

Pershore Town Council



Annual Report 2020/2021

13th May 2021

Report from the Town Mayor – Councillor Chris Parsons MBE

We come to the end of what has been a difficult Council year for everyone, knowing that the pandemic has affected everyone in various ways. Whilst things have been difficult at the Town Hall I am pleased that we have been able to continue providing a service to the residents of our town. Many of our regular events had to be cancelled, Carnival, Plum Fair, Jazz Festival and many others. The pandemic also forced a total rethink on VE commemorations and the all important Remembrance Day service. I am pleased that this Town Council, on behalf of its residents found alternative ways to remember these important days.

Certain businesses have also gone that extra mile by providing additional delivery services to those in need. I would pay particular tribute to a local pharmacy and all those who set about delivering medicines to our more vulnerable residents. Like other towns some of our residents have lost their lives to Covid 19. At this town meeting I, on behalf of Pershore Town Council, offer our sincere condolences to those families.

The Council has adopted the 'Twenty Minute Town' principle as it believes that most of what is required for daily use can be obtained from local outlets. If we support our local shops it will maintain a vibrant town centre. I thank the District Council for the relaxation of parking charges over recent months as a way of encouraging trade back into the High Street.

As the Town Hall had to remain closed to the public for much of the year, the Council took the opportunity to carry out a total refurbishment of the ground floor. This has resulted in a larger council chamber, a much larger kitchen, energy efficient lighting and other improvements. Various audio/visual equipment is currently being evaluated. This will provide those using the building with much enhanced facilities. The funding of this refurbishment, which has been held in reserves for many years, was from the proceeds of a previous claim against other parties. The conference room at Pershore Library is well used by many different groups. This has been redecorated with new carpet. As pandemic restrictions are now being relaxed we are able to take bookings for the use of both the Town Hall and the Library, simply contact the Town Hall for details. The installation of photovoltaic panels (PV) is currently being investigated for both buildings as a possible further cost saving both financially and environmentally.

Another finished project was the provision of a new toilet block at the cemetery. This has been completed using a local builder and in full consideration of its location within the curtilage of the listed chapel. The facility is, of course, fully DDA compliant and is also powered by a solar panel and therefore totally off grid.

The clock on the Town Hall, which was installed many years ago in memory of those who lost their lives in the wars, has proved unreliable over recent years. The internal workings have now been totally replaced using modern technology, this will, hopefully, provide the town with a far more reliable and accurate timepiece for many years to come.

The Town Plan, completed some years ago, indicated that our town would benefit from a 'Well Being hub' where residents could obtain information on a variety of

concerns they may have. The Town Council support this new venture and I am pleased to report that it should come to fruition in the very near future.

Our Cemetery Chapel continues to provide a much desired location for small funeral services. Sadly these have not been possible during the lockdown period and funeral services have had to be held at the graveside with only low numbers attending. We currently await further Government guidance as to when our chapel can be put back to full use. Any building like our chapel will require regular maintenance; this has continued throughout the lockdown period together with work on the repair of the perimeter wall.

Three new members of staff have joined the Council recently. All have settled in very well, taking on various responsibilities to ensure that the Council continues a high level of service.

To conform with the latest IT requirements the Council's website has been redesigned and upgraded. This should provide much easier access to all those who use this facility.

The small car park at Avon Meadows has been leased to Wychavon District Council for the past 25 years, however the District Council have decided not to renew this lease. The car park is now in a poor condition and various options on the future of this area are currently being considered.

Negotiations between the Town Council and the District Council have resulted in the car park at the rear of the library being made available for public use free of charge at weekends although the precise practicalities of this change are awaited.

The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) continues to raise concern. I believe that Pershore, just like many other similar towns, will be subjected to more housing development. It is extremely important that we continue our discussions with the various authorities and developers as to how and where any such development is considered. Any development affecting Tiddesley Wood is being strongly resisted.

