

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Lydney

Annual Town Meeting

at

The Town Hall, Lydney

On Monday 18th April 2016 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 20th April 2015**
- 3. The Mayor's Annual Report for 2015/16**
- 4. Annual Police Report**
- 5. To receive the following Annual Town Council Reports:**
 - ❖ **Planning & Highways Committee – Chairman's Report** *(Cllr Preest)*
 - ❖ **Amenities Committee Report** *(Cllr C Harris)*
 - ❖ **Burial Committee Report** *(Cllr Harris)*
 - ❖ **Finance & Scrutiny Committee - Chairman's Report** *(Cllr Pearman)*
 - ❖ **Neighbourhood Development Plan** *(Cllr Pearman)*
- 6. To receive the Annual County Councillor's Report** *(CCllr Preest)*
- 7. To receive the annual Charitable Trust Reports;**
 - ❖ **Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust** *(Cllr Ives)*
 - ❖ **Lydney Recreation Ground Trust** *(Cllr Biddle)*
- 8. Selection of Community Reports**
- 9. Public Questions** *(Questions submitted in advance of meeting by the general public)*

Please note: Should any member of the electorate wish to raise a further question following the ATM they are respectfully requested to submit their question, in writing, to the Town Council for which they will then receive a formal response, tendered by the Mayor, as part of the Town Council's May Full Council Meeting to which they are more than welcome to attend.

- 10. Close**

**Annual Town Meeting
Held at Lydney Town Hall, Lydney
Monday 20 April 2015 at 7.03 pm**

Present: Lydney Town Council
B Berryman (Mayor), D Biddle, R Bonser, J Greenwood, C Harris, V Hobman,
H Ives, J Openshaw, B Pearman, A Preest, S Rudge, B Thomas, C Vaughan

Mrs J Smailes - Chief Executive Officer
Miss C Wheeler - Executive Officer
Mr R Lewis – Independent Internal Auditor, Wildin & Co

Gloucestershire Police
P C Evans, Community Officer, Cinderford

35 Members of the Public

Councillor Berryman 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 notices had been published in the local press and on the Town Council's noticeboards requiring electors to submit any question which they wished to pose to the Council in advance of the meeting.

All attendees were provided with a bound version of Lydney Town Council's Annual Report 2014/15.

1. **APOLOGIES**
No apologies for absence were received.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting dated 7 April 2014 were confirmed and approved as a true record and duly signed. **Proposed by Cllr Rudge, seconded by Cllr Harris.** Vote carried.
3. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014/15** – Cllr B Berryman
Cllr Berryman read out his report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.
4. **ANNUAL POLICE REPORT**
PC Evans read out the report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.

Cllr Berryman advised that the Council remained concerned over the potential transfer of Officers and PCSOs from Lydney Station to Coleford Station, particularly the requirement for PCSOs to make their own way between said Towns. A member of the public questioned the decision to close Lydney Station highlighting that Lydney was a major Town in the Forest of Dean which was set for a significant growth in its population.

PC Evans gave a commitment to relay the points raised to her superior Officers.

5. **LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS**
Planning and Highway Committee – Cllr J Greenwood
Cllr Greenwood read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Amenities Committee – Cllr B Thomas

Cllr Thomas read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.

Burial Committee – Cllr C Harris

Cllr Harris read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.

Finance and Scrutiny Committee – Cllr B Pearman

Cllr Pearman read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.

CEO's Report – Mrs J Smailes

The CEO read out her report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15 and drew attention to the Budget Comparison, End of Year figures and Independent Internal Audit figures for Year Ended 31 March 2015.

6. **CHARITABLE TRUST REPORTS**

Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust – Trustee H Ives

Trustee Ives read out the Trust's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Lydney Recreation Trust – Trustee Preest

Trustee Preest read out the Trust's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

7. **COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Lydney Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group – Cllr B Pearman/Cllr J Openshaw

Cllr Pearman read out the Group's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Cllr Openshaw gave a visual presentation on the improvement works which the Group hoped would be carried out should the NDP successfully pass Referendum.

Lydney Dial-A-Ride – Mrs L Currie, Manager

Mrs Currie read out the organisation's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Lydney Multi Agency Stakeholder Flood Defence Committee – Cllr B Thomas

Cllr Thomas read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/2015.

Taurus Crafts – Ms E Ball

Ms Ball gave an overview of the work undertaken by Taurus Crafts, the success of local artisans and the links which continue to be forged with the local community.

Lydney In Bloom – Cllr C Harris

Cllr Harris read out the Committee's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15.

