



BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



I am very pleased to present Bridport Town Council's annual report for 2017/18. The report provides a summary of the projects delivered by the Town Council over the past year, followed by more detailed information on its operational services, organisation and accounts.

Councillor Anne Rickard, Town Mayor and Chairman 2017/18



Civic Day

In April, the Town Mayor, Cllr Anne Rickard, welcomed civic dignitaries from across Dorset to her Annual Civic Day to showcase local community projects.

The Day included visits to the Youth and Community Centre, Museum, TIC, Town Hall and the Literary & Scientific Institute, finishing with a presentation on the Rights Respecting project.

Picture: Civic Day 2018
(Bridport Camera Club)

Town Council Projects 2017-18

Some of the projects undertaken this year include:

Local Government Reorganisation As part of the preparations for the new unitary authority, the Town Council has continued discussions with West Dorset District Council regarding the potential devolution of services. This has primarily involved seeking to agree a package of asset transfers, which would provide an income to help cover the costs of managing public toilets in Bridport and West Bay. If agreed, the future of the public toilets will be safeguarded under the Town Council's management.

Community Governance Review The Town Council requested a parish boundary review to consider bringing the Vearse Farm site into Bridport parish, bearing in mind the potential increased pressure on town services. The review, being conducted by West Dorset District Council, is due to report later in 2018.

Play Area Improvement Plan Following a public consultation on its play areas, the Town Council has allocated funding in its budgets for play area improvements. It is also working as part of a Steering Group, looking at options for the skate park.

Bridport and West Bay Public Wifi It is hoped to introduce public wifi into West Bay in Summer 2018.

New Community Bus Schemes The Town Council has been working with WATAG and other local stakeholders, looking at options for bus services in the town. It agreed to commission a six month pilot round town service, on Wednesday and Saturday, which is due to start over the summer.

Town Centre Traffic The Town Council completed an extensive consultation exercise on town centre traffic, including options for South Street. The outcome of the survey is to be considered by a new Working Group of key stakeholders, to be convened later in 2018.

Climate Change Strategy The Town Council is looking at projects that can be taken forward under the Low Carbon Dorset Programme and has allocated funding in its budgets to support environmental initiatives.

Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan The Town Council continued to support the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan, working with Allington, Bradpole, Bothenhampton & Walditch and Symondsburys parish councils. The Regulation 14 Public Consultation on the draft Plan and policies is to take place between July and September 2018

Town Council Services 2017-18

Allotments: The Town Council has 170 allotments and at the current time there are 27 people in the parish on the waiting list. New allotments at St Cecilia's were opened last year and have proved to be very popular.

Asker Meadows: The open space and adjoining New Zealand site are overseen by a well supported community group. Once again, the showground was used during the year by the Circus, the Jurassic Music Festival and the Food Festival.

Borough Gardens: The Borough Gardens community group, supported by the Town Council, has met regularly on site, making continued improvements to the Gardens. The Gardens were also used for events during the year.

Bridport Football Club: The Town Council has the freehold ownership of this land and the Football Club has an existing lease. The District Council manages the car park on behalf of the Town Council, with the proceeds split equally between the Football Club and Town Council. The multi use games arena on the site is free to use during the day and continues to be very popular.

Bridport Local Area Partnership: The Town Council continues to support BLAP and receives a £6,000 annual funding contribution from the District Council. In the past year, BLAP has led on projects looking at homelessness and working with the parish and town councils, to look at the options to work together on delivering services, which may be devolved after local government reorganisation.

Car Parking: The Town Council continues to work with West Dorset District Council to seek to identify additional car parking capacity in Bridport and West Bay. New parking places on its land at Plottingham are now available.

Cemetery: The Town Council manages the Bridport Cemetery, which is such an important and highly regarded asset for the town.

Coastal Community Team: The Town Council supports the Bridport and West Bay Coastal Community Team (CCT), which is a local partnership formed to produce an Economic Plan and deliver projects for the area. A number of CCT supported projects are being delivered this year, including the re-opening of the West Bay Methodist Chapel as an innovative and welcoming Discovery Centre. The Discovery Centre project is being led by the Bridport Area Development Trust.

Community Transport: A Working Group, with representatives from the Town Council, WATAG and BLAP considered the findings of a feasibility study into bus services in the area and options for community led solutions, at a time of reductions in local services. The Town Council has agreed to commission a round Bridport bus service on market days (Sat and Weds), which it is hoped will start as a six month pilot later this year.

