



# Crewkerne Town Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 13  
May 2014

### THE MAYOR'S REPORT

I would like to welcome you all to this, the Mayor's Annual Report 2013/14, to let people know of the work carried out by the Council and changes made within the last year and also remind us of some of the major events that have taken place.

This last year seems to have been a fairly quiet one to many, but this is not the case for the Council, working hard to make changes, some small, some large, to hopefully improve the town.

As most of you will be aware the Wednesday Market has moved from South Street car park to Market Square, where it is proving to be a great success! What is less well known is that it is also now run and managed by the Town Council, giving the people a far greater say in their market.

We have taken over the lease of the public toilets and are looking to spruce them up a little and make them a positive part of our town. Little by little we will improve them, if not to a place of great beauty, at least somewhere we can feel unashamed of!

The project to improve Henhayes Recreation Ground progresses slowly with the demolition of the old clubhouse and pavilion due soon, and other works to improve the play facilities and planting of the South Street car park entrance (see Amenities report).

Once again traffic is an issue within our town, what with the gas main being re-laid in Church Street and elsewhere it has been a bad time recently. This has made life tougher for traders in town but we are assured that this is the last, for the gas, for some time to come! And we must be grateful that all the heavy rain did not cause flooding here at least.

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 large number of volunteers who 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. Robin Pailthorpe, Mayor

### PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

The Planning and Highways Committee meetings take place on the second Monday of each month; they are public meetings open to anyone wishing to attend. Personal representations from applicants, objectors and others are welcomed when applications are discussed. The Town Council is only able to make observations and recommendations on planning applications but these are taken into account when they are considered by South Somerset District Council.

The Committee has considered 42 different applications this year, with 22 at Town Council meetings due to time constraints in which to respond to the District Council. There have been some controversial plans submitted, when the Town Councillors have attempted to give the town's view in an informed and positive way and on several occasions attending the South Somerset District Council Area West Committee meeting to reinforce this.

Turning to highway matters, the initial start to the North Street one way system, installation of traffic lights at the junction of Ashlands Road and the A30, has been delayed. This year has seen the long awaited CLR site plans approved and it is hoped that the relief road which is part of this will not be too long in coming. This will give some relief to the town centre and help the industrial estates with their deliveries.

Even though the town has not suffered serious flooding during the winter, Councillors try to ensure that Somerset County Highways Authority empties road gullies in order to properly address the quantity of surface water.

Cllr. Ms Jo Dawson, Chair

### **Crewkerne Weekly Market**

**Market Square**

**Every Wednesday**

**9.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.**

*Fruit & Veg, Bread, Pastries,  
Fresh Fish, Plants & much more*

## COUNCIL AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2013/2014

### To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities. Achievements:

- Responsibility of the Wednesday Market transferred to Crewkerne Town Council on 30<sup>th</sup> October and received a £6,000 grant towards purchase of new umbrellas etc. The new market has been very successful.
- Development and support for the weekly Youth Clubs held in the George Reynolds Centre and project work at Wadham School.
- Completion of the George Reynolds Centre on Henhayes despite C.S. Williams (Building Contractors) going into liquidation prior to various defects being finalised. The Council has resolved unfinished work at its own cost.
- Acceptance of the transfer of responsibility of the public toilets in Falkland Square. In order to retain the facility Crewkerne Town Council received a grant of £34,000 from South Somerset District Council.
- Awarded community grants in May 2013 to ABCD £1,500, Crewkerne Allotment Team £75, Henhayes Centre £1,500, Henhayes Centre Young People's Music Festival £250, Heritage Centre £1,500, CUDOS £450, 3D Support Services £200, Tea Dance Group £150, Twinning Association £100 and Yeovil & District Forest Education Initiative £200 to help improve or aid leisure pursuits.
- Paid for new lights around the Town Hall and Christmas tree, for the installation of the town's very attractive Christmas lighting again and provided administrative support for the popular Annual Lighting Up event on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

### To liaise with and support voluntary groups to achieve our objectives. Achievements:

- Working in collaboration with the Royal British Legion, South Somerset District Council and local residents as part of the centenary commemorations of World War I to enhance the war memorials and re-landscape the oval at Severalls Park Avenue.

- 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 once again, making rooms available free of charge in the Town Hall. Also awarded £100 to the work of Victim Support.
- Gave a donation of £150 to Friends of Crewkerne Station to help enhance the railway station.
- Set up a new community 'Dogwatch' volunteer group to help address irresponsible dog walkers and occurrence of dog mess on Henhayes Recreation Ground.

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

- Set up a Community Speed Watch in Crewkerne which started in early Autumn. There are 6 current volunteers.
- Has continued to work closely with the Police in the Community Safety Group, unlike other towns in the area.
- Staged the most successful annual Community Safety Event to date on 13<sup>th</sup> September in Falkland Square. Included were stalls with information on deterring cold callers, home safety, together with representatives from the Police Community Support Officers, Road Safety Unit, Somerset Trading Standards and Devon and Somerset Fire Service.

