

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 MAY 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Chowns, Harvey, Hughes, Kettle, Morris and Sinclair.

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Julia Lawrence – Deputy Clerk
Honor Holton – Minute Taker
4 members of the public

C791. TO ELECT A TOWN MAYOR FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Chowns nominated Councillor Harvey to the position of Chairman of the Council, seconded by Councillor Hughes.

No other nominations were received.

Councillor Harvey noted how Council Membership is currently significantly depleted, and made reference to her health concerns, and stated that she did not feel in a position to undertake a significant number of responsibilities and asked that Members took these factors into consideration when considering her nomination to Chairman rather than Mayor. She also hoped that the council would be able to co-opt further Members and given that this suggested that there be a review in six-month's time as to whether there is a better candidate who is more able to fulfil civic responsibilities for the remainder of the year.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Harvey be duly elected to the position of Chairman of Ledbury Town Council pro, with a review after 6-months.

Councillor Harvey made her declaration of office to the role of Chairman.

C792. VOTE OF THANKS TO OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

The new Chairman called for a vote of thanks for the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Chowns, for all his hard work over the past year. She stated that as the Deputy Mayor it had been a pleasure to support him through the last twelve months and noted that he had done a fantastic job representing the town at a lot of civic events both in the town and across the three counties.

Councillor Harvey hoped that Councillor Chowns had enjoyed his year in office, referencing both public and behind the scenes work of running the Council over the past year, noting that he been a calm and very collected Chair and that she hoped that she had been able to learn

from his example. She finished with wishing Councillor Chowns a restful time with family and to catch up with all the things that have had to be put aside.

Councillor Hughes added his personal thanks.

The Retiring Mayor was presented with a Past Mayor's Badge and retiring Mayoress was presented with a bouquet of flowers as a thank you.

RETIRING MAYOR'S RESPONSE AND CLOSING REMARKS

The outgoing Mayor gave a short speech about his year in office as follows:

"It has genuinely been a **privilege** – and most of the time a pleasure – to be Mayor of this lovely town, and your representative in the County and neighbouring counties for these last twelve months.

I have attended almost 100 engagements as Mayor, and the unofficial Mayor's Secretary (that is, my wife and consort) has calculated that this has involved at least 380 hours, quite apart from many hours spent reading agenda papers, preparing to chair meetings, responding to emails and letters, drafting reports, and so on. We have had some difficulties, of course, including the loss of a number of Councillors through resignation, some Code of Conduct issues and a regrettable complaint leading to disciplinary action. There have been some **staff changes**, including the ill-health retirement of our Groundsman, and the recruitment of a Clerk's Assistant, an apprentice, and two staff focussed particularly on the Masefield Matters project. I am most **grateful to the Clerk**, Angie Price, for her tireless work leading this professional team and keeping all of us Councillors on the straight and narrow.

Throughout the year I have been much encouraged by conversations with business owners, volunteers in a wide range of charities and interest groups, the staff of our schools, the ministers and congregations of our churches. Those who have helped to organise fund-raising for my nominated charities, or who have donated prizes for raffles and special events are very much appreciated by me and by the two charities – Ledbury Refugee Support and the Alzheimer's Society.

The achievement of the National Lottery Heritage grant for the Masefield Matters project has been a **real coup** for Ledbury – though I cannot claim any personal credit for it. But I shall look forward to participating in its programme over the next two or three years. A personal target that I **do** claim some credit for was the reopening of the Bye Street toilet block – which I know is much appreciated by visitors arriving by coach!

I cannot end without remarking on the steadfast support and the advice that I have received throughout the year from Deputy Mayor Liz Harvey. This lady is a phenomenon, and a fount of knowledge about all aspects of Ledbury life. I have been very grateful to have her by my side.”

C793. **TO RECEIVE APOLGOIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Bradford, Browning and Eakin.

C794. **TO ELECT A DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Councillor Morris nominated Councillor Chowns for the role of Deputy Mayor; Councillor Chowns thanked Councillor Morris for the nomination but declined to accept the nomination.

Councillor Chowns nominated Councillor Hughes for the role of Deputy Mayor; Councillor Hughes thanked Councillor Chowns for the nomination but declined to accept the nomination.

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred until the next meeting of Full Council.

C795. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

C796. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

Councillor Harvey noted that there is a need to move through the agenda swiftly to enable Members to be available for the VE Day event at 9.00 pm. Therefore, she proposed that governance documents be received and noted and that a meeting of Councillors be held to review these documents and consider any amendments accordingly at a future date.

C797. **TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2024, WHICH WERE FORMALLY APPROVED AND SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD AT A MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 6 JUNE 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 9 May 2024 be received and noted.

C798. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 1 MAY 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 1 May 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C799. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2024 be received and noted, subject to the following amendments:

That “Judith” be changed to “Janet” on page 3601 under ‘Presentation of Citizen of the year Awards 2025.’

That “roadworkses” be amended to “roadworks” on page 3603 under ‘Roadwork closures and resurfacing was raised’.

C800. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MAY 2025 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a Resources Committee meeting held on 1 May 2025 be received and noted.

C801. TO REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Members were reminded that the Committees, with the exception of the Resources committee, were currently in abeyance due to the low numbers of Councillors. However, the Chairman pointed out that it was necessary to appoint Chairs to the Standing Committees as part of the Annual Meeting process, noting that they will then be in place once the Council returns to committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference be received and noted, recognising that ahead of standing up any committees it will be necessary to review them and make any amendments required.

C802.

TO APPOINT MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was noted that whilst committees are held in abeyance it would be helpful to consider committee membership due to it being one of the statutory requirements of the annual meeting.

