

Ludlow Annual Town Residents Meeting

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held at Methodist Church Broad Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 29th April 2024 at 7.00PM**

ATM/ PRESENT

Mayor: Councillor Ginger

Councillors: Childs, De Gersigny, Garner, Gill, Hall, Parry, Tapley, Thompson, B Waite, S Waite

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Kate Adams, Deputy Town Clerk
Esther Gittoes, Communications Officer
Charlotte Ambrazas, Committee Officer.

Unitary Councillors: Parry

Electors: 57

ATM/01 WELCOME BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor Councillor Glenn Ginger welcomed everyone.

ATM/02 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones & Cllr Urka

ATM/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Annual Town Residents Meeting is not a decision-making meeting of the council.

Members are invited to make declarations for transparency and openness.

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None

b) Declaration of conflicts of Interest

Cllr Parry - Ludlow in Bloom

c) Declarations of personal interest

Cllr Childs - Ludlow residents' group

ATM/05 UPDATES FROM PSCO SUE COOKE

Traffic

We have conducted both education and then enforcement activity on Lower Corve Street in April, with support from the Motorbike Traffic Support Team. 8 offenders

were recorded in an hour and issued with tickets. We have conducted speed enforcement on Overton Road, with 19 offenders dealt with. We continue to conduct regular patrols of the Eco-park and other locations we are notified about, to deter and deal with anti-social driving.

Theft

We arrested and charged a prolific shoplifter with 25 offences. He is due in court at the end of May for sentencing and we hope to obtain a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) to stop him entering a number of shops in Ludlow.

The number of thefts from stores in Ludlow has halved in Q1 of 2024 (Jan-March) compared to the figures from Q3 and Q4 of 2023.

We conduct regular reassurance and high visibility patrols to the shops that are affected the most, along with the general Town Centre area.

Drugs

We conduct regular high visibility patrols and covert patrols of those areas where we have received intelligence that drug dealing, and drug use is taking place. We have used our stop search powers to deal with individuals suspected of being in possession of drugs and we have had a number of positive searches from this work.

We need the help from the local community to give us intelligence about these people and locations. We can apply for a warrant to enter a property where we suspect drugs are being dealt from if we have sufficient intelligence.

As a reminder, you can report to us in several ways:

Crimestoppers (this is anonymous) – online via their website or call 0800 555111
West Mercia Police website

Email Ludlow officers at ludlow.snt@westmercia.police.uk

Questions

Which shops are targeted?

The one stop shops and the supermarkets

What are you doing regarding the juvenile criminal damage at Upper Linney on successive nights?

The response Team had a report and dealt with this incident. If we find the people involved we will issue an anti-social behaviour order and a hand delivered letter will go to the home so that the parents are aware.

How many Police are based in Ludlow ?

There are approximately 6 staff and covering a large area from The Leisure Centre Bromfield Road, Richards Castle, Clee Hill, Doddington and Woofferton.

The Response team have 3 staff on shifts one sergeant and SNT's (safer neighbourhood teams) PCSO's.

ATM/06 COMMUNITY UPDATES AND TOWN COUNCIL PROJECTS & SERVICES

A presentation including updates, projects, and local services.

THE TOWN COUNCIL'S VISION

Ludlow is a successful and vibrant town where people want to live, work, and visit.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Kings Coronation.

COMPLETED PROJECTS 2023/24

- The Diocese of Hereford has granted a faculty to install Wi-Fi equipment in the church tower.
- Painting of Henley Road Cemetery Chapel and Cemetery House.
- Re-surfacing of cemetery path.
- Water table investigation for new burial area at Henley Road Cemetery completed.
- Report to be considered by the Council before initiating the next stage.
- Henley Helpers – community volunteer programme
- Installation of bus shelter on Sheet Road.
- Consultation on locations for new bus shelters.
- Two Electric Vans were introduced into the council fleet of three vans in October 2023.
- Listed building consent approval and installation of the Kings Coronation Commemorative plaque.
- Installation of new hand wash units and hand dryers at Castle Street public toilets.
- New urinal at Smithfield public toilets.
- Listed building consent approval and installation of external directional signage for Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross.

LOCAL SERVICES PROVIDED:

• **LUDLOW MARKET**

Trades every Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday and most Thursdays and Sundays.

Street Trading creates a vibrant street scene On Events Square, High Street, & Bull Ring & Community Events.

• **LUDLOW MUSEUM AT THE BUTTERCROSS**

Open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Ludlow's history through the ages, family friendly activities, and changing locally focused exhibitions.

