

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2016 HELD AT BRITISH LEGION HALL**

**Chairman – Councillor Mrs S. Locking**

**Present – County and Town (& District) Councillors, Members of the Public, Community Group Exhibitors and one member of the press. Total 53 present**

- 1. The Chairman Councillor Mrs S. Locking welcomed all present to the meeting.**
- 2. Following a proposal by Councillor Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Ballard and a vote of those present the Chairman signed the notes of 2015 Annual Town Meeting and approved them as the minutes.**
- 3. Annual Report of the Town Council 2015/16**

The Chairman introduced the report and spoke to the Town Council activities, later introducing Committee Chairman to detail their remit and expand on the contents.

  - a. The number of electors in the parish at the last election was 12,293.
  - b. There are currently no vacancies with 21 councillors representing the town comprising 3 for each of the 7 wards.
  - c. Councillors performance for the last year was 87% attendance an increase of 2% on the previous year over 17 Town Council Meetings, 20 Planning Committee, 11 Governance and Finance Committee, 7 Personnel Committee, and 11 Community Resources Committee Meetings held on a total of 23 occasions.
  - d. Councillors also attended working groups, meetings with other authorities, Town and Parish Area Forum, Project Boards, Residents Groups, Local Action groups, and are representatives on charitable trust boards.
  - e. Town Council Routine activities
    - i. Hosted a Public Forum at every scheduled meeting receiving comments ranging from Bus Station Benches to residents opposition to planning applications and updates from the X Sports group and the Scanner Appeal.
    - ii. Participated in the new Area Forum set up by ELDC to replace Louth Area Committee.
    - iii. Attended Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils AGM and training courses.
    - iv. Created a new Sessions House use policy and recently approved an application from LANALS to provide storage facilities.
    - v. Celebrated National events and anniversaries by flying the flag, including '@Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth'.
    - vi. Responded to 24 Traffic Regulation Orders and considered one new speed limit proposal.
    - vii. Received presentations from the New Police Inspector for the Wolds Neighbourhood Policing Team, Environment Agency Officers and the Leader and Portfolio Holders of ELDC throughout the year.
    - viii. Proposed or supported suggestions for new road names in the town resulting in Northgate Mews, Various birds of prey (Off Fulmar Drive), Taylor's Gardens, La Ferte Bernard Close, Betts Mews, Thompson House and Printers Place.
    - ix. Approved the Budgets and Precept for 2016/17 and submitted the request to ELDC.

f. Major topics / events for the year which the Town Council considered were:

- i. Co-opted two new councillors following vacancies from the May 2015 elections.
- ii. Supported Louth in Bloom Projects resulting in EMIB Silver Gilt Award 2015 and sought grants to improve the town and cemetery environment and the work of the Community Payback Team.
- iii. Continued to participate in the River Lud Attenuation Scheme Project Board and signed an authorised funding agreement to finance annual maintenance costs. The sites are due to become operational in summer 2016. A site visit for councillors and the Flood Group was held in October 2015.
- iv. Continued to support the work of Hubbard's Hills Trust by funding day to day operational costs and their proposals for a Lottery Funding bid.
- v. Commented on the County Council Electoral Review regarding boundary changes.
- vi. Participated in the Monks Dyke / Tennyson consultation process.
- vii. Commented on Magistrate Court Closure proposals.
- viii. Established a Youth Council Working Group to investigate the demand for setting such a body in the town.
- ix. Loaned Brown's Panorama to the Usher Gallery for the great Lincolnshire Exhibition and approved for images to be used in non-profit making various projects.
- x. Supported Inspire 500 celebrating 500 years of the spire of St James Church.
- xi. Rededicated the War Memorial on Armistice Day following major repairs after the road traffic collision in March 2015.
- xii. Celebrated the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 21st April 2016 by holding a party for nonagenarians at the Sessions House and the lighting of a beacon in the Gatherums in the evening.
- xiii. Set up a working group to look into the impact and benefits of (partial) pedestrianisation in Louth.
- xiv. Considered the initial impact of budget cuts / Transformation Programmes to be introduced by the County and District Councils.

g. Planning Committee presented by Vice Chairman Councillor D. Hall:

