

**Budget Setting Consultation April 2021 – March 2022**

The financial year April 2020 – March 2022 is half way through. Ludlow Town Council's six month review, in common with all other local authorities, tells a story of significant loss of income.

**The Impact of Covid-19 in 2020 / 2021**

Ludlow Town Council's £920,582.00 expenditure budget of consists of:

- a precept of £612,740.00 (a fixed amount received in April from the Council Tax)
- Expected income of £307,842 from fees.

*Approximately one third of the town council's annual income is derived from fees.*

**At the six month point:**

- expected income should be: £153,921.00
  - actual income is: £55,256.00
- 6 month income deficit: £98,665.00

Projected 12 month income deficit: £137,000.00 [calculated before the second lockdown]

**Explanation of the £137,000 income deficit**

<b>Service &amp; Timescale</b>	<b>Income</b>
<b>Ludlow Market</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March to 1 August 2020  1 August to 1 September  2 September onwards full price rent charged <b>projected loss</b>	No income  Stalls reduced from 49 to 30 – and half rent received  Stalls remain reduced from 49 to 30  £111,500
<b>Buttercross market pitch</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March to 1 August 2020  1 August to 1 September –  2 September onwards – full price rent charged <b>projected loss</b>	No income  Low income  Reduced income  £1,500
<b>Street Trading</b> No trading due to Covid-19 social distancing in the street	

<b>projected loss</b>	£5,000
<b>Museum</b> Closed 23 <sup>rd</sup> March – cannot re-open due to Covid-19 access (narrow stair case) restrictions <b>projected loss</b>	£7,000
Commercial Rent Request for rent reduction received (outcome undecided) <b>projected loss</b>	£5,000
Toilets Remained open but significantly lower footfall in first six months <b>projected loss</b>	£7,000
<b>Projected income loss</b>	<b>£137,000</b>

### **Budget Underspends and Savings**

Ludlow Town Council is currently reviewing the 2020 / 21 budget for underspends due to Covid-19 or other circumstances.

Underspends will be used to off-set the income deficit, increase earmarked and general reserves, reduce the precept

### **Financial Resilience - Reserves**

In recent years, Ludlow Town Council has prudently built up its reserves to help plan for projects and maintenance of assets.

Ludlow Town Council currently has financial reserves of:	<b>£752,367.00</b>
Allocated to future projects, and asset and building maintenance.	<b>£313,346.00</b>
General contingency reserve	<b>£439,021.00</b>

### **Recommendations for a sustainable budget in 2021 /22 and beyond.**

- To adopt the budget setting timetable
- To safeguard local services
- To be mindful of the severe local economic impact of Covid-19 when setting the precept
- To set a sustainable budget for 2021 /22
- To set a reasonable and workable timetable to facilitate the projects delayed in 2020 / 21
- To set a three year budget trajectory for financial sustainability and resilience

## **Working During the Pandemic**

Ludlow Town Council's staff and councillors continued to work throughout the pandemic, and made many necessary adaptations to service delivery.

### **Projects completed in 2020.**

As well as delivering local services, the following projects have been completed.

- CCTV Phase I
- Bus shelter installed at Sheet Road
- New Website launched
- Repairs to the Buttercross
- Updating landline phone system to VOIP

### **Ongoing projects in 2020 / 21**

- Staffing Structure Review
- CCTV Phase II
- Ludlow Town Walls

### **New Externally Funded Projects in 2020/21**

- Ludlow Town Centre Recovery Fund – Love Ludlow
- Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross website presence

### **2020 Projects delayed by Covid-19**

- The Linney Riverside Park boating; and development of a refreshment kiosk
- Extension of Henley Road Cemetery

## **Local Service Delivery during the Pandemic**

Adaptation has been the watchword of 2020. The key adaptations have been staff working from home, Zoom staff meetings, and socially distanced way outdoors working:

- **Ludlow Market**  
24<sup>th</sup> March - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020 - market closed. The market officer kept in touch with traders and helped by providing information for government grant applications.  
8<sup>th</sup> June - market re-opened with 14 trading spaces  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 - trading spaces increased to 30
- **Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross**  
Closed 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020  
The museum remains closed due to restricted access. Staff have been using social media to keep in contact with the public, have secured £5,460.00 to improve the online presence of the museum, and have been liaising with partner organisations.

- **First Virtual Committee Meeting**  
 The government created legislation to permit council meetings to take place virtual on 4<sup>th</sup> April, and the town council held their first virtual meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> in April 2020.
- **Amenity Areas**  
 Grounds work has continued throughout the pandemic. The initial emphasis was on maintaining the cemetery and then moving out into other areas as appropriate.
- **Play Areas**  
 The Linney, Wheeler Road, and Houseman play areas were closed on 23 march and re-opened 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020. They remain open.  
 While the play areas were closed safety checks were carried out, and prior to re-opening signage was installed, and items such as swings removed to provide the space for social distancing.
- **Public Toilets**  
 The public toilets have remained open throughout the pandemic to support essential delivery and bus drivers.
- **Burials**  
 Following Covid-19 secure procedures, burials have continued to take place throughout the pandemic.
- **Civic Events**  
 Sadly all civic events have been cancelled during the pandemic.
- **Christmas Events**  
 The Christmas lights and tree are being put up using Covid-19 safe procedures.
- **Remembrance Sunday**  
 There will be a pre-recorded act of remembrance streamed by St Laurence's Church on their website and Facebook.