



LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Louth Town Council cares for an area of 4,394 square miles with approximately 17,000 residents.

The 21 Town Councillors form a single voice, **THE LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL.**

Councillors work for the betterment of Louth, its residents and businesses. They listen to local concerns and give residents a voice on the decisions the Council makes, as well as liaising with the District and County Councils.

Each Councillor is dedicated to a particular area in the town, called a Ward, and there are seven Wards, each one represented by three Councillors.

- North Holme Ward
- Priory Ward
- St. James' Ward
- St. Margaret's Ward
- St. Mary's Ward
- St. Michael's Ward
- Trinity Ward

Currently Louth Town Council has one vacancy in North Holme Ward, which it may fill by co-option.

What does being a Town Councillor involve?

Councillors are the champions of their community and give residents a voice on the decisions the Council makes. Becoming a Councillor will allow you to make a difference in the community by engaging with residents, local groups and businesses to find out their needs, making decisions on which services and projects the Council should take forward and getting involved locally to ensure the services are meeting your community's needs.

Louth Town Council has a meeting, on average, once every two weeks on a Tuesday evening. Town Councillors should attend most, if not all of these meetings otherwise they are not representing those residents that have elected them. Voting on items on the agenda at Council meetings can only be done at the meetings, written or verbal votes are not accepted.

How much time does Council work take up?

Being a Town Councillor can be a challenging and rewarding position.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Local Councillor Census Survey found that councillors put aside, on average, three hours a week for council work. This often includes attending meetings, engaging with residents and speaking on behalf of the council to other bodies.

Louth Town Council is a busy Council, and it may be that some Councillors give more time to their Council work than the national average, for instance, Councillors who Chair committees will be expected to liaise more closely on projects and committee matters with the Town Clerk. The Town Mayor commits a considerable amount of time to attending community events throughout the year, fundraising for the Mayor's Charity as well as being Chair of the Town Council and if the Council wishes to run events, such as the Remembrance Parade or Beacon Lighting Councillors will be needed to assist in the organisation, set up and running of those events.

Are Town Councillors paid?

Councillors are not paid. In 2022/23 all Councillors will only be paid expenses, if approved in advance, if they need to make a journey on the Council's behalf or attend a training session. The Mayor may have other expenses including invitations and Christmas cards which are sent on behalf of the Council and the Civic Sunday that each Mayor holds during their year of Office.

Do I need to be a member of a political party to be a Town Councillor?

No, you don't have to be, and like most local councils Louth is not supposed to be political. In Louth Town Council many Councillors sit as independent members of the Council. If you would like to be a representative of a political party you will have to contact the party you want to represent and go through their processes.

What is the difference between Town, District and County Councillors?

Local government structures can often be confusing. Local councils are the first tier of local government and deliver the most local form of services. Principal authorities are the tier above local councils and are often bigger in size and represent a larger area such as Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and East Lindsey District Council (ELDC).

Principal authorities are responsible for services across counties and districts including education, transport, rubbish collections, housing, council tax collections, fire and public safety to name a few.

As a local council we often work in partnership with principal authorities (ELDC and LCC) and are now delivering more services on their behalf than ever before, such as the verge cutting that Louth Town Council agreed to undertake in full as from April 2018 (this was originally one of the services that Lincolnshire County Council undertook).

Can I stand as a Louth Town Councillor?

There are only a few rules to qualify you to stand for election. You must be:

- Registered as a local government elector for the Parish on the current Electoral Register
- Has during the whole of the previous 12 months occupied as tenant or owner of any land or other premises in the Parish.
- His/her principal or only place of work in the previous 12 months has been in the Parish.
- Has resided either in the Parish or within 3 miles thereof during the whole of the previous 12 months.

How to stand as a Councillor

Council elections are held every four years, and the next elections for parish and town councils are in May 2023. However, currently, Louth Town Council has one vacancy in North Holme Ward which it may fill by co-option. If, after reading the attached information, you would like to stand for co-option please send a letter or email to the Town Clerk, Mrs. Lynda Phillips at clerk@louthtowncouncil.gov.uk or in hard copy to Louth Town Council, The Sessions House, Eastgate, Louth, LN11 9AJ explaining that you would like to stand, what you feel you could bring to the Council, confirming why you are eligible to stand and containing your contact details by 12 noon on 31st March. Once your application has been verified, the Town Clerk will contact you with details of the co-option process. Please note, you will be expected to attend an evening meeting of the Council to give a short presentation to Council on why you would like to join, what you could bring to the Council and how you meet the criteria.

What does the Town Council do for Louth?

