

## **ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **BUSINESS PLAN 2019 – 2023.**

#### **Introduction from the Leader of the Town Council.**

I am very pleased to be able to introduce this Business Plan for Ashby de la Zouch Town Council for the period 2019 to 2023. Every business has to plan for the future and improve their service to its customers. Ashby de la Zouch Town Council is no exception. A business plan helps to ensure that the Town Council can take an organised and consistent approach to:

- The design and delivery of services;
- The prioritisation and allocation of resources;
- The achievement of value for money.

Our plan sets out our vision for the town and what we aim to achieve in the next five years. All plans need to be flexible. We need to be able to re-act to changing national and local circumstances as the need arises. The plan, therefore, will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis over its lifetime.

**Councillor John Coxon**  
**Leader of Ashby de la Zouch Town Council.**

#### **Our mission statement.**

Ashby de la Zouch is a prosperous, attractive and historic market town at the heart of the National Forest. Our vision is to build on that uniqueness and create a town that meets the needs of local people whilst making the most of its special qualities to attract visitors and shoppers from further afield.

This will be achieved by creating a safe, clean, accessible and attractive town in which people can shop, work, live and pursue their leisure activities. The town should offer something for everyone regardless of their age, lifestyle or status.

#### **Our vision for the town.**

- A historic market town with heritage appearance protected and a clear separation between it and neighbouring villages.
- A tourist destination with a wide range of accommodation, restaurants, attractions and events.
- Industrial diversity with a mixed employment base.
- A robust infrastructure which meets the needs of residents and reduces the need to travel to neighbouring towns;
- Well used and accessible public open spaces across Ashby and Blackfordby;
- An economically thriving and diverse town centre shopping experience which meets the day to day needs of residents.
- A functional transport infrastructure which effectively manages traffic flows and supports the use of public transport and cycling and walking.
- A balanced night time economy which attracts all ages in to a town centre where they feel safe;
- A wide range of housing provision that meets the needs of the whole of the community. Including affordable housing, adequate social housing and town centre living;

- A clear sense of community identity, with an active voluntary sector and a range of community groups and facilities.

### **An overview of the Town Council.**

The Local Government Act 1894 created Ashby Urban District Council which was in existence until 1974 when local government re-organisation following the 1972 Local Government Act created Ashby de la Zouch Town Council.

- The population of the town is 14,803 (estimated) and the electorate is 12,248 (2019).
- The Town Council is made up of 17 Councillors who are elected every four years. The next election is in May 2023;
- The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected by the Town Council every year;
- There are five Standing Committees of the Town Council: Finance, Tourism & Administration; Parks & Cemetery; Planning & Transportation; Licensing and Events & Entertainment;
- Full Council and Committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber in Legion House and are open to the public. There is a public participation session at each meeting;
- The Town Council employs a qualified Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk and other administrative and grounds maintenance staff as necessary;
- The Town Council has been awarded the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold Award and has adopted the 'General Power of Competence'.

### **What the Town Council does.**

The purpose of the Town Council is to improve community well-being and provide better services at a local level which will improve the quality of life of the residents of Ashby de la Zouch and Blackfordby.

Its activities fall into three main categories:

- **We represent the local community. The Town Council:**
  - considers every planning and licensing application made in the parish;
  - debates highways (e.g. road safety schemes) and transportation matters (e.g. location of bus stops), rights of way changes and on street naming;
  - sends representatives to outside bodies such as Ashby de la Zouch Museum, Lount Landfill Liaison Committee, Willesley Residents Association and Ashby Street Pastors;
  - comments upon initiatives within the town (for example, the development of the Money Hill area and in opposing proposals for the route of HS2);
  - has initiated the process which will lead to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the village of Blackfordby;
  - has Town Councillors who are also members of the District and County Council;
  - works with the police on law and order and local schools to reduce anti-social behaviour.
  - supports the civic duties and responsibilities of the Town Mayor;
  - supports the democratic process by holding meetings, Councillor surgeries, elections, polling stations and provides information to members of the public;
  - supports many events in the town that are organized community and voluntary groups.
- **We deliver services to meet local needs. The Town Council:**
  - supports and encourages the arts and crafts;
  - provides and maintains the town cemetery and burial records;

