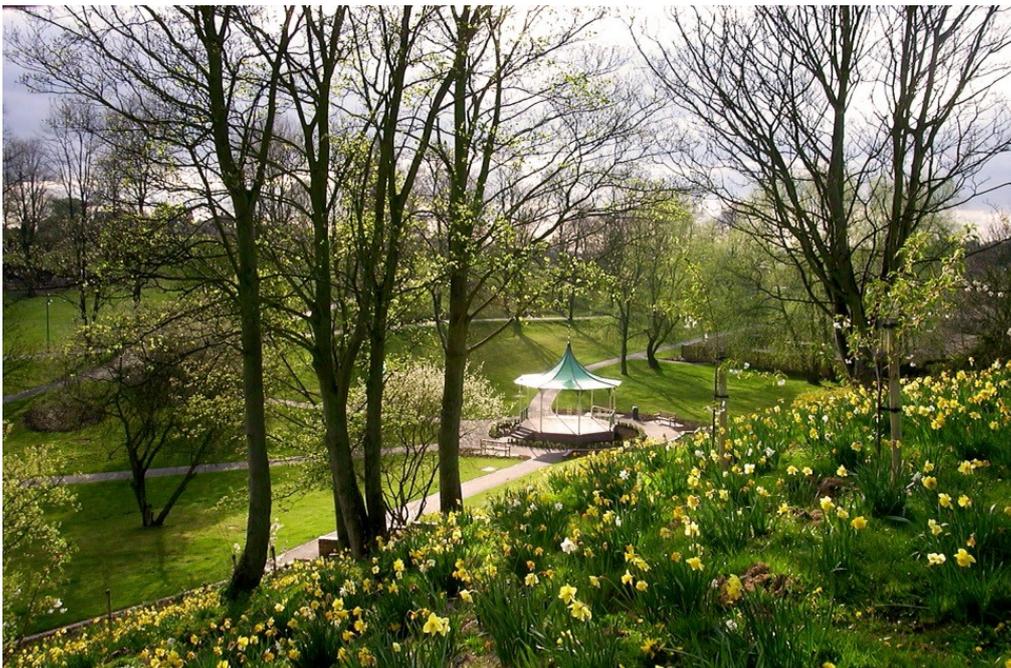


Whitchurch Town Council

Annual Report

2018 - 2019

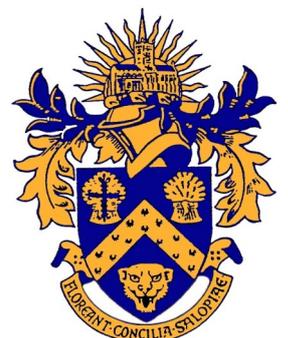


Published 9th May 2019



Contents

- **Introduction & Review from the Mayor of Whitchurch - Councillor Tony Neville**
- **Parks & Public Realm Report**
- **Civic Centre Report**
- **Heritage Report**
- **Finance Report**
- **Entertainment & Events Report**
- **Whitchurch Town Councillors 2018-2019**
- **Key Contacts**



Introduction

Mayor's Review - 2018-2019

As I come to the end of my two year tenure as Mayor I feel that we, as a town together, have achieved much, and the support I have received from the townspeople has been very humbling.

We have finally succeeded in installing a skate park in Jubilee Park and the Town Council organised a fantastic opening day in August last year. The park has proved very popular and the Council continue to have great comments passed our way.

The Jubilee Park play area has been extended, thanks to a very successful public consultation, the installation of the new park equipment has also been well received and the amount of people using the park seems to have increased and it's great to see.

The Council have also purchased new litter bins and benches which will be located in both Jubilee and Deermoss Park.

Green and clean energy has been introduced to the Civic Centre with solar PV cells mounted on the market hall roof. Not only are these cells good for our environment, but the Council is getting a Feed-in-Tariff - saving money by using solar energy throughout the day, thereby reducing our energy bills.



Mayor's Review continued ...

Our regular events such as Party in the Park, Food & Drink Festival and Christmas Lights Switch On still draw vast crowds and we would like to thank everyone for supporting these events. They don't just happen – the planning and work start months before the event happens. Well done to our Town Centre Manager/Assistant Town Clerk, Zoe Dean, for coordinating the events throughout the year.