• **FAMILY FRIENDLY PLAY AREAS**

At the Linney Riverside Park, Wheeler Road Skate Park and Houseman Play Area.

• **GREEN OPEN SPACES**

At Castle Gardens, St Johns Gardens, and Sidney Road Town Green.

• **LUDLOW MAY FAIR**

Rides open from 2nd to 6th May 2024.

Dodgems Service at 11:30 am on Sunday 5th May.

• **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

Following the public consultation and funding support the first new lights were installed in 2024.

• **GRANT FUNDING**

In 2023/24, Ludlow Town Council awarded:
£500 Ludlow Concert Band

£6,000 Shropshire Youth Association

£5,000 Ludlow Assembly Rooms

£500 Ludlow Fairtrade Group

£3,500 Ludlow in Bloom

£2,000 South Shropshire Youth Forum

£1,550 Project Support Grants

Project Support Grant Applications are accepted all year

• **FINANCIAL YEAR END 2023/24**

Reserves and balances held Year End 2023/2024 37%

£1,224,278.00

Income including Precept 34%

£1,135,122.00

Expenditure including Staff costs 29%
£973,922.00

- Annual Report 2023 / 2024 released.

ATM/07 QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

Question1

As the town council's social media suggested I would like to submit a question please on the 29th of April. Please find attached copies of the info from 2016 I shared with the office in the past from the MP, SALC and Dept for Communities and Local Government. My Question: "I am so pleased that finally the town council has got around to being part of the Local Council Award Scheme - well done. The Implementation plan has several levels of achievement, can you provide an action plan for how the council is looking to attain full compliance and over what time period please".

Name and address supplied.

Response:

Thank you for your question and for the attachments of personal correspondence with the M, SALC and Dept for Communities and Local Government.

Your statement "I am so pleased that finally the town council has got around to being part of the Local Council Award Scheme - well done.' is unfortunately incorrect. I am unsure of the source of the confusion, but it may be related to news that the town council has gained the General Power of Competence, which is an achievement that enables the town council to act more freely with a wider range of powers, but it is not the same as the Local Council Award Scheme.

The Local Council Award Scheme is peer review accreditation process. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of an accreditation panel.

As you state, 'the Implementation plan has several levels of achievement,'

You ask, 'can you provide an action plan for how the council is looking to attain full compliance and over what time period please". As is the case with all organisations, the town council has finite resources and sets priorities for these resources, I confirm that the council's focus is on community projects and no resources have been allocated to the Local Council Award Scheme.

Question 2

I've just been made aware of the meeting which I very much hope to attend. I have a lot of questions I'd love to ask but after talking to a few locals today one thing that repeatedly comes up is:

'Is the council considering free parking in the town? The current fees put so many people off spending time and money in the town centre that it is totally counter-productive.'

I am able to walk into town and don't drive so I am asking this really on behalf of other people and with an eye on improving footfall for desperate local businesses.

Name and email address supplied.

Response:

Thank you for your question. 'Is the council considering free parking in the town? The current fees put so many people off spending time and money in the town centre that it is totally counter-productive.'

In response, the majority of the town's car parks are owned by Shropshire Council, and parking fees for car parks and on-road parking schemes are set by Shropshire Council.

Ludlow Town Council has a car park at the Linney Riverside Park, the area is a flood area on the banks of the River Teme so there is no tarmac because it would accelerate run off rates, and the car park is occasionally closed when the river is in flood. The fees for this car park are £2 for all day parking. The car park is available for everyone, and our interactions with users shows that frequent users are families using the play area, tourists, college students, and market traders. The proceeds from the car park fee are used to maintain the play area and toilet facilities at the Linney Riverside Park.

Ludlow Town Council has rigorously protested all of Shropshire Council's proposals to increase parking fees in Ludlow. Ludlow Town Council is also concerned that none of the revenue raised in Ludlow from parking fees by Shropshire Council is reinvested in the town.

Ludlow Town Council has supported the Chamber of Trade requests for free parking for Tinsel Tuesday (Christmas) markets and would support further requests to Shropshire Council for periods of free parking to support the town's economy.

Question 3

It was suggested I contact the council about the attempted takeover of Ludford parish. To explain to the residents of that Parish why they have not

been consulted about the proposal and the benefits they will accrue from such a change.

Name and email address supplied.

Response:

Thank you for your question. It was suggested I contact the council about the attempted takeover of Ludford parish. To explain to the residents of that Parish why they have not been consulted about the proposal and the benefits they will accrue from such a change.

