

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A RECONVENED MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2026**

PRESENT: Councillors Chowns, Eakin, Harvey (Chair), Hughes, Kettle, Morris & Troy

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Sophie Jarvis – Minute Taker
3 members of the public and press

C1152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bradford and Browning.

C1153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Harvey and Morris declared an interest in agenda item 20 – Invoices for payment for February 2026 due to being Trustees of 'Love Ledbury'.

C1154. TO NOTE THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

RESOLVED:

That the Nolan Principles be noted.

C1155. 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.

Members agreed to bring agenda item 16 forward – To endorse the decisions recorded in the minutes since May 2023 of meetings with less than 6 Members present.

C1156. TO ENDORSE THE DECISIONS RECORDED IN THE MINUTES SINCE MAY 2023 OF MEETINGS WITH LESS THAN 6 MEMBERS PRESENT

The Clerk confirmed that Councillors Browning, Kettle and Troy have been appointed as co-optees to Ledbury Town Council by Herefordshire Council for 6 months in pursuance of the power conferred upon it by Section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was noted that as a result of the appointment of the three Councillors, they now hold full voting rights at meetings of Ledbury Town Council, thus ensuring quorum to be met by Ledbury Town Council. It was further noted that during that 6-month period Ledbury Town Council could arrange to formerly appoint the three co-optees to the Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the information and advice provided within the supplementary report provided by the Clerk be received and noted.**
- 2. That all decisions taken at Full Council since May 2023 be endorsed and therefore ratified.**
- 3. 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”.

C1157. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 29 January 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C1158. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ACTION SHEET

RESOLVED:

That the action sheet be received and noted.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS NOT CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026

C1159. STORAGE CONTAINER & REMOVAL COSTS FOR SURPLUS FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

The Chairman queried why the report made no reference to alternative options for disposing of surplus furniture. Such as selling, rehoming or disposing of items in poor condition if they are not in regular use and are unlikely to be required in the future, particularly if they are to be placed in storage.

Members concurred and requested that this option be investigated further, with a revised report to be presented at a future meeting of Council. It was suggested that the long thin tables could be retained, but that consideration be given to get rid of other items that are either no longer used or in poor condition.

RESOLVED:

That a further report be submitted to a future Council meeting providing details of alternative arrangements such as rehoming, selling or disposing of surplus furniture.

Members agreed to bring agenda item 21 forward – Grant Funding Applications.

C1160. GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

- i. Ledbury Community Day – amount requested £300.00 to support the event – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, power to provide and contribute to a wide range of recreational facilities in or outside the Council's area.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Ledbury Community Day be awarded a grant in the sum of £300 and this be allocated from within the 2026/27 Unspecified Grants budget line under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, power to provide and contribute to a wide range of recreational facilities in or outside the Council's area.**
- 2. That it be recorded that Council gave consideration to the expenditure in respect of this project and agreed that it meets the requirements of the Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2011, in so far as the project provides for individuals who are protected by the Act due to qualifying of protected characteristics.**

- ii. LEAF (Locally Encouraging All to Flourish) – Supporting report and multi-year grant amount requested:

Year 1 - £10,940.00

Year 2 - £10,940.00

Year 3 - £10,940.00

Local Government Act 1972 s 137 – Power to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised.

RESOLVED:

1. **That LEAF be awarded a multi-year in the sum of £10,940 for three years and that in Year 1 (2026/27) the £10,000 allocated to LYAS in 2019 be used, with the remaining £940 being included in the 2026/27 budget and allocation be included in the 2027/28 and 2028/29 budget of £10,940 - Local Government Act 1972 s.137 – Power to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised.**
 2. **That it be recorded that Council gave consideration to the expenditure in respect of this project and agreed that it meets the requirements of the Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2011, in so far as the project provides for individuals who are protected by the Act due to qualifying of protected characteristics.**
- iii. Ledbury Poetry House – amount requested £5,000.00 towards new branding, including signage, banners, flags, printed material, set dressing and/or other visible materials that will be used across the town (and beyond) during the 2026 festival – Local Government Act 1972 s. 144 – Power to encourage tourism to the Council's area or contribute to organisations encouraging tourism.

Members indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to view the new Ledbury Poetry branding at the earliest opportunity and advised Amy Howard that this could be considered under a confidential item, if necessary.

Amy Howard informed Members that, once the artwork is available, she will liaise with the Clerk to ensure it's included on an upcoming council agenda as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Ledbury Poetry be awarded a grant in the sum of £5,000 - Local Government Act 1972 s.144 Power to encourage tourism to the council's area or contribute to organisations encouraging tourism and this expenditure be met from the underspend from budget line 214/4900 in the 2026/27 budget.**
- 2. That Ledbury Poetry provide Members with sight of the branding artwork when available.**
- 3. That it be recorded that Council gave consideration to the expenditure in respect of this project and agreed that it meets the requirements of the Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2011, in so far as the project provides for individuals who are protected by the Act due to qualifying of protected characteristics.**

Amy Howard left the meeting at 7:31pm.

