



LAUNCESTON

TOWN

COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2020/21

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Launceston Town Council is the part of government that is closest to you. We recognise that at times it may be confusing to know who provides what service in the town, so it is our aim to ensure that all our residents are aware of what services we provide and that by continuing to work closely with other agencies, the duplication of services can be avoided. One of our aims is to be the local 'champion' for our residents. If there are problems and issues we will try to avoid passing them on to others, but instead will provide information on who to speak to or we may be able to solve the issue ourselves.

The Town Council provides many local facilities, including parks and open spaces, highways grass maintenance, running events and activities, funding a Visitor Information service, providing the town Christmas lights display, offering grants to local community groups and organisations as well as owning or managing a number of sites including; Launceston Town Hall and Guildhall (including all bookings for venue hire), Launceston Library, Lawrence House Museum, Launceston Visitor Information Centre, Launceston Cemetery, Dockacre closed cemetery, allotments at Dutson, Grammers Park and Kensey Vale, the Coach Park, the multi-storey car park in Westgate Street, public conveniences in Westgate Street, Race Hill, the Walk and Newport, the War Memorial, Southgate Arch (leased to the Causley Trust), the Roundhouse Newport, the Ambulance Hall, the Bandroom (leased to Launceston Town Band), the Green Room (leased to LADS), Launceston Priory Ruins, Grammers Park and play area, King's Field and play area (Priory Park), Lanstephan Area play park, Stourscombe public open spaces, the Rest Garden Newport, Windmill Wood, public seats, bus shelters and street lights.

Following the extensive renovation and upgrading of the Town Hall in 2010, and further investment installing professional light and sound equipment, the town now has a stunning property suitable for a wide variety of uses for all the community. This attractive building adjoins the Guildhall and offers two meeting rooms, plus the Guildhall itself and the main Town Hall. All of these can be hired for a variety of uses from small committee meetings to parties and concerts. Having taken on ownership of the former St John Ambulance Hall in 2017, we are now able to provide additional venue space for community groups or event hire.

To undertake all of these services, we are permitted to apply for a precept from local residents, which is collected by Cornwall Council and which forms part of your overall annual Council Tax bill. The calculation for this is based upon the average Council Tax band, which is Band D.

If we do not operate a service, we will try to ensure that our local residents get the very best level of service possible from other service providers.

This document sets out our overall policies, priorities and targets for the next year and provides information about our services. To help us set and achieve our targets we need your views and comments. You can contribute to your town by telling us what is important to you in Launceston. With your involvement we can continue to build upon the many good things within the town and lay the foundations for an even better future.

How can I get in touch?

You can contact us at Launceston Town Hall, Western Road, Launceston, PL15 7AR, by telephone on 01566 773693 or email admin@launceston-tc.gov.uk

We know that it is sometimes not clear which council or agency does what and if you have a complaint or comment about any service, we would like to hear from you and we will either pass it on to the right person, or we will give you a contact so that you can speak with the person responsible. We will tell you what we have done with your request and we will also try to get action taken on your behalf.

How we work

The Town Council currently has five committees, with most items being considered by the whole Council that meets eleven times in each municipal year. We are consulted by Cornwall Council on all planning applications affecting the town and the town's Planning and Economic Development Committee meets every three weeks to consider these applications. You are welcome to attend any meeting of the Council and there is a public representation time at the beginning of each meeting. All of our meetings are publicised on our notice boards and a copy of each agenda and all minutes are published on the Town Council website at www.launceston-tc.gov.uk

Annual Report of the Town Mayor

As my Mayoral year draws to a close and we enter into Town and Parish elections, this past 12 months has been like no other in my lifetime.

As a community we have all had to adjust ourselves into a world that has been full of worry, lockdowns and restrictions to our normal way of life. Mayoral visits to community events simply didn't happen due to Covid-19. But despite this I have found the past year just as rewarding and such an honour to see our community rally together to help our neighbours, the elderly & clinically vulnerable.