- i. Commented on 143 planning applications / amendments following recommendations from the Planning sub group who meet prior to Committee meetings.
- ii. Recorded 12 variances of planning consultation responses compared to ELDC outcome including Hi-Lite Sign site on Ramsgate, Cattle Market (Fairfield Industrial Estate), 82 Eastfield Road and Rock Cottage Site (Ugate).
- iii. Commented on 18 'Proposed Works' to trees.
- iv. Noted and supported enforcement proposals and action on Church Street, Westgate, Eve Street, Aldi Car Park and Ramsgate.
- v. Received the planning inspectorate decision to allow the removal of townscape trees at The Quarry, Ugate which the Committee objected to.
- vi. Major / Notable Planning Application Consultations some of which were attended by a representative of LTC at ELDC Planning Committee:
  1. Cattle Market - Particulars (Fairfield Industrial Estate) (objected and was approved by ELDC)
  2. Louth X Sports (supported and was approved by ELDC)
  3. 82 Eastfield Road – Particulars (objected and was refused by ELDC)
4. Legbourne Road (Southern Gateway) appeal against refusal of planning permission was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate.

h. Governance and Finance Committee presented by Councillor Mrs E. Ballard:

- i. Finance Overview Group meets prior to Governance and Finance Committee meetings to make recommendations to the Committee members.
- ii. Oversees Audit procedures – LTC received an unqualified external audit for 2014/15 and the 2016-16 Annual Return will be submitted following approval at the next Town Council meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Louth Town Council participate in a quadripartite internal audit arrangement with three other local councils.
- iii. Carried out an Insurance Comparison Review and awarded the Town Council policy to a new provider with potential savings of over £2,000 per year.
- iv. Carried out a Risk Review, adding to and tightening Internal Controls accordingly.
- v. Reviewed Governance Documents and will be updating Financial Regulations in line with new national recommendations during 2016.
- vi. Carried out a thorough Budget Setting exercise resulting in Precept of £231,260 for 2016/17 or £48.29 for a Band D equivalent an increase of 8.1% on 2015/16 largely due to the removal of Support Grant, a staffing review and additional funding responsibilities passed down by the District Council for election costs.
- vii. Expenditure and Income 2015/16  
Approved net expenditure against Loans, Reserves and Precept monies of £188,079 (audited April 2016) major items included:
  1. Hubbards Hills £35,000 day to day maintenance expenditure
  2. Cemetery Net Cost £26,278.
  3. Loan Repayment £20,513 Loan Balance outstanding £92,810 which will be complete in 2021.
  4. Christmas Celebrations including Safety checks, New Strings of Lights and Tree - £11,061.
  5. Grants – £3,100 – Awards including Run for Life, The Men’s Shed, Louth Lions Bike Night and Louth Croquet Club. The Town Council also gave £1,000 to the Citizens advice bureau.
- viii. Louth Town Council Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Linda Blankley informed those present that the Notice of Electors Rights had been published that day enabling any electors to come and examine the Annual Accounts and supporting documents from the 6<sup>th</sup> June until 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016. She also informed those present that she would be submitting the Annual Report to the External Auditors shortly following authorisation by the Town Council on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

i. Personnel Committee presented by the Chairman:

- i. Maintained Policy handbook for Employees and Members, adopted by Town Council.
- ii. Supported officers and Councillors attending training courses throughout the year – new Councillor training, Code of Conduct, IT, Emergency Planning and Clerks training.
- iii. Carried out a task based staffing review to ensure the well-being of 4 Town Council employees, resulting in an enhanced structure of 5 posts for 2016/17.
- iv. Employed specialist personnel advisor to ensure employment legislation compliance

j. Community Resources Committee presented by Councillor Mrs J. Makinson-Sanders:

- i. Council Premises –The Sessions House
  1. Provides office accommodation for the Town Clerk and office based staff.
  2. Hosts council, working group and public meetings
  3. Instils Civic Pride by Flying The Flag(s)
  4. Councillors are Fire Wardens and nominated keyholders
  5. Hosted visits from schools, twinning and art groups and charity events

6. Hosted Action Group Meetings
  7. Provides storage facilities and a base for Louth in Bloom and Hubbards Hills and recently agreed storage facilities for LANALS.
  8. Explained that there were some current issues in rehanging Brown's Panorama since its return from Lincoln last year.
- ii. Town Asset Group:
1. Continuously reviews all assets to ensure best use
  2. Oversaw major repair and cleaning works to the War Memorial.
  3. Made recommendations regarding the potential future use of the Cemetery Lodge and reinstatement of the Cemetery Archway. Project pending.
- iii. London Road Cemetery:
1. 57 burials took place in 2015 made up of 36 full burials and 21 sets of ashes
  2. Total Town Council responsibility of 29,136 burials since 1855 as at 31/12/15
  3. 26 weeks of Community Payback attendance (including some free sessions)
  4. Continuation of the cultivation of Meridian Meadow area and Meridian Orchard by Community Payback Team in conjunction with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Officer following a grant from the Evan Cornish Foundation
  5. Hedge laying introducing traditional skills.
  6. Maintenance of Bluebell Walk under Lime Tree Avenues.
  7. Continued assessment of the archway access and structural repairs with planned structural engineering investigations and historical research.
  8. Thanked the Maintenance Assistant for achieving a high standard of maintenance throughout the past year.