Events: The Town Council was represented at the Food Festival, Melplash Show and the Community Fair, as well as providing support for the Christmas Cheer and Hat Festivals and processing road closure applications for all community events in the year. It also organised the Remembrance Parade in November.

Finances: In setting its budget for 2018/19, the Council had to meet another annual reduction of £13,002 in the Council Tax Support Grant, (In total, over 5 years, the Town Council has had a funding reduction of £58,237) and make provision to safeguard services that could be at risk from local government reorganisation. The Town Council has agreed a Capital budget to support the delivery of projects in the next 2-3 years.

Grants: Council funding for the Leisure Centre, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Museum, Arts Centre and Youth and Community Centre continued at existing levels under Service Level Agreements, which run until 2019. It also provides one off funding for community groups to support the delivery of projects. In total in 2017/18, the Town Council awarded £36,750 in grants.

Highways and Transportation: The Town Council considered a large number of issues over the year, including the consultation on town centre traffic and local bus services.

Highway Verge Maintenance: The Council continued to maintain the highway verges, as part of a Service Level Agreement with Dorset County Council. The Town Council receives a grant from Dorset County Council to assist with the work.

Lengthsman: The post of Lengthsman is funded by the Town Council and the local councils participating in the scheme - Bothenhampton & Walditch, Symondsburry and Bradpole Parish Councils. The work of the Lengthsman includes gully clearing, repairing notice boards, removing fly posting, grass cutting, removal of weeds, repairing benches throughout the town and similar tasks. The Town Council has also taken on additional work on behalf of Chideock Parish Council and Litton Cheney Parish Council.

Town Council Services 2017-18

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): The Town Council has been meeting regularly with West Dorset District Council, to discuss the potential devolution of discretionary services, that may no longer be funded after the unitary council is established. The Town Council is seeking agreement for asset transfers, to provide an income to support any delegation of services. The Council is looking to agree a package to support the possible local management of the public toilets. It is also seeking assurances about future funding of other discretionary services, including District Council grant funding for key local organisations such as the CAB, Arts Centre and Museum. Local Government Reorganisation continues to be a key priority for the Town Council.

The Market: The District Council agreed to transfer its right to manage the market to the Town Council, which will include the ownership of the Market Charter.

Market & Business Liaison Working Group:

The Working Group considers reports on the Tourist Information Centre, the market, town events and co-ordinates town publicity and promotion. It also oversaw the production of the new Town Guide.

Neighbourhood Plan: The Town Council continues to work with Allington, Bothenhampton and Walditch, Bradpole and Symondsburry Parish Councils on the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan. The delivery of the Plan is being co-ordinated by a community led Steering Group, overseen by a Joint Committee of all the participating councils, supported by the Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer post. The past year has seen work on the draft intentions, which went out for public consultation, and which are now being worked up into policies. There will be further consultation on the latest draft of the Plan and policies over the Summer.

Priory Lane - Community Orchard: The Bridport Community Orchard Group manages this site and hosts a number of popular events during the year, including the Apple Day and Wassailing events. The Orchard Group also manages the land at the top of Park Road. The sites are managed in partnership with the Town Council.

Planning: Over the past year, 96 applications were reported for comment to the Town Council's Planning Committee. The Town Council was also represented on the Vearse Farm Master Plan Working Group, looking at community issues such as affordable housing, and will be participating in the St Michael's Trading Estate Community Group.

Play Areas: The Town Council maintains a number of play areas, including the fully accessible West Bay Play Area. The Play Area was this year designated a fully inclusive play area, through the national Plan Inclusive Play Areas scheme. The Council participates in a Steering Group looking at the options for the Skate Park, and undertook a detailed consultation exercise on all its play areas, which it will be taking forward in the next year.

Riverside Gardens: The Town Council continues to maintain the Gardens.

Salt House: This venue continues to be well used. The popular summer West Bay Wednesday evening markets were held once again on the Green and in the Salt House.

Tourist Information Centre: As well as its tourism services, the TIC also now manages the Town Hall, Bucky Doo Square, the Bridport and West Bay web site and the production of the Town Guide. The TIC is very popular and visitor numbers are very high. This year saw the TIC using its online booking system to sell tickets for a number of events, including the Literary Festival and it continues to look at opportunities to offer increased services to the town. It is also now selling the Bridport reusable bottles and cups.

Town Hall: The Town Hall is open six days a week and can be booked through the TIC.

