



Crewkerne Town Council

Report No. 11

ANNUAL REPORT

March 2012

THE MAYOR'S REPORT

I would like to welcome you to our 11th Annual Report to inform you of the work the Town Council has carried out on the town's behalf in the past year.

At last I can report on the good news that building work has commenced on the George Reynolds Centre. This has been something that the Council has been working on for several years now and will replace the three buildings of the West One centre, the sports clubhouse and sports pavilion. The existing buildings have been in a poor state of repair for several years and it was uneconomic to undertake major repairs. The new building will meet the current Ofsted requirement for access to open green space for children and also the governing bodies requirements for youth and sports changing provision.

Pressure from the Town Council and others managed to convince Somerset County Council (SCC) to keep the local recycling centre open even though it is now chargeable. I would like to thank everybody who supported the campaign to keep the centre open. It is a well used and a much needed resource in the town.

The traders and businesses in the town along with their staff and customers continue to face difficulties as a result of the lack of car parking spaces and we have continued to put pressure on South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to try to find more. However, town centre land is always at a premium but despite this making things difficult, we will continue working with SSDC to try to find ways to address the problem.

There will always be an issue for Crewkerne with modern cars and lorries travelling on roads that were not designed to handle their number or speed. There are two current projects being progressed at the moment to try to alleviate some of the problem. The CLR development, including the link road between the A30 (east of Crewkerne) and A356 (south of Crewkerne) is progressing, but is a number of years away. The work to consider making North Street one way is continuing and the plans will be available soon for comment from local residents.

The Council has pledged £28,000 towards the transfer of services from SCC & SSDC. Both of these Councils have faced cuts of up to 25% in their government income and needed to prune various frontline services.

The Town Council is continually being asked to take on more services by SSDC but as we receive no government funding, either through subsidy or through business rates, we are doing our best to manage our current assets and I am delighted to report that we have been able to maintain the precept at the same level as in 2011/12.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, who do a wonderful job on your behalf in ensuring that Crewkerne remains a vibrant town. However they could not do this without the Town Council staff and a huge number of volunteers that help out with various groups and organisations in the town and I would also like to thank them for all their continuing effort on behalf of the community.

Cllr Neil Sturtivant, Mayor

PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Welcome to the Planning and Highways Chairman's report. The Planning and Highways Committee sits on the second Monday of each month and is a public meeting open to anyone wishing to attend.

2011/12 has been a quiet year from a planning point of view. We have received 64 applications to date.

The planning permission for the CLR housing development has been approved by South Somerset District Council. The Town Council wishes to take an active role in the development to make sure the town gets the best possible deal.

SSDC continues to look for more long stay parking in Crewkerne, though this is proving very difficult. New signage that guides cars to the existing long stay car parks has been undertaken. In the last Town Council newsletter we asked for your opinion on the car park on Henhayes; should it become a permanent car park or be removed. We hope that people have/will respond so that the views of the residents will help guide us on a decision.

North Street one way system is an on-going project, with the planners at the Highways department at Somerset County Council currently drawing up solid proposals which will be put on display for public consultation and opinion. It is hoped that this will happen May/June of this year.

Cllr Robin Pailthorpe, Chairman

COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS 2011/12

Aim: To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities.

Achievements:

- Secured increased planning gain funding of £242,719 from the Maiden Beech Housing Development towards the new George Reynolds Centre and subsequently agreed to start the building.
- Received a grant of £3,721 from Awards for All and monies from The Waitrose Charity scheme towards the planned activities for the Diamond Jubilee events on Henhayes in June. The Council has been working with community groups to make the celebrations enjoyable and free for all.
- Awarded community grants to West One Community Centre £10,250 (£9,000 of this is for the annual rent to the Town Council), Henhayes Centre £1,000, Heritage Centre £1,500, CUDOS £335, C. Local Information Centre £385, and Twinning Association £150 to improve or aid leisure pursuits. Also St Margaret's Hospice was awarded £500 and SSCVA £500.
- Installed once again the very attractive Town's Christmas lighting and provided administrative support for the annual Lighting Up event on 25th November which this year attracted over 1000 locals.
- Organised the Henhayes Fete on 11th June
- Provided assistance for the French Market and staged an opening event at Happy Valley on 19th April.
- Following on from the achievements at Happy Valley the Council has started a new project to enhance the play and visual value of the Henhayes Recreation Grounds. £12,500 matched funding has been secured from the District Council and additional grant funding will be sought towards the project.

Aim: To liaise with voluntary groups to achieve our objectives

Achievements:

- Awarded South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau a £2,000 grant to continue to provide its beneficial services in the town for a year as well as making rooms available free of charge in the Town Hall.
- Worked with the Civic Society to help fund and install the new notice boards in Falkland Square.
- During the year, we learnt that as part of significant budget cuts, the County Council would be withdrawing all its funding from youth provision within the town. The Town Council unanimously agreed to take a proactive approach to support the young people of Crewkerne and with funding from the Council budget will work with other organisations to sustain the youth clubs.

