

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026**

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Chowns, Eakin, Harvey (Chair), Kettle, Morris, Sinclair and Troy

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Julia Lawrence – Deputy Town Clerk
Sophie Rudd – Minute Taker

3 members of the public and press

C1118. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Browning and Hughes

C1119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sinclair declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 17(3), due to knowing the planning applicants.

C1120. TO NOTE THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

RESOLVED:

That the Nolan Principles be noted.

C1121. TO NOTE THE GENERAL DUTY ON PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF SECTION 149 OF THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

RESOLVED:

That the General Duty on Public Authorities of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 be received and noted, noting that the Clerk will advise Members it is appropriate for them to be considered under this Duty.

C1122. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2026

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 8 January 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C1123. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ACTION SHEET

RESOLVED:

That the action sheet be received and noted.

C1124. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair advised that regrettably she would not be able to attend the Ledbury Big Breakfast due to other commitments. She advised that she had received invitations to the SAFA Herefordshire AGM, Marches Family Network AGM, the Wychavon Civic Service and the Colwall Care Home Grand Opening.

C1125. TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF STANDING ORDERS 3(E) AND 3(F)

RESOLVED:

That agenda items 13 and 20 be brought forward.

C1126. GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. Ledbury Poetry

Councillor Bradford proposed a grant award of £2,500 for Ledbury Poetry due to the 2025/26 grants budget having already been allocated. Councillor Harvey asked for clarification on whether he was suggesting that the funds be taken from the 2025/26 budget or that provision be made within the 2026/27 budget.

The representative from Ledbury Poetry advised that the request for grant funding was for new branding and signage to replace the current materials, which had not been replaced for a number of years.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to have sight of the artwork for the branding at the next meeting of Council and confirmed that the item could be considered in confidential session due to the branding not having been unveiled to the wider audience at this time.

Councillor Bradford withdrew his motion in favour of more information being provided to the meeting of Council scheduled for 19 February 2026.

2. It was noted that LEAF had submitted a further multi-year grant application, which had been received after the agenda for this meeting had been set.

RESOLVED:

1. That Agenda Item 13(i) be deferred to the next Meeting of Full Council scheduled for 19 February 2026 as a confidential item with an accompanying updating report from Ledbury Poetry to include detailed costings and artwork.
2. That the Clerk provide information on whether Members should make provision for any grant awarded to Ledbury Poetry from underspends in the 2025/26 budget or make allocation for the funds in the 2026/27 budget.
3. That Ledbury Visually Impaired Club (VIP) be awarded a grant of £250.00 towards a visit to Codington Vineyard and Garden in June 2026 – Local Government Act 1972 s. 137 Power of local authorities to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised.
4. That Ledbury Visually impaired club be asked to send the Council a photograph of their trip to the Vineyard and Garden.
5. That the request from Ledbury Places to use the underspend in respect of the Hearing Loop in the sum of £195 for a print run of the Lamb quizzes be approved.
5. That the end of grant report received from LEAF be received and noted.
6. That LEAF provide as much information as possible in support of their request for further multi-year funding, including how they support other youth projects in the town, for consideration at the meeting of Council on 19 February 2026.

C1127. UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028

The Chair advised that she had requested this item be revisited due to more information now being available than had been at the meeting held on 8 January.

The Ledbury Community Hub advised that they would be willing to act as the Lead Group for the Ledbury application for UK Town of Culture 2028, with support from the Council and any other interested organisations and individuals. Ledbury Poetry offered their support to the application.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council is supportive and encouraging of a Town of Culture bid coming forth from Ledbury and that the Town Council offer a Town Councillor and officer to contribute to the discussions about the Expression of Interest, noting that Ledbury Community Hub will act as the lead applicant.
2. That Councillor Kettle be nominated as the Council representative, and that Councillor Eakin be substitute, and that the Clerk identify which member of staff will be attending and liaise with the Community Hub.
3. That subject to permissions being received, the clerk provide the Community Hub with the details of individuals who had been in contact in respect of participation in the UK Town of Culture application.

