

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 26TH APRIL 2022

Held at the Royal British Legion Hall

Chairman – The Mayor of Louth, Councillor Darren Hobson

Present – Town and District Councillors, Members of the Public and Members of Community Groups. Total 31.

1. The Chairman, Councillor Darren Hobson, welcomed all present to the meeting as the representative of Louth Town Council and explained how the evening would run. He reported that over the last year he had attended many events and met a host of interesting people. He continued that usually, at the Annual Town Meeting, the Mayor would hand out cheques to his chosen charities, but that this year he had raised £2,000 which he would use to fund some additional defibrillators for the town.
2. Following a proposal by Councillor AL, seconded by Councillor Mrs. JMS and a vote of those present, the notes of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting were approved as the minutes to be signed by the Chairman forthwith.
3. **Annual Report of the Town Council 2021/22**
 - I. **The Town Council**

The Chairman of the Council and Mayor of Louth, Councillor Darren Hobson reported that:

 - a. The Town Council is made up of 21 councillors representing the town comprising of three Councillors for each of the seven wards. There are currently no vacancies.
 - b. Meetings were held on 18 separate occasions in 2021/22.
 - c. Attendances for the last year (to 5th April 2022) were 77% a decrease of 10% on 20/21 with three councillors missing no meetings at all. During the year there have been 10 Town Council Meetings, 11 Planning Committee, 7 Governance and Finance Committee, 6 Personnel Committee, and 5 Community Resources Committee Meetings.
 - d. Councillors and officers also attended online meetings of working groups, with other authorities and associations and meetings related to representatives on charitable trust boards.
 - e. **Town Council Routine activities**
 - i. Hosted Public Forums at scheduled meetings receiving comments mainly on planning issues.
 - ii. Attended the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) AGM, attended the ICCM Annual Meeting and ICCM information and training sessions. Both staff and Councillors also attended training sessions through LALC.
 - iii. Supported the work of the Hubbard's Hills Trust funding operational costs.
 - iv. Provided storage facilities under agreement for LANALS.
 - v. Celebrated National events and anniversaries, flew the Union flag all through the year and hoisted special flags for other events such as Commonwealth Day.
 - vi. Approved the Budgets and Precept for 2022/23 and submitted the request to ELDC.
 - f. **Major topics / events for the year which the Town Council promoted**
 - i. 100th Anniversary of the War Memorial – a service of rededication.
 - ii. Organised the Lovely Louth competition and awarded winners.
 - iii. Organised the Festive Window competition and awarded winners.
 - iv. Organised the Fab and Festive competition and awarded winners.
 - v. Compiled a Christmas Shopping leaflet containing vouchers for use in participating Town Centre shops and delivered it to households town wide.
 - vi. Organised and participated in Louth's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Church Service.

- vii. Organised a service of thanksgiving to commemorate the current Mayor of Louth's year in office.
- viii. Discussed / responded to various consultations including Public Space Protection Order, Louth Academy Admissions Policy, Active Travel Scheme.
- ix. Supported residents' requests for Litter Bins.
 - x. Agreed to pay tribute to key workers in the town by placing a bench with suitably worded plaque near the canal.
 - xi. Agreed to look into restoring an historical metal gate removed by LCC.
 - xii. Agreed to light the Beacon for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- xiii. Formed a working group to carry forward projects which met the criteria for help from Government Welcome Back Funding these included the Brown's Panorama Trail, the War Memorial information boards and tourism leaflets and to come is weeding in the town centre, two new planters for the market place, solar lighting in the market place trees, 50 planted up hanging baskets to be issued to town centre businesses for free, the purchase of and erection of new flags and bunting through the town centre, 4 new benches for use as a stock/to replace some of those existing around the town which are in a state of disrepair and one to be used to form a tribute to key workers, 6 new bins for use as a stock/to solve already identified litter problem areas in the town (working in conjunction with ELDC), 7 new trees to be planted in Hubbard's Hills as part of national guidelines to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee,
- xiv. Met with Magna Vitae and ELDC representatives to discuss concerns surrounding Magna Vitae's withdrawal from the management of London Road Pavilion.
- xv. Wrote to ELDC to object to proposals to increase the cost to residents of green waste collections.
- xvi. Wrote to the areas MP re. the cancellation of some public transport services in the town.
- xvii. Agree to support an application to ELDC by Louth Navigation Trust for Business Rate Relief.
- xviii. Wrote to the Clinical Commissioning Trust, Lincolnshire Community Health Service and United Lincolnshire Hospitals to express grave concern over the unexpected and sudden permanent closure of Cawthorpe Ward at Louth County Hospital.
- xix. Wrote to Lincolnshire County Council to implore them to review the issues affecting Louth bypass, including surface dressing, drainage, pedestrian access (affected by overhanging vegetation) and risk.
- xx. Wrote to ELDC to raise concern with their proposals to place a new 3G football pitch on the site of an existing grass football pitch at Meridian Leisure Centre.
- xxi. Wrote to Lincolnshire County Council to raise concern over traffic in the town and damage caused to buildings and parked cars when vehicles of a large size and/or weight use unsuitable roads/residential areas. Requested a review of 1) signage and 2) increased enforcement of inappropriate use of roads, 3) ways to reduce/deter speeding in the town, 4) ways to increase environmentally friendly transport in the town.

II. Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Sue Crew reported:

- a. The Planning Committee has delegated responsibility for all items relating to planning, make comments on planning applications, traffic regulation orders, proposed works to trees, street naming, planning enforcements and planning appeals. We note planning decisions, other correspondence received e.g., temporary road closures and consideration of matters relating to road safety and enforcement complaints.
- b. We commented on 161 planning applications (to 5/04/2022) and amendments following recommendations from the Planning Working Group who meet prior to Committee meetings. This was a substantial increase on last year (2019/20) due to Covid (135), the number of considered in 2018/19 also being 161.

There is quite a list of recorded variances of planning consultation responses where our opinion was different to the ELDC outcome including N/105/00653/21 – 3 Trinity Lane, N/105/00722/21 – 73 Eastgate, N/105/00704/21 Land off Kenwick Gardens, N/105/01419/21 27 Market Place, N/105/01641/21 73 Eastgate, N/105/01357/21 - Pear Tree Lodge High Holme Road, N105/01361/21 - St Mary’s Lane, N/105/02010/20– Land off Legbourne Road, N/105/02137/21– Land to the north of Julian Bower, N/105/02176/21 – Louth Golf Club, N105/01426/21 – Brackenfreya Woods, PL0161/21 –Keily House, Gresley Road, N/105/00046/22 – 10 Davey Close, N105/02149/21 – Land at Grimsby Road, N105/00045/22 – Brackenborough Arms.

- c. We considered 24 ‘Proposed Works’ to trees (to 5/4/22).
- d. We received 24 Temporary Traffic Restrictions/Closure notices.
- e. We consulted on one street naming proposal at a development for land off Brackenborough Road.
- f. With regards to Notable Planning Application Consultations, some of these were attended by a representative of LTC at ELDC Planning Committee: Louth Llama Trekking – change of use of land to be used for Llama Trekking at Hallam’s Close, Julian Bower.

III. Governance and Finance Committee

The Chairman of the Governance and Finance Committee, Councillor Mrs. Eileen Ballard reported that:

