

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS** held in the Victoria Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne on Monday 14 April 2025 at 8.00p.m.

PRESENT:

Alice Samuel	Mayor of Crewkerne (in the Chair)
Katharine Sheehan	Town Clerk
Gemma Hughes	Deputy Town Clerk

Plus, approximately 80 local government electors of the Parish of Crewkerne.

1. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Community Groups were thanked for bringing their presentation boards and leaflets, which were available around the room. Various groups had been on hand for a community engagement session directly before the Annual Town Meeting. The Community Kitchen were thanked for providing food to everyone attending. The Mayor briefly introduced the Town Councillors in attendance, noting they were available to speak with residents after the meeting.

2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 15 April 2024 were **APPROVED**.

3. MAYOR'S REPORT 2025

The Mayor gave a presentation which summarised the highlights from the year to date and some forthcoming events to look forward to.

4. GRANT AWARDS 2025

The Mayor read out the Community Groups received grant awards, who then gathered for a group photo. These groups were:

Organisation	Purpose of grant
Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre	Running costs
Crewkerne in Bloom	Extra hanging baskets
Henhayes Centre	Running costs
Merriott Majorettes	Batons/poms/costumes
CAB South Somerset	Crewkerne CAB Service
Crewkerne Shed	Running costs
1 st Crewkerne Scout Group	Upgrade surface at front of Scout hut
Crewkerne Pegasus Karate Group	New crash mats
CUDOS	Set up and running costs for CUDOS Youth

Crewkerne Boxing Club	New extension
Severalls War Memorial Gardening Group	New plants
Crewkerne Gardening Club	Contribution to cost of flower show
Crewkerne & District Twinning Association	Contribution to hospitality and entertainment
Connect Somerset	Build a neighbourhood team for Crewkerne
Awe & Wonder	Hire costs for GRC
Friends of Crewkerne Station	Plant and compost renewal
Crewkerne Allotment Team	Works to trees
Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership	Hire costs/Public Liability insurance for Wellbeing Group
Crewkerne Rugby Club Youth Section	New tackling equipment

Representatives from Friends of Crewkerne Station, Crewkerne Boxing Club, and Crewkerne Rugby Club Youth Section gave updates on their grant-funded projects and their work in the community.

5. ANNUAL HONOURED CITIZENS AWARD 2025

The Mayor presented an Award to Reverend Stephen Gray. She noted that Stephen serves as the Minister of the Crewkerne Community Church, and recently celebrated 25 years of serving the town. He has shown love and support to not only his congregation but by working alongside the other churches and actively engaging the townspeople from all walks of life. Stephen had the vision for Be A Good Neighbour during the Covid pandemic, organising a team of volunteers to support the community, shopping, cooking, delivering meals and offering a telephone service for those finding lockdown lonely and stressful. This has now evolved into a food bank. Stephen continues to oversee the running of BAGN, which includes volunteers collecting food surplus from shops in the town, Yeovil and Chard, a team cooking weekly meals, shoppers and admin staff, to name but a few. The food bank is used by over fifty families a week. He visits local businesses, secures grants and attends fundraising events to ensure the provision can continue. BAGN also provides additional supplies to school breakfast clubs.

Stephen is the chaplain to St Bartholomew's School, where he carries out assemblies, attends meetings and offers pastoral care to staff and students. He has carried out special celebrations of life for those in difficult circumstances, often without charge.

He is a real people person and can often be found in local coffee shops with his laptop, ready to listen to anyone who needs a friendly face. Never too busy to help anyone in need, he provides practical as well as spiritual advice.

From offering help to the homeless to representing Be A Good Neighbour at business functions to ensure funding continues, we are sure that all will agree Stephen is a worthy recipient of the Honoured Citizen of Crewkerne Award 2025.

Rev. Gray accepted the award and thanked everyone.

The Mayor presented an award to Stuart Prince and reported that Stuart has been devoting his time to helping others and raising money for charity for many, many years. He has been a part of the Rotary Club of Crewkerne for a long time, and during this period has helped raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for local groups and organisations. He has been instrumental in setting up and running the

annual Rotary shop, which alone has raised over £140,000 for local groups and causes over the past 16 years.