The Civic Centre is now holding regular events such as comedy nights, Easter & Christmas pantomimes and music nights. The Council are now approached by promoters wishing to put on shows @theCivic which demonstrates how far this Council have progressed. The upgrading of the Main Hall is one of our priorities in the future which will mean we will be able to attract national performers once the work has been completed.

Of course none of these events would be possible without a fantastic team of people willing to go that extra mile. Nicola, the Town Clerk, Zoe, the Town Centre Manager/Assistant Town Clerk, the Facilities Team led by Morris, the Hub staff who welcome you daily and Alison our finance genius. And, of course, the Councillors who volunteer their time helping out at events - **thank you all**.



2018 saw many national commemorative events marking the centenary of the end of World War 1. In Whitchurch we held an afternoon 'street party' style tea in the Civic Centre after the formal service in St Alkmund's. It was great to see so many people attending and the townspeople coming together to remember.

And in December, I congratulated Arthur Skitt as he was nominated as Whitchurch Citizen of the Year 2019. Look out for Arthur at the town events, especially Party in the Park collecting donations for the event.

We now have a full complement of Councillors which makes a great difference when it comes to picking committees. A great many townsfolk still think we councillors are paid – may I say that not one of the councillors gets paid a penny, it is all done voluntarily. In saying that, we are here to represent you, so please come along to Council meetings and get involved with what we are doing.

I am still getting told what a wonderful place Whitchurch is which proves that we sometimes don't appreciate what we have here. The community spirit is alive and well in this great town of ours.

I have several "Thank You"s to say. Firstly to Nicki, our Town Clerk - I really couldn't have managed without you and all your wise advice, you are an absolute star! To Zoe, Town Centre Manager - for organising so many great events, very well done. To Bev, my Deputy – for all your support and encouragement. To the Hub staff, Shirley & Jan – for all your behind-the-scenes work and a welcoming smile daily. To Morris and his Facilities team – the place would cease to function without you. Finally to all Councillors who have supported me and helped to bring all the changes about.

I would like to wish the new Mayor all the very best in their new role and hope fellow Councillors will give whoever it is their full support.

The last two years have given me memories that will last a lifetime – thank you to everyone. The biggest "Thank You" has to go to my wife Pat, your support and unconditional understanding has been unwavering.

Mayor's Review continued ...

2017-2019 - Whitchurch Mayor, Councillor Tony Neville - tenure in pictures



Beautiful Jubilee Park - the Mayor opened the Meres & Mosses Landscape Partnership bench - along with students from SJT, who had made the artwork for the tiles.



Commemorating a centenary since the end of World War 1 - Armistice Day. An event to remember - There But Not There - all the great things achieved by the people of Whitchurch for the War effort. Many thanks to all the groups involved in organising and providing information for the event.



Congratulations Arthur Skitt

Whitchurch Citizen of the Year 2019

Arthur received his CoY trophy at a celebratory afternoon tea in December organised especially to mark the occasion.

Arthur and his sister Muriel helped the Mayor at his fundraising coffee morning in December, dressing up appropriately for the season. Thank you to Arthur for your help during my time as Mayor.



Mayor's Fundraising Spring Ball

During 2019 I held a Spring Ball to raise funds for my chosen charities:

Midlands Air Ambulance / 79 Sqn (Whitchurch) ATC / Whitchurch Men in Sheds

Thank you to everyone who helped me raise funds for these worthy causes.



Parks & Public Realm

Cllr Terry O'Neill - Chairman: Cllr Tony Neville - Vice Chairman

The Parks & Public Realm Committee have worked closely with the Council's grounds maintenance contractors and have had another successful year.



Jubilee Park continues to have a stunning display of flowers, magnificent trees and now with extra new play equipment. The Council wishes to thank all the staff at Nobridge for continuing to look after the splendid parks we have in our town.

The stunning floral displays continue into the town, with the splendid hanging baskets which are provided and maintained by Nobridge. Thanks to much work by the Council staff team, more and more town centre businesses are taking up the opportunity to have a fabulous floral display outside their shop to help make our town centre look so attractive.



