



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Doug Cracknell | **Vice Chairman:** Cllr Keith Evans

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons PSLCC



Members are requested to attend a meeting of the
COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMITTEE
of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council
on **Tuesday 8th February 2022** commencing at **7.30 pm.**
at Leigh-on-Sea Community Centre, 71-73 Elm Road,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1SP

Committee Membership

Cllrs: David Bowry, Doug Cracknell, Keith Evans, Anita Forde (Chairman), Emma Mills, James Preston, Emma Smith, Mike Wells and Andy Wilkins

Helen Symmons

Helen Symmons PSLCC
Town Clerk
3rd February 2022

Any member who is unable to attend should send their apologies to the Town Clerk before the meeting

AGENDA / BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

1. CHAIRMAN AND HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS
4. TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMITTEE [14th DECEMBER 2021](#)
5. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS
6. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT ([Appendix 1](#)) page 6

LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

7. FACILITIES REPORT

The repair and maintenance program continues with the next phase being to address all the lighting to ensure it is energy efficient. We still await replacement of the rotten windows in the hall way and thereafter will ensure the windows to the south of the building on the first floor and attic level receive some attention. Storage solutions are also being considered in areas where there is wasted space.

8. BOOKINGS REPORT

Community Centre hire income has reached the budget set for this year and if all bookings currently made proceed, income should increase to £90,000. This is still far less than pre-COVID but it is a positive sign. All hirers have been advised of the new rates from 1st April and there has been no adverse reaction to date.

9. LORNA & LOTTIE'S REPORT

At its last meeting, the Committee asked the Town Clerk to obtain an answer from the Café directors as to why the printing, postage and stationery costs for 2020 were so high when the café was closed for 9 months. The answer was to refer to the main heading of General Admin Expenses which printing, postage and stationery was an itemised line below. It would seem that this itemised line actually included accountants fees; card machine leases, coffee machine leases, bank and credit card fees; companies house fees plus printing, stationery and postage. The highest cost within that figure was the accountants fee of £1415, higher due to furlough calculations followed by machine leasing which was apparently approximately £900. The Café directors trust the Committee is happy with the explanation.

The café look to have made an overall loss in 2021 so there will be no licence fee payable. The first month of 2022 was profitable and it is hoped that this continues.

10. ARTS GROUP REPORT

A meeting of the group took place 25th January to discuss Artist in Resident (AIR) applications for 2022/23. Despite extensive promotion, no applications had been received. The group received an update from the present AIR and in particular around the scholarship work she has developed for any interested school. Sadly, Belfairs Academy had not taken part but it was hoped this would change in the future. The scholarship scheme features a student being awarded one session with the AIR, receiving private tuition and involvement in a life drawing class. The results after this session have proven to be significant for the student in the development of their work. The AIR has also been offering sessions for AS/A level students as well as adult beginners and over the course of the year 145 students/new artists have benefitted from the free sessions.

Following discussion regarding AIR options for 2022/23, the group made the following **RECOMMENDATION** to the Committee to decide upon:

- That Susan Smith-Allen and Kerry Doyland be joint AIR for 2022/23 and to continue the scholarship scheme (which Leigh Town Council need to promote the work of).
- That Kerry Doyland assist with administration of the Art Wall exhibitions.
- That the Attic Room charge be waived for the year
- That any room hire charges in respect of the free lessons offered to school students and beginner adult groups under the AIR programme be waived for the year (approximately 20 sessions)
- That the F&G Committee approve the grant application to be submitted by the AIR to cover materials for the scholarship scheme

The group will be re-visiting the Terms of Reference for the AIR programme for 2023/24 as it was felt that the £100 month attic rental charge may be a barrier to the programme. It was also noted that the legacy piece had at some point been removed from the programme but no reference can be found for the reason.

The group noted that the Listening Room project was progressing well and proving popular. Maddi Crease the organiser of the evenings will be invited along to the next Arts Group meeting.

