

Liskeard Town Council

At the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held IN THE Public Hall on **Thursday 30 June 2022 at 7 p.m.** there were present:

The Mayor – Councillor Simon Cassidy – in the Chair
The Town Clerk – Mr Steve Vinson

Councillors – David Ambler, Rachel Brooks, Richard Dorling, Annette Lee-Julian, Jane Pascoe, Lori Reid, Julian Smith, Naomi Taylor and Christina Whitty

Deputy Town Clerk – Yvette Hayward

52 Members of the public

The Mayor asked all Councillors to stand and introduce themselves briefly to the community.

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Kerry Cassidy, Nick Craker, Ian Goldsworthy, and Tony Powell. Julian Short (Salvation Army), Shirley Lewis (Liskeard Facebook page), Holly Whitelaw (Liskeard Gleaning Project), Father Gilmour (Catholic Church)

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE PUBLIC HALL ON THURSDAY 25 APRIL 2019 – The minutes were noted.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT 2020/21

Councillor Rachel Brooks gave the following report:

We had to cancel the last two annual meetings because of Covid so I'm going to report on the two years when I was Mayor and make the Community Champion Awards for that time.

Despite the challenges of the Pandemic, the Town Council managed to start two major projects to bring in investment to improve Liskeard when I was Mayor, and we are still working on them.

The first is the Market Makers project. We successfully applied for European funding, match funded by Cornwall Council, to support local artists and craftspeople and build a stronger community of makers locally. We have recruited a project manager and assistant who have set up a network of local artists and are providing business and other support for makers. An important part of the project is opportunities to try new crafts to boost skills and confidence for people not in work. We're already seeing that paying off with people going on to education and setting up new businesses.

The second project is on active travel - looking at how we can make it easier and safer to walk and cycle in and around town. With funding from Cornwall Council, we commissioned the national cycling charity Sustrans to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which included consulting with local people both in person and online. They have also drawn up some specific proposals for walking and cycle lanes on Charter Way and Plymouth Road, making Castle, Pound and Dean Streets safer and to make Barras Street more pedestrian friendly. The next stage will be

to consult about those over the summer. That will all give us what we need to apply for major grant funding to make it happen.

We know that communities are healthier where people can easily shop and get to school and work by bike or on foot. We want to give people more choices about how to travel and to help locals and visitors enjoy our town and the surrounding countryside.

Of course, another major focus for most of the two years was dealing with the pandemic. In the early days that meant getting information out to people via door-to-door leaflets about how they could get help and how to help others. We set up a special grant fund for organisations who were helping, like local churches and the school, which was making visitors. Some of those will be recognised in the Community Champion awards.

Once we started coming out of lockdown we worked with local business groups and Cornwall Council to encourage people to come back into the town centre and make it as safe as possible, with signs, sanitiser and a new 20 mph limit in the central streets.

4. COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARDS 2020

Awards were made to people and groups who have made a positive difference to life in Liskeard. Following some amazing nominations, Awards were presented to:

Individuals

- Jayne Darlington for responding to the lack of PPE at the start of the pandemic by forming a group to make face masks

Young People

- Willow & Indigo-Violet Tubbritt for a year of incredible charity work supporting several local charities and organisations.

Groups

- Café Abundance for delivering meals and groceries to households shielding, self-isolating of financially depleted at the start of the pandemic, and working and coordinating with other groups
- Lighthouse Community Centre for bringing people in the community together

Unable to attend but also receiving an award:

- Real Junk Food Project delivering fresh produce, groceries and ready prepared meals to those in need at the start of the pandemic, and supporting other local organisations

5. CHAIR'S REPORT 2022

The Mayor, Councillor Simon Cassidy gave the following report:

On the 18th May 2021 I was elected as Mayor of our Town. It seems so long ago now yet it was just over a year ago. To be elected Mayor was a great honour and to be elected Mayor of a place that means so much to me made it truly special.

So what does the Mayor do? That's a question asked many times often in criticism of my not having done something. The Mayor is in effect a Civic role – Yes, I am the Chair of Council and as

such Chair meetings, but I don't decide what we do. We don't lead and decide on what direction we go – if I tried that I'd soon be out on my ear. In addition to chairing the meetings the Mayor is responsible for championing Liskeard – the visible presence in a Red Coat and Chain – going round highlighting all those things that are great about our town, highlighting the many amazing organisations and people that make our town great and representing Liskeard at events such as Remembrance Day and events outside the town.