Friends of Lydney Hospital – Mr A Midgeley, Chairman

Mr Midgeley gave a précis of the report contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2014/15. It was noted that a newsletter was produced every 6 months which was widely circulated and well received.

Recalling the report made at the Annual Town Meeting last year, Mr Midgeley felt that after the ordinary elections had taken place on 7 May 2015 “the Friends” would be invited to participate in a consultation exercise with the local NHS Trust designed to improve the service. Mr Midgeley stressed the importance of both the Council and the community engaging in said consultation.

Mr Midgeley then spoke on the improvements which were being undertaken at the hospital and expressed thanks to the support given by the community.

Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee – Mr C Knight, Chairman

Mr Knight gave a précis of the Management Committee’s report and highlighted the diverse range of events which had taken place. It was stressed that the Management Committee would welcome additional Trustees/helpers and attendees were encouraged to register on the Town Hall’s website in order that they may receive e-mail alerts for future events.

Mr Knight expressed thanks to the residents of Lydney for their assistance with the Town Hall.

Lydney War Memorial (Almshouses) Trust – Mrs R Richardson, Chair

Mrs Richardson read out the Trust’s report, as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2014/2015.

The Royal British Legion Lydney Branch – Mr M Houghton, President

Mr Houghton read out the Branch report, as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2014/2015.

Lydney Community Centre – Mr D Biddle

Mr Biddle was pleased to advise that the Centre was running to capacity every evening and the Management Committee possessed exciting plans for a new entrance and café. Furthermore, Mr Biddle felt that the Centre was the hub for talent sharing in the community.

8. **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED**

Cllr Berryman advised that no questions had been received from the electorate.

9. **CLOSE**

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.

The Mayor's Annual Report 2015/16

Once again I have to report that there has been no progress on a public crossing at the railway station or the road junctions at Bream Road and Forest Road.

Progress is now being made at Oakdale with a lot of problems being overcome. The latest improvement is a tarmac footpath from the estate to Cambourne Place. Stakeholder meetings are still taking place and with the event of phase two other improvements should follow.

A new Head Teacher at The Dean Academy has been appointed and the signs are positive that the school will improve and a new youth council will be set up.

The Council continues to clear the banks of the River Lyd to increase the flow of water which helps to prevent Lydney from flooding. Although not perfect, the flood defences at Lakeside have alleviated the flooding problem. The weather has given these defences a very good test but the Council is concerned about spring water from the old golf course seeping into Lakeside. Stakeholders still meet regularly in relation to flood defences.

The Groundstaff have maintained a high standard in the Cemetery, closed churchyard, Bathurst Park and around the Town.

This year the Council was very pleased to have been presented with Quality Gold Status. Lydney Town Council is the second Council in England to have achieved this standard. Members of the electorate often inquire what this affords them to which the answer must be 'peace of mind' that the council's procedures, its financial governance and the manner by which it addresses community business is appropriate for a council of this size. Attaining this accolade was no mean feat therefore I think that it is only fitting to note the commitment to excellence shown by Council employees and members of this Council on a daily basis.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan has now passed the Referendum stage with 85% of voters in favour. This should help Lydney in relation to planning, funding and the future of the Town.

Christmas Lights Switch On was carried out by Andy Lewis, a local paratriathlon champion, and with a real tree it was a very successful evening. Extra lights have been purchased to fill the gap adjacent to Tesco supermarket for the 2016 display.

The planted gateway signs have been sponsored at no expense to the Council. We are currently in negotiations with a local business man who is willing to provide items relating to the history of salmon fishing at the three roundabouts. Gloucestershire County Council Highways are causing a delay with the plans due to their concerns over the items being traffic friendly.

The land between the lake and the Bypass has been cleared and grass planted with a footpath through it. The old compound used when the Bypass was built has been opened up for additional car parking. Picnic tables are being made in-house and will be placed in this area.

The sports clubs still offer excellent facilities for the residents of Lydney and along with other organisations give ample opportunities for adults and youth.

The four Forest Mayors continue to meet regularly to move forward with a united front. Lydney's CEO and other Town Clerks continue to confer on new legislation or problems that arise concerning the Towns.

Before I conclude my report I would like to thank all of the Town Council's staff who continue to demonstrate their loyalty and their commitment to improving our town; it is my opinion that with the present staff and Councillors we are well placed to move Lydney.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, fellow Councillors and staff for their support over the past year.

Cllr Bob Berryman
Mayor



Police Report

Lydney Annual Police Report 2015/2016

Local Staff

Forest Inspector – Stephen Chester
Forest South Sergeant (Coleford/Lydney/Sedbury) – PS Sara Sleeman

Lydney beat manager – PC 2142 Hopkins
PCSO Tom Oliver
PCSO Dan Wilce

Crimes.