The Council are also supporting Mr & Mrs Evison with their project to install an all-inclusive play area in Wheatsheaf Drive, the

Council have had the planning application approved and now funding is being sought for the equipment by Mr & Mrs Evison.

The Council now subscribe to Shropshire Playing Fields Association, who can provide practical information and advice, inspiration and "moral support" needed by parish and town councils, playing field management committees, community playground committees and sports clubs.

Ongoing work is taking place continually in the parks and public realm, including regular replacement of broken coping stones on the wall that edges the Castle Hill car park. This wall seems to be regularly broken by pick-up style trucks with tow bars. Whitchurch Town Council are keeping an eye on the situation, but request people with longer vehicles are careful when reversing into the parking space. Thank you.



An external defibrillator is now located in the Bullring. This was jointly funded by British Red Cross & Whitchurch Town Council. It is a public access defibrillator and available for everyone to use. The cabinet is not locked and therefore ideal for all emergencies.

Whitchurch Town Council have also invested in new CCTV for Jubilee Park. Following vandalism of the public toilets on several occasions and break-ins to the shed, the Council has installed CCTV covering these high ASB areas and has access to 24/7 images.

As you have probably seen, there is a new addition to the park: a brick-built bench celebrating that Whitchurch is at the heart of the Meres & Mosses local landscape. Students from Sir John Talbot's school were involved in the project and much of the artwork on the tiles has been produced by them.



Parks & Public Realm cont ...

Whitchurch Town Council wishes to thank all the people involved in finally getting a skate park built in our town. It has been a long while coming, but thanks to Town Councillors, Shropshire Councillors, council staff and young people we now have a fabulous skating/BMXing facility.

The skate park was opened during August last year with an event organised by the Town Council which included professional skaters from Canvas Spaces. Skaters, BMXers and young people on scooters came from far and wide and had a great day. Canvas Spaces organised a competition and the winner can be seen below with Canvas Spaces and the Mayor.



Civic Centre

Cllr John Sinnott - Chairman: Cllr Terry O'Neill - Vice Chairman

2018 into 2019 has seen a busy year with regards to work carried out in the Civic Centre and planning for the future.

The Civic Centre Committee have put together a business plan to agree short, medium and long-term goals and aspirations. Included in this is replacing all the lighting in the market hall with LED bulbs. In order for this project to progress, the ladder to give access to the loft-space has been fixed and a harness provided for staff safety, then the Council called in an expert company to remove or encapsulate the asbestos in the roof void. Following all this work Councillors have set up a working group to progress the project.

Unfortunately, during a lively private hire event, the Civic Centre front doors were bent. The Council had to replace the doors so that they locked properly and thankfully the perpetrators paid for the replacement.

Due to a large amount of fly-tipping by unknown people, the Council have installed a CCTV camera at the rear of the market hall, overlooking the entrance to the garage area. We now hope that this fly-tipping will cease.

Due to a successful and developing events programme, the Council have agreed to purchase 200 new chairs. The staff are currently searching for the right chairs to purchase.



Following a successful funding bid to WRAP, Whitchurch Town Council worked with Energy Analysis to undertake a feasibility study on solar energy. The Council allocated expenditure and 100 solar photovoltaic cells were installed in early 2019. The Council can now use solar energy during the day and will also receive money from the Feed-in-Tariff - a community win, win! Not only are the Council saving money, but among all

the benefits of solar panels, the most important thing is that solar energy is a truly renewable energy source.



The Civic Centre Main Hall floor has been refurbished and you can see from the before and after photographs below the difference. The true colour of the wood can now be seen:

Advertising space, especially for voluntary groups and charitable organisations, can be difficult to find, especially if it's free. Whitchurch Town Council has a fantastic large display case that local organisations can book, free of charge, to use for one month at a time. Please contact the Town Centre Manager, Zoe Dean, tcm@whitchurchcouncil.uk to book. Displays which have previously been exhibited are information on the WW1 Armistice Day commemorations and MacMillan Fund-raising week:



Heritage

Cllr Bev Duffy - Chairman: Cllr Terry O'Neill - Vice Chairman



A major change this year is that Whitchurch Town Council has signed the lease with Whitchurch Museum and Archives CIO (WM&A CIO) for the Heritage Centre. As tenants, WM&A CIO are now able to operate the Museum and Archives with more freedom and have greater access to grants, including those for building improvements.