Youth and Community Centre: The Town Council helped to establish the new Charitable Trust, which has taken over the management of the Bridport Youth and Community Centre.

West Bay: The Town Council owned Water Sports Centre is used by the Canoe Club and the Gig Club. The Town Council continued to support the West Bay Forum and West Bay Days.

The Civic Year

For the past year, I have been totally absorbed in Bridport's civic life at a level not experienced by me before. I had the honour to be invited to events throughout Dorset, including the very many local festivals and events, which make Bridport the lively and community-engaging town it is. I feel proud to be part of a Town Council that puts in so much work and support to help make these events run smoothly, but much of the credit must also go to our townspeople, for the ideas, commitment, expertise and talent they always offer to the town.

I was particularly pleased this year to be able to launch our Citizens' Charter, making Bridport the first Rights Respecting Town in the UK. It was a very busy and very enjoyable year and I would like to thank all the staff, especially Linda Bullock, and my Deputy Mayor, Cllr Barry Irvine, for all their support.

Cllr Anne Rickard Town Mayor 2017/18

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Elected 4 May 2017



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How the Council Works

The Council comprises 18 councillors - 9 to represent the South ward and 9 to represent the North ward. All Councillors meet as the full Council to take the major decisions and oversee all activities of the Town Council. The Council appoints three main committees - Planning, Finance & General Purposes and Environment & Social Wellbeing. These are supported by a number of sub committees and working groups. Councillors are also appointed to serve on local outside organisations.

The Town Council meets six times a year at 7.00 pm on a Tuesday. The Planning Committee meets monthly on Mondays. The Finance and General Purposes and Environment and Social Wellbeing committees meet on Wednesdays, four or five times a year. The Council's Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee meets quarterly. Agendas are normally issued seven clear days before the meetings and are posted on public notice boards throughout the town and on the Council's website.

The press and public are welcome to attend all committee, sub committee and full Council meetings and the public may put questions or make statements on any matter on the agenda, in public forums at the beginning of all of these meetings. The minutes should be available within three working days of the meeting. They are available at the library, Mountfield and on the Town Council website.

The Calendar of Meetings for the Year is on the Town Council's web site (www.bridport-tc.gov.uk) and on notice boards. Please contact the Town Council for any information regarding Council meetings.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2018**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018****CURRENT ASSETS**

Payments in advance	8,101
Debtors	28,278
Stock	9,192
Money Market Deposits	205,296
Cash at Bank	892,385
Cash in Hand	<u>18</u>

TOTAL ASSETS 1,143,270

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Creditors 127,513

NET ASSETS 1,015,757

REPRESENTED BY:

General reserve as at 1 April 2017 402,218
Net surplus for the year 8,478

General reserve as at 31 March 2018 410,696

Earmarked reserve as at 1 April 2017 70,798
Contribution to reserves 65,991
Earmarked funds expended -15,418

Earmarked reserve as at 31 March 2018 121,371

Larger project reserve as at 1 April 2017 147,569
Payments during the year 0

Larger project reserve as at 31 March 2018 147,569

TIC* reserve as at 1 April 2017 150,000
Contribution towards running costs -30,000

TIC* reserve as at 31 March 2018 120,000
(*Tourist Information Centre)

Capital reserve as at 1 April 2017 219,321
Payment during the year -3,200

Capital reserve as at 31 March 2018 216,121

TOTAL RESERVES 1,015,757

INCOME

Precept	569,698
Council Tax Support Grant	13,002
Interest and investments	6,450
Allotments	5,431
Cemetery	24,067
Frontages	390
Market	89,131
Amenity Areas and Playing Fields	29,797
Mountfield	40,925
Salt House	7,745
Town Hall	22,406
Tourist Information Centre	278,718
Transfer from reserves	30,000
Parish Clustering	8,447
Events	270
Community Initiatives	1,012
CCTV	16,837
Salary Contributions	<u>6,000</u>

1,150,326

EXPENDITURE

Administration	251,331
Office Expenses	10,399
Mountfield	46,901
Salt House	3,221
Town Hall	21,111
Tourist Information Centre	352,448
Cemetery	43,614
Civic	5,222
Members' Allowances	13,464
Market	19,802
Amenity Areas and Playing Fields	172,300
Parish Clustering	26,757
Grants and Donations	37,250
Community Planning	31,570
CCTV	21,882
Town Plan Projects	23,651
Other Services	<u>60,925</u>

1,141,848

NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR 8,478

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of Bridport Town Council as at 31 March 2018 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.