The number of crimes that has taken place across Lydney from 28th February 2015 to the 29th February 2016 have decreased from **381** (14/15) to **297** same period 15/16. This is a decrease of 84 crimes.

Detected Crimes.

	Disposal										Total
	Adult Caution	Adult Conditional Caution	Det Charge / Summons	Det NFA Community Resolution	Det NFA Formal Warning	Det NFA Penalty Notice Possess Disorder	Det TIC Prev. Recorded	Restorative Disposal Level 1	Youth Caution	Youth Conditional Caution	
Lydney	12	0	63	4	7	1	3	12	3	0	105
Total	12	0	63	4	7	1	3	12	3	0	105

Road Traffic Collisions.

- ❖ During the period 28th February 2015 – 29th February 2016 there have been 82 Road traffic collisions. In a comparison 9th March 2014 – 15th March 2015 there were 79 Road Traffic Collisions. This is an increase of 3.

Police Report

Response Times

Each incident reported to the Police is given a grading depending on the severity of the incident. This ranges from suspects no longer at the scene, date when the offence happened and also risk to life factors.

Grade 1's require trained officers to respond with lights and sirens illuminated. In urban areas the response times are set at 10 minutes. Rural areas are set at 20 minutes.

In the period – 28th February 2015 – 29 February 2016 there have been:

362 Grade 1's
877 Grade 2's
471 Grade 3's
383 Grade 4's

There have been 2093 incidents created by Police.

Lydney Policing Issues.

- ✓ Lydney police station remains open and we have a number of officers working from the station.
- ✓ Steele Avenue – Drugs – A drugs warrant was recently conducted and a large quantity of drugs (Heroin) was found. We are working closely with Housing on this matter. Update on this from last year the offender has been given a prison sentence.
- ✓ Wheeled Respect – this is a speeding operation which is run in Lydney 3 monthly. This operation continues to be a great success and is used to both enforce speed and to educate offenders about speed.
- ✓ Community Speed Watch is available for members of the community to be trained using the speed gun. Minimum of 6 people required and gun provided by Road Safety Partnership.
- ✓ Officers from Lydney hosted a Fraud Prevention and Online Safety Event at NatWest Bank, Lydney on Monday 1st March 2016. It was a successful event with members of the public attending about purchasing 'gig' tickets online, online banking and using comparison websites. A number of leaflets and parenting guides were handed out.
- ✓ We have continued to provide 'Think you Know' assemblies at local schools. The Constabulary's mascot, 'Ollie' the online computer visited a recent assembly at Severn Banks School. We have also been asking secondary schools to show the BB3 production, Murder Games, The life and death of Brek Bendar,
- ✓ We have secured funding from the PCC for two more electric bikes. These will be in service from the 7th March 2016.
- ✓ We are still making enquiries into the criminal damage at Bathurst Pool. We ask that anyone who has any information contact us on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Community Policing in Lydney.



INSP872 Chester PS1448 Sleeman PC2142 Hopkins PCSO49218 Wilce PCSO49252 Oliver

Your local officers are listed above and we are dedicated to serving the community of Lydney and surrounding areas to the best of our abilities and to the highest standard possible.

Within Lydney we currently have 2 PCC funded electric assisted pushbikes which are used by the local officers for general patrols in the area, they are also used for events such as bike awareness within the schools, high visibility patrols along the local bike trails in the summer months and were recently used to assist officers at road closures for the remembrance parade in Lydney. We have also had locks and water bottles bought for the bikes which were obtained through funding from Lydney Town Council.

One of our most recent events was that at Natwest Bank in Lydney where we were offering advice along with the staff from Natwest bank in relation to online fraud. PCSO Wilce was in attendance along with Ollie the Online computer who is Gloucestershire Constabularies mascot for online safety. (pictured).



The local officers all spend a lot of time educating the local schools in areas such surrounding road safety, internet safety and drugs education. We also work with local community groups and run regular police information points within the town to enable easier access for members of the community to speak to their local officers who otherwise would be unable to attend the local station.



We continue to run our "Wheeled Respect" speeding up within Lydney which looks to educate drivers who are either speeding, using a mobile phone whilst driving or not wearing seatbelts. The idea of the scheme is to educate drivers of the consequences of the above actions. In conjunction with this we have an electric mobile speed sign which displays the speed of oncoming vehicles to drivers; the speed sign is available to use on request for local parish councils or speed awareness groups to use dependent on availability. (pictured).

We are also in the process of organising the Bathurst Park fun day which is scheduled for Wednesday 1st June 2016, this was an enormous success last year and is back by popular demand.