### Staffing News

The Council is committed to assisting young people obtain vocational training to help develop a skilled and qualified workforce. It has recruited a third apprentice who is now also studying for his NVQ qualification in horticulture.

### No Attendance Allowances to Councillors

Councillors continue to be voluntary giving their time without any payment. Only the Mayor receives a £500 civic allowance, in addition both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor receive limited sums for attendance at local civic events.

#### ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION

**Town Clerk:** Mrs J Warner  
**Deputy Clerk:** Mrs A Roffey  
**Finance Officer:** Mrs A Hooper  
**Secretary:** Mrs J Cowie

**Property & Projects Officer:** Mr N Omell  
**Grounds & Amenities Supervisor:** Mr J Fontana  
**Cemetery Superintendent:** Mr N Peters  
**Junior Groundsman:** Mr L Warren  
**Grounds & Amenities Apprentice:** Mr J Kirkland

**Tel:** 01460 74001 **E-mail:** [towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk](mailto:towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk) **Website:** [www.crewkernetown.org/TownCouncil](http://www.crewkernetown.org/TownCouncil)

**The Council Offices** are open to the public during the following hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

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

**Forthcoming Council Meetings (all meetings start at 6.45 p.m. in the Council Chamber)**

June 2014	July 2014	August 2014
9 <sup>th</sup> – Planning and Highways	14 <sup>th</sup> – Planning and Highways	11 <sup>th</sup> – Planning and Highways
9 <sup>th</sup> – Policy and Resources	14 <sup>th</sup> – Amenities	
23 <sup>rd</sup> – Town Council	28 <sup>th</sup> – Town Council	

## FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, will not be externally audited until later in the year. The final accounts have been approved at the May meeting of the Town Council. Members of the public will have the opportunity to examine the full accounts on request.

**Income and expenditure account for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 is as follows:**

	Income £
Allotments	282
Aqua Centre	2,057
Bank Interest	1,799
Capital Projects Adjustment	*-42,664
Cemetery re-imbursm't excl salaries	25,124
Diamond Jubilee Celebrations	5
George Reynolds Centre	670
Grounds Maintenance	1,272
Henhayes Car Park	12,825
Miscellaneous	19
Precept	#269,319
Central Govt Grant Allocation	#33,775
Projects	9,502
Property Sale Proceeds VAT adjustm't	2,074
Salaries & Wages Re-charged	23,463
Town Hall	4,676
Grant - Youth Service Provision	7,500
Public Toilets transfer fund – SSDC	34,020
Wednesday Market (inc £6,000 set up grant)	9,131
Victoria Hall	7,502
War Memorial Commemoration Trust	4,063
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>406,414</b>

	Expenditure £
Aqua Centre Loan and Maintenance	5,337
Capital Projects	37,454
Cemetery Admin & Maintenance	24,815
General Admin inc. Insurance	34,394
George Reynolds Centre	2,440
Grants	8,475
Grounds Maintenance	33,684
Invest for Crewkerne's Future	1,500
Joint Burial Committee Precept	31,100
Projects	8,953
Salaries & Wages	156,194
Town Hall	28,445
Youth Service Provision	18,566
Public Toilets	1,946
Wednesday Market	8,185
Victoria Hall	8,112
War Memorial Grounds	2,657
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>412,257</b>

\*This figure is made up of Section 106 monies of £40,351 to provide an additional mini soccer pitch that will not now be received within the next accounting period and also £2,313 which has been written off because the debtor concerned has gone into liquidation.

## The Statement of Accounts for 2013/14

	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2013	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014
Balances b/fwd	602,523	435,903
Annual Precept	303,093	269,319
Total other Receipts	904,525	137,095
Staff Costs	151,379	156,194
Loan Interest/Capital Repyt.	**155,012	4,995
Total other Payments	1,067,847	251,068
Balances c/fwd	435,903	430,060
Total Cash and Investments	379,643	400,854
Total Fixed Assets	5,886,570	5,901,621
Total Borrowings	26,022	23,223

\*\* Includes £150,000 short term loan taken out to enable the construction of the George Reynolds Centre to proceed prior to the sale of the West One building.

#The government has revised how the Precept is accounted for. The Central Government Grant Allocation part of the Precept is the Council Tax Support Grant (Housing Benefit).

## CREWKERNE AND WEST CREWKERNE JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

This Committee meets 4 times a year, is made up of 5 Crewkerne Town Councillors and 3 West Crewkerne Parish Councillors and is responsible for the running of the Cemetery which is situated at the top of Mount Pleasant on the east side of the town.

Throughout the year the Committee oversees the maintenance of the grounds, the Chapel and the Lodge house (which are both Grade II listed buildings), and monitors the memorials some of which are over a 100 years old. In June 2013 the 5 yearly tree inspection was carried out which recommended the felling and pollarding of some of the older trees and inserting cable bracing in other trees to help prolong their life. The storms in December and January have unfortunately caused further damage to some trees which have had to be made safe.

A maintenance report recently carried out on the Chapel has shown that the roof needs urgent replacement and this work has been completed in May.