The Clerk advised that Councillor Eakin had notified that he would like to continue as a member of the Environment & Leisure Committee and the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Sinclair raised concern over the appointment of Standing Committees whilst they are in abeyance as this indicated an assumption that Committees would be reinstated and that the resolution to suspend committees has not been changed and therefore an assumption should not be made.

The Chair advised that committees have not been abolished, only suspended, but that this does not mean that they do not have membership, they do still exist, and membership can be appointed in anticipation of them being able to meet at some point in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Membership of the Council's Standing Committees for 2025/26 Municipal Year be as follows, noting that the committees are currently suspended:

Environment & Leisure Committee

**Councillor Chowns
Councillor Eakin
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Kettle**

Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee

**Councillor Eakin
Councillor Harvey
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Eakin**

Planning, Economy & Tourism Committee

**Councillor Harvey
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Morris**

C803. TO ELECT CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS TO THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

- 1. To defer appointing Deputy Chairs until the next Meeting of Full Council, due to several Councillor absences.**
- 2. That the following Councillors be elected to act as Chair and Vice Chair for Standing Committees:**

Committee	Chair	Vice Chair
Environment & Leisure	Councillor Chowns	
Finance, Policy & General Purposes	Councillor Hughes	
Planning, Economy & Tourism	Councillor Morris	
Resources	The Chairman	

C804. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE A DRAFT SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the draft schedule of meetings for the 2025/2026 municipal year be approved pro-tem to assess the amount of business being considered on a three weekly meeting cycle.**
- 2. That it be noted that if the Standing Committee meetings are reinstated the meeting schedule will be amended and resubmitted to Council for approval.**

C805. TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk advised that there is a draft amended document available for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Standing Orders be approved and adopted, with no amendments.

C806. **TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

RESOLVED:

That the Council's financial regulations be approved and adopted, with no amendments noting that they were updated and approved by Council on 10 November 2024.

C807. **TO NOTE THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

RESOLVED:

That the Council's Code of Conduct be received and noted.

C808. **TO APPOINT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

RESOLVED:

1. That the following Members be elected as Outside Body Representatives for the 2024/25 Municipal year:

OUTSIDE BODY	COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE 2025/26
Age Concern	Councillor Morris
Community Choir	Chairman
Community Hall Association	Councillor Hughes Councillor Morris
Herefordshire Council – Parish Summits	Appropriate Chair or Vice Chair
Ledbury Carnival Association	Chairman Councillor Kettle
Ledbury Consolidated Charities	Councillor Eakin
Ledbury in Bloom	Councillor Morris
Ledbury Strömstad Twinning	Chairman Councillor Chowns
Ledbury Food Group	Councillor Morris
Ledbury Food Bank	Councillor Chowns Councillor Morris
Ledbury Children's Centre	Chairman
Ledbury Primary School Governors	Councillor Morris
RMTG Local Councillor Panels – Rural Vulnerable Young & Older People	That these two memberships be deferred until the next meeting of Council.
John Masefield Society	That this item be deferred to the next meeting of Council

2. That the following Representatives for Outside Bodies be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council.
 - i. RMTG Local Councillor Panels – Rural Vulnerable Young & Older People
 - ii. John Masefield Society
3. That all outside bodies be notified of the Council's representatives for the 2025/26 municipal year and that they be asked to provide a schedule of their meetings.

C809. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S ASSET REGISTER

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council's Asset Register be received and noted.
2. That the Asset Register be reviewed at a working group meeting and revisions to be submitted to Council.

C810. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S RISK REGISTER

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council's Risk Register be received and noted.
2. That the Risk Register be reviewed by the Clerk and Chair of Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.

C811. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER IN RESPECT OF ALL INSURABLE RISKS FOR 2025

RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for the Council's insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks be received and noted.

C812. TO REVIEW THE CORPORATE PLAN

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Plan be received and noted.

C813. TO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- a. Complaints Procedure
- b. Freedom of Information
- c. GDPR
- d. Social Media Policy

RESOLVED:

1. That the above policies and procedures be received and noted.
2. That an amendment be made to the Complaints Procedure in respect of the “Not satisfied” paragraph. It should state that in the event that a concern/complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily a complaint can be made to the Local Government Ombudsman and not the Monitoring Officer as stated.

C814. TO DETERMINE CHEQUE SIGNATORIES FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

1. That the following Councillors be appointed as Cheque Signatories for the 2025/26 Municipal Year:

**Councillor Harvey
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Kettle
Councillor Morris**

2. That the Clerk be authorised to complete the relevant Bank Mandate forms as required to recognise the new cheque signatories; Councillors Kettle and Morris.

C815. TO REVIEW COUNCIL’S AND/OR STAFF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO OTHER BODIES FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

That the Council’s and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies for the 2025/26 Municipal Year be received and noted.

C816. TO REVIEW LIST OF DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

That the list of direct debit payments for 2025/26 Municipal Year be received and noted.

C817. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT FOR MAY 2025 (INTERIM)

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment for May 2025 be approved.

C818. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

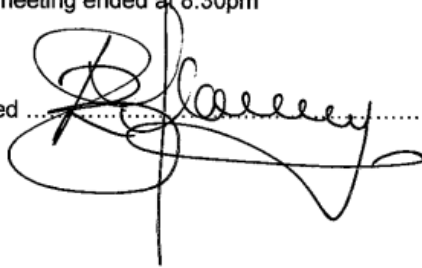
RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of Full Council will be held on 22 May 2025.

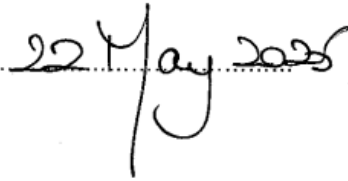
The meeting ended at 8:30pm

The meeting ended at 8:30pm

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Kelly', written over a dotted line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Date

A handwritten date '22 May 2025' in black ink, written over a dotted line. The date is written in a cursive style.