We continue to run the "Don't be Tricked Campaign" where we look to educate members of the public on different types of scams that are frequent within the Forest of Dean with events running in Lydney and Sedbury with future events being planned. This is run in conjunction with our local secondary schools.

If you wish to speak to your local officers then their contact details are available on the Gloucestershire Constabulary website:

<https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/neighbourhood-policing/forest-of-dean/lydney/>

You can also contact us via Twitter (@Glos_Police), or to take a look at whats happening in your area please visit the Gloucestershire Constabulary Facebook page. To report an incident please dial 101 for a non-emergency or 999 in an emergency.

Planning and Highway Committee Report 2015/2016

Planning: "*a method or procedure*" so says the Oxford Popular Dictionary.

In what has been a relatively quiet year following the recent lunacy of the Sainsbury u-turn and Allaston, of which neither could boast either "method or procedure" (through no fault, it must be said, of Lydney Town Council), 2015/2016 has been a relatively quiet year where the Town Council Planning and Highway Committee has worked cohesively and constructively - no pun intended, ably supported by our excellent and knowledgeable staff.

As part of the planning process, the Planning and Highway Committee is defined as a consultative body in the process, "*actions to progress*" again says the Oxford relating to the meaning of process. I firmly believe that our role as a Planning Committee is more in line with a scrutiny role, with obvious enhanced knowledge of local needs, feelings and aspirations coupled with a basic grasp of planning law - compulsory training should be available to members who lack it, the informed qualified views of the Town Planning and Highway Committee should be the starting point to assist the Principal Planning Authority Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) to arrive at a strong and competent decision.

AKA Localism, which in theory should now progress as part of the process now that our Neighbourhood Development Plan has passed the Referendum stage and been ratified by FoDDC. Let us hope that theory becomes reality.

October last, in my role as a FoDDC member, and following numerous and serious concerns regarding planning at FoDDC, I proposed the following motion that received unanimous support ; "*To request that the Council (FoDDC) sets up a Development Control Working Group to examine working practices reacting to all aspects of planning*". Finite details of the motion, including references to Town and Parish councils, can be viewed on the FoDDC website. The final report of the Working Group will be presented at the FoDDC meeting in April this year and will then be made widely available.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), in 2015, yet long overdue, became the Lead Local Flood Authority, and already we are seeing a much more comprehensive and robust approach to planning applications on what is needless to say an issue that concerns a great many people in and around Lydney. I am a member of the GCC Planning Committee and have received comprehensive (and ongoing) training, with first class professional advice always available.

Highways concerns and issues are also a remit of the Committee and an in-depth localised analysis of issues takes place at each of our monthly meetings.

Finally, thanks to my fellow members who sit on the Town Planning Committee for your support, time, knowledge, flexibility and a positive attitude in helping to progress our Town.

Cllr Alan Preest
Chairman

Amenities Committee Chairman's Report 2015 to 2016

Over the last twelve months the Amenities Committee has strived to continuously improve the facilities provided and raise the visual appearance of the Town. Listed below are a number of projects which we have undertaken since the last Annual Town Meeting:

Floral Displays

We are delighted that a local retailer, Travis Perkins, agreed to sponsor the floral displays which have been installed at three of the entrances to the Parish. The new displays have significantly improved the visual appearance as you enter Lydney and we are sure will, as the shrubs mature, result in magnificent displays in future years.



We are continuing to offer support and guidance to an organisation which has expressed an interest in sponsoring the floral displays on the A48 roundabouts and we hope that 2016 will be the year when their plans reach fruition.

The Committee continues to sow "bee friendly" floral seed at the Aylburton and Cross Hands junctions, which continues to be appreciated by members of the public.

South Road Allotments

Allotments continue to prove a popular past time. We have created four raised allotment beds on an area which previously was utilised as grass verges. This will ensure greater accessibility to all age ranges who are interested in renting an allotment.



Before



After

Dog Waste Bins

Over the last twelve months the Committee has received a number of requests for the installation of dog waste bins. Whilst the Committee is not able to accede to all requests, it did agree to install a dog waste bin in Ridler Road (which is well used) and has recently agreed to install a dog waste bin at the entrance to the Bracken Close footpath which leads to Kimberley Drive footpath. The Council continues to inform Forest of Dean District Council of areas where dog fouling issues seem to be prevalent and it would encourage residents to do likewise.

Annual Tree Inspections

The Council has entered into a five year contract with a local arbourcultural business to undertake annual written inspections of trees sited on its land, and those under the responsibility of its two charitable Trusts (Bathrust Park and Recreation Trust; Lydney Recreation Trust). The formal inspection will enable the Council to put in place a formal schedule of works designed to safeguard the health of the tree, thereby helping to maintain the local environs.

