

Crewkerne Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 18
May 2019



Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7LN
Tel: 01460 74001 Email: towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk Website: www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

The Mayor's Report



Welcome to the 2018/19 edition of the Council's Annual Report, which aims to keep you informed about the work that the Council is doing on your behalf.

There are reports from each of the Council Committees, as well as a financial report and the Council's list of achievements within the year. These are challenging times for local councils as central government funding continues to shrink. Nevertheless, as you will see in these reports, the Council has been very active this year and has made substantial progress on a number of projects and continues to work hard to maintain the council-owned buildings and play and recreation areas.

In recognition of their outstanding contribution for the benefit of the town and its citizens, Richard Hall and Tim Udall have been elected Honoured Citizens of Crewkerne this year.

Richard is, of course, well known as the proprietor of Oscars wine bar but this award recognises that Richard generously supports many of Crewkerne's voluntary organisations, including provision of a meeting place for the Men's Shed group and loyal support to groups such as the Crewkerne Churches Together, CUDOS and the Museum and Heritage Centre.

Tim served on the Town Council and was Chairman in 1979/80 and has also served on the Twinning Committee and as a member of the Rotary Club. Tim was a guiding light with the old Crewkerne Day Centre and now plays a leading role, as Chairman, in the management of the Henhayes Centre.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors who do an excellent 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.

Cllr. Mrs Kathy Head, Mayor

Planning & 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 (SSDC). The Committee has considered 33 applications to date.

A significant planning application was the proposed residential development at the North Street Trading Estate which has been granted approval after a house on North Street was purchased allowing changed access and removing concerns regarding safety on the access road.

Disappointingly, the CLR site has not moved forward significantly, though we have had a meeting with the developers, who informed us of their intention to submit the next, and vital part of the application. This COULD see work commence by the end of the year!

A potential development off Lang Road has been put forward but has been paused by access safety issues. We will continue to defend the safety of our residents over and above new housing! A large development near the station has been mentioned and a design company has held public consultations both here and in Misterton. At this stage it is only a possible and no plans have been submitted.

Cllr. Robin Pailthorpe
Chairman of Planning & Highways Committee

Amenities Committee

The Amenities Committee meets every other month and is attended by all councillors. Members of the public are also welcome to attend. The Committee is responsible for the care and maintenance of all the Town Council's buildings, play areas and open spaces as well as any amenities-related projects.

Town Hall and Victoria Hall



This building houses the Council's administrative office, Council Chamber (for public meetings), the Victoria Hall and the Community Office, which hosts the Local Information Centre and South Somerset District Council's "Customer Access Point" computer terminal.

Further work on renovation of the exterior of the building was completed this year and focussed on the west and north elevations, with the stonework being cleaned and repaired, the woodwork repainted and new stone pinnacles installed. Work on the final phase has commenced and involves renovation of the east face of the building.

Looking forwards, the Council will be assessing the remedial work required to the interior of the building, in particular the issue of damp.

George Reynolds Centre and Crewkerne Aqua Centre

These two buildings are owned by the Town Council and are leased to Crewkerne Sports and Youth Activities Ltd. and Crewkerne Leisure Management (CLM) respectively. Both buildings continue to be well used by the public and the Council works closely with the two management companies to support their work in continuing to provide these important amenities to the residents of Crewkerne.

During the year, CLM undertook the major task of having the Aqua Centre's air handling system replaced.

Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve

The Council's grounds staff continued to work through the year to manage this beautifully natural area and to improve the pathways through the reserve.

Happy Valley

Further work to improve the pathways has been undertaken, with the tarmacking of the main driveway.

Badgers remain a persistent problem in Happy Valley and there is very little the Council can do, because of the protected status of badgers. However, the Council was able to deal with the intrusion of the badgers into the sandpit play area, which has now been "badger proofed".

Allotments

The Council maintains allotments at the War Memorial Grounds at Severalls Park Avenue and at Bincombe Lane. There is currently a small waiting list for allotments.

Tennis Courts at Severalls War Memorial Grounds

The Council has been exploring grant funding opportunities to upgrade the tennis courts although with no success to date. Grant funding possibilities continue to be sought.

Barn Street Recreation Ground

Additional facilities have been installed in the recreation ground, including picnic benches, an additional litter bin and a safety handrail at the entrance steps.

Henhayes Recreation Ground

The new playground equipment has proved to be popular, with the playground being very well used.

Public Toilets

Responsibility for management and upkeep of the public toilets at Falkland Square was transferred from SSDC to the Town Council in 2013. The toilets are well used but are now very "tired" and in need of major refurbishment. Such a major financial expenditure will need to be considered as part of the future Council's budget, alongside the search for suitable funding support.

Car Parking

The Town Council owns one car park, which is at Henhayes and is managed on behalf of the Town Council by SSDC. The plan by SSDC to develop the former Millers Garage site into a long stay car park continues to nudge forward, with SSDC's submission of a planning application and which is still awaiting determination.

