



# ANNUAL REPORT

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2024-25

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**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

# Message from the Mayor

Ledbury has continued its recovery from the disruption of the Covid pandemic, and is once again a thriving and growing community with a wide range of activities and events. We are something of a tourist magnet, often mentioned as a good place to live, or visit, by writers in the national press. This is due to the hard work of our Town Council staff, our town councillors, and a host of volunteers of all kinds. It's been a privilege to be your representative this year, and to hear the warm compliments that are paid to Ledbury by other nearby towns, villages and cities.

I should like to express my appreciation of the support I have received throughout the civic year from the Town Clerk, Angie Price, and all of her team, particularly the Mayor's Secretary Sophie Jarvis; from the Deputy Mayor Cllr Liz Harvey; from fellow councillors, from my Chaplain, Revd. Phil Warrey, and from my wife and Consort Gillian.



**Councillor Stephen Chowns**

We have maintained our link with HMS Ledbury, seen the Poetry Festival and Carnival grow, listened to our young people (who now await our responses), and achieved a tremendous Heritage Lottery grant to largely fund the John Masefield memorial project – known as 'Masefield Matters' – which will culminate in 2028 with celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet's birth. On the way there have been little victories, such as the re-opening of the Bye Street toilets, and tremendous fund-raising events for my two charities: Alzheimer's Society and Ledbury Refugee Support. Ledbury's Got Talent and the Mayor's Mile – both instituted by my predecessors – have been a great success. And highlights for me have been the Community Choir concerts and the amazing Community Brass Band event in early April.

We need to do more to support families moving into our town; we need to improve the coordination of the work of preserving heritage buildings; and we need to improve our market provision and relations with traders and businesses. The Council's work would be greatly enhanced by having more councillors – people willing to share their ideas, and engage with the needs of all members of the community.

Thank you, everyone – I've enjoyed the year so much!



# Council Overview

## Supporting Community, Economy, and Public Spaces with Strategic Budget Allocation

During the 2024-25 financial year Ledbury Town Council has continued its work supporting community events and activities, encouraging economic development and tourism trips to the town and looking after the public spaces, playgrounds, green areas and heritage buildings in public ownership or control.

The total budget for the council year was £682,400 with 47% of this funding supporting the council’s activities and 53% funding the council’s costs in delivering those activities.

Diagram 1 shows by the size of each coloured area the proportion that the council’s total funding is spent on each general area of activity.

