

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report 2012/13



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Lydney

Annual Town Meeting

at

The Town Hall, Lydney

On Monday 15th April 2013 at 7.00pm

All Parishioners on the Electoral Role are invited to attend the Annual Town Meeting.

B Berryman

CLlr B Berryman

Mayor – Lydney Town Council

AGENDA

(Meeting to be called to Order by the Mayor)

Housekeeping

1. Apologies
2. Adoption of the previous Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 16th April 2012
3. The Mayor's Annual Report for 2012/13
4. Annual Police Report
5. To receive the following Annual Town Council Reports:
 - ❖ Finance & Scrutiny Committee - Chairman's Report *(CLlr Pearman)*
 - ❖ Planning & Highways Committee – Chairman's Report *(CLlr Osborne)*
 - ❖ Amenities Committee Report *(CLlr B Thomas)*
6. Presentation of Lydney Town Council Accounts/Governance Statement for 2012/13 & Budget Overview for 2013/14
7. To receive the Annual County Councillor's Report *(CCllr Cooksley)*
8. To receive the annual War Memorial Officer's Report *(CLlr Osborne)*
9. To note the annual Charitable Trust Reports;
 - ❖ Bathurst Park
 - ❖ Lydney Recreation Ground Trust
10. To receive Community Reports *(as submitted)*
 - ❖ Lydney's Neighbourhood Development Plan
11. Public Question Time *(Questions submitted by the general public)*

**Annual Town Meeting
Held at Lydney Town Hall, Lydney
Monday 16 April 2012 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Lydney Town Council
W Osborne (Chairman), J Bartle, B Berryman, D Biddle, R Bonser, D Cooksley, J Cordon, D Edwards, C Harris, C Matthews, B Pearman, B Stapleton, B Thomas

Mrs J Smailes - Chief Executive Officer
Miss C Wheeler - Executive Officer

Forest of Dean District Council
District Cllr M Winship
District Cllr J Davis
District Cllr J Bevan

Gloucestershire Police
PC Kate Croudace

15 Members of the Public

Councillor Osborne welcomed all present to the meeting and explained that no practice fire evacuations were scheduled during the event. Attendees were then informed of the location of the fire exits and were reminded that questions from the electorate would be taken later in the meeting.

All attendees were provided with a bound version of Lydney Town Council's Annual Report 2011/12.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Whilst no apologies were received from Town Councillors, apologies for absence were received from District Cllr Glastonbury and duly accepted.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Assembly meeting dated 18 April 2011 were confirmed and approved as a true record and duly signed. **Proposed by Mrs N Moore, seconded by Mr Owen** (two members of the public).

3. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011/12** – Cllr W Osborne

Cllr Osborne made two presentations. The first presentation was to the Mayor's Cadet, Ben Vaughan, for his assistance during the Civic Year. The second presentation was to Miss Daisy Birt, the winner of the competition to design the Mayor's Christmas card.

Cllr Osborne expressed a belief that the previous year had been a steep learning curve for the Council and he felt that the Council had significantly improved its policies and procedures as a result. Cllr Osborne then proceeded to read out his report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

4. **ANNUAL POLICE REPORT**

PS Croudace read out her report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

5. LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Scrutiny – Cllr B Pearman

Cllr Pearman gave a brief overview of the events surrounding the Public Interest Report which had been received earlier in the year. It was stressed that as a result of employing the CEO, the Council had significantly strengthened its procedures, revised its Standing Orders, introduced a Committee system, considered its insurance requirements, introduced an appraisal system and also undertaken risk assessments, etc. Furthermore, the Council's accounts were now displayed in a format which was easier to understand and this information was provided to Councillors at each meeting. When reflecting on the Council's financial practices in previous years, Cllr Pearman gave a commitment that in the future the Council would not seek to draw on its General Reserves to cover any financial deficit but would ensure strong measures were in place so to address the budget forecast in an informed manner..

Cllr Pearman informed all present that the Council had also introduced a system of audit checks (in-house controls), in which two Councillors (on a rolling rota basis) audited the Council's accounts. Furthermore, it was the Council's intention to introduce a six monthly audit review and he stressed that the Council was committed to address any issues which may be highlighted as a result of said checks.

With regard to training, it was noted that the CEO was fully qualified (CiLCA) and was currently studying for a degree in Community Engagement and Governance; the Executive Officer had completed Working With Your Council (WWYC) and would now study for a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA); the Finance Assistant had commenced WWYC and was also undertaking a SAGE training programme. Councillors had also undertaken a training programme and had already attended the first of three sessions; one Councillor was also undertaking a degree course in Community Engagement and Governance, with another undertaking WWYC. Whilst Cllr Pearman accepted that in the recent year the Council had found itself in an unprecedented situation.

In consideration of the Year End figures, Cllr Pearman explained that the Council had had a number of services devolved to them from the District Council during the year, which had not been anticipated. Whilst the Council's General Reserves equated to three months average expenditure, Cllr Pearman hoped that the situation would be much improved by the next Annual Town Meeting.

Members of the public were encouraged to submit their ideas regarding the development of the town and Council services, in order that they may be included in the Council's five year business plan and also a Neighbourhood Development Plan, both of which were still in their infancy.

Whilst he accepted that the Town Council had had to make a number of difficult decisions in the last year, he felt that whilst the decisions had been unpopular, they had not necessarily been the wrong decisions. Cllr Pearman stated that members of the public were able to contact Councillors and Council officers for information, which would be divulged to them whenever possible (unless deemed to be confidential relating to an ex-employee). Furthermore, that the Council was responsible for protecting the public purse and to provide the services which the public of Lydney deserved.

Planning and Highways Committee – Cllr J Bartle

Cllr Bartle read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

6. **PRESENTATION OF LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL'S ACCOUNTS/ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Attention was then drawn to the account information contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012. The CEO, as Responsible Finance Officer, emphasised the need for transparency and explained that at each meeting Councillors were provided with a "daily book" which detailed the budget performance during the year, in addition to monthly payment schedules. Attention was drawn to the End of Year payment schedule and daily book, copies of which were contained in the Annual Report. It was explained that the information was used to complete the Council's Annual Return which was then sent to the External Auditor (Moore Stephens), once the figures had been approved by the Council and the Internal Auditor (Wildins). The CEO explained that as part of the Annual Return the Council was also required to answer a number of questions relating to its governance. The CEO recalled that it had been previously mentioned in the meeting that the Council had been the subject of a Public Interest Report, and explained that interested parties could obtain a copy of the report from the CEO after the meeting, or could visit the Council's website where the report was displayed.

7. **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** – County Cllr Cooksley

County Cllr Cooksley read out his report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

8. **WAR MEMORIAL OFFICER'S REPORT** – Cllr W Osborne

Cllr Osborne read out his report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

9. **CHARITABLE TRUST REPORTS**

Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust – Trustee B Berryman

Trustee Berryman read out the Trust report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

Cllr Osborne stated that Bathurst Park was felt to be the "jewel in Lydney's crown" and he stressed the work undertaken outside of "normal" working hours by those Councillors who were Lead Councillors for each Trust.

Lydney Recreation Trust – Trustee Biddle

Trustee Biddle stated that the Trust was in discussion with young people to increase their involvement in the sports ground. The Trust had also discussed the possibility of creating a solar orchard/allowing Time and Place to use the East Marsh land.

Trustee Biddle acknowledged the need for increased sports pitches for the town, but stressed the expense involved in their creation. Furthermore, Trustee Biddle stated that the Trust was in the process of entering into formal leases with a number of clubs to regulate their use of Trust land, which had proved to be a very complex exercise.

Lydney Town Hall Trust – Trustee R D W Clarke

Trustee Clarke read out the Trust report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

10. **COMMUNITY REPORTS**

British Legion – Mr Frank Bennett, Chair, Legion Welfare Committee

Mr Bennett advised that case workers were active in the Forest to provide help and advice to ex-service men and their families. Successes to date included the provision of stairlifts, recliners, suitable housing for the homeless, holidays for deserving cases, relocation services, white

furniture purchase, food vouchers, heating oil, etc.

Mr Bennett also stated that welfare visits were conducted, both at home and in hospital. Age range catered for 10-90 years old and he was pleased to report that the local Poppy fund stood at £15,717.00

Lydney War Memorial Trust – Mr Frank Bennett

Mr Bennett read out the Trust report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/2012.

Friends of Lydney Hospital – Mr Anthony Midgley, Chairman

Mr Midgley expressed his gratitude to the Committee for the generosity of Lydney and District for their support and that the funding raised would be spent on improving the facilities Lydney Hospital. Mr Midgley explained that it was the aim of "The Friends" to improve the audiology equipment at Lydney Hospital and it was attempting to obtain approval from NHS Gloucestershire to this effect.

Lydney Area in Partnership (LAIp) – Mr Derek Biddle

Mr Biddle advised that LAiP had spent a lot of time supporting Lydney Yacht Club with its funding bid to LAGS to provide a toilet facility at the Docks. Whilst the LAGS bid was not achieved, further funding applications were on hold as the Environment Agency (the owners of the Docks) had indicated that they wish to sell the facility.

LAIp had attended meetings with Mr David Flint of STAG to discuss the rail service for the town and further meetings would take place in the future to lobby Arriva to improve the service to Gloucester. Mr Biddle advised that the hydro scheme had been placed on hold, as Lydney Park Estate had indicated a desire to hand the facility to a preservation group. According, interested parties were now being sought to join such a group and it was noted that a funding bid would need to be submitted to the Lottery to enable the scheme to be brought to fruition.

Lydney Dial-a-Ride

Thanks were expressed to the Manager of Dial-a-Ride for the report which was shown in the Council's Annual Report for 2011/12, and for the work of staff. Dial-a-Ride had embraced social enterprise and all of their minibuses were now engaged in school runs which amounted to in excess of £300,000 of business.

Naas Lane Community Centre – Friends of Naas Lane

As a result of the Big Community Offer, a group of volunteers had been formed to take on the running of the building. 120 members of the public had expressed an interest in helping to save/run the building and it was hoped that the group would be able to take the business forward.

Lydney Festival – Mr Derek Biddle

Mr Biddle reported a very successful event last year, which the Committee hoped to repeat again this year. The Committee promised a full and varied programme for this year and Mr Biddle stressed that on 23 June Lydney Yacht Club celebrated its 25th anniversary, which would be a big event in the Festival's calendar.

11. **QUESTION/ANSWER PERIOD**

Mr Owen, Augustus Way, Lydney

Q – Thanks expressed to the Council for its solidarity and its new structure, which will hopefully continue. Vote of thanks proposed from the floor to the Mayor and an enquiry made as to whether he would be prepared to continue in his position.

A – The Mayor acknowledged the thanks and stated that he was currently considering his position

at present. He also expressed a desire for public attendance at Council meetings to be increased.

Mr Perry, Beauchamp Meadow, Lydney

Q – Last year, due to the ill health payment of £150,000, residents faced a 26% increase in Council tax. I assume that this was a one-off event?

A – The £150,000 was paid in two tranches which were spread over two years. Previously the Council Chairman had said that the Council's precept would not be reduced due to the limited General Reserves held. However, the Council is now in a much better position, and whilst the Council had yet to formally discuss its budget, it was hoped that its electorate could be provided with good news. The previous practice of drawing on the Council's General Reserves was key to the problem the Council had faced.

Q – It was never thought that the £150,000 would be paid as one payment.

A – The Council is aware that members of the public will closely scrutinise its budget.

Beaufort Drive, Lydney

Q – Who controls the River by the Recreation Ground? Whilst some of the vegetation alongside the River has been cut, the cuttings (and litter) have been left in the watercourse which may cause a blockage. Is it possible for the River to be cleared out?

A – The River is controlled by the Environment Agency, who will only remove large items from the watercourse. Lydney Recreation Trust has riparian owner obligations, as do all properties which back onto the river. The Trust is planning to clear out a section of the River and whilst its grass cutting contract stipulates that the vegetation must be cut down to the water's edge, this is not currently being undertaken by the contractor. The Environment Agency used to clear out the River, however, they now say that it is no longer their responsibility.

Mr Perry, Beauchamp Meadow, Lydney

Q – I note that a company recently held a presentation at Naas Lane Community Centre for the installation of a wind turbine. How does this relate to planning?

Response given by District Cllr Bevan

A – I believe that this will come under planning.

Mr Owen, Augustus Way, Lydney

Q – The walkway alongside the river has always been free passage, but now cars are being parked in this area. Could the Council advise if the route is a right of way or if it is a concessionary route?

A- The Council would need to investigate before providing a response, which will be given at a future meeting.

12. **CLOSE**

The meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

Mayor's Report 2012/2013

The past year has been a busy and productive year for Lydney Town Council.

The Council has, with the help of its CEO - Mrs Jayne Smailes and her staff, obtained Quality Status and Power of General Competency, with the End of Year accounts being passed by the external auditors, Moore Stephens, without comment; a great success given the previous issues which required our CEO to address/resolve on behalf of the Council.

A Youth Council has been formed to mirror the Full Council under the guidance of Cllr Janice James.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is well advanced under the Chairmanship of Cllr Brian Pearman. Members of the public with valuable knowledge or expertise have been co-opted onto this group.

With the help of Cllr Charlotte Mathews, Bathurst Park obtained Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Playing Field status, thus protecting the Park for future generations. The same Councillor obtained Big Lottery Funding for the successful outdoor gym equipment at the same location.

One of the main changes introduced this year has seen the Council's ground staff no longer being confined to Bathurst Park; instead they are now visible in the town. The gateways have since been planted with bulbs and flowering tubs have been placed on the round-a-bouts and throughout the town. New 'Welcome to Lydney' signs have been erected. The standard of the Cemetery has been raised and a 'Garden of Reflection' planted! Each facet in the town, from litter to the Cemetery, now falls to specific Councillors to 'champion', with each being responsible for ensuring these worthwhile improvements continue.

During the year Lydney Town Hall was handed over to its users and local residents and a report from the new management eagerly awaited. Local sports clubs have also been given long commercial leases by the Council to assist their attempts to obtain funding by providing proof of tenure.

The four Town Mayors continue to meet regularly and also meet with the Police; this I think has helped to keep the Police Hub at Coleford instead of it moving to Gloucester.



The highlight of the year, on a personal basis for me, was the invitation to Buckingham Palace to the Queens Garden Party. It was a privilege to attend and at the same time represent Lydney as its Mayor.

To conclude: my aim is very much to continue to push Lydney forward for the benefit of its inhabitants, making it a better place to live. Our community needs to be nurtured; to achieve positive results requires us all to work in unison.

Finally, I would like to thank fellow Councillors and all of the Council staff for their support during the past year.

Bob Berryman

Mayor (Civic Year – 2012/13)



Lydney's Annual Police Report 2012/13



Crimes

- The number of crimes that have taken place across Lydney have increased from 479 to 553 (74 more crimes) which is a 16.78% rise.
- Statistics suggest that you are 16.78% more likely to be a victim of crime than in the same period than the year before.
- We have detected 32.28% more crime in this period compared to last period.