The people of Launceston worked as we always do, as a united community and it has been an honour to serve as your Mayor over this strange year. The chains of office have been seldom worn, but I have remained in close contact with many of our towns people, along with other communities via what has turned out to be our new way of meeting with Zoom or Teams meetings.

The Town Council staff in all departments have worked above and beyond during these strange times and my thanks go to all of them for being supportive and professional during the difficult days over the last year.

As I write this, the country is in mourning at the loss of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. As your Mayor I have sent messages of condolences to her Majesty on behalf of our community and our thoughts and prayers are with our Queen and Royal Family at this sad time.

Negotiations are still ongoing with Cornwall Council regarding our new Library hub and I hope that we will continue to make good progress with Cornwall Council officers after the elections and secure this vital project for Launceston.

Cllr Dave Gordon - Mayor of Launceston

Annual Report of Committee Chairmen

ESTATES AND PROPERTIES

Despite the Covid 19 pandemic work has been undertaken by the estates and properties team wherever possible and we have continued to maintain the various buildings and areas of the Town Council's estate.

Within the year we saw the retirement of the previous manager and we were fortunate to be able to promote from within the team, with the new manager (Martin Cornish) taking up his position in January. This has led to Martin re evaluating some of the major works that need to be completed on some of the estate, including the Town Hall Clock Tower and Lawrence House Museum. These two areas of work are ongoing, the former needing major stone work completing and the latter subject to a recent extensive report on the overall condition of the building. The multi storey car park has had an inspection and we are awaiting the results of that which may result in remedial work needing to be completed.

Various risk assessments have been reviewed including Covid, Fire, Legionella and COSHH risk assessments have been implemented. There has also been a degree of sprucing up with full redecoration of the Ambulance Main Hall, the dressing room in the town hall, some external decoration and new signage has been introduced in the town hall.

Ian Nolan – Chairman

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES

The challenges faced by the Town Council this year were unprecedented and planned income was not achievable due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, with the closure of the Town Hall, Ambulance Hall and for a period of time free parking in the Westgate car park. During this period much of the planned expenditure did not happen and officers made savings where possible, this included not recruiting staff into new roles planned or replacing staff who left during this time. Councils were unable to claim furlough for employees under the Government scheme running throughout this time.

The Committee have met via Zoom and we have learned to work this way to ensure full participation of all members and supporting the RFO in her role. Setting the budget for 2021-2022 for the precept was difficult as no one knew just where we would be in the opening up of our town and also how long social distancing would affect events, the costs were scrutinised and savings made where possible ensuring there was only a minimal increase.

The Council have continued to support local organisations throughout the 2020-2021 financial year with approval of Exceptional Grants to Launceston Volunteer First Aid Service, Launceston Foodbank and The Merlin Centre. Standard grants were issued to 21 local organisations, each receiving £340 per group and it has been agreed to support 17 local organisations with a grant of £200 per group in the new financial year. The Council has remaining funds available to support any organisation benefiting the residents of Launceston through the Exceptional Grant Scheme throughout the coming year should their need arise.

Our Audit was once again exceptional and our control processes were reviewed and agreed. I take this opportunity on behalf of the Committee to thank the Clerk, RFO and staff for their support and hard work maintaining services and keeping our costs to a minimum at a time where our Town was challenged. It has been a pleasure to work with such a dedicated team of Committee and Staff Members.

Helen Bailey – Chairman

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The committee meets every three weeks and considers all planning applications and makes recommendations for approval or refusal to Cornwall Council Planning Committee.

The committee's terms of reference include the Town Square and Town Centre management and liaison with the Chamber of Commerce, to maximise the Town Council's role in influencing the development of the town.

The committee worked with Cornwall Council Planning Officers and others for several years on producing the Southern Growth Area plans for the town. We assisted Launceston Council in producing the Town Strategic Plan in 2011 which first mooted the idea of a pedestrian bridge at Newport that is finally being built in 2021. We continue working with Cornwall Council for the benefit of Launceston.

