and help with obtaining grant funding
- License - an annual agreement which allows occupational and control booking of the space
- Management Agreement

When considering whether the Council wish to take on the responsibility of managing this area they should consider the following:

- Why do Ledbury Town Council wish to manage this space?
- Can this space be used for this purpose, noting that currently there is no electricity supply to the space?
- Do they want to take on the management of this space on a permanent basis, or for a trial period?

Members may wish to consider asking the Clerk to organise a Councillor Briefing whereby the Estates Manager could meet with them to discuss these options further.

### **Recommendation**

1. That Members give consideration to whether they wish to take on the management of the square at St Katherines and if so in what capacity.

2. That Helen Beale, Herefordshire Council Estates Manager be invited to meet with Councillors to provide more information on what options are available and how these could be met in respect of the square at St Katherines.

# COMMUNITY GUIDANCE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced by Herefordshire Council (HC) to provide help to community organisations who wish to consider taking over the day to day running and management of a Council property. This document is an appendix to the HC Community Asset Transfer policy. Definitions within this document are explained in Section 8.

An effective way of achieving our County Plan Ambitions and Principles is to empower community organisations to help them deliver their own solutions to local needs and demands for services. This will have both social and economic benefits. The transfer of buildings or land to well organised and supported community organisations will assist greatly in optimising community activity in local areas.

The document outlines the process that needs to be followed should a community organisation wish to submit an application to take over a HC building. The process may be seen as onerous on the community organisation however, managing property especially for community benefit can be fraught with issues. HC has a duty to ensure that any community organisation is fully capable of running an asset and that the project will be sustainable; so as not to expose any of the community to undue risk.

With ever increasing pressure on budgets, a community asset transfer application may be a tangible method of retaining or delivering valued services to a local community. This process will help develop those aspirations into a robust proposal with local support and a business case which can also be used to support external funding applications.

## 2. WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

The term “Community Asset Transfer” abbreviated as “CAT”, is defined by Central Government as “passing ownership or management of a building or piece of land from a public sector body to a third sector organisation”. Herefordshire Council’s CAT policy further defines it as relating “primarily to leasehold or freehold arrangements at less than best consideration, or in giving Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) ‘first-refusal’ on a commercially-based disposal”.

In practice this means that a formally constituted community organisation can seek to take over the day to day running and management of a building for the purposes of providing a valuable local resource. An example might be to deliver space that the community needs to meet or access information such as a community centre. Any application will need to evidence local need as well as robust proposals to run the property.

The basis of a transfer to a community organisation may vary, depending upon the application made. A transfer, if approved by the Council, will most likely take the form of a long lease for example but freehold transfers may also be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Where a community organisation applies to deliver front line services which might normally be delivered or resourced via the Council, this application is a separate process to that of a CAT and should be dealt with directly with the existing Council service. It is noted however that the two may be linked.

The CAT process is different to the Community Right to Bid process. Please see the Herefordshire Council [website](#) for more information.

### **3. WHO CAN APPLY?**

The CAT applicant must:-

- (a) Be a community organisation which is community led (i.e. its governance arrangements must ensure that it has strong links with the local community and that members of the community are able to influence its operation and decision-making processes).
- (b) Be appropriately constituted (e.g. a registered charity; a community interest company; a charitable incorporated organisation; a not-for-profit company; a co-operative). Such constitution allows the ownership and management of buildings and / or the provision of services. Town and Community Councils are also included.
- (c) Demonstrate good governance by operating through open and accountable co-operative processes, with adequate systems for monitoring, evaluation, and financial management.
- (d) Demonstrate it has the skills and capacity within, or available to its managing body to effectively manage the property asset and deliver its services.
- (e) Demonstrate diversity and also work to improve community cohesion and reduce inequalities.
- (f) Be engaged in economic, environmental or social regeneration within Herefordshire or provide a service of community benefit that aligns with the Council's [County Plan](#).
- (g) Demonstrate management experience and / or expertise.
- (h) Have a proven track record (e.g. accounting records or previous projects). The Council will consider a community organisation where they are a new entity, however the application should be robust and demonstrate where the essential skillsets and expertise are being drawn from, paid for and how long they will be in place.

### **4. WHAT BUILDINGS ARE AVAILABLE?**

The Council is open to a discussion regarding many of its sites and buildings for community transfer. This can be done by emailing [CommunityAssetTransfer@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityAssetTransfer@herefordshire.gov.uk) and stating that you have an interest



in a CAT. Predominantly, the applicant should be able to demonstrate that a building has a community purpose and that there are very few or no other alternatives.

Examples are community centres and sports pitches or land but also may include buildings where a valued local service is provided by either HC or an agency/organisation. If a community organisation wish to consider an application to deliver an existing service then alternative building locations should form part of an options appraisal in the expression of interest. All applications to deliver a service will be led by the relevant Service, supported by the Property Services and Talk Community teams.