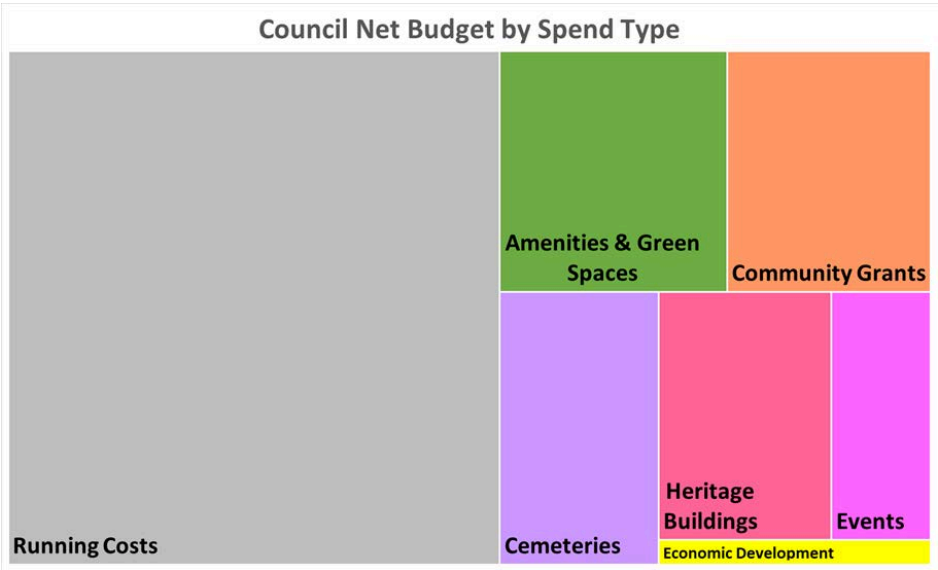


Diagram 1

**Diagram 1: Area plot showing proportion of council funding spent on each area of activity**

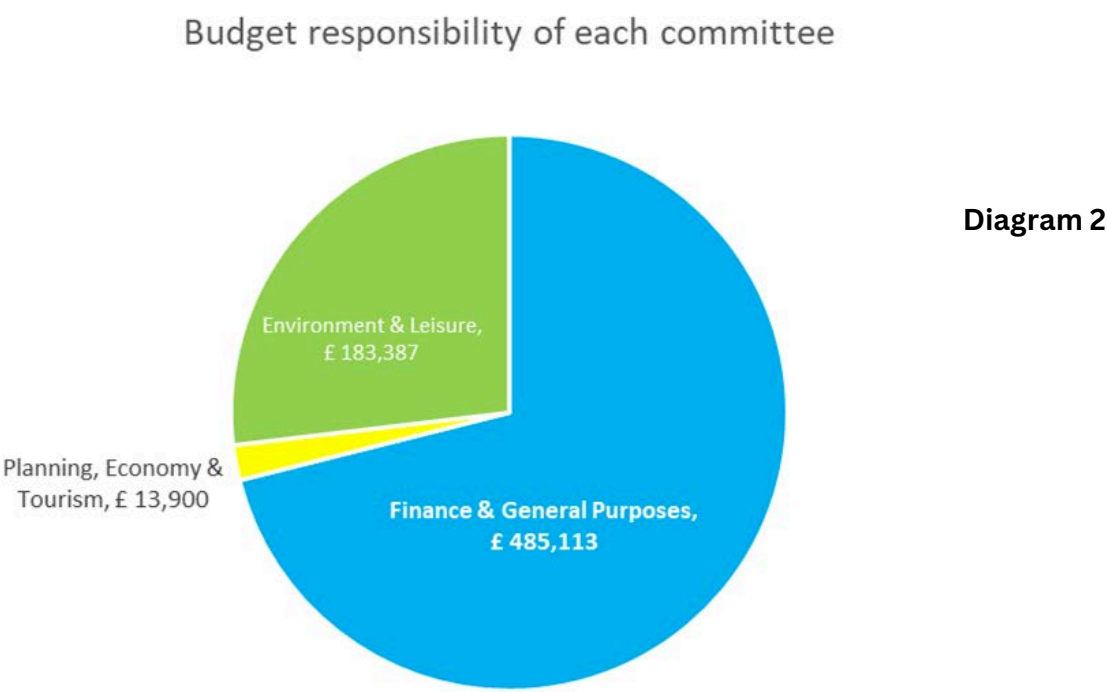
The council has three committees overseeing the delivery of the majority of council activities:

- Environment & Leisure – responsible for green spaces and council buildings and the running of council-led events in the town
- Planning, Economy and Tourism – responsible for encouraging inward investment, markets and tourism and responding to local planning applications and strategic planning matters
- Finance & General Purposes – responsible for oversight of the council’s financial matters, the award of grants for community groups and for the policy and governance framework of the council.

and a fourth Resources Committee to handle governance issues, complaints and staff matters when they arise.