It is important to appreciate that when the local planning authority makes decisions on planning applications, or considers representations submitted relating to planning applications, it must only take into account national and local planning policies and material planning considerations. The planning committee has a legal obligation to decide planning applications based on policy grounds and relevant material considerations. While Councillors have a democratic responsibility, the views of residents have to be set within the context of a plan led system. This is not always easy or comfortable for Councillors.

Rob Tremain – Chairman

LAWRENCE HOUSE MUSEUM MANAGEMENT

The Lawrence House Museum Committee has had a facelift, it has been renamed the Management and Liaison Committee and has seen a change of membership. There are 3 lay trustees who will each bring their expertise to the Museum, a newly appointed secretary and treasurer and 9 trustee councillors who are committed to seeing the Museum progress.

We are fortunate to have a highly qualified and dedicated curator who is bringing new

ideas forward, he has worked closely with the Operations team throughout lockdowns and will liaise with the library and VIC on future projects.

The Council's new Properties Manager has visited the Museum with consultants to assess the works required and the way forward to meet the terms of the lease with the National Trust.

Opening times are under review but, as yet, no date has been set. It is encouraging to note that as a result of a recent survey, there are over 20 new volunteers ready to help as soon as the Museum can open. The Operations team and curator have been working on new exhibitions during Lockdown as well as the garden being redesigned to make it more sympathetic and accessible to the Museum.

Margaret Young – Chairman

VISITOR AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The VIC has followed Government guidelines in relation to the pandemic and has remained closed. Much of the normal work of the VIC was significantly curtailed because of the pandemic, but during lockdown the VIC staff have worked on alternative projects to support the fight against COVID-19, including Coronacornwall and the Reopening High Street Safety Fund (RHSSF) initiatives. Staff are now looking forward to re-opening the doors on the 12th April, within the U.K. Governments guidelines.

Councillors from the Visitor and Information Services Committee, along with Town Council Officers, are active members of the Launceston Town Planning Group (LTPG), who are working towards securing funding to support improvements within the town.

We are hoping to improve the Saturday Markets and the VIC forwarded questionnaires to all Councillors for completion and feedback. The Chamber of Commerce has agreed to contact businesses within the town, for their feedback.

Unfortunately St Piran's Day was unable to be celebrated as last year, but the VIC staff organised activity packs which were sent to the local schools and pre-schools, in order for the children to celebrate our Cornish tradition.

Discussions are taking place between the VIC and Library to ensure, post COVID, a consistent approach to services offered across both locations, is achieved. Discussions have taken place between colleagues, including VIC and Events Promotion at the Town Hall, to establish improved links and to find a better way to support each other's services.

Nicola Gilbert - Chairman

Launceston Town Councillors

Councillor Dave Gordon
66 St John's Road
Launceston PL15 7DD
01566 774706
cllrgordon@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Councillor Leighton Penhale
Penglair
Landlake Road
Launceston PL15 9HP
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cllrpenhale@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Councillor Helen Bailey
C/O Launceston Town Hall
Western Road
Launceston PL15 7AR
01566 773693 or 07718483716
cllrbailey@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Councillor Paula Bullen
3 Dutson Road
Launceston PL15 8DX
01566 778768 or 07769173572
cllrbullen@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Councillor John Conway
8 St Stephen's Hill
Launceston PL15 8HN
01566 774603 or 07862 731782
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Councillor Nicola Gilbert
13 Castle Meadows
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Councillor John Harris
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Launceston PL15 9HX
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Councillor Joan Heaton
Coupland House
1 Castle Street
Launceston, PL15 8BA
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Councillor Brian Hogan
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01566 773479
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Councillor Jane Nancarrow
2 Duke Terrace
St Stephen's
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Councillor Ian Nolan
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Councillor Paul O'Brien
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Launceston PL15 7EP
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cllrobrien@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Councillor Rob Tremain
Gwel an Castel
2 Park View
Launceston PL15 9AJ
01566 772164
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Councillor Margaret Young
1 Lower Cleaverfield
Launceston PL15 8ED
01566774023
cllryoung@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Council staff