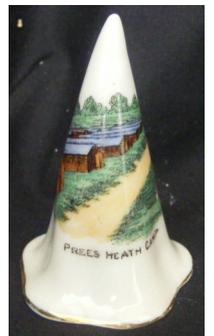
The Heritage Business Plan has been produced with short, medium and long term goals for the maintenance of the listed Heritage Centre. This year a new, more efficient heating boiler has been fitted, the windows and outside walls are going to get a fresh coat of paint and any repairs required for the roof and guttering will be carried out.



Dr Judith Hoyle, the volunteer Curator, successfully bid for a 'Ready to Borrow' grant from Arts Council England of £38,826.29 which was used to replace the outside doors with automatic ones which provide improved access for all. The rest of the money was used to buy a very smart, state of the art, controlled environment display cabinet with attached illuminated drawers which currently house the St Alkmund's Church collection of 18th century silverware, which is definitely worth seeing.



There have been many new acquisitions of local historical artefacts and documents this year, some having been donated by local residents, some being bought with money donated by the public.



Heritage

continued ...



These include paintings by local artists Jessie Furber and Kath Parbutt, WW1 related items, Whitchurch football club programmes and items of commemorative china connected to the town and its surrounding area.

There are lots of interesting new displays and exhibits and the Museum is looking very good indeed. The number of visitors recorded for 2018 was in excess of 2000.

The Heritage Open Days on the 14 & 15 September had several of Whitchurch's historic buildings open to the public including the Museum and Archive and the ever popular climb up the St Alkmund's Church tower. The view of the town is amazing!

People can research their family background at the Family History group, which continues to meet on a Friday upstairs in the Museum.



John Mellor
LIVED HERE



Killed in action in Greece
2nd December 1918 aged 27

Named on the
Whitchurch War Memorial

MediaActive Presents...
Eyewitness - Champions of Flight
At the HERITAGE CENTRE until December 5th



The Museum hosted a very interesting and informative talk on the role of Prees Heath during WW1 by volunteer David Broad for WHAG (Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group). So

many people wished to attend that the talk had to be repeated for those unable to get a seat; a great success! The museum also got involved with the Whitchurch Armistice Commemorations: they researched all the people from WW1 who had died during the war and where they had lived in Whitchurch. Each address was given a small poster [as above] to display in their window, giving the name of the person who had lived there, where and when they died and their age - the list was also on display at the Armistice event - it was quite moving to read the names and ages of these local people.

The Curator continues to do an excellent job along with the twenty active volunteers who care for the collection, create displays, carry out research, lead groups on guided walks, produce publications and act as stewards in the Museum.

In 2018 volunteer time averaged 500 hours per month, the equivalent of more than 3.5 full-time employees.

Whitchurch Town Council wish to thank all of the Museum & Archives volunteers for their continued and dedicated hard work and for curating a noted museum in Shropshire.



Finance

Cllr Alan Chesters - Chairman: Cllr John Sinnott - Vice Chairman

Annually, Whitchurch Town Council receives the Neighbourhood Fund element of the Community Infrastructure Levy. For the financial Year 2018-19 we have received £82,978.

With these finances in place, each Committee has developed it's own business plan, with short, medium & long-term projects, which the Council will prioritise. The Community Infrastructure Levy has specific criteria in that any money spent on a project must be linked to the new housing developments. Specifically this can include highway projects, in partnership with Shropshire Council; upgrading and expansion of play areas, as well as other community related projects.

The Council has expanded its repertoire of events and to enable it to be easier to purchase tickets, we have now developed a Ticket Source website specifically for Civic Centre events: www.ticketsource.co.uk/whitchurch-civic-centre. For more information on events and to purchase tickets online please visit this site. You can still purchase tickets over the counter in the Civic and our friendly Hub staff will be pleased to help.

Service Level Agreements have been written to enable the Council to work in a professional manner with local organisations who wish to use the Councils staff and services for events.