# Budget responsibility of each committee

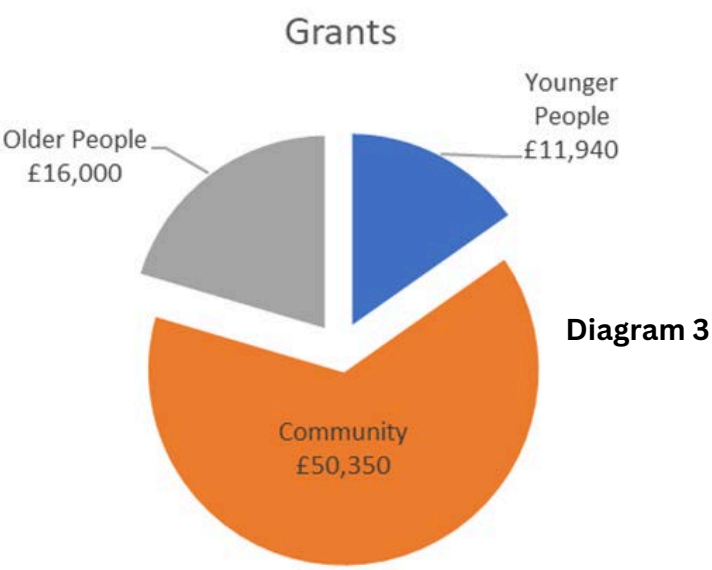


**Diagram 2: The proportion of the council's total budget overseen by each committee.**

Despite the significant variation on the proportion of the Council's overall budget overseen by each committee, the workload of each committee is roughly similar because not all of the work done involves the spending of money and also because most of the council's work across all three committees is delivered by our staff, while overall responsibility for staff costs remains with the finance committee.

The Council spends more than £73,000 (11% of its budget) on providing grants to other groups to support their work in our community. These grants support a range of activities aimed at supporting: Older people, Younger People and the Community as a whole.

The funding this year has been spread across these activity types as shown in Diagram 3.



### Diagram 3: Distribution of grants across activity types

As well as one-off grants, the council offers multi-year grants to a number of groups providing sustained support across our community so that this provides some continuity and security of funding to these activities. Groups receiving grants from the Council during this year include

- LEAF
- Ledbury Food Bank
- AGE UK Hereford Localities
- Dream your future families
- Community Action Ledbury
- Barret Browning Clock
- Ledbury Methodist Church
- Ledbury Carnival
- Buses 4 Us

The Council has supported a variety of local events with funding and has also organised a number of events for the community to enjoy. These include:

- Ledbury Carnival
- Community Day
- Christmas Lights Switch-on
- Ledbury Fringe Music Festival
- Ledbury Poetry Festival
- The Big Green Week
- Ledbury World Bookfest
- Ledbury Celebration and Food Festival
- Heritage Open Days
- Late Night Shopping
- Big Breakfast
- Candle Lighting event



As well as giving out funding through our various grants schemes, the Town Council also brings money into the town through the securing of inward investment grants and by working with the County Council to ensure that their grant funding and inward investment budgets are spent on the right things locally.

This year the Town Council assisted in directing the County Council spending on road maintenance and public realm projects, received the benefit of £11,500 in grant funding from the County Council, secured funding streams and invested £7,000 of its own funds working with a dedicated and highly experienced group of local people to secure more than £220,000 of Heritage Lottery funding for a two year project to raise community awareness of the work of our very own Poet Laureate - John Masefield. More information can be found on page 11 of this report.

## Changes in Council Membership

This year we have continued to be short-handed in terms of our councillor numbers. We have said goodbye to a number of long- and shorter-serving councillors and welcomed some new faces onboard.

We would like to thank all departing councillors for their dedication, good humour and hard work over the time they have served the community. We welcome our new councillors and thank them for committing time to public service.

Presently the council has 9 vacancies across all the wards making up the parish – see diagram 4. If you feel you would like to find out more about being a town councillor, please contact the Town Clerk for more details on: [clerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)