To dispel some rumours - I don't have immense power, I don't make all the decisions, I don't tell people what to do, I don't get paid, I do have a full-time job, I do care – deeply. I also have an amazing Deputy in Christina who is my slightly smaller wing girl, and a council made up of people like you who truly care about their town.

So as this is meant to be my report on 2021/22 let's have a look at what we've been up to. As Rachel has said much of 2021 was taken up with the Pandemic and the slow exit from restrictions - Council still continued to function during this time and through our Social Emergency Fund we provided over £20,000 to local organisations and groups who supported the community through the pandemic. On behalf of the Town, I would like to thank Rachel and her Deputy, Sandra Mitchell for their leadership of our town throughout the pandemic.

In 2021, I attended 53 additional events as Mayor, additional to attending Council meetings and volunteering in the community – so far in 2022 I've attended 33. This obviously doesn't take account of the many visits I've made to organisations and businesses to see what they do and thank them for their commitment to our town. I've presented the Freedom of Liskeard twice – firstly to the Rifles Regiment our local Infantry Regiment and secondly to the Liskeard Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) on their centenary of service. Liskeard RBL will be exercising that freedom in August with a parade through town. I honoured a number of organisations in the Town on their anniversaries including Liskeard Eventide on their 70th Anniversary, Liskeard Lions on their 50th and Pengover on their 25th.

We have rebuilt relationships with our adjoining parish councils and continue to work with them ensuring that their voice is heard in addition to our own as what happens in Liskeard affects them too. We have rebuilt relationships with our Town Traders and Chamber of Commerce and are working closely with them on ways to improve our town. We have worked with the Police and external agencies and brought them into our town to listen to residents' concerns and ultimately build a closer relationship with them.

As a Council we managed to ensure a zero percent increase in Liskeard Town Council's part of the Cornwall Council tax and have now achieved three years with zero increase. It's been tough and we have had to tighten our purse strings, but people are struggling, and we wanted to help as much as we could.

Our Facilities Committee lead by Cllr Julian Smith and Richard Dorling has been hard at work on the subject of devolution – identifying those assets currently managed by Truro and fighting the case for them to be managed locally, allowing local people to best decide what they want from their assets. In addition, they have reviewed our current properties, parks and open spaces making recommendations to improve them and ultimately identifying ways we can reduce our carbon footprint.

Our Planning committee led by Cllr Naomi Taylor continues to push for buildings that work for Liskeard. Retaining our rich heritage but at the same time allowing environmental considerations to be understood. Our Neighbourhood Plan has been instrumental in giving us the power to challenge developments and ensure they are right for our town. Naomi and her team are walking neighbourhood plans and properly armed for the tasks in hand.

Our Communications and Engagement Committee led by Nick Craker and Annette Lee-Julian have worked hard to ensure relationships are built with the many organisations that make Liskeard great and community events are supported. They also led on the Active Travel project mentioned by Rachel and continue to lead the Museum and Tourist Information Centre as we emerged from restrictions. This year there will be more focus on events in the town now that we are free to do these.

Finally, our amazing Council Colleagues who work day after day supporting us and the wider community. Without their dedication we would be completely lost.

Our priority for 2022/23 is to get out and listen, to work with organisations in helping them to do what they do best and to continue to make Liskeard the destination of choice for locals, tourists and businesses alike. Liskeard is an amazing place with a truly amazing community spirit – sure it has its problems, but we are committed to working with you to make Liskeard a better place for all.

6. CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU (CAB) – How they used a grant from Liskeard Town Council of £2,000 in December 2020 to upgrade their IT and benefit the community

Janice Waters from CAB explained that pre pandemic their contact with those seeking their help was usually on a face-to-face basis. With the onset of the pandemic a more extensive upgrade of their IT system than originally planned was necessary, totalling £20,000 including additional laptops, which has enabled them to continue supporting people through the challenging conditions. As they are now meeting many people virtually, this has left spare capacity within their building, and they are now commencing work with the Foodbank, who will share the building, helping with running costs, and provide their advice service and a town centre location for people to collect support boxes.

7. SAFER LISKEARD

Lucy Allison (Community Safety Officer) and Katherine Kemp (Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) caseworker), explained that Safer Liskeard was a multi-agency initiative to improve community safety and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the town through partnership working, and had a very broad membership of local organisations.