The Station Road/Wyre Road junction continues to cause problems with safety barriers regularly suffering damage. The majority of Town Council members preferred a simple roundabout at the junction and produced a plan of how this could be achieved; local residents also campaigned for such a roundabout, but unfortunately the County Council continued with the installation of traffic lights. We can only hope that the additional works planned for this area resolve the current problems. The residents of that area have suffered several years of total chaos.

The lockdown has seen an increase in residents wanting allotments and I am pleased to report that we now have a waiting list of people wishing to embark on growing their own produce. Most of the allotments are well maintained and tenants have accepted the new terms of their tenancy especially the bonfire code.

An area of St. Andrews Garden has been left to 'wilding', some have referred to it as overgrown. This has been done to hopefully encourage more wildlife to this area. There will be further discussions on how this may be improved upon in due course.

The Redrow development in Besford Bridge Road (previously Rebecca Road) was completed with a footpath which leads directly onto the highway on Holloway. This is on a blind bend and poses a considerable danger, especially for young children. Discussions have been ongoing with the County Council regarding this extreme hazard to no avail. These discussions will continue until a satisfactory result is achieved.

Whilst the town twinning with Bad Neustadt and Plouay continues to flourish, exchange visits have not been possible. I know that those with friends in these twin towns have kept in regular contact using various social media, often comparing details of how our countries are dealing with the pandemic.

Sadly, I have to report that there have been several acts of vandalism at our library. This has cost the Council considerable sums to rectify. Youths have regularly climbed onto the roof, ripped slates off, tried to remove what they thought was lead and carried out other unsavoury acts which I am not prepared to detail here. The Library is covered by CCTV and we have obtained footage of those responsible. I would also thank the resident who has kindly provided photographs of the same. This matter is now in the hand of the Police and prosecutions will be encouraged wherever possible.

The difficulties of the year passed, has resulted in significant financial loss to the Council. Bookings for both the Town Hall and the Library ceased and investments have failed to produce the anticipated yield. Cost savings have been made where possible but it is highly likely that some austerity will need to be considered for the next year or two. When civic events ceased, I chose not to claim any mayoral allowance.

The quarterly Town Council Newsletter has been delivered to houses in Pershore by Newsquest, Councillors Gillmor, Hemming and Rowley. I thank those councillors for all their help in the distribution. The cost of producing and distributing the newsletter has been a drain on the Council's finances so a decision has been taken to make this an on-line publication with a small number being produced in-house for town centre distribution. I am confident that the Council will monitor its financial situation carefully during the months ahead.

The pandemic has prevented most of the Civic events taking place. The few that have been held have, correctly, incorporated social distancing and other precautionary measures. This has also prevented any charity fundraising in recent times. Fortunately we were able to organise several events prior to the pandemic crisis and all that it brought with it. I would like to thank everyone who supported my chosen charity, Prostate Cancer Support. Special thanks go to all the Council staff for their administrative help and all the stalwarts who regularly turned up to man the kitchen for the coffee mornings. With all the help and support from so many we are pleased to be able to donate a useful sum of money to the charity later this evening. This will be used to support those from the Pershore area who are suffering with Prostate Cancer.

I now come to the personal part of my report where I have the opportunity to say a few words of thanks. I have been fortunate to have had the reliability of Councillor

Palfrey as my deputy. Whenever I have been unable to carry out a Civic duty, Julian has been prepared to step up to the mark, taking my place in representing this Council. I would also pay my respects to the previous Mayor, Councillor Gillmor. Throughout my term the Council has faced many difficult situations that have needed to be handled by the Management Group. Both Councillors Palfrey and Gillmor have shown integrity, compassion and common sense with those difficult situations, thank you both.

Good working relationships are extremely important between the different levels of local government, town, district and county. For the past forty years our county councillor has been Liz Tucker. Liz has regularly attended our Town Council meetings and kept us informed of any item affecting Pershore and acted as a liaison between the two councils. I would like to place on record this Councils thanks to Liz for all the help she has given us over those forty years.

