



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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19 February 2026

To: All Councillors

Dear Councillor

Please find attached the To Follow papers in respect of the meeting of **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**, to be held on **Thursday, 19 February 2026 at 7.00 pm** in the **Town Council Offices, Church Lane, Ledbury, HR8 1DH** which are supplementary to the papers sent to you on 13 February 2026.

Yours faithfully

Angela Price PSLCC, MIWFM, AICCM
CiLCA (England & Wales)
Town Clerk

FILMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETING

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AGENDA

12. Ward Councillor Reports

(Pages 5914 – 5918)

- i. Councillor Harvey – Ledbury North
- ii. Councillor Peberdy – Ledbury West
- iii. Councillor Simmons – Ledbury South

GOVERNANCE

16. To endorse the decisions recorded in the minutes since May 2023 of meetings with less than 6 Members present (Supplementary report).

(Pages 5919 – 5922)

Distribution: Full agenda and reports to all Councillors (11)
Plus file copy

Agenda and reports excluding confidential items to:

Local press (1)

Library (1)

Council Website (1)

Ledbury North: Councillor Ward Report – Jan/Feb 2026

Flooding and Drainage Issues

Flooding and drainage problems continue on The Common in Wellington Heath, exacerbated by ditches and drains becoming silted-up by run-off from a building site.

Work to renew a collapsed pipe under the highway on The Common was scheduled for the week of 1st December, and it did happen, but appears not to have installed the correct pipework and further investigation seems necessary. Responsibility for blocked drains higher up The Common between Herefordshire Council and Welsh Water/Severn Trent is delaying the clearing of blockages which are adding to the surface water problems on this road. Developer annexation and earth-working on highway verge and unauthorised piping of ditches is also being investigated.

Persistent heavy rainfall has totally waterlogged the ground and significant run-off from fields and sloping land is causing flooding and aquaplaning hazards on the roads.

Councillors are asked to encourage members of the public to continue to report blocked drains using the 'Report It' function on the Herefordshire Council website, so that these can be cleared before further heavy rainfall occurs.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-problem>

Police & Trading Standards

Police, Fire Authority and Trading Standards have taken action to petition for the review of the licences for The Convenience Store on the High Street and its associated internet business following persistent illegal trading of tobacco and alcohol products. The Licensing Sub-Committee heard the case on 18 February and resolved to revoke the licence permanently.

There have been a number of businesses operated in Ledbury in recent years which have been closed down for this sort of illegal trading. Police continue to be concerned about the risk to the public of counterfeit and illegal goods, cash-in-hand businesses and the link to money laundering and to serious organised crime.

A significant amount of the evidence cited in the licensing review came from information provided by the public regarding concerning and suspicious behaviour at the premises. Trading Standards and the Police continue to encourage members of the public to report any concerns regarding the operation of businesses to the proper authorities.

Developments & Planning

New Village on Ledbury's doorstep – In January Forest of Dean District Council included plans for 3,500 houses in a 'new village' development in their draft Local Plan, which is currently out for consultation until 18 March (<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/developing-our-new-local-plan/>). There is considerable local concern regarding the possible impact of this large development just across the county boundary from Ledbury. Ward members have requested a briefing from planning officers as regards the consultation response being prepared by Herefordshire Council and the requests being made for appropriate payments towards improved community infrastructure in Ledbury and the surrounding area from the developers, should this site come forward.

Unauthorised Works – I have received a large number of complaints and concerns from residents regarding the works undertaken to the shop front of the old butcher's shop in The Homend. The property is in the conservation area of the town and the planning permissions sought recently related only to internal modifications. Planning Enforcement, Heritage and Conservation and Building Control officers are all

involved in investigating the works undertaken. A Planning Contravention Order has been issued to the property owner.

Refused again – The plans for development of a small housing site on the Ledbury Road in Wellington Heath have been refused again, due to the proposals failing to meet the requirements of county and neighbourhood development plan policies. It is reassuring to know that the county’s planning policy framework is still capable of being used by planning officers to prevent inappropriate and unsympathetic development form coming forward – at least in some parts of the area.

Boundary Commission, Devolution and Elections

Herefordshire Boundary Review: I submitted a proposal to the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on ward boundaries in Herefordshire on behalf of the three Ledbury ward members. The aim of the proposals is to simplify the delineation of the ward boundaries and, as part of doing this, to move some properties from the North and the South wards to become part of the West ward. This will also address the imbalance in electorate numbers across the three wards.