- maintains the St.Helen's and Holy Trinity closed churchyards;
- cleans and drains the water courses at Willesley Recreation Ground, Fairfax Close; part of the Gilwiskaw Brook and Coleorton Brook and on the land off Main Street in Blackfordby;
- controls litter on land owned and maintained by the Town Council;
- maintains war memorials on Market Street, St. Helen's Churchyard and in Blackfordby;
- provides and maintains street furniture: benches, bins, information boards, interpretation panels, finger posts and litter bins;
- maintains and updates the town website;
- grits footpaths in the town centre as part of the 'snow warden scheme' and provides grit bins at critical points around the town;
- supports and sponsors Ashby de la Zouch Museum;
- provides Legion House as a facility for use by community and voluntary groups;
- provides financial support of up to £12,000 annually to community and voluntary groups in the town.

- **We improve the quality of life and community well-being. The Town Council:**

- is responsible for, and maintains, 90 acres of recreation grounds, parks and playing fields and areas of informal open space;
- provides and maintains sports pitches and pavilions on Western Park, the Bath Grounds, Westfields Recreation Ground, Hood Park, Willesley Recreation Ground and in Blackfordby;
- maintains 17 children's play areas and the skate park on Hood Park;
- encourages tourism and business;
- provides the allotment gardens at Wilfred Gardens;
- provides Christmas trees and lights in the town centre and Blackfordby;
- provides seasonal floral decorations in the centre of the town;
- organises, in partnership with the Royal British Legion, the police and the churches of Ashby, the annual Remembrance Day Parade and Armistice Day service;
- organises other events for the town such as Jim's Tractor Run & Family Fun Day and the Christmas Fair & Market;
- maintains the heritage of the town including the Loudoun Memorial and other listed structures;
- encourages and supports residents' and tenants' associations in Ashby and Blackfordby;
- maintains the tree stock of around 1,200 trees on Town Council owned land.

## Our plan for 2019 – 2023.

How we will seek to achieve our objectives.

### **1. Improving our Parks & Open Spaces.**

- We will work with partners to ensure Ashby's open and green spaces, street trees and woodland are protected, maintained and safeguarded for the future;
- We will continue to negotiate the transfer of the ownership of the Bath Grounds to the Town Council;
- We will work with Ashby Hastings Cricket Club & Ashby Bowls Clubs to provide a new lease and to progress grant applications to enable enhanced facilities i.e. new pavilions;
- We will complete the refurbishment of the roadways at the town cemetery; we will also replace the damaged garage at the cemetery and instigate memorial testing as appropriate;
- We will install new/replacement benches and bins where required;
- We will explore the options for the re-roofing or the complete replacement of the community cabin on Willesley Recreation Ground;
- We will resurface the car park area at Willesley Recreation Ground;
- We will complete the process of the adoption of land at the former soap factory site and Leicester Road development and other new developments as they are constructed;
- We will work with the land owner to complete the transfer of land to the Town Council of open space at Trinity Close;
- We will improve the access road into Western Park from Avenue Road and complete the pathway from the car park to Packington Nook Lane;
- We will develop a management plan for the Bath Grounds to facilitate a possible Green Flag application in 2020;
- We will initiate a project to refurbish and reorder the Hood Park play hub;
- We will explore possible uses for Prior Park Road field;
- We will re-align our tree inspection regime in the light of the decision in the case of Cavanagh v Whitley Parish Council;
- We will regularly clean play equipment to remove algae and offensive graffiti.