Angela Gerrard acted as my Chaplain for this mayoral term and I cannot thank her enough for all the help and unquestionable support throughout that time. She should also be congratulated for having the willpower to stay for what were often boring, and sometimes stormy, meetings.

We are very fortunate in having the staff that we have. They are both respected and liked in the town. They act as the face of this Council to the public, often taking unfair criticism and sometimes, thankfully rarely, abuse from irate residents. The public don't always appreciate the responsibilities of the various levels of local government. Hence the easiest option is to blame the local council.

Any team is only as good as its leader. We are extremely fortunate to have a Town Clerk who not only leads our team at the Town Hall but is also highly respected outside Council. She has built an excellent working relationship with officers at both District and County councils. She is highly respected by both the County and National Associations of Local Councils. She should take pride that she brought this Council up to Quality Gold standard. We were the first council the country to renew that accolade.

As well as every team needing a good leader, every Mayor will benefit from having a good consort. I, again, have been very fortunate in the support that Jan has given me as Mayoress. At any event when we have been representing the Council, Jan has acted as a wonderful ambassador to this town. She has socialised with representatives from other towns and organisations and has always said the right thing to the right person at the right time. She has also made sure that I am kept in order.

Finally I come to my Council colleagues. Whilst some Council meetings have become a little heated and firm views have been exchanged, I would thank everyone for the courtesy that you have afforded me, especially in the charring of difficult virtual meetings.

Tonight we will elect and invest our Mayor for the ensuing year. I wish that person a successful term in office.

We all hope that the difficulties of the past year are coming to an end and our town can once again return to the thriving social community of the past. We look forward to the carnivals, festivals fairs and fetes. In short we look forward to things returning to normal, just as they used to be.

On behalf of Jan and myself I thank you all for giving us the privilege and honour of serving as your town Mayor and Mayoress.