Foundation Strategic Authorities: Government has just announced its intention to proceed to consult on the shaping of FSAs across the whole of England, whether or not devolved government arrangements are in development or are already in place. A ministerial statement says:

“Foundation Strategic Authorities will have devolved powers over transport and infrastructure, skills and employment support, housing and strategic planning, economic development and regeneration, environment and net zero, health, wellbeing and public service reform, and public safety. They will also receive devolved funding in areas such as local transport and skills, and the Government is currently consulting on giving Foundation Strategic Authorities the power to raise an Overnight Visitor Levy.”

In addition government signalled its intention to also align Spatial Development Strategies with the geographies defining FSAs. This is a further complication to the ‘bonfire of the Districts’ which is currently underway, seeking to remove the middle layer of local government in all areas served by three tier authorities – this includes Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

Elections: Government’s announcement this week that elections WILL now be held in authority areas undergoing local government reorganisations, means that elections will now be held across Worcestershire in May 2026. This will not affect Ledbury, but given the town’s proximity to both Gloucestershire and Worcestershire county boundaries, may well create some local confusion. Particularly for people commuting between authority areas.

Committee Work and Party Registration

I have attended Full Council, Scrutiny Management Board, Group Leaders’ and Employment Panel meetings at Herefordshire Council. I have represented Herefordshire Council on the West Mercia Police & Crime Panel and The Lower Severn Drainage Board.

Independents for Herefordshire is now a registered and regulated independent political party with The Electoral Commission.

Councillor Liz Harvey

It’s Our County & Independents for Herefordshire – Ledbury North Ward Member – 18 February 2026

Peer
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February 2026 Report from Cllr Justine Peberdy – Ward Councillor Ledbury West

Spotlight on Culture

I am delighted that Ledbury Community Hub are leading on our submission of an Expression of Interest for Town of Culture 2028. I'm confident that just the process of submitting an EOI will generate enthusiasm for and recognition of the brilliant cultural offer in Ledbury. I'm looking forward to being a part of the Working Party.

Whatever the outcome, 2028 will be a significant year with the unveiling of a new memorial on the 150th anniversary of John Masefield's. We (Masefield Matters) are just £5500 off our match funding target, having received £7000 from Herefordshire BID this week. We have several fundraising events coming up this year and are certain that we will meet our target. Our evaluation data shows that we have directly engaged with about 1500 people so far. The consultation period, during which anyone can contribute ideas of on how they feel John Masefield should be memorialised, ends on 6 March. Please share this widely, particularly with under 25s.

Consultation survey:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DQSIkWdsW0yxEjajBLZtrQAAAAAIAAAAAAAMAAAF7ncGJURTFZnk9INTFEREISjBTMEdHNDfWRUpPVi4u>

I have also been involved in the consultation for Hereford's submission to City of Culture. The scope of this bid is countywide, and Ledbury will be a big part of this.

Local Access Forum

I was recently elected as chair of Herefordshire Local Access Forum and am focusing on how we can deliver better value for money for essential maintenance and repairs to our Public Rights of Way network through the new Public Realm contract and our volunteer organisations. The Capital Budget which was approved at Full Council on Friday 13th March included a welcome investment of £1 million for vital infrastructure repairs on the PROW network.

Oatley's Meadow

Oatley's Meadow has been transformed by a UKSPF grant and the Friends of Oatley's Meadow, a new organisation brought to life by Ledbury Community Hub. Stef and I spent a wet Saturday helping to create living willow structures. Over 1000 daffodil bulbs have been planted, and several trees including native fruit trees and legacy oaks. Further improvements will include a seating area (from S106 funding) and A2 information boards about John Masefield and the canal/railway history. More info here [Oatley's Meadow](#)

Ledbury Station access

Following the government's announcement last month that Access for All funding will not be allocated to improve access at Ledbury Station, Stef, and I met with Ellie Chowns MP, John Hobbes (HC Director of Economy and Environment) and representatives from West Midlands Railway and Network Rail. (Liz was already committed to West Mercia Crime Panel but fed into the conversation). We resolved to find local funding for a feasibility study to look at 5 different options to improve access. This is to improve our chances of success at the next available round of funding.

justine.peberdy@herefordshire.gov.uk

February 2026 Ward Report Ledbury South - Cllr Stef Simmons

Herefordshire Council News

Full Council Meeting 13th February – This was the annual budget setting meeting where all Herefordshire Council councillors were asked to approve the Council's draft revenue and capital budgets. This includes;

- discussing the Government's grant settlement and need for any council tax increase for households across Herefordshire (revenue income),
- the amount to be spent on day-to-day costs of delivering services like bin collections, highways maintenance, children's and adult's services (revenue spend),
- delivery of large projects (capital spend) and sources of funding for these (capital grant, reserves or borrowing).

