

Pershore Town Council



Annual Report 2019/2020

27th May 2020

Report from the Town Mayor – Councillor Chris Parsons MBE

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I would normally be writing this report to be presented at our annual Town Meeting. Unfortunately, due to the current Coronavirus crisis such meetings have been cancelled but it is only right that we should reflect on the past year.

Our town continues to grow with extra housing appearing to take up every available piece of land surrounding our town. The Town Council is especially concerned regarding the proposal in the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Review for a large development in the area close to Tiddesley Wood. I am pleased that members of the Town Council opposed this development unanimously. It is important that we preserve such areas of the Pershore hinterland both for this and future generations.

Despite the Town Council's preference for a roundabout on the Station Road/Wyre Road junction, the County Council pressed ahead with the installation of traffic lights. These are now installed and following some early problems appear to be working satisfactorily.

I am pleased to report that, once again, although we had a very wet Spring, we have not had to rely on the flood defences installed in 2009 to keep our town dry. However, the part of the defence running through the allotment site continues to break up causing problems for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists. The Environment Agency have finally acknowledged the problem and have planned for work to rectify the situation. This was due to commence in March this year but has now been put on hold due to the Coronavirus crisis. The condition of some of our allotments continues to be of concern and tenants are being regularly reminded of their obligation under the tenancy agreement to maintain their allotment in a good condition. Giving due consideration to neighbouring properties the Town Council has put a ban on bonfires at the allotments between March and October. This will be reviewed in the Autumn.

Some residents have commented about certain areas of St Andrews Garden looking unkept. This is intentional as we are trying to allow an area of wildflowers to become established. This should encourage insects and other wildlife to naturalise in this area. This will also be reviewed after twelve months.

Our towns Twinning continues to flourish with regular exchanges between both Bad Neustadt and Plouay. The 40th anniversary of our twinning with Bad Neustadt was celebrated in style in 2019 with Bad Neustadt visiting Pershore in August and our returning to Bad Neustadt in October. Bad Neustadt hosted a magnificent reception in their new Town Hall with some 400 people. I reassured our twin towns that Brexit will make no difference to the wonderful relationships that have developed over the years.

Worcestershire County Council are reviewing its library service throughout the county. Our library is a very important part of Pershore everyday life and, with this in mind, the Town Council will do everything possible to ensure that the library continues to serve the people of our town in the best way possible. The option of Pershore becoming an open library is not supported by the Town Council.

Pershore Cemetery is often commented upon as being one of the best kept cemeteries in the county, something we are extremely proud of. The work of repairing the perimeter wall continues. The length of the wall dictates that this will be a costly operation and for this reason the work is scheduled to be carried out in stages over the next few years. Burial fees have been kept to a minimum and far below many of our neighbouring authorities. The chapel, with its newly installed stained-glass window, continues to provide an ideal venue for smaller funeral services and those who have used it often pass very favourable comments regarding the intimate setting that it provides. The digitalising of the cemetery records continues. This is proving a very lengthy and time-consuming operation, but once completed, will provide staff and public with a much enhanced and user-friendly system for accessing records. The long-awaited planning permission for the new toilet has been approved and work on this is due to start very shortly.

Whilst the current lockdown is in place the Town Council considered it sensible to carry out the refurbishment of both the Town Hall and the library. These buildings are not being used at present so it should cause little inconvenience to hirers once we return to normal.

The Town Council planned to build a brand new Community Hall and Family History Centre in the field that it owns off Defford Road. This project was supported by the majority of councillors and planning permission was obtained in early 2019. It was also awarded a substantial grant of New Homes Bonus funds by the District Council. Unfortunately, after taking the results of a large public consultation into account the development did not have sufficient support to

proceed. In the meantime, the field has been rented to a local farmer as grazing land as a means of low maintenance.

The 8th May 2020 was to be a commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VE day. A concert, planned to take place in Pershore Abbey, regrettably had to be cancelled due to the Coronavirus as many other events in the town also had to be curtailed. It was understood that several street parties were being planned but social distancing placed severe restrictions on what should have been a very memorable day.

One of the priorities identified in the adopted Town Plan was the establishment of a “Wellbeing Hub.” This was to provide a centre where residents could speak to volunteers in an informal way over a cup of coffee and be guided as to where help, if needed could be obtained. The Hub had been running a few weeks from the Library prior to lockdown but those volunteers have now been using their skills to support the lonely and isolated at this difficult time.

Princess Diana’s Memorial garden has fallen into a poor state over the past twenty-three years. Contracts have been awarded for the refurbishment of this important entrance to our riverside area. Earlier in the year Travellers took up illegal residence at the riverside and, at the Councils expense, enforcement proceedings had to be instigated for their removal. A barrier has been installed to prevent this happening again.

