



Crewkerne Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 15
May 2016



THE MAYOR'S REPORT



Cllr. Robin Pailthorpe, Mayor

Welcome to the 2015/2016 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 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.

In recognition of their outstanding contributions for the benefit of the town and its citizens, Martin Pakes and Janet Harris have been elected Honoured Citizens of Crewkerne this year. Presentation of these awards was made at the Annual Town Meeting on 18 April 2016.

This year has seen many changes in the office staff. After a long and successful 'reign' as Town Clerk, Jeanne Warner retired at the end of June and was replaced by Peter Davidson. Also leaving us this year was the Deputy Clerk, Annette Roffey and the Finance Officer, Angie Hooper. Our sincere thanks go to Jeanne, Annette and Angie for their excellent contribution towards the smooth running of the Town Council.

In addition to our new Town Clerk, we have welcomed on to the team, Laura Gowers as Deputy Clerk, Paula Hewitt as Finance Officer and Mark Jay as Amenities Operations Manager.

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 all parties are welcomed when applications are discussed. The Town Council is only able to make observations and recommendations on planning applications which are taken into account when they are considered by South Somerset District Council.

The Committee has considered 46 applications this year, in addition to 12 which were considered at Town Council. There were 4 applications recommended for refusal by this Council, while 4 applications were withdrawn by the applicants.

There have been some controversial plans submitted this year, notably revised plans for the southern phase of the Crewkerne link road site. Town Councillors have attempted to give the town's view in an informed and positive way and on several occasions have attended the South Somerset District Council Area West Committee meeting in reinforcement of our position.

Cllr. Ben Hodgson, Chair

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

The Council have commissioned a full structural survey of the Town Hall to obtain a complete picture of its condition, as there have been some concerns regarding the deterioration of parts of the structure, and as a listed building, it is the responsibility of the Council to keep it in good order.



Town Hall

The survey results have recently been received and one urgent issue has been highlighted; the poor condition of the 5 stone pinnacles which are located at the front top and rear of the building. It was recommended they are removed due to the deterioration of the stone.

A stone mason has been appointed to carry out their removal as per the recommendation and they will be stored pending repair or replacement. This will unfortunately include some short road closures to carry out the work but this will be kept to a minimum.



We are now studying the rest of the report to address any further issues raised and establish a long term plan of maintenance for the building.

Allotments

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

Bincombe Beeches 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

Work has recently taken place to lay a gas supply along the edge of the field. Following its completion the Council will be investigating carrying out improvements to its boundary with Tower Hill Road.

Henhayes Recreation Ground

The first phase of the new playground project has been opened after a long delay.



Henhayes playground

Work on the second phase of the playground which involves major ground works will start as soon as the ground conditions improve to allow the bringing in of soil and equipment

Happy Valley

Work still continues with the assistance of a group of young people (ABSIC) and ABCD on a project to replace the skate park. A contractor has been appointed to develop a design and to help achieve this, a consultation which includes our schools, is taking place. When a final design is agreed then funding will need to be secured prior to installation.

The Council are in process of installing new goal posts on the small pitch which will replace those vandalised.

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.

We are presently addressing issues with both buildings regarding construction faults, including an issue with part of the Aqua Centre roof but are working with both companies to resolve these problems.

Cllr. Mike Best, Chair

VICTORIA HALL HIRE

The Victoria Hall is available to hire for:

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

Please phone the office for details.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31 March 2016, will not be audited until later in the year. The final accounts will be 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 31 March 2016 is as follows:

	Income £
Allotments	241
Aqua Centre	1,545
Bank Interest	1,377
George Reynolds Centre	16,614
Wayleaves	5023
Henhayes Car Park	8,604
Projects	14,692
Events	800
Miscellaneous	10
Precept	311,290
Central Govt Grant Allocation	13,185
Victoria Hall Bookings	7,451
Salaries recharged	24,932
Market fees	2,777
Town Hall	4,374
War Memorial Grounds Contribution	2,886
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	26,277
TOTAL	442,077

