

LOUTH TOWN COUNCIL**6. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 2017****3. Annual Report of the Town Council 2016/17**

- 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 (Louth Museum) and Hubbards 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 Hubbards 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 Ugate / 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:**

- 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:**

- 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

- 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

- 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

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