Town Clerk

Mr Christopher Drake

**Responsible Financial Officer and
Support Services Manager**

Mrs Helen Gribble

Properties Manager

Mr Martin Cornish

Support Services Officer

Ms Kate Stark

Office Administrator

Ms Fiona Davey

Facilities Steward

Mr Andrew Statton

Facilities Steward

Mr Jonathan Stringer

Facilities Steward

Mr Gary Herbert

Lawrence House Curator

Mr Damon Dennis

Lawrence House Museum Cleaner

Eileen Langdon

**Senior Library and Information
Assistant**

Mrs Andi Snook

Library and Information Assistant

Ms Elaine Shillaber

Library and Information Assistant

Mrs Lindsay Hartgroves

Library Cleaner

Mrs Tracey Furneaux

**Tourist Information Centre
Manager**

Mr Ewan Murray

Tourist Information Assistant

Mrs Ruth Maunder

Tourist Information Assistant

Mrs Lauren Greene

Senior Groundsman

Mr Andrew Frain

Groundsman

Mr Mark Cornish

Groundsman

Mr Norman Pomery

Groundsman

Mr Mark Phelan

Precept information

Band D Equivalent Homes 2020/21
Band D Equivalent Homes 2021/22

3030
3023

Precept

2019/20 £ 765,203
2020/21 £ 765,203

Council Tax

Per Band D Household 2020/21 £ 252.50
Per Band D Household 2021/22 £ 253.13

Budget Information

2020/2021			SERVICE	2021/2022		
Gross Expenditure £	Income £	Net Expenditure £		Gross Expenditure £	Income £	Net Expenditure £
226,185	37,377	188,808	Town Functions (incl Grants)	237,274	34,790	202,485
114,537	42,499	72,038	Parks, open spaces, public seats/lights, allotments	100,940	28,854	72,086
67,337	4,325	63,012	Cemetery	61,555	4,325	57,230
219,497	61,160	158,337	Town Hall and other Council properties	203,243	40,660	162,583
81,891	1,500	80,391	Library	86,909	1,550	85,359
52,710	121,000	(68,290)	Car Park	54,379	109,000	(54,621)
37,483	0	37,483	Public toilets (4)	34,343	0	34,343
68,908	0	68,908	Lawrence House Museum	57,950	0	57,950
51,318	0	51,318	Capital Projects	51,318	0	51,318
133,698	20,500	113,198	Visitor Information Centre	111,146	14,675	96,471
1,053,564	288,361	765,203	TOTAL	999,057	233,854	765,203

Aims and Objectives

‘Working in partnership for an even better community’

Working together with the people of Launceston and other local providers to develop quality services for the needs of the community.

What the Town Council believes in and what we want to achieve;

Our Aims:

- **Creating and maintaining a quality environment**
- **Maintaining a safer community**
- **Promoting and encouraging a more prosperous community**
- **Acting as a catalyst to champion the community’s needs and interests**
- **Managing the Council’s resources effectively**

Our core values:

At the heart of the Council are our core values. These values guide how we do business and how we operate

Partnership	We work as a team (councillors, staff and contractors) and we will work with other agencies to ensure that all services are provided to the highest possible standard
Communication	We will listen to you and make it easier for you to have your say and ensure openness and transparency
Performance	We will strive to improve the quality, efficiency and cost of local services and encourage other agencies to do the same. Whatever we do, we will aim to do it well, but we will always be looking at ways to do it even better. We will review our services regularly and train our staff to deliver excellent services
Opportunities	We will provide equality of opportunities when we recruit and in the provision of our services

Aims and Objectives

Creating and maintaining a quality environment

The Town Council owns a number of open spaces and play areas. King's Field, also known as King George's Field, Prior's Park or Priory Park is situated in Newport. The Council has agreed to upgrade the facilities at this site, and will include an under 12's play area as well as a grassed area for ball games, which will be maintained to ensure it is available for use.