The Town Council maintains/provides on behalf of the town:

- Session's House (the old Magistrates Court), where the Town Council meet and work from
- London Road Cemetery: Burials, Garden of Remembrance and two Chapels
- Hubbard's Hills (Contributing to the maintenance through Hubbard's Hills Trust)
- London Road Pavilion and grounds (leased by the Louth Athletics Club and Magna Vitae)
- Allotments (managed by the Louth Cottage Garden Allotment Association)
- The War Memorial
- Bus Shelters, litter bins, seating and information boards in the Town Centre
- The wooden hand carved Town Signs at entrances to Louth
- Town Centre Christmas lights, Christmas Tree and Crib
- Planting baskets in Louth Market Place and main town streets
- Funding 12 CCTV cameras (Managing in partnership with ELDC)
- Verge cutting on the main roads
- Interactive speed signs
- Brown's Panorama
- The original Louth Town Charters, paintings of past Mayors, housed in Session's House
- Civic Parades

- Lovely Louth Competition and Award's Night
- Festive Window Competition
- Decorated Door Competition

The Council liaise and consult with:

- Lincolnshire County Council – County Councillors, Highways – roads, public paths, trees, schools etc.,
- Lincolnshire Police – Louth Police Team and Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership
- Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Lindsey District Council – District Councillors, planning applications, street names and Tree Protection Orders
- Member of Parliament for Louth & Horncastle

The Council award grants to organisations around Louth, in 2022/23 to a:

- A riding for the disabled group
- Louth cancer fundraising charity
- Local youth groups
- An art organisation
- A sports club
- Local organisations who support community mental health

The Town Council work with many organisations in the town including:

- Louth Litter Pickers
- Louth Independent Traders (Victorian Market, Christmas Market including Christmas Lights Switch On)
- Louth Lions
- Zero Degrees Festival
- Louth Rotary
- Community Pay Back Team
- Louth Museum
- Local schools
- Royal British Legion
- Team Parish of Louth
- Magna Vitae
- Louth Athletics Club, Hockey Club and Louth Old Boys Football Club

- Louth Run for Life
- Citizens Advice

What rules and guidelines do the Town Council abide by?

Standing Orders - are based on a model provided by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) this lengthy document governs how the council operates within the bounds of legislation, tailored for Louth Town Council. The document is amended as required when new legislation is issued, or when the need arises and is adopted every year at the Annual meeting.

Financial Regulations – also based on model documentation from the National body in accordance with government legislation again tailored where possible for the way that Louth Town Council operates, amended when required and adopted annually. The regulations impact on how the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Auditor function and how the council reduces risk by imposing and monitoring internal controls. The current RFO for Louth Town Council is the Town Clerk, however some councils use a separate employee or external service, and the current internal audit arrangements are via a quadripartite arrangement with Mablethorpe and Sutton, Alford and Skegness Town Councils.

Code of Conduct – this applies to Councillors and advises on how they are expected to act whilst carrying out their role and the consequences if not followed. Louth Town Council has no formal governance regarding a dress code for Councillors, which may range from conventional to characterful; however, members are encouraged to observe standards which the public could expect of their elected member.

Every council will operate within this framework but in quite different ways that suit the locality, character, and aspirations of the community. For example, Louth Town Council has a very traditional civic history and routinely incorporates robed town council meetings, civic parades and church services within the council year which councillors are expected to participate and assist in as a corporate body. Louth also has a Conservation Area and many Listed Buildings which means that additional planning policies have to be observed by the planning authority when applications are received. Louth Town Council is also the guardian of historic assets such as Brown's Panorama, Town Charters and many other art works and valuable items which whilst not a council function they all have to be cared for appropriately and safeguarded for the town.

Where does the Town Council get its funds from?

Each year a sum of money called a 'precept' is voted on in Council which is then collected by ELDC through the council tax. This money is paid into the Town Council's bank account and then through the budget (voted on each year through the Council) is invested back into your local neighbourhood to run and improve facilities and services for the town. Income is also generated through the London Road Cemetery for burials etc., along with a small amount through rents/leasing of rooms and property/land.

More about the structure of the Town Council

Louth Town Council operates a Committee system which currently comprises

- Planning
- Governance and Finance
- Community Resources
- Personnel

The Town Council has an Annual meeting each year at which the first agenda item must be the Election of a new Chairman, followed by the same for the Vice Chairman. As we are a town, in Louth, the Chairman and Vice Chairman may also be known as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor respectively; there is no difference in these roles although the Mayoral term may be more associated with civic and public duties, however, neither have any more powers than any other Councillor who is elected to serve Louth.

Council meetings in Louth are usually held on Tuesday evenings with a public forum commencing at 6.45pm and meetings at 7.00pm and there may be any combination of different Council or Committee meetings on any evening. The meetings schedule for the year is usually prepared and approved preceding the new Council year in May, this allows for forward planning to ensure that important deadlines are achievable and for staff and councillors to pre plan holidays. It also allows the Council to meet timescales set for planning application consultation responses and budget preparation and approval or to accommodate bank holidays. The Town Clerk distributes general information, community publications or other authority press releases which is usually done by email and for those who do not have internet access they can be viewed at the office or in hard copy.

Each Committee is re-established at the Annual meeting together with its membership (number of councillors), remit and delegated powers to act on behalf of the council on specified matters such as decisions on planning applications. In the 2021/22 council year members have voted once again for every Committee (except Personnel) to comprise 100% of councillors. This enables all Councillors to be involved in discussions on all matters and for members to take on the opportunity of being a committee chairman or vice chairman in perhaps a specialist area such as Finance. This system means that all Councillors are required to attend almost all meetings; other Councils may operate committees with fewer numbers and therefore attend on fewer meeting dates. There are some important functions of the council that are covered by strict legislation, but most other things can be altered within governing documents. The Committees are also supported by smaller working groups who meet as required.