

# Crewkerne Town Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 16  
May 2017



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### The Mayor's Report



Welcome to the 2016/2017 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 maintenance 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, Colin Coggan and John Wyatt have been elected Honoured Citizens of Crewkerne this year. Presentation of these awards was made at the Annual Town Meeting on 20 March 2017. Candidates are nominated for this award by 3 separate people and selection is made by a Committee consisting of the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor, plus the 5 most recent past Mayors. Nomination forms for next year, will be available from mid-January at the Town Hall, although please feel free to notify the Council at any other time of worthy recipients.

We have had, as always a busy year, with several community events including:-

Our bi-annual town fair held on Henhayes, which was used to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; many different community groups attended to give everyone a lovely day, finishing with a concert organised by CUDOS and my favourite, fireworks!

We held an annual Community Safety Day in Falkland Square, which was as always, an informative and enjoyable day.

We opened the new skate park in Happy Valley, less than two years after the old one was condemned; as the result of a remarkable effort by a group of young users who raised funds to ensure that it happened. Our thanks to them, and also SSDC for helping us with the funding.

Our second Christmas market was well attended and it seems, enjoyed by all those who came.

2016 also saw 40 years of twinning with Igny and 10 years with Burres-sur-Yvette; many congratulations to all those involved in this impressive achievement; and in June we welcomed some of our friends from these towns.

Works have continued, and will continue, on the Town Hall, to maintain this historic building so it may be enjoyed by the town for many more years.

And finally, as most of you, I hope have noticed, we have opened the rest of the fenced play area on Henhayes to the public, with some new play equipment and landscaping done; we have more work to do but it's nearly done!



Viking Rope Swing at Henhayes

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.

## 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**

Following the structural survey, the 5 stone pinnacles which were located at the front and rear of the building have been removed using a heavy crane to carry out the work. The condition of the pinnacles was found to be very poor and most will require new replacements being made before they are returned to their position on the building in the future.

The stone plinth at the front of the building which supports the crib during our Christmas celebrations has also undergone repairs to strengthen it and some modifications to the crib itself to reduce the impact on the plinth when in place.

We are also progressing repairs to the east side of the building where a complete door casement on the first floor will be replaced which was in danger of falling apart and repairs will also take place to one of the kitchen windows on the same floor.

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

- **Allotments**

The Council continues to maintain and run the existing allotments that it holds. Allotments are located at the War Memorial Grounds, Severalls Park Avenue and at Bincombe Lane. All efforts are made to provide allotments to those who want them.

- **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**

The large tree located next to the entrance to the field continues to be monitored, the tree in the past was damaged by fire and is not in the best of health. We still have outstanding an investigation to carry out improvements to its boundary with Tower Hill Road which will be looked at in the coming months.

- **Henhayes Recreation Ground**

After a very long delay the next phase of the playground is complete and is now open for use with

two new pieces of equipment available. Work still continues with the installation of more seats and benches and we are now moving the focus to install a new piece of play equipment to go in the centre of the moat section which will enhance the play experience in that area.

- **Happy Valley**

The new skate park is now complete and in full use. Sincere thanks must go to the group of young people (ABSIC), our past Deputy Town Clerk Annette Roffey, ABCD and South Somerset District Council for their funding contributions in producing a first class facility that is used by many youngsters from our area.

- **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 continue to address issues with both buildings regarding construction faults. It is very sad that when faith is put in what are considered reputable companies that we are let down due to the fact that they are no longer trading and therefore cannot be held to account. We are then left to resolve the issues but we will work with both companies to resolve these problems.

Cllr. Mike Best, Chair

## 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.

The Committee has considered 39 applications this year, in addition to 12 which were considered at Town Council. There were 9 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 North Street Trading Estate development. Whilst the Council appreciates the need for affordable housing in Crewkerne, the safety of residents is our paramount concern and we hope that safer proposals for access can be submitted in the near future.