Members of the Public left the meeting at 7:58pm

C1128. TO RECEIVE MOTIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

None received.

C1129. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE MONTH 9 FINANCIAL REPORTS

RESOLVED:

1. That the receipts and payments for the period 1 – 31 December 2025 be received and noted.
2. That the balance sheet and trial balance for month 9 be received and noted.
3. The budget monitoring reports for 1 April to 31 December 2025 be received and noted.

C1130. TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred until the meeting of Full Council scheduled for 19 February 2026, due to the Chair of Finance Policy and General Purposes was not in attendance.

C1131. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT FOR JANUARY 2026 (FINAL)

The clerk clarified the overspend for Bliss Cleaning should read £491.00 and not £4,491 as stated within the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That officers contact suppliers to request contract costs for 2026/27 to enable the budget setting process to be as informed as possible.**
- 2. That the invoices for payment in the sum of £30,356.83 plus VAT be approved for payment.**
- 3. That Members note the information provided in respect of points one-six within the report.**
- 4. That the Accounts Clerk be instructed to undertake the action outlined in point 7.**
- 5. That the Accounts Clerk be instructed to amend Budget Line Descriptions to be more reflective of what they represent e.g. Fuel for Van to Fuel for Van and Mowers.**

C1132. CODE OF CONDUCT MATTERS

The chair advised that she had received an update on the outstanding Code of Conduct Complaint informing that the Monitoring Officer was nearing the end of their investigations, following which their report will be provided.

C1133. HYBRID MEETINGS AND LIVE STREAMING

Members were advised that in June 2025 the Government had given a clear statement of intent to change the law to permit local authorities, including Town and Parish Councils, to hold meetings on a hybrid or remote basis.

It was noted that the Government had not provided any timescales for the introduction of this legislation, however officers felt it would be prudent for the Council to consider whether this is something they would wish to adopt in readiness and to prepare for this in respect of live streaming equipment and a policy to support the process.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Members noted the Government's intention to legislate to allow hybrid meetings for town and parish councils, noting that there is no confirmed implementation date.**
- 2. That Officers undertake the preparatory work to include drafting policies and reviewing technical requirements, to ensure the Council is ready to act once the legislation is in force.**
- 4. That a further report be provided when legislation and accompanying guidance are published.**
- 5. That officers draft a report to be submitted to a meeting by the end of the financial year on how, in advance of legislation, Ledbury Town Council can progress on starting to live stream meetings.**

C1134. TO ENDORSE THE DECISIONS RECORDED IN THE MINUTES SINCE MAY 2023 OF MEETINGS WITH LESS THAN 6 MEMBERS PRESENT

Members were informed that information had been provided regarding the misinterpretation of legislation and guidance on what number of Councillors constitutes a quorum for Full Council. The standing interpretation has been that a quorum for Full Council is one third of councillors currently appointed, whereas clarifying advice recently received is that the correct interpretation is one third of total number of seats that are designated to the Council (six minimum).

Guidance had been sought in respect of how to regularise decisions previously made at inquorate meetings. The advice received was that the council should ratify the decisions previously taken en-bloc. The Clerk summarised the advice received as follows:

- “The purpose of the decision you are making is to ratify the decisions taken at previous meetings
- The council can pass a single resolution ratifying those decisions to prevent future challenge
- All members could vote in the single resolution (including those who were co-opted in the period), though for belt and braces I'd probably want to ensure that there was at least a quorum present this evening of councillors whose status could not be later challenged (i.e. those that were not co-opted at an inquorate meeting).
- There is no reason those co-opted later cannot ratify earlier decisions”

A list of inquorate meetings since May 2023 was provided within the officer report.

Councillor Sinclair raised the following questions:

1. When was LTC made aware of the number of Councillors required for meetings to be quorate?
2. Are resolutions made at inquorate meetings legal?
3. Why is the inquorate meeting of 24 July 2025 not listed?
4. Have the external and internal auditors been consulted and why did they not identify that meetings were inquorate?
5. Are Councillors who agree to the recommendations in this report breaking the law and is it wise to push this through without knowing this information?
6. Is the Council at risk of a Judicial Review if the recommendations are accepted?
7. Will the Council be financially liable for acting illegally?