### Leaving the Council



**Councillor J Newsham**



**Councillor H l'Anson**



**Councillor P Howells**



**Councillor D McAll**



**Councillor S Furlonger**

### Meet Our New Council Members

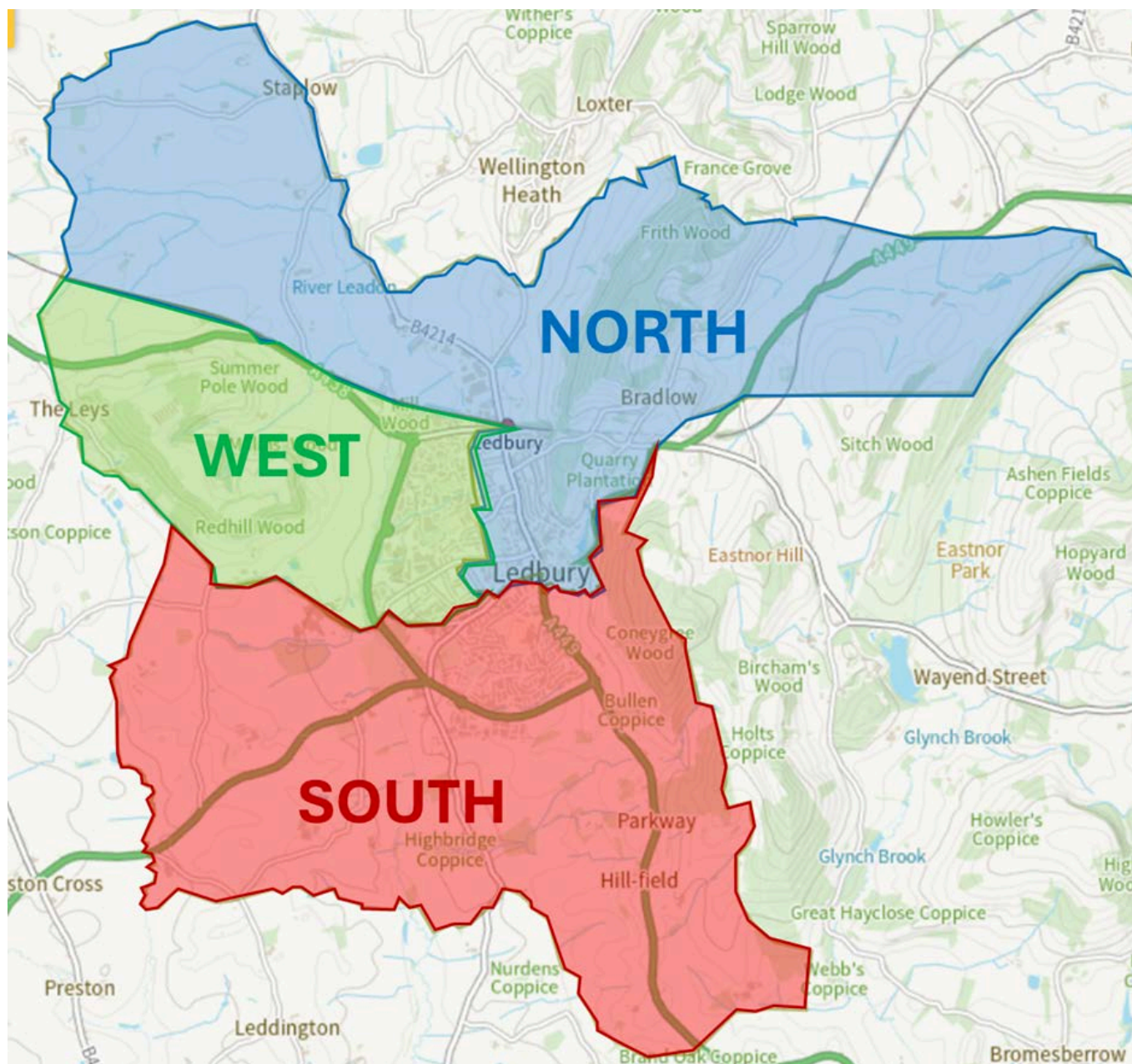


**Councillor J Browning**



**Councillor D Kettle**

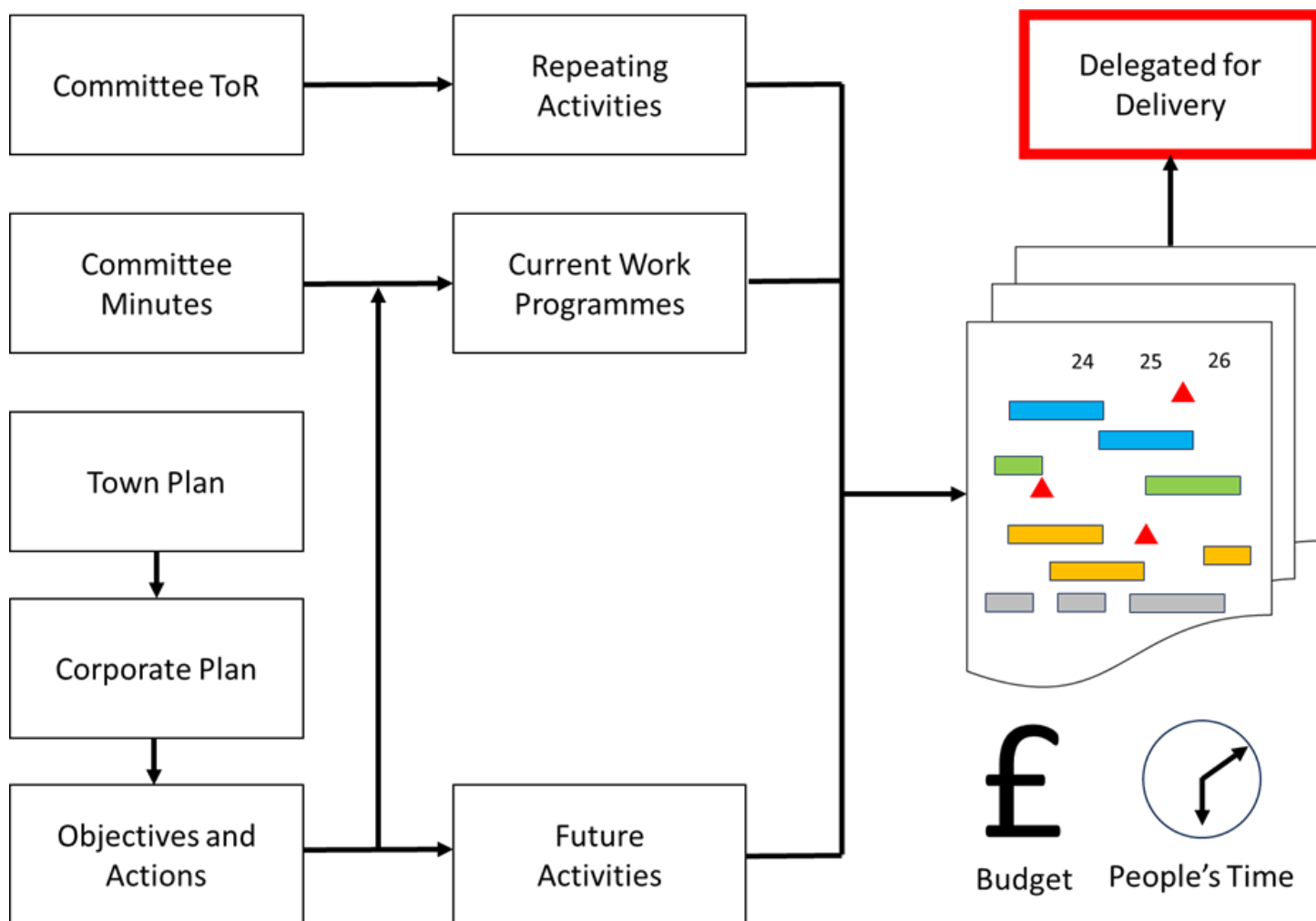




**Diagram 4: The Wards of Ledbury Parish**

Whilst the Council has only half its full complement of councillors, business has been conducted for most of this year in Full Council meetings, rather than at committee level, so that we can be confident that sufficient members are present to be able to hold the meeting lawfully. Despite this, councillors have spent much of the year putting plans together to enable committees to be delegated their own decision-making powers in the future. Information from the committees' existing Terms of Reference and current activities have been combined with the more strategic requirements for the Town Council provided by residents through the Town Plan. These have been added and considered alongside new and emerging requirements for action.

This information has been prioritised and set out in timetables which have been provisioned in terms of funding and the in-house and community effort required to deliver them. Once these plans have been approved by Full Council, they will be able to be delegated – including the financial decisions to realise them – to each of the committees for delivery.



This will enable decisions to be enacted more swiftly, as committees will not have to wait for their recommendations to be approved at a later full council meeting. Instead, these decisions will be able to be taken immediately.

### Looking ahead to 2025-26

The budget for the coming council year was set by the Town Council in February 2025. Overall, the budget went up by 7% to £734,622 and the parish precept charged to local residents went up by 5% to £198.71. This is an increase of just under £10 for a Band D property. The main cost increases being for the maintenance of the cemetery and the council's heritage buildings and an increase in provision made to support local events.