Incidents

The number of incidents that get called to Police regarding your areas give an indication of the amount of requests for help or support we receive from your residents. Every incident gets categorised but categorisation is subjective thus you cannot extrapolate any meaningful information from the call grouping.

There have been 2,594 calls to Police during this period compared to 2,554 calls last period. A difference of 40 calls.

Call Category	1/4/2012 to 1/4/2013	1/4/2011 – 2/4/2012
Alarms	0	0
ASB	531	588
Crime	587	596
Admin	283	259
Public Safety	879	779
Road Traffic	314	332
=	2,594	2,554

Lydney Response times.

The Force response time target is to attend emergency requests for help to your residents within 20 minutes.

We aim to get to every incident of this nature within this time but accept that occasionally we will fail thus set a target of 90%.

There have been a total of 2,707 incidents called to Police during this period. The Forest of Dean Policing team have successfully attended 2212 incidents (81.7%) during this period in comparison with 2390 incidents (85.2%) during the same period the year before.

Lydney Police Issues.

- We have still not decided where a potential Police Information Point will be sited if the Police Station were to close. We have no decision on this question. The location most favoured at present is The Fire station in Lydney.
- Your local Officers are; Inspector 627 Richard Boyles, PS2191 Richard Pitman, PC1771 Kate Croudace, PCSO 49206 Mary Skinner, PCSO 49218 Daniel Wilce and PCSO 49215 Michael Shuttleworth.

SARA PLANS.

There is currently one live SARA plan in Lydney. This is for antisocial behaviour and antisocial driving in Albert Street car park, Lydney. Police are commencing regular patrols and working closely with the Forest of Dean district council to combat these problems.

Finance Chairman's Report 2012/2013

I have just completed my first full year as Finance Chair, and it would be fair to say that Lydney Town Council, like Central Government, has faced and will continue to face significant challenges on the financial front.

To date considerable progress has been made by this Council in terms of how it monitors/controls its expenditure and income (*making the best possible use of public money*) and improving 'governance' procedures. At this time last year I reported the progress on both of these fronts, and further progress can once again be evidenced this year by the following;

- **The Year End Return was signed off on time by the External Auditors with no issues.**
- **The Power of General Power of Competence was awarded to Lydney Town Council**
- **Quality Status (Benchmark) was achieved**
- **As predicted, the Council finished the year within budget and are on track to do the same this year**
- **The Council's General Reserves are now within the prescribed parameters, though they could ideally be higher.**

The above has been achieved by the combined efforts of both Councillors and staff working together, this we must ensure continues despite new challenges such as a possible national capping of local councils in the next couple of years. A national 'cap' will inevitably put a strain on our ability to continue to provide the current level of service to the Community, but the strain will be eased by our now sound financial base which has involved financial management measures aimed at ensuring our financial commitments can be robustly met for the foreseeable future.

Last year I spoke of training, and I can report that the CEO has completed her ***Certificate of Higher Education in Community Engagement and Governance***, and as we meet is currently awaiting her ***CEG University Degree*** results; the Executive Officer is nearing the completion of ***Certificate in Local Council Administration*** and the Finance Assistant ***Working With Your Council*** (*all recognised local council accreditations*). Councillors have attended training events ranging from Roles, Responsibilities and Finance to basic First Aid. Two Councillors are also registered for WWYC and ideally I would urge more to come forward and partake in formal training.

The training needs of our Ground Staff is also being assessed to help increase their efficiency and job satisfaction as we introduce changes to working practices to deliver our vision for the Town; the Staff Appraisal process conducted in February helped to identify our staff's aspirations and their training wishes versus the Council requirements for improved service delivery. The process is very much twofold between Council and staff as it enables the Council to explain its plans for the future of our community and to explain how we see the staff fulfilling their roles in order to service such plans. I feel it is true to say that we now have the best trained, qualified and experienced staff and Councillors in the history of Lydney Town Council.

In summary, I believe that Lydney Town Council now have the firm foundations necessary, not just to face the challenges of the future, but to grasp the opportunities which will present themselves as we move into a very exciting time in the Town's existence.

CLLr B PEARMAN

Finance & Scrutiny Chairman

Lydney Town Council



Explanatory Foreword

31st March 2013

The Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013 is set out on the following pages.

They consist of the following statements: -

The Income and Expenditure Account

This summary covers income and expenditure on all services.

The Balance Sheet

This sets out the financial position of the Council at 31st March 2013, i.e. its assets and liabilities at that date.

Notes to the Accounts

These provide further information on the amounts included in the financial statements.

The Council's overall financial position remains at an acceptable level and unallocated sums are transferred to the general fund. This fund is lower than is expected for a Council of this size but this is offset by the level of Capital and Earmarked funds.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts - 31st March 2013

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required: to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, to secure that one of its officers (R.F.O.) has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs, and to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

The Responsible Financial Officer's Responsibilities (RFO)

The R.F.O. is responsible for the preparation of the Council's statements of accounts.

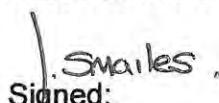
In preparing the statements of accounts, the R.F.O. has: selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently, made judgments and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.

The R.F.O. has also: kept proper accounting records which were up to date, and taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Responsible Financial Officer's Certificate

I hereby certify that the statements of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations are set out in the following pages.

I further certify that the statements of accounts present fairly the financial position of Lydney Town Council at 31 March 2013, and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2013.


Signed:

CEO/Responsible Financial Officer

Statement of Internal Control Relating to Lydney Town Council



Scope of Responsibility

Lydney Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council also seeks, in the interest of good governance, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

A system of internal control has been in place at Lydney Town Council for the year ended 31st March 2013 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and accounts.

The Internal Control Environment

The system of internal control is based on a framework of codes of conduct, internal regulations (*including but not limited to financial regulations*) and administrative procedures. It is further enhanced by the regular provision of management and financial information, provided as appropriate to fit the Council's policy of delegation and responsibility. The system is constantly monitored by Members as well as Officers within the Council.

The system incorporates: Standing Orders relating to financial matters, Quarterly budget reports, Monthly reconciliations/Authorisation of transactions and payments.

Review of Effectiveness

Lydney Town Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the control exercised by Members and the work of the internal auditor and CEO who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment. It is further enhanced by reports and comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Significant Internal Control Issues

To-date, no significant internal control issues have been identified. As such issues arise, effective steps will be taken to ensure that matters are addressed, weaknesses eradicated and revised systems implemented at the earliest possible opportunity.

Approval of Statement

Mayor:

Handwritten signature of the Mayor in blue ink.

CEO:

Handwritten signature of the CEO in blue ink.

Date: 8th April 2013

Annual Return - Section 1 (2012/13)

	Last Year	This Year	Difference	<i>Explanation required</i> <u>Note</u>
1. Balances brought forward	25,036	123,685		
2. Annual Precept	387,765	415,765	28,000	Increase 7.22%
3. Other Receipts	<u>50,861</u>	52,690	1,829	<u>50,861</u> Increase 3.60%
4. Corporate	171,434	186,278	14,844	Increase 8.66%
5. Loan interest & Capital Repayments	15,287	15,287	0	No Change 0.00%
6. Total Other Repayments	<u>153,256</u>	188,437	35,181	<u>153,256</u> -102,395 Increase 22.96%
7. Balance C/Fwd	123,685	202,138	78,453	Increase 63.43%
8. Total Cash and Investments	127,118	215,954	88,836	Increase 69.88%
9. Total Fixed Assets	674,268	722,067	47,799	Increase 7.09%
10. Total Borrowings	129,446	125,686	-3,760	Decrease -2.90%

Lydney Town Council

The following explanations address variances in excess of 15% in the Annual Return*

Box 6 Total Other Repayments

Increased / new expenditure during 2012/13

£5,510	Investment in Councillor & Staff Training (Community Engagement, Governance, Health & Safety)
£15,400	Cemetery Improvement Project
£8,174	Amenities Improvements (Floral Displays £1200, Grit Bins, £2713, Bus Shelter £300, Gateway Signage £3961)
£12,420	Election Costs (due to Cllr death & resignations)
£400	Sandbags distributed during flooding in town
£2,266	Increased Sponsorship of local events
£8,000	Support to the newly formed Town Hall Trust Management Committee
£4,872	Development of the Neighbourhood Development Plan
£1,619	Introduction of Quarterly Newsletter for all residents

Reductions due to exceptional expenditure in 2011/12

-£11,327	Audit fees
-£12,153	CCTV taken over from District Council in 2011/12
£35,181	Additional Expenditure in 2012/13

Box 7 Balance C/Fwd

£15,850	Creditors at year end
£15,400	Capital Project for Cemetery
£28,000	Following advice from local assoc (re capping) provision made for retention (CCTV)/provision of local services (Grass Cutting in-house)
£13,500	Grass Cutting Provision
£3,874	Litter Picking
£1,829	Additional Income in 2012/13
£78,453	

Box 8 Total Cash and Investments

£15,850	Creditors at year end
£15,400	Capital Project for Cemetery
£28,000	Following advice from local assoc (re capping) provision made for retention (CCTV)/provision of local services (Grass Cutting in-house)
£1,829	Additional Income in 2012/13
£18,000	NDP / Lydney Investment Forum / Town Centre Development Project
£5,510	Investment in Councillor & Staff Training (Community Engagement, Governance, Health & Safety)
£4,247	Additional Health & Safety
£88,836	



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website: www.wildin.co.uk
email: wildin@wildin.co.uk

OUR REF:
RLL/L165B

YOUR REF:

DATE:
8 April 2013

Mrs Jayne Smailes
Chief Executive Officer
Town Council of Lydney
Council Chambers
Claremont House
High Street
Lydney
Glos
GL15 5DX



Dear Mrs Smailes

Lydney Town Council
Report on the Internal Audit 2012/13



The work conducted at the end of year internal audit covered the areas of internal control referred to in Section 4 of the Annual Return from the date of the interim audit to the financial year end.

We also covered the section 'Asset and investment register were complete and accurate and properly maintained' which was not covered at the interim audit.

A. Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year.

Our tests indicated that all targets continue to be met.

As a result of the award for General Power of Competence, Lydney Town Council no longer has to record the statutory spending power under which expenditure is made (previously recorded on the day book sheets).

However, the CEO informs me that she and the council are mindful of addressing all financial matters with a view to continuing to conduct its business within the best interests of the community of Lydney.

B. The councils financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Our tests proved that the controls introduced continued to be actioned.

All items of expenditure for services and goods which were tested were supported by orders and continued to be minuted to evidence approval.





All cheques/orders for payment are signed in line with LGA 1972 S150(5); by two Councillors and the CEO (RFO).

- C. The council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.**

The council continue to assess significant risks and further comment is made concerning risk management at the end of the report.

- D. The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.**

The financial information presented to full Council continues to include a comparison with Budget figures to enable discussion and review to take place.

There was documentary evidence that the budget for 2013/14 has also been addressed correctly and that appropriate discussion took place. The CEO ensured that councillors were offered suitable financial training to ensure they understood their role and the requirements under 'governance' to address the determination of the precept correctly.

The 2012/13 Minutes reflect that consideration is to be given to those members serving on the Finance & Scrutiny Committee; from May 2013 there is a proposal which suggests automatic enrolment of Trust Chairman. In my opinion careful consideration should be given to this point, *(the CEO shares my concern)* in order to ensure the Council's financial governance is not weakened by allowing committee Trust Chairman to influence what should be impartial council budget discussions; *Currently there is a 'blanket' Grant Application Scheme for which all parties apply for community grants on a level footing which is open/transparent).*

The financial statements at 31 March 2013 clearly recorded the Reserves, Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves and were maintained at the required level.

- E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.**

Our tests confirmed that the control objectives continued to be met.

- F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.**

Tests on petty cash were erred and confirmed petty cash payments were accurately recorded and approved.

- G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.**

Tests on the payroll proved the system was being operated accurately and timely.

All salaries and allowances to employees continue to be approved by Council.



It was noted that insurance was now in place for ill health in respect of the CEO (highest salary banding)

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

We checked the asset register to ensure it was up to date and recorded the material assets of the council. The rate for depreciation was consistently applied to the historical cost of the relevant assets. Non depreciating assets, principally land and buildings were recorded at historical value (land) and insurance value (buildings). Major items of office furniture were recorded at insurance value.

The insurance cover was checked to ensure adequate cover was in place and this proved satisfactory.

One asset, Bathurst Outdoor Swimming Pool was not covered by the council's insurance policy. It was confirmed by the CEO that this was the responsibility of The Friends of Bathurst Park and insurance cover had been taken out by them.

I. Periodic and year end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Bank Reconciliations/Monthly Payment Schedules/Copy of the Daily Book continue to be prepared and approved on a monthly basis.

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

The year end accounts were agreed to the daily book sheets and the income and expenditure reviewed to ensure accuracy of the analysis, this analysis providing the basis for the figures recorded and reported on in the Annual Report.

General Comment

1. Training

It was noted there has been a significant increase in training costs during 2012/13.

The CEO highlighted the main areas being covered, as follows: -

All office staff now receive on-going training in council policies/procedures with a view to obtaining WWYC/CiLCA qualification to recognise their skills in local council administration. Two Councillors are also attending WWYC Training.

The Finance Assistance has attended courses in Sage Payroll and Real Time Information reporting of payroll to H M Revenue & Customs.

Risk management is becoming increasingly important in assessing risk to the 'public purse'. Training is now under way to strengthen this area and looking forward the



council aims to ensure the CEO has Health and Safety management training with a view to attaining IOSH and NEBOSH membership and qualifications.

The council also subscribe to Ellis Whittam; Employment Consultants as recommended by the SLCC.

2. Risk Management

As mentioned above, steps are being taken to improve risk management. The importance of risk management was highlighted by a report produced by Grant Thornton (the now current external auditors) called 'Local Government Governance Review 2012 – High Pressure System'.

It was encouraging to see that a document has been prepared by Ellis Whittam Ltd in respect of health and safety general risk assessment with a view to producing a Health and Safety Procedures Manual. The council has recognised the importance of identifying significant health and safety issues relevant to Lydney Town Council. This will assist in reducing legal action being taken against Lydney Town Council and help minimise any claims by employees, visitors or contractors from accidents or other incidents.

3. Budgets

The CEO commented that Local Councils will possibly be capped in the future and accordingly the precept for 2013/14 had been set with a view to ensuring that there would be a sufficient level of general reserve to both maintain and facilitate further amenities/service provision within Lydney.

Conclusion

The tests carried out and enquiries made confirm that internal control procedures continue to be working correctly and are evidenced by councillor authorisation. On-going improvements referred to above, namely training and risk management strengthen the controls over the financial affairs of Lydney Town Council with a view to protecting the 'public purse' whilst continuing to deliver a high level of service to the community.

Finally, we wish to thank the CEO (Mrs Smailes), Mrs Exton (Finance Assistant) and other administration staff for their assistance during the course of the internal audit.