Aim: To co-operate with and support the Police and District Council to reduce crime and disorder in the town.

Achievements:

- Continued to work closely with the Police in the Community Safety Group.
- Organised another highly successful annual Community Safety Event on 2nd September in Falkland Square. There were stalls with information on home safety, environmental safety, flooding issues, together with representatives from the Police, Road Safety Unit, Yarlinton Housing Group and SCC Civil Contingencies Unit.

GEORGE REYNOLDS CENTRE COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee oversees this project and consists of all 12 Town Councillors and formerly 4, now 2 non-voting members, Graham James representing Sports Clubs and Kay Chant representing West One Youth and Community Centre users.

The last year has been quite exciting with ups and downs along the way. West One had a firm offer of purchase. Grants were awarded by both the Rugby Football Union and the Football Association. Plans for the building were finalised and contingencies plans put in place for the rehousing of the West One groups during construction if required.

Haven Health who are wanting to purchase the West One building to provide a new doctors surgery are dependent on PCT and NHS approval and various conditions which have been slow to be agreed. The FA grant was lost because it needed to be spent in the current financial year. No further work on the building plans could be progressed until contracts were signed and the formation of the new company to run the Centre could not be actioned.

Then a new year [2012] and suddenly we were able to engage our contractor and start building principally because South Somerset District Council increased the planning gain award to the project. The RFU confirmed its grant as long as they are used by the end of the financial year and a loan has been secured to cover the delay in contract exchange with Haven Health.

Next years report will give the details of the new company and the first few months of trading.

George would be proud of all the continued hard work put in by so many to bring this project to fruition.

Cllr Rusty Jackson, Chairman

AMENITIES COMMITTEE

The Town Council Amenities Committee meetings are held bi monthly on the second Monday in January, March, May, July, September and November. The Committee makes decisions on matters relating to property and land owned by the Town Council as well as issues relating to other amenities in the town. The public buildings and open spaces owned and maintained by the Council are as follows: the Town Hall and the Victoria Hall, including the Town Council and Community Offices, West One Youth and Community Centre, Henhayes Recreation Ground including the children's playgrounds and the Sports Pavilion, Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve, Happy Valley, Southmead Crescent play area and Barn Street recreation field. The Aqua Centre with Active Lifestyle Centre although owned by the Council is maintained by Crewkerne Leisure Management our 'tenants'.

2011/12 has brought improvements in the town, many of which I hope that you will have noted and enjoyed. The Happy Valley Project was completed and is well used and loved by many of the younger residents of Crewkerne, new footpaths were constructed at the Cemetery to make access easier and to mark out the areas more clearly and the lighting in Henhayes (near the Aqua Centre) was improved. Bincombe Beeches had many new trees planted to coincide with National Tree Week. Scrub was cleared at both Bincombe Beeches and the Cemetery and part of this work was undertaken in partnership with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

Work on the new George Reynolds Centre started on the 5th March and alongside that a rejuvenation of Henhayes will be undertaken to improve such things as the play area, footpaths and seating with new junior pitches being constructed at the end of the project when the old pavilion is demolished. The youth groups at West One will also move into the new George Reynolds Centre when it is completed.

However, many of the improvements may not be visible to all so here are some that you may have missed: One of the Cemetery chapels that is not used was refitted internally to give us valuable storage space and a much needed working area. We appointed 2 new grounds staff, a full time grounds person and a full time apprentice (following the retirement of our previous grounds staff) and we also formally took over the employment of the Cemetery Superintendent. Extra equipment has also been provided to help them with their work. Safety inspections have been carried out on the trees in Barn Street Recreation Ground and the Lucombe Oak in Henhayes. We are also pleased that despite the economic recession, the Aqua Centre is reporting increased use.

Also at the Cemetery there was an excavation to recover the buried remains of a crashed Spitfire which was filmed for television (so watch out for it coming to your screens soon!).

The Council has a total of 21 Allotments, 12 at the War Memorial Grounds in Severalls Park Avenue and 9 at the Bincombe Amenity Land. All are let and we have a waiting list. The Council will continue to try and increase the number of allotments available but to date all our efforts have failed to find suitable land for this purpose. We are therefore considering acting as a facilitator for "garden sharing" so if you have a garden that is too large for you and you would like to consider letting someone use it as an allotment to grow vegetables/flowers please contact us and we will put you in touch with someone on our current waiting list.

Another way to keep fit would be by playing tennis and the hiring of the tennis hard courts at Severalls is available from the Severalls Mini Market. The Council maintains the small Severalls Community Hall and Memorial recreation area as it is the sole Trustee.

I would like to thank the council staff for their continued hard work and I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of all the volunteers undertaking many tasks (often unseen) in and around Crewkerne that ensures that we make our town as wonderful as it is.