## **5. HOW DO YOU SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?**

### Before a formal application.

Initially, the applicant needs to ensure that it meets the criteria (see item 3 above). Robust research will have been undertaken and evidence collected on local support for the project. An initial review of options should be undertaken and if the community organisation still wishes to proceed with a CAT, it should contact the Property Services Team of Herefordshire Council to ascertain if the identified property is available -

[CommunityAssetTransfer@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityAssetTransfer@herefordshire.gov.uk)

### Submitting the first part of an application.

If the identified HC site is available, then the community organisation may proceed to an expression of interest (EOI). The group will be presented with a template form together with a plan of the site and a timeframe for completion. The form is designed to be easy to understand and draw out relevant areas that will need work, evidence and understanding.

Depending on the location of the site, it may be appropriate to promote the opportunity to a wider audience. This will be made clear when the EOI form is sent out.

Once submitted, the EOI(s) will be reviewed by officers and relevant Members and the community organisation(s) may be asked to provide more evidence or enhance some sections. The community organisation(s) may also be informed that the application will not proceed. If this happens, an explanation will be provided.

### Moving to stage two of the application

If an EOI is successful, the community organisation will be asked to complete a business case (a template will be provided); the completion of which will be within an agreed timescale (usually several months). The business case goes into more detail about the proposal and is likely to involve continued discussions between the applicant and HC. A market and community value will also be provided at this stage by HC to inform the business case. The business case will go into similar detail to that required by external funders.

Once submitted, a full review will be undertaken by Herefordshire Council and the community organisation may be asked to provide more evidence or enhance some sections. Any recommendation to proceed by HC Officers will result in a submission to HC Cabinet or Cabinet Member who will make the final decision.

If approved, a period of further discussion will inevitably take place to progress the project.

#### Key points for applicants

(Outline or high level details required for EOI and full detail for business case):

- (a) The ability to demonstrate a proven local need for the project.
- (b) Demonstrate planned outcomes and benefits that will result from the property transfer.
- (c) Include any financial resources that the asset transfer will release or attract.
- (d) Demonstrate financial sustainability and forward planning.
- (e) How the applicant will invest in and maintain the asset, including a specific plan for meeting Health & Safety and compliance responsibilities.
- (f) A community governance / management structure with the capability to sustain the asset
- (g) A track record for delivering services and / or managing property.
- (h) A plan for how much space is required and its potential usage.
- (i) Business case applications should include 5 year plans for revenue and capital funding, plus cost projections for managing and operating the property.
- (j) If the CAT applicant requests that the property asset be transferred for an amount equal to or less than its existing use value (either freehold or leasehold), the Business Case must quantify the benefits to the community and Council in order to justify this subsidy.

## **6. REALITY CHECK**

Delivering local resources or services can be a real asset for the local community – delivering what you need, when you need it. Having a building that you control may be central to your plan.

It is important to be realistic, do research to prove that the local community are in support of your project and look to the future to understand how a property can be funded and maintained.

You will need to understand the time commitment for this process not just in preparing and evidencing your project but also the application process itself up to potential approval. If approved, it may take several months to transfer the property to you.

Applications for grant funding also have defined timeframes so be clear about what is required from your group and when.

Any application for a CAT or submission for external funding will expect a clear, identified income stream into the project to sustain it- how are you going to raise money for day to day expenses such as utilities, maintenance, fittings, consumables and repairs? For the majority of the time, a track record of delivery will be essential along with a formal constitution however it is possible for a new community organisation to provide assurance to the Council.

In addition, community organisations should look at partnering or sharing space to see how they can broaden the scope of their project to deliver real change or resources for the community. If you want to take over a property under a CAT, you will need to prove that your project has merit, delivers an identified local need and is above all, sustainable.

## 7. AND FINALLY

HC is pleased to accept initial interest queries and applications for CAT's by community organisations. HC will work with groups to ensure every opportunity is provided for communities to support themselves in the context of wider local government changes and funding challenges.

The Talk Community service is there to help, support and promote community initiatives to strengthen our communities. Details can be found on the Council's website:

[Community funding advice](#)

If you want to do something differently within your community or want advice about what funding is available or guidance then please contact them.