Weedspraying

Following the decision by Gloucestershire County Council to completely withdraw from performing this activity, the Committee resolved to expand the area it currently sprayed to include both the town and the approach roads. Whilst the Committee would dearly love to undertake weedspraying in residential areas, it simply does not possess the required equipment/staff to undertake this. However, it will endeavour undertake adhoc weedspraying in areas which are particularly badly affected, subject to financial provision.

Cllr Carol Harris
Chairman

Burial Committee **Report 2015-2016**

The Committee is responsible for the management and maintenance of Lydney Cemetery and St Mary's Closed Churchyard.

St Mary's Churchyard

Since the last Annual Town meeting the Committee has carried out further re-pointing work to the boundary wall in St Mary's closed churchyard and it has been necessary to rebuild a section of the wall at the top of the churchyard following its collapse. All work on the wall has been undertaken to a high standard and the Council has received many favourable comments as a result of the work.



Members of Lydney Town Council Ground staff continue to perform grass cutting duties in the Churchyard and continue to manage the wild flower conservation area on an annual basis. It is the Council's intention to purchase a quantity of wildflower seeds which may be sown in the area to increase. The Council has also carried out work to address storm damage/routine maintenance to some of the trees in the Churchyard and we continue to ensure that the Churchyard (and the Cemetery) receive annual tree inspections by a qualified contractor.

Lydney Cemetery

The Council has identified a number of additional burial plots which will be utilised to increase the number of plots in the Cemetery and it continues to work with Funeral Directors/members of the public to ensure that the rules and regulations of the Cemetery are upheld.

Again, members of Lydney Town Council Ground staff perform grass cutting duties in the Cemetery and I am sure that you will agree that the grounds maintenance standard in the Cemetery remains high and is a fitting tribute to loved ones who are laid to rest there.



Sadly, towards the end of last year a headstone on a child's grave in the Cemetery had collapsed. Whilst every attempt was made to contact the Registered Deed of Grant holder for the grave to alert them to the situation, it was not possible to locate them. M E Damsells generously agreed to repair the headstone free of charge but we would urge everyone, if they are named as the Registered Deed of Grant Holder, to contact the Council to ensure that their contact details are correct as this is the only way we can contact you if there is a problem with the grave of your loved one.

Finally, we are conscious of the need to consider future burial provision and our attempts to identify and secure additional land for this purpose continue. If you own a parcel of land which you feel could be suitable we would like to hear from you.

Cllr C Harris
Chairman

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT 2015/16

2015/16 has been a truly interesting year. As expected the Council came in at year end within budget, and will do so again this year. (I write this report before year end to meet publication deadlines).

The Annual External Audit was again signed off with no issue; the Electors public rights to view the accounts will however change as of the end of the current financial year with public able to view the accounts during a specific timeframe which includes the first 10 days of July.

During the year we became involved with Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) in a dialogue as to the treatment of the Local Council tax Support Grant. In previous years FoDDC have paid, as required, Lydney Town Council's Precept Demand in two instalments, however show in the Council Tax Leaflet a net sum after deduction of the grant. For 2016/17, after Lydney Town Council sought legal advice, it has been agreed that the Precept Demand will be paid, as previously, in two instalments with the grant being paid separately. The Council Tax Leaflet will however show, as a comparison, last year's net figure against this year's gross figure which gives the Electorate a false and misleading view of Lydney Town Council's financial position.

Over the period there has been no loss to the Lydney Council Tax Payer, merely a distorted view of the situation. At the time of writing the matter has not been totally resolved, but the final outcome will be reported in due course.

As Finance Chair I also hold the Personnel Chair, and I would like to congratulate our staff on their commitment and professionalism. Their contribution to the achievement of Quality Gold status should not be overlooked, and now of course we, both staff and members, have to continue to meet this standard in order to retain the award.

Cllr Brian Pearman
Chairman





NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP **REPORT 2015/16**

The report from the NDP Chair is very straightforward.

During the year the Plan was considered, and unanimously endorsed by Forest of Dean District Council at both Cabinet and Full Council. The Plan then moved on to Independent Examination which, with minor modifications to strengthen policies, it passed with flying colours.

The final hurdle was the Referendum which was held on February 18th (a day that will stay long in my memory) with the resulting YES vote of 86% of those who voted sending a clear message!

The Group's work in producing the Plan is obviously now complete and thus is wound up.