Yours sincerely

R L Lewis FCA
Wildin & Co



Lydney Town Council

Reconciliation Between Reserves and Bank Balances

31 March 2013

Bank Balances	215954
Debtors	<u>2034</u>
	217988
Less creditors	<u>(15850)</u>
Balance of reserves c/fwd. per Annual Return	<u>202138</u>

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/2011	2011/12	2012/2013	DRAFT 2013/14	BUDGET COLUMN HEADER	APPROVED BUDGET 2013/14
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
					0	0	0	0	£137	0
					1,500	2,000	4,500	5,908	TRAINING	6,908
					151,470	222,329	242,421	270,810	CORPORATE COUNCIL EXPENSES:	278,360
									Corp: Office, plus est. charges/utilities	£146,556
									Corporate: Grounds Maintenance	£96,504
									Corporate: Running Costs	£32,300
									Corporate: Health & Safety	£3,000
					2,500	2,500	6,700	4,200	VEHICLE COSTS	5,900
					2,500	2,000	17,000	3,250	AUDIT	4,300
					6,350	9,100	9,100	9,100	INSURANCE	9,100
					1,400	500	1,000	1,950	CIVIC EXPENSES	1,950
					1,000	4,000	7,500	8,000	FINANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	7,000
					159,979	32,950	55,800	53,000	GRANTS	53,000
									AMENITIES COMMITTEE:	£77,750
					10,350	8,060	8,560	12,900	CEMETERY	8,900
					10,000	10,250	8,250	14,250	CHRISTMAS EVENT/LIGHTS	16,250
					6,734	9,150	13,700	20,000	GRASS CUTTING	13,500
					4,950	4,700	6,400	7,100	LITTER PICKING	7,100
					5,875	2,860	7,050	12,300	Allotments, Dog Bins, Play Areas, Weeds, Tree Survey	9,000
					0	0	3,660	21,500	Bus Shelter, Grit Bins, St. Furniture, Floral, Trees	23,000
					3,100	2,860	>Amenities	5,750	HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE	5,750
					500	500	500	500	PLANNING COMMITTEE	500
					4,000	3,000	13,200	10,000	ELECTION	10,000
					1,000	1,250	4,500	4,000	CONTINGENCY	1,000
					15,316	15,316	15,316	15,316	PWLB (Loan)	15,316
					0	150,000	0	0	EARMARKED (LGPS)	0
					0	0	1,000	1,000	YOUTH COUNCIL	1,000
					0	0	0	5,758	NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN	8,758
					388,524	483,325	426,157	486,592	BUDGET REQUIREMENT	486,592
					344,562	26,092	20,560	20,392	Predicted Income Figure	20,392
					19,045	17,040	33,892	20,392	Off-set taken from General Reserves	20,000
					0	0	0	20,000	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	446,200
					235,674	242,541	266,795	299,670	235,674	242,541
					14,425	77,000	36,841	18,800	14,425	77,000
					up to 75,000	nil	21,814	nil	21,814	nil

Predicted Income Figure	486,592
Off-set taken from General Reserves	
Precept Request	160
Taken from General Reserves to make up Budget deficit	150
Identified Savings - returned to General Reserves	1,500
	0
	32
	50
	5,000
	20,000
Precept request for 2013/14	446,200

* Precept made up of: Net Precept £387,781 plus Gov't Funding of £58,419 = £446,200

PLANNING AND HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

2012-2013

All planning applications that come before Lydney Town Council are scrutinised by the Planning Committee; the Committee currently consists of a total of seven Councillors and one co-opted member of the public. *'Material Considerations'* (our considered views/comments) are then passed back to the Principal Planning Authority - Forest of Dean District Council, in order that they may make the final decision on what they (currently) consider to be permissible.

One of the largest developments to date, started 2011, (still with its controversial entrance off Lydney By-pass into Higher Lydney Park) is Stage One - Oakdale. This development still figures heavily during our meetings; needless to say we believe this is due to there having been insufficient scrutiny prior by FODDC to the application details; *why else would we have ended up with a development for which despite construction being well underway, and street lights present, the trigger-points have not been able to enforce the turning on of such lights?* Likewise; *who other than FODDC/GCC Highways would provide for a housing development without ensuring local residents safety by insisting the developer made a financial contribution towards pathway provision!* Both of these are totally unacceptable and we believe FODDC /GCC should be both legally and morally obligated to address as a matter of urgency before there is a serious accident of fatality - a petition was duly submitted to FODDC this affect, to no avail!

As I write my report Lydney Town Council's Planning Committee remain very concerned with the planning application/proposals submitted by Hitchins, in fact the NDP Steering Group have already written to Mark Harper MP and Eric Pickles MP Secretary of State noting the following concerns. *Whilst the Planning Committee fully accept that outlaying planning permission has already been granted to develop the site east of the By-pass, the proposed inclusion by Hitchins of a Neighbourhood Centre (a commercial build on a Greenfield site, which would encompass the erection of a superstore), we believe would not be in our town's best interest, especially when there already exists suitable Brownfield sites in close proximity of the town centre which could be redeveloped thereby securing the jobs of many local residents currently employed by Fedral Mogul. For these reasons the Town Council raised an objection to the proposed Hitchins/Sainsbury Planning Application, believing we should instead support our local traders in order to ensure the economic and social sustainability of our town and community remains within our hands (however whether such an important decision is considered by FODDC Planning Committee or is merely delegated to an Officer we have no control over which in itself is bizarre when we believed Town and District Councillors were duly elected to serve the community! – **we would therefore urge everyone to lodge a similar letter of concern with FODDC or Mark Harper MP before it is too late!***

The Committee is also responsible and required to consider Highway issues, passing back our comments/recommendations to Gloucestershire Highways. In 2011 the Town Council entered into a Winter Maintenance Contract with Gloucestershire County Council, agreeing to actively address priority areas during inclement weather conditions and the spate of bad weather certainly kept the Town Council Ground

Staff, Office Staff and indeed Councillors busy gritting the main pathways!. As many of you who phoned the office will be aware, every effort was made to clear side roads and provide additional grit bins.

Whilst our prime concern remains that of safety, we have asked Network Rail (again) for a footbridge and/or the existing tunnel to be re-opened. Our other priority is to facilitate a 'joined up' approach to the flood defence measures still so desperately needed in Lydney. A multi-agency meeting has been arranged and our aim is to try and ensure that measures are put in place by the EA, FODDC, GCC which will allow the Town Council to take defensive action at times when there is a likelihood of flooding; after all, we residents know Lydney, the lay of the land and how the increased, permitted planning developments, (*permitted at best without due regard at worse regardless of the affect of SUDS*), has since resulted in increased surface water draining from the new developments which has caused misery to those living within the vicinity of Lakeside/Cambourne Meadow - incidences such as the ones shown below have to be prevented and we aim to do all within our power as Town Councillors to address this point.



The Planning and Highway Committee continues to be a Committee that draws public interest; instead of 'sitting on the side lines' why not ask to be considered as a co-optee?

Or, if you have a genuine interest in wanting to ensure sustainable development is all that Lydney gains and that we do not end up a dormitory town – join the Neighbourhood Development Steering Group?

- Lydney's future is in your hands, the Council cannot do it alone, it must be a community effort made with an assertive voice!

CLLr Bill Osborne

Planning/Highways Chairman

Amenities Committee

- Chairman's Report 2012/2013

This is the end of my second year as a Town Councillor, so I'm still a "new" boy to Lydney and the Town Council. Despite this my fellow Councillors elected me Chair of the Amenities Committee in May 2012. Because of the increasing demands on Council time and resources, the Committee was created to deal with the multitude of details needed to create a better place for us all to live. It exists to look after the provision of the practical elements of the town, everything from grit bins to allotments to play areas.

You might have noticed the smart new black and gold signposts welcoming people arriving from Chepstow and Gloucester. The planting displays to brighten the entrances and at strategic points through the town. The cold weather has delayed the full impact of the planting but warmer weather and mature plants will make more of an impact in the coming months. All this has been made possible by the hard work and skill of the Town's ground staff and work carried out on suitability and resourcing by Councillor Biddle. It is planned to extend the signposts down to the Harbour from the bypass, at the moment we hide one of our tourist highlights at the end of a badly potholed road through an industrial site. Any uncertain travellers are going to turn back before discovering the beauty of the Severn and the walks along the foreshore. Likewise passengers arriving at the railway stations. Dean Forest Railway has taken it upon itself to erect direction signs for passengers emerging at the town centre station and at the end of the line. We are about to begin discussions with Network Rail on how we might upgrade the area around the station and make other improvements.

Early in the council year Committee members were provided with a 'draft' Allotment Tenancy Agreement for consideration as the Council had not previously used one. This had led to previous misunderstandings on both sides. To improve communications Councillors Sue Osborne and Valerie Hobman were elected as Allotment Liaison Representatives.

An initial meeting with the Council's allotment tenants took place in November to introduce the new agreement. In addition letters were sent to all previous applicants for an allotment plot, 56 letters were sent out, 14 responded. We are now looking for suitable land to develop. Councillor Osborne evaluated a number of sites including land owned by Lydney Park Estate, Cambourne Meadow and land off the by-pass. Cambourne appeared to be the most suitable but reports of Japanese Knotweed on the site needed cautious assessment - ***If anyone has or knows of any suitable land for allotment use we would be keen to talk to you.***

You cannot miss the new play equipment around the town, most of it provided through Lottery funding organised by Councillor Matthews. There is more in the pipeline, from a toddlers' area on Primrose Hill to possible additional equipment for Bathurst Park. Unfortunately hand-in-hand with the improvements there are problems. On Primrose Hill the zip wire has been damaged by vandalism three times. Sometimes by adults trying to recapture their lost youth and sometimes maliciously, the latest attack had tried to separate one of the zip wire supporting poles from a main upright. As a result of the repair costs incurred the zip wire has been decommissioned until a decision can be reached over its future. In addition the ground staff had to replace eleven handholds that had been unscrewed or smashed on the climbing wall.

Another change relates to the grass cutting arrangements. Numerous complaints had been received regarding the standard of grass cutting; left too long, cutting when the dry weather didn't require it, failure to remove grass cuttings from cemetery headstones etc.

As a result the ground staff have undertaken the maintenance and improvements in the cemetery and the 'closed' churchyard at St Marys. They have cleared, and are currently creating, a 'Garden of Reflection' at the far end of the cemetery at the request of the mayor, Councillor Berryman.

It seems a bit early to talk about next winter when this one still hasn't finished by April but you'll be pleased to know that the Council has ordered additional grit bins to deal with the problems experienced with the ice and snow in recent times.

On that same note we hope you'll be pleased with this year's Christmas Lights. Up 'til now the lights have been provided via a hire contract. Disappointment in the display by the town's traders and members of the public led to the formation of a working party to decide on the best way forward. Councillors Bill Osborne, Valerie Hobman and Carol Harris have looked at the alternatives and decided the greatest improvement could only be made by purchasing our own. We hope that you will be pleased by the result.

Christmas 2013 will see the Town Hall Trust Management Committee organising Santa and his grotto. But the desire of having Santa leading a procession through the town when the lights are switched on has to remain a dream. If the Council wished to organise a procession they would need to obtain a road closures, provide detailed plans and organise their marshals, provide reflective jackets, erect signage advising that the road would be closed in advance of the event, obtain insurance etc. As a result of this bureaucracy the Committee decided in 2012 not to organise a parade.

I'm aware that this report is as much looking forward as back but that's the nature of the Council's work. Some things arise and are dealt with swiftly, others that I know of are still going on after two years! The strength of the Council lies in the diversity of the Councillors and the strong foundation of the backroom staff namely Jayne Smailes, our CEO, Carol Wheeler Executive Officer and Hilary Exton Finance Assistant who make sure that we stay on the straight and narrow and remain accountable.

Cllr Brian Thomas

Amenities Committee Chairman



Chief Executive Officers Report 2012/13

EXAMINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN LYDNEY

Introduction

Lydney Town Council believes and delivers on the Big Society concept in a real and practical way, partly through its policy on Community Engagement which sets out our approach to engaging with the community.

Anyone who lives, works, goes to school in Lydney is valued and we recognise the significant contribution that is made by the community for the benefit of the town and for this very reason the Town Council is committed to providing the community with opportunities to become involved with all that the Council does and in the decision making processes.

Community Engagement

Ways in which people from within the community are able to engage directly with the Town Council include:

- Becoming a local Town Councillor;
- Public Participation at Council meetings;
- Volunteering through the Community Groups;
- Writing to the Town Council/District Ward Councillors;
- Using the feedback facility on the Town Council web-site;
- Submitting a letter for submission in the Town Council's Newsletter

The Town Council also operates a Customer Information Point with our Administrative Assistant available to assist with any queries between 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 9am – 12 noon on a Friday.

Throughout the year agendas listing the matters to be discussed are advertised in advance, on our notice boards, these very agendas highlight the diverse range of projects and services that the Council is involved in and which the local community can have a say in and work with us to achieve.

Every agenda also explains that there is an opportunity for the public to speak at Council meetings; to ask questions of Council which Council will then aim to provide a response either at that same meeting or the very next. Even if members of the public did not have a particular opinion on any of the matters being discussed, we extended a welcome to attend; the opportunity to chat with Councillors and Officers prior or indeed after the meeting.

During 2012/13, the Town Council continued to communicate with the public in various ways, through Civic Receptions, the newsletter which is distributed to all local residents via The Review, Press Releases, the web-site and ward based notice boards, in addition to attending various public/civic events.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Councillors, along with the Chief Executive Officer attended civic engagements, partnership/strategic meetings throughout the

year; the Council also has representatives on a number of local bodies and organisations.

The Town Council is committed to the exchange information with its partners as listed in the Council's Purpose Statement and has signed up to the Gloucestershire Charter. We also support the Neighbourhood Partnership initiative with local community groups and other service providers.

Council Meeting

Lydney Town Council believe that the provision of information and transparency is key in building trust within the community we serve. Full details of the information and documents which are published by the Town Council are included in our Freedom of Information Publication Scheme; this includes how to access the information.

The Town Council's website at www.lydneytowncouncil.co.uk continues to provide the focal point of everything which is happening in Lydney.

The Year Ahead

In 2013/14, we will continue to welcome the views of the local community and will continue to work together with the local community in shaping proposals and the delivery of services. We will support where able, with the resources we have available, empowering others in seeking to take responsibility for effecting change in our community.

We take seriously the views of the local community and with each passing month the Council seeks to cement ties with Forest of Dean District Council; not a submissive approach on our part by any means but instead one that ensures Lydney's voice is well and truly heard and that our 'Community Rights', those provided for by the introduction of the Localism Act, benefit local residents.

I hope that 2013/14 will be the year in which we might make significant strides in taking over and improving service delivery, in starting to deliver and make progress in respect of the redevelopment of the Town Centre through positive business, grant funding and community development investment and generally improve the environment and experience for both local people and visitors alike.

I also trust that year on year members of the public will see an improvement in what we are seeking to do, for and on behalf, of the people and town of Lydney.