## 8. DEFINITIONS

Community Asset Transfer (CAT)	passing ownership or management of a building or piece of land from a public sector body to a community organisation
Community organisation	<p>A community organisation is a legal entity and:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exists for community / social / environmental benefit</li> <li>• Has evidence and proven/evidential track record of community benefit objectives (e.g. a Community Interest Company)</li> <li>• Is non-profit distributing (i.e. must reinvest any surplus funds to further its social aims and community benefits and not to be distributed to shareholders)</li> </ul> <p>NB: The term Third Sector Organisation is largely interchangeable with this definition. For the purposes of this procedure it also includes Town and Parish Councils.</p>

Talk Community Operational Team	A service offered by the Council to support and develop communities. <a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community-1">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community-1</a>
Expression of Interest (EOI)	An initial, written presentation of a community organisations idea to use a Council owned building that outlines what the asset will be used for, why and how it will be financially viable.
Business Case	A more detailed 5 year picture by the community organisation of their proposal that provides assurance to the Council that the project supports the community and is viable.
Business Plan	A working document when the proposal is in operation based on the business case and developed by the community organisation as a framework to work within to run its business.

<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>	<b>7 DECEMBER 2023</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 11</b>
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

## **SMART WATER**

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to bring SmartWater to the attention of Members and ask them to consider whether they wish to include funds within the budget or earmarked reserves for a SmartWater project in Ledbury.

### **Detailed Information**

Ledbury Town Council has previously received a presentation in respect of SmartWater and did consider that this would be something that they would want to consider in the future, but unfortunately, this has not progressed due to concerns over costs.

West Mercia Police have recently written to council promoting the scheme and the content of two emails received are below:

*“I would like to make you aware of the SmartWater Villages project. We work alongside our parish councils in order to offer each resident their own SmartWater property marking kit. The PCC contributes 25% of the total project costs.*

*Once 70% of the kits ordered have been registered, We Don't Buy Crime deterrent street signage will be erected at key locations around the projected area. The external and internal signage together will add to the overall deterrent as evidence shows that 74% of acquisitive crime offenders would not break into a property with a SmartWater sign on display.*

*If you would like to hear more about this project and how this could work for your parish then we can arrange for a presentation at your convenience.*

*If you are interested then I can put you in touch with the We Don't Buy Crime Team.*

*PCSO Kirsten Kysow”*

*My name is Neil Darley and I am the Administration Assistant for the 'We Don't Buy Crime' scheme with West Mercia Police based in Bridgnorth.*

*I am writing to you today to ask whether your parish would be interested in signing up for the Towns and Village scheme.*

*Essentially, you would submit an application to the Police and Crime Commissioners grants office requesting the funding for a SmartWater project to cover your area.*

*You first need to decide what level of coverage that you require, i.e. how many residents that you would need to provide SmartWater kits for. For the scheme the minimum coverage is 80% of the residents. This is the normal provision as there will always be empty houses and residents that have just moved in as well as those who*

*do not wish to have a kit. If you can guarantee that you can cover 100%, then you can have 100% but as I say this is often difficult to achieve and draws the project on. Once you have decided on your target coverage you will fund the cost for 75% of the required kits, with the PCC providing the funding for the remaining 25% of your requirement. In respect of the costs this scheme has a charge of £8.90 +vat per kit. It has the advantage that there is no yearly re-registration fee for each kit. Kits purchased outside of the scheme cost considerably more from SmartWater and they have a requirement to have their registration renewed regularly. Following the registration of 70%, or above, of your requested kits the PCC provides free signage in the area which we will position for you to give your parish the best protection from the travelling criminality. I have attached information about the project and SmartWater for your perusal. Any further questions or queries, or if you wish for us to do a short presentation, do not hesitate to contact me”*

### **Financial Implications**

As part of the Police and Crime Commissioners ‘Leading from the front’ campaign, he is offering to contribute 25% of the project costs which will include all of the signage and a quarter of the costs for the property marking kits leaving the town and village to cover the remaining 75% (kits are priced at £8.90 each).

A minimum of 80% of the chosen area must be purchased. However for larger areas, there may scope to stage the roll out to spread the cost.

### **Recommendation**

Members are requested to give consideration to the information above and attached and decide whether they wish to progress the SmartWater Scheme in Ledbury and if so how this could be funded.

## **WE DON'T BUY CRIME**



### **WHY SMARTWATER?**

**20/10/2021 latest data shows residential burglary in West Mercia down by 23%**

#### **Your SmartWater kit is unique to you, your home & your property**

SmartWater is made up of 85% Water, 10% polymers plus a unique mix of rare earth metal traces which make every bottle unique.

SmartWater is invisible in daylight but fluoresces under UV light

SmartWater cannot be removed

#### **Why protect your items with SmartWater?**

If your items were stolen, the police could trace them back to you

Most importantly the We Don't Buy Crime initiative is about prevention and by SmartWater protecting your items you deter burglary – but how?

Thieves hate SmartWater and here's why...