The Council continues to support Blackberry Fair, not only financially, but with staff time, prior to the event and on the day. This great annual event, run by a separate Community Interest Company, is spectacular for this town and draws in the crowds. It was the inspiration for all the other town events, which are mostly lead by the Town Council, including the Food & Drink Festival and the Party in the Park.

Staffing still remains the most significant outgoing for the Council, but we are striving to ensure better and effective use of public money and the Council's assets, including staff. The Accounts Officer is nearing the end of AAT training, which can only be good news for the Council.

Another advancement for this Council that is that finally charitable trust funds have been set up for C J Berrington Trust and Frank Greaves Trust. These will be registered with the Charities Commission imminently, but the funds this year are not included within our main accounts, but as separate accounts with their own funds.

The council's website has not been the most informative place for this Council over the last year, and work is now in progress to update and develop the site to make it work easier to find out information and to include up to date agendas and minutes much quicker.

A further significant outgoing is the running of the Civic Centre. The Town Council reported last year that Shropshire Council have agreed to transfer the freehold to the Town Council. But currently, this transfer has still not taken place, but this Council are continuing to contact Shropshire Council and chase the matter up.

Finance

continued ...

Whitchurch Town Council has renewed its membership of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils. This membership enables Councillors and staff to attend training, paying membership rates and keep up to date with all that is happening in the County.



Whitchurch Town Council continue to provide more Christmas lights annually, this year investing £13,442. This cost covered new infrastructure to install the new lighting at the top of the High Street as well as putting up and taking down the light decorations.

The Council has also invested money in purchasing:

- a reconditioned photocopier for the office, this has made work quicker and much more cost-efficient.
- new CCTV systems in Jubilee Park & at the rear of the market hall. The new CCTV in Jubilee Park has 4G connection to the Civic Centre so that images can be viewed remotely, costing in the region of £7,000.
- Solar PV panels for the market hall roof, costing just under £30,000.
- 10 new gazebo's, some with the Council's emblem, which are helping us to promote ourselves and look more professional.

Finally, we are pleased to report, that good fiscal management has meant that the increase of council tax payable to Whitchurch Town Council has only risen by 0.08%.



Events & Entertainment

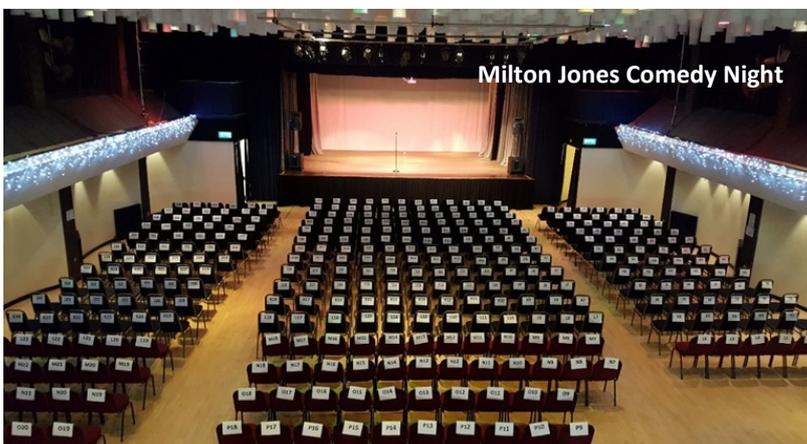
Cllr Andy Hall - Chairman: Cllr Harvey Vasey - Vice Chairman

The Entertainment & Events Committee was a newly formed committee for the 2018/2019 Council Year. The committee had a very busy year with a busy and exciting performance schedule.

Through the late Keith Chegwin, the Civic Centre has been very fortunate to secure a professional pantomime company who now regularly frequent the theatre during their yearly tours. The pantomime run continued its success @Civic Centre with a five-day run over the Christmas Holidays in December 2018 with 'Aladdin' attracting 850 guests from Boxing Day to 30th



December 2018. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers who work tirelessly at these events from selling tickets, to organising seats, serving at the tuck shop and checking tickets. These events are hard work and a lot of effort goes on behind the scenes in order to bring the public the best possible shows.