ALLOTMENTS

11. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE ([Appendix 2](#)) page 7

LOSAS (Leigh on Sea Allotment Society covering Leigh side of Manchester Drive allotment site)
The Town Clerk was advised that the Society had dissolved as the Constitution of the Club had not been met with regard to the Committee following the AGM. The letter at Appendix 2 was sent to all plot holders. LOSAS are returning the annual service agreement funds to Leigh Town Council which will be held separately to provide a basic service to prevent the allotment site from becoming overgrown. Southend Borough Council external works department have provided a favourable quote to provide this basic service and also to clear an overgrown area to bring back in to use as

allotment plots. MDAS are offering membership of their society to plot holders to enable them to use their clubhouse facilities.

The Town Clerk has received correspondence from a plot holder who advises that 5 plot holders are interested in setting up a society. Guidance has been provided with regards to this and help offered in sending out information to all plot holders. Once the society is formed, the Town Clerk has advised that a proposal with regard to the annual service agreement should be submitted.

MDAS (Manchester Drive Allotment Society cover MDAS side of Manchester Drive allotment site) The Chairman of the society resigned before Christmas. A new Chairman will be appointed at the Society's AGM in March/April.

Fly tipping on Leigh Side – this was all cleared at a cost of £550 which will be paid to Leigh Town Council from LOSAS funds.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

12. SKATE PARK

Two grind rails were installed in memory of Phil Mersh. Some maintenance work needs to be undertaken at the park and quotes are awaited.

13. STRAND WHARF

Maintenance work has now completed. It was discovered that the internal structure of the under-seat lighting had been too greatly damaged to repair and not covered by the insurance claim. The lighting has all been removed and made safe for the time being.

14. PADDLING POOL

The Town Clerk is delighted to report that we were successful with the grant application. Work has to be completed within 6 months. This has been reported to Southend Borough Council and the Town Clerk awaits a response regarding their contractor undertaking the repairs.

HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

15. EVENTS

The event application for the Jubilee Community Day and Big Lunch Picnic at Bonchurch Park on Sunday 29th May, 12-3pm has now been submitted. Initial save the dates and pitch forms have been sent to a handful of local community groups and charities to apply. This is a 'bring your own picnic' event which is an opportunity for residents to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee with their neighbours, family and friends whilst enjoying local entertainment and music.

Administration work is underway to secure weekend dates for free bunting workshops in April. These will be two hours long and for up to 20 residents in each workshop.

16. FARMERS' MARKET

The Farmers' market will continue on the third Friday of every month and also include new 'Seasonal Saturdays' on the first Saturday of each new season (March, June, October and December). The full list of dates is available on the website. More craft stalls are being invited to attend this year and fill spaces. The first market of 2022 is on Friday 18th February, 9am-1pm and will welcome 8 new craft stalls as well as regular food stalls.

17. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL CLUB

Social Club

The social club had a steady attendance in the last quarter of 2021, with some sessions attracting as many as 38 attendees. The financials for the club show a small loss overall, however, this is partly due to buying some integral equipment such as the tea trolley and table cloths, and for organising some special entertainment and raffle prizes for the Christmas Party.

In 2022, activities are booked up until the end of April, with the next third of the year due to be organised shortly. Within this time, it is planned to hold a Jubilee tea party on the 1st June.

The café has continued to provide lunches and have been providing a variety of hot and cold dishes. The majority of comments about the food have been very positive.

There are now 10 volunteers who regularly help at the club with approximately 6 attending per session along with the regular the help of Cllr Evans.

Community Transport

It was wonderful to be able to provide a Christmas lunch for members at the Sarah Moore Pub after nearly two years without any trips. The lunch was well attended, although there were several cancellations on the day due to illness. The event was assisted by 3 volunteers and hosted by Cllr Cracknell. A much enjoyed Christmas raffle was provided.

It is hoped that once the weather warms up, some local trips for members can be launched which will include some shopping and theatre trips that have been requested.

18. CHILDREN'S SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

In February half term there will be an arts and crafts session with the Art Ministry, which will be provided free of charge following the grant they received in November 2021.