All stolen goods are checked for smartWater and all police officers carry UV torches and regularly spot check items that arouse suspicion

The We Don't Buy Crime team work vigorously to encourage all organisations who buy items off the public; retailers, scrap metal merchants, auction houses, antique and jewellery dealers to check for SmartWater therefore sabotaging the re-sale avenue of stolen goods

When-ever a suspect is arrested and brought in to custody at a West Mercia police station, they are checked for SmartWater – if a suspect is arrested for burglary – their premises are checked for other stolen goods/SmartWater

In a court of law, SmartWater is sufficient evidence to convict a criminal with 100% conviction rate in court to date – since 1995 over 1000 SmartWater convictions have taken place and this criminal and a far greater number of burglaries has been prevented in our neighbourhoods

SmartWater protected areas see an average reduction in burglaries of 65% due to all of the above facts – that is why it is essential that the window stickers go up on your property in full view – this is your burglary deterrent

## **What's in your pack?**

### **1 SmartWater vial that is uniquely coded to your address**

Each vial will give you between 50-75 applications – only one small dot is need – it dries invisibly in 10 mins and adheres to any solid clean surface fully in 24 hours

SmartWater will keep in the bottle for a good couple of years – if stored sensibly and kept cool, even longer, although we do recommend you use it not store it

As long as you can shake the bottle and it remains fluid it's good to go

The longest example of SmartWater lasting is on a church roof in Shropshire – it has been fluorescing on the lead roof for over 14 years

**4 large square window stickers** – It is essential to display these in a front and rear window of your house – visible from the roadside/approach

also great to put on caravan windows, shed/garage windows

These stickers act as a massive deterrent to burglary – thieves hate SmartWater!

**60 small weatherproof stickers** – these can be used inside or outside the property – visual reminders to a thief that the item is protected by SmartWater

Great places to put these stickers: Garage door handles, padlocks on sheds/outside units, bikes, garden equipment, mobile phones, cars, transportable IT equipment, windows, letterboxes and gates.

## **How to protect your items**

If you have the choice of a rough or smooth surface, always choose the rough as it adheres better

Keep a list of all items you have marked and where they were marked then save the information securely – ideally a digital copy to the cloud - If overpainted, provided a scrap can be taken from the area it was applied, it will still be detected

Good places to put SmartWater; Tools & IT Equipment, Bikes, Jewellery, Artwork, Furniture, electrical equipment, cars, mobile phones, clothing accessories, garden furniture/ornaments/equipment, trailers, caravans, motorbikes.



## **Common Questions answered**

What if I move address? Ring SmartWater and advise of your change of address – it moves with you

What if I sell something valuable I have SmartWater protected? Ring SmartWater and let them know – tell the buyer where it is marked too so they can tell SmartWater or just keep a record of who you sold it to

Do Insurance companies recognise SmartWater when giving quotes?

Yes – always mention it - NFU mutual and Lloyds give a discount on home insurance



**WE DON'T  
BUY CRIME**



# TOWNS AND VILLAGES PROJECT

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My Safer West Mercia Plan sets out my vision for what I want to achieve as Police and Crime Commissioner for our communities.

My aims will be best achieved working in partnership with others who share common goals. Together we can be more effective and efficient in reducing crime, supporting victims and witnesses and building a better and safer West Mercia.

Often the best solutions to community issues come from within communities themselves. I am very passionate about empowering communities to play a more active role in identifying and tackling local issues in ways that the police could never do, by making the right tools and opportunities available to them. It is with these principles in mind that I am opening my Commissioner's grant fund for the 'We Don't Buy Crime' initiative, inviting applications from local authorities that will deliver the results our communities need and expect.

I am aware that acquisitive crime, including burglary, robbery and theft, harms our communities. A person's home and possessions often carry an emotional attachment and when crime interferes with this it can have a long lasting impact on its victims. West Mercia Police is committed to protecting people from these crimes. 'We Don't Buy Crime' demonstrates this commitment by taking an innovative approach to reducing and disrupting the market for stolen goods, and protecting homes and possessions by making them less attractive to the 'would be criminal'. By working with partners I want us to be able to property mark as many households as possible with SmartWater to create 'We Don't Buy Crime' towns and villages and significantly reduce the risk of burglaries.



**John Campion**  
Police and Crime Commissioner

## WHAT IS WE DON'T BUY CRIME?

We Don't Buy Crime is a department within West Mercia Police tackling acquisitive crime throughout the local authority areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire. Since first launching in 2015, the project has gone from strength to strength with more than 165 towns and villages signed up and more than 50,000 homes protected (data correct as of March 2023).

We Don't Buy Crime takes a holistic approach to acquisitive crime. Along with towns and villages, the team also works with second-hand stores and fuel stations. We have a covert team that looks to use the latest in technology to catch criminals in the act. We also have exploitation and vulnerability trainers working with frontline professionals, to raise awareness of associated harm that is linked to criminal activity and how to spot the signs someone who may be being exploited by criminals.