The Chair reiterated the advice that had been provided that it was acceptable to ratify the decisions en-bloc, however she also recognised that if Members felt it prudent to do so this agenda item could be deferred to the meeting scheduled for 19 February in order to seek answers to the questions raised by Councillor Sinclair.

RESOLVED:

1. **This item has been deferred to the next meeting of Full Council scheduled for 19 February 2026 to allow the Clerk to seek responses to the questions raised by Councillor Sinclair.**
2. **That Members submit any further questions to the Clerk by 4:30pm on 30 January 2026.**
3. **The Clerk to email to Councillors a full list of hyperlinks to the minutes of the inquorate meetings held since May 2023.**
4. **That Members identify any individual decisions in these minutes which they are concerned about to the Clerk by 4:30pm on 6 February 2026**

The press left the meeting at 8.40pm.

C1135. TO CONSIDER PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

1. **Application No. 251528 – Proposed replacement of 16 windows to purpose built double glazed casement hard wood windows, painted white plus sandblasted glass to the right of the front door. - 54 The Homend Ledbury Herefordshire HR8 1BT - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**

RESOLVED:

No objection

- 2. Application No. 253580** – Part change of use and conversion of detached double garage from residential (Use Class C3) to commercial (Use Class E(c)(ii)) - **4 Progress Close Ledbury Herefordshire HR8 2QZ**

RESOLVED:

Objection on the grounds of noise nuisance, parking and traffic management issues related to a commercial premises being located in a residential area and noting plans to change the layout of this road in the future, which is likely to contribute to the traffic management issues.

Councillor Sinclair declared a non-pecuniary interest in Application no. 253554 and left the meeting at 8:47pm.

- 3. Application No. 253554** – Erection of single storey extension to existing utility room. - **Badgers Holt, Upperfields, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1LE**

RESOLVED:

No objection.

Councillor Sinclair re-joined the meeting at 8:49.

- 4. Application No. 253088** – Replacement of existing plant with new, removal of existing cold room and alterations to 2 no. openings to the rear, proposed laundrette and parcel lockers to front, and general redecoration to store – **Co-op Supermarket, New Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2EZ.**

RESOLVED:

- 1. That this item be deferred to the meeting of Full Council scheduled for 19 February 2026 to allow Members to review the application on the Herefordshire Council's planning portal.**
- 2. The Clerk be instructed to ask for an extension for provision of comments.**
- 5. Application No. 253151** – Installation of fibre optic cable and junction box – **16-18 Bye Street Ledbury Herefordshire HR8 2AA - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**

RESOLVED:

No Objection

C1136. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

That the update on the planning decisions be received and noted.

C1137. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(X)

RESOLVED:

That Standing Order 3(x) be suspended for a period of 20 minutes.

C1138. ITEMS DEFERRED TO MEETING OF COUNCIL SCHEDULED FOR 19 FEBRUARY 2026

RESOLVED:

That the following items be deferred to the meeting of Council scheduled for 19 February 2025, noting that these items will be the first items of business following the approval of the minutes of this meeting:

- i. Agenda item 23 – Storage container & removal costs for surplus furniture and equipment**
- ii. Agenda item 24 – Events Working Party**
- iii. Agenda item 26 - Draft Environment & Sustainability Policy**
- iv. Agenda item 27 - Authorisation for officers to commission advice on options for alternative use of council offices**
- v. Agenda item 32 – Citizen of the Year Nominations**

C1139. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

- i. To consider licensing applications review in respect of Ledbury Convenience Store, 23 High Street, Ledbury. HR8 1DS**
- ii. To consider licensing application review in respect of Flat 2, 23 High Street, Ledbury. HR8 1DS – mail order only premises**

RESOLVED:

- i. That Ledbury Town Council support the review of the premises Licence at Ledbury Convenience Store, 23 High Street, Ledbury, HR8 1DS**

- ii. **Members instructed the clerk to write a letter to the licensing agency supporting the withdrawal based on the grounds for review.**

