

LOUTH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2017HELD AT BRITISH LEGION HALL, NORTHGATE, LOUTH

Chairman – Councillor Mrs E. Ballard

Present – County and Town (& District) Councillors, Members of the Public, Community Group Exhibitors and one member of the press. Total 70 present

1. **The Chairman Councillor Mrs. E. Ballard JP welcomed all present to the meeting.**
2. **Following a proposal by Councillor L.M. Stephenson, seconded by Councillor J. Garret and a vote of those present the Chairman signed the notes of the 2016 Annual Town Meeting and approved them as the minutes.**
3. **Annual Report of the Town Council 2016/17**
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 as at February 2017 12,873, an increase of 4.7% from 2015.
 - b. There are currently no vacancies with 21 councillors representing the town comprising 3 for each of the 7 wards.
 - c. Councillor's meeting night attendances for the last year (to 25/04/2017) was 84% a decrease of 3% on the previous year with 2 councillors missing no meetings at all. During the year there have 17 Town Council Meetings, 20 Planning Committee, 10 Governance and Finance Committee, 4 Personnel Committee, and 10 Community Resources Committee Meetings held on a total of 21 occasions.
 - d. Councillors also attended working groups, meetings with other authorities, Town and Parish Area Forums, Project Boards, Residents Groups, Local Action groups, and are representatives on charitable trust boards.
 - e. The Town Council was also represented at Civic Services throughout the County and in Louth including celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday, Armistice Day and Remembrance Day.
 - f. Town Council Routine activities
 - i. Hosted a Public Forum at every scheduled meeting receiving comments ranging from grass verges, Taxi Rank disruption, planning application objections, litter, parking and football facilities.
 - ii. Participated in the Area Forums hosted by ELDC and attended Flood Forum meetings.
 - iii. Attended the AGM's of Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils, Community Lincs and Walkers are Welcome.
 - iv. Continued to support the work of Hubbard's Hills Trust by funding day to day operational costs.
 - v. Provided storage facilities under agreement for LANALS and Hubbard's Hills.
 - vi. Celebrated National events and anniversaries by flying the flag, including 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth 2017' and Queen Elizabeth II 90th birthday celebrations in 2016 which included a beacon lighting ceremony, coffee and cake for nonagenarians and the planting of a commemorative oak tree in Hubbard's Hills.
 - vii. Complied with statutory duty to display public notices such as EU Referendum, By Election, and LCC Election.
 - viii. Received 20 Temporary Road Traffic Closure notices.
 - ix. Received presentations from the organisers of the Tour of the Wolds Cycle Event and the Chief Officer and Chairman of the East Lindsey Commissioning Care Group (CCG) regarding the Lincolnshire Healthcare STP. The CCG will be returning to speak to the council after the General Election.
 - x. Approved the Budgets and Precept for 2017/18 and submitted the request to ELDC.
 - g. Major topics / events for the year which the Town Council considered / carried out were:
 - i. By election for Trinity Ward following the disqualification of the elected candidate for non-attendance. Councillor Mrs Julie Speed was the successful candidate in October 2016.

- ii. Supported Louth in Bloom Projects resulting in EMIB GOLD Award 2016 and received sponsorship to assist with cemetery projects such as the Community Orchard.
- iii. Continued to participate in the River Lud Attenuation Scheme Project Board. The sites are due to become fully operational in early summer 2017 and have been operationally protective since November 2016 for 1 in 100 events.
- iv. Discussed and responded to consultations on:
 - 1. LCC Waste and Mineral Plans
 - 2. Local Plan including Gypsy and Traveller Site proposals
 - 3. Greater Lincolnshire Devolution
 - 4. Proposed Danelaw Multi-user Route
 - 5. BT Phone Box Disposals
 - 6. Boundary Commission Electoral Review regarding boundary changes.
 - 7. Lincs Wolds Management Plan
 - 8. Polling station review
- v. Considered the impact of budget cuts / Transformation Programmes introduced by the County and District Councils – Streetlighting, Grass Cutting, Car Parking Policy, Customer Access Point Opening Hours and Public Toilets. (Petition raised and presented by the Chairman to object to removal of budgets for LCC Amenity Grass Cutting).
- vi. Contested the selling off of street corners in Louth to ELDC, the latest being Upgate / Kidgate Corner.
- vii. Accepted surrender of lease with Louth Sports Association for the Artificial Turf at London Road and entered into a new lease arrangement with Magna Vitae Leisure to assure its long term future for sporting use.
- viii. Brown's Panorama has been revalued and re-erected in the Court Room at The Sessions House. Guide assistance will be resuming on Wednesdays and Fridays from 31st May 2017. Bookings for visiting groups are also in the diary.
- ix. Town Charters have been framed and erected in the former retiring room at The Sessions House and are now available to view. The room is now also home to the former Louth Court Statute books which have been repatriated since the closure of Skegness Magistrates Court.
- x. Dismissed a proposal to site Stocks in the Market Place!!!