Liskeard is one of ten priority towns that has been identified as a Safer Town initiative based on population figures, crime data and the residents' views on crime and disorder in that area. Each year, a Town Profile for Liskeard provides details of crime and ASB trends, Residents' views and looks at the wider context from health information and community insight profiles and is available on the Safer Liskeard webpage.

Safer Liskeard is now in its third year and has developed a comprehensive work plan based on the evidence presented in the Liskeard Town Profile and feedback from the Residents Survey.

Community safety priorities for the Town identified are:

- Drug related harm and recovery including dangerous drug networks/county lines/cuckooing and the associated serious violence
- Domestic abuse and reducing violence against women and girls
- Youth engagement
- Taking pride in Liskeard, crime prevention and improved feelings of safety
- Community engagement and building community resilience

During 2020/21, Safer Liskeard met virtually every 3 - 4 weeks to ensure that regular dynamic intelligence and updates about the rapidly changing nature of crime and risk across the town was fed in and acted upon. During this time the local issues were predominantly related to the impact of COVID restrictions and antisocial behaviour in specific areas of Liskeard. Social distancing prevention measures were supported in the town and the use of local businesses encouraged.

Safer Liskeard have supported Liskeard Town Council and the live monitored CCTV system in the town that is proving vital to public safety and supporting criminal investigations. More recently, the partnership encouraged the trial of two further cameras in Liskeard, these are both Rapid Deployable Cameras that are a temporary resource for specific areas of need.

In 2021/22, the Safer Liskeard partnership response moved to a more proactive model and substantial collaborative work was delivered around the Evening and Night Time Economy (ENTE). Working closely with Liskeard Town Council, Safer Liskeard supported a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioners Office for match funding to assist with the safe reopening of licensed premises and evening and night-time socialising in Liskeard. This included contracting two SIA approved street marshals from a local security firm operating jointly at weekends and additional live monitoring of the CCTV system. The marshals also picked up and disposed of any broken glass/alcohol litter.

This year, following feedback from the Liskeard Traders Association and St Martin's School additional Public Space Protection Order signs were fitted yesterday along Fore Street and in Castle Park. This legislation provides Police and council with powers with regards to prohibiting alcohol consumption in specific areas of the town. The signs were fitted by offenders on Community Payback with Probation.

Safer Liskeard have recently held several multi agency pop up shop events in the centre of Liskeard and will be at Liskeard Show on 9th July.

The latest crime and ASB data showed:

- Like everywhere ASB is going down
- Shoplifting and other theft has gone up across Cornwall and a lot in Liskeard
- Rape and other sexual offences are up across Cornwall and have increased since March 2021, mainly in response to national incidents which have led to an increase in reports
- Violence without injury and public order offences are also going up across Cornwall linked to the re-emergence of night-time economy crime
- Hate crime incidents have increased although the number of incidents is pretty low.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that drug litter is monitored to target where action is needed. Other reports of littering are passed on to other agencies. Everybody was urged to use the single reporting form online for reporting any concerns. It is important that things are reported direct to the police which they can action rather than posting on social media which may not come to their attention.

8. GRANTS AVAILABLE

Liskeard Town Council allocates a grants budget annually to assist other organisations within the town to achieve projects, services, exhibitions and events of benefit to the town and its residents. Usually within the range of £50 - £500. Applications are usually considered monthly. Over the last year organisations which have benefited include: Baby Basics, the Cornwall Pride bus, the Lion's Panto, the Foodbank, Liskeard Trader's Association, the Liskeard Bridge Club and the Liskeard Gleaning Project.

Philip Blamey Trust provides grants to young people for educational purposes. During the pandemic, this trust provided 15 young people with laptops to support their home learning.

Eva Bowles Memorial Fund helps local young people to take part and enjoy music making in all its various forms. A grant was presented to Isabelle Sutton whose love for music has inspired her to want to join the Royal Marine Band. The grant will support her in the purchase of a new flute.

Alex Page Trust aims to help young people who want to learn a skilled trade but find the low income and financial outlay for professional tools or training a positive disincentive. Open to anyone below the age of 21 at the time of application and resident in the Liskeard area (PL14 postcode). Applicants must be pursuing a nationally recognised qualification (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship or NVQ), or a qualification which is recognised by a trade organisation appropriate to the career concerned. There are no minimum or maximum limits, but as a general principle relatively small 'one-off' awards will be available rather than continuous funding for any individual applicant.

