



Crewkerne Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 14
May 2015



THE MAYOR'S REPORT

Cllr. Robin Pailthorpe, Mayor

Welcome to the 14/15 edition of the Council's Annual Report which is designed to keep you informed of the work that we are doing on your behalf. There are reports from each of the Council Committees, which will detail their activities, as well as a financial report and the Council's list of achievements within the year.

Over the past year we have continued to plan for the future of the town and ensure the wellbeing of the buildings and land that we own, as well as pursue those matters of concern which have been brought to our attention.

One of the highlights of the past year was our first ever Christmas Market on 11th December. It was very successful and the atmosphere in Market Square on the day was very festive. We consulted with those attending and feedback from traders and visitors was very positive.

The Council works with many organisations. In 2014, as with the rest of the UK, we organised various projects to commemorate the centenary of WWI (there is information about the war memorials on page 2 of this report).

In recognition of their outstanding contributions for the benefit of the town and its citizens Simon Colledge and David Cuthbertson have been elected Honoured Citizens of Crewkerne this year. Presentation of these awards was made at the Annual Town Meeting on 20th April 2015.

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. I would also like to thank them all for their continuing effort on behalf of the community.

PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

The Planning and Highways Committee meetings take place on the second Monday of each month. Personal representations from applicants, objectors and others are welcomed when applications are discussed. This 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 48 applications this year, plus 32 at Town Council meetings of which 8 were considered at both Planning and Town Council meetings. 8 applications were refused by this Council of which only 3 were refused by South Somerset District Council and 8 applications were withdrawn by the applicants. 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. District and Town Councillors have also attended the appeals concerning the Goldcroft Farm application putting forward the concerns of the town about this controversial proposal which the Planning Inspector ultimately refused.

Cllr. Ms Jo Dawson, Chair

Crewkerne Weekly Market Market Square

Every Wednesday 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.



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

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. This 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 much welcomed air conditioning and heating system has now been installed in the Victoria Hall which makes the venue a more comfortable place for its many users.

War Memorials/WWI Commemorations

All the town's war memorials were refurbished last year and several services were conducted to commemorate the start of WW1. The new memorial tribute in Falkland Square and the enhancement of the oval at Severalls Park Avenue War Memorial were as a result of the Town Council working in partnership with the Royal British Legion and local residents with the help of and a substantial grant from South Somerset District Council. The group was also successful in obtaining an 'Awards for All' grant thanks largely to the efforts of Councillor Rusty Jackson. A tea party organised by local residents was held at the oval which, because of the new fencing and benches, has provided a safe area for residents to socialise and it is hoped that this event may be repeated.



Severalls War Memorial

Flower Beds

The Council has obtained a license to manage various flower beds around the Town and the long term aim is to obtain a 'green flag' award for all our open spaces.

Allotments

There is a continuing demand for allotments and the Council is constantly on the lookout for appropriate areas of land.

Bincombe Beches Nature Reserve

Routine management continues. More people are encouraged to become involved in the volunteer group which assists the Council in managing this large nature reserve.

Barn Street Recreation Field

Local residents were very opposed to the change of use of the recreation field to a wildflower meadow so the Council decided to keep it as it is for the time being. It was encouraging to note how many people said they use the facility on a regular basis.

Happy Valley

The Council is working with a group of young people on a project to replace the skate park which was one of the first of its kind in South Somerset. There is also an aspiration to create an additional play pitch to relieve the pressure on the Henhayes pitches.



Southmead Crescent Play Area

New fencing has been erected and the perimeter wall repaired which has made a marked improvement to the play area.

Henhayes Recreation Ground

Now the redundant buildings have been cleared away work is progressing on the new enlarged play area which has now been fenced. Some local residents have formed a 'Friends of Henhayes Playground' and are assisting the Council in obtaining more funding for this exciting project.



Public Toilets

Since taking over responsibility for managing the toilets the Council has received numerous compliments about the improvement of the facility.

The George Reynolds Centre and Crewkerne Aqua Centre

These Council owned buildings are leased to Crewkerne Sport and Youth Activities Ltd. and Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd. respectively. Liaison between the Town Council and the Directors of each occurs on a bi-monthly basis regarding all aspects of the facilities.



World War II Pill Box

The tidying up of the pill box has been welcomed by residents and the Council is hoping to schedule the structure to protect its future.

Wednesday Street Market

There has been additional investment by the Council in the weekly market with the purchase of smaller canopies to encourage local traders to take advantage of this 'shop window'.

Long term maintenance plans for all the buildings owned by the Town Council are being prepared which will help with future funding.

