

Leighton-Linslade Partnership (Joint) Committee

16 June 2022

Information Report on Town Council services & activities

Report of: Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk
Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

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.**
2. **Note the comments relevant to Central Bedfordshire Council, in particular the highlighted areas for collaboration.**

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. Specific areas on which the Town Council is currently requesting greater collaboration are shown in bold and highlighted.

Area	Current comment	Comment relevant to CBC (if applicable)
Grounds & Environmental Services		
Allotments	LLTC has seen a dramatic increase in demand since March 2020. The current waiting list is 291. Only residents within the parish are added to the waiting list.	Awaiting information on the future of allotment sites on the eastern urban extension. The requirement for additional allotment land is noted in the CBC Parish Schedule regarding Leisure.
Play areas	LLTC has invested some £300k in the refurbishment of the play area in 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. LLTC is also refurbishing its play area in Alwins Field, Linlade.	This development complements the installation of a Changing Places pod funded by S106 monies. An application has been submitted to the CBC Rural Match Fund to resurface and widen the diagonal footpath/cycleway across the park.
Parks & open spaces	The beach and Splash & Play park, which are both free of charge, are now open for the summer season. 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.	
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. A site on the Stearn Land is identified but is currently outside the LLTC parish boundary.

Public Realm	LLTC is undertaking regular activity such as graffiti removal. Summer planting and hanging baskets are now installed.	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 seeking a supplier to provide baseline data. LLTC intends undertaking carbon literacy training later in the year.	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 installed a re-creation of the 1937 Coronation Shelter in Parson's Close and held a beacon lighting with firework display for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, which was very well attended. Future projects include interpretation signage in the parks, possible works to the Henry Finch Memorial Fountain and installation of drinking water fountains.	
Cultural & Economic Services		
Street Market	At the end of May LLTC celebrated the 10 th anniversary of taking on the Market Charter with a visit by representatives of the National Association of British Market Authorities. LLTC won the "best council run market" award earlier in 2022. Additional activities including visiting markets, Love Your Local Market campaign and a special Platinum Jubilee market.	
Trails	LLTC continues to promote its Living History trail and the Sands of Time trail. 2022 sees the 10 th anniversary of the Children's Trail and a birthday party will take place in August, with an addition to the trail in Linslade Recreation Ground.	
Community Events & Promotions	2022 sees a welcome return to the Big Lunch, Linslade Canal Festival and Christmas Festival, which are enjoyed by thousands of residents. LLTC produces a bi-monthly parish newsletter which is freely available in printed form in various outlets, as well as online.	These free community events are possible with CBC support to use the town centre and Tiddenfoot Waterside Park.

55UP	LLTC is funding a 2 year project to provide digital support to older people. Support can be provided by telephone or in person. Digital champion volunteers are currently being recruited and trained. One venue for support will be the "Chatty Café" which operates on Tuesday mornings at the Teenage Advice Centre, in conjunction with Bassett Road Patient Participation Group. LLTC has provided grant funding to a number of groups and is considering funding a part time "Community Agent" through Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.	
TACTIC	The Teenage Advice & 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.	LLTC would welcome greater involvement in the next review of commissioned young persons services by CBC due to our established local offer.
Business support	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. LLTC is currently funding free town centre WiFi as well as GeoSense town centre footfall counting data.	
Central and Democratic Services		
Civic	On 16 May 2022, Cllr Farzana Khwarawala was re-elected Chairman (Town Mayor) for 2022-23, with Cllr Sheona Hemmings elected Deputy. Cllr Khwarawala will be raising funds for the L-L Citizens Advice and L-L Helpers over the next year.	
Transport	LLTC has recently endorsed the revised Buzzcycles Cycling Strategy and aims to support progression of initiatives to promote greater cycling in the town.	LLTC looks forward to continued partnership working with CBC officers on highways matters; queries are regularly put forward

	<p>LLTC is also looking to support the creation of a bus user group.</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>LLTC is keen to progress the requested trial of a timed crossing at the Bridge Street/Lake Street junction.</p>	<p>from the Planning & Transport Committee.</p> <p>LLTC welcomed the statement made by Cllr I Dalgarno on 1 February 2022 regarding engagement with the council on developing future options for the High Street and looks forward to early progress on this matter.</p> <p>Meeting with taxi licensing took place on 8th 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>Planning</p>	<p>In 2020-21 LLTC commissioned consultants to advise on the likely costs and benefits of developing a neighbourhood plan. Council decided not to proceed with this on the understanding that greater direction in terms of place shaping and engagement with parishes would come from the local authority.</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.</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 is keen to understand CBC's strategic plans in respect of Place.</p> <p>LLTC is 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 councils can work together to ensure appropriate development on this site.</p>

Community Safety	<p>A Community Safety Plan is currently under development with our CBC Community Safety Officer.</p> <p>LLTC is funding 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 was pleased to note the Police Crime Commissioner's commitment to this initiative at its recent Council meeting on 4 April 2022.</p>	
Governance review	<p>LLTC awaits the outcome of the second round of CBC consultation with residents in respect of the current boundary between Leighton-Linslade and Eggington.</p>	<p>LLTC is keen for greater engagement with CBC on this matter given the ramifications for future management of public land and facilities on the eastern developments.</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 & 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 not keeping pace with population growth.</p> <p>LLTC is keen for greater engagement with the CBC Health and Wellbeing Board on this matter and to see demonstrable progress towards the improvement of local healthcare provision.</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>Recent small grants include support for Girlguiding and Scouts, Reclaim Life, Buzzcycles, W.I. and Friends of Tiddenfoot Waterside Park.</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 Meadow Way Community Centre.</p>
Awards	<p>LLTC is currently inviting nominations for the 3rd year of its Young People awards.</p>	

	In May, LLTC presented two Community Volunteer Awards to two local residents with 5+ years of volunteering in the community.	
Other	<p>LLTC is currently undertaking a software review including meetings management software.</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.</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>	<p>LLTC would be keen to talk to CBC officers about its Convene software for meetings management.</p> <p>LLTC is keen to understand whether CBC customer service provision will resume at the LB Library. We deal with in-person enquiries from residents who may not be able or willing to access services online and wish to discuss in person. At present there is nowhere we can refer such enquiries.</p>

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.

End.