To Conclude

My report would not be complete without extending my thanks and sincere appreciation to all of the council staff; not only for their continued support and immense level of service delivery and sheer motivation shown but also for the innovative approach each and every one of them is now displaying on almost a daily basis – *well done and thank you!*

Jayne Smalles

Chief Executive Officer

Lydney Town Council

- Head Groundsman's Report

Bathurst Park

We have had a hard working year in Bathurst Park; the weather conditions have been most testing, as it seems to be raining then flooding or cold and then snowing! However, through the tough weather we have managed to keep the Park's high standards maintained, much to the enjoyment of the town's people, club users and visitors.



Lydney Town

The ground staff's priority is within the Town and its environs and we aim to improve the overall standard year on year.

This year we have put flower tubs in key areas to be noticed and enjoyed. We have also installed new signage with further flower planters at the town's entrance points, along with the planting of thousands of daffodil bulbs, in order for people to take notice of the fact they are entering Lydney. In this we hope to inspire pride in our town and add to the general enjoyment of visiting Lydney.

Cemetery/Churchyard

The Ground staff have worked hard to bring the area up to a higher standard that mirror's Bathurst Park.

We have now taken over the responsibility for the grass cutting in both the Cemetery and the 'closed' Churchyard and our aim is to ensure maintenance consistency.



I personally have also worked very hard on the designing, project managing and the installation of a new 'Reflection Garden' within the Cemetery.

- *'It has been testing but now it's taking shape the rewards are there to be seen'.*



(Garden of Reflection)



Overview



(Town/Gateway Planting)



The changing working patterns of the ground staff is all about bringing the Town to a higher standard for people to enjoy, having said that safety and tidiness are always our main priorities.



We have new members of staff; a young man called Declan, who will be securing the Park gates; I am also pleased to advise that Ryan Berryman who is hard working and conscientious employee has since been employed by the Town Council on a permanent basis *(He has a bright future ahead of him and the Town and its Council are lucky to have him on the team).*

It is a good time to be working for Lydney Town Council. As a local resident I take pride in Lydney, as do the rest of the ground staff and we are certainly looking forward to the future - we have all very much enjoyed working around the Town and are looking forward to continuing with planned improvements throughout the coming year.

James Young
Head Groundsman



Lydney Youth Council

Annual Town Meeting Youth Council Report 2012/13

The Lydney Youth Council is a newly formed addition to Lydney's existing Town Council. We are comprised of a range of ages and genders from schools all over the Forest of Dean.

All of our members live in and around Lydney meaning we get a diverse spread of opinions and ideas on issues relating to our town.



It is our aim to improve the facilities, activities and address general issues in the Lydney area that concern young people. We are a group with 9 members so far; however we are currently looking for new participants between the ages of 11 – 18 as there are 6 additional places available.

So far we have had three successful meetings where we have elected a Chairman, Cllr Tiffany Cooksley, and a Vice Chairman, Cllr John Watkins. At these meetings we decided our agenda for the year which includes the production of a seasonal leaflet comprising of all the activities that are going on within the town aimed at all ages which we hope to have completed by the end of May. We also aim to stage a Skate Jam in the summer months at Lydney Skate Park.

As well as the aforementioned projects we are also hoping to host a concert for young people at the Town Hall in order to promote local talent and provide a safe environment for local youths to enjoy themselves.

As well as organising these events we also wish to help existing organisations and charities who help the local youth and town as a whole by volunteering when we can and helping with the attainment of grants and funding.

If you are interested in joining the Youth Council why not contact us via the

Town Council Office

WAR MEMORIAL OFFICER'S REPORT 2012/13



'The aim of the Trust is to bring all the Nations War Memorials up to date before their centenary in 2018. Lydney's, thanks to complete renovations in 2005, remains in pretty good condition; with the Cadet forces annual clean up it should stay a credit to our Town for many years'.

In 2012 the annual Citizens Act of Remembrance was combined with that of the Civic Remembrance Parade held at 11.00 am on 11th November 2012. This year we were joined by 1 Rifles.

Cllr Carol Harris read the role of honour, with the Mayor's Cadet, Tiffany Cooksley reading the Epitaph.

During 2013 it is my aim to ensure that the pillars and chains which provides the regal ambience this War Memorial so rightly deserves are refurbished using the War Memorial Officer's Fund towards this work which is currently 'earmarked' within the Council's financial accounts.

' keeping this memorial in a fit state of repair is the least we owe those whose name is engraved upon it; those who gave so much for us'

Any kind donations offered in respect of this worthy cause are always most welcome – *Thank you!*

In closing, I would like to extend a special thank you to the lady/ladies who continually keep the memorial vase stocked with fresh flowers.

Cllr W Osborne

War Memorial Officer (2012/13)



**CUSTODIAL TRUSTEE
REPORTS**

BATHURST PARK AND RECREATIONAL TRUST

Annual Report 2012/13



Celebrations in Bathurst Park during 2012 marked the unveiling of a plaque by the Mayor, Cllr Bob Berryman, to celebrate the Park being dedicated as a Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field. Early visitors enjoyed some races, music from a local rock band and Parkend Brass Band. Sports were organised by Dave Lucas supported by volunteers from the ATC, who helped as marshals. Friends of Bathurst Park, who organised the day, have received very positive responses, especially some wishing this to become an annual event!

The Park, as always, remains a superb attraction for Lydney, admired by residents and visitors alike and I would like to thank the Head Groundsman and all of the Ground Staff for their hard work in maintaining it to such a high standard.

The park is used by many organisations and clubs as well as residents of all ages, it is also used for events organised by Churches Together and Lydney Festival. The Town Council/Trust believes that the cost of maintaining the park to such a high standard is justified as it is enjoyed by so many people.



The firework display on 5th November was another successful event with attendance levels at an all time high, and for a change the weather was kind!

The later part of 2012 has seen a change in Pavilion Cafe tenant; Mrs Claire Harris has also been fortunate in securing LAGS grant funding, enabling her to completely refurbish this facility, raising the standard greatly – *we wish Claire every success and can't wait to attend the opening in May!*

The Trust looks forward to yet another pro-active year and as such would encourage any members of the public with innovative ideas to get in touch!

Cllr Janice James
Lead Councillor



Trust Secretary: Mrs Jayne Smailes

Lydney Recreation Trust

Council Chambers, Claremont House,
High Street, Lydney, Glos, GL15 5DX

Telephone: 01594 842234

Fax: 01594 842312

Registered Charity No: 301569

ANNUAL REPORT - 2012/13

The year brought the culmination of four years negotiation by Kevin Toombs which has allowed the leading sports to obtain long leases on the areas they had previously rented from the Recreation Trust. The permission of the Charity Commission was granted on the understanding that the non leased areas were free for use by the public. The Recreation Trust will still maintain these areas, as well as improve the drainage systems for the whole ground, should the necessary funding be obtained.



Though the current drainage system cleared the December floods in reasonable time, the continual summer rain caused the Cricket Club to lose half its home matches fixtures. The Tennis Club have already benefited from a long lease by obtaining funding which assisted the replacement of the old floodlights.

The youth play area of Multi Ballpark and Skateboard have been very well used, but fund raising for skate park improvements which included a new Jump Box has proved unsuccessful in this current financial climate.

The Camborne Field has been identified as a possible site for new allotments, but the site has limited use because of new sewage storage system installed during the year by Severn Trent, and because of the large size pipes being close to the surface, this will restrict any future usage in the proximity of the installation.



There has been continued interest by "Time & Place" for the land south of the bypass with a revised layout plan submitted with an estimated build cost of £200k. The land has been included in the Lydney Area Action Plan as a possible area for future development, but being a former landfill site will limit its scope for any usage.

Derek Biddle

**Lead Councillor
Lydney Recreation Trust**

COMMUNITY REPORTS



Lydney's Neighbourhood Development Steering Group Report - Annual Town Meeting 2013

Work commenced in order to draw together a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Lydney; utilising powers granted under the Localism Act (reform to the Planning System 2012).

A Steering Group was set up; comprising of a number of members of Lydney Town Council and members of our local community, who have continued to meet monthly in order to drive the project forward. It would be fair to say that it has been quite a steep learning curve for all involved, whether members of the Steering Group, or other organisations such as FODDC with whom we have been working closely; this of course this is quite normal given how revolutionary and community led this new legislation is, the aim being to promote community participation at 'grass root' level.



Map showing the designated NDP area

Several research and engagement tools have been used to promote public consultation including; A Public Survey, Councillor surgeries, On-line Survey and a Public Meeting held at Lydney Town Hall in January, attended by Mark Harper MP. This consultation enables the wider community to express their views and aspirations for Lydney over the coming years, and will be the basis upon which the plan will now be produced.

We are currently at the stage of putting together 'draft' proposal plans, which when completed, will require professional planning officer input to ensure that all requirements of the Localism Act are met before the completed plan goes before the Independent Inspector, and then to Public Referendum.

Once the NDP has passed the Referendum stage, it is adopted by FODDC and becomes a legal planning document in its own right. The plan (*whilst planning led*) will also look to then build upon important related themes such as; employment

prospects, our local economic and social wellbeing, transport and highway infrastructure, education and healthcare, town centre regeneration/redevelopment potential, improving community services, leisure and tourism and protecting our environment. The Steering Groups aim/objective is to produce a DRAFT NDP which passes Independent Inspection by the end of 2013, with the Public Referendum taking place before the end of financial year 2014.

Our other priority which will focus upon shaping Lydney is via an Investment Forum for Enterprise project; working closely to address the areas identified by the NDP Steering Group, the body will be tasked with turning plans into actions, and will include in its membership representatives of Lydney Town Council, Forest Of Dean District Council, Glos County Council, Government Agencies such as HCA, NHS Gloucestershire, Local Organisations and most importantly, local business leaders. This body will be 'independent' and is absolutely crucial to ensuring we achieve goals set by the NDP, realising the potential that exists within Lydney.

'The next 12 months will see us face many challenges, but I know we are all looking forward to meeting those challenges head on.'

Lydney is a high quality rural and urban environment, celebrating its Severnside location, acting as a gateway to the Forest of Dean.

The 'vision' is to develop Lydney over the next 20 years into a thriving, prosperous, safe, integrated and attractive market town serving its rural hinterland and as a centre from which to visit the area and its many local attractions, thereby securing Lydney's economic and future sustainability'.

Cllr Brian Pearman

Steering Group Chairman



Neighbourhood Development Plans
'an exciting time for local councils'
(DCLG 2011)

FRIENDS OF BATHURST POOL



ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2013

The summer of 2012 was the second wettest since national records began in 1910. In June, July and August 366.8 mm of rain fell in the UK just slightly less than in 1912 which was the wettest with 384.4 mm. Despite this, we survived! Overall, we had just eleven really good days but these made it all worthwhile.

Income on all normal activities was slightly higher than the previous year and donations were up by £2420. The number through the gate was 5460, an increase of 256 on the previous year. Expenditure remained roughly the same as 2012 with just slight increases in maintenance and insurance. The serious swim club was more popular than ever and we have already had several enquiries with regard to the starting date for this year.

Last year saw the completion of the new toilet block complete with disabled facilities. This building blends in excellently with the surround and with all modern fittings is a huge asset to the pool. Another massive benefit last year was the partial laying of a non-slip surface. It was completed at each end of the pool and reduced accidents of children slipping over to zero. We hope to raise enough funds this year to lay this surface around the whole pool.

A project that is already underway this year is the installation of solar panels to raise the temperature of the water. Funding has already been received from a Bledisloe Trust for which we have to extend a huge thank you to Lord Rupert Bathurst for considering us for this grant. Work is to begin on this at the end of April/early May.

Two new committee members have come forward this year, both very keen to help with the running and maintenance of the pool and all the trustees are working together to ensure the continued success of the facility, the two new ones excelling themselves with time given and work carried out.

Our enthusiasm for this wonderful pool never wavers and we are as keen as ever as we look forward to another season at Bathurst Pool.

Sheila Berryman
Trustee/Treasurer



LYDNEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

NAAS LANE LYDNEY GLOS GL15 5AT

TEL 07504565351

INDUSTRIAL & PROVIDENT SOCIETY 31506R / CHARITY NO. XT33997

The first AGM of the Lydney Community Centre was held on Wednesday February 20th 2013, the treasurer Pat Stokes reported that the voluntary hard work of the members had been rewarded with a financial surplus of £9,700. The GCC had only provided an interim lease for the first year, which limited fund raising for large grants. Despite this the committee had been successful in obtaining several small grants, the income was used to commence the internal repair & decoration of the building. The purchase of new chairs, blinds & curtains has helped to enhance the comfort and ambience of the facility for all users. The committee & members produced a "Wish List" of improvements for the building, which has been prioritised subject to the availability of finance. The fifteen year lease due to be signed soon will enable applications for large funding grants to be made to finance the outstanding improvements.



The official reopening of the community centre by Lydney Mayor Cllr Bill Osborne in October 2011 allowed the user clubs to advertise and hold demonstrations of their club's activities. This event together with extensive advertising encourage former clubs that had used the facility to return, and attracted many new clubs specialising in "keep fit" & tai chi.

Circus Skill workshops were held for young people, but unfortunately attendance was poor. It is hoped that the newly formed Lydney Youth Council will assist to organise events for young people at the centre.

The Naas Lane site is shared with the Sea Cadets and Carol Tiley has been very helpful and supportive to the joint management of the site especially with the de aggregation of the utilities services, and also leading with the possible purchase of the centre under the Big Community Offer discount.

Derek Biddle
Chairman

Commanding Officer
S/Lt (SCC) Mike Chard RNR
☎ 07890428348

Unit Chairman
Mrs Carol Tiley
17 Crooked End Place, Ruardean
Gloucestershire, GL17 9YN
☎ 01594 542044 (evenings)
✉ carol.tiley@btconnect.com



Registered Charity 286701

TS ROYAL FOREST
Forest of Dean Sea Cadets
Lydney Youth & Community Centre
Naas Lane
Lydney
Gloucestershire
GL155AT
forestofdeanscc@btinternet.com
www.forestseacadets.web.officelive.com
01594-841058

"Parvis e glandibus quercus" **Great oaks from acorns grow**

I am S/Lt (SCC) Mike Chard RNR the Commanding Officer of TS Royal Forest, the Forest of Dean Sea Cadets, one of the biggest youth organisations in the Forest of Dean.

We take the young people from the Forest and surrounding areas and through adventurous training we help them towards responsible adulthood by encouraging valuable personal attributes and high standards of conduct, using a nautical theme based on the customs of the Royal Navy. We are not a recruiting tool for the Armed forces however we do encourage the attitudes that a person looking for a career in the armed forces would need.

Unlike the other cadet and youth organizations we receive no funding from the MOD or government, which is not quite true as they kindly gave us £120 last year, not per cadet I hasten to add but for the whole unit. At today's prices you can imagine how far that went!