The Tour of Britain speed trial came to Pershore in mid-September. This prestigious event closed the town to make way for the thousands of visitors who came to witness the event. The organisers of the event could not speak highly enough of their chosen location and indicated how much they would like to return at some time in the future.

Michael Doley kindly presented the Town Council with a model locomotive named the ‘Pershore Plum’. This locomotive was so named to celebrate the centenary of the discovery of the Yellow Egg plum in Tiddesley Wood.

Many of you will have noticed that Town Clock now only tells the correct time twice a day due to a major fault. The Town Council have spent a considerable amount on this clock over recent years and is now investigating a more lasting repair or replacement of the internal workings of the clock.

In these modern days most of the Town Council administration is computerised and our ancient system finally ground to a halt. This necessitate the installation of a new system which has greatly enhanced all our working practices.

As the current lockdown and social distancing continues the Council is investigating various opportunities for carrying out virtual meetings whist ensuring the confidentiality of certain business and the security of both Council and other computers.

The Town Council renewed its Quality Gold Status during the year. Once again Pershore have led the way by being the first Town Council in the country to receive this accolade. Our thanks must go to the Town Clerk for all her hard work in achieving this high standard for our Council.

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought about a very different way of life to us all and I would finish this report my expressing my personal thanks to all those members of our community who have gone that extra mile in helping those less fortunate than ourselves by collecting and delivering medicines and groceries or simply keeping in touch with a vulnerable or lonely resident. This is the time when the community of Pershore is seen in its true colours.

Councillor Chris Parsons MBE
Town Mayor

Councillor Activities:-

During the year, as well as attending Council meetings and making decisions, councillors have also represented the Council on a number of outside bodies. These include:-

Citizens Advice Bureau
Persore Volunteer Centre
Persore Town Football Club
Emergency Planning
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Vale Public Transport Group
Riverside Youth Centre

A report from each of the Council representatives on these groups will be available on our web site in due course and are available for residents on request.

WHAT THE COUNCIL DOES

The Town Council owns and manages:-

- Riverside land at King George's Field and Avon Meadows
- Grassed play area at Cherry Orchard
- Allotments in Defford Road
- Persore Cemetery and car park
- Town Hall and walkway
- Persore Library and Visitor Information centre
- Land off Holloway – available to walkers for picnics and a rest area
- Small area of land adjacent to Holloway
- White Railings moorings (leased to A.N.T.)

