

**Annual Town Meeting
Held at Community Centre, Naas Lane, Lydney
Monday 25th April 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Lydney Town Council

A Harley (Mayor), L Penny, T Saunders, C Harris, S Stockham, S Cave, S Holmes, R Holmes, W Leach, E Taylor, R Kemsley, P Macklin, S Thomas-Brown and C Vaughan

Mr S Holley – Town Clerk

Mrs L Bendall – Assistant Clerk

26 Members of the Public

Cllr Harley welcomed all present to the meeting, explained the new format of the evening and that everyone had access to a copy of the Annual Town Meeting Report 2021/2022. It was noted that a digital copy of the report was also available on the Town Council's website.

At the close of the meeting everyone was encouraged to visit the stalls situated around the room; the following committees/projects had stalls:

Lydney Hub, Forest Voluntary Action Forum, Royal British Legion, Lydney Town Hall, Lydney Community Centre, Churches Together, Traffic Plan, Plastic Free Lydney, Riverside Walk Project & Skatepark Project.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Gloucestershire County Councillor, Alan Preest, and councillors from the Forest of Dean District Council who were unable to attend due to a clash of meetings.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting dated 18th March 2019, the last full meeting prior to Covid, were confirmed and approved as a true record and duly signed. **Proposed by Cllr C Harris, seconded by Cllr R Holmes. Unanimous.**

3. **CLIMATE EMERGENCY** – Cllrs S Stockham & L Penny

Cllr Stockham highlighted that we are in a climate crisis and that Lydney had already identified various projects to help protect the environment.

Traffic Plan has been set up to identify how as a town we can reduce the amount of traffic, noise, pollution and increase safety within our town centre. This is in early stages but 7 proposals have been identified and feedback was welcomed, it was identified that not all 7 proposals could feasibly be introduced but 1 or 2 certainly. The 7 proposals are:

- Pedestrianisation
- Introduce a weight limit
- 20mph zone throughout the village
- Change the signage
- Traffic calming
- Introduce a one-way system
- Single carriage traffic controls

Further public consultations to be scheduled to collate resident and business owners feedback on the proposals.

Riverside Walk a continuous shared project, as the area covered is owned by different parties, to establish and improve the riverside walk between Forest Road and the Docks promoting a traffic free, safe and friendly walk. A litter pick collection morning was recently undertaken and more are planned, agreed that these events need to be more widely promoted within in the local community to involve more residents and community groups.

Community Orchards currently looking for suitable sites

Council is also looking into extending the number of allotments and making better use of green areas within Lydney by involving local residents and asking what they would like to do with these spaces.

Plastic Free Lydney is an ongoing project that the town has signed up to, the aim is to try and reduce the amount of plastic being used especially eradicating where possible single use plastic. Currently 8 independent local businesses have signed up together with 2 community groups. Cllr Penny is looking to work with local schools, local independent businesses and community groups.

A toolkit is available to provide further information:

<https://plasticfree.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/SAS-Business-Toolkit-2020.pdf>

4. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22** – Cllr A Harley
Cllr Harley read out her report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2021/2022.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

- (i) **Helium Balloons/Chinese Lanterns** – a local farmer had to pull out part of a helium balloon from one of his lambs, if he had not been there, he would have lost his lamb. He advised that other councils had banned the use of letting off balloons and lanterns and was asking if Lydney Town Council could do the same.
RESPONSE: Add to council agenda; council to look into the legal requirements.
Action – Town Clerk
- (ii) **Litter** – a resident has complained at the amount of litter on Oxford Street (at the back of Tesco) which primarily appears to be from children going to and from the Dean Academy, a suggestion that the council should contact the school to flag the issue with them. Another resident confirmed that his child attends the school and as part of the induction is to highlight not dropping litter.
RESPONSE: Further litter pick dates are planned; these will be advertised encouraging all residents to take part; residents are encouraged to join working parties. It was noted that teenagers would need to have a parent or carer present.
- (iii) **Bathurst Park** – a member of the public wanted to pass on their thanks to the grounds staff for their continued excellent displays around the park and town.
RESPONSE: Town Clerk confirmed he would relay the message
Action – Town Clerk
- (iv) **Clinically Vulnerable** – it was acknowledged that during the height of the Covid pandemic the local support group set up by Tess Tremblett was a life saver helping residents who had to shield to ensure they had food and medication delivered.
RESPONSE: Cllr Saunders to email the group to pass on the thanks
- (v) **Cemetery grass cuttings** – a complaint of headstones being covered in grass cuttings which is causing distress and upset for the families, a suggestion that the grass cuttings


should be collected and put in a composter.

RESPONSE – The grounds team do use blowers to remove as much of the grass from around the headstones as possible, it is noted that the first few cuts of the season tend to be worse as the grass is quite sticky.

- (vi) **Internal Audit Reports** – a concern was raised following the release of the council's internal auditor report about how the council currently authorise payments; it was felt that the council were at an increased risk of fraud.
RESPONSE – Cllr Homes Chair of the Finance & Scrutiny Committee answered the question; changes to how payments were authorised was introduced during the pandemic; originally cheques were written up and the Town Clerk and 2 councillors would sign, however this was not feasible during the pandemic so the council had to move to electronic payments.
Council is currently working with Lloyds Bank to provide an electronic counter signatory to improve security and stage one paperwork has been completed.
- (vii) **Meeting Minutes on website** – it was noted that previous meeting minutes uploaded onto the council website still showed as “unconfirmed” or “draft” despite being approved.
RESPONSE – Town Clerk gave apologies for this and agreed meeting minutes would be renamed and updated accordingly - **Action - Assistant Clerk**
Council confirmed they operate an “openness” policy and all meetings held are open to the public to attend, Council is still looking into the feasibility of streaming the meetings via video/Zoom.
- (viii) **Newsletter** – previous newsletter was not received by all residents.
RESPONSE – distributor used for last newsletter let the council down; council aware there were issues. A Jubilee Special Edition Newsletter will be sent out in May and council is using the Royal Mail so expect no distribution issues this time.
A member of the public stated they had to go to the library to read a copy; council to ensure future newsletters will be held at the library
- (ix) **Storm Eunice** – the evacuation worked well and was well organised and thanks were given.
RESPONSE – District Council co-ordinated but it was recognised that the local community pulled together well; councillors who use social media to please relay thanks to the organisers.
- (x) **Lydney Lake** – it was noted that the lake was looking better
- (xi) **Weeds through the town**– weeds still seem to be an issue in some areas and a suggestion of whether the council could start sweeping the pavements within the Town Centre, perhaps a machine could be purchased to undertake this work.
RESPONSE – Responsibility of the Highways, however, council to consider if this additional work could be undertaken by our grounds team or employing an additional person to undertake this work. To be added to Council Agenda for discussion. **Action – Town Clerk**
- (xii) **Bus Service/Timetable** – the bus timetable displayed at the Bus Station is significantly out of date and so is their website, a suggestion of whether an electronic bus timetable be introduced as this works well in other stations and are very user friendly.
RESPONSE – Council has no authority over the bus companies it is managed through

Gloucestershire County Council.

6. **CLOSE**
The meeting closed at 8.19pm.


24-5-23.