- a. All of the members on the Town Council sit on the Governance and Finance Committee. We all share responsibility for the financial management of the Council although the finances are administered by the Responsible Financial Officer, who is the Town Clerk.
- b. We ensure that the Responsible Financial Officer acts properly and that the Council avoids the risk of fraud, bad debts or carelessness. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that our accounts have been properly prepared and approved, that we have an effective system of internal controls, that we comply with the law, that we have assessed all possible risks to public money and that we have appointed a competent and independent internal auditor. We make sure that the accounts are publicised for general inspection and that there are no hidden issues, (such as impending claims against the Council) and also that any significant differences in the figures from previous years can be explained. Louth Town Council received an unqualified external audit for 2020/2021.
- c. A group of Councillors sit on the Finance Overview Group which meets prior to the Governance and Finance Committee meetings to make recommendations to the committee members, such as risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. It has recently carried out a risk management review, adding to internal controls accordingly. It has also 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.
- d. As Chair of the Governance and Finance Committee I keep an eye on the arrangements for financial management and check financial documents such as the Cheque Schedules regularly.
- e. The Governance and Finance Committee are responsible for the collation and production of the annual budgets and recommendations to the Town Council, and to oversee financial transactions of Louth Town Council. The Committee also oversees the Council’s formal grant giving process, assessing and making resolutions on applications received.
- f. The Committee reviews financial regulations, Standing Orders, the Code of Conduct, internal controls and any other matters required. It has to ensure that all statements of the AGAR (annual governance and accountability return), can be approved by the Full Council. Its responsibility is to develop general policies and strategies on behalf of the Council, for implementation.
- g. Louth Town Council participate in a quadripartite internal audit arrangement with three other local councils, Skegness, Mablethorpe and Alford.

- h. We have carried out a thorough examination of the Council's income and expenditure and undertook a budget setting exercise.

Expenditure 2021/22 included:

1. Hubbard's Hills £45,000 maintenance expenditure.
 2. Cemetery Net Cost (to 8th Feb 2022) £14,126.
 3. Christmas Tree and lights including safety checks, repairs, installation, Market Place tree and rental and installation etc., £10,480.
 4. Louth Town Council awarded grants to the following organisations: £1,000 – Awarded to Lindsey Citizens Advice as allowed under the LGA 1972, S142(2A) and £1,200 Help for the Homeless under the LGA 1972 S137 and a further £2,000 was awarded to Louth Playgoers under the LGA 1972 S145 Power to give to a theatre. Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants were awarded: £301.70 was awarded to Louth Thirteen Plus; £100 to Lincs Wold Community Trust
 5. £704 to Louth Navigational Trust, £500 to Louth Run For Life, £200 to Louth and District Concert Society and £1,750 to 1228 Air Training Corp
 6. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Payments towards maintenance of the structure which was completed in 2017 and is located near the Hallington end of Hubbard's Hills, as agreed with the Environment Agency commenced this year and required the Council to contribute £12,394.26.
- i. The Mayor continued to receive no honorary payment for undertaking the Mayoral Role, and only received mileage expenses when travelling to official events.
- j. We also ensure that public notice requirements are complied with.

IV. Personnel Committee

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Mrs. J. Makinson-Sanders thanked the Town Council' staff for their hard work throughout the year – the Town Clerk and her assistant in the office and the two staff at the cemetery. She also thanked the Council's volunteer for his voluntary work at the cemetery and thanked the recently retired Mayor's Sergeant (and were now looking for a replacement). She then reported that the Personnel Committee was a small group that had responsibility to oversee staffing matters, policies, procedures and supported officers and councillors attending training courses throughout the year. The committee also ensured that the Council complied with its statutory Pension Scheme requirements.

V. Community Resources Committee

The Chairman and Community Resources Committee, Councillor Andrew Leonard reported that the committee has responsibility for all inspection / maintenance / refurbishment / terms and conditions / regulations and charges re. Louth Town Council owned or 'responsible for' assets e.g. Church Clock or 'default' assets e.g. war memorial.

- i. Council Premises –The Sessions House – now owned by the Town Council, is usually used as follows but has been subject to restrictions due to the pandemic.
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 Flag(s).
 4. Councillors are nominated keyholders.
 5. Hosts visits from schools, twinning groups, art groups and charity events.
 6. Hosts Action Group Meetings.
 7. Hosts award ceremonies.
 8. Provides storage facilities for LANALS.
 9. Stores the Town Council/Borough Council archives along with the Town Charters and Mayoral Robes and Maces.
 10. Brown's Panorama hangs in the Court Room.

- ii. London Road Cemetery:
 - 11. In total the Town Council has responsibility for 29,503 burials since 1855 as at 31st March 2022.
 - 12. 65 interments took place in 2021/22 made up of 38 full burials and 27 sets of ashes.
 - 13. We welcomed back the Community Payback Team following an absence due to Covid.
 - 14. We continue to enjoy the assistance of 2 volunteers at the Cemetery who assist horticulturally and with grave enquiries, photography and research etc.
 - 15. We continue to cultivate the Meridian Meadow area and the Meridian Orchard, a community initiative (which contains 26 apple trees all species native to Lincolnshire, 2 blackcurrant bushes and a mulberry bush) in conjunction with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Officer.
 - 16. We support biodiversity by allowing the growth of the wildflower meadow and other set aside areas.
 - 17. Following a comprehensive tree survey we continue to carry out works as recommended by the report.
 - 18. Following contact from LCC we cut back the canopy of trees both on the Cemetery lining London Road and in Mount Olivet Allotments lining Grimsby Road to ensure that street lights were unobstructed so to safeguard members of the public in those areas.
 - 19. One Chapel located at the Cemetery is rented by St. Aethelherd's Greek Orthodox Church.
- iii. Louth Allotments

The five sites are managed by The Louth Cottage Garden and Allotment Association.
- iv. Civic Pride in the Town – The Council organised the Lovely Louth, Fab and Festive Louth and Festive Window Display Competitions and organised the erection of the Town's Christmas Tree, Nativity and Town Lights. The town's planters and troughs were replenished throughout the spring and summer. Upkeep of the War Memorial and decoration with poppy garlands and wreaths for Remembrance Sunday was undertaken and the Council has some litter picking equipment available for use.
- v. Pay for the running costs of the Parish Clock and external lights at St. James' Church.

4. Presentation: *Sarah-Jane Mills Director of Service Development and Delivery of NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group who hold the funds for Health Care Services across Lincolnshire (Hospital, Community and Primary Care) and ultimately make decisions as to what services are provided in each area. Sarah-Jane will explain the New Health Service set up and how services will be decided for Louth under the new NHS arrangements*

Sarah-Jane introduced herself to the meeting and explained that the NHS was about to embark on a change called the Integrated Care System, in Lincolnshire this is to be called 'Better Lives Lincolnshire'. With this change, all those organisations that can improve the health and care of people in Lincolnshire will work together in a partnership to look at how patients can get better access to their healthcare, and to help them recover from illness; the current system was fragmented with many different organisations. She continued to explain that although the organisations worked together, they were reactive and so now they were looking to make changes so that they could help those struggling, and to help people who found it difficult to access the help, services, transport and to access to appointments.

Services are relevant to the different areas in the county, so Louth had different requirements to Lincoln due to the primary age group of residents. There are also a number of issues with the IT services in that they don't work together, so they want all providers to be able to access the information be it a community pharmacy, GP or hospital; also, they hope then that the person a patient does see can offer varied assistance instead of patients being passed from person to person. In Lincolnshire, she explained, we have one County Council, 7 District Councils and 3 Trusts with a

really strong voluntary sector. The Covid pandemic gave a great example of what we can achieve in Lincolnshire, our service reach was one of the best which is a testament to those working, as well as living in the community who came forward. When we all pull together we can achieve great things.

Presentation: *Dean Odell Contract Manager for Healthwatch Lincolnshire whose primary role is to find out what matters to the public and help to make sure those views shape the support provided.*

Dean Odell explained that Lincolnshire Healthwatch was one of 150 Healthwatches along with Healthwatch England. The main function of the organisation is to signpost information and services available and to report monthly. Healthwatch aim to join up all the care community based services, the community trust, Lincolnshire United Hospital and mental health etc. He requested that people could help Healthwatch; they wanted to hear from those who access multiple services and for them to tell Healthwatch how they worked together; they were particularly looking at MS, ME, epilepsy and fibromyalgia, they also are looking to form focus groups and to hear from system leaders to share their aspirations. Along with complaints there are also complements and so Healthwatch encourage those to share their good experiences. Morale is low and so positive comments are appreciated. Survey and feedback forms were available.

A number of questions were raised including:

Q. Most people are signposted to PAL not Healthwatch with complaints.

A. D.O. Yes PAL are for individual cases and we signpost to that, Healthwatch is more for general reporting purposes or to pick up if there were many complaints referring to a single surgery or hospital.

Q The area covered by yourselves is Lincolnshire, many residents in the town are signposted to Grimsby which doesn't fall under that area.

A. S-J.M Yes this falls under a different region and integrated care section.

Q. Why does it take so long to get test results and why are waiting lists so high in a rural area.

A. S-J.M Some test results need to be analysed by expert clinicians and so this can delay results be reported back. We are now looking to make sure if something of concern is seen on say an X-ray, that a patient would be booked in with an referral appointment straight away. Waiting lists vary across different departments often it is due to workforce availability. In an area like Louth we are likely to require far more orthopaedics and so we do try to plan to the population's needs. We are also looking at accessing diagnostic centres so that patients don't have to travel so far.

Q. How confident are you that the new IT systems will talk to each other?

A. S-J.M The NHS is not efficient, and everyone in the NHS is frustrated as we want people back in their own homes. People are working differently to improve efficiency and over Easter those in the Health Service were making sure all those who could get home from hospital could. We make sure that when someone is at 'end of life' there is a plan in place, so whoever needs it can access that information. This has not happened before due to governance and organisations having different systems, but the new integrated care system will ensure that we work together.

Community pharmacies are now offering more services such as urine infection testing and we need to get across to the residents how to access these services. We are also looking at the manner in which we write to groups such as diabetics and we will try to make communications more friendly and easy to understand.

Q. I am concerned about the 111 call system, that following giving symptoms we were referred to Grimsby Hospital and not Louth, even though we knew Louth treated this issue.

A. S-J.M The 111 service works using algorithms and therefore depending on how you answer a question the referral will be signposted a certain way. Those responding on 111 cannot change the signposting, they must pass on to the caller those directions.

Q. Are they going to downgrade Louth hospital?

A. S-J.M Louth Urgent Treatment Centre is really important, and it is going to be more important as we continue to look at our urgent treatment centres.

Q. I know you are looking at putting a diagnostic hub at Grimsby Hospital, how can we as Town Councillors be involved? 23% of the workload to Grimsby is from the East Lindsey area, so what is the future for Louth Hospital. Are they looking to do more operations or urgent care. If you stay in hospital for 10 weeks you are likely never to be returned home without assisted care.

A. S-J.M The Primary Care Network is about bringing people together to know what is right for the population, how to get the better pathways to get people home. Our aim is to always keep people in their own homes. At Louth we are trying to make the best and most efficient elective care; we are looking at day surgery for Louth.

Q. We have to visit three different hospitals for my son's treatment, and I have to get the hospital appointments integrated and so I welcome the changes you speak of. We are currently waiting for hip and knee surgery and so orthopaedics is not just for older people.

A. S-J.M Thank you, you are just the people we are looking for to feedback to us.

Q. What provision is in place for refugees? How do they register?

A. S-J.M This depends on who the individual is. We have a number of refugees in Skegness, on a temporary basis they can access services and we put on additional support. From our perspective we work from a health point, but there is also the Home Office side. If the refugees then settle in the community then they can access healthcare in the same way that you and I do. In terms of registration, there will be plan for those coming from the Ukraine and I will send that information through to you.

Q. With ever increasing waiting lists, there is pressure to use private companies, so what are the plans in place to use our hospitals instead of private companies?

A. S-J.M As long as I have done this job we have always worked with private companies. In the short term (next two years) we will work with them to increase capacity. Nationally we are trying to reduce waiting lists and so will use private companies for this reason and the partnership with them means we can plan that.

Q. The breast screening services stopped in Louth and I want to ask you to push to get the screening service back to Louth. Please feedback to us and don't forget about us.

A. S-J.M The breast screening services are developed by Public Health England and Healthwatch has already been in contact with us about that. D.O We are looking to go to more rural locations and would appreciate your support.

5. There were no further remarks from the floor.

6. The Mayor Cllr. DH thanked Sarah-Jane Mills and Dean Odell for attending and answering questions. He also thanked those who set up their displays around the room and everybody else for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting finished at 8:55pm

Signed _____ (Chairman)

Dated _____