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

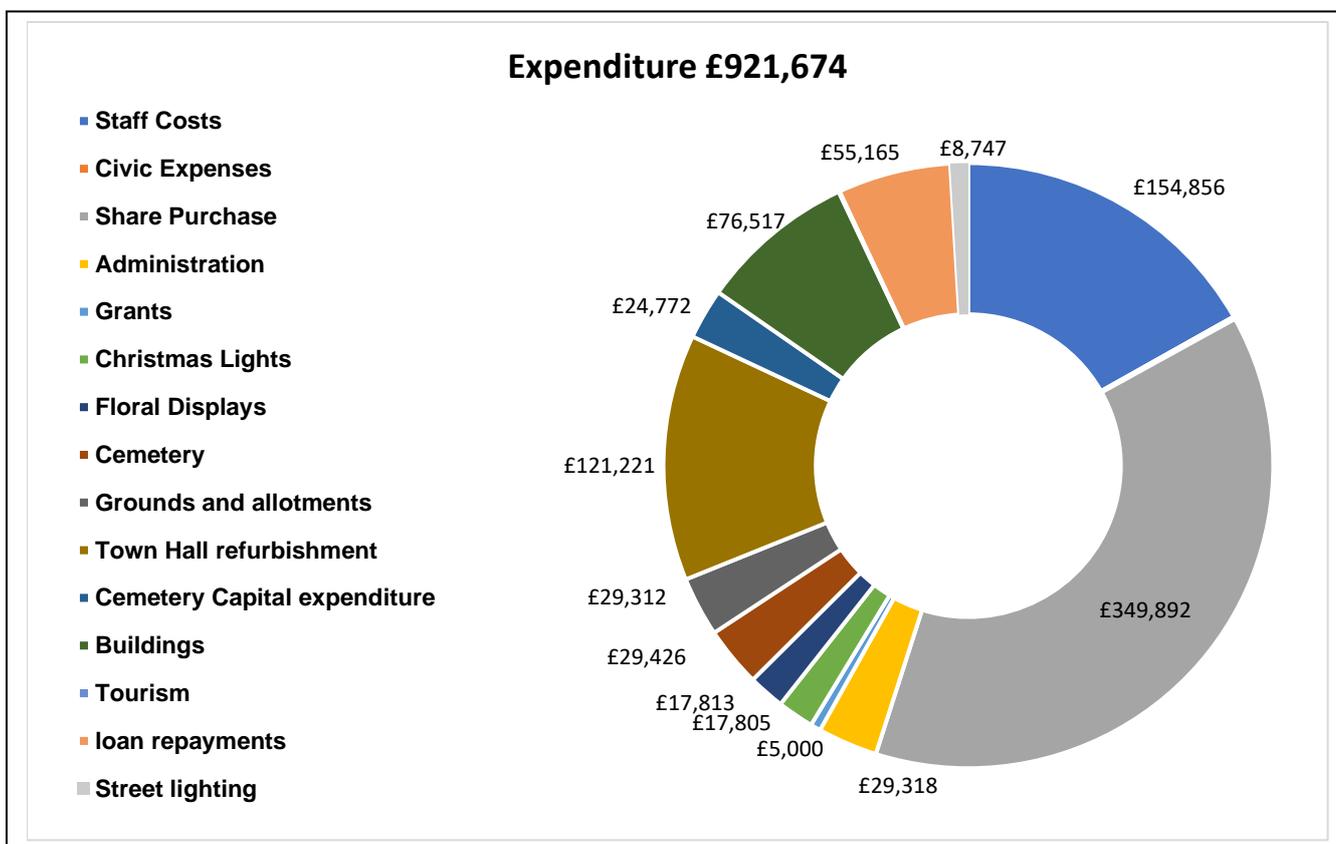
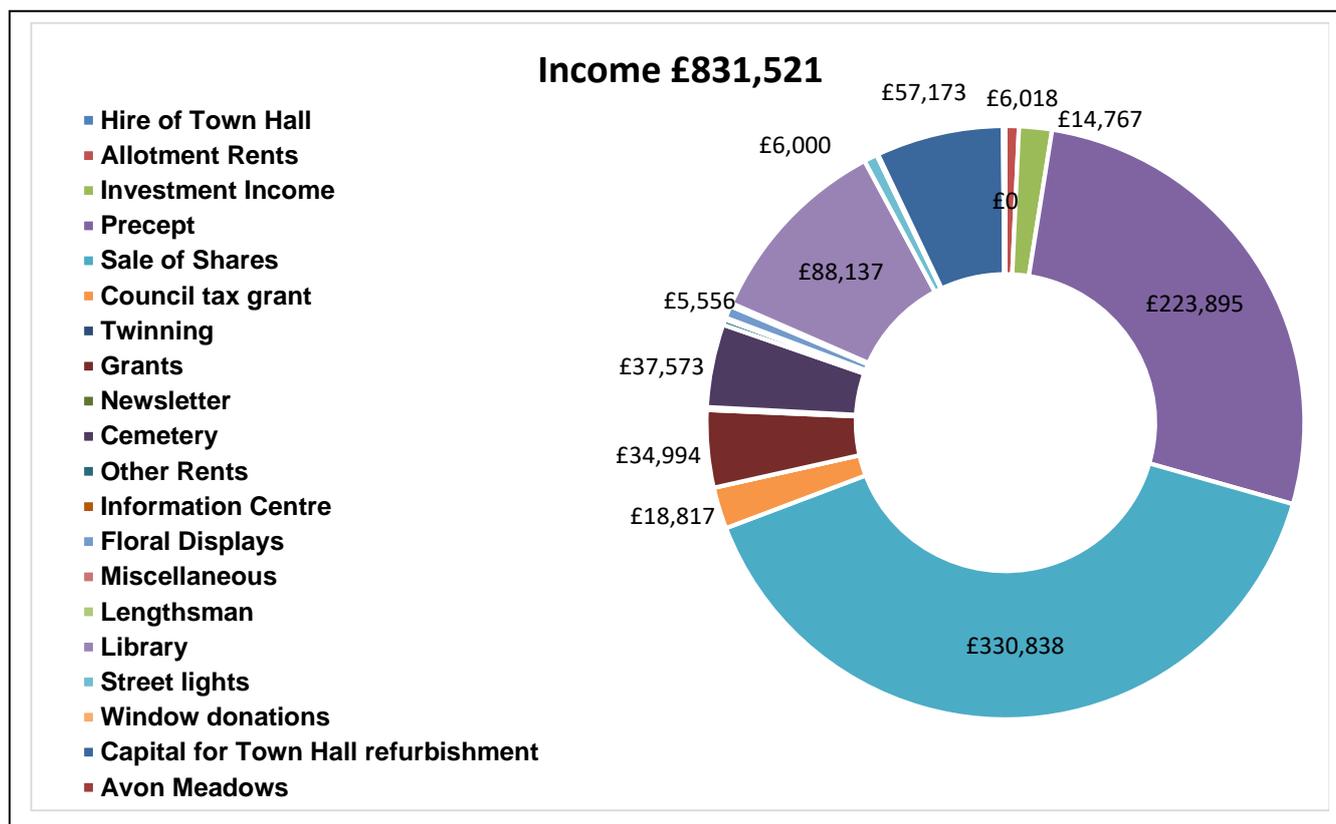
The Town Council provides:-

