

Crediton Town Council Annual Report 2018-2019

Chairman's Report

Frank Letch MBE Town Mayor and Chairman of Crediton Town Council

It is only when I come to write this annual report that I understand the duality of my role. As the Chairman of the Council I chair the main Town Council meetings and attend all the other committees of which I am a member. We have slightly streamlined the committee system this year and now have three main committees as you will see from the report. One of the small committees to which I belong is the P3 Parish Paths, which looks after the footpaths around Crediton. When you look at the map and walk the footpaths you realise just how extensive the network is. We also have the annual Redvers Ramble and a Boxing Day walk!

The year's events have followed a fairly traditional pattern. I have been to the Mid Devon Show and attended the Boniface Concert Society's annual concert. I also played for the Town Council in the annual "boules" competition. Once again we did not progress very far but as my old headmaster would have said the important thing is to take part!

Once again the allotments have been judged and praised by our visiting judge. We also did very well in the competition called "It's Your Neighbourhood." Because of the rather better than normal summer, it was a delight to accompany Bert Jewell as he judged a healthy entry of gardens in our annual garden competition. As usual I learnt such a lot from this very wise and experienced gardener. I have one small duty apart from taxiing Bert around and that was to choose the Mayor's favourite. This year there were three entries which caught my eye, but I had to make a decision and did so.

In September I went to Avranches, our twin town in France, to sign a new charter of friendship. There were several other signatories including Chester, Korbach from Germany, Riolo Terme from Italy and Saint-Gaudens, a French town that helped Avranches during the war. I always enjoy our trips to Avranches and it was a privilege to sign the charter of friendship when you think of all that has gone on since June 2016.

Over the past few weeks I have attended two sponsored rugby matches and thoroughly enjoyed being a partisan spectator. I was even more pleased to see the Crediton rugby team, which is by and large a young side, winning both those games and progress up the league. I also attended the CODS musical, Carousel, on two occasions once as the Mayor and once as grandfather of my lovely granddaughter Erin who was in the cast!

This report cannot ignore the big event of October, when the council building was sold to a commercial bidder. Three members of Mid Devon District Council's Cabinet ignored the wishes of the 23 councillors, who voted for my motion to urge Cabinet to sell the building to the Town Council at half the restricted value. This was the same deal they had agreed with Tiverton Town Council in January 2017 and which the officers had proposed themselves.

You will all have noticed that we have moved across the square and have offices in 8a North

Street. This is not to say that we are not looking for a new, larger home which will accommodate us and several of the community groups that previously used the council offices! Watch this space!

Finally, I would like to thank the staff who work so hard to make sure that the council's aspirations are achieved. Emma Anderson

left to have a baby in February and her maternity leave is being covered by Lisa Blake. We also have Emily Armitage as our receptionist and the redoubtable Clare Dalley, our knowledgeable, inspirational and hard-working clerk. On a personal note, I would like to thank my wife Natalia who continues to support me and works with such dignity and enthusiasm as town Mayoress.

Crediton Town Boundary and Ward Map

The Town Council receives numerous enquiries during the year asking how the town is divided into two wards, so here's a helpful map! The blue line shows the boundary of Crediton Town and the division between Lawrence and Boniface Wards. You can access the interactive map at <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/your-council/mapping/>

Committee Reports 2018-2019

The following reports give an overview of the activities of each Crediton Town Council Committee & Sub-Committee for the past year. Each report has been written by the Committee Chair.

Council Affairs Committee

Cllr Joyce Harris

The Council Affairs Committee meets every other month. It consists of eight Town Councillors and is responsible for determining the resource requirements of the Council and making recommendations to Council, this includes land and property, employees and contracts. In addition to this, the Committee oversees the training requirements of Councillors and staff, the policies and procedures of the Council, its publicity and public relations, any legal proceedings, electoral matters, insurance arrangements and civic events. Finally it also scrutinises, when required, Council activities and decisions.

This year the Committee has been kept busy overseeing the relocation of the Council offices, recruiting Lisa Blake, who is providing maternity cover for Emma Anderson and pursuing the acquisition of Newcombes Meadow toilets. Unfortunately, this last project is taking slightly longer than the Town Council would have liked due to the fact that we are struggling to find cleaning staff for the toilets!

In May 2018 the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force resulting in new data protection policies and procedures to be adopted and implemented. In

November 2018, as well as the Remembrance Sunday Parade the Council marked the centenary of the end of the First World War with the Battles Over Beacon Lighting Ceremony with the assistance of the First Crediton Scout Group.

If you would like to stay up to date with the work of the Council, please go to our website www.crediton.gov.uk where you will find, minutes of meetings, policies, procedures, copies of the finances, news of events and projects and much more.

Town Strategy

Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking

We had hoped that 2018-2019 would see us realising our plans to consolidate the old Market Street Council Offices as a central base for the Town Council and for other community services, and for developing it as a community venue able to accommodate a variety of events and activities. As we were unsuccessful in negotiating the purchase of the offices, regrettably, those plans for that building will not now come to fruition. The long-term future location for the Town Council will need to be reconsidered.

This year we have organised two consultations on the Crediton Neighbourhood Plan and one on the Crediton Traffic Study. This study came as a result of the response to our Neighbourhood Plan surveys in 2015, which showed how negatively the High Street is perceived for pollution, noise and congestion (but how well it is perceived for its independent shops and services). These two projects are current and details about both can be seen on the Town Council website www.crediton.gov.uk

Throughout the year, the committee responds to planning applications and is keen for electors to give their points of view in meetings or by letter/email whenever they wish. We are also grateful to all those who have responded to consultations and taken part in workshops to help with planning for the town centre. The Town Strategy Committee oversees how the town develops in the future, in social, economic and planning terms, and the views of the community are important.