During the year there have been 33 interments which include both full burials and burials of ashes and 5 scattering of ashes. 41 applications to erect a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial have also been received.

### Speedwatch Volunteers Needed

To increase the effectiveness of our group we still need more members, so if you would like to join the team in their quest to make our roads safer please contact Annette Roffey at the Town Council, tel: 01460 74001 or email [towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk](mailto:towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk)

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## AMENITIES COMMITTEE

All Town Councillors are members of the Amenities Committee which meets in January, March, May, July, September and November on the second Monday of the month and, as with all Council meetings, any members of the public are welcome to attend.

The Committee receives a report at each meeting from the Council's Property and Projects Officer on the projects in hand. Unusually there have been two changes of personnel to this post during the year; Richard Hollocks replaced Jed Dunn for a short time until his other work commitments meant he could no longer fulfil the role. Nils Omell, who has recently been appointed, is settling quickly into his role.

Training for all Town Council grounds staff continues and means that many of the tasks which used to be contracted out can now be done 'in house'. This has required the purchase of additional machinery throughout the year.

The Committee is responsible for the routine care and maintenance of the town's public buildings, play areas and open spaces:-

### **The Town Hall and Victoria Hall, including the Town Council and Community Offices**

A great deal of work was done last year in preparation for the Royal visit but some work has been necessary to repair the external walls in the Clerk's office.

### **War Memorials**

In preparation for the commemoration of the start of WW1 later this year the War Memorial Soldier at Severalls and the cross in St Bartholomews Church grounds have had much restoration work carried out during the year. In addition the Town Council is working in partnership with the Royal British Legion, to provide a new commemorative plaque in Falkland Square. The Council is also working in partnership with the District Council and local residents on an ambitious project to enhance the area at Severalls Park Avenue known locally as The Oval to include fencing, replanting and new paving and benches.

### **War Memorial Recreation Grounds**

Severalls Jubilee Bowls Club has continued to make improvements to the clubhouse building and Maiden Beech School has made use of the tennis courts.

### **Allotments**

21 allotments are directly managed by the Council and support has also been given to the privately managed land at Lyewater. The Council continues to look for suitable areas for more allotments as there is still a waiting list.

### **Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve**

2 new benches have been installed during the year and the routine management of the trees and hedgerows continues. Several trees were lost and/or damaged during the storms. Many volunteers continue to assist the Council in managing this large nature reserve.

### **Happy Valley, Southmead Crescent Play Area and Barn Street Recreation Field**

These places are monitored on a daily basis by our grounds staff. During the summer holidays the Town Council arranged coaching of a variety of sports at the Happy Valley MUGA to encourage its use. It is intended to repeat this during the Easter holidays.

### **Henhayes Recreation Ground**

The demolition of the redundant buildings has been greatly delayed firstly due to a much protracted grant application to the Football Foundation and then because of the atrocious weather; the work is now due to be carried out in May.

The Council has instructed a professional independent play designer to take the results of the public consultation and draw up plans to improve the play area once demolition has been completed. Unfortunately it became clear during consultation with the Cricket Board and Sport England that the distance from the cricket wicket to the boundary in two areas leaves inadequate room for the intended circular path and therefore this has been put on hold for the time being.

Complaints about dog fouling occurred again during the year and as a result a group of dog owners agreed to form a 'dog watch' group to encourage others to pickup and to regularly check the field.

The moving of the Sensory Garden and the redesign and replanting of the garden at the entrance to South Street car park has always been part of the project to encourage the use of the Henhayes ground for informal recreation. Several donations have been received from individuals and local groups to purchase new trees and shrubs. Following the disappointing withdrawal of substantial promised funding, David James of Marshall-James Garden Development Ltd. stepped in to assist in the redesign and planting of the garden and, in addition, generously offered to maintain the garden at no future cost to the Town Council. Work has already started and should be completed soon.

### **Public Toilets**

The Town Council has taken over the responsibility of managing the toilets from the District Council. A plan is in place to smarten up the building inside and outside.

### **The George Reynolds Centre (GRC) and Crewkerne Aqua Centre**

Both are managed by separate charitable companies and regular bi-monthly meetings are held with the Town Council. Following the liquidation of the major contractors, C.S. Williams, the Town Council has had to deal with the many outstanding defects at the GRC. The external landscaping has been completed in partnership with the District Council during the work to the car park extension. There is still some tidying up to do once the weather improves.

A solution to the ongoing problem with the condensation and guttering at the Aqua Centre is nearing completion and will probably mean extensive work to the roof in the future.

In addition many of the town's events and projects linked to health and wellbeing are either organised by, monitored by or reported to the Amenities Committee. These include amongst others the many partnership projects with ABCD, the Christmas Lighting Up event, the bi-annual Town Crier Competition and the Youth Steering Group where the Town Council's contract with Active Learning & Skills to deliver the work with our young people is monitored. Projects this year include outreach work at Wadham School and an Arts Project at the George Reynolds Centre.

Cllr. Mrs Angie Singleton, Chair