- 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 page 8 showing how the Council has spent your money during the year to 31st March 2021. A detailed copy of the financial statements is available on the Town Council website or hard copy on request

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



Full Council and Committee meetings for the year 2021/22
 Pershore Town Hall, 34 High Street, Pershore
 (Cemetery Committee will take place at the Cemetery Chapel in summer)

2021

May	20 th	Planning Committee Town Council
May	27 th	Cemetery Committee
June	3 rd	Finance and Property Committee
June	17 th	Planning Committee Town Council
July	8 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
July	15 th	Planning Committee Town Council
July	22 nd	Cemetery Committee
Aug	5 th	Finance and Property Committee
Aug	9 th	Twining and Tourism Committee
Sept	2 nd	Planning Committee Town Council
Sept	9 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Sept	15 th	Youth Council (High School – TBC)
Sept	23 rd	Cemetery Committee
Oct	6 th	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Oct	7 th	Finance and Property Committee
Oct	21 st	Planning Committee Town Council
Nov	3 rd	Youth Council (High School)
Nov	8 th	Twining and Tourism Committee
Nov	11 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Nov	18 th	Planning Committee Town Council
Nov	25 th	Cemetery Committee
Dec	1 st	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Dec	2 nd	Finance and Property Committee
Dec	16 th	Planning Committee Town Council

2022

Jan	5 th	Youth Council (High School)
Jan	13 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Jan	20 th	Planning Committee Town Council
Jan	27 th	Cemetery Committee

Feb	2 nd	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Feb	3 rd	Finance and Property Committee
Feb	14 th	Twinning and Tourism Committee
Feb	17 th	Planning Committee Town Council
Mar	2 nd	Youth Council (High School)
Mar	10 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Mar	24 th	Cemetery Committee
Apr	6 th	Youth Council (Town Hall)
Apr	7 th	Finance and Property Committee
Apr	21 st	Planning Committee Town Council
May	4 th	Youth Council (High School)
May	5 th	Amenities and Environment Committee
May	9 th	Twinning and Tourism Committee
May	12 th	Town and Annual Meetings
May	19 th	Planning Committee Town Council
May	26 th	Cemetery Committee

NB: Youth Council meetings commence at 2.00pm, Planning usually 7:00 pm, all other meetings at 7:30 pm.

Please note at the time of this report the country is still under Government restrictions. Whilst the Town Council will be meeting face to face from now on, it will continue to record and/or live stream the meetings so that members of the public only need to attend a meeting if they wish to speak. Please see our website for updated information as restrictions ease.

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	Holy Cross
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.