We have formed partnerships with local businesses and communities with a common goal of reducing crime. We work closely with our safer neighbourhood teams and SmartWater to make use of the latest technologies to fight crime, by ensuring that property in homes is marked appropriately and that signage is displayed accordingly.



# WHAT IS A WE DON'T BUY CRIME TOWN AND VILLAGE?

This is where we work with parish councils who invest in the project to offer each resident in their chosen area a free SmartWater property marking kit. Once 70% of the kits ordered have been registered, deterrent street signage (as shown below) will be erected at key locations around the protected area. The external and internal signage together will add to the overall deterrent as evidence shows that 74% of acquisitive crime offenders would not break into a property with a SmartWater sign on display.

**WE DON'T  
BUY CRIME**

**HINSTOCK**

**CRIMINALS  
BEWARE!**

**THIS AREA IS PROTECTED  
BY SMARTWATER**

Our community's property  
is security marked and we  
work with the police to  
prevent crime

**SMARTWATER**

West Mercia  
**POLICE**

John Compton  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
West Mercia

**WE DON'T  
BUY CRIME**

**HINSTOCK  
PARISH COUNCIL**

**CRIMINALS  
BEWARE!**

**THIS AREA IS PROTECTED  
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Our community's property  
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**SMARTWATER**

West Mercia  
**POLICE**

John Compton  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
West Mercia

# HOW DOES THE TOWN AND VILLAGE PROJECT WORK?

## How much will it cost?

As part of the Police and Crime Commissioners 'Leading from the front' campaign, he is offering to contribute 25% of the project costs which will include all of the signage and a quarter of the costs for the property marking kits leaving the town and village to cover the remaining 75% (kits are priced at £8.90 each).

A minimum of 80% of the chosen area must be purchased. However for larger areas, there may scope to stage the roll out to spread the cost. To see how much your 75% contribution will cost, please find the attached Excel spreadsheet.

## Town and village kit distribution

Councillors and/or their partners will be expected to provide local volunteers/colleagues to assist with the roll out of their kits but the WDBC co-ordinator will be able to give advice and guidance throughout. The kits must be registered with SmartWater using the dedicated We Don't Buy Crime app to ensure saturation rate evidenced to prevent and reduce burglary. This simple registration process will be explained in depth by the WDBC co-ordinator upon becoming a protected area. It is vital that kits are registered with the resident of each household in person and is not just given to anyone without registering.

## Signage

To qualify for signage, 70% of the kits purchased must be registered. There will be an option for the councillor/partner to provide some personalisation with the name of the area on the A1 signs. This personalisation should be noted on the application form. For examples of the signage options, please see page 5.

Smaller signs are pre-formatted and standardised.

The timescale during which initial funding must be spent is:

**1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**



## WHAT IS SMARTWATER AND WHAT'S IN THE PROPERTY MARKING KIT?

SmartWater is a water based solution which contains a unique forensic code that is invisible to the naked eye but will glow yellow-green under UV light and once applied, makes equipment traceable back to their owner. It is easy to apply, with only a speck of solution. Only the size of a pinhead is needed to convict and is guaranteed to last five years on each application.

Research by Leicester University shows when interviewing burglars about the best deterrent, SmartWater outsourced? all other forms of crime deterrent.

SECURITY MEASURE	SCORE OUT OF 10
SmartWater	8.3
High visibility police patrols	7.4
Ink-dye tags	7.2
Access control systems	6.9
Window grills	6.7
CCTV	6.2
Burglar/intruder alarms	6.0
Cased merchandise	5.9
Electronic tagging	5.0
Security guards/store detectives	4.9
Property marking	4.8
Mirrors	3.9
Perimeter fencing	3.8

Research conducted by Gill Martin, Leicester university 2008.

SmartWater is responsible for convicting hundreds of criminals with a 100% conviction rate in contested court cases and when deployed by police, SmartWater has helped reduce burglary by up to 85%.

In each forensic marking kit you will receive:

- 1 x SmartTrace® forensic liquid – enough to mark 80-100 items.
- SmartWater THIEVES BEWARE® window deterrent labels.
- SmartWater THIEVES BEWARE® tamper-resistant deterrent labels.



## NEXT STEPS

To start the process of becoming a protected Town and Village, please send a completed application form, Financial application excel document and a map of the area in which you want to cover to [wedontbuycrime@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:wedontbuycrime@westmercia.police.uk)

<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>	<b>7 DECEMBER 2023</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 12</b>
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

## **CORRESPONDENCE FROM LEDBURY HUNT**

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with correspondence received from Ledbury advising that they have undertaken the necessary steps to consult in respect of the Ledbury 2023 Boxing Day Hunt

### **Detailed Information**

Members will recall that previously the Ledbury Hunt organisers were advised that going forward they should ensure that they consult Ledbury Town Council and provide evidence that they have consulted with Ledbury businesses and appropriate organisations in respect of the Boxing Day Hunt.

