

LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 2018

Chairman – Councillor Mrs P. Watson

Present – Town County and District Councillors, Members of the Public and Members of Community Groups. Total 60 present.

- 1. The Chairman Councillor Mrs. P.F. Watson welcomed all present to the meeting.**
- 2. Following a proposal by Councillor Mrs. SC, seconded by Councillor Mrs. SEL and a vote of those present the Chairman signed the notes of the 2017 Annual Town Meeting and approved them as the minutes.**
- 3. Annual Report of the Town Council 2017/18**
 - a. The number of electors in the parish as at December 2017 was 12,897, a slight increase from February 2017 of 24.
 - 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 24/04/2018) was 77% a decrease of 7% on the previous year with 1 councillor missing no meetings at all. During the year there have been 18 Town Council Meetings, 18 Planning Committee, 9 Governance and Finance Committee, 8 Personnel Committee, and 11 Community Resources Committee Meetings held on a total of 25 occasions.
 - d. Councillors also attended working groups, meetings with other authorities, the ELDC 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 Armistice Day and Remembrance Day.
 - f. Town Council Routine activities
 - i. Hosted a Public Forum at every scheduled meeting receiving comments ranging from installation of a gate on Watts Lane to Keep Louth Special pledging funds to assist with the battle to keep Louth Livestock Market, Bridleways Access, broadband cabling issues, anti-social behaviour in Kiln Lane, objections to a planning application to demolish Ayscough Hall, proposals to change the astro-turf at London Road, the collapse of the river retaining wall on Wellington Street and litter.
 - ii. Participated in the Area Forums hosted by ELDC, attended Flood Forum meetings and attended the AGM of Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils, LCC Highways Parish Cluster meeting and Livestock Market meetings.

- iii. Supported the work of Hubbard's Hills Trust in the year of the 110th anniversary of Hubbard's Hills being gifted to the people of Louth by continuing funding day to day operational costs, increasing our contribution in 2017 by an extra £10,000 which was spent installing a new beach area near the stepping stones and having the stepping stones raised to their original level, a new handrail was also made and installed at the side of the steps leading to the top path and the footpath entrance to the golf course.
- iv. Provided storage facilities under agreement for LANALS and Hubbards Hills.
- v. Celebrated National events and anniversaries by flying the flag, including 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth 2018' and the Queen's birthday.
- vi. Received presentations from Andrew Morgan CEO of LCHS NHS Trust re. Louth Hospital and Services, Adam Grist on Louth Livestock Market, Local GP's on proposed mergers, the Scouts on their proposals for the Charles Street recreation area, Mr. Humphreys on proposals to replace the astro-turf at London Road and Mr. Hampson and Mr. Brown on Louth Academy.
- vii. Approved the Budgets and Precept for 2018/19 and submitted the request to ELDC.

g. Major topics / events for the year which the Town Council considered / carried out were:

- i. Supported Louth Navigation Trust in including the Navigation Warehouse on 'The Assets of Community Value List'.
- ii. Won an EMIB 2017 It's Your Neighbourhood award at Level 4 (Thriving) at Louth Cemetery and received a donation from Louth Lions to increase the Meridian Orchard at the Cemetery with native fruit trees.
- iii. Continued to participate in the River Lud Attenuation Scheme Project Board and attended the official opening of the sites in July 2017.
- iv. Supported Louth Livestock Auctioneers in their battle to keep Louth Livestock Market.
- v. Discussed / responded to consultations on:
 - 1. Proposed Public Space Protection Orders
 - 2. Local Plan
 - 3. Local Medical Practices Mergers
 - 4. Louth Livestock Market
 - 5. Lincolnshire School Admissions
 - 6. Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Services
 - 7. Review of Local Government Ethical Standards
 - 8. Building Communities of Specialist Provision: A Collaborative Strategy
 - 9. LCC Fairer Funding
 - 10. Licensing Act 2003 – Review of Licensing Policy
- vi. Supported residents' requests for Litter Bins, Magna Vitae's request for Brown Signs and Discretionary Rate Relief requests from Navigation Warehouse, Generations Church and Louth and District Scouts.