The money available for awards is generated by the Trust's capital and future donations, and over the last three years £1,529.23 has been raised. In 2021 grants were made to support students who needed laptops to continue their studies during the second and third covid lockdown. This year the trust has supported a student needing personal safety and protection equipment to carry out practical work for their Forestry and Arboriculture BTEC course. The trust still has over £10,000 to make future grants.

Full details of all of these funds together with application forms are available on the Town Council website under Grants.

9. LISKEARD GLEANING PROJECT – How they used a grant from Liskeard Town Council of £500 in November 2021 to help harvest crops that would otherwise be wasted and distribute them to local organisations.

Holly Whitelaw gave a video message as they were short of volunteers this week, having been busy harvesting pointy cabbages, and could not attend in person. They thanked the Town Council for the grant which helped them purchase a pickup truck and trailer and they have another pickup on the way. Last year they gleaned 100 tons of vegetables and some apples which would have

otherwise gone to waste. They have recently attended the Royal Cornwall show and two more farmers have signed up to work with them, and they are looking for more.

It is not the fault of farmers there is surplus produce. They need to over produce to ensure they have enough to fulfil their contracts. Sometimes the produce is too big, for example last year potatoes did well and were very large – too big to go into small crisp packets. Sometimes produce grows at different rates, or they do not have enough pickers.

The project distributes to 40 organisations across Cornwall and swaps produce with FareShare in Plymouth for items they do not have – this week mushrooms and eggs.

The project has seven coordinators across Cornwall who receive a small salary, and organise the gleans, distribution of the produce to hubs, including one in Liskeard, and swaps. They have received funding from the Lottery, Feeding Britain and the Guinness Partnership, but there is likely to be less funding available going forward as the Lottery will not be funding food provision as this is a government function. More food is currently going out of Foodbanks than coming in.

They currently cannot harvest all the produce available, and volunteers are always welcome on a glean for a green workout, which are also fun. Details can be found on their Facebook page.

10. COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARDS 2022

Awards were made to people and groups who have made a positive difference to life in Liskeard. Following some amazing nominations, Awards were presented to:

Individuals

- Lynette Rule who has been a regular Liskeard in Bloom volunteer for several years helping to create some of the wonderful floral displays in the town.
- Anthony Langdon who has spent many years litter picking and helping to keep our town looking clean and tidy.
- Colin Murch who coordinates regular clean up and litter picks at Culverland Park and brings the community together.
- Malcolm Mort who has spent 40 years maintaining the flowers at the railway station and developed the wonderful 'hidden garden' at Stuart House.
- Clare Bevan who is committed to projects which bring Liskeard together and give underprivileged people affordable events and sports.

Young People

- Tilly Day who did litter picks in the town for 100 consecutive days during lockdown, and inspired many others to get out do the same.

Groups

- Liskeard Community Fire Station for throwing open its doors to the community during the recent power outages, and often being at the forefront of local fundraising.

Unable to attend but also receiving an award:

- Shirley Lewis who tirelessly promotes and highlights Liskeard positively on social media.
- Julian Short who coordinates a team to give children and families a better Christmas.

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Fencing at the cricket club

Q Cricket balls were currently coming out of the field onto the road or neighbouring properties. What could be done about this?

A The Mayor would speak to Cornwall Councillor Nick Craker and the club to investigate the issue and provide a response.

Littering

Q Litter, in particular cans, glass bottles and broken glass (often around benches) was a growing problem – what could be done about it?

A Reporting issues – particularly street drinking related litter and anti-social behaviour. CCTV can be checked for evidence, or temporary cameras used to target specific issues. Fixed Penalty Notices could be issued where the offender can be positively identified. Encourage the use of seagull sacks, particularly where people need to put bin bags out the night before the collection – available to purchase via several options including from the Tourist Information Centre at £4 each. Education, and everybody being prepared to litter pick and encourage responsibility in others.

Q Could bottle banks be reinstated in carparks?

A Councillor Pascoe advised that the cost was prohibitive.

Q Could a monthly large item waste collection be arranged in different parts of the town to help people dispose of waste regularly and responsibly and deter fly tipping?

A Enquiries would be made with Cornwall Council.

It was noted that everybody had attended the meeting because they cared about the town and wanted to improve it, and this was a positive way to work together to make that happen.