Attached is a letter received from the Ledbury Hunt in which they advise of consultations that have taken place and also the road closure application submitted to Herefordshire Council.

It should be noted by Members that this item is not one that Council will debate as to whether the Hunt should or shouldn't be allowed to go ahead, Ledbury Town Council have no powers in relation to this. It is purely to receive and note the information provided by the Hunt and to make comment if felt appropriate in respect of the consultation process.

### **Recommendation**

That Members receive and note the letter and attachments provided by the Ledbury Hunt.





## The Ledbury Hunt Limited



20 November 2023

Dear Madam

The Ledbury Hunt has once again applied for road closure notices for the A438 from Top Cross to Bye Street and the A449 from Top Cross to Market Street, in respect of their Boxing Meet in Ledbury on 26 December 2023. As part of the application process this year we have provided plans of the roads closed and also diversion routes. We have also submitted a Traffic management plan and a copy of the letter delivered to shops and public houses, copies of these are attached.

In order to facilitate this we have personally visited shops and public houses in the road closure area, speaking to the owners and/or leaving details of the exact closures and timings, with contact details should they wish to discuss this. As was the case last year, we found everyone to be supportive.

Our Chairman Will Windsor-Clive has written to the local Herefordshire Councillors - Councillor Liz Harvey, Councillor Stef Simmons, Councillor Justine Peberdy and also to Councillor Helen I'Anson, copy attached. I have also emailed the contact I had last year in the West Mercia Police, Police Sergeant Michelle Clegg to discuss things should the application be granted.

In the event of the closures being granted, we will put up advance notices of the closures two weeks before the event; we will put up the public notices within the given time at appropriate places. On the actual day we will have manned barriers at Top Cross and at Bye Street junction and there will be stewards on site. As we have always done, we will also monitor the horses coming to the meet. Finally, as we have always done, once the riders have left the area we will make sure that all the 'mess' left by the horses and hounds is cleared away.

We accept that trail hunting is obviously still a very contentious issue but we feel that our application for road closure should be looked at purely from a road closure angle and the benefit to the Town hosting a large crowd with positive PR and not from a political point of view.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me on [ledburyhunt@icloud.com](mailto:ledburyhunt@icloud.com) or 07768 337186.

Yours faithfully

Helen Smith  
Ledbury Hunt Secretary

The Clerk to Ledbury Town Council  
Ledbury Town Council Offices,  
Church Street,  
Ledbury,  
Herefordshire. HR8 1DH.



## The Ledbury Hunt Limited



20 November 2023

Dear Councillor

The Ledbury Hunt has historically met on a Boxing Day outside the Feathers Hotel in Ledbury. Our Secretary, Helen Smith, has always applied for and been granted permission to temporary close the roads. This year is no exception and the necessary application forms and reports have already been sent to Balfour Beatty.

As part of the application process we have liaised with the Town Council (and will continue to do so) and also with the local retailers and public houses. As has always been the case, the shop owners and publicans in Ledbury have been very supportive; the publicans particularly as they benefit more than most from the crowds who come to watch! We are also required to write to the local Country Councillors which is the reason for my letter.

Trail hunting is obviously still a very contentious issue but we feel that our application for road closure should be looked at purely from a road closure angle and the benefit to the Town hosting a large crowd with positive PR and not from a political point of view.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me on [wwclive@gmail.com](mailto:wwclive@gmail.com) or 07793 956449.

Yours faithfully

William Windsor-Clive  
Chairman  
Ledbury Hunt

**PROPOSED TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE  
MEET OF THE LEDBURY HUNT FOXHOUNDS  
26 DECEMBER 2023**

**TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN**

- Advance notices of the road closure will be erected two weeks before the event, comprising of A1 boards giving notice of the closure and the diversion. These will be situated at the roundabout at the end of the A417 coming from the M50, at the roundabout at the end of the A449 coming from Ross-on-Wye and also on the second roundabout on the Leadon Way that runs to the town centre via Lower Road, Bridge Street and Bye Street
- The usual road closure notices issued by Herefordshire Council will be put up at least seven days prior to the event at all junctions on the top cross, at the Bye Street junction and the Market Street junction
- At the time of the closure stewards will be in place at the top cross and Bye Street manning barriers and helping road users
- Importantly, these notices will be removed once the event has taken place



**LEDBURY HUNT LIMITED**

31 October 2023

The Ledbury Hunt will be holding their traditional Boxing Day Meet, subject to approval, on Tuesday, 26 December 2023. We will be applying for road closure notices asking for closures from the Top Cross to Bye Street and Top Cross to Market Street, for one hour between 10.15am and 11.15am. As part of the application process Hereford Council have requested that we consult with local business people regarding the impact of the closures.