h. **Planning Committee:**

- i. Commented on 159 planning applications (to 08/05/2018) and amendments following recommendations from the Planning sub group who meet prior to Committee meetings. This is a decrease of 28% on 2016/17 (204).
- ii. Recorded 14 variances of planning consultation responses compared to ELDC outcome including Rock Cottage, Legbourne Road, Eastfield Road and Former Quarry.
- iii. Considered 25 'Proposed Works' to trees.
- iv. Received 21 Temporary Traffic Restrictions/Closure notices.
- v. Notable Planning Application Consultations some of which were attended by a representative of LTC at ELDC Planning Committee:
 1. Land to the South of 115 and to the rear of 115-107 Upgate, Louth (Site formerly known as land adjoining Rock Cottage, Quarry Road, Louth).
 2. Land South East of Brackenborough Road, Louth.
 3. Ayscough Hall, Lee Street
 4. Former Quarry, Upgate
 5. Land West of Keddington House, Keddington Road
 6. Land adjacent 26 Gresley Road
 7. Land adjacent 82 Eastfield Road

i. **Governance and Finance Committee:**

- 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 2016/17 and the 2017/18 Annual Return will be submitted following approval at the Town Council meeting earlier on the 8th May 2018. 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 (Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) and Insurances and have prepared and adopted a number of new policies and procedures during the year.

v. Carried out a thorough Budget Setting exercise resulting in Precept of £269,286 for 2018/19 or £54.58 for a Band D equivalent an increase of 7.9% on 2017/18. The main increases have been due to the provision of funds to undertake amenity grasscutting (formerly carried out by LCC), the inclusion of monies for election expenses (which were previously paid for by ELDC), an amount for maintenance at the Sessions House to renew emergency lighting and repaint externally (painting not undertaken since 2011) and an increase in the salaries budget and training budget due to a staff restructure - currently underway. LTC have also set aside an amount for the provision of WWI Commemorations (LTC are registered as participants in 'Battle's Over – A Nation's Tribute & WWI Beacons of Light, which will see over 1,000 WWI Beacons lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories and the Sessions House will also host an exhibition entitled Lincolnshire Voices of the Great War in November. LTC will also be looking at the replacement of its Town Signs (both decorative oak and brown information). The attractive oak signs have braved all weathers since 1967 and some can, unfortunately, no longer be repaired. LCC have informed the Council that the Brown signs do not now meet national requirements and LTC will have to pay to replace them, if we want them, even though LCC originally paid for and installed them. The Town Council has also set aside monies to help the Royal British Legion meet the costs of staging the Remembrance Parade and we have also decided to again provide an extra £10,000 for the maintenance of Hubbard's Hills which it was agreed should be repeated from 2016/17.

vi. Expenditure and Income 2017/18

The Council's internal auditor completed his audit procedures on 1st May 2018.

Approved expenditure in 2017/18 included:

1. Hubbards Hills £45,000 day to day maintenance expenditure.
2. Cemetery Net Cost £17,810.
3. Loan Repayment (Sessions House) £20,513 Loan Balance outstanding £57,724 which will be complete in 2021.
4. Christmas Celebrations including safety checks, repairs and tree - £11,328.
5. Grants – £4,300 – Awards including Louth and District Help for the Homeless, Lincolnshire Emergency Blood Bike Service, Lincolnshire Wolds Riding for the Disabled, Nichols Youth Project and Louth Scouts. 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 centre.

6. Payments for the Flood Alleviation scheme which were allowed in this budget have not been invoiced yet, but should fall due this year.

j. Personnel Committee

- i. Maintained Policy handbook for Employees and Members, adopted by Town Council.
- ii. Supported officers attending training courses throughout the year.