Environment

Cllr Joyce Harris

It's been a busy year for the Environment Committee, which meets every other month. The year started with the Committee needing to find two new contractors, one to supply the towns' floral displays and one to water them. This was following Mid Devon District Council, who previously provided the service, increasing their prices exponentially. Having thoroughly researched the market and obtaining quotations we were not left wanting with our choice of contractors, who provided an excellent service and enabled the town to look beautiful throughout the summer months. A separate report on Floral Crediton can be found on page 6.

Thanks to the hard work of the Assistant Clerk, all Council owned and maintained property

has been regularly inspected with work carried out as and when necessary, this has also included essential tree works.

The Council has over 100 allotments spread over 3 sites. The Town Clerk along with the Chair of the Boniface Allotment Association regularly inspect the allotments providing updates at each Committee meeting.

Finally, there is great deal of work undertaken in our town completely free of charge by community volunteers and groups. The hard work and generosity of these volunteers cannot be overlooked or underestimated. They litter pick, weed kill, look after flower beds, planters and wildlife areas, all of which helps to positively enhance our environment, one such recent project was the roundabout at Tesco. They really are our local heroes.

Christmas in Crediton

Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking

The third Saturday in November is now our regular date for the big Switch-on event for Christmas in Crediton. The best thing about it is the number of community groups who contribute to making this event happen. In particular, we are pleased to have regular input from young people in the town, including the scouts, guides and cadets, and Haywards and Landscore primary schools. Then, of course, there are all the youngsters who join in the fancy dress and make the evening sparkle. Last year's Winter Wonderland was another colourful display of inventiveness and originality.

The Switch-on brings together people of all ages and we are pleased that it is a town-wide event that takes place alongside all the Christmas fairs, plays and nativities, the Christmas Tree Festival in the Parish Church, carol services and carol singing in the Town Square.

The event wouldn't happen without participation from the Arts Centre and the Chamber of Commerce, and from individuals, all of whom meet regularly throughout the year to make the Switch-on event and all the Christmas lights the best they can be. Every year we have been able to add a little bit more to what went before and with the support of High Street businesses and business sponsorship, we have been able to extend the illuminations to include almost all the High Street buildings. The Christmas in Crediton Committee is planning to keep going and we'll add another surprise or two to this year's event on 23rd November.

Grants

Cllr Joyce Harris

Each year the Town Council allocates a sum of money for grants to local voluntary or charitable organisations where the activities will contribute to, and be of benefit to, the life or community and benefit the people of Crediton. This year the Council decided to increase

the sum available from £20,000 to £25,000. This reflects the increasing number of grant requests received each year and the outstanding work that our local community groups, organisations and charities do in the town.

To see who received a grant and to access a copy of the Council's grant aid policy and an application form please go to <https://www.crediton.gov.uk/Grants>.

Floral Crediton Cllr Mike Szabo

The purpose of Floral Crediton is to co-ordinate and increase the towns' floral displays, organise the Floral Crediton competition, and enter into the Britain in Bloom (BIB) competition.

Despite the hottest and driest summer since 1976, we still managed to keep our floral displays blooming lovely all summer long. We also managed to find another experienced contractor to water the plants this year at a much reduced price!

Here are just some of the things that happened this year:

- Keeping the town weed free - weed spraying courtesy of Bert Jewell.
- Maintaining a clean and tidy High Street by eliminating fly posting, littering, and dog fouling.
- Promoting the Floral Crediton competition to residents which attracted 20 entries last year.
- Increasing the number of floral displays in the town by:
 - Crediton Rotary Boniface has supplied and maintained the wooden barrel floral display near the Downes House/Ladd's corner entrance.
 - The new two-tier flower tower outside Hillbrow Care Home. Planting courtesy of Bert Jewell.
 - The Tesco roundabout has been landscaped courtesy of Bert Jewell, Eddie Sherwood, Nick Hasteed, and David Oliver.
 - Adding eight more hanging baskets to the displays on the High Street.
 - Increasing the number of It's Your Neighbourhood entries which attracted 15 entries last year
- Continuing to achieve a high standard entry into the BIB competition. A Silver Gilt level was awarded to the town last year.

Last July, the BIB judges visited Crediton and said "The community feel of the town is evident as you walk around, as is the pride of the community in the environmental quality and the parks and green spaces of the town."

Don't forget you can pick up FREE bio-degradable dog poo bags from the council office!

Parish Paths

Cllr Michael Szabo

The 35 Public Rights of Way (PROW) in CREDITON are the responsibility of Devon County Council (DCC) who outsource the custodianship to the CREDITON P3 Parish Paths committee. The committee then identify and photograph any repairs, improvements, or maintenance that are needed and forward it to the PROW officer, Ros Davies who has her team complete the work with a view to protecting and encouraging the wider enjoyment by all residents. The PROW warden, Sam Jeffcote, cuts growth away from the footpaths every June and September.

Some of the accomplishments of the committee include:

- The creation and promotion of Redvers Ramble, trail-blazed by Heather Sansom, a parish path volunteer.
- The launch of the inaugural Boxing Day Ramble. There will also be a summer solstice ramble on 21 June 2019!
- The re-surfacing and building of 39 new cement steps on the footpath from the High St, near the Ivory Secret to lower QE School.

Contact Details

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