Work is already underway with partner organisations to turn policies within the Plan into real outcomes for the Town, examples being Lydney Revolutions (cycle & pedestrian routes), the Community Economic Plan (Town Centre rejuvenation) and the Coastal Community team (Harbour). I am sure we will be receiving regular reports on progress made on these and other projects.

Finally, a personal and heartfelt "thank you" from me to all those people who contributed to the production of the NDP. Lydney has led the way in Gloucestershire, and this is potentially the most important planning document relevant to the Town to come forward in the last thirty years.

Brian Pearman
Chairman

Head Groundsman's Report

Lydney Town

The Ground staff have been working hard throughout the Town. We have been busy at the South Road Allotment site constructing four new raised beds with a hard standing surface in order that the site may be more readily accessible to all.



As we are sure you will have noticed, the vegetation around Lydney Lake has been significantly landscaped; areas have been seeded with a pollen/flower mix and also amenity grass; new picnic tables have been installed and extra car parking space has been provided; new fencing and access gates have been erected. The area has been much improved and we have received numerous positive compliments on the improvements.



New flower beds have been created at the Parish Gateways; these have been planted with bedding plants, shrubs and small trees, thanks to the sponsorship of Travis Perkins.

Ground staff continue to take on additional duties, such as additional weedspraying in specific areas of the Town.

The new wild flower beds at the entrances to the Town look great; we did have a few problems with weeds coming through in one area but we hope to resolve the issue this year which will result in an even better floral display. We also installed a new flower bed at Lydney Fire Station which has received many a positive comment from visitors and residents alike.

There are an increased number of salt bins in the Parish which have been provided by the Town Council and we maintain a supply of sandbags; both items are ready to be deployed should we experience adverse weather.

St Mary's Churchyard/Lydney Cemetery

The Ground staff take pride in keeping both these clean and well maintained. We have installed additional flower tubs, trees and drainage in order to enhance the appearance of the site.

The grass in both areas is kept short and tidy; hard standing areas are regularly brushed and kept weed free.

Bathurst Park

The Ground staff maintain high standards in the Park. This year the Council has purchased a new second-hand cutting machine and also a scarifier which all sports areas will benefit from during maintenance periods.

Two picnic tables have been installed around the Sports Pavilion on the football side of the Park. These benches will enable those members of the public with dogs to use the café facilities.

Over the year the Ground staff have received many kind, positive comments from Lydney people and visitors about how much they enjoyed the Park and how beautiful the flowers were.

Overview

The Ground staff are proud of our work and the high standards we set. We work to the maximum of our physical ability every day of the year striving to provide Lydney with the best service and value for money.

All the Ground staff were very pleased and honoured to help Lydney Town Council receive the Local Council Award Scheme Quality Gold status. In my opinion as Head Groundsman, it was a reflection of the professionalism, dedication and hard work we show in our jobs, which we enjoy doing every day.

Finally I would like to personally thank my fellow Grounds Staff for their hard work and support throughout the year.

James Young
Head Groundsman



COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT 2015-2016

Sadly after five years of a zero per cent Council Tax rise, reality, through substantially reduced Government Settlement Grant funding, has arrived and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) inevitably has had to raise its Council Tax demand, two per cent to maintain services and a further two per cent specifically to address the continual increasing pressure on Adult Care Services.

The following is the minuted extract from my budget speech at the GCC budget setting meeting of 17 February this year; *"Cllr Alan Preest, Leader of the UKIP Group, believed that there was value in having a cross-party review of the budget as part of the budget setting process. This should involve a review of all service areas with a particular emphasis on all areas of discretionary spending. He proposed an amendment to that effect (amendment subsequently supported). He was pleased that the Government had provided additional funding after much lobbying by the Leader of the Council. He recognised the growing pressure on Adult Care Services and Children's Services. Cllr Preest was anxious that the MPs in Gloucestershire worked on behalf of GCC to ensure that the Government was aware of the impact of continuing cuts to funding. He was pleased the "Lengthsman" scheme (minor Highways repairs) that had been trialled so successfully in the Forest of Dean was being rolled out across the rest of the County. He welcomed funding for a circular (Stagecoach operated) off-peak circular bus service in the Forest of Dean. "*

Towards the end of February, the budget, and, indeed most other things at GCC were overshadowed by the proposals that Cotswold District Council are pushing forward with plans to "politically" leave Gloucestershire to join up with West Oxfordshire. The five Oxfordshire Councils are asking Government to agree their plan to abolish Oxfordshire County Council and create up to four new Local Unitary Councils, including the West Oxfordshire/Cotswold model. GCC strenuously oppose this proposal and are *"committed to retaining Gloucestershire (as it is) as the place that we live, work and do business, including the Cotswolds which is so much part of our historic county"*. I am in constant contact with the GCC Chief Executive and Leader regarding this issue.