- iii. Recruited a Maintenance Foreman to join the existing 3 employees who commenced in November 2017. Recruited a new Town Clerk, after advertising the post and interviewing 9 successful candidates, by promoting the Deputy Town Clerk. The Committee will shortly begin the recruitment process to fill the remaining vacant office post.
- iv. Employed specialist personnel advisor to ensure employment legislation compliance.
- v. Ensured that the Council complied with its statutory Pension Scheme requirements.

k. Community Resources Committee

- 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 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. 60 burials took place in 2017/18 made up of 32 full burials and 28 sets of ashes
 - 2. Total Town Council responsibility of 29,978 burials since 1855 as at 31st March 2017.
 - 3. 26 weeks of Community Payback attendance (and many additional free sessions). One of their current projects includes the crafting of a natural barrier made of fallen tree branches woven between stakes, being used to supplement the hedge on the quarry bank.
 - 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 Lions which allowed the planting of 13 more apple trees all species native to Lincolnshire to supplement the 13 which were planted in 2016 along with 2 blackcurrant bushes and a mulberry bush.
 - 5. Supporting Biodiversity by allowing the growth of the wildflower meadow.
 - 6. Memorial testing is currently being undertaken.
 - 7. Continued assessment of the archway access.
 - 8. A comprehensive tree survey was commissioned which highlighted problems with the avenue of Lime trees running east to west across the Cemetery.

Remedial action, in the form of pollarding, mulching and restriction of vehicular access in the area has been implemented.

- iv. Civic Pride in the Town – hosts the annual Lovely Louth Competition, provides the Town Christmas Tree, Solar Trees and Town Lights and has litter picking equipment available.
- v. Maintain the Parish Clock at St James Church.
- vi. Purchased new meeting furniture at the Sessions House.

4. Louth Town Council Objectives / Projects 2017/18

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 2018/19.

- a. The Council is always mindful that a safe environment makes the town a pleasant place to live and will attract more visitors.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The long awaited flood alleviation scheme is now completed and is working to 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.
 - iii. Speeding traffic remains a major concern of Louth residents and Louth Town Council will be looking to use its rotating interactive speed signs throughout the town, gathering data for publication and use as evidence for enforcement authorities to lobby for support for local residents.
- 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 Maintenance Foreman and Maintenance Assistant will continue to ensure that the notice boards, bus shelters, seats etc., are all maintained and replaced if necessary.
- e. The edge of Town Signs will be reviewed soon; this follows the 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.

g. Hubbard's Hills

Councillor A. Leonard gave a report on the work of the Hubbard's Hills Trust in 2017/18 and confirmed that they were now in receipt of three quotes for the repair of the disabled ramp. Unfortunately, it is not thought that the work can be started in time for the summer season. Quotes are all approaching £15,000. Vandalism is a major problem at Hubbard's Hills as is litter which is very expensive to clear up and have collected. The Trust have been in contact with the Environment Agency recently over flooding in the hills and they have confirmed that the Hills have always and will always take the initial influx of water and the flood alleviation works will protect the rest of the town. The Trust is looking into carrying out de-silting works on the duck pond.

5. Presentation by Dr. N. Parkes on Louth Community Hub

Dr. N. Parkes explained that the Hub is a pilot and is a foray into how access can be increased for patients between the hours of 8am and 8pm. It is not about urgent or emergency care. It would look at what opening hours best suit patients and would provide evidence for this, it would also allow medical care to be more resilient and would allow more medical services to be accessed via the Hub. It would put services back into Louth Hospital and there was a possibility that a 24 hour pharmacy would be included. The coming together of GP Surgeries would ensure that there was always a safe and effective level of staffing and this sort of system might help surgeries experiencing problems with recruitment or illness stay open as the other surgeries could fill in. Dr. Parkes confirmed that the pilot would run for a year and that members of the public should contact their GP Surgery to find out how they would be taking part or contact Dr. Parkes for further information. He finished by saying that modern medicine can do so much but we need to design a system to support it.