Grammers Park includes a play area (built in 2009) with a climbing frame and wall, a big basket swing and a wooden maze, plus other more conventional playground equipment. The remaining area has been used to create allotments. We aim to work with local residents to work on improvements to this site in the coming year

In 2011, Windmill Wood was taken over from the Woodland Trust on a 99-year lease. The wood is open to the public and is used by a local school and nursery for their Forest School sessions. A programme of tree management is in place along with the planned introduction of new trees.

The Town Council provides and manages three allotment sites, at Dutson (Prince Charles Close), Kensey (Kensey Hill) and Grammers Park (Upper Chapel). All of the allotment gardens have a water supply included in the annual charge and in total we are able to offer 80 plots. If you wish to apply for an allotment you can contact the Council offices.

The Town Council works in partnership with Cornwall Council to undertake grass cutting and horticultural work in the town and surrounding parishes, grass cutting of highways, and footpaths maintenance. The Town Council also manages the town square and parade ground on behalf of Cornwall Council. We are undertaking a new scheme of planting to enhance our car park as well as producing town signage maps and working with the Chamber of Commerce and businesses to explore ways of enhancing the town centre. We have worked with Cornwall Council in developing open space nature areas in the town.

We supply the Christmas lights and work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to light up the town. Christmas lights are strung across the roads in Westgate Street, High Street, Church Street and Broad Street, individually lit trees are erected on buildings and a large lit tree is erected in the town square.

The Council has a rolling works programme to ensure that works are consistently undertaken and to ensure regular maintenance of buildings and assets, so as to maintain civic pride

The Town Council is consulted about planning applications within the town and on major applications in adjoining areas and all applications are considered by the Planning and Economic Development committee and comments submitted to Cornwall Council as per the adopted town policies.

WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE – OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To provide and maintain our open spaces to a high standard
- To enhance the town by supporting floral planting and maintenance

- To encourage dog owners to be responsible on Council open spaces and throughout the town
- To ensure positive and constructive input into all planning applications and other consultations from Cornwall Council
- To consider the environmental implications of Council decisions
- To consider green spaces within the town and where possible secure their future
- To reduce the impact of graffiti and other vandalism to Council property
- To promote the use and maintenance of public footpaths
- To encourage volunteering in projects
- To provide and promote the use of the Council's facilities
- To provide, maintain and promote our allotment sites
- To encourage the development of sports, play, local heritage and the arts within the town
- To seek to make all the Council's facilities accessible for people with disabilities as far as possible

Maintaining a safer community

The council works with other organisations to make the parish a safer place to live and work.

We advise the Highways authority of any street light or road maintenance issues

We will continue to work with the Police in ensuring that they have an active role in the town and will assist wherever possible and will endeavour to hold multi agency meetings with all relevant parties

We will secure open spaces as far as practicable to reduce the risk of damage

We will encourage productive play for young people and listen to their needs and seek improvements to services.

WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE – OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To work with community groups and individuals to champion community issues
- To work with the Police and Cornwall Council to promote a safe environment both in the town and the recreation areas
- To respond to requests and initiatives for community safety

Promoting and encouraging a more prosperous community

The Council works with businesses in the town and other agencies where possible, to promote the town as a place to live and work.

The Town Council is responsible for the Christmas lights throughout the town, which now include festoon lighting across Westgate Street, High Street, Church Street and Broad Street

The Council contributes to the plans and activities of Cornwall Council to develop the local economy

The Council runs a monthly market in the town square, bringing in visitors from outside of the town and more vibrancy to the town centre.

The Town Hall has a large number of events, promoting the arts and bringing popular

acts to the town to provide a diverse range of activity and entertainment.