Members agreed to move agenda item 29 forward – To consider the draft Project and Event Plan for 2026/27.

C1161. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT PROJECT AND EVENT PLAN FOR 2026/2027

RESOLVED:

That members approved the proposed events budget of £13,368 for the 2026/27 financial year to support the delivery of the Council's events programme.

C1162. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE NOTES OF A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2026 AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the notes of the Events Working Party held on 13 January 2026 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Council works in partnership with Ledbury Community Day and Sustainable Ledbury to deliver activities that align with and complement Ledbury Community Day programming.**
- 3. That the Council works in partnership with Ledbury Food Group for the delivery of Ledbury Celebration 2026.**

4. That the Christmas Light Switch-on Event be held on Sunday, 22 November 2026, to avoid clashes with events in neighbouring towns.
5. That the budget of £5,000 for the delivery of the 2026 Christmas Light Switch-on Event be approved, noting that this budget excludes the hire costs of market stands, which will be considered separately at a future meeting to seek approval from Full Council.
6. That Full Council agrees to the booking of the following entertainment to ensure their availability:
 - i. Hire of a snow machine - £550 + VAT (or possible purchase) – that this be agreed in principle, but that a report be provided to a future meeting detailing the cost to purchase a snow machine and details of how this could be marketed for hire by other groups.
 - ii. Winter walk about Fairy - £470 + VAT
 - iii. Red Earth Arts - £475 + VAT
 - iv. Hire of St. Katherine's Hall - £120 + VAT
7. That the Council supports the principle of getting projects developed via a virtual app, and that more information be provided in respect of the potential budget for such a project at a future meeting.
8. That officers obtain reassurance from the Christmas Lights installers that the lights will be installed sufficiently in advance of 22 November 2026 to allow time to resolve any snagging issues that may arise.

C1163. TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO AND APPROVE THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Members asked that larger documents do not get printed in the agenda pack in order to reduce paper usage, and instead that a link be included in the report.

Members asked for the word 'educate' to be replaced with an alternative such as 'inform' where shown in the draft Environment and Sustainability Policy.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Environment and Sustainability Policy be approved, subject to the following amendment:

- That the word ‘educate’ be replaced with an alternative word such as ‘inform or encourage’ within the draft policy.
2. That the Environment and Sustainability policy be reviewed every two years, with progress being monitored and reported in line with the policy commitments.
 3. That all existing policies and procedures and day-to-day activities be reviewed to ensure they align with this policy.

C1164. AUTHORISATION FOR OFFICERS TO COMMISSION ADVICE ON OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE USE OF COUNCIL OFFICES

RESOLVED:

That members instruct officers to commission the advice in respect of possible options for the council offices and that sum of £2,000 be set aside from the 2025/26 “professional fees” budget line for this expenditure.

C1165. TO RECEIVE CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman thanked Councillor Hughes, Deputy Chairman for attending Ledbury’s Big Breakfast on her behalf.

The Chairman informed Members of the forthcoming visit from representatives of Strömstad, advising that Councillor Hughes will represent the Chairman during the visit.

Councillor Harvey informed members of correspondence received from Colwall Care Home to confirm that the Chairman of Colwall Parish Council will be attending their grand opening event.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman’s Communications be received and noted.

C1166. WARD COUNCILLOR REPORTS

RESOLVED:

That the Ward Councillor reports were received and noted

C1167. TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF STANDING ORDERS 3(e) and 3(f)

RESOLVED:

None received.

C1168. TO RECEIVE MOTIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

RESOLVED:

None received.

C1169. TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES IN RESPECT OF CODE OF CONDUCT MATTERS

The Chair provided Members with a verbal update on the Code of Conduct case currently being considered by the Monitoring Officer, confirming that the investigation is expected to be completed by the end of the month and that an update report should be available for the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the update in respect of Code of Conduct matters be received and noted

C1170. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE BUDGET FOR 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

- 1. That members approve the 2026/7 draft budget.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk be authorised to request a precept of £815,859, an annual increase from £198.71 to £213.75 per Band D equivalent property (an annual increase of £15.04 - £1.25 per month).**
- 3. Members confirmed that in setting the 2026/27 budget, the council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and that they had considered the potential impacts of budget allocations, service changes and grant funding on persons sharing protected characteristics and are satisfied that no unlawful discrimination arises and that equality of opportunity is promoted where reasonably practicable.**

C1171. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE MONTH 10 FINANCIAL REPORTS

- i. Receipts and Payments 1 to 31 January 2026
- ii. Balance sheet and Trial Balance – Month 10
- iii. Budget Monitoring Reports 1 April – 31 January 2026

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Receipts and Payments 1 to 31 January 2026 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Balance sheet and Trial Balance for Month 10 be received and noted.**
- 3. That the Budget Monitoring Reports from 1 April to 31 January 2026 be received and noted.**
- 4. That the Clerk schedule a Budget Monitoring Meeting during March 2026.**

Member of the press left the meeting at 8:32pm.

C1172. TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026.