Cllr. Ben Hodgson, Chair

## Financial Report

The accounts for the current year, which ends 31 March 2017, 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 2017 is as follows:

	Income £
Allotments	294
Aqua Centre	1,345
Bank Interest	834
George Reynolds Centre	6,258
Wayleaves	23
Henhayes Car Park	8,601
Projects	71,865
Events	3,199
Miscellaneous	4,517
Precept	316,523
Central Govt Grant Allocation	25,020
Victoria Hall Bookings	6,620
Salaries recharged	27,318
Market fees	2,758
Town Hall	4,369
War Memorial Grounds Contribution	2,948
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	25,289
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507,783</b>

	Expenditure £
Aqua Centre Loan and Maintenance	22,483
General Admin inc. Insurance	38,463
Salaries and Wages	190,126
George Reynolds Centre	4,208
Grants	11,200
Grounds Maintenance	54,486
Projects	99,963
Events	5,863
Joint Burial Committee Precept	38,293
Victoria Hall	12,557
Town Hall	43,410
War Memorial Grounds	5,106
Youth Service Provision	20,700
Public Toilets	12,943
Wednesday Market	1,258
Cemetery Admin and Maintenance	25,106
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586,164</b>

At 31 March 2017 the following debt is outstanding to the Public Works Loan Board: Aqua Centre - £13,156.36

## The Statement of Accounts for the last audited year 2015/16

	31 March 2015	31 March 2016
	£	£
Balances b/fwd	430,060	318,587
Annual Precept	279,567	298,105
Total other Receipts	158,521	143,972
Staff Costs	171,388	164,790
Loan Interest/Capital Repay't.	4,984	4,973
Total other Payments	373,189	273,305
Balances c/fwd	318,587	317,596
Total Cash and Investments	292,117	310,477
Total Fixed Assets	5,795,885	5,787,762
Total Borrowings	20,162	16,815

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 work which has been completed and also discuss future requirements for ongoing maintenance.

Following this year's walk around it was identified that the chapel was in a rather poor state of cleanliness, with chairs no longer at their best, floor tiles discoloured and the hanging fabrics in need of cleaning. All these areas have been addressed and local funeral directors have been made aware of the improvements to the chapel.

Work continues as always to ensure paths are upgraded to improve the overall mobility for all around the cemetery. The new section of the cemetery has now been carefully mapped to ensure that there are clearly defined plots, all correlated with the computer records for each plot.

During the year the Committee were faced with a theft from the workshop which led to a review of the security in the area of the chapel. Matters identified have been addressed, and it is to be hoped that prevention of such an occurrence in future has been achieved.

In September as part of Heritage Day there was an open day at the cemetery. This year there was a guided tour around this Victorian cemetery, and there were the most visitors for many years. This was a fascinating insight into burials, graves and the cemetery's important part in local history.

During the year there have been 30 interments which include both full burials and burials of ashes and 2 scattering of ashes. There have also been 18 grave plots and 4 ashes plots purchased and 23 applications to erect a memorial or add an inscription to an existing memorial have also been received.

Clr. Mrs Julia Borland, Chair

## Council Aims and Achievements

### To support and provide cultural, social and sporting activities

- The Christmas Market was held on 10 December at Market Square and, once again, it was a great success, despite the inclement weather. A date has already been agreed for this year's Christmas Market, of Saturday 9 December.
- Provided support to the town's annual Christmas Lighting Up event held on 25 November.
- Construction of a new skatepark at Happy Valley, with the opening of the skatepark celebrated with a "jam" launch event.
- Opening of the playground extension at Henhayes, featuring two major new pieces of play equipment and with plans for further equipment in hand.
- Agreement to the addition of Crewkerne Rangers football club to the sports clubs playing regularly at Henhayes.
- 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.

### 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 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 13 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 16 September in Falkland Square. As before, this event proved to be very popular with the residents of Crewkerne.

### Crewkerne Weekly Market



Every Wednesday (9 am – 1 pm)  
Market Square

### To liaise with and support voluntary groups – Community Grants Awards for 2017/18

Organisation/Community Group	Grant Awarded	Description
Crewkerne Tea Dance Group	£150	Support to running costs
Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre	£1,500	Support to running costs
CUDOS	£500	Replace lighting desk
Henhayes Community Centre	£1,500	Support continuation of services
Severalls Jubilee Bowls Club	£300	Improvement to club amenities
Crewkerne Local Information Centre	£445	Improvement to window display
The Speedwell Club	£500	Redecoration of hall and building
Rotary Club of Crewkerne District	£1,000	Support to St. Barts Fair

### 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,  
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Tel: 01460 74001  
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Website: [www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk](http://www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk)

#### Office Staff

- Town Clerk: Peter Davidson
- Deputy Town Clerk: Laura Gowers
- Finance Officer: Paula Hewitt
- Amenities Operations Manager: Mark Jay
- Administration Officer: Julie Cowie

- **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.