The Town Council controls and manages:-

- St Andrews Gardens

The Town Council provides:-

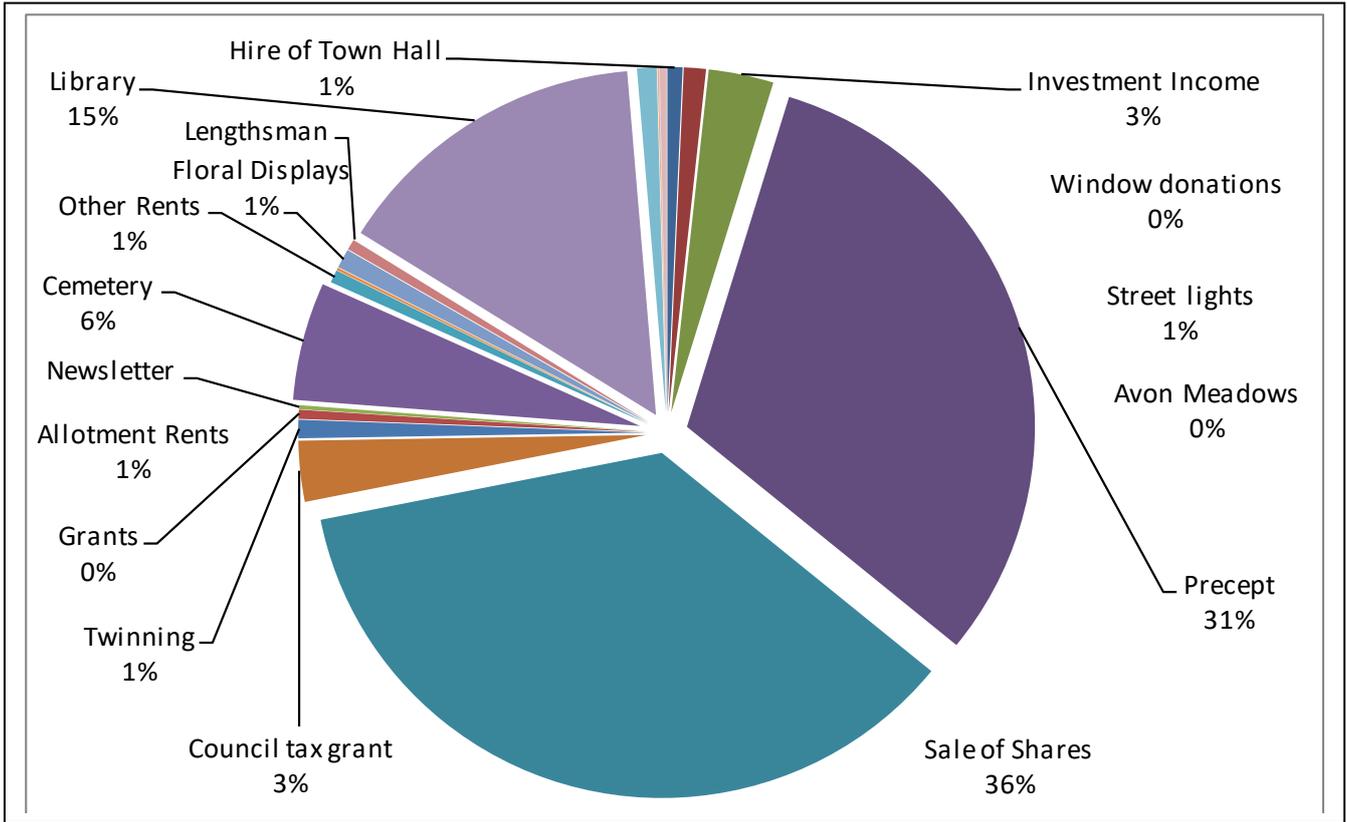
- Street lighting in residential areas
- Bus Shelters
- Vehicle Activated signs
- Town Clock on the Town Hall
- Benches and litter bins
- Flower tubs, hanging baskets and floral displays
- Christmas lights
- Grants to local organisations
- Free accommodation at the Library and a grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau, reviewed annually
- Rooms in the Town Hall and the Library for hire to local groups in the town
- Exchanges, through the Twinning and Tourism Committee, to our twin towns
- The Visitor Information Centre at the Library
- The land for the Riverside Youth Centre on a lease
- The land for Pershore Town Football Club on a lease
- The land for the Leisure Centre on a lease
- Some of land occupied by the Avon Meadows wetlands
- Free accommodation for the Heritage Centre

Town Council Finances - Please see charts on the next page showing how the Council has spent your money during the year to 31st March 2020.

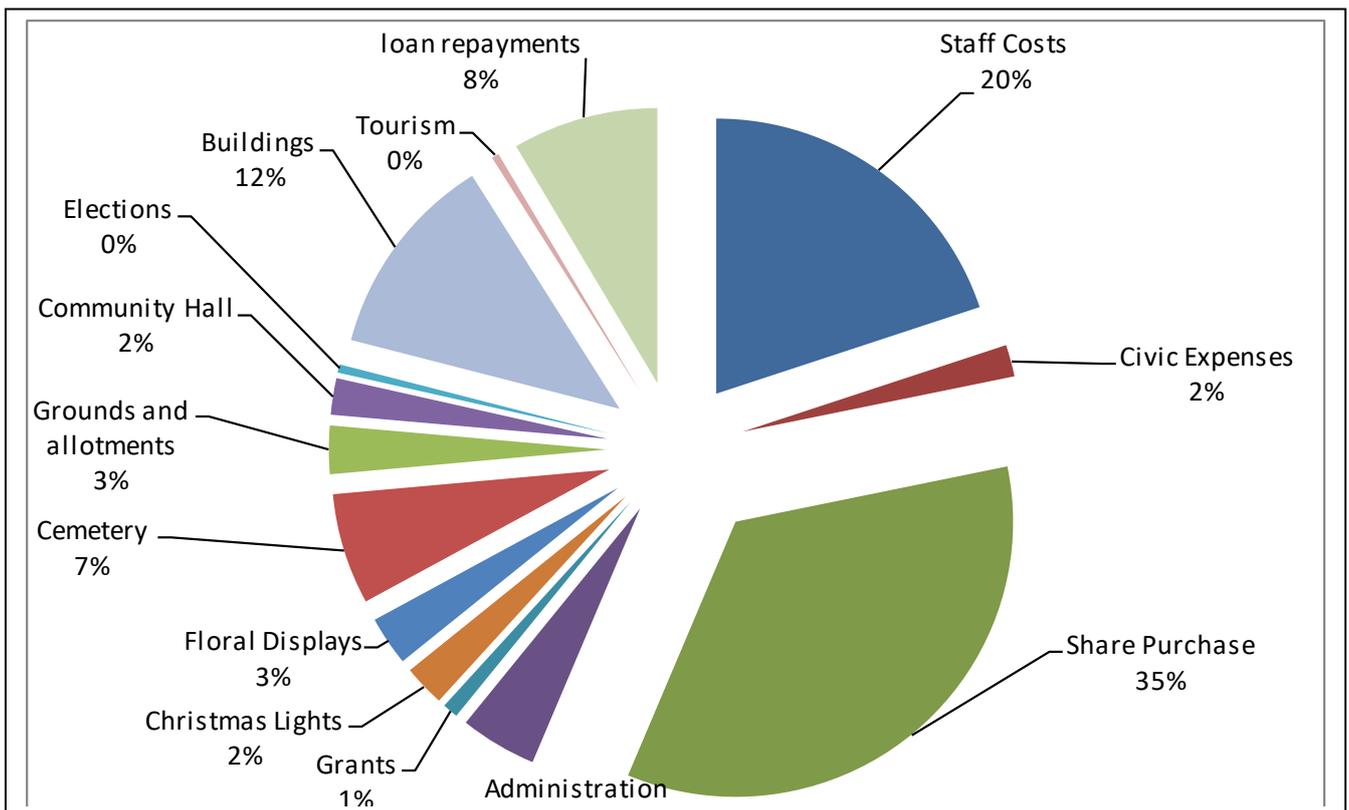
If you would like more detailed information, or a set of the accounts, please contact the Town Clerk after the end of May.