	Expenditure £
Aqua Centre Loan and Maintenance	5,598
General Admin inc Insurance	38,420
Salaries and Wages	164,790
George Reynolds Centre	18,788
Grants	7,824
Grounds Maintenance	32,591
Invest for Crewkerne's Future	1,005
Other Projects	28,903
Events	300
Joint Burial Committee Precept	37,440
Victoria Hall	14,753
Town Hall Maintenance	26,914
War Memorial Grounds	4,153
Youth Service Provision	21,149
Public Toilets	12,979
Wednesday Market	553
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	26,908
TOTAL	443,068

At 31 March 2016 the following debt is outstanding to the Public Works Loan Board: Aqua Centre - £16,815.29

The Statement of Accounts for the last audited year 2014/15

	31 March 2014	31 March 2015
	£	£
Balances b/fwd	435,903	430,060
Annual Precept	269,319	279,567
Total other Receipts	137,095	158,521
Staff Costs	156,194	171,388
Loan Interest/Capital Repay.	4,995	4,984
Total other Payments	251,068	373,189
Balances c/fwd	430,060	318,587
Total Cash and Investments	400,854	292,117
Total Fixed Assets	5,901,621	5,795,885
Total Borrowings	23,223	20,162

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 again concentrated on continuing to improve the newer section of the cemetery to make it feel a part of the whole area; the tree line that formed the boundary with the neighbouring footpath has been removed making the whole area a lot lighter and less restrictive to the graves situated along the edge of the plots.

We have also started to resurface the footpaths, with the first path completed being the one that leads down from the chapel to the new extension. The upgrades will improve mobility around the cemetery and over the next years the work will continue to resurface them but it will be done in sections due to the significant cost.

Maintenance continues to be carried out on the Chapel with the second part of the roof repair being completed and improved parking bays.

During the year there have been 23 interments which include both full burials and burials of ashes and 1 scattering of ashes. 21 applications to erect a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial have also been received.

COUNCIL AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities

- Following the success of our first Christmas Market in 2014, a second Christmas Market was held on 12 December 2015 in Market Square. Once again, this event was a great success and a date has already been agreed for this year, Saturday 10 December 2016.
- Support to the weekly youth clubs held in the George Reynolds Centre.
- Paid for the Christmas tree in Market Square and installation of the town centre Christmas lighting.
- Provided support to the town's annual Christmas lighting up event held on 27 November.
- Paid for the community project to design and paint a mural on the wall at Southmead Playground. This project was a great success and has prompted a follow-up project to re-design and re-paint the artwork on the floor of Southmead Playground.
- Managed a photographic competition around the theme of Bincombe and nature.

No Attendance Allowances to Councillors

Councillors continue to be voluntary, giving their time without 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.

To liaise with and support voluntary groups – Community Grants Awarded

Organisation/Community Group	Grant Awarded	Description
Crewkerne Sports & Youth Activities Ltd	£16000	Support to running costs
Henhayes Centre	£1500	Support to continuation of services
Heritage Centre	£1500	Support to running costs
A Better Crewkerne and District (ABCD)	£250	Support to Creative Crewkerne singing workshops
CUDOS	£1000	Support costs of replacing stage lighting
Speedwell Club	£1500	Support to costs of replacing hall floor
Tea Dance Group	£250	Support to running costs
Twinning Association	£500	Support to 40 th anniversary events

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 10 volunteers including Councillors.
- Crewkerne Town Council works closely with the Police in the Community Safety group. The group organised another of its annual Community Safety events on 11 September in Falkland Square. As before, this event proved to be very popular with the residents of Crewkerne.

Crewkerne Weekly Market
Market Square
Every Wednesday 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.



ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION

Town Clerk: Mr Peter Davidson

Deputy Town Clerk: Ms Laura Gowers

Finance Officer: Mrs Paula Hewitt

Amenities Operations Manager: Mr Mark Jay

Administration Officer: Mrs Julie Cowie

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, Town Hall)

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
13 - Planning & Highways	11 - Planning & Highways	8 - Planning & Highways	12 - Planning & Highways
13 - Policy & Resources	11 - Amenities		12 - Amenities
27 - Town Council	25 - Town Council		26 - Town Council