To deviate from my County Council role and move to my Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) role, it is vitally important to know that FoDDC are progressing with their "shared-services" 20/20 vision, coincidentally "shared services" that involve both Cotswold and West Oxfordshire Councils. Ludicrously the regime at FoDDC fail, for whatever reason, to see any potential repercussions that may affect their vision!!!. To this end at the FoDDC meeting held on the 14 April 2016 I proposed and moved the following motion; *"This Council notes that Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, two of the Council's partners on the 20/20 project, have announced their intention to pursue a unitary bid.*

We wish to register our serious concern that there was no communication with partners ahead of the announcement. It is clearly evident from the detailed nature of the proposal put forward that work has been on-going on this matter for some time. This Council (FoDDC) is appalled that two of its closest working partners have acted in this way. Projects such as 20/20 are built on trust and understanding and these

key principles appear to have been totally disregarded by Cotswold and Oxfordshire District Councils.

In the fundamental interests of the electorate of the Forest of Dean, we therefore call upon the Cabinet to review and risk-assess the position in light of the announcement. A comprehensive report should be prepared and made to this Council at the earliest opportunity (and in any event no later than 31 May 2016) which identifies the options available to this Council regarding the future of the project. This should include the extent of contractual commitments and the costs of making an immediate withdrawal from the project"

Mindful of space I will give a quick resume in no particular order of some of the GCC positives for Lydney in 2015/16.

- Announcement of added car-parking at Lydney Rail Station.
- Pavement improvements around the Hospital.
- Resurfacing of the Lydney to Whitecroft Road.
- £750 grant to Bathurst Swimming Pool in lieu of vandalism damage.
- Substantial grants to Lydney Tennis and Rugby Clubs.
- GCC up and running in their "new" role as Lead Local Flood Authority.
- GCC total support for the Lydney Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- On-going visits by the GCC Leader, Cllr Mark Hawthorne.
- Bream Road Parking Restrictions.
- Extensive work followed by continual checking and maintenance of the Bypass attenuation pond.
- Transport "access to the Forest" task group.
- £30k allocated to Divisional Councillors' for "minor" Highway repairs for 2016/2017.

My commitment and positivity in first and foremost representing Lydney will continue.

Cllr Alan Preest

BATHURST PARK AND RECREATION TRUST REPORT **2015/16**

This year has been a significant one for the Trust in many ways. Over the course of the year we have seen several key initiatives and events that collectively point toward a brighter future for our greatest community asset.

Of these, perhaps the most notable has been the Trust's decision to pursue the Green Flag Community Award. This is a national award for excellence in the management, presentation and use of community-run green spaces. To win this award, several improvements including the installation of a wildlife area, replacement of broken signage, addition of recycling bins and the deep-cleaning of all water features will be considered. This will be a major pseudo-renovation project for the park that will leave it in a much better state than seen previously. As the award requires annual renewal, you can be confident that our improvements will be both long-term and sustainable, so watch this space.



As usual we were able to put on an annual fireworks display, and as always, the standard of display by Sandling Fireworks was exceptional. We played host to hundreds of local residents, and as such my colleagues deserve thanks for marshalling the event so well. Despite occasional difficulties with coinage, we managed to pull through with very few problems. Thanks are also due to stall-holders and our very hard-working pavilion tenant for the provision of hot food and drink to attendees. Looking ahead to the 2016 display, we have decided to adopt a hand-stamping system of admission rather than the issuing of bands, as some marshals reported seeing younger attendees handing their bands backwards, therefore passing free entry to others. Such an act is considerably harder with hand-stamps, hence the decision to switch.

It was also noted that for many years the park was without emergency provision should anyone require life-saving medical attention. To this end we were grateful to receive a defibrillator from Lydney Town Council which will be sited on the workshop wall as you enter the park. Through a support agreement, the Community Heartbeat Trust have kindly agreed to maintain this device, and ensure it is constantly kept in tip-top working condition. The health & safety of those who visit the park is of paramount importance and will form a key focus point for the Bathurst Park five-year management plan, which we will put together as part of our Green Flag Award preparations.

The park continues to be a prime venue for events, with the Trust hosting a commemorative event to mark the Queens 90th Birthday later this month. This event will be on April 23rd, and I would like to thank in advance the acts for agreeing to perform. Weather permitting, it should be a fantastic day out so do come along.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to my extremely dedicated team of trustees, who throughout the year have proven themselves completely committed to the well-being of this community asset; and in whom I have the greatest confidence will continue to be for many years to come.

Thank you.