Three bookings have been made in the Lower Hall for the Easter holidays to provide events, and several entertainers have already been contacted.

During the May half-term it is hoped we can provide a Jubilee themed activity for children on 31st May.

ENVIRONMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES

19. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

The 3-year lighting contract is up for renewal and quotes are being obtained. These will be presented direct to F&G Committee and then Council due to timescales of meetings and costs involved.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

20. SPECIAL CONSTABLES

An update has been requested on training.

21. YOUTH CLUB AND YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Club recommenced 20th January after a Christmas break. Some changes have been made to the timings as attendance had been quite low for both groups since COVID and also feedback had been received that 9 pm was quite late to finish on a school night. The sessions have therefore been combined and run from 4 pm to 7.30 pm. Anyone can attend aged 8-16 yrs. Most of those currently attending are aged 10-14 yrs old.

Cllr Forde will provide a verbal report on the Youth Forum at the meeting.

COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING

22. FIRST AID POST

Demolition and rebuild status unknown at this time.

FINANCE

23. COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT 2021/22 ([Appendix 3](#)) page 9

24. TO CONSIDER ANY UNDERSPENDS IN 2021/22 BUDGET TO EARMARK AS A RESERVE
DECISION ITEM

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee **recommend to Council via Finance & Governance Committee** the following movement to Earmarked Reserves (EMR) at the year-end:

Purpose of Reserve	Opening Balance	Movement	Closing Balance
Allotments Infrastructure	£2160.28	£2500.00	£4660.28
Allotments maintenance	£5120.19	£1500.00	£6620.19
Leigh side maintenance	NEW	£400.00	£400.00
C&C General Services	£5900.00	-£3112.00 (hanging baskets)	£2788.00
H & W General Events	£17086.30	-£2000.00 -£1000.00 -£1260.40 (various events resolved)	£12825.90
Bunting Workshop	NEW	£1000.00	£1000.00
Christmas Lights Structure	£12359.00	-£3357.00 (new timers)	£9002.00
Community Transport	£800.00	none	£800.00
Skate Park	£6902.25	£3595.50	£10497.75
CFC other	£1831.03	-	£1831.03
Community Centre	£23119.88	£12000.00	£35119.88
LCC Salaries	NEW	£6,000.00 (national wage settlement not yet made)	£6000.00
Paddling Pool	£2659.70	none	£2659.70
Strand Wharf Planters	£3041.67	£500	£3541.67
Community Specials	£7500.00	none	£7500.00
School Crossing Patrol	NEW	£6684.60 (accrued) £4700.00 (current year)	£11384.60
Good for Leigh	NEW	£500.00 (Safe Sun project)	£500.00

Dear Allotment Tenant on the Leigh side at Manchester Drive Allotments,

Just prior to Christmas the Council were advised by the Leigh Allotment Society that they did not have a functioning committee and gave notice that the intention was to wind up the Society and inform plot holders of this.

Obviously, this is a shame for your allotment community but also for the standards you have come to expect over at the allotments, as between the Council and the Society there was an annual service agreement and each year your society have been undertaking the following:

The Association's Responsibilities

- 3.1 The maintenance work to be provided by the Association is outlined below.
 - 3.1.1 *Cutting the grass in common areas including track verges and car parking and car turning areas.* To ensure that the grass is kept to an acceptable height, all areas will be cut at least once every three weeks during the period April to October and when appropriate during November to March.
 - 3.1.2 *Maintaining the water tanks so that all tanks operate at full capacity.* This maintenance work will involve general repairs, replacing and adjusting ballcocks and taps, clearing blockages and cleaning out the tanks when necessary. Maintenance work should be carried out as expeditiously as possible and no tank should be inoperable for more than one week.
 - 3.1.3 *Maintaining communal roadways to a suitable standard.* There are two roadways running north-south across the Site and two east-west roadways to the north and south of the Site. These roadways should be kept in a good state of repair to provide access for light vehicles through the Site. Maintenance work may require the filling of potholes with aggregate or other suitable material. At the discretion of the Association or at the request of the Council, weather conditions may require that roadways are temporarily closed to vehicle use.
 - 3.1.4 *Removing rubbish from the site.* Rubbish may build up on common areas during the course of the year. It is the responsibility of the Association to periodically arrange for the removal of this rubbish so as to ensure that the Site remains safe and attractive.
NB It is the responsibility of the Council to remove asbestos from the Site (see below).
 - 3.1.5 *Clearing brush from encroaching on common areas.* To ensure that roadways, parking areas, car turning areas and other common areas are kept open and clear, it will be necessary to cut back brush, bushes and large weeds as and when required.
 - 3.1.6 *Minor works (e.g. fence repairs, pruning).* The Association may undertake minor repairs from time to time at the request of the Council. Such work will be separately chargeable at a price agreed with the Council.
- 3.2 On behalf of the Council, the Association will introduce prospective plot holders to their plot and will make them aware of the rules and regulations included in the tenancy agreement.
- 3.3 The Association will be responsible for health and safety matters relating to the work undertaken by its operatives and contractors.
- 3.4 The Association will hold Public Liability Insurance which covers their operatives and contractors.
- 3.5 Every two months the Association will provide a report to the Council outlining the condition of the Site, the maintenance work carried out over the previous two months, a summary of correspondence received from plot holders concerning allotments maintenance, and details of any non-regular work and improvements undertaken. To assist the Council in its forward-planning, the report should also identify future action that may be required outside the scope of this Agreement.

For provision of this service, the Society is paid an annual fee (£1,600) which can be used for the benefit of plot holders as they see fit. For example, in the past they have provided skips for rubbish despite the fact that plot holders under the tenancy agreement are responsible for removing their own rubbish from the site.

It may come as a surprise to many of you but the Council do not have any legal responsibility to improve allotment land. The Council 'may' do it, but doesn't have to. That said, Leigh Town Council through the Annual Service agreement with the Society took on the following responsibilities:

The Council's Responsibilities

- 4.1 Without prejudice to its statutory rights, duties and obligations under the letting agreements with individual allotment holders the Council accepts responsibility for and agrees to carry out the following, subject to available resources:-
- 4.2 Maintenance of the existing boundary fences, gates and hedges, carrying out repairs and replacement as necessary.

- 4.3 Boundary hedge trimming and tree maintenance in common areas.
- 4.4 Maintenance of the pipework bringing water to the tanks.
- 4.5 Removal of asbestos that has been dumped on the Site.
- 4.6 Determination of the dates on which bonfires can be lit. (obviously not applicable anymore)
- 4.7 Maintaining a waiting list of prospective plot holders.
- 4.8 The Council will notify the Association when plots become available for rent and will arrange with the Association when new plot holders can be introduced to their plot.

However, without a functioning allotment society, this agreement is now defunct and Leigh Town Council certainly do not have the resources, nor the time to undertake all the work previously undertaken by the Society committee on your behalf. Additionally, the Society had a 'Permission to use Agreement' for the Greenhouse – this now is terminated as there is no Society Committee overseeing the Greenhouse and therefore the Greenhouse will not be in use anymore.

The compostable toilet is now also no longer available to plot holders as again this was overseen by the Society Committee. Additionally, every single plot holder now needs to obtain their own insurance protection as the cover provided through membership of the allotment society is no longer possible. You can however obtain membership in the Manchester Drive Allotment Society (MDAS) and through this it would cover insurance and give you use of their facilities. Vacant plots used to be made good by the Society to be relet if the previous tenant had let them lapse. Vacant plots will now just be let as seen as the Council does not have available resources, although Southend Borough Council do provide a service to spray and rotovate plots which we will pass details on to new plot holders.

We have contacted Southend Borough Council to see how they manage their sites where Societies are not present and have been informed that they just maintain the perimeter and water service; grass cutting is when the council verge cutting team are able to fit it in and no skips are provided although occasionally, they may get an odd green waste trailer.