We take part in many community events such as parades, fundraisers, dinners, sporting events etc. Unfortunately due to the necessity to continually raise funds we spend more time than I would like doing just this very thing. As you are aware the Forest of Dean is not the most affluent area and carers or parents of cadets sometimes cannot afford to pay for their child to attend all the activities on offer; in these cases the unit pays for these cadets. A typical week's course can cost anything between £50- £250 We now have over 50 members so you can see how much money we need to raise to fund their activities.

Due to a recent expansion of the unit we now have the old youth club building (at the Naas Lane Community Centre), which has been turned into a centrepiece for the community running numerous courses and events for the town. The Sea Cadet unit itself has been identified as a centre of excellence within the southwest area, which in turn attracts hundreds of cadets and their parents from as far away as Cornwall to Birmingham.

I have lived and worked in the Forest of Dean for 20 years now and have seen a dramatic increase in anti-social behaviour involving the youth of Lydney. I have seen the importance of providing facilities for the youth, and the need to engage with them. The Sea Cadets are the only provider of some services to these children, and we take pride in being able to have engaged and recruited young people from all walks of life with no discrimination to race, sex, colour or ability, we do however require support from the Town Council in order to continue with this good work.

Sub-Lieutenant (SCC) M Chard, RNR
Commanding Officer

Commanding Officer
S/Lt (SCC) Mike Chard RNR
☎ 07890428348

Unit Chairman
Mrs Carol Tiley
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For some young people who are perhaps not as gifted at school as others, the Sea Cadets is a lifeline; we offer real qualifications, qualifications that the Cadets can then use to find a worthwhile

career, the CVQO status is equivalent to 5 GCSE's. We also enrol our Cadets in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. One or two of our Cadets have actually used their First Aid qualification when a member of their family has been injured at home.

2012/13 has witnessed the unit using its rowing boats on Lydney lake, however this may unfortunately be the last season we use the lake due to needing to fit around roster usage and this will result in us having to travel further to continue to use the boats. We have also recently purchased some canoes, kayaks and mountain bikes which allow us to offer additional sporting activities to the Cadets. We also have the ability to offer "sleepovers" to Cadets and adults alike, providing for a full weekend of training within the southwest area for a nominal fee.

For the past four years, despite a rigorous annual assessment, we have been awarded the highest possible accreditation, putting us in the top ten units within the Country. This award is not given lightly and shows the sheer determination of the adults who have proved their worth time after time.

To conclude; we need the support of both the Community and the Town Council. The Cadets deserve recognition for the things they achieve in Lydney, without such support they obviously feel disheartened and let down and for this reason I would urge you to take a proactive approach in seeing just what they have achieved and help us in helping them. The staff at the unit continue to work very hard to maintain the high standards set, we are all volunteers, giving at least 20hrs per week and whilst we do not seek reward for what we do it would be excellent to see the Cadets gaining the recognition they so rightly deserve together with funding to improve and develop our facilities and activities further.

Sub-Lieutenant (SCC) M Chard, RNR
Commanding Officer

LYDNEY WAR MEMORIAL TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT - APRIL 2013



The Lydney War Memorial Trust is the body responsible for the maintenance and administration of the almshouses in Church Road, Lydney, near the War Memorial. The properties are divided into two houses and four flats.

The Trust continues to meet each month, although the venue of the meetings has now changed to the Naas Lane Community Centre. In the last year, two Trustees have stepped down – Mr Donald Dryhurst (*representing the British Legion*) and Mr Bert Stapleton (*representing Lydney Town Council*). Two new Trustees have joined the Committee; Mr Hiley Warren (*representing the British Legion*) and Mrs Sue Osborne. Mrs Valerie Hobman, an existing Trustee, has stepped in as one of the Trustees representing the Town Council.

At the AGM Mr Frank Bennett agreed to continue in the role of Chair, with Mrs Ruth Richardson continuing as Vice Chair. Attendance at the meetings by the Trustees has been good with all meetings except three being quorate. Gill Moir remains as the Clerk for the Trust.

The Trust continues to maintain all six properties to a high standard and during the year various works have been carried out to improve the flats and houses. Because the properties are over eighty years old, maintenance costs are relatively high.

During the year, a new tenant moved into flat 44B which had been vacated due to the previous resident moving from an upstairs to a downstairs flat. Recently, another of the residents has spent a period of time in respite care and we have now been informed by her relatives that she will not be in a position to return. Once the house is cleared, any maintenance issues will be addressed before it is redecorated, re-carpeted and then advertised for rent again.

The last Quinquennial Survey was carried out in July 2009. We were pleased that the surveyor noted some significant improvements since the last survey and also that he did not identify any work requiring immediate attention. Any issues requiring attention “as soon as practicable” have been considered and addressed where appropriate or possible at the current time. The other points raised are being reviewed and addressed, where appropriate, over time.

The Trust continues to maintain a good relationship with the residents, who can phone the Clerk at any time should any problems arise.

Frank Bennett

(Chair)

THE VICTORIA CENTRE 2013

(ideally situated between Tesco and Bathurst Park)

It is a pleasure to report that the Centre continues to thrive, preparing between 130 -150 lunches per week to retired residents of the area during 50 weeks of the year.

All the renovations planned in 2012 have been completed; the automatic doors gives safer, easier access and the heat exchange ventilation system a cleaner, fresher atmosphere. Sincere thanks are extended to Lydney Town Council which gave funds to install new lighting and an alarm system. A local firm is about to install a solar panel free of charge; an inspiringly 'green' venture. Plans are afoot now for external insulation and some internal decoration and renovation. The list seems limitless but the end is in sight! What our team of volunteers provides remains broadly as before:

Tuesdays and Thursdays are regular luncheon days.

The *Wednesday Club*, offers for those who cannot get out alone, not only lunch, entertainment and occasional trips but, more importantly, a chance to chat and laugh with friends old and new.

The *Friday Exercise Club* is ever popular, surviving thanks to the generous support of the Forest of Dean Council, Ginger Gym and the Cooperative Funeralcare, Lydney. The exercise, geared exclusively to the older person, is followed by a light, nourishing lunch.

Most importantly in our fund-raising, which is still our life-line we continue to enjoy the support, both financial and moral, of local people, churches, clubs and businesses.

Booking is essential.

Call Lorraine on Dean 843418

LYDNEY TENNIS CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013

The last 12 months have been eventful ones at Lydney Tennis Club.

March 2012 saw unseasonably warm weather and we thought that we were due that barbecue summer we had been promised, but how wrong we were. Apart from a few sunny and hot days in May, the climate during most of the year seemed to conspire against any form of outdoor sport. In spite of many league matches needing to be re-arranged and Club Tournaments being played in chilly and often damp conditions, the club's programme was eventually completed but with varying degrees of success.

A highlight of the last year saw the club being granted its 25 year lease along with other sporting associations. This has resulted in the club being able to apply for funding which would otherwise not have been available.

A key project has been the replacement of floodlights on two of our courts. We are now just £2500 short of the £22,500 required, and one way or another, the new lights will be switched on within the next 6 months.

As a result of having a lease, we were also eligible to apply for funding from the District Council; a £4,500 grant awarded last autumn allowed the club to engage the services of a professional court-cleaning company who set about de-mossing our four courts and then repainting the lines on two of them. It was indeed fortunate that they initially postponed the aforementioned job to order allow the floodlighting people to take down and remove the old lights and install the new poles as we were flooded within days of the new poles going up, any clean-up would have been a complete waste of money - *had that been the case, the Chairman's ability to speak fluent French might have echoed around our town for all to hear and just a little bit stronger than 'sacré bleu'!* Once the flood waters had receded, we were able to organise a clean-up of the mud and silt which then covered the courts before asking the professionals to do what they had planned to weeks prior.

In spite of a difficult year club membership numbers are buoyant; especially on the junior front. We have entered five junior teams in the Gloucestershire League for this season, *(up from previous three)* and have five teams entered in the senior leagues, *(increasing from the previous years four)*.

The club would like to thank the Cricket Club and in particular it's Secretary, Andrew Davies, for ensuring that we had a water supply during the difficult, long and frosty, winter days when we needed water for the diesel and petrol washers to function.

We would also like to thank the Lydney Recreation Trust for its invaluable advice on where to look for funding.

As usual, the club's development is a work in progress and I hope to report more new initiatives this time next year.

Martin Goodwin

Chairman



25 Newerne Street Lydney, Glos GL15 5RA

Charity No. 1088206

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

On behalf of Lydney Vibe Café I would like to express our gratitude for your continued support and donations, allowing us to continue to provide a much needed and valued service to the young people of this town. The Vibes Café had several staff changes during the early autumn which caused temporary closure as there were insufficiently trained staff to manage the café safely.

I would also like to thank Lena Maller, Kate Wyatt, Forest of Dean District Council & District Councillor Terry Hale for their continued support, advice and funding. Their visit to the café in January and participation in the pool competition was greatly enjoyed by everyone as it allowed a relaxed exchange of ideas and opinions.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Gloucestershire Youth Service and PCSOs, who have been very supportive.

We are grateful to all our new members of staff (Nicky & Tristan) and from long running staff member Richard, who continue to ensure the smooth running of the youth café and the provision of a safe environment for the young people of Lydney and surrounding area and without whom the cafe would not be able to operate.

Vibe is currently open two nights a week and recently secured funding should enable the Cafe to extend to a third evening which is high on the agenda of the young people's current "wish list". This wish list has several music-themed evenings which Richard & Tristan with their musical experience are addressing. Bread making and cookery have proved very popular, especially with the boys who consume the majority of the food produced.

Catherine Taylor

Manager





ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

Little did I imagine that on the 22nd May of last year that I would attend a Public Meeting at the Town Hall and come away with the keys having been appointed Chairman, what a daunting and interesting challenge lay ahead. Together with the ever enthusiastic David Cooksley as Vice Chairman and a total of 18 new appointed Trustees, we were entrusted with the day to day running, maintenance and upkeep of the Town Hall which next year (2014) celebrates its 125th anniversary.

At the onset we were without an office, telephone, computer, stationery and all the other bits and pieces needed to create a functional office fit for use. Thanks to some very kind and generous people we were soon up and running and fully equipped. It took a while to get accustomed to the day to day running and needs of the hall. The two resident Caretakers; Leslie and John were most helpful, and we are grateful for their continued assistance.

The Trustees meet on a monthly basis to debate and discuss the various topics that have to be addressed. Various appointments were made including Chairman: Vice Chairman: Secretary: Treasurer: Booking Clerk: Minute Secretary: Web Master: Email coordinator: Publicity/Press Officer. Several sub committees have been formed in order to focus on certain aspects such as Bar and Catering, Events, Maintenance, Finance etc. The committee are also researching funding streams to assist with much need improvements to the hall.

The hall has suffered financially for many years due to high maintenance costs and low use and it is imperative that this situation is reversed. The Trustees are determined to achieve this goal; to move forward we decided that the income from the bar and catering had to be greatly increased to provide a profit margin. Accordingly we are embarking on a complete refurbishment of the bar area and much needed improvements to the kitchen which should prove to be a valuable asset to the hall.

Catering; again after a lot of deliberation it has been agreed that there is a potential income stream which must be explored further with a local well known company having been approached in consideration of becoming our resident caterer. As I write we are currently considering the best ways to deliver our catering provisions to meet what we hope will be a growing demand.

We have recently received notification from both Dial a Ride and the Air Cadets that they will be terminating their tenancy as each are moving into their own purpose built accommodation, resulting in the loss of regular income.

Over time we hope to increase the revenue from the Town Hall letting by organising our own functions, again increasing our potential income steam. We have already organised several of our own events with mixed fortunes.

On the 19th April 2013 we have indeed been very fortunate in securing the band of Her Majesty's Grenadier Guards to play in concert at the hall, hopefully this will generate much needed positive and constructive publicity.

I conclude by offering an assurance to our town residents of the continued determination of all of the Trustees, all of whom are keen to ensure the survival and success of our beloved Town Hall.

Colin J Knight

Chairman (2012 – 13)

Lydney Dramatic Society

2012-2013

Lydney Dramatic Society has enjoyed another busy and productive year.

A three act play, 'Prepare to meet thy tomb', the final one in a trilogy by Norman Robbins, was well received by our appreciative audiences and was a delight to perform.

The Pantomime this year was, 'The Grand Old Duke of York', and, after many frustrations and set backs, did well. The weather was very unkind to us causing two performances to be cancelled for the first time in our history it is believed, but we had to consider the safety of cast and audience on their homeward journey.

We are now in rehearsal for our next three act play and would welcome old and new members to participate.

The Scene Setters, our younger peoples section, have done incredibly well this year. Their entry in the Gloucester Drama Festival received two 'Best Young Actor' and two 'Best Young Actress' nominations. They have participated in community events at Naas Lane Centre and are currently rehearsing their contribution for the Open Day in June. With these brilliant young people waiting in the wings, we are confident that the future of our Society is in safe hands.

The Society, together with the Scene Setters, continues to support the Friends of Lydney Hospital and handed over £200 at the annual Hospital Fete.

Nancy Moore

Producer
March 2013





The Midcounties Co-operative



Lydney Festival Report for 2012/13

To Quote Sister Rosetta Tharpe 'Didn't it rain children, didn't it rain?'. And in June it certainly did, yet amazingly Lydney Festival only had to cancel one event because of inclement weather, and sadly it was Jazz in the Park. The rest of The Festival's extensive programme went off and fulfilled, nay exceeded, all expectations.

Opening out side of the Co-Op, celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and featuring Lydney's young talents, started in dynamic style with dance and music. This also set the scene for the following weeks of busking at the same venue.

St Mary's Church played host to several events, the superb talents of Will Sharma supported by Amy & Rhianan, being the first, also the return of Alex Kirk at the end of his first year at the London Royal School of Music, with a polished, warm performance.

We also enjoyed concerts featuring Wydean Orchestra and Choirs prior to their European tour. Percussionist & Miramba player, Rhydian Griffiths, returned for a third year, assisted by Osian Griffiths, a witty and accomplished evening.

The Town Hall played host to Lydney Primary schools providing a strong Jubilee theme enjoyed by all.

The audience at St Mary's Aylburton enjoyed a musically illustrated talk by Barry Fergusson, on Herbert Howells' influence on Barry's musical career. Especially when Barry was at Rochester Cathedral as organist and choir conductor.

Poetry fanatics were spoilt with Maggie Clutterbuck's open mike evening with a number of local poets sharing their words and then a few nights later, The Poetry Slam with Lydney poets taking on The Rainbow Team.

The 50th anniversary of Lydney Yacht club was celebrated in some style with a joint Festival/Yacht Club event in blustery sunshine. Irish folk & scottish pipes, featuring amongst the musical offerings. This supported by a myriad of local organisations and trade stalls ensured a superb day.

Sunday saw, for the first time, a church service at the docks, lead by Revd. Sarah Fenby and music supplied by The Lydney Training band. An encouragingly large congregation warmed by the Sunday sun, participated with enthusiasm in a nautically themed service.

The Festival traditionally closed with a last night concert at the Town Hall, with Bream Silver Band and The Springfield Singers providing the musical and vocal entertainment.