h. **Planning Committee:**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Mrs. Sue Crew explained that the Planning Committee was made up of all 21 Councillors and that one from each ward met in the week prior to formal meetings to go through and discuss each of the plans on the agenda for the following week and to formulate a recommendation to make to the full committee. She further reported as follows:

- i. Commented on 204 planning applications (to 09/05/2017) and amendments following recommendations from the Planning sub group who meet prior to Committee meetings. This is an increase of over 42% on 2016/17 (143).
- ii. Recorded 6 variances of planning consultation responses compared to ELDC outcome including Cistercian Cottage (Stewton Lane), Julian Bower, Land off Eastfield Road, Eastfield House and Land off Chestnut Drive.
- iii. Commented on 18 'Proposed Works' to trees.
- iv. Noted and supported enforcement proposals on Westgate and Amanda Drive.
- v. Major / Notable Planning Application Consultations some of which were attended by a representative of LTC at ELDC Planning Committee:
 - 1. Land at 82 Eastfield Road (46 dwellings)
 - 2. Land off Chestnut Drive (100 dwellings)
 - 3. Land west of Grimsby Road (240 dwellings)
 - 4. Land off Legbourne Road (55 dwellings)
 - 5. Land south of Keddington House (33 dwellings)
 - 6. Land rear of 64 Kenwick Road (107 dwellings)
 - 7. Land off Shearwater Close (55 dwellings)
 - 8. Rock Cottage (13 dwellings)
 - 9. Land South East of Brackenborough Road (500 dwellings)
 - 10. Julian Bower development

i. **Governance and Finance Committee:**

Councillor F.W.P. Treanor, the Chairman of the Governance and Finance Committee explained that this Committee ensured that the Council was run in accordance with regulations and that the Council's money was spent and accounted for properly by overseeing the following:

- i. Finance Overview Group meets throughout the year including 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 2015/16 and the 2016-17 Annual Return will be submitted following approval at the Town Council meeting earlier on the 9th May 2017. Louth Town Council participates in a quadripartite internal audit arrangement with three other local councils. The Committee also ensures that public notice requirements are complied with.
- iii. Carried out a Risk Review, adding to and tightening Internal Controls accordingly.
- iv. Reviewed Governance Documents and Insurances and have adopted New Financial Regulations in line with new national recommendations during 2016/17.
- v. Carried out a thorough Budget Setting exercise resulting in Precept of £243,084 for 2017/18 or £50.59 for a Band D equivalent an increase of 5.1% on 2016/17. Whilst there are no major new projects scheduled this does include an increase of £10,000 for the maintenance of Hubbards Hills which will be reviewed later this year prior to budget setting exercises for 2018/19.
- vi. Expenditure and Income 2016/17
Approved net expenditure against Loans, Reserves and Precept monies of £186,448 (audited April 2017) major items included:
 1. Hubbards Hills £35,000 day to day maintenance expenditure
 2. Cemetery Net Cost £18,024.
 3. Loan Repayment (Sessions House) £20,513 Loan Balance outstanding £75,591 which will be complete in 2021.
 4. Christmas Celebrations including Safety checks, New Strings of Lights and Tree - £10,611.
 5. Grants – £5,950 – Awards including Louth Lions Bike Night, Zero Degrees Festival, Wolds Riding For Disabled, Louth XSports Skate Park and Louth Croquet Club. The Town Council also gave £1,000 to the Citizens advice bureau.
Grants ensure that the Town Council support local community organisations and the local economy by helping to increase footfall to the town.
 6. Payments for the Flood Alleviation scheme which were allowed in this budget will not fall due until the project is completed later this year.

