



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Report of PUBLIC MEETING

held on 14 November 2018

in The Community Centre, Lawnside, Ledbury

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 14th November 2018 at the Community Centre, Lawnside, Ledbury to consult on the public's views on the 2019-20 Ledbury Town Council budget.

Chair: Cllr Nina Shields (Chair of the Council.)

Councillors present: E. Harvey, A. Harrison, P. Howells and N. Morris

Also present: Mr M. ab Owain (Town Clerk).and 11 members of the public.

1. Cllr Shields welcomed those present. She explained that it had been quite a challenge to get the budgets into an understandable form and thanked Cllrs Harvey and Harrison and the office team for working so hard to clarify these. In addition to the general poor standard of previous management, she confirmed that there had been a major challenge to budget setting this year, in that the legal costs related to the Judicial Review had been taken out of reserves. This meant that the Council needs to consider not only running costs for the year 2019/20 but also how to build up reserves again. This is particularly important given that the Council looks after medieval buildings. The 'hole' in reserves amounted to some £200,000 for legal costs.

She hoped that this consultation would be the first of many because she believed that it is important to give residents a real say in the direction the Council is going.

2. Cllrs Harrison and Harvey then gave a PowerPoint presentation which included:
 - i) How a resident's tax bill was broken down between Herefordshire, the police, the fire service and Ledbury Town Council.
 - ii) A breakdown of how Herefordshire County Council spent its money.
 - iii) The makeup of Ledbury Town Council's budget in 2018-19.
 - iv) How the costs of the Judicial Review would impact on the budget.

A handout was also given out listing the types of expenditures/projects that, by law, a Town Council can undertake.

3. The public were then invited to give their views. There was a considerable amount of discussion and members of the public thanked the Council for explaining the division between Town and County Council responsibilities. Overall views included:
 - i) That a large rise in the precept would be unwelcome by most residents.
 - ii) That general maintenance should take priority over any new schemes.
 - ii) That areas or equipment maintained by the Town Council should be labelled so that residents could see where their money was being spent.

4. Cllr Shields concluded by thanking those members of the public who had attended. She confirmed that the points raised would be reviewed by the Council and that a copy of the PowerPoint presentation would shortly go on the Council's website.