In the coming year, work programmes prioritise:

- Investment in amenity and green spaces
- Funding improved support for young people
- Improving the town's Charter Markets
- Encouraging community groups to grow and flourish
- Delivering an enhanced programme of events supported by local groups and businesses
- Developing a partnership approach to the ownership and operation of heritage buildings
- Boosting the economic benefit achieved locally from tourism
- Raising public awareness of the works of John Masefield through the Masefield Matters project



# Fundraising and Sponsorship



- Secured £2,500 towards the Light Switch on Event from UKSPF
- Held a Mayor's coffee Morning in aid of Women's Aid
- Awarded over £62,000 in community grants
- Raised £4,216.17 for the Mayor's Chosen Charities
- Secured £9,000 for the Painted Room through the UKSPF
- Secured £220,000 from the National Heritage Lottery for the Masefield Matters Project
- Helped secure match funding from Community Foundation for John Masefield High School to purchase Books for students for free.
- Awarded £16,000 to support the community-run Daffodil Line bus service, ensuring vital transport links for residents and students between Ledbury and Newent
- Committed to a further £8,000 in grant funding in 2025/26 to support the community-run Daffodil Line bus service
- Partnered with local companies and businesses to successfully raise £1,570 for children's Christmas gifts in Ledbury.
- Collaborated with local businesses to secure raffle prizes and other forms of sponsorship for the Mayor's fundraising events



**Local Artist in residence  
Jeanette McCulloch**



# Green Spaces & Amenities

**Dog Hill Wood – Woodland is a designated Ancient Semi-natural woodland and a former coppice. Majority of canopy species mostly ash and oak, are over 100 years old with the occasional yew at 200+**

- 11.66 Hectares of well-managed space
- Management of the Square at St Katherines carpark
- Speed Indicators installed North of Parkway
- Tree management including tree felling and tree surveys for Ledbury Cemetery and Dog Hill Wood
- Facilitating wildlife watch groups in New Street Cemetery
- Sold over 543 packs of dog poo bags to encourage dog owners to keep our green spaces clean

- Refurbishment of 3 decommissioned phone boxes in the town in readiness to support defibrators
- Pews and lecterns in the Cemetery Chapel revarnished to match previously re-stained wooden floors
- In partnership with Love Ledbury, Ledbury Town Council is committed to keeping the Bye Street public toilets open, clean, and freely accessible for the benefit of the community and visitors alike.
- 25% of every order of dog poo bags are donated to Ledbury Food Bank
- Invested in a foam stream weeding machine for the weeds in and around the town
- Plaque installed in the Cemetery Chapel in memory of William Turberfield (“Bill the Bell”), Town Crier from 2000–2018
- Oak memorial board installed to honour past Councillors
- New CCTV system installed at the Recreation Ground and Cemetery
- Lightning Conductor Test and Inspection completed on the Cemetery Chapel Spire
- Cemetery Chapel opened for the Annual Candle Lighting event, with memory tree and refreshments including mince pies
- New Scatter Garden to be introduced later this year in the new area of the cemetery
- Maintenance works scheduled, include: repointing perimeter walls, improved management of the new burial area, driveway improvements, and hard landscaping features to prevent vehicles from driving on grass verges
- Plastic and Oasis floral foam from the Cemetery are responsibly recycled and repurposed through Co-op Funeralcare.



A photograph showing a person's hand lighting small tealight candles in a black metal holder. The candles are arranged in rows, and some are already lit, casting a warm glow. In the background, a wooden chair is visible against a plain wall.

# Over 100 visitors at Ledbury Chapel

*"My biggest excitement  
was at The New Street  
Chapel. I discovered my  
family's burial sites. An  
unforgettable  
connection to my  
Ledbury heritage."*