Setting a balanced budget this year was an extremely difficult, almost impossible task, due to the reduction in real terms funding by Government (from central taxation). Rural areas now receive 41% less funding per person than metropolitan areas. With a £30 million gap between income and anticipated cost of meeting demand for statutory services, some tough decisions have been made on cuts to services, including loss of roles/jobs and efficiencies needed in delivery to close the gap. On this basis a 4.99% increase in council tax will be required to be set in March. Given the increase in council tax being proposed, I also supported the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to ensure those most in need in our county are able to access this support.

Decisions on where cuts had to be made in the revenue budget for the next financial year, and beyond, were made all the harder by the Conservative administrations Capital Budget plans including a further £5million in borrowing for the Hereford Southern Link Road. This 2 mile stretch of road from the A49 at Grafton to the A465 at Belmont is now estimated to cost £45.3 million, landing entirely on all Herefordshire Tax payers shoulders for the next 40 years! This is now badged as Phase 1 of a western bypass but will not deliver a river crossing or noticeable improvements in congestion in the centre of Hereford. There is no indication from Government that they would fund the huge costs of a Phase 2. The need to repay the loan for the SLR from council tax revenue means there is less ability to fund things that will actually make a difference to people everywhere in Herefordshire, but particularly our young people in Ledbury. As such I did not feel able to support the Capital Budget and abstained.

Following request from Green councillors I was pleased that some money has been ringfenced from the producer packaging grant (collected from all companies that produce packaging waste) to help address roadside litter. I took the opportunity to thank all those volunteers of Community Clear up groups and individuals working across our county to litter pick the worst areas. I asked for more action on ensuring waste falling from commercial vehicles is addressed, and that National Highways act on rubbish along their sections of strategic road network in our county.

I was also pleased that after intervention by Greens a small sum has been allocated to develop a plan to extend 16-19 year olds bus travel outside of college hours. If we're serious about tackling rural inequality and driving economic growth, then we **have** to support young people in accessing employment, training, and social opportunities.

Ward News

Deer Park Pump Track – The invite to tender has now been sent out to firms who have expressed an interest in designing and building the proposed pump track at Deer Park. This has been a little delayed but the funds have been ringfenced and next step will be to select a design/build contractor before submitting a planning application for public consultation and determination later this year.

Deer Park Anti-Social Behaviour – Despite the Ledbury Reporter's best efforts at putting words in my mouth I do not think the area has been 'blighted'. It is a safe, established community and pleasant place to live. A minority are causing issues for residents and police have responded. I continue to discuss with the local policing team any concerns residents contact me with, but these predominately relate to speeding, which has sadly increased since the resurfacing works on Biddulph Way and Martins Way!

Other meetings, events and activities

In addition to my role as ward member I am the Green Group Leader on the council. This means, alongside Cllr Harvey as Leader of the Independents for Herefordshire, I attend additional meetings of council including Cabinet. I am available by email: stef.simmons@herefordshire.gov.uk, phone: 07792 881706, or my regular surgery at Ledbury Rugby Club (Tuesdays by appointment).

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| FULL COUNCIL | 19 FEBRUARY 2026 | AGENDA ITEM: 16 |
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

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

Further advice has now been received in respect of the question raised in respect of whether where co-options were made at inquorate meetings, these decisions should be ratified first before ratifying all other decisions taken en-bloc.

The advice received is:

“There is provision in Local Government Act 1972 s82 that “any acts and proceedings of any person elected to an officer under the Act and acting in the office shall, notwithstanding his disqualification or want of qualifications be as valid and effectual as if he had been qualified. This is to protect council decisions being nullified by a member’s individual validity.”