With thanks to all those who helped, sponsored the event and those who turned up to support us.

Derek Biddle

Lydney Festival Committee

Friends of Lydney Hospital, Annual Report to Lydney Town Council 2012/13

The past year has seen more clarity in the management arrangements for administering health care throughout Gloucestershire from 1 April 2013; this includes how the community hospitals will be owned and run. A new NHS trust will take over from the current management under the PCT, this will be known as Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust (GCST). The Friends will continue to monitor the situation including engagement with all levels of management, especially over the forthcoming months, and will advise the Town Council if they believe that the new arrangements are in any way detrimental to the effective operation of the local hospital. The Friends also attended the recent open meeting to debate the Neighbourhood Plan, and are ready to work in partnership with the team on any matters relating to health issues in the town.

The Friends participated in the debate over the introduction of new medical service arrangements at the hospital, and attended the public meeting called by Councillor Osborne in December. The new service agreement whereby the Blakeney Practice took over full responsibility for medical attendance at the hospital, has been in operation since 1 January 2013 and is working well. Staff are finding the new arrangements especially beneficial, and the Friends have seen no evidence that patient care has suffered as a result of this Gloucestershire-wide initiative.

Fundraising has continued throughout the year with a very successful Summer Fete once again providing much of the funds expended on new equipment and facilities. The major expenditure this year was on the purchase of specialist audiology equipment which has enabled Lydney Hospital to have the best audiology facility of any community hospital in the County. This has significantly improved out-patient services at the hospital. Some new items of equipment have been purchased for the wards including a state of the art patient hoist, a Hi-Lo bed and a walking device to assist patient recovery. Additionally a patient monitor was purchased through funds generously donated by the Coventry Building Society. Current plans include the refurbishment of the Staff Room including a wall-mounted television, new furniture and minor building works. In addition, the Friends have agreed to fund a special bed and visitor chairs for larger patients and for those with special needs.

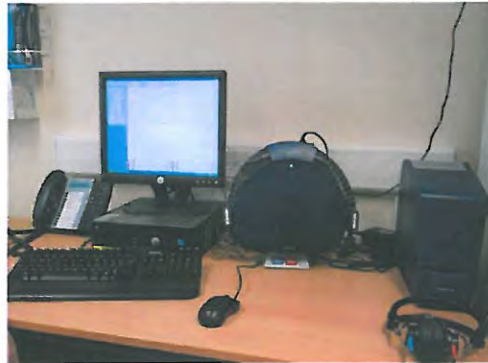
The Friends Newsletter introduced last year to keep the local community informed on hospital developments, continues to be produced and widely distributed every six months. This initiative appears to be appreciated by local people.

The Friends continue to maintain a close interest in the staff including special efforts at Christmas, making a floral presentation to members of staff about to retire, and monthly meetings with the Matron and Senior Staff. This helps create a pleasant and friendly atmosphere, and enables the Friends to maintain regular contact with the hospital operation without becoming involved in the day-to-day management.



On Wednesday 20th March 2013 Brian James of the Friends presented a gift and flowers to Verna Wheeler, Emergency Nurse Practitioner, retiring after 31 years with Lydney & District Hospital.

(Below – some items funded: Patient Hoist, Dinamap 'Vital Signs' Monitor, Audiology Unit etc.)



Mr Anthony Midgley
Chairman

Forest of Dean Railway Limited (operators of the Dean Forest Railway)

Lydney Town Council Report year ending 5th April 2013.

The Dean Forest Railway is at the forefront of the tourism industry in the Forest of Dean. Established in 1971 it is multifunctional in its aims and achievements. It operates a four and half mile branch line and fulfils many aspirations for individuals seeking companionship with others with similar interests and provides a focal point for those looking towards retirement.

Through the efforts and dedication of the membership, 2011 proved to be a successful year. The railway contributes to the local economy and indirectly supports at least nine people in employment, according to District Council statistics, in addition to our paid staff of four.

Many visitors enjoy our Santa Specials and Days out with Thomas events. We were able to reintroduce "Wilbert" the Forest engine to revenue-earning service through its long term rental to another railway. Whitecroft station, closed in 1929, has been refurbished and re-opened to provide access by train to the village. We also welcomed a mainline excursion train from St Leonard's, Hastings.



A sylvan scene on the Dean Forest Railway

We live in difficult economic times and this clearly impacts on the railway company which has had to balance limited surplus funds against major track repairs, overhauls to coaching stock, routine maintenance and infrastructure development.

The level crossings at Harbour Road and Lydney-by-pass have been reconstructed, but there remains Lydney Town crossing, which warrants a modern installation and a replica signal box.

A programme of lineside vegetation and tree clearance has continued and significant progress has been made clearing sight lines to the railway boundary. Some fence repairs have followed but we require more people to participate in this activity.

Network Rail's Lydney Junction crossing box was demolished. It was found to be in serious need of strengthening and was not a good example to preserve in the absence of any defined scheme for its relocation. Artefacts from the box have been saved for future use and the nameplate has been donated to the DFR Museum Trust.

In common with other attractions the railway continues to operate with very little financial support for advertising, compounded by the loss of local T.I.Cs and with the added disincentive of car parking charges in the whole forest area, which has to rely on its green credentials and open spaces as the prime attraction for visitors.

Shortly a public appeal will be launched to raise working capital of £50,000 to fund the start of restoration work on St Mary's footbridge; the balance will be sought from grant applications. Closed by Gloucestershire County Council due to cracks in the walkway, the bridge will cost approximately £150,000 to refurbish before it is returned to its former glory.

In addition a disability ramp needs to be installed from the platform to provide easier access to the boating lake and footpath into Lydney. We plan to stage appeals through the local press and by direct communication to all businesses in the district. The project is being dedicated to the memory of the late Melville Watts who did so much for so many in the community, and it was one of his last wishes that the bridge should be refurbished.

Peter C I Adams

Chairman

Forest of Dean Railway Limited

5th April 2013



St Mary's Footbridge



LYDNEY YACHT CLUB

The Old Shipyard House
Harbour Road
Lydney
Gloucestershire
GL15 4ER
Tel: 01594 842573

Please reply to Commodore, Miss S E Pearson, 16 Bulwark Avenue, Chepstow, Mon, NP16 5QG
01291 620189/07738 3971987

Annual Town Meeting Report 2012/13

During 2012 the Club celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Last year we held our annual rally over the weekend of 23 and 24 June. As a new addition to the event Rev. Sarah Fenby of St Mary's Church conducted an open air service on the dock side on the Sunday morning and the Club served teas and coffees and snacks after the service.

The Club held its annual summer down channel cruise in July and our departure date was the same date at the RYA's 'Push The Boat Out Day', we incorporated the two events.

This year the event will be held over the weekend of 15 and 16 June and again will be in conjunction with the Festival committee.

We are currently looking to increase our membership and are in contact with local gyms etc to encourage people to come along and try sailing. We are also planning to have boat on display in Lydney with members of the Club on hand to talk to people about what we do.

We are continuing with our plans to improve the facilities at the club.

Susan Pearson (Miss)

**Commodore
Lydney YACHT Club**





Lydney Branch of The Royal British Legion Annual Report 2012/13

The aims of the branch is to facilitate welfare for serving or ex-serving armed forces personnel and/or their dependants. Also, to maintain the "Spirit of Remembrance " for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their Country.

Welfare Committee

The Welfare Committee's main aims/objective are to provide help advice and support to serving and ex-service personnel, their families and dependants. This service is provided by a team of volunteers (Caseworkers) who meet the applicants in need, complete the required paper work and forward it to county office for confirmation of eligibility and approval.

Our caseworkers cover most of the Forest of Dean and deal with a wide variety of problems i.e. debt, housing problems, mobility & domestic issues. They also deal with the local planning officers in the cases of storage facilities for E.V.P's

The Welfare Committee deal with arranging welfare breaks for individuals & families and also arrange both hospital & home visits for those who are sick.

The relationship with the 1st Rifles at Beachley Barracks continues to improve and we have met with the new Welfare Officer and his staff; it is anticipated that their workload will increase this year due to at least 174 service personnel being made redundant.

There are changes taking place within the Royal British Legion organisational structure, some of these may well have an adverse effect on how we operate, we will just have to wait and see. One positive is that we may well require a 'drop in centre' which will be sited in the Town.

Poppy Appeal

The Poppy Appeal is the main fund raising activity run by The Royal British Legion and the Lydney Branch is indebted to Stan Rudge and his volunteers for all the hard work they put in to make each year more successful than the last.

We also owe a thanks to the Lydney Branch of the Co-Op for their use of the Melville Watts Poppy Shop for the last few years . The Poppy Shop continues to be the envy of many and was opened on 24th Oct 2012 by Dame Janet Trotter with other dignitaries in attendance i.e. Mark Harper MP, Bob Berryman Town Mayor & many others.

The Poppy Appeal Concert continues to be very popular and attendance is excellent with many local artists appearing. To date the amount raised exceeds £16,000 and continues to rise!

The Remembrance Parade

Many people think that such a Parade just happens, but the amount of work that goes into making sure everything runs smoothly for this Civic Ceremony is extremely demanding on all.

The parade is jointly organised by the Branch, Town Council & St Mary's Church; the arrangements include such things as applying for Road Closures, a Marching Band, Parade Marshall and printing and collating Order of Service sheets.

2012s Remembrance Parade was one of the most attended for many years.

That concludes the report from The Lydney Branch of The Royal British Legion; it remains a privilege to help all those past and present members of all branches of the Armed Forces.

Allan Edwards

Lydney RBL Treasurer



Lydney Area in Partnership

The announcement from Rob Millar of the Environment Agency of the sale or disposal of the Lydney Docks by 2015 together with the adjacent former factory site of Pine End Works was welcomed by those members who feel greater community involvement could bring forward the necessary improvements for the use of both sites.

The Yacht Club bid for LAGS funding for construction of a café and toilets at Lydney Docks failed to gain the support of the club members, mainly because the cost of building appeared to be unsustainable.



The LAiP applied unsuccessfully to register the project to restore Upper Forge & New Mills with the Forest Landscape Fund for a English Heritage lottery bid.

The restoration could also include the revival of the millponds at New Mills which could be beneficial for wildlife and aid tourism, being close to the Dean Forest Railway Norchard Station.



Bob Turner reported the numbers using the Lydney Railway Station has risen, putting pressure on the car park where some days ninety cars overflow the seventy two allocated spaces. The LAiP has lobbied Arriva Wales for more car parking spaces, platform cover for passengers, better signage, especially "Welcome to Lydney", and a footbridge for safe passenger crossing now that the station signal box has been demolished.



Derek Biddle
Chairman - LAIP



Lydney and District Twinning Association

The Lydney and District Twinning association continues to enjoy friendly relations with the delightful town of Bréhal in Normandy.

This year it was our turn to provide hospitality for 38 members from France, 27 adults and 11 children, over the last weekend in May.

The warm weather made visiting the surrounding area and further afield very enjoyable and picnicking, conversing and exploring in Lydney Park gardens on Sunday afternoon was a delight.

Our feasting extravaganza took place at Soudley Village Hall this year, with a hog roast, folk dancing, and a live band. The delightful setting, on a warm summer evening added to the pleasure of the event with children safe to play outside if they wanted to.

During the year we have held a very profitable quiz evening and sociable barbeque to raise funds towards entertaining our guests in 2014 when we will again be the host town.

We do not get any funding from the Town Council and members fund the exchanges themselves.

Twenty five adults and two children are planning to go to Bréhal at the end of May this year and stay with their hosts from Friday to Monday.

We are a very mixed group and all make their own travel arrangements. Crossing the channel is quite expensive and most of us tend to take the opportunity to spend a few more days visiting other friends or enjoying the delights of la belle France before or after the weekend.

Membership remains much the same with a few new members and some who have fallen by the wayside, but the general feeling of the association is that it is thriving. We are always open to welcome fresh faces with enthusiasm and perhaps new ideas.

Annual Membership remains at £5.00 per person or £10.00 per family

To find out more information contact Mrs. J. Capps tel: 01594 510391/ Email geoffandjudycapps@btopenworld.com

During the course of each year we hold some fundraising events in order to raise the finance needed towards the cost of entertaining our visitors; the encouraging feature in the last few years, both in France and in England, is the increase in membership in both towns, which bodes well for the future.

Judy Capps (Chairman)

April 2012

Neds Top Resident's Action Group

Report for Lydney Town Council Annual Town Meeting

Introduction

The Neds Top Residents Group has had a busy year supporting the development of a sustainable friendly community on the north east fringe of Lydney.

Contact with Agencies

The group attended a number of consultation events in Lydney, Yorkley and Coleford. The Group made representations to Lydney Town Council (LTC) about local issues and were given help and advice. Two members attended the Town Hall launch of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Project group launch. The Group welcomed the initiative to develop a locally owned plan and one of the members joined the steering group. Car parking charges in Lydney were opposed; these were an additional cost to local people wishing to support local shops. It seemed a short sighted measure.

Highways

The Oldcroft to Lydney and Oldcroft to Yorkley roads were surface dressed approximately 18 months ago. Following the surface dressing the centre line markings were omitted due to the width of the road being less than 5.5m at a number of locations and traditional signifiers of 'priority', bumps in the road, levelled off. The Neds Top junction where the Oldcroft Road meets the Old Dam and Church Walk became particularly hazardous because of no indications of priority and traffic speeds. Brian Watkins the Highways Manager (West) visited the site. It was agreed that the provision of 'give way' markings and any possible signage required might possibly lead to an increase in speeds of traffic in the directions given priority. This potential increase in speed together with the relatively low volume of traffic where drivers become accustomed to not having to give way may be counterproductive in terms of road safety. The overgrown conifer hedge at the junction restricted visibility and the Highways Manager agreed to liaise with the owner about improvements. The group are monitoring road safety at the junction and continue to liaise with Mr Watkins.

Large vehicles continue to founder on sharp bends and narrow lanes after being led astray by Sat Navs. Some drivers continue to show remarkable lack of common sense and a large industrial crane was grounded in Spring 2012.

Wildlife and Wild Boar

The number and frequency of wild boar roaming the roadsides increased dramatically last year. Entry in to private gardens became a problem and this was



reported to the Forestry Commission (FC) and the District council. Councillor Brian Thomas agreed to take this forward at consultation sessions with the FC.

Members of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and local birdwatchers were interested in the shelducks and fieldfare which graze on Neds Top in the Winter and Spring.

The Old Dam/Church Walk/ Oldcroft Junction.
The Church Walk junction is obscured by the hedge bottom right.

Litter and Fly Tipping and Waste Collection

Fly tipping particularly on the Old Dam included building waste, two sofas and several tyres. The Council responded very quickly to removing the sofas but the other detritus took longer and was more problematic. The Group would welcome more prosecutions of fly tippers. The new waste collection arrangements got off to a bumpy start with insufficient bins and irregular collections but these teething problems are now resolved. The Group is committed to recycling and welcomed the opportunities for improvements in recycling, reducing landfill and the environmental benefits these would generate.