#### **4. Louth Town Council Objectives / Projects 2016/17**

The Chairman then explained that in addition to day to day budgets for the maintenance of assets and provision of services, Louth Town Council is focussing on projects already underway requiring completion and consolidating funds to reduce future risks, whilst Principal Councils consider the provision of services and their own budget cutting exercises for 2016 / 17.

- a. The Council is mindful that a safe environment makes the town a pleasant place to live and will attract more visitors.
  - i. The long awaited flood alleviation schemes currently being constructed to the North West and South West of the town which will protect not only hundreds of residents near the River Lud but also in settlements downstream towards the coast. Louth Town Council has entered into a ground-breaking multi authority funding agreement which will be in place for the next 100 years providing protection for the town.
  - ii. Speeding traffic remains a major concern of Louth residents and funds were set aside in 2015/16 and added to by County Councillor initiatives to enable most areas of Louth to be covered by Reactive and Passive Speed Signage on a rotational system, currently with the Road Safety Partnership.
  - iii. CCTV remains a priority for the town council; the delivery of the monitoring of and the provision of the town council cameras will be by new providers and a monitoring watch will be required to ensure that there is no drop in standards currently enjoyed. Wireless technology for image transmission will make relocating cameras a more flexible feat in the future.
- b. The Town Council is always keen to support local and national celebrations which this year includes the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party Celebrations which continue into June 2016 with a Street Party Theme and funds to community groups to hold celebrations are available now upon application. The Town Council also plans to plant an Oak Tree as a lasting memorial.

Interskill which the Town Council uses to maintain benches in the town celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year.

- c. Support in the form of grants continues to be available to Community groups to apply for as well as other funding provided on a perpetual basis for items such as power to St James floodlights and Parish Clock and annual funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- d. Provision of community facilities is also an important responsibility within the town with further additional funding being provided this year to ensure that the notice boards, bus shelters, seats and town signs are all maintained and replaced if necessary.
- e. Non-Financial Projects –
  - i. The Town Council will closely monitor the proposed Local Plan being prepared by ELDC for adoption to assess the potential impact on Louth including the policy on Traveller / Gypsy / Showmen sites proposed for Louth.
  - ii. Monitoring of large scale developments and impact on local resident’s amenities and on the town services and facilities and support local action groups as necessary

**5. Louth Flood Alleviation Schemes presentation by the Environment Agency**

The Chairman introduced Paul Arnold, Catchment Engineer for the Environment Agency in Lincolnshire. He explained that he was responsible for ensuring that design teams produce flood alleviation schemes that can be monitored safely and were effective. He then gave a detailed presentation using a projector to show images of the site, mechanisms and effectiveness of the two alleviation schemes at Hallington and Lincoln Road which will change the likelihood of flooding from the River Lud from a current 1:20 to 1:150 probability. He explained that the schemes had been able to proceed due to an innovative partnership funding approach by the Environment Agency, LCC, ELDC, LMDB, AW and Louth Town Council. He concluded that the scheme was due to be finished by August 2016.

He then took questions from the audience and confirmed the mechanics of the float device that will become operational in times of heavy rainfall. Flood victim Mrs Susan Dodge thanked everyone who had enabled this scheme to be brought about and Louth Town Council for their continued support to residents, and former Flood Warden Darren Hobson.

He rounded up the presentation by displaying an information sheet that was available and announcing that Community Site visits could be arranged and to contact the Town Clerk.

**6. The Chairman opened the Floor to the public:**

There being no other issues raised the Chairman read out a letter she had received from a local resident who enquired after the future of a football club for Louth. The Chairman invited Councillor G. Horton to speak on the subject who expanded that due to lack of funding and costs of upkeep and the potential loss of the ground had led to the demise of the former team.

**7. The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.07hrs**

The Chairman then invited those present to remain to see her present cheques to her chosen charities for the year – LIVES, St Barnabas Hospice and Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance. She also encouraged everyone to visit the Community Group display stands around the hall and to partake of refreshments available.

**Chairman.....**

**Date.....**