

Crediton Town Council
Annual Report 2022-2023

Finances: Figures as at 31 March 2023

Income

Income Summary

Precept	385,738
Sub Total	385,738

Operating Income

Administration	2,957
Council And Councillors	780
Exhibition Road Allotments	2,092
Barnfield Allotments	1,713
Moffats Land Allotments	160
Boniface All. Assoc. Member'p	442
War Memorial	150
Stonypark	0
CCTV	0
Wayleave Payments	19
Newcombes Meadow Toilets	588
Christmas Lights	90
Localism Project	6,859
Total Income	401,589

Expenditure

Running Costs

Salaries	168,884
Administration	23,073
Council And Councillors	14,363
Insurance	3,889
Exhibition Road Allotments	1,411
Barnfield Allotments	932
Moffats Land Allotments	31
Boniface All. Assoc. Member'p	70
Peoples Park	6,453
Upper Deck	90
Bandstand	157
War Memorial	26
Street Furniture	1,063
Town Clock	215
Town Council Offices	26,952
Stonypark	86

CCTV	0
Boniface Statue	0
General	1,255
Garage and Storage Rental	0
Public Open Spaces	1,246
Newcombes Meadow Toilets	1,024
Old Landscore School	6,604
Tree Works	3,305
Town Maintenance Contract	7,202
Floral Crediton	8,439
Christmas Lights	20,432
General	0
Localism Project	15,958
Annual Grant Funding	26,584
Diversity Festival	0
Total Expenditure	339,745

Did you know?

The town council's website contains details of all town council finances. You can view the budget for the year, monthly payments and receipts, as well as the council's annual return for 2022-2023. Please visit: www.crediton.gov.uk/Finances.

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CHAIRS REPORT2022-23

CLlr Liz Brookes-Hocking, Chair and Mayor

Hello to Spring 2022! Goodbye to restrictions on meetings and gatherings! It gave the Crediton community the opportunity to come together to celebrate the Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II in June, to mourn her passing and mark the Succession in September and to celebrate again for the Coronation of King Charles III in May. The public commemorations and celebrations in Crediton, organised by the town council, were attended by hundreds of residents taking part in these very significant events of our time. On the business as usual side, Crediton got its Neighbourhood Plan in September (more on page 4); in October we thanked Bert Jewell who stepped down from his role of chief plantsman for the town (more on page 5); the Remembrance Sunday parade was unrestricted for the first time since 2019; Christmas in Crediton had an even bigger parade; and the town council funded our many community groups whose activities, now fully resumed, make such a difference to our town (more on page 6). A small sub-committee invested in our footpaths so residents can get around the town and into the countryside (more on page 6). We have keenly supported a cycle route to Exeter, climate emergency initiatives and biodiversity improvement. It has been a busy and eventful year in which our council officers have gone the extra mile to mark our special occasions as well as "keeping the show on the road" and I thank them for their

hard work in often challenging circumstances. Thanks also to the many volunteers who do so much for our town and to my fellow councillors for their support for the work of the town council through the year.

Committee Reports 2022-23

PLANNING AND TOWN STRATEGY COMMITTEE

This committee comments on planning applications received by Mid Devon District Council, which is the Local Planning Authority (LPA). In September 2022 Crediton Town Council's draft Neighbourhood Plan was passed by referendum. This plan, which contains policies for development in Crediton, is a legal document and stands beside the National Planning Policy Framework and the district council's Local Plan in the suite of documents that must be considered when determining applications. It is still the district council that is the LPA, however, and it is district councillors who have the vote. Town Council comments are not binding, even when citing Neighbourhood Plan policies as a reason for objection. Planning officers have delegated responsibility for most applications and provide thorough reports on more significant applications that are determined by the district council's planning committee. Officers' reports are generally supported by the councillors. The planning system is complex and residents often feel that large developments, which can take years to go through the process, give little opportunity for their comments to carry much weight, as fundamentals are often decided early in the process before the detailed application is seen by the public. During 2022-23, proposed development at Creedy Bridge/Pedlarspool received a lot of comments from Crediton residents, even though it is located in Sandford parish, because of its impact on the setting of the town and the surrounding landscape. Crediton's Planning and Town Strategy Committee responds to forward planning proposals from the district council, such as the Local Plan, and other agencies, including relevant government consultations, and proposals such as the County Council's Transport Plan. The possibility of a dedicated, safe cycle route from Crediton to Exeter has long been an aspiration which the town council strongly supports. Finally, the committee oversees town events and celebrations, such as the Jubilee and Coronation. We often work with community groups and other partners who have plans and proposals to improve the economic and cultural well-being of the town, which is a key aim of the town council's Neighbourhood Plan.

COUNCIL AFFAIRS AND FINANCE

The Council Affairs & Finance Committee is responsible for proposing budget requirements as well as forward planning and making earmarked reserves recommendations. The committee covers a range of items including the provision of internal control checks and risk assessments, the training of councillors and staff and the policies and procedures of the Council. A Warm Spaces initiative was set up to help residents who struggled to heat their homes in the energy crisis. The town council allocated a sum of £1,500 to help fund this initiative. The following organisations provided the warm spaces - The Turning Tides Project, Boniface Church, Methodist Church, Congregational Church and Crediton Library. This committee also oversees civic events which, this year, included a Mayoral Reception at the