If you have concern about this, the neatest thing would be for councillors whose validity is unquestionable to ratify all decisions for the whole period (including any meetings where councillors who were technically not co-opted properly made a meeting quorate) i.e. to endorse all decisions taken since date X including the co-option of councillors today and then from this date it would be normal.”

As Head of Paid Services, the Clerk would recommend that whilst the Local Government Act 1972 s82 does provide a level of cover in so far as it confirms that any Member who has been elected or co-opted to the Council at an inquorate meeting is considered valid and effectual as if they were qualified, it would be prudent of the Council not to rely on this and for the purpose of absolute clarity the co-options made of Councillors in 2024 and 2025 be endorsed, and all the decisions taken at Full Council since May 2023 be ratified by those Members whose validity is unquestionable.

It should be noted that in order to take the action outlined above there needs to be a quorum of 6 validated Members in attendance at the meeting on 19 February 2026.

Recommendation

1. That Members receive and note the information and advice provided within this supplementary report.
2. That for the purpose of absolute clarity Members whose validity is unquestionable endorse the co-options made of Councillors on 3 October 2024 and 21 August 2025.

3. That Members endorse **ALL** decisions taken at Full Council since **May 2023**.

| Date | Number of Cllrs in attendance | Seats Filled |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>25.05.2023</u> | 5 | 9 |
| <u>29.06.2023</u> | 8 | 9 |
| <u>13.07.2023</u> | 5 | 9 |
| <u>02.08.2023</u> | 6 | 9 |
| <u>03.08.2023</u> | 8 | 12 |
| <u>06.09.2023</u> | 8 | 12 |
| <u>28.09.2023</u> | 11 | 12 |
| <u>11.10.2023</u> | 6 | 12 |
| <u>23.11.2023</u> | 9 | 12 |
| <u>07.12.2023</u> | 6 | 12 |
| <u>25.01.2024</u> | 11 | 12 |
| <u>07.02.2024</u> | 7 | 12 |
| <u>28.02.2024</u> | 7 | 12 |
| <u>28.03.2024</u> | 8 | 12 |
| <u>10.04.2024</u> | 8 | 12 |
| <u>09.05.2024</u> | 10 | 11 |
| <u>06.06.2024</u> | 7 | 10 |
| <u>04.07.2024</u> | 8 | 10 |
| <u>01.08.2024</u> | 7 | 10 |
| <u>05.08.2024</u> | 4 | 10 |
| <u>08.08.2024</u> | 8 | 10 |
| <u>19.09.2024</u> | 9 | 10 |
| <u>03.10.2024</u> | 4 | 9 |
| <u>10.10.2024</u> | 7 | 11 |
| <u>17.10.2024</u> | 5 | 11 |
| <u>31.10.2024</u> | 6 | 11 |
| <u>14.11.2024</u> | 4 | 11 |
| <u>28.11.2024</u> | 4 | 11 |
| <u>12.12.2024</u> | 5 | 11 |
| <u>09.01.2025</u> | 7 | 11 |
| <u>23.01.2025</u> | 7 | 11 |
| <u>13.02.2025</u> | 9 | 11 |
| <u>06.03.2025</u> | 4 | 9 |
| <u>27.03.2025</u> | 4 | 9 |
| <u>17.04.2025</u> | 6 | 9 |
| <u>01.05.2025</u> | 6 | 9 |
| <u>22.05.2025</u> | 5 | 9 |
| <u>12.06.2025</u> | 8 | 9 |
| <u>03.07.2025</u> | 5 | 9 |
| <u>24.07.2025</u> | 4 | 9 |
| <u>21.08.2025</u> | 6 | 9 |
| <u>11.09.2025</u> | 8 | 11 |
| <u>02.10.2025</u> | 8 | 11 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|----|
| 30.10.2025 | 8 | 11 |
| 13.11.2025 | 8 | 11 |
| 04.12.2025 | 6 | 10 |
| 08.01.2026 | 7 | 10 |
| 29.01.2026 | 8 | 10 |

4. That Standing Order 3(v) be amended to include the following sentence, to avoid any misinterpretation of the legislation in respect of Council meeting quorum:

“The quorum for a Council meeting MUST be no less than 6.”

82

Validity of acts done by unqualified persons.

The acts and proceedings of any person elected to an office under this Act or elected or appointed to an office or elected as elected mayor or executive leader and acting in that office shall, notwithstanding his disqualification or want of qualification, be as valid and effectual as if he had been qualified.

ad. Journal