6. Presentation by Rev. N. Brown on the work of the Church

Rev. N. Brown began by explaining that the Parish of Louth encompassed several village churches but the largest presence was at St. James'. He opined that St. James' is the heart of the community. It maintained as a place of Christian Worship and the Ministry Team meets each day to provide prayers etc. There are four congregations across the course of a week and the church also receives many visitors and is used by many community groups as a venue for events. There are currently no full time vicars in the villages and so they are trying to keep all of the outlying churches serviced. As a team they are trying to help people live the fullest life possible. Within the town is also the Trinity Centre. This is available for hire by community groups and is used by the church to reduce isolation or loneliness. Activities are run by other groups but aided by the church or referred to the church for partnership working. Rev. Brown introduced Zoe McIlpatrick who was the Projects Administrator at Trinity Church. She explained that the projects undertaken at Trinity were aimed at providing support, friendship and activities like the Memories Matter Dementia Café which offers support to sufferers and family and meets every Wednesday afternoon and once a month goes out for activities. This group is vital to help some members get some enjoyment from life. She also spoke about the Stroke Recovery Café which ran on very similar lines to the above and she reported that there were also two luncheon clubs: 1) Tasty Tuesday and 2) Fish on Friday. Fish on Friday ran every week and provided a chance for friends old and new to have lunch and find support through friendship. Tasty Tuesday ran once a month and was a two course meal. Rev. Brown then introduced Greg Gilbert who was the Community Outreach Manager and who had run Louth Men's Shed for four years. He reported that the Men's Shed had proved popular and not only had they had opened an extension in 2017 but they had also started a ladies day on Thursdays. It had become a charity in it's own right in 2017. He ran the Community Larder and always welcomed any food or money that people might

wish to donate. They ran a gas and electric fund which was there to help anyone struggling or experiencing difficult times. He explained that they always tried to help as many people as they could who were struggling with a variety of different hardships including homelessness. They ran a meals and wellbeing service which provided meals five days a week to people in Louth and was a chance for elderly to have a chat with the deliverer. This has been set up in August 2017. Finally, he reported that the Trinity Centre hoped to operate a volunteer counselling service in the near future.

7. Public Forum

The Mayor opened the floor to members of the public.

- a. A gentleman asked why Louth Town Council had cancelled the bike night. It was explained to him that this was not the case and the Town Council were not a part of the event, which was actually organised by the Louth Lions and who had decided to have a break from it for a year due to the rising cost of the road closures required and a lack of volunteers. The Mayor urged members of the public to contact Louth Lions if they wished to volunteer.
- b. A gentleman voiced his concerns about Louth Town Council’s response to the downgrading of Louth Hospital. He was upset that campaigners were called scare mongers. The Mayor explained that Louth Hospital was not an accident and emergency centre, it had not been that for years. The Council had received assurances that it would not be closed. Dr. Parkes was called upon to speak and he said that one of the problems was communication and an out of date idea of what services a hospital such as Louth’s should provide. He sadly confirmed that the days of general physicians were over. Specialised teams were the way forward and outcomes were far better when surgeries were performed by a specialist who performed those operations all the time. However, he opined that Louth had a huge part to play in triage, rehabilitation and getting patients back closer to home quicker after surgery, as it was a known fact that patients recovered far quicker with their family around them. He confirmed that there was a need to redesign the resource to ensure it was safe and well used. There was a need for patients to travel to Hull, Leicester, Nottingham for specific operations but there was no reason why 24 hours after surgery the patient could not be returned to Louth. Also, he explained that patients do not accept ‘Acts of God’ anymore. The risks that once we accepted twenty years ago, are not the same risks now.
- c. A gentleman asked whether Louth Town Council would be able to provide any extra facilities following the withdrawal of support by Louth Academy. The Mayor explained that it was not currently planned by Louth Town Council and unfortunately the days of using the schools facilities were over as they were no longer run by the County Council but were run as a business which unfortunately meant that local groups would have to find other venues and funds or fund raise to build new facilities. But, there was a possibility that the redevelopment of the Charles Street Recreation Ground by the Scouts might open up some opportunities.

8. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

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 Choral Society, Louth Swimming Club, Louth Division Guide Association, Louth Interskill Ltd., Louth and District Scouts Council, Louth and District Help for the Homeless, Louth Men’s Shed, Louth Navigation Trust and Louth and District Concert Society.