Councillor Eakin left the meeting at 9:05pm

C1140. TO CONSIDER AND ENDORSE PROPOSALS PROVIDED FROM LEDBURY WARD COUNCILLORS IN RESPECT OF PARISH WARD BOUNDARIES INTERNAL TO THE LEDBURY PARISH BOUNDARY REVIEW

RESOLVED:

1. **That Ledbury Town Council support the proposed changes to the Ward boundaries within the parish of Ledbury as proposed by the three Ward Councillors.**
2. **That the Clerk be instructed to submit the proposal on behalf of Ledbury Town Council to the Boundary Commission public consultation before 2 February 2026.**

C1141. TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO A REQUEST FROM WELLINGTON HEATH ROAD SAFETY

Members were asked to give consideration to a request received from Wellington Heath in respect of funding towards Speed Indicator Devices (SID's) to be located in Wellington Heath.

RESOLVED:

1. **That Ledbury Town Council support the request for funding in support of SID's for Wellington Heath in the sum of £9,850.00 from the Market Town Investment Fund.**
2. **That the Clerk contact Herefordshire Council offices to ask whether it would be possible to allocate £9,850.00 from the £200k Market Town Investment Fund in support of Speed Indicator Devices being installed in Wellington Heath.**

C1142. STORAGE CONTAINER AND REMOVAL COSTS FOR SURPLUS FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next Full Council Meeting scheduled for 19 February 2026.

C1143. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE NOTES OF A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2026 AND TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council scheduled to be held on 19 February 2026.

- C1144. THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 23(A), AUTHORITY BE GIVEN FOR THE DEEDS OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL 807, 808 AND 812 TO BE SIGNED, GRANTING THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL TO THOSE NAMED ON THE INTERMENT FORM**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Standing Order 23(a), authority be granted for the Deeds of Exclusive Rights of Burial numbers 805 and 806 to be signed.

- C1145. TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO AND APPROVE THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council due to be held on 19 February 2026.

- C1146. TO AUTHORISE OFFICERS TO COMMISSION ADVICE ON OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE USE OF COUNCIL OFFICES**

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council scheduled to be held on 19 February 2026.

- C1147. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2026**

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee meeting held on 22 January 2026 be received and noted.**
- 2. That Council support the request from Post Holder 50 to undertake PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner (E-Learning) at a cost of £1,335, which includes the following:**
 - Course Materials**
 - Pre-course reading**
 - Foundation and Practitioner exams**

- E-book manual
 - 12 month's access to course materials
 - Hard copy manual
3. The Post Holder cover the cost of insurance for exam resits.
 4. That any project management projects to support the training be planned out with the Post Holder and their Line Manager ahead of the commencement of the course work.
 5. That the Post Holder be advised that the start of the course should be delayed until the 2026/27 financial year and that consideration should be given to the post holder's agreed responsibilities and commitments within the next 12 months to ensure the Post Holder has time to complete the course.
 6. That the Post Holder be advised that she would be expected to undertake the course work in her own time as well as allocated time as agreed with her line manager taking into account the operational needs of the Council.
 7. That the Post Holder be advised that Councillor Troy had offered support with the training.

C1148. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of Council is scheduled for Thursday, 19 February 2026.

C1149. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That 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.

C1150. GROUNDS CONTRACTOR EXTENSION

Members were requested to consider options in respect of an extension to the ground contractor's contract.

Councillor Bradford asked that it be minuted that he objects to the Council paying for grounds maintenance for areas that are owned by Herefordshire Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That Mr McCutcheon continue to carry out the grounds maintenance contract for an extended period of six-months from 1 April to 30 September 2026, at a total cost of £13,800, excluding all works relating to Dog Hill woods.
2. That officers obtain alternative quotations for the works relating to Dog Hill Wood with immediate effect.

Councillor Sinclair left the meeting at 9:36pm

C1151. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR 2025/26 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next Full Council Meeting due to be held of 19 February 2026.

The meeting ended at 9.38 pm.

Signed **Dated**