As this is a bank holiday I understand that a number of shops and businesses may not be open but if you have any issues please contact me at [ledburyhunt@icloud.com](mailto:ledburyhunt@icloud.com).

I can be contacted on 07768 337187 if you would like to talk to me.

Thank you for your time.

Helen Smith  
Hunt Secretary



**LEDBURY HUNT LIMITED**

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The Ledbury Hunt will be holding their traditional Boxing Day Meet, subject to approval, on Tuesday, 26 December 2023. We will be applying for road closure notices asking for closures from the Top Cross to Bye Street and Top Cross to Market Street, for one hour between 10.15am and 11.15am. As part of the application process Hereford Council have requested that we consult with local business people regarding the impact of the closures.

As this is a bank holiday I understand that a number of shops and businesses may not be open but if you have any issues please contact me at [ledburyhunt@icloud.com](mailto:ledburyhunt@icloud.com).

I can be contacted on 07768 337187 if you would like to talk to me.

Thank you for your time.

Helen Smith  
Hunt Secretary





## **The Ledbury Hunt Limited**

26 October 2023

Dear Ms Orum

I refer to our recent emails and the request for information and details of various consultations to accompany The Ledbury Hunt's application for a temporary road closure on 26 December 2023, for our Boxing Day meet.

On Tuesday 31 October members of the hunt will visit the shops and public houses in the road closure area (and outside) verbally consulting with them where possible and leaving details of the exact closures and timings, with contact details should they wish to discuss this, if they are too busy to talk. A copy of the letter is attached. I have contacted Susie Mckechnie the Chair of the Traders' Association in Ledbury and asked if she would kindly email her members as she has done in previous years.

I will be writing to the local Herefordshire Councillors - Councillor Liz Harvey, Councillor Stefanie Simmons and Councillor Justine Peberdy.

I consulted with Angela Price, Clerk to Ledbury Town Councillor on 29 September informing her of our intention to apply for road closure on Boxing Day and will be keeping her up to date on proceedings. I will also be writing to her formally setting out the actions we have taken.

I will also liaise with the Police nearer the time as they had a presence last year, more to monitor any anti hunt presence than anything else.

With regard to practical matters, In the event of the closures being granted, we will put up the notices within the given time at appropriate places. We will also put up advance warning notices two weeks before the event, giving details of the closure and diversions. On the actual day we will have manned barriers at Top Cross and at Bye Street junction and there will be stewards on site. As we have always done, we will also monitor the horses coming to the meet. Finally, as we have always done, once the riders have left the area we will make sure that all the 'mess' left by the horses and hounds is cleared away.

I can confirm that the Hunt has in excess of £5 million Public Liability Insurance cover.

We accept that trail hunting is obviously still a very contentious issue but we feel that our application for road closure should be looked at purely from a road closure angle and the benefit to the Town of hosting a large crowd with positive PR, and not from a political point of view.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me on [ledburyhunt@icloud.com](mailto:ledburyhunt@icloud.com) or 07768 337186.