j. **Personnel Committee**

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Councillor A. Leonard JP reported as follows:

- i. Maintained Policy handbook for Employees and Members, adopted by Town Council.
- ii. Supported officers and Councillors attending training courses throughout the year.
- iii. Recruited a Maintenance Foreman to join the existing 3 employees who will commence in June 2017. A vacant office post will be recruited to shortly.
- iv. Employed specialist personnel advisor to ensure employment legislation compliance.
- v. Monitored and made recommendations to the Council on statutory Pension Scheme requirements. Town Clerk attended pension scheme meetings.
- vi. Training by the newly recruited Interim Monitoring Officer at ELDC is outstanding and a date pending.

k. **Community Resources Committee**

The Chairman of the Community Resources Committee, Councillor C. Green apprised those present of the activities/responsibilities of this Committee as follows:

- 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 storage for LANALS.
- ii. Town Council Asset Working Group:
 1. Continuously reviews all assets to ensure best use
 2. Oversees Louth Town Council properties / land legal requirements and recommendations.
- iii. London Road Cemetery:
 1. 62 burials took place in 2016 an increase of 9% made up of 38 full burials and 24 sets of ashes
 2. Total Town Council responsibility of 29,198 burials since 1855 as at 31/12/16
 3. 26 weeks of Community Payback attendance (and many additional 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 and a recent grant from Louth Rotary Club.
 5. Supporting Biodiversity by completing Hedge laying projects and reinforcing boundaries by using self-set sapling waste. Additional compost bins have been created using natural materials found on site by the Community Payback Team and Bird and Bat Boxes have been erected around the site which were also made by them.
 6. Continued assessment of the archway access and structural repairs with planned structural engineering investigations and historical research to provide the council with options on the way forward.
 7. Large blue planters now have smart wooden outers thanks to Interskill.
 8. On Healthy Walks route, with the Greenwich Meridian marked and encourages visitors.
- iv. Civic Pride in the Town – hosts the annual Lovely Louth Competition, provides the Town Christmas Tree, Solar Trees and Town Lights, erected bunting in the town for the recent cycle race and has litter picking equipment available. Active contributor to Louth in Bloom hosting part of the route in the Cemetery and Town Centre.
- v. Maintain the Parish Clock at St James Church and have funded a regulator to ensure accuracy throughout the year.

4. **Louth Town Council Objectives / Projects 2017/18**

The Chairman then continued saying, 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 continue to consider the provision of services and their own budget cutting exercises for 2017 / 18.

- a. The Council is always 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 is nearing full completion 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 during 2015/16 have erected passive reminder signage and more recently have been rotating two interactive speed signs on roads identified with speeding issues. Data is being collated and will be analysed to provide evidence to enforcement authorities to lobby for support for local residents.
 - iii. CCTV remains a priority for the town council; the delivery of the monitoring of and the provision of the new digital town council cameras will be by new providers and a monitoring watch, now located at Boston 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 and have already signed up to host the Voices of War banner exhibition (formerly at Lincoln Castle) and will take part in the national beacon lighting events ‘Battles Over’ both of which commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War in November 2018.

- 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 and the recruitment of the Maintenance Foreman will ensure that the notice boards, bus shelters, seats all maintained and replaced if necessary.
- e. The edge of Town Signs will be reviewed soon; this follows that removal of two of the signs due to extensive deterioration and one from accident damage. There is also a requirement to review the official town signage on approach roads and Louth Town Council will be working with LCC to achieve compliant signposting to aid the local tourist economy.
- f. Non-Financial Projects –
 - i. The Town Council will closely monitor the implementation of the draft Local Plan when it is approved to assess the potential impact on 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. Presentation by ELDC Portfolio Holder for Market Towns, Councillor Adam Grist

Councillor Grist began by explaining that he had served on Louth Town Council for ten years. Was Louth born and bred and now his role on the ELDC Executive Board was Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy which meant that he was trying to deal with the following kinds of issues:

- a. Economic development matters
- b. Improving relations with Town Councils
- c. Producing a plan for the Wolds in terms of tourism
- d. Production and implementation of East Lindsey Economic Action Plan (launched just before Christmas)

Cllr. Grist reported that there were three districts with responsibility for the Wolds and up a few months ago each had taken a completely different approach to it. However, recently they had all met and come to an agreement on a single approach that they would all take. The Love Lincs Wolds website had been launched just before Christmas and there were three strands to this that were being developed. These being:

- a. Active outdoors
- b. Cultural and heritage
- c. Food and drink

He confirmed that each of the above would have a promotional video produced for them and it was hoped to get pieces into glossy Sunday magazines to put the Wolds on the map.