The Civic Centre attracts both community and professional room hire. Perhaps the centre's biggest accolade for the year ending 2018/2019 has been working in partnership with Funny Beeseness Comedy Club who have brought big names stars such as Mock the Week's Milton Jones and comedian and movie star Omid Djalili to the venue within two months of one

another, as well as a whole host of other comedians. Both comedy nights were near to sell-out shows and showcased the venue at its very best.

In May 2018 the Civic Centre hosted the fifth annual Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival which was a great weekend for the town. The date was shared with the Royal Wedding and FA Cup Final so there was some competition! Followed, in June by yet another successful Party in the Park, helped tremendously by the beautiful sunshine.

As the revamp of the Civic Centre theatre is still only in its infancy not all of the events held in 2018 were a success, but the Town Council is committed to providing a range of shows and events for local people. The Council will also continue to encourage percentage split deals in order to limit the Town Council's financial risk.

Events & Entertainment

continued

2018-2019 Show Rundown

Friday 23rd November 2018 – Funny Beeseness Comedy Night headline act Milton Jones

Saturday 24th November 2018 – Elvis Odyssey Tribute starring Josh Whittall

Wednesday 28th November 2018 – Neil Sands Productions “Christmas Memories”

Friday 14th December 2018 – The Jerseys, Tribute to Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons

26th – 30th December 2018 Anton Benson Productions Christmas Pantomime “Aladdin”

31st December 2018 – New Year’s Eve feat. Groove Dynamite

Friday 24th January 2019 – Funny Beeseness Comedy Night headline act Omid Djalili

Saturday 19th February 2019 – Over 18s Pantomime “Snow White”

Saturday 9th March – Funny Beeseness Comedy Night feat. “Angelos & Barry”

Friday 22nd March 2019 – Neil Sands Productions Sentimental Journey Matinee Concert

Wednesday 17th April 2019 – Anton Benson Productions Easter Pantomime “Beauty & the Beast”

In March of this year the Civic Centre released Issue One of the Civic Centre Events Programme, showcasing the venue’s up and coming acts, as well as providing space for community adverts. The venue also introduced online ticket sales, through Ticket Source, in 2018 for all shows, as well as purchasing a wireless card machine for payments on the hub, expediting the booking process for our customers.

It is the Town Council’s vision to make the Civic Centre an Arts and Entertainment destination that regularly secures a variety of high-quality shows for all aspects of the community. For the 2019/2020 Financial

Year the Town Council has budgeted to improve and update the lighting and sound systems to attract and accommodate bigger acts, as well as committing to the purchase of new chairs for the Main Hall. There is a lot of work to be completed in order to modernise the theatre space but as we move into a new Council year, I feel confident that some of the wish-list can be completed.

The Civic Centre’s programme of events is shaping up nicely for 2019-2020 and we look forward to bringing our residents an abundance of high-quality shows both now and in the future.

If you have any suggestions for future shows you would like to see at the Civic Centre, then please do let us know. This is your local venue!



Council 2018-2019

Mayor & Chairman

Tony Neville

Deputy Mayor

Bev Duffy

Councillors

Alan Chesters

Terry O'Neill

John Sinnott

John Martin

Lee Broders

Andy Hall

Mike Barker

Norma Raynes

Harvey Vasey

Scott Radford

Simon Hamlyn

Ruth Shepherd

Rose Snell

Town Clerk

Nicola Young

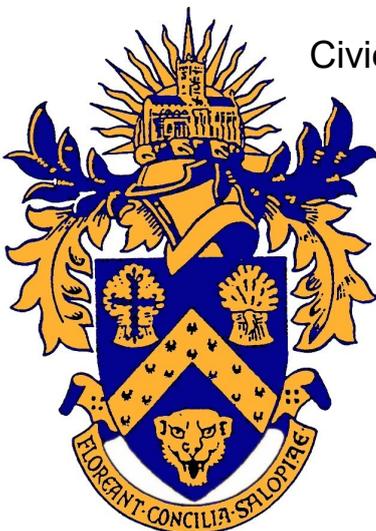
Town Centre Manager/Assistant Town Clerk

Zoe Dean

Civic Centre, High Street, Whitchurch SY13 1AX

Tel: 01948 665761

Website: www.whitchurchcouncil.uk



WHITCHURCH
SHROPSHIRE

Whitchurch Town Council