The Town Council is working in partnership with English Heritage to develop strong community links through site activities on the castle green

WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE – OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To participate in town centre management issues
- To provide Christmas lights and other activities
- To work with other agencies to promote tourism
- To work with other agencies and the private sector to encourage appropriate business development within the town
- To continue to use local suppliers for Council services and supplies, as far as possible
- To promote the town and Town Council outside of the immediate area to raise its profile and the profile of our facilities and local people

Acting as a catalyst to champion the community's needs and interests

The Town Council responds to the Cornwall Council policy initiatives and strategic documents, from the perspective of any impact on local people. We are often the first point of contact for local people who are concerned about council services. Wherever possible we will take issues up with the relevant authority on behalf of local residents.

WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE – OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To ensure positive and constructive input to local plans and other strategic documents and plans of other agencies
- To respond to requests from local residents for service improvements from other agencies
- To ensure local residents are informed of Council decisions and events
- To ensure the local press have adequate information about the work of the Town Council
- To encourage feedback on Council services
- To consult on significant decisions for the Council and the town
- To consult local people and in particular young people, in the development of facilities and activities
- To participate and be represented on local groups and bodies within the town
- To provide a Grant Aid programme to support local groups and organisations
- To aspire to respond and support the needs of those with disabilities

Managing the Council's resources effectively

The Town Council is able to operate the services it provides partly by levying a precept on local residents and this forms part of the annual Council Tax bill, as well as generating income from the car park, and function room hire and events.

The Council Tax demand for 2021/22 is £253.13 per Band D household. This equates to £4.87 per week to fund the Council. The money is used to provide and maintain all of our gardens, open spaces and play areas, maintain and/or replace street furniture, erect Christmas lights, provide an Information Service, offer grants to local groups and organisations, run events and activities including the monthly market, operate the library, maintain allotments, operate a museum and consult on all planning and policy matters affecting the town.

WHAT WE SET OUT TO ACHIEVE – OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To seek to develop and maintain additional services to contribute to the income of the Council
- To seek to maintain and develop sponsorship opportunities and external funding for specific projects and events
- To maintain the balances of the Council at a level that adequately covers any risks facing the Council
- To monitor administration costs and deliver best value in services to minimise increases in Council Tax
- To review all direct services within a five year period to ensure that they still meet the Council's objectives
- To maintain a repairs and renewals plan for all Council owned properties and assets
- To ensure sound financial management of the Council and effective scrutiny of the Council's programmes, actions and procedures
- To ensure health and safety legislation is met to provide safe working conditions and facilities for all staff
- To ensure that staff are trained and motivated to deliver excellent services for local people
- To consider any arising safety issues within the town

Comparison

We will compare our performance against other large town and parish councils. We will take into account your views and use these when comparing performance

Consultation and Communication

We will continue to consult our residents as we have previously and keep in touch with residents by publishing a quarterly newsletter update in the Launceston Life publication.

Information about Council meetings is published on the Council's notice boards as well as on our website and on social media, together with other posters and information such as proposed road closures. The Town Council offices are usually open to the public from 9.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday

The Council has a public representation time at each of its meetings for residents to raise relevant items for the Council's attention.

The Council's plans, policies and finances are reviewed and audited twice a year and an external audit is undertaken annually.

Feedback on this report

We are keen to get the views of our local residents. We want to know how you feel about things in your town. Your views are important and will help us shape our services for the future. As a resident or someone who works in Launceston, you have the opportunity to comment on the services provided by the Town Council, or suggest services you would like to see in the town.

You can give your feedback by contacting the Town Council by letter, phone, email or in person at;

Launceston Town Council
The Town Hall
Western Road
Launceston PL15 7AR
Phone: 01566 773693
Email: admin@launceston-tc.gov.uk

Or you can contact your local councillor, the details are included in this publication and also available on our website www.launceston-tc.gov.uk

We will always do our best to live up to expectations where we are directly responsible for services and where we are able to influence the decisions of others. We may not always get it right, but with your comments and feedback we will continue to strive to meet everyone's needs.