Boniface Centre, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Twinning of Crediton and Avranches, France. Crediton welcomed 31 guests from Avranches.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The tasks of this committee focus on maintaining, repairing and improving our public spaces and facilities. This all costs a surprising amount of money and the council aims to keep costs low while keeping our assets looking good. The town council values the input of many volunteers and community groups who take on significant roles in environmental work. Without them, the town would not have so many cared-for spaces – or it would be a lot more expensive. The town council is grateful to Bert Jewell for all his work in the town square over many years, supported by his wife, Margaret, as well as judging the Gardens Competition. Bert has been instrumental in helping the town council to achieve its current high standards, giving freely of his time and expertise. Thanks also to Cllr Mike Szabo who, for many years, has organised, encouraged and chivvied many successful entrants to It's Your Neighbourhood competition as well as leading on the town's entry to Britain in Bloom, receiving a Silver Gilt Award in 2022. Sustainability, climate change and the need to re-establish biodiversity are now significant factors in our policy and decision making. Fewer cuts to Peoples Park and verges give more opportunity for wildflowers and insects, is cheaper and has less environmental impact. Bed and container planting is chosen for its suitability for pollinators and drought tolerance. The town council aims to invest in the town environment but in the last year funds have too often gone towards fighting a rearguard action against vandalism causing the closure of facilities and claims against insurance. On the encouraging side, young people have been involved in creating graffiti signage for Newcombes Meadow toilets, new dog bins are due to be installed around Tarka View and new trees have been planted at Peoples Park.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

During this year the committee produced a Climate Action Plan. One of the council's intentions is to develop partnerships with other groups. During the year, the council discussed plans for supporting Sustainable Crediton by offering space for a hub giving information on sustainability, resilience and community projects. The committee has discouraged the use of chemical weed killers in the open space maintenance contracts it offers. This has been carried through in awarding contracts, and now they are not used. We have followed the feasibility work being done by Devon County Council on a cycle route from Crediton to Exeter. The committee has also considered whether any improvements could be made to the town bus service to create a real alternative to the many short car journeys that are made around the town.

GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Grants Sub-Committee met in November 2022 to decide on the allocation of grants to local organisations. A budget of £33,000 was approved to cover applications for the 2023-24 funding year. Twenty eight applications, totalling £32,600, were approved. A second meeting was held in January 2023 when it was resolved to move the remaining underspend from

2022-23 to the 2023-24 budget. Resulting in a total of £3,716.48 remaining for the current financial year. The Committee looks very carefully at the feedback received from the organisations who received a grant to make sure it has benefited the local community. For a full list of community grants issued, please visit our website. Crediton Town Council has a commitment to encourage, support and promote local community groups and organisations whose activities will contribute to or benefit the town. The deadline to receive grant funding in April 2024 is 30 September 2023. Grant application forms are available to download from our website www.crediton.gov.uk.

PARISH PATHS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Parish Paths Sub-Committee met on two occasions during 2022-23. The sub-committee discusses any issues that arise regarding paths around the town and ensures these paths are walked at least once a year to check they are safe, reporting any issues to Devon County Council. This year has seen the approval of a handrail at the bottom of the steps leading from Stonypark down into Greenway. It has been noted that a new footpath (yet to be adopted) now links Tarka Way to Downeshead Lane. If you take the new path from Downes Close, a lovely view of the town can be observed half way along this route.

CHRISTMAS IN CREDITON SUB-COMMITTEE

The Christmas in Crediton Sub-Committee meets throughout the year to plan the Christmas lighting and the switch-on event which takes place on the 4th Saturday in November. The festive season is an opportunity to show what the independent shops and cafés in Crediton have to offer, and the town council aims to make the High Street, St Lawrence Green and the Town Square look as attractive as possible. It's also an opportunity for the young people of our community to take part in the celebrations before, during and after the event. In 2022, the scouts, guides, youth club and primary schools all made lanterns to carry in the parade. The choirs from Haywards and Landscore schools are a firm favourite on the day and, after the event, the clear up happened 10 times faster with the help of Crediton Rugby Club. A little more lighting was added to the High Street last year as we move away from Christmas trees to more sustainable decorations. After several years of having the land train, last year we decided not to include it in the event due to the environmental impact and cost - train is transported from Exmouth – but we know how popular the train has been and are looking for a more cost-effective alternative.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Crediton Town Council has an overall responsibility for the wellbeing of Crediton residents and protecting their quality of life, environment and economic wellbeing. The way we live, work and enjoy time in Crediton is supported by three council bodies:

CREDITON TOWN COUNCIL

- Maintain open spaces
- Maintain town council assets (War Memorial, Boniface Statue, bandstand, noticeboards etc.)
- Hedge and grass cutting on town council land and other agreed areas

- Allotments for residents
- Public conveniences (Newcombes meadow toilets)
- Partnership working with groups and charities
- Community grants Community projects
- Town events (e.g. Christmas in Crediton)
- Making observations to planning authorities
- Campaigning for the wellbeing of residents
- Working to make Crediton more sustainable
- Youth work
- Representing residents on local issues Maintaining public footpaths in Crediton (in partnership with DCC)
- CCTV

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

- Rubbish, recycling, garden waste, food waste collections
- Maintain play areas and equipment
- Council tax and business rates
- Housing
- Planning applications and building control
- Dog controls including dog mess
- Off-street parking (pay & display car parks in Crediton)
- Environmental health Leisure Centres (Lords Meadow in Crediton)
- Public conveniences (Market St toilets)
- Economic development
- Licensing
- Electoral registration and voting.

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

- Education, school admissions, early years and education/health care plans
- Roads, transport, potholes, public rights of way, cycling routes, street lighting, onstreet parking, traffic management and reporting any related problems
- Fire and public safety
- Social care, blue badges, health care
- Libraries
- Recycling centres, fly tipping and graffiti
- Celebratory events, birth and death registrations
- Business support
- Child protection and adoption
- Trading Standards
- Concessionary bus passes

CONTACT DETAILS

Crediton Town Councillors - Boniface Ward

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Useful Contacts

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More on our website: www.crediton.gov.uk/useful-contacts