Resident of Ledbury who took part in  
Heritage Open Days



# Events and Engagement

- Supporting local community groups to hold various events in the town, to benefit its residents
- Partnership with Ledbury Poetry and Ledbury Food Group to hold Ledbury Celebration
- Held 7 free events in and around the town
- Working with local schools to promote events and create community engagement
- Published 57 updates on the Town Council Website under 'News and Articles'
- Published The Town Council Newsletter 6 times, with each edition growing with further updates from community groups
- Partnership in the Ledbury Listening Project
- Engagement with local Youth Group to choose a replacement tyre swing at the Recreation Ground
- Attending Network Meetings with local organisations and Talk Community
- Town Council presence at 4 Community Events
- Introduced a community events calendar on the Town Council website, which is open to all to use
- Mayor / Deputy of Ledbury attended 93 engagements
- Working with Sheds Together to extend staff skills in maintenance and tool handling
- Hosted 4 Mayor's Coffee Mornings
- Raised £4,216.17 for the Mayor's chosen charities
- 1.46k followers on Facebook
- 420 followers on Instagram
- 25% of all orders on dog poo bags donated to the Ledbury Food Bank
- Ledbury Town Council Gazebos hired out 17 times – free of charge to community groups and market traders
- Promoting local events in the Tourist Information and Town Council windows
- Litterpick in and around the town
- Awarded 4 residents with the Distinguished Citizens Award



**Wild\_about\_ledbury**



**Ledbury Town Council**







# **This year's Mayor's Mile raised over £500**

*supporting Ledbury Refugee  
Support, Alzheimer's Society, and  
Ledbury Town FC.*

*Special thanks go to Steve  
Onions from Ledbury Town FC  
for his dedication in helping to  
organise the event, and to the  
Ledbury Harriers Running Club  
for their continued support.*



*"I must go down to  
the seas again, to  
the lonely sea and  
the sky, and all I ask  
is a tall ship and a  
star to steer her by"*

*John Masefield  
'Sea-Fever'*

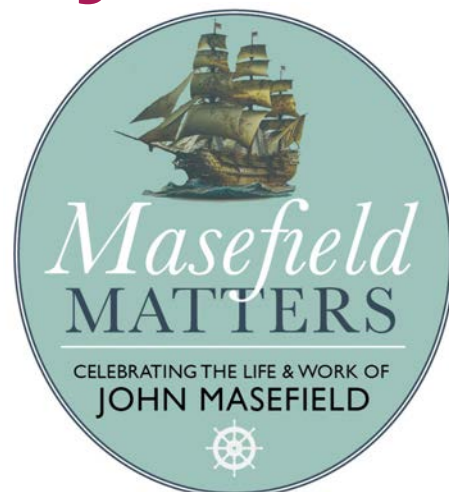




# Masefield Matters Project

## Celebrating the Legacy of John Masefield in Ledbury

2028 marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of John Masefield in Ledbury. In the early twentieth-century Masefield was a best-selling author and he was appointed Poet Laureate in 1930. His inspirational life and work have now faded from view and a Ledbury-based project, Masefield Matters, will rectify this.



Through a programme of activities, the local community will have the opportunity to reconnect with Masefield by exploring the things that mattered to him, including the countryside and the sea. These activities will help to determine what the form of the ultimate memorial will take. The two-year project has been awarded £220,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.

The project is being run by Project Co-Ordinator, Emma Clowsley, and Project Assistant, Isabel Lewis, and supported by a team of representatives of local organisations who make up the Board overseeing the delivery of the project.



**Emma Clowsley**  
Project Co-ordinator

Emma is a proud Ledbury resident who joins us after leading a two-year community project for Ledbury Poetry, and has a background in risk management and compliance. Isabel joins us with a newly acquired master's degree in Conservation of Cultural Heritage.



### Emma Clowsley

Project Co-ordinator - Masefield Matters  
Ledbury Town Council  
Tel: 01531 632306  
Mobile: 07701 256328

### Isabel Lewis

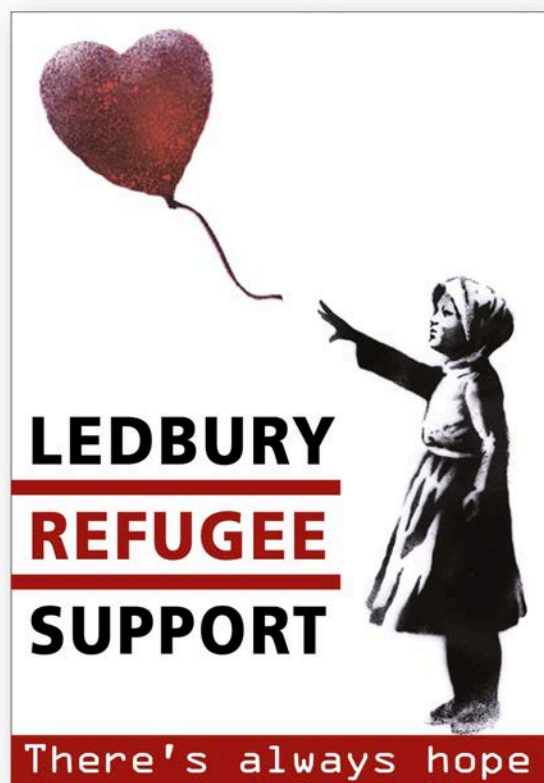
Project Assistant Intern - Masefield Matters  
Ledbury Town Council  
Tel: 01531 800583  
Mobile: 07701 256328