Please note that 0% indicates income or expenditure of less than £3500.

Total income £662,557



Total expenditure £649,040



Council and Committee meetings for the year 2020

Pershore Town Hall, 34 High Street, Pershore

(Cemetery Committee will take place at the Cemetery Chapel in summer)

May 14 th	Town and Annual Meetings
May 21 st	Planning Committee and Town Council
May 28 th	Cemetery Committee
June 3 rd	Youth Council (Town Hall)
June 4 th	Finance and Property Committee
June 18 th	Planning Committee and Town Council
July 1 st	Youth Council (High School)
July 9 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
July 16 th	Planning Committee and Town Council
July 23 rd	Cemetery Committee
Aug 6 th	Finance and Property Committee
Aug 10 th	Twining and Tourism Committee
Sept 3 rd	Planning Committee and Town Council
Sept 10 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Sept 16 th	Youth Council (High School – TBC)
Sept 24 th	Cemetery Committee
Oct 1 st	Finance and Property Committee
Oct 7 th	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Oct 15 th	Planning Committee and Town Council
Nov 4 th	Youth Council (High School)
Nov 9 th	Twining and Tourism Committee
Nov 12 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Nov 19 th	Planning Committee and Town Council
Nov 26 th	Cemetery Committee
Dec 2 nd	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Dec 3 rd	Finance and Property Committee
Dec 17 th	Planning Committee and Town Council

Please note at the time of this report, all meetings are suspended until members either decide to undertake virtual meetings, or Government restrictions under the Coronavirus emergency plans are lifted. Please see our website for updated information on this.

Members of the public are invited and welcome to attend all council and committee meetings and there is an opportunity to speak at the start of each meeting.

If you would like to ask a specific question at a Town Council meeting please give this to the Town Clerk one week before the meeting so that it may be given time for debate by members as part of the agenda if necessary. Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings of the Council and its committees and speak during a debate if invited to do so by the Chairman.

Members of the Council until the next election, planned for May 2023

Cllr David Annis,	7 Woodward Close, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Dan Boatright	10, Abbey View Road, Pinvin	St Andrews
Cllr Peter Brookbank,	86, Station Road, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr M Chapman Pincher	7, Broad Street, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Robert Gillmor,	20, Loughmill Road, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr Richard Grantham	13, Meadow Walk, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr Julie Hemming	32, Nogains, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Art Lavelle	Church Street, Great Comberton	St Andrews
Cllr Julian Palfrey,	4, Mill Lane Close, Pershore,	Holy Cross
Cllr Chris Parsons MBE,	13 Allesborough Drive, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Valerie Smith	165, Farleigh Road, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr C G J Tucker,	10 Throckmorton, Pershore	St. Andrews
Cllr Liz Turier	38 Newlands, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Matthew Winfield,	34, Hunter Rise, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Val Wood,	20 Bridge Street, Pershore	Holy Cross

All members may be contacted through the Town Hall on the numbers or email address listed below. Members also have their details on the Town Council web site:- www.pershoretowncouncil.gov.uk. The Town Council also has a Facebook page called Pershore Town Council.