Motorbike Scrambling

The 'Neds Top' crown of land was used for motorcycle scrambling last year and this became an environmental nuisance and hazardous when it escalated to advertised weekly practice events. District Council enforcement was contacted and the situation is being closely monitored. The maintenance of footpaths and wild life habitat also continues to be monitored.

Development

The area is the focus of development by renewable energy companies because of its topography and proximity to grid connections. Resilience Energy PLC hosted a consultation event regarding a turbine 87 metres in height on a strip of land between the Nurshill and Hurst Farms. Several members of the Group attended and felt that the proponents offered biased and partial information, it was also clear that they intended taking the proposal forward regardless of the outcome of consultation. The developers are carrying out a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) required by the Council. The Group believes that the impact on landscape, amenity value of the area outweighs any local or national benefits and is liaising with groups in Aylburton and Plusterwyne to oppose what is clearly a wind farm development down the estuary.

In January a German renewable energy company, eeg sought a 'screening opinion' from the District Council for the purposes on erecting a massive solar farm on a 37 hectare site known locally as Horage Wood on the estuary facing side of Neds Top, an area known for its views, wildlife and local walks. The Council for the Protection of Rural England have expressed concern that this development does not require a full EIA and are also concerned at the potential loss of 'best and versatile' agricultural land. The North Lydney Councillor, Alan Preest wrote to eeg energy expressing his opposition to the development because of the local value placed on this beautiful and historic site, and the cumulative impact of this potential development combined with other green field sites in North Lydney designated for development. He offered to search for an alternative brown field site but this has not been taken up by developers. No formal application has been made. The developers did state that they would consult with local communities but this seems another token gesture rather than serious engagement.

The Group is committed to renewable energies meeting an important part of the Nation's renewable energy requirements. Local developments are being driven by solutions that maximise profit without due regard to communities or the landscape. The Group has welcomed the development of a Renewable Energy Guidance Document for LTC members that supports developments that are of a scale and fit with the locality and will discourage those that are of overwhelming scale and impact.

Young People

The equine businesses on Neds Top continue provide recreation facilities for a number of local young people who benefit from exercise and engagement with the countryside. There was a well-attended summer camp for young people and parents that was successful despite the weather.

Economy

The small equine and agricultural businesses maintained themselves despite the bad weather that persisted for much of the year. The local 'holiday home' was well let and brought a number of visitors to local facilities and footpaths.

Sad News

One of the most senior residents on Neds Top, Mr Don Phillips died in March. Don had lived locally all his life and worked at the local collieries and at a Lydney Agricultural merchant before his retirement. He raced pigeons, enjoyed football and kept a tidy garden. He was always willing to exchange a few words and pass the time of day. He will be missed.

Mr Roger Deeks

Neds Top Resident's Action Group

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCILLOR
REPORT**

Gloucestershire County Councillors

Annual Report 2012/2013

Submitted by Cllr D Cooksley

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In April 2011, we launched a new Council Strategy and embarked on an ambitious four-year programme of change. This programme was designed to transform the way the Council works by generating around £114m in savings, reducing management and other running costs and focussing our front-line services on protecting the most vulnerable people, supporting active communities and building a sustainable county. This was our response to the significant financial challenges facing the public sector and our contribution to the coalition government's commitment to dramatically reducing the nation's debt.

In this update to our Strategy, we report our progress to date, highlight some of our main achievements and reiterate our commitment to providing the services that Gloucestershire needs at a price its residents can afford.

We are now half way through delivering our Meeting the Challenge programme, and while the size of the challenge has not diminished, the Council is making great progress towards the goals we set ourselves. In areas like youth services, bus services and highways we are taking a radically different approach to the way that our services are provided, by working together with local communities, by joining with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors and by focussing on the things that matter most to local people. By March 2013 we will have saved £65m against our target, and are on track to deliver a further £32m in the coming year.

At the same time as delivering the Council's share of public sector savings, we are also investing in economic recovery. By investing £12m in the economy, we know this will bring many times more investment into the county. This investment in the county's future will help young people develop the right skills to get jobs, keep talent within Gloucestershire by helping first time buyers get on the housing ladder and improve the county's infrastructure from roads to broadband.

In the meantime, we recognise that the economic climate is making life tough for many local people and families, so for the third year running will be freezing council tax. Once again, the income this would have generated will be replaced by a grant from the national government.

The wider role of local government is also changing. From April 2013, under the national NHS reforms, the Council will take responsibility for public health. In Gloucestershire, we are building on a strong track record of partnership working with the NHS and other partners and we see this as a further opportunity to put the health and wellbeing of the local population at the heart of everything we do.

Bearing that in mind, the priorities and plans set out in this strategy have been developed in conversation and consultation with thousands of local people who understand the challenges the Council is facing and whose views have helped us design solutions. We are extremely grateful for the way that you have engaged with us to shape this Council strategy and are committed to continuing to work with our partners to provide the services that matter most to local people

Our Vision and Values

Our vision is to use the resources available to us to improve quality of life for Gloucestershire people.

Our plans are built on 3 clear values that will help to steer us through the years ahead. Applying these values will mean that the Council is not only smaller, but also more flexible and more responsive to local people's needs and expectations.

Living within our means

We believe that it's wrong to spend more than we can afford or to pass financial problems on to the next generation. This means we have to make difficult decisions now and focus on our priorities, manage our budgets and reduce our borrowing. We will do that by:

- Being as efficient as possible and saving money by joining up with our partners
- Making tough but necessary choices about the services we provide and taking responsibility for those choices
- Implementing cuts in government grants locally – where government has had to cut funding streams for specific services, we will not be able to afford to subsidise those services locally
- Reducing our debt and the burden it places on our revenue finances

Providing the basics

In the coming years we will have less money and will have to make sure we spend it where the need is greatest. Our role is to make sure local people get good outcomes from their services and we understand that it is the quality of the service that matters to local people, not who provides it. Our focus should be on:

- Improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Providing the infrastructure and services that keep the county moving and working
- Making decisions that promote long-term sustainability
- Finding the best, most efficient way of delivering services which satisfy customers. If someone else can do a better job or make the money go further, then we should make use of their skill and expertise.

Helping communities help themselves

The Council is at its most effective when it is helping people to live successful lives as independently as possible and helping communities to help themselves. We believe that if you give power to local people you get better results and achieve better value. Our approach will be to:

- Give individuals more say about the services they receive and the support they receive
- Empower communities to do more themselves and giving them the tools they need for community action
- Recognise that some areas need more help than others and that, with a little support, they can get their ideas off the ground
- Support the transfer of buildings and other assets to community ownership so that they can become a hub for local activity - flexible and responsive to local needs.

Our Funding

This strategy is all about how we make a difference for local communities with the available funding.

We have already experienced two years in which the funding we get from Central Government has been reducing, and further radical changes to the way that we are funded will be introduced from April 2013. Not only will the trend of reducing funding continue into the future, but there will also be a number of other changes that will affect the Council's budget.

The main changes are

- Continued overall reductions to the grant funding we receive from Government, which will decrease in cash terms by £19.53 million or 4.6% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. Although the amount of funding we receive from Government will continue to shrink, we are being given more freedom over how we use it, as fewer grants will be restricted to being used for particular services.
- Councils will have responsibility for designing their own rules and system for reducing Council Tax for those who cannot afford to pay it in full. We are working with the District Councils to implement a new scheme, but although we welcome the move to a local scheme, the Government is assuming that we will be able to run it more efficiently, so we are expected to make significant local savings on the existing scheme.
- Along with our District Councils, we will receive a share of any extra money that is generated through growth in business rates.
- Further reforms to the way schools are run will mean that some of the funding that previously contributed to the cost of overseeing the local education system and supporting schools will now be paid directly to schools.
- Responsibility for public health will pass to the County Council, along with a ring-fenced budget.
- We will also receive additional funding for adult social care to reduce the demand on acute hospital care.

For the third year running, we will be freezing council tax. The council tax income we have foregone (equivalent to £4.4 million) will be replaced by a Government grant of £2.5 million and additional savings of £1.9 million.

The impact of some of the most recent changes is still becoming clear. We know that restraints on public spending will continue for the foreseeable future and we will continue to plan for a challenging financial future.

Let's Talk - What You've Told Us

In Autumn 2010, the County Council undertook a major consultation exercise which shaped this strategy. Around 5,000 residents and stakeholders engaged in our 'Let's Talk' campaign. Through this you told us which services local people are most interested in, which services you value most and where you think we should focus our efforts to drive down cost. This included a clear message that we should protect services for the most vulnerable people, with high levels of support for:

- Care for older people, vulnerable adults and vulnerable children
- Fire & Rescue
- Supporting thousands of voluntary carers

However, when faced with the financial challenges we face, people recognised and understood the need to make tough choices across the piece. In particular, people thought we should look first for savings in the following areas:

- Parking
- School transport
- Libraries
- Archives
- Life-long learning
- Trading standards & consumer advice
- Traffic improvement schemes
- Council-funded additional police officers
- Coroners
- Registrars
- Emergency management

Further consultation took place during December 2012 and January 2013 to support the updating of this strategy. This included local people, our key partners as well as staff, trade unions and professional associations. It also included particular consideration of the needs of those groups that are covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty. The results of this consultation will be used alongside the high-level analysis of local needs which we undertook earlier in the year (as set out in *Understanding Gloucestershire*) to understand and where appropriate to mitigate the impact of our decisions and to shape our strategy for future years.

This consultation reinforced the message that the Council should focus its resources on those in most need and, wherever possible, should help people to live independent lives. As a result, we are continuing to protect Adult Social Care budgets as well as focussing services on helping vulnerable people regain their independence.

The consultation also showed overwhelming support for County Council taking action to stimulate economic growth and create jobs for Gloucestershire. In response, we are announcing further investment in the county's skills and infrastructure.

Getting Our Own House in Order

Every pound spent on running the council is a pound that is not spent on front-line services. There is a cost associated with running any council but we will continue to minimise and reduce that cost. We will do everything we can to be as efficient as possible, reduce the council's running costs and get the best value from our assets.

We are making good progress with a fundamental review of the way the Council operates. We have reduced senior management costs and our back-office costs while focusing the Council on its core job of securing good outcomes for local people based on sound evidence of local people's needs.

We will look to share back-office services with other public sector partners, whether that means buying-in services at better cost than we can deliver them ourselves, or generating income or reducing costs by providing services for others.

Although we will employ fewer staff, we will continue to develop our workforce to be skilled and productive so that they can respond effectively to local needs. We will ensure that pay and rewards reflect the needs of the council and the prevailing economic and employment conditions. Technology will be a key, both to reduce the back-office support needed by managers, and to help customers access our services more easily online.

As our workforce gets smaller, we are also freeing up buildings and equipment to reduce running costs and our debt.

By doing all of this, we believe we can make Gloucestershire County Council not only leaner and more focussed but also more effective and responsive to local people's needs.

Since launching this strategy, we have...

- Slimmed down the Council's management structure, reducing the number of Group Director and Director posts by a third, and saving £700k.
- Saved approximately £1 million by negotiating better prices against existing contracts with our major suppliers.
- Reduced back-office costs by joining up with Gloucester City Council to deliver payroll services.
- Frozen member allowances.
- Reduced our levels of borrowing through debt redemption.
- Restricted recruitment to all but essential, front-line posts, and successfully renegotiated staff terms and conditions, saving £1m.

- Reduced our staff numbers by 1461 since March 2010, the vast majority of whom left on a voluntary basis or as a result of a fixed term contract ending.
- Reduced our office accommodation, freeing up surplus buildings such as the Hucclecote Centre and 68 Westgate Street and reducing costs.
- Launched a new, interactive website that allows customers to do more business with us online.
- Refreshed our focus on providing great customer service through our 'Think Customer' campaign.
- Taken advantage of the reduction in external inspection and government target-setting by paring back performance monitoring to those activities that are critical to our business.
- Exceeded our target to reduce carbon emissions by 10% by 2012 (from our 2006/07 baseline) and are on track to achieve our even more ambitious target of a 60% reduction by 2021.

Over the coming years, we will:

Focus on the customer

- Continue to improve the way we manage and report customer comments, compliments and complaints and using these and other sources of information to develop a better understanding of our customers' needs.

Management and administration

- Continue to drive costs out of the organisation's structure.
- Continue to make back-office savings across all areas by pooling resources, centralising specialist teams that are currently distributed across the council and significantly reducing staff numbers.
- Continue to use LEAN techniques and robust programme management to streamline internal processes, focus on customer needs and achieve efficiency savings.
- Consolidate all the Council's transactional services into a single Business Service Centre.
- Rely more on partner provision rather than direct employment.

Buildings and assets

- Reduce our overheads and generate capital receipts from selling surplus office accommodation and recycling or returning spare computers and other equipment.
- Rationalise our estate and share more of our buildings with partners wherever possible.
- Retain a core rural estate of 6400 acres and reduce the number of farms from 88 to 50. The receipts from the disposal will go towards reducing the burden of council debt.

Procurement

- Continue to reduce our energy costs and our carbon emissions.
- Reduce our transport costs by cutting business mileage and working with our partners to integrate the procurement, use and maintenance of vehicles.

How will we measure change?

- The overall savings delivered through Meeting the Challenge
- Total funds generated through sale of assets
- Monitoring of customer compliments, comments and complaints

Protecting Vulnerable People

Protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults is one of our most important areas of work. It accounts for a large proportion of our budget and we know from the 'Let's Talk' feedback that local people support our view that this should be a top priority for the council.

The way we look at social care is changing dramatically. We have begun to give people much more choice about the support they receive including, when possible, giving people direct control of the money we are providing. We need to make best use of available resources, and that means putting power directly in the hands of those receiving care to make good choices about what support they receive.

Over recent years we have improved the way we respond to children and young people who are at risk and are continuing to focus on reducing the pressure on those services by better targeting of preventative work. We have worked with partners to make sure that referrals are made only when appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

We also want to encourage closer working at a local level between different professionals and further integration of services with partners. This can provide a more rounded assessment of children's needs, seamless support tailored to individual needs and to allow safeguarding services to focus on those children who are most at risk. Through our Families First programme we will work with professionals across all sectors to provide focussed, co-ordinated support to families with high levels of need.

Over the coming years more service users will be able to make personal choices about how they use their personal budgets to meet their care needs. This process of change is already resulting in people moving away from traditional forms of support such as day centres and opting for community-based activities and provision. We need to respond to that by shifting resources away from traditional institutions, and into stimulating the market to provide innovative services and solutions that focus on integrating, community based activity.

Since launching this strategy, we have...

- Improved services for our most vulnerable children.
- Completely redesigned our youth services, putting in place a 5-year contract for an integrated service that focuses on targeted work with those young people who are most at risk.
- Further joined up NHS & Council services by preparing for the integration of Public Health into the Council and the creation of a Health & Wellbeing Board, whose priority has been the development of a Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- Increased the percentage of social care clients who receive personal budgets, allowing them to make choices about what services they receive.