Cllr. Grist then went on to list other events etc., that he had been involved with or hoped to review so as to boost the economy and/or maximise tourism in the area. These being:

Tour of the Wolds – a professional cycle race held on 8th and 9th April 2017, started and finished in Louth and extending out into the Wolds. Has a huge potential. Is hoping to run again next year.

Car parks – following a review of car park usage and charges he had looked at what can be done to help shops and businesses and get tills ringing. He said the programme of changes in Louth was unique to Louth to cater for it especially. Some of the changes included:

- a. Introducing 30 mins free parking in the Market Place.
- b. Scrapping the policy to introduce overnight parking charges.
- c. Analysing on-street parking.

Markets – looking at best practice nationally and provision locally. Trying to add new impetus. The Town Council would be consulted on this.

Industrial Estate Review – Fairfield Industrial Estate is actually quite full. Most plots have been purchased. ELDC needs to future proof it and ensure that they can offer other plots to any enquiring businesses.

Multi-User Path – There is a commitment nationally to improve the cycle network. Lots of work has already been done in the Lincoln and Gainsborough area. It is hoped that a coastal path can be created around the whole of the British Isles and ELDC would like to join it to the Lincoln path. He stressed that this project was

in its very early days. Landowners still needed to be consulted and ecological surveys still needed to be done and funding sill needed to be found. BUT, it would be brilliant for tourism if it could be achieved.

Grants – Cllr. Grist explained that there was not a lot of money to give out. Last year ELDC had run a shop front scheme wherein shops could apply to have their shop fronts revamped and if they were willing to put in half of the cost of the revamp ELDC would provide the other half. £10,840 had been given to shops in Louth via this to improve the high street and this had realised £22,000 into the economy. He opined that he would hope to run the scheme again. However, this year the Micro Business Grant was in operation. This was aimed at small businesses and was intended to help launch them or provide a springboard. He confirmed that £3,500 had gone to businesses in Louth so far and there were ten applications currently being processed.

Cllr. Grist then finished his presentation and asked if there were any questions. Cllr. Mrs. J. Makinson-Sanders asked if ELDC would support residents in their bid to persuade LCC not to decrease the amount of public amenity grass cutting that it would undertake as it would severely impact on tourism. Cllr. Grist opened the floor to Cllr. T. Bridges the recently elected Louth North LCC representative. Cllr. Bridges introduced himself and explained that LCC need to save £30m a year. He opined that these are challenging times but he reported that he was hoping to be re-elected to the LCC Committee looking at Grass Cutting and he would do his best to support the residents.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Grist for his presentation.

6. The Chairman opened the Floor to the public:

A gentleman spoke saying that he was in agreement with LCC’s proposals re. grass cutting. He wanted to see verges being treated as meadows, having wild flowers growing in them and being beneficial to wildlife and the environment.

Another gentleman asked about the Cattle Market and whether it had been sold yet. Cllr. Grist replied that there is a preferred bidder and discussions are ongoing. He reported that when discussions reach a stage where the full ELDC Council need to make a decision, the Council will do that. He expected that stage to be reached in 2017 but could not say for sure.

7. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Chairman..... Date.....

Following the closure of the formal meeting:

The Chairman then invited those present to remain to see her present cheques to her chosen charities/organisations for the year – Louth Museum, Friends of St. James’ Church, Louth Athletic Club, Louth and District Arthritis Group, St. Barnabas Lincolnshire Hospice, Louth Male Voice Choir, Louth Choral Society, Lincolnshire Wolds Riding for the Disabled, Louth Swimming Club, Louth Division Girl Guides, Disability Sports and the Zero Degrees Chorus.