The consultation is being conducted by Shropshire Council and Ludlow Town Council has responded to their consultation stating our opinion that 'Ludford Parish should merge into Ludlow Town Council to become Ludford Ward, and explained that essentially:

At a time of reducing public services, it is important that the resources of the town and its community are unified under one town council so that time, energy and resources are not wasted or misdirected by split leadership at the grass roots level.

Supporting Ludford becoming a ward of Ludlow Town Council is opportunity to invest in Ludlow's unified future.

and provided information for residents to access Shropshire Council's web pages and how to make their own views known.

Please let Shropshire Council know your views on this matter by responding to the consultation: communitygovernance@shropshire.gov.uk

More information is available at: <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/parish-council-boundary-review-consultation/>

Ludlow Town Council recognises that democracy is a process that encourages the expression of multiple opinions through open and reasonable communication methods. Shropshire Council does not send individual information to each household when it consults and in the same way Ludlow Town Council is being open and honest about its reasons and communicating in a reasonable way, which has included digital and print channels.

The town council's full response text is below for information:

'Ludford Parish should merge into Ludlow Town Council to become Ludford Ward,

A very difficult situation is unfolding within Shropshire Council. Our Unitary Council needs to make savings of approx. £62m in the next year, and early analysis suggests that they are only saving £1–2 million per month, which

sadly is not enough. Hopefully, this situation will improve, but whatever happens – local services will be cut.

Shropshire's market towns, including Ludlow, are the only organisations with the experience and the resources to support local services in our town. This is a very big ask for the larger market towns, such as Ludlow, so unfortunately, it is completely beyond the experience and financial capacity of smaller parishes, such as Ludford.

Ludlow Town Council has a £1m annual budget to support local services; and it has built a prudent reserve fund over the years. Ludlow employs 19 staff and provides a range of local services including the market, public convenience, open spaces, play areas, spaces for cultural activities, tourism publications, CCTV, Henley Road cemetery, and Ludlow Museum.

Ludford's annual expenditure is less than £5,000.00 per year and it employs one part-time member of staff. However, Ludford is now receiving the development funds from Shropshire Council for the new housing being built. Ludlow needs these funds to consolidate and strengthen its position in the face of some very serious problems.

The majority of residents in Ludlow and Ludford use Ludlow's local services, but there is an inequality in the council tax paid by residents of Ludlow and Ludford. Ludlow residents pay £231.95 per year, and for access to the same services, Ludford residents pay £22.84 per year, so the services Ludford residents use are paid for by Ludlow's residents.

Addressing this inequality is important for Ludlow because of the impending threat to local services provided by Shropshire Council. Ludlow needs all residents to contribute equally so that the town can continue to thrive and become as self-reliant as possible in the face of significant cuts to discretionary services such as libraries, leisure activities, museum services, waste services, and street cleaning.

Ludlow Town Council has the greatest respect for Ludford Parish Council, and its long history dating back to the Dooms Day Book and has made this apparent in responses to Shropshire Council regarding the parish boundary review.

Ludford becoming a ward of Ludlow is now the best way forward. This change would provide more resources for the Town Council to save as many local services as possible. The ward of Ludford can continue the great work of preserving Ludlow's natural heritage, and also begin to actively contribute to Ludlow's future prosperity.

Please let Shropshire Council know your views on this matter by responding to the consultation: communitygovernance@shropshire.gov.uk

More information is available at: <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/parish-council-boundary-review-consultation/>

Question 4

My question for the town council would be:

What are your plans to hold Connexus to account for the empty properties that are being left and not being let to families that need them, the sandpits debacle, the fact that tenants are being left in overcrowded and unsuitable homes, and finally the fact that they will not meet any of the tenants personally to provide clarity on what exactly is going on.

They have also been selling housing stock on without replacing them, thus reducing the housing stock.

Many thanks

Name and email address supplied.

Response:

Thank you for your question.

You raise some important questions that should be answered by Connexus. Ludlow Town Council is not the housing authority – this is Shropshire Council. However, the issues are important to the Ludlow's local community.

What are your plans for the empty properties in Sandpits that are being left and not being let to families that need them?

Why are tenants are being left in overcrowded and unsuitable homes?

Why will Connexus not meet any of the tenants to provide clarity on what exactly is going on?

Why are Connexus selling housing stock on without replacing them, thus reducing the housing stock.

Ludlow Town Council will put an item on a council agenda as soon as possible with the proposal to ask the above questions of Connexus and Shropshire Council.

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS AT THE MEETING

There were a number of questions raised and statements made relating to the town walls and Heras fencing, the shops and retail crisis, Ludlow market, CCTV and the work of Ludlow Residents group.

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm