

Leighton-Linslade Partnership (Joint) Committee

8 December 2022

## Information Report on Town Council services & activities

**Report of:** Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk  
Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk  
Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds & Environmental Services

**Purpose of this report:** To provide information to the Partnership Committee on services & activities at Leighton-Linslade Town Council

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership Committee is asked to:

1. **Note the report.**

### Background

1. Leighton-Linslade Town Council comprises 21 elected Members and 40 employees, with an annual expenditure budget in 2022-23 of £2,691,916.
2. In addition to those powers and duties applicable to all parish councils, Leighton-Linslade Town Council (LLTC) is eligible to exercise the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011).
3. The Town Council has four standing committees and operates in three main service areas: Grounds & Environmental Services, Cultural & Economic Services and Central & Democratic Services.
4. LLTC publishes the vast majority of its meeting agendas, reports and minutes to its website for transparency purposes.

### Town Council projects, services & activities

5. As requested, below is a summary of recent and current Town Council activity with any comments relevant to Central Bedfordshire Council noted in the right hand column.

Area	Current comment	Comment relevant to CBC (if applicable)
<b>Grounds &amp; Environmental Services</b>		
Allotments	<p>LLTC has seen a dramatic increase in demand since March 2020. The current waiting list is 318 (increased from 291 in the June report).</p> <p>Only residents within the parish are added to the waiting list.</p> <p>Plots are inspected three times per year. LLTC is working towards recruiting a p/t member of staff to assist with inspections, plot re-allocation and liaison with tenants.</p>	<p>LLTC would welcome information on the future of allotment sites on land at Chamberlains Barn. The Heath Road site is due to come forward at the occupation of 250 dwellings.</p> <p>The requirement for additional allotment land is noted in the CBC Parish Schedule regarding Leisure.</p>
Play areas	<p>LLTC has invested some £300k in the refurbishment of the play area in the town centre destination park- Parson's Close Recreation Ground, to create a bespoke, inclusive adventure playground which will allow children of all abilities to play together, including play at height. This has been extremely well received by residents.</p> <p>LLTC is also refurbishing its play area in Alwins Field, Linlade. LLTC has an annual play area refurbishment and safer surfacing replacement programme.</p>	<p>This development complements the installation of a Changing Places pod funded by S106 monies which is located within the same park.</p> <p>An application has been submitted to the CBC Rural Match Fund to resurface and widen the diagonal footpath/cycleway across the park.</p> <p>LLTC has submitted comments on proposed play areas on Chamberlains Barn and would welcome engagement with CBC. To guarantee "play value", both authorities should engage to ensure play equipment is not replicated at nearby sites.</p>

Parks & open spaces	The beach and Splash & Play park, which are both free of charge, are now closed for the winter. A temporary refreshment offer replaces the previous Café in the Park. LLTC supports volunteers in three community gardens with a fourth currently being established in Parson's Close.	LLTC would welcome greater discussion with CBC on the development of the Shenley Hill Country Park on Chamberlains Barn, which sits within the parish.
Cemeteries	LLTC has invested in increased memorialisation options and is monitoring demand for a potential second mausoleum. The quantity of burials and ashes interments remains constant. LLTC's remaining burial capacity is classified as "problematic".	The longstanding requirement for additional burial land to allow LLTC to continue as a burial authority has been noted by CBC in its Parish Schedule and was further acknowledged during the Covid pandemic crisis.
Public Realm	LLTC is undertaking regular activity such as graffiti removal. Winter bedding plants are now in place.	Purchase of equipment was funded through the CBC public realm improvement scheme.
Climate Emergency	LLTC has passed a resolution to seek to become net carbon neutral by 2030 and is currently working with Smart Carbon to establish its baseline data. A report with recommendations is anticipated in March/April 2023.	LLTC welcomes engagement with CBC on its Sustainability Plan.
Greening	LLTC supports the work of the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom and the South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth on local community gardens, maintenance and planting of amenity land and wildflower/biodiversity projects.	LLTC and the Friends would welcome engagement with CBC over the maintenance of the Hockliffe Street town centre roundabout.
Projects	LLTC has recently funded partial restoration works to the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain in Linslade Recreation Ground and is working towards installation of drinking water fountains in four of its parks. The skate park in Parson's Close Recreation Ground is due to undergo a partial refurbishment in 2023.	
<b>Cultural &amp; Economic Services</b>		
Street Market	At the end of May LLTC celebrated the 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of taking on the Market Charter and won the NABMA "best council run	With the re-opening of the High Street on non-market days, cars parking

	<p>market” award earlier in 2022. Several young traders participated in the NABMA Young Traders competition, with two taking part in regional finals as well as the national final at Stratford-upon-Avon market in August.</p>	<p>overnight continues to have an impact on market operations on Tuesdays and Saturdays. LLTC is keen to continue discussions about the longer term future of the High Street whilst working with CBC to minimise traffic and parking issues in the meantime.</p>
Trails	<p>LLTC celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Children’s Trail in August 2022. This continues to be a much loved free family activity. As part of the celebrations we launched a temporary “Trail in the Trees” in Linlade Recreation Ground, using tiles created by students at two local schools. This temporary trail is due to end in December. The Sands of Time trail has been added to the Buzzard Trails app and will be publicised in the new year.</p>	
Community Events & Promotions	<p>2022 saw a welcome return to the Big Lunch in June and the Linlade Canal Festival in July, both well attended and enjoyed by thousands of residents.</p> <p>The Proms in the Park event in September was cancelled at short notice but will resume in 2023.</p> <p>Planning work is now commencing on celebrations to mark the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023.</p> <p>LLTC produces a bi-monthly parish newsletter which is freely available in printed form in various outlets, as well as online.</p>	
55UP	<p>LLTC is funding a 2-year project to provide digital support to older people. Digital champion volunteers have been recruited and trained, to provide telephone support or face to face support in a public space such as the Library or weekly “Chatty Café”. Two volunteers from the local Helping Hands (Good Neighbours) have been trained so can provide support in people’s homes.</p> <p>38 learners have been supported thus far. A case study example was given about “Barbara” aged 88, who has learnt how to</p>	

	<p>access the music she loves on her device and how much difference this has made to her.</p> <p>A recent expansion of this scheme is a partnership arrangement with BRCC enabling the loan of tablet devices or routers, following referral by a digital champion.</p> <p>LLTC is also funding a part time "Community Agent" through Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. In the first two months she has helped 13 people, with 24 client contacts made. The help given encompassed a range of issues including health, money and carer support.</p>	
TACTIC	<p>The Teenage Advice &amp; Information Centre continues to provide mentoring, signposting to specialist services, drop-in sessions, holiday activities, a weekly additional needs group, sessions in 5 of the 6 local Middle/Upper schools and is supporting 11 young people in working towards an AQA accreditation. The Centre saw 789 young people in February-April 2022, a marked increase back towards pre-pandemic attendance numbers.</p>	<p>LLTC would welcome greater involvement in the next review of commissioned young persons services by CBC due to our established local offer.</p>
Business support	<p>LLTC has funded a revision of the local shopping directory and contributed towards the creation of an online business directory as well as an online shopping portal. The annual Business Network Event resumed in April 2022 with over 100 local business people attending.</p>	
<b>Central and Democratic Services</b>		
Civic	<p>On 16 May 2022, Cllr Farzana Khwarawala was re-elected Chairman (Town Mayor) for 2022-23, with Cllr Sheona Hemmings elected Deputy.</p> <p>Cllr Khwarawala will be raising funds for the L-L Citizens Advice and L-L Helpers over the next year.</p>	
Transport	<p>LLTC has recently endorsed the revised Buzzcycles Cycling Strategy and aims to support progression of initiatives to promote greater cycling in the town.</p>	<p>LLTC looks forward to continued partnership working with CBC officers on highways matters; queries are regularly put</p>

	<p>LLTC has facilitated the creation of a local bus user group by providing free meeting space and promoting the meetings. Feedback from the group will go to the pan-Bedfordshire bus user forum.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to engage with CBC as soon as possible on the future of traffic in the High Street.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to encourage the re-location of the taxi rank from its current location outside of Pizza Express.</p> <p>LLTC has recently expressed concerns regarding the A505 bypass.</p> <p>Changes to the Vandyke Road layout remain a concern</p> <p>LLTC is keen to progress the requested trial of a timed crossing at the Bridge Street/Lake Street junction.</p>	<p>forward from the Planning &amp; Transport Committee.</p> <p>LLTC welcomed the statement made by Cllr I Dalgarno on 1 February and 20 September 2022 regarding engagement with the council on developing future options for the High Street and looks forward to continuing to liaise on this matter.</p> <p>Meeting with taxi licensing took place on 8<sup>th</sup> March and awaiting comment on the merits or otherwise of a preferred taxi rank location.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to understand the progress of the A505 safety review.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to understand the progress of the Vandyke Road safety review.</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p>LLTC has sought engagement with S106 spending officers to better understand current agreements and funds relating to the parish and to seek greater engagement in the process.</p> <p>LLTC has formed a working party in respect of land south of the High Street and is keen to see a clear plan for this derelict site which will enhance the town centre offer. LLTC has commissioned masterplanning work to</p>	<p>LLTC remains keen to have greater involvement in the S106 process.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to understand CBC's intentions in respect of the land south of the High Street and how both</p>

