

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

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

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

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:	£752,367.00
Allocated to future projects, and asset and building maintenance.	£313,346.00
General contingency reserve	£439,021.00

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**
24th March - 8th June 2020 - market closed. The market officer kept in touch with traders and helped by providing information for government grant applications.
8th June - market re-opened with 14 trading spaces
8th July 2020 - trading spaces increased to 30
- **Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross**
Closed 23rd 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 4th April, and the town council held their first virtual meeting on 29th 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 11th 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.