Alongside the Rotary, he is always the first to offer his services to help others, driving people to appointments and offering his assistance wherever he can. Having had a very successful printing business in town, he is very well known and loved in Crewkerne.

His main voluntary role is now that of the caretaker at the Henhayes Centre, cleaning the Centre thoroughly every morning to ensure that the Centre is ready to welcome the 150 people of all ages who walk through the door. He gets up at 6 am in order to do this, and also takes care of all the repairs and maintenance, furniture set up and take down for the groups and activities throughout the day. He helps with all the Centre's fundraising events, regularly giving up his weekends and evenings and is a key part of the Henhayes team. The fact that he does this has saved the Centre over £17,500 on core costs in the past two years which has made a huge difference to the Centre and all its users.

Mr Prince accepted the award and thanked everyone.

6. MAYOR'S COMMENDATION AWARD 2025

The Mayor presented a Mayor's Commendation Award to Sylvia Murphy.

She commented that following her retirement Sylvia volunteered for the British Red Cross Mobility Aids Department issuing mobility aids to Crewkerne and surrounding areas.

Sylvia has also been a volunteer for many years at St. Bartholomew's Church, and has been a hand bell ringer for a long time, visiting nursing homes in the town during the Christmas period.

Sylvia undertakes the cleaning of the ringing chamber, the clock chamber and the tower chamber. She also helps to clean each individual step that leads to the tower (120 in total), as well as the roof when there are tours up the tower. Sylvia helps to oversee the tower open days and cascades the poppy petals during the Remembrance service.

Finally for the last 11 years or so, Sylvia has been volunteering at St. Bartholomew's Primary school, listening and supporting children to read and helping them to gain confidence in reading. At times she has supported by escorting the choir to venues where they entertain the community, or escorting children to the swimming pool. She also helps at an After School Club preparing light snacks and listening to children read at the Reading Cafe.

Sylvia Murphy accepted her award.

7. YOUNG CREWKERNIAN AWARD 2025

The Mayor presented the inaugural Young Crewkernian Award 2025 to Lara Deakin who was nominated by the leadership team at 1st Crewkerne Scouts.

She noted that this year marks the first year of the Young Crewkernian Award, which recognises the work of young people living or studying in the town who make a remarkable contribution to it. Residents heard that Lara has been a valued member of Crewkerne Scouts since she was a small child, obtaining her senior scout awards and moving on to be a member of Rainbows Explorer Scouts. During this time she has represented 1st Crewkerne Scouts at the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea,

having been chosen after a competitive selection process, and fundraising thousands of pounds to help her on her way.

As an Explorer she often participated in fundraising activity to support this thriving group, which gives young people aged 14-18 opportunities for activities and adventure. She herself has completed a number of Ten Tors events, trekking and navigating over Dartmoor in challenging conditions. She is currently working towards her King's Scout award, the highest award in scouting.

Having recently turned 18, Lara is now registering as an adult helper for the Scout Group, and has volunteered to be part of the support team taking 70 young people to the Kent International Jamboree this summer. Lara's calm and positive attitude provides a fantastic role model to younger scouts. She is always willing to help and be hands on to get the task done, and her friendly nature is underpinned by a lively mind and a fabulous work ethic.

Lara gives up her time in order to coach for Crewkerne Rugby Club, supporting the younger sections which provide the chance to participate in junior rugby to many young people in the town. Evenings and weekends, she will turn out to training and games, whatever the weather!

Lara attends Wadham School, where she is Vice President of the student body, and takes an active role in initiating and developing ideas to improve student life and support learning. Lara has won awards for her dedication to her studies, and represented the school in forums and services.

Lara Deakin accepted her award and thanked everyone for their support.

8. MATTERS RAISED BY CREWKERNE RESIDENTS

Members of the public raised questions relating to:

- Progress on the anticipated link road, one way system and continuing problems with speeding through the town centre.
- Anticipated levels of town precept in the future.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Signed:

Dated:

ATM14APRIL2025