# Mayor's Charities 2024-25

## Ledbury Refugee Support

Ledbury Refugee Support is a recently formed humanitarian group dedicated to raising funds, collecting essential supplies, and increasing awareness to aid refugees across the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe. The group focusses on providing support to those urgently in need-independent of politics and religious belief. The collective of volunteers supporting the group focus with compassion on encouraging progress towards peace.

All donations gathered are directed towards assisting refugees, with the group carefully selecting a small number of charities to support. At a time when many organisations are struggling to meet growing demands, Ledbury Refugee Support aims to offer relief, solidarity, and meaningful assistance to those who need it most.



Alzheimer's Society UK is a leading charity dedicated to supporting people affected by dementia, funding vital research, and campaigning for change. Their mission is to ensure that no one faces dementia alone by providing expert advice, emotional support, and practical resources for individuals, families, and caregivers.

Through initiatives like Dementia Friends and support groups, they work to increase awareness and create a more dementia-friendly society. They also invest in ground-breaking research to find better treatments, improve care, and ultimately work towards a cure.

With over 900,000 people living with dementia in the UK, Alzheimer's Society UK plays a crucial role in offering hope and support to those affected. Every donation helps fund life-changing services and advances in dementia research, making a real difference in the fight against this condition.

# Tourist Information

- 2,977 enquiries from visitors to the TIC
- Working with Glide Media to provide leaflets to visitors on local attractions
- Working with Visit Herefordshire to promote Ledbury as a visitor destination
- Collaborating with Buses4us to promote the Daffodil Line
- Working with Ledbury and District Civic Society to sell Heritage Maps
- Working with the Traders Association to promote Ledbury
- Working with Herefordshire BID and local companies to produce a Town Map
- Supporting tourism and local economy through the TEMAP Group, which develops initiatives like the Ledbury Town Map & Guide to promote events, markets, and attractions.



## Grants



Each year, the Town Council offers the community an opportunity to apply for grants to support projects that benefit local residents. This year, the Council has provided support to many local organisations, granting a total of £65,000.

Beneficiaries include John Masefield School, Ledbury Carnival, Ledbury Methodist, Ledbury Food Bank, Dream Your Future Families, and LEAF, among others.

## Ledbury Planning & Tourism

- 64 Planning Applications were considered at the Planning Economy and Tourism Committee
- Worked with Ward Councillors on the needs for improved community infrastructure paid by developers
- Consulted on premises licenses
- Adopted a new Markets policy
- Developing a new Charter Market Strategy
- Developing a new Tourism Strategy
- Welcomed 4820 visitors to the 16th Century Painted Room
- 462 tours at the Market House









# Connect with Ledbury Town Council

If you have any questions about the annual report or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office. We welcome your enquiries, feedback, and suggestions. Our dedicated team is here to assist you with any questions you may have about our services, programmes, or community initiatives.



Town Clerk - Angela Price  
[clerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)



Deputy Clerk - Julia Lawrence  
[deputyclerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)



Community Engagement Officer - Olivia Trueman  
[ceo@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:ceo@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)



Receptionist and Mayor's Secretary- Sophie Jarvis  
[reception@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:reception@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk)



## Make a change to your Community!

If our work throughout the year has inspired you and you're curious about becoming a councillor, we'd love to hear from you! Serving as a councillor is a rewarding way to make a difference in our community, and we're here to provide you with all the information and support you need to get started.

Please feel free to contact us at the office for more information on how you can get involved.

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



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