Yours faithfully

Helen Smith  
Ledbury Hunt Secretary

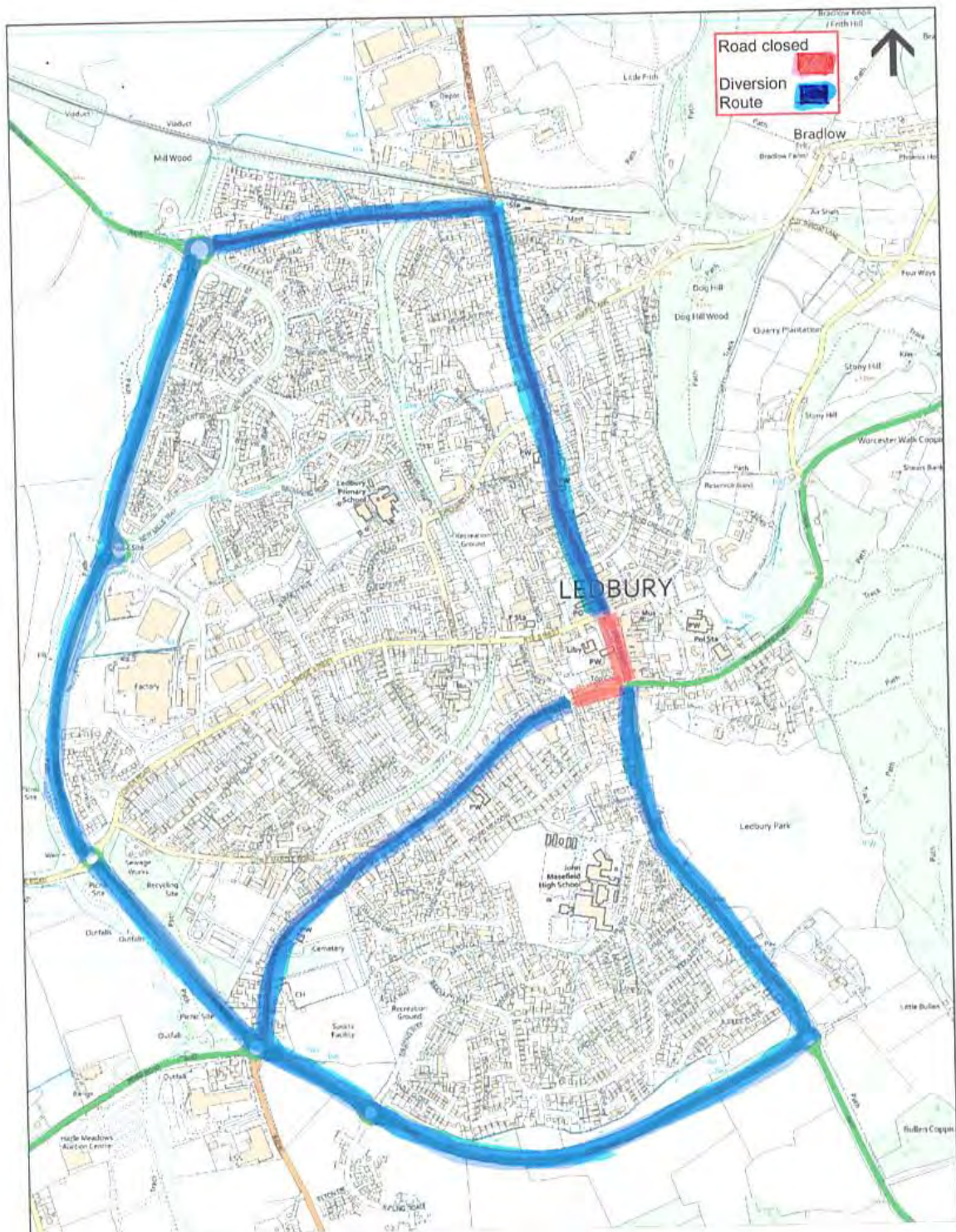
Ms Charlotte Orum  
Events and Licensing Administrator  
Balfour Beatty  
Unit 3 Thorn Business Park  
Rotherwas  
Hereford  
HR2 6JT



Road Closed  
High Street - 1015 - 1115  
New Street - 1100 - 1115









# APPLICATION FOR A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE

Email completed form to: [hereford.streetworks@bblivingplaces.com](mailto:hereford.streetworks@bblivingplaces.com) or post to NRSWA Team, Balfour Beatty Living Places, Unit 3, Thorn Business Park, Rotherwas, Hereford

**ALL APPLICATIONS ARE REQUIRED TO BE RECEIVED A MINIMUM OF 8 WEEKS BEFORE YOU**

ROAD CLOSURE DETAILS			
Road Name:	HIGH STREET & NEW STREET		Road No: e.g. A4123
Location of works:	Easting :	Northing :	USRN:
Details of where road will be closed from / to:	A432 - FROM TOP CROSS TO BYE STREET B4216 - FROM TOP CROSS TO MARKET		
Date of commencement :	26.12.2023	Date of Completion:	26.12.2023
Reason for road closure:	ANNUAL BOXING DAY MEET OF THE LEDBURY HUNT		
Description of diversion route: <small>(note - you must also attach a plan showing your diversion route, your application will be rejected without this)</small>	VIA THE HORNEND, HEREFORD ROAD, LEDBURY BYPASS AND THE SOUTHEND & VICE VERSA		
Will continued access be available at all times for:	Emergency Vehicles :	Buses :	Refuse collection ve
Will the closure be removable at the end of each day? :	YES	If yes, enter the approximate working hours	
			1 HO

Company for whom the TTRO is required: LEDBURY HUNT LIMITED

NRSWA NOTICE NUMBER <small>(Also referred to as Job No)</small>	<b>If the works are for a Utility Company you must provide this informat</b>

*If the application is for Private works then the NSRWA Notice shall be created by Balfour Beatty on your beh*

APPLICANT DETAILS	
Name of applicant:	[REDACTED]
Name & address of applicant's organisation:	[REDACTED]

PAYMENT DETAILS	
<i>Please ensure you complete all of the below fields.</i>	
Company:	[REDACTED]
Invoicing address:	[REDACTED]

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the section of road detailed above needs to be closed to facilitate works, which cannot be maintained without maintaining traffic flow. I understand that the cost for a closure is as detailed in the guidance notes issued to me. I have consulted and discussed this closure with those likely to be affected and agree to provide and maintain traffic regulation order site notices and advanced notice boards, required for closure for the duration of the