Cllr Mrs Andrea Stuart, Chairman

ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION

Town Clerk: Mrs J Warner **Property & Projects Officer: Mr J Dunn** **Finance Officer: Mrs A Hooper**
Administrative Officer : Mrs A Roffey **Secretary: Mrs J Lanning** **Cemetery Superintendent: Mr N Peters**
Grounds & Amenities Worker: Mr J Fontana **Grounds & Amenities Apprentice : Mr L Warren**

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www.crewkernetown.org/TownCouncil

The Council Offices are open to the public during the following hours:

Monday to Wednesday: 9 am – 1pm & 2pm – 4pm Thursday & Friday: 9 am – 1pm

Council Surgeries are held every 3rd Saturday of the month (except August) in the Community Office at the Town Hall.

Council Meetings in April, May & June 2012: **All meetings start at 6.45 pm in the Council Chamber**

April: 16 th Planning		16 th – GRC	23 rd - Town Council
May: 14 th – Planning	14 th - Amenities	21 st – GRC	28 th - Town Council (Annual Mtg)
June: 11 th - Planning	11 th - Policy & Resources	18 th – GRC	25 th - Town Council

(GRC – George Reynolds Centre Committee)

FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31st March 2012, will not be audited until later in the year. The final accounts will be presented to the May meeting of the Town Council and a summary published on the notice board outside the Town Hall prior to audit. Members of the public will have the opportunity to examine the full accounts on request.

Estimated income and expenditure for the current financial year is as follows:

Income

Allotments	240
Aqua Centre	1,000
Bank Interest	4,940
Grounds Maintenance	1,080
Other Projects	295
Licensing	600
Miscellaneous	4,530
Precept	303,096
Victoria Hall	7,260
Salaries	14,150
Town Hall	4,580
War Mem Grounds Contribution	2,870
West One	9,000
Cemetery admin & maintenance	<u>22,600</u>
Total	376,241

Expenditure

Aqua Centre	6,000
General Admin	45,000
Salaries & Wages	129,370
Grants & Donations	17,420
Grounds Maintenance	22,000
Capital Projects	*54,100
Other Projects	1,840
Joint Burial Committee Precept	30,000
Licences	360
Victoria Hall	7,800
Town Hall	31,500
War Mem Grounds	2,440
West One	200
Trf Services from SCC/SSDC	14,000
Cemetery admin & maintenance	<u>22,600</u>
Total	384,630

The Statement of Accounts for the last audited year 2010/2011

	31 st March 2010	31 st March 2011
Balances b/fwd	604,386	595,474
Annual Precept	234,755	303,096
Total other Receipts	63,359	134,869
Staff Costs	109,919	116,143
Loan Interest	5,170	4,883
Total other Payments	191,937	332,576
Balances c/fwd	595,474	579,837
Total Cash & Investments	594,914	523,214
Total Fixed Assets	5,289,571	5,390,008
Total Borrowings	33,067	30,925

At 31st March 2012 the following estimated debt is outstanding to the Public Works Loan Board:

Aqua Centre £28,583

It is anticipated that the expenditure for the current financial year will be within budget. *However, the excess of expenditure over income is due to spending on the George Reynolds Centre project, funded by allocated Capital Reserves.

Staffing news

The Town Council believes its most important resource is its staff and is committed to keeping skills up to date so that the needs of Crewkerne can be met. This year the Finance Officer became a fully qualified Accounting Technician achieving full member status of the AAT and for the first time the Council recruited a young Grounds and Amenities Apprentice who is undertaking Level 2 in WBL Horticulture with Bridgwater College.

No expenses to councillors

With the concentration elsewhere on expenses for politicians, it is reassuring for everyone to know that our Councillors continue to be voluntary giving their time without any payment. Only the Mayor receives a £300 allowance to contribute towards the civic duties.

Councillor	Address	Tel No.	% attendance at meetings since May 2011
Sylvia Allman	4 Ashland Court, Crewkerne TA18 7AP	72875	58%
Mike Best	186 Park View, Crewkerne TA18 8JH	74245	90%
Ron Bond	5 Whitehall Court, Crewkerne TA18 7NW	75284	35%
Teresa Bond	5 Whitehall Court, Crewkerne TA18 7NW	75284	43%
Jo Dawson	52 Hermitage Street, Crewkerne TA18 8ET	76797	83%
Alys Hennessy	14 Station Road, Crewkerne TA18 8AJ	76592	58%
Rusty Jackson	2 Thomson Drive, Crewkerne TA18 8AQ	75400	88%
Robin Pailthorpe	51 West Street, Crewkerne TA18 8AZ	07835 711073	88%
Angie Singleton	Kincora, Church Street, Crewkerne TA18 7HR	74846	95%
Andrea Stuart	Summerhill, 5 Mount Pleasant, Crewkerne TA18 7AH	07776414267	98%
Neil Sturtivant	9 Birch Way, Crewkerne TA18 7DT	78602	90%
Sue White	126 Park View, Crewkerne TA18 8JJ	76026	85%