

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2025

PRESENT: Councillors Stephen Chowns (Town Mayor), Councillor Liz Harvey (Deputy Mayor),

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Julia Lawrence – Deputy Town Clerk
30 Residents
1 Non-resident

a) PRESENTATION OF CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2025

Citizen of the Year Awards were presented to:

Mary Ann Keyes
Judith Meredith
Stuart Houghton

Ben Mowbrary was not present, and the Mayor asked Councillor Morris, who had nominated him, to receive the award on his behalf and to arrange to deliver it to Ben.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF A TOWN MEETING HELD ON 25 April 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Town Meeting held on 25 April 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Mayor stated what a privilege it had been to be the town's representative and one of the joys of going to other similar events is how many people compliment Ledbury and what a lovely place it is. The Mayor's Civic Celebration was discussed and those present were invited to attend.

He continued to say that Ledbury has continued to recover from the Covid pandemic, and that the town is a "tourist magnet" and this has been reflected in the national press upon occasion this year.

The town council staff, councillors and volunteers were commended with the Town Clerk, Angela Price, the Mayor's Secretary, Sophie Jarvis, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liz Harvey, all receiving special recognition for their work throughout the year.

The Mayor thanked Rev. Phil Warrey of The Methodist Church, and also his wife and Consort, Gillian.

He stated that the Council have maintained links with HMS Ledbury, the second oldest commissioned naval vessel in the Royal Navy, with HMS Victory being the oldest.

Several matters were discussed such as the growing popularity of the poetry festival and carnival, the Youth Consultation held in 2024, the Masefield Matters project, the re-opening of the Bye Street Toilets and successful fundraising efforts for the mayor's charities through events such as Ledbury's Got Talent and the Mayor's Mile.

The Nolan Principles were discussed and shortcomings regarding two Ledbury Town Councillors were highlighted. Councillor Chowns stated that Ledbury Town Council is determined that the Council be a safe place for everyone to work, visit and engage with and we shall continue to sincerely address shortfalls in the service we provide as a council.

Depletion of councillor numbers was highlighted and the hope to co-opt more members in the coming months.

4. LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Attendees were invited to raise questions.

Thanks were given to Council Staff for their hard work and commitment to Ledbury from a member of the public at this time.

5. TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2025/26

Attendees were invited to ask questions, none were raised.

Former Councillor Newsham was thanked for his help with the budget preparation.

RESOLVED:

That the information regarding the Town Council Budget 2025/26 be received and noted.

b. POLICE REPORT

PC Dean Wall was in attendance to give a report of crime in Ledbury. The main areas discussed were opportunistic theft and issues with electronic scooters. Criminal damage on the main Worcester Road was discussed and PC Wall noted that the offenders had been identified, and actions were now in process to deal with this matter. Speeding and noise nuisance was highlighted. It was noted that the Police see a lot of reports on social media, however this is often long after the event. He urged members of the public to contact the Police directly should they see something that they feel is a Police matter. Contact details for the police will be made available on the Ledbury Town Council Website after the meeting. Growing population regarding policing was discussed. Councillor Harvey highlighted the way policing is being provided differently in recent years alike health services etc, it is not necessarily the "bobby on the beat". Also discussed was Neighbourhood Matters, a messaging service between the police and the wider public which is not through social media. Ledbury was described as a low crime area with little drug related issues.

6. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM ANY ELECTOR OF LEDBURY PARISH

Q1 – Question raised regarding developments and the S106 obligation to raise money and who benefits from it.

Response – It was noted that this was a question for Herefordshire Council; Councillors Simmons and Harvey, as Ward Councillors, picked this item up and provided a response. It was highlighted planning is a long process and that this includes the consideration given to Section 106 monies. The Councillors provided details of where S106 monies are currently being spent or planned to be spent in Ledbury, such as, a widened footbridge/cycle bridge over Orchard Lane, a Pelican Crossing across Bridge Street, improved sports facilities and an all-age football facility is also being discussed. The Section 106 Wishlist was discussed. Attendees were encouraged to comment on planning applications in the early stages of the planning process via the Herefordshire Council Planning Portal to help influence decision making. Residents were made aware that currently £664,700 is held from developers from Hawk Rise Developments and Hopfields. They were also advised that Bloor had made an upfront payment towards sports facilities and a further £545,000 is awaited. A Feasibility Study for expansion options regarding education is being undertaken.

Q2 – Road work closures and resurfacing was raised.

Response – This was not a matter for the Town Council but for Herefordshire Council. It was however noted that there needs to be short term sacrifice for long term gain. The roads need to be closed in order to be resurfaced. Some roadworks were due to the unplanned development and some works legally need to be carried out.

Q3 – Can the planning department insist that solar panels be put on new roofs.

Response – Residents were advised that there are rules on where they can and can't be put. Herefordshire Council has not and does not apply more than what the law requires. Positioning of the roofs is considered with developers so that if someone wants to install solar panels the roofs are in optimum positions to allow for this.

Q4 – Empty shop at 14 The High Street

Response – This was a question for Hereford Council. Officers are aware of the dilapidations and the overall effect in the high street regarding the empty premises. It is a slow but moving process.

Q5 – The Old Methodist Church

Residents were advised that planning permission has been granted for alterations to this building, however currently there are no plans to proceed with this.

The meeting ended at 8.12 pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)