Cllr. Mrs Angie Singleton, Chair

FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31st March 2015, will not be 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 for the year ending 31st March 2015 is as follows:

	Income £
Allotments	286
Aqua Centre	1,766
Bank Interest	1,784
George Reynolds Centre	15,557
Grounds Maintenance	223
Henhayes Car Park	6,011
Projects	23,789
Miscellaneous	41
Precept	279,567
Central Govt Grant Allocation	32,895
Victoria Hall Bookings	7,938
Salaries recharged	24,733
Grant – Youth Town Council	5,000
Wednesday Market	6,574
Town Hall	5,038
Grant – CCTV Upgrade	1,995
War Memorial Grounds Contribution	3,062
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	21,829
TOTAL	438,088
	Expenditure £
Aqua Centre Loan and Maintenance	13,475
General Admin inc Insurance	34,613
Salaries and Wages	171,388
George Reynolds Centre	7,550
Grants	7,952
Grounds Maintenance inc new vehicle	59,746
Invest for Crewkerne's Future	1,062
Capital Projects – GRC/V/Hall heating	49,268
Other Projects	50,107
Joint Burial Committee Precept	32,220
Victoria Hall	16,704
Town Hall Maintenance	32,747
War Memorial Grounds	3,516
Youth Service Provision	20,432
Public Toilets	16,819
Wednesday Market	4,148
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	27,753
Youth Town Council	60
TOTAL	549,560

The Council has used its reserves, earmarked specifically for certain projects, for the excess expenditure over income.

At 31st March 2015 the following debt is outstanding to the Public Works Loan Board:

Aqua Centre £20,161.88

The Statement of Accounts for the last audited year 2013/14

	31 st March 2013	31 st 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 Repayt.	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

*Principally George Reynolds Centre Project

The External Auditor raised no matters of concern.

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.

This year we have concentrated work on opening up the newer section of the Cemetery to make it feel a part of the whole area; the hedge line that divided the two areas has been reduced and improvements to the pathways and the formation of a screened storage compound will follow.

Maintenance continues to be carried out on the Chapel. Following the first part of the roof repairs we have had to carry out underpinning of one end which involved installing concrete pads under the building to support it and this will stop any structural damage being caused by the building sinking.

During the year there have been 38 interments which include both full burials and burials of ashes and 4 scattering of ashes. 34 applications to erect a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial have also been received.

VICTORIA HALL HIRE

The hall now has the benefit of modern heating and ventilation and is available to hire for:

- Parties and wedding receptions
- Music events and gigs
- Fitness classes etc.

Please phone the office for details.

COUNCIL AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities

- Held a first Christmas Market in Market Square on 11th December with 40 stalls which was very successful and enjoyed by many. Another has been agreed for 12th December this year.
- The numbers attending the weekly youth clubs, now paid for by the Town Council, held in the George Reynolds Centre, are increasing.
- Obtained a replacement crib for the Town Hall. Paid for the 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 28th November.

To liaise with and support voluntary groups

- Successful re-landscaping of the oval at Severalls Park Avenue plus the refurbishment of the memorial there and also that in St Bartholomew's Churchyard and replacement of the memorial tribute in Falkland Square

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

- Support Community Speed Watch in Crewkerne: there are currently 7 volunteers including Councillors.
- Unlike other towns in the area, Crewkerne Town Council still continues to work closely with the Police in the Community Safety Group. The group organised an annual Community Safety Event on 13th September in Falkland Square.

Staffing News

The Council supports providing training opportunities for its staff as this not only widens the skills base but also reinforces the value that it places on their continued development. The Apprentice has successfully passed his NVQII in horticulture and undertaken 17 months of work experience, demonstrating the Council's continued commitment in assisting young people to obtain vocational training.

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.

Community Grants Awarded

Citizens Advice Bureau - towards services in town	£2,000
Henhayes Centre - subsidise meals and activities	£1,500
Henhayes Centre Young People's Music Festival	£300
Heritage Centre - running costs for building	£1,500
CUDOS - LED lighting	£1,400
Golden Oldies Charity - set up sessions in town	£500
Tea Dance Group - subsidise running costs	£250
Twinning Association - its promotion	£200
Crewkerne Sports & Youth Activities Ltd – subsidise rent of the George Reynolds Centre	£7,147
Crewkerne Bell Ringers - purchase muffles for bells	£302
TOTAL	£15,099

Did you know?

- We are one of the few town councils that owns a highly successful public swimming pool.
- The Council re-introduced surgeries in September 2001 and they are held the 3rd Saturday of most months of the year in the Town Hall Community Office. They are informal and confidential opportunities to discuss issues face to face with Councillors.
- Crewkerne Town Council now operates and maintains the public toilets in Falkland Square.
- The Mayor attends around 36 engagements each year.
- The Council funds the CCTV system in the town centre.
- All meetings have a 15 minute public session time.
- The Council does not receive any income from Business Rates.

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

ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION

Town Clerk: Mrs Jeanne Warner
(Mr Peter Davidson from 1st July)
Deputy Town Clerk: Mrs Annette Roffey
Finance Officer: Vacancy
Secretary: Mrs Julie Cowie

Amenities Operations Manager: Vacancy
Grounds & Amenities Supervisor: Mr Jason Fontana
Cemetery Superintendent: Mr Nigel Peters
Groundsman: Mr Lewis Warren
Apprentice: Vacancy

Tel: 01460 74001 **E-mail:** towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk **Website:** 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 2015	JULY 2015	AUGUST 2015
8 th - Planning and Highways	13 th - Planning and Highways	10 th - Planning and Highways
8 th - Policy and Resources	13 th - Amenities	
22 nd - Town Council	27 th - Town Council	