RESOLVED:

The Chair of Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee confirmed that he had verified and signed the bank statements and reconciliations for October to December 2025 and January 2026.

C1173. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT FOR FEBRUARY 2026

Members were asked to approve two lists of invoices for payments.

Councillors Harvey and Morris had declared an interest in the second list. It was noted that the Council would not be quorate to approve this list in its entirety and that they would not take part in the vote for this list.

It was agreed that the two payments due to be made to Love Ledbury be excluded from the list and that the Chair of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee and the Clerk being given delegated powers to consider these two payments outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the invoices for payment in the sum of £9,835.40 plus VAT be approved.
2. That the Accounts Clerk be instructed to undertake actions in relation to points 1 and 2 in the report as follows:
3. That £75.96 be journalled from 202/4155 Housekeeping to 220/4592 PPE/Health & Safety.
4. That a virement of £1,000 from budget 230/401 – Travel/Conference/subscriptions to 230/4001 Agency Cover be approved.
5. That the invoices for payment on the additional report in the sum of £7,716.69 plus VAT be approved, with the exception of the two payments to Love Ledbury, and that delegated powers be given to the Chair of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in respect of considering and approving these payments outside of the Council meeting.

C1174. TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO A REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS FROM MASEFIELD MATTERS

RESOLVED:

That the request for the release of £5,290 from the Masefield Matters National Lottery Heritage Funding to enable Midnight Folk activity to take place be approved.

C1175. TO CONSIDER PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

1. **Planning Application No. 253537**

Repairs to damaged chimney stack – **25 High Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1DS LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**

RESOLVED:

No objection.

2. **Planning 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**

Councillor Harvey queried why this application had been resubmitted, noting that the comments from previous

consideration of this application were already on the Planning Portal. Members did not believe this application was in relation to any previous application received.

Members agreed to raise no objection to this planning application, noting that, given the nature of the business, it is unlikely to cause noise nuisance and, as it will operate by appointment only, it should not create additional traffic on the road.

Councillor Harvey abstained from this vote, advising that she would address this application as a Ward Councillor.

RESOLVED:

No objection.

3. Planning Application No. 260302

Removal of dead laburnum. Removal of all dead and dying conifers & acacia trees behind/beside garages and overhanging neighbouring properties. All brash chipped and removed. All wood to be cut into manageable pieces and stacked – **The Cedars, Horse Lane Orchard, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1PP**

Councillor Harvey abstained from this vote, advising that she would address this application as a Ward Councillor.

RESOLVED:

No objection.

4. Planning 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.**

Councillor Harvey abstained from this vote, advising that she would address this application as a Ward Councillor.

RESOLVED:

No objection.

C1176. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE AN UPDATE ON PLANNING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Planning Decisions was received and noted.

C1177. LICENSING APPLICATIONS

To provide comments regarding a premises license in respect of Home Bargains, New Mills Industrial Estate, Ledbury, HR8 2SR

RESOLVED:

That the Council submit no comment to the Home Bargains licence application due to there being no grounds upon which to object.

C1178. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE INFORMATION REGARDING S106 MONIES RECEIVED FROM 192482 – LAND SOUTH OF LEADON WAY, LEDBURY

RESOLVED:

That the information regarding S106 monies received from 192482 – Land South of Leadon Way, Ledbury was received and noted.

C1179. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE REVISED DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2025-2045 FROM THE FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chairman gave a verbal update to members who were not present at the Major Planning Applications Working Party prior to the Council meeting and urged that Councillors attend the Local Plan Consultation at Redmarley Village Hall on Monday, 2 March 2026.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that this agenda item had been covered in Major Planning Applications Working Party prior to the Council meeting.

C1180. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM GREEN AWAY PLANNING IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED PLANNING APPLICATION REGARDING LEADON HOUSE HOTEL

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be instructed to contact the planning officers to enquire as to how this change of use will comply with legislation in respect of HMO's.

C1181. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(x)

RESOLVED:

That Standing Order 3(x) be suspended for a period of 15 minutes to allow the remaining business of the agenda to be complete

C1182. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM OUTSIDE BODIES (IF ANY)

RESOLVED:

None received.

C1183. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MASEFIELD MATTERS MEETING HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2026 AND TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Masefield Matters meeting held on 27 January 2026 be received and noted.

C1184. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of Council is scheduled for Thursday, 12 March 2026.

C1185. 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.

C1186. TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR 2025/26 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

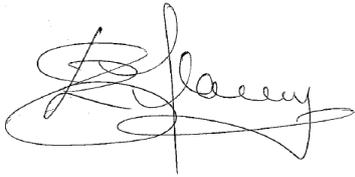
RESOLVED:

- 1. That Nina Sheilds be awarded the Citizen of the Year award 2025/26.**

2. That officers contact the Headteacher at John Masefield High School and other youth group leaders in Ledbury to ask whether they are aware of any youngsters who they feel could be nominated for the Young Citizen of the Year Award.

The meeting ended at 8:59pm.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Green', written in a cursive style.

Dated 12 March 2026