By using Southend Borough Council as our contractors, we would be able to put the following in place:

- Grass cutting of main path ways April to September (once a month);
- Brush in common areas to be cut back once per year;
- Supply a green waste trailer once a quarter;
- Cut down the overgrown area at the back of the allotments to bring back into use to let as plots

Leigh Town Council will also undertake the following:

- Maintaining the water tank system – this will be possible subject to available resources but is likely to incur an external cost (this will be paid from Council's existing maintenance budget for all sites for any underground works but over ground will be costed to the Leigh side service fund).
- Maintaining communal roadways to a suitable standard – this will be infrequent, likely to be inspected once a year but will incur an external contractor cost

Plot holders will be responsible for removing their own rubbish. No skips will be provided.

The Town Council will remain responsible for letting new plots and this will be arranged when officer time permits. We are currently in the process of arranging viewings for 14 plots.

Obviously, the Council will not be providing the funding allocation to the Society that it had annually (£1,600) but this will be used to service the allotment site. That said it will be limited without the volunteer time of the Society Committee taking on the responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the Site. The aim of the service agreement was to improve the quality of allotment maintenance through the direct involvement of the Society and plot holders themselves, to encourage self-help through plot holders' engagement with the running of the Site, to provide cost savings to Leigh taxpayers and to promote the interest and benefits of allotment gardening in the local community. With the service agreement now terminated, we felt it appropriate that all plot holders be kept up to date as you will find that the maintenance of the site will not be as regular as before.

Finally, for those interested, an allotment society can be formed by any group of allotment holders but that doesn't automatically mean it will take on the annual service agreement. The Council will happily review any proposal made but ultimately it will be up to the Council to decide whether they wish to work with a society to reinstate the annual service agreement and permission to use the clubhouse area known as the Greenhouse.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE COMMITTEE										
INCOME	Budget 2021/22	Income Received	Balance	% Received	EXPENDITURE	Earmarked Reserves	Budget 2021/22	Expenditure	Balance	% Spent
Leigh Community Centre	£ 60,000.00	£ 61,546.80	-£ 1,546.80	102.58%	Leigh Community Centre	£ 23,119.88	£ 54,400.00	£ 32,679.51	£ 21,720.49	60.07%
LTC Use of LCC	£ 10,000.00	£ -	£ 10,000.00	0.00%	Community Centre Staffing		£ 123,000.00	£ 99,099.81	£ 23,900.19	80.57%
Friends of LCC		£ 554.00			Friends of LCC	£ 1,021.41		£ 494.61		
Allotments	£ 20,650.00	£ 19,069.50	£ 1,580.50	92.35%	Allotments	£ 7,280.47	£ 28,700.00	£ 20,622.71	£ 8,077.29	71.86%
Community Facilities	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,662.16	-£ 662.16		Community Facilities	£ 14,434.65	£ 10,650.00	£ 8,254.82	£ 2,395.18	77.51%
Council H&WB Programmes	£ 4,750.00	£ 5,911.56	-£ 1,161.56	124.45%	Council H&WB Programmes	£ 17,886.30	£ 35,900.00	£ 31,738.15	£ 4,161.85	88.41%
Environment Facilities & Services	£ 1,400.00	£ -			Environment Facilities & Services	£ 12,359.00	£ 18,162.00	£ 20,195.00	-£ 2,033.00	111.19%
					Community Partnership Programmes	£ 7,500.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 4,289.90	£ 710.10	85.80%
					Community Services Funding	£ 2,788.00	£ 5,700.00	£ -	£ 5,700.00	0.00%
					Committee Staffing		£ 15,000.00	£ 9,452.49	£ 5,547.51	63.02%
TOTAL COMMITTEE INCOME	£ 97,800.00	£ 88,744.02	£ 9,055.98	90.74%	TOTAL COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE		£ 296,512.00	£ 226,827.00	£ 69,685.00	76.50%

[Agenda](#)