Cllr. Mrs Rusty Jackson
Chairman of Amenities Committee

Financial Report

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31 March 2019, will not be audited until later in the year. The final accounts will be approved at the June 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 2019 is as follows:

	Income £
Precept	404,888
Central Government Grant Allocation	3,360
Town Hall	4,202
Victoria Hall	7,521
General Admin	13,153
Market Fees	1,127
Aqua Centre	1,747
George Reynolds Centre	343
Henhayes Car Park	10,035
Henhayes Pitch Licenses	180
Cemetery Income	30,211
West Crewkerne Contribution to Cemetery Salaries and Expenditure	4,673
War Memorial Grounds Contribution	2,869
Grants and Donations	6,841
Events	136
Projects (unused donation returned)	-109
Allotments	303
Miscellaneous	875
TOTAL	492,355

	Expenditure £
Salaries	197,735
Victoria Hall/Town Hall Maintenance	49,253
Victoria Hall/Town Hall Rates and Utilities etc.	24,406
Grounds Maintenance	47,309
Cemetery Expenditure	36,313
General Admin	35,103
Council Insurance and Audit	15,453
Youth Service Provision	19,530
Public Toilets	13,864
Christmas Lights	9,223
George Reynolds Centre	8,968
Aqua Centre Loan and Maintenance	6,100
Grants	6,674
Projects	5,390
Election Expenses	3,020
War Memorial Grounds	2,740
Events and Market	1,989
TOTAL	483,070

At 31 March 2019 the following debt is outstanding to the Public Works Loan Board: Aqua Centre £4,782.14

Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2018

	31 March 2017	31 March 2018
	£	£
Balances b/fwd	317,596	239,215
Annual Precept	316,523	430,805
Total other Receipts	191,260	115,926
Staff Costs	190,126	200,491
Loan Interest/Capital Repay't.	4,956	4,948
Total other Payments	391,082	334,351
Balances c/fwd	239,215	246,156
Total Cash and Investments	224,172	236,598
Total Fixed Assets	5,860,287	5,940,951
Total Borrowings	13,156	9,156

The External Auditor raised no matters of concern.

Crewkerne & West Crewkerne Joint Burial Committee

The Committee meets 4 times a year, including an Annual Meeting in June, where there is a walk around the cemetery grounds and chapel to allow Councillors to review completed work and also discuss future maintenance requirements.

A considerable amount of work was been accomplished during the year in maintaining and improving the cemetery. Most noticeable was the tarmacking of the main driveway and parking areas, which has greatly improved vehicular access to the cemetery and has been much appreciated by both visitors and our local Funeral Directors. In addition, further work was carried out to the chapel walls.

In setting the annual budget, the Committee has taken into account that major expenditure is required over the coming months to support the ongoing improvements to the cemetery footpaths, the further remedial work to the chapel and the required remedial work to the lodge roof. With this in mind, the Committee has regrettably had to increase the cemetery fees for interments etc, although it is important to bear in mind that the fees remain comparable with those of neighbouring cemeteries.

In September there was once again an open day at the cemetery, which included a talk and guided tour. Both talk and tour were very well received by visitors.

During the year there have been 36 interments which include both full and ashes burials. 45 grave plots have also been purchased.

I should like to thank all those involved with the cemetery for the care and attention given to this integral part of our community. It is a pleasure to be a part of a committee which strives to ensure the ongoing day to day management of the cemetery.

Cllr. Mike Best
Chairman of Crewkerne & West Crewkerne JBC

Council Aims and Achievements

To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities

- The theme for this summer's Henhayes Fete was the 100th anniversary of the ending of WW1 and proved once again a popular event. The Council is very grateful to all of the charities and volunteers who helped make the event a success. The day of the fete also saw the Town Crier competition take place which, judging by the loud bellows, was hotly contested.
- Lighting Up Night was once again a very successful evening and included for the first time a lantern parade, which proved very popular. This event is organised by the Christmas Committee, which includes strong support from two Councillors and a Council member of staff.
- The Town Council also organised the annual Christmas market, the Christmas tree in Market Square and the installation of the Christmas lights in the town.

- As the list below shows, the Council provided grant funding support to a number of local cultural, social and sporting community groups.
- The Council provided support to the Crewkerne in Bloom group and would like to thank this group for their hard work in making the town centre a more colourful place.
- The Council continues to support the weekly Youth Club at the George Reynolds Centre.

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

The Town Council works closely with the Police and Fire Service and a number of Community Safety Group meetings were held through the year.

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 Awards for 2019/20

Organisation/Community Group	Grant Awarded	Description
Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre	£1,500	Support to running costs
Crewkerne Bowling Club (West Street)	£400	Contribution towards new bowls for younger members
Crewkerne Gardening Club	£100	Support to running costs
Crewkerne In Bloom	£250	Provision of additional planters
Crewkerne Local Information Centre	£654	Support to running costs
Crewkerne Men's Shed	£500	Support to start up running costs
Crewkerne Ranger Guide Unit	£100	Provision of new hand and record books
Crewkerne Sports & Youth Activities Limited	£400	Contribution towards new lightweight tables with trolley
Crewkerne Tea Dance Group	£100	Support to running costs
CUDOS	£296	Contribution towards upgrade of sound system
Henhayes Community Centre	£1,500	Contribution towards running costs
Rotary Club of Crewkerne District	£1,000	Support towards Crewkerne Fair traffic management costs
Severalls Jubilee Bowls Club	£300	Contribution towards replacement chairs
The Speedwell Club	£500	Contribution towards chairs and storing trolley
Twinning Association	£500	Entertain French visitors

Additional Town Council Information

If you have any comments or concerns about issues which affect Crewkerne, please contact:

Crewkerne Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7LN

Tel: 01460 74001 Email: towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk Website: www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

- **Council Offices:** Open to the public during the following hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm
- **Council Surgeries:** Held every third Saturday of the month (except August) in the Community Office at the Town Hall.
- **Council Meetings:** All meetings start at 6.45 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.