### **2. Enhancing our Town Centre.**

- We will work with other agencies to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve safety;
- We will negotiate a new Christmas light scheme for 2021;
- We will apply for Purple Flag re-accreditation August 2019 and 2021;
- We will develop the existing good relationship with businesses in Ashby and the Ashby Town Centre Traders group by working together to promote and enhance the economic vibrancy in the town;
- We will maintain Market Street's vibrancy: traditional retail is shrinking fast and will continue to do so, so we will encourage the "day time economy" by exploring options for the future of the town centre;
- We will enhance our floral displays and 'green' the town centre;
- We will work with stakeholders to develop and define the concept of Ashby as a "Forest Town" and as the only town on the National Forest Way;
- We will encourage climate change reduction initiatives including the reduction in the use of plastic bags with the support of "Bag for Life", "green tourism" and becoming a water refill scheme;
- We will initiate a marketing campaign to encourage tourism and destination management;

- We will use the free guest town centre Wi-Fi effectively to gather footfall data & utilise features such as messages to the public for the marketing & promotion of the town;
- We will enter for recognised national and local award status (e.g. Great British High Street) where appropriate;
- We will consider the options for introducing park & ride for key events;
- We will work with appropriate stakeholders and agencies to monitor and reduce noise and air pollution in and around the town centre;
- We will support an initiative to introduce a community bus service;
- We will support local traders in undertaking a feasibility study for the possibility of progressing a Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) for the town;
- We will confirm, develop and enhance the role of the town centre manager.

### **3. The future shape of the town.**

- We will maintain vigilance on housing numbers and major planning applications;
- We will progress the Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan to referendum;
- We will work with the District Council and County Council to improve car parking and reduce congestion in the town centre;
- We will continue to monitor the HS2 project and comment upon it as necessary;
- We will work to improve public transport and reduce road congestion in Ashby;
- We will work with relevant partners to promote cycle routes and pedestrian access as a sustainable and healthy form of transport;
- We will implement the walking and cycling strategy for the town, including “Walkers are Welcome”;
- We will work with the National Forest Company to develop Hicks Lodge as "Ashby's Cycle Centre" [assuming Willesley footpath finally gets the go-ahead, apply to make the connection to Hicks Lodge a bridleway, secure funding to improve the surface and get it signposted];
- We will work with the District Council and the developers on the Money Hill Master Plan;
- We will work with Oakland Hotels Ltd (or its successors) to secure the future of the Royal Hotel building, preferably as a thriving hotel;
- We will work with the Money Hill consortium and other stakeholders to explore the opportunities for a Community Centre and additional sports facilities on the proposed site or on other suitable land in or around the town;
- We will encourage, support and promote volunteer organisations and charities within Ashby for the benefit of the town and act as a dependable signposting centre;
- We will comment upon the Local Plan Review and other strategic planning documents which may impact upon the town;
- We will work with partners, including the Ashby Civic Society, to protect the heritage and character of Ashby, ensuring conservation areas, buildings, developments, modifications and materials are in keeping with the town.

### **4. Being more effective in our governance and administration.**

- We will continue our dialogue with the principal authorities for the possible transfer of assets and the delegation of services to the Town Council that are in the town’s best interests;
- We will support the initiative for local government re-organisation in the county and for improving service delivery;
- We will produce a paper identifying Town Council assets and council activities that may benefit from climate change scrutiny, outlining where improvements can be made to commit the Town Council to support a climate change strategy and policy;

- We will continue to improve our use of social media;
- We will continue to explore opportunities to be more cost effective in everything we do;
- We will continue with our programme of improvements to Range Road Depot to increase efficiency and reduce costs;
- We will continue to develop the Town Council website and social media presence;
- We will continue to make improvements to Legion House to maximise its use, to reduce its environmental impact and improve its “green” credentials;
- We will negotiate a new lease with the NHS for the ground floor (rear) of Legion House;
- We will develop an emergency response plan for the town;
- We will arrange for one Town Council meeting in each municipal year to be held in the village of Blackfordby;
- We will apply for Local Council Award Scheme Gold Award re-accreditation in April 2021.

**How we let you know what we have achieved:**

- We will publish a quarterly newsletter in ‘Ashby Life’ to keep you informed of what we are doing;
- We will publish an Annual Report in April summarising our activities;
- We will issue regular press releases to the local media and updates on social media.

**Jack Fargher  
Town Clerk  
30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**