	<p>include up to four possible site plans and will share this work, once completed, with CBC. LLTC also looks forward to receiving information from CBC on its own research/evidence gathering.</p>	<p>councils can work together to ensure appropriate development on this site. CBC presence and input at working party meetings would be welcomed.</p>
Community Safety	<p>LLTC has funded digital CCTV upgrade on its land as part of the wider CBC digital CCTV programme.</p> <p>LLTC is aware of residents' wish for a local police hub and continues to campaign for increased policing presence and a manned customer service desk in the parish.</p>	
Governance review	<p>LLTC notes the decision made by CBC in respect of the Leighton-Linslade/Eggington boundary. Consideration will need to be given to resident/non-resident access to subsidised services going forward.</p>	<p>As part of the wider discussion, cemetery provision which the town council has been lobbying for now finds itself within the Eggington urban extension which currently is not a burial authority.</p>
Health	<p>Recent town growth has added to GP pressures and waiting lists. Leighton-Linslade is understood to be the largest town in the country without a hospital. Residents are keen to see increased GP capacity as well as provision of additional healthcare services locally. LLTC has a Health Services Task &amp; Finish group which is keen for closer involvement and engagement in the provision of local health services and the proposal to develop an Integrated Care Hub.</p>	<p>LLTC is aware this is one of the top issues for residents, as provision of local health services is perceived not to be keeping pace with population growth. LLTC is keen for greater engagement with the relevant authorities to see demonstrable progress towards increased capacity and services in the town.</p>
Grants	<p>LLTC will be supporting local organisations with almost £80k in grant funding in 2022-23, through service level agreements, guaranteed grants (over 4 years) and general grants (for small annual projects). LLTC provides grants to the L-L Sports Council and Arts Forum to distribute on its behalf.</p> <p>In addition to this, in October the Council allocated a further £10,000 in grants for organisations providing direct support to</p>	<p>LLTC supports Citizens Advice with £23k+ in grant funding. LLTC also supports the Leighton-Linslade Music Centre, run by CBC Inspiring Music, with over £9k per annum. Other recipients relevant to CBC include Buzzer Bus (Dial A Ride) and the</p>



	residents in relation to the cost of living/energy crisis. To date three grants have been approved, two for warm spaces and one for provision of free food to those in need.	Meadow Way Community Association.
Awards	LLTC is currently considering nominations for its 2023 Community Volunteer Awards. This scheme recognizes those residents with 5+ years of volunteering in the community.	
Other	<p>LLTC is in the process of changing I.T. provider with a move towards greater cloud-based storage. Following a software review, several new programmes and apps are due to be adopted.</p> <p>LLTC has recently undertaken a data protection audit and recommendations are awaited.</p> <p>LLTC is working with an external provider to develop its social media strategy and look towards increased use of video in its communications with residents.</p> <p>LLTC committed to an equalities statement in 2021 and commissioned an accessibility audit of its buildings. A programme of actions to enhance accessibility is under development. Alongside this, LLTC is developing a 10 year planned maintenance programme for its estate.</p> <p>The White House re-opened to the public earlier this year. We continue to receive walk-in enquiries from residents on CBC matters and approximately one-third of telephone calls are on CBC-related matters.</p>	An understanding in terms of how CBC anticipates addressing this matter is welcomed.

6. The above table provides a high level overview but the Town Council continues to engage with Central Bedfordshire Council councillors and officers on a wide range of matters affecting local residents.
7. The Town Council would very much welcome more pro-active information and engagement with the local authority on both strategic matters and proposed/planned projects, services and activities which will affect residents within our parish.



*Leighton Linlade*  
Partnership Committee

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**End.**