- Joined up the management of front-line NHS and Council services through our partnership with Gloucestershire Care Services, and made progress towards removing artificial boundaries for service users.
- Introduce fairer charging for those who can afford to pay and want to buy extra support.

Over the coming years, we will:

- Continue to increase the number of people who receive personal budgets and are in charge of their own social care.
- Stimulate and develop community capacity, helping organisations and groups to develop the services that social care clients want to use their personal budgets to buy.
- Drive down costs through smarter 'shopping', making more use of providers in the independent sector.
- Continue to transform services for vulnerable children, focussing child protection resources on those children who are at most risk and working in partnership with schools, health and other partners to provide high-quality, preventative support for other vulnerable children and young people.
- Provide flexible, focussed support to families with the highest levels of need through our Families First programme, through which we will deliver the Government's 'Troubled Families' initiative.
- Introduce a new, multi-agency specialist team bringing together social workers, substance misuse and mental health workers, health visitors and a speech and language therapist to provide intensive support to families with very high levels of need where children and young people are at risk of neglect.
- Focus on making sure that the support we provide helps children to either stay in or find safe and stable families.
- Work to reduce the number of people who self-harm or who die by suicide.
- Put a bigger emphasis on helping older people back to independence and recovery, recognising that many can return to full independence following a relatively short period of support.
- Ensure that users are properly involved in decisions about the viability of existing patterns of service.

- Joining up with other councils to develop and deliver care models that better meet people's needs including the development of a wider range of housing options, allowing us to reduce the number of residential care places across the County.
- Help people to stay active and healthy so that they can remain independent and enjoy a good quality of life into old age.
- Focus on targeting funding for housing-based support on people rather than buildings and developing more flexible models of locality-based support.
- Continue to work with partners to implement our Carer's strategy with a particular focus on inter-generational work.
- Improve the quality of life of those people who have dementia by helping to develop dementia-friendly communities.
- Increase our use of technology, including telecare, in helping people to live independently.
- Help older people to remain independent for longer by taking preventative action to reduce accidental falls.

How will we measure change?

- The percentage of social care clients being given control of their own budgets
- The percentage of social care clients receiving short-term services that help them back to independence
- A reduction in children returning into the Child Protection system for a second or subsequent time.
- The percentage of carers who receive a needs assessment and specific services from the Council

Supporting Active Communities

We want to help communities to do more themselves and give them more control over local services like schools, libraries and youth centres.

We know that Gloucestershire's army of volunteers already make a huge difference to thousands of people's everyday lives in their neighbourhoods, towns and villages. We want to work more closely with Gloucestershire's voluntary and community sector to stimulate innovation and encourage communities to step forward and take on new roles in providing local services and solutions.

We support the steps the government is taking to strengthen the autonomy and independence of schools. We will still continue to have an important strategic role in education but will focus our resources on ensuring access to high quality provision and helping those maintained schools which need particular support. We will also continue to offer support and back-office services to schools on a business-like footing, working closely with the schools community.

We recognise that some of the services we will have to stop are still important to local people, so we want to make it as easy as possible for communities to take over local centres or activities. Our commitment is that where we step away from a service, we'll create the opportunity for communities to step forward. This will include releasing assets to community ownership, offering community buildings at peppercorn rents, putting communities in control of services and providing support to make it happen.

We believe that not only is this approach more sustainable in the long-term, but that it will also make them more flexible to local needs.

Since launching this strategy, we have...

- Provided 38 community organisations with grants totalling £58k through the Supporting Active Communities grant scheme, helping them to make a real difference in their neighbourhoods.
- Agreed the takeover of 11 council buildings with community groups through our Big Community Offer.
- Launched "Highways – Your Way" – a Big Community Offer scheme giving towns, parishes and neighbourhoods the opportunity to take on delivery of highways services, seek match funding for high priority local projects and buy in additional services or equipment from the Council.
- Supported the launch of Gloucester Academy, working in partnership with the Academy's sponsor, Prospects Services and Gloucestershire College.
- Opened 4 new fire stations and our new Life Skills Centre.

- Worked with district councils to help community groups and voluntary organisations to provide a range of activities for young people.
- Secured a range of locality-based support and services for families through the re-tendering of our Children's Centre contract.
- Following strong feedback from the public, discontinued the discretionary funding of police officers from 2013.
- Reviewed and redesigned our approach to delivering a library service enabling greater community involvement.
- Scaled back lifelong learning, arts and culture to concentrate the services on areas that attract external funding or where income can cover the full cost.

Over the coming years, we will:

Working with communities

- Encourage people to play an active part in their communities by volunteering.
- Work with Town and Parish Councils to play a more active role where they are keen to do so.
- Support communities to take forward road safety activities and education.
- Encourage communities to promote healthy lifestyles through our schools-based Health Living and Learning programme, for example, our Healthy Living Pharmacy programme, health trainers programme and other health improvement services.
- Continue to provide a county-wide registration service which covers its own costs.
- Make the most of opportunities for a 'one-stop-shop' approach, where a range of services and activities are based in a single building.
- Focus our early years support on children and families who are most in need.

Schools

- Offer a range of value-for-money services to those schools who wish to buy them.

- Continue to ensure sufficient school places and intervene in those maintained schools where outcomes for pupils need improvement.
- As a result of the reduction in Early Intervention Grant, we will reduce our capacity for intervening in schools as more convert to academies.

How will we measure change?

- Total funding provided to community groups through our small grants scheme
- The number of buildings transferred to community ownership

Building a Sustainable County

Gloucestershire County Council is responsible for planning and delivering much of the infrastructure that keeps the county working and moving. The financial challenges mean that we need to find significant savings, but we are committed to doing this in a way that avoids creating problems for future generations.

We will prioritise those services that keep the county running, that make Gloucestershire an attractive place to do business, and that directly protect the public from harm.

Working with local business through our Local Enterprise Partnership, the Council will promote economic growth through an innovative economic stimulus programme attracting investment into critical infrastructure, major transport schemes, work based skills and the housing market.

Our approach to the highways network will see a shift in emphasis to a core maintenance service, to reflect the tighter financial limits over the short to medium term. The service will continue to focus on maintaining the county's roads in a safe condition, cost savings and opportunities for joining up services with partners to better meet the needs of local communities

We want to take a joined up approach to the transport network. We recognise that different solutions are needed for large urban centres, smaller towns and rural villages. We want to make sure that the money we put into passenger transport is being used as effectively as possible and is focussed on getting people to work, school and essential services.

We will also continue our efforts to reduce our carbon emissions and to reduce the amount of waste that we send to landfill.

Since launching this strategy, we have...

- Delegated £10,000 to each County Councillor to spend on local highways schemes and priorities.
- Focussed on essential repairs to our roads, filling 76,201 potholes since this strategy was launched and exceeding our targets for emergency repairs.
- Invested £1m in strengthening roads, including repairs to those roads that were worst affected by the severe winter weather at the end of 2010.
- Completely redesigned our bus network, generating savings of £2m while making sure that people can still access essential services.
- Introduced new, fairer charging policies for home to school transport.
- Signed up to a Joint Waste Committee with District Council partners that will help us to progress towards our long-term recycling targets.

- Invested significant amounts of money into building our resilience to flooding.
- Continued to reduce the levels of waste going into landfill and to progress our plans for a new residual waste facility.
- Reshaped our planning department to focus on our statutory responsibilities.
- Launched a new Local Enterprise Partnership with the local business sector.
- Brought our Emergency Management service into the Fire & Rescue Service and focused our Trading Standards service on enforcement and risk management, reducing costs across both areas.
- Invested £12 million to bring in many times more investment into the county, to help grow Gloucestershire.
- Putting £1million into youth employment and created apprenticeship opportunities across County Council departments.
- Helped keep talent within the county by providing low interest, local authority loans to 42 first-time buyers.
- Contracted with BT to secure the roll out of Next Generation Access Broadband across the County by 2015 (three years ahead of our original target).

Over the coming years, we will:

Supporting business

- Work with our Local Enterprise Partnership to address the infrastructure constraints to economic growth through the government's Growing Places Fund.
- Promote, and where appropriate lead, major transport infrastructure improvements, including the delivery of Cinderford Spine Road and the development of Elmbridge Park and Ride and junction capacity improvements.

Skills

- Help young people develop the skills employers are looking for and make sure young people and employers can access information & support they need.
- Make it easier for young people to get work experience and share the good practice already taking in place in schools and businesses.

Roads

- Continue to provide £10,000 to each County Councillor to spend on local highways priorities.
- Focus on carrying out essential maintenance and repairing potholes, scaling back plans for road building and park-and-ride improvements.
- Concentrate on responding to problems reported by the public and local communities whilst reducing the amount spent on routine inspection and monitoring of street lighting and road condition.
- Work closely with District Councils and Parish and Town Councils to provide joined up services.

Community Safety

- Ensure we have the right fire and rescue equipment, specialist rescue appliances and crewing levels for aerial appliances in order to take advantage of the location of new stations.

Parking

- Reinvest parking revenue in passenger transport and roads, introducing new parking schemes and making savings through smarter procurement and reviewing charges.

Waste Management

- Trust people to make the most of the new collection schemes being introduced by District Councils, integrating promotions and campaigns aimed at persuading the public to recycle more into our mainstream communications.

Renewable Energy

- Move towards a carbon-neutral position across our estate by maximising income from the generation of renewable energy from our property assets.

Flooding

- Continue our huge investment in flood alleviation schemes with an additional £1m, and £1m for flood-related highways repairs.

How will we measure change?

- The number of potholes and road defects repaired
- The reduction in the amount of waste going into landfill
- An increase in the amount of renewable energy generated from the Council's estate over the lifetime of this strategy
- The reduction in carbon emissions from Council buildings and transport

**PUBLIC QUESTION
TIME**

**COUNCILLOR'S
DETAILS/ATTENDANCE
RECORDS**

Town Council of Lydney

Council Chambers, Claremont House, High Street, Lydney, Glos, GL15
5DX

Telephone: (01594) 842234

Fax: (01594) 842312

www.lydneytowncouncil.co.uk



Customer Information Point Opening Times

9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Monday to
Thursday

9.00 a.m. to 12 Noon Friday

Purpose Statement

"Lydney Town Council is dedicated to meeting the needs and aspirations of the whole community by:

- ***Proving cost-effective services***
- ***Promoting a clean, safe and low-crime environment***
- ***Supporting local activities and facilities for all***
- ***Encouraging citizenship and localism***
- ***Supporting the local economy***
- ***Encouraging appropriate development which will sustain a vibrant town"***

Councillor Meeting Attendance Record

Councillors 2012/2013

	May-12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Late Jul/August 12	Aug 12 - Annual hol	Sep-12	Oct-12	Late Oct 12	Nov-12	Late Nov 12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	Total Number of Absences
Clr J Bartle	A	A	R	R	N/A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	-
Clr B Berryman					N/A											0
Clr D Biddle					N/A	A								A		3
Clr R Bonser					N/A			A		A						2
Clr J Cordon	R	R	R	R	N/A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	-
Clr D Cooksley					N/A											1
Clr D Edwards				A	N/A							A	A			4
Clr C Harris					N/A											-
Clr V Hobman					N/A		A							A		3
Clr J James				A	N/A	A		A		A		A		A		7
Clr C Matthews				A	N/A		A			A		A		A		7
Clr B Osborne					N/A			A								1
Clr S Osborne	....	....	....	....	N/A		A			A				A		6
Clr B Pearman					N/A											1
Clr A Preest	....	....	....	....	N/A			A		A						3
Clr B Stapleton		R	R	R	N/A	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	-
Clr B Thomas					N/A			A		A						4
Clr G Thompson	....	....	....	....	N/A		A			A		A	A	A	A	7
CEO					N/A											
Minute Taker					N/A											

Codes

- Attended

A - Absent

R - Resigned

.... - Not yet a councillor

Lydney Town Council

2012 – 2013 LIST OF COUNCILLORS

<p>Mr Robin Berryman Stedman 77, High Street Aylburton Glos GL15 6DE Tel: 01594 842036</p>	<p>Mr Derek Biddle Hurst Farm Lydney Glos GL15 4LN Tel: 01594 842180</p>	<p>Mrs Ruth Bonser 24 Forest Road Lydney Glos GL15 5LB Tel: 01594 841813</p>
<p>Mr David Cooksley 3 Swan Road Lydney Glos GL15 5RU Tel: 01594 844800</p>	<p>Mr David Edwards 33 Templeway Lydney Glos GL15 5HU Tel: 01594 840106</p>	<p>Ms Carol Harris 63 Klondyke Avenue Lydney Glos GL15 5PN Tel: 01594 841026</p>
<p>Mrs Valerie Hobman 31 Albert Street Lydney Glos GL15 5LU Tel: 841079</p>	<p>Mrs Janice James 3 Bathurst Park Road Lydney GL15 5HG Tel: 01594 843847</p>	<p>Ms Charlotte Matthews The Old Vicarage Lords Hill Coleford Glos Tel: 01594 836105</p>
<p>Mrs Sue Osborne 25 Valley Road Lydney Glos GL15 5QN Tel: 01594 841970</p>	<p>Mr William Osborne 25 Valley Road Lydney Glos GL15 5QN Tel: 01594 841970</p>	<p>Mr Brian Pearman 18 Bracken Close Lydney Glos GL15 5AH Tel: 01594 841452</p>
<p>Mr Alan Preest 7 Greenacre Bream Lydney GL15 6AP</p>	<p>Mr Brian Thomas Soilwell Barn Allaston Road Lydney Glos GL15 4EX Tel: 842373</p>	<p>Vacant Seat</p>
<p>DISTRICT COUNCILLORS</p> <p>Cllrs: Hobman, Osborne, (Lydney East)</p> <p><u>(Details as above)</u></p>	<p>DISTRICT COUNCILLOR</p> <p>Cllr J Bevan Dene Hollow Cottage Highfield Lane (Lydney East) Lydney Glos GL15 4LL Phone: 01594 842146 Email: James.bevan@fdean.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr J Davis 1 The Spires Lydney (Lydney North) Glos GL15 6QX Phone: 842884 Email: Judy.davis@fdean.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr M Winship Severn Lodge Church Lane (Lydney West) Alvington Lydney, Glos GL15 6BQ Phone: 01594 528289 Email: Morlan.Winship@fdean.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllr T Glastonbury Tall Pines The Tufts (Lydney West) Bream Glos GL15 6HL Phone: 01594 562102 Email: Terry.Glastonbury@fdean.gov.uk</p>	<p>COUNTY COUNCILLOR</p> <p>Cllr D Cooksley</p> <p><u>(Details as above)</u></p>
<p>CEO & Executive Officer</p>	<p>Mrs Jayne Smailes CEO/RFO/Proper Officer Tel: 01594 842234 E-Mail: ceo@lydneytowncouncil.co.uk</p>	<p>Miss Carol Wheeler Executive Officer Tel: 01594 842234 E-Mail: exec.officer@lydneytowncouncil.co.uk</p>