Cllr Harry Ives
Chairman

Lydney Recreation Trust Annual Report for 2015/16

The reinstatement work undertaken by Severn Trent contractors for the new sewage pipeline over the Trust land was deemed to be unsatisfactory and now has been redone to a satisfactory standard, with the new stone path for the dog walkers being a feature.

The Trustees took the opportunity to have most of the brambles and shrubs cleared along the lakeside and Cambourne Place Meadow. New post and rail fencing has completed the major tidy up project, which is now enjoyed by local Parkrun runners every Saturday morning at 9am.

Poor drainage of the playing pitches is still a problem for sports clubs if there is prolonged wet weather. Additional alternative playing pitches are needed for several sports clubs as most have youth teams in addition to the senior teams, which is causing huge pressure on the existing pitches. Sports clubs have looked at the Trust land south of the by-pass, but Sport England estimate that a new pitch would cost at least £250k, which would take several years to level and the earth to settle to create a level pitch.

The Trust has installed a number of dog waste bins at the entrances to the recreation ground in an effort to combat the problems which have been experienced with irresponsible dog owners failing to remove their animal's waste from sports pitches. Whilst I am pleased to report that the units are being well used problems are still being experienced with a minority of the public and we would welcome pressure from the Community to report any instances of people failing to collect their animal's waste to Forest of Dean District Council's Streetwardens.

The skatepark is still popular with young people for skating/bmx and meeting. Consultation to improve to the skatepark with concrete bowls has been researched and discussed, but at the estimated cost of £150k will unfortunately take a long determined dedication to identify the finance required.

Cllr D Biddle
Chairman

PARKRUN REPORT 2015/16

Every Saturday morning at 9am at over 370 locations worldwide. Millions of runners start a FREE 5k timed run. Lydney's own parkrun started on 2nd January, at Lydney boating lake. It is a three lap course which takes in the picturesque boating lake, canal path and wooded section. The run is open to anyone of any ability and age of any fitness or speed. We encourage people of every ability to take part; from those taking their first steps in running to Olympians; from juniors to those with more experience; we welcome you all.

Every runner has their own story, but many have started running through the 0-5k group organised by Forest of Dean Athletic Club, it meets on a Monday evening at the Lake. This 9 week course takes those wanting to get active from not running to being able to complete a 5k run.

Parkrun is FREE to take part, after registering at www.parkrun.org.uk, print off your personal barcode and turn up, at any of the parkruns worldwide. Each run is managed by volunteers, you will be given a pre run briefing where we celebrate those runners achieving a milestone (50, 100 or 250) runs, after completing the run and coming over the finish line, your time will be recorded, and you will be handed a finish token, this together with your personal barcode will be scanned, and then with the magic of technology later in the day you will receive a text message and email with your time and statistics.

Much about parkrun is social, and our finish area is right near to where we enjoy a cuppa and sometimes cake whilst after the run, this means that those first finishers are able cheer everybody else as they cross the finish line, and celebrate with those getting a new Personal Best, or for rejoice with those that have managed to finish one of their first every 5k runs.

There are many runners who enjoy parkrun tourism, in our first few weeks, we have had runners come from Cardiff, Basingstoke, Oxford and Bournemouth



to name a few, on speaking to these runners, they then spend much of the day in the local area.

Parkrun is run by volunteers and we welcome anyone who wants to come along and help just drop us an email lydneyhelpers@parkrun.com, you don't have to enjoy running to come and help. We were initially funded by the Gloucestershire Active Together Fund, the Forest of Dean District Council, and Forest of Dean Athletic Club.

In our first two months we have seen 432 different runners, including participants from 37 athletics clubs, who have completed 897 runs covering a total distance of 4,485 km, and there have been 255 new Personal Bests.

For more information check out our website www.parkrun.org.uk/lydney, find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/lydeyparkrun email lydneyoffice@parkrun.com or why not come along one Saturday morning, we are there from 8am and the run starts at 9am.

Lydney Park Run Team

Lydney Dial-a-Ride

April 2016

The Core Vision for Lydney Dial-A-Ride remains clear. It is to prevent social and rural isolation by providing transport to those who are frail or elderly, people who have temporary or permanent disabilities and for those of any age, who do not have regular access to public transport or a car of their own.

This has been a year of consolidation, with Charities such as ours facing pressures from many sources; the impending increase in the National Minimum Wage, pension reform and the ongoing cost savings being made within Gloucestershire County Council. We have taken this year to look at the efficiency of the organisation while maintain the standards we want to give our members. Steps that we have taken include reducing the fleet of minibuses to fourteen and not replacing hours when staff have left or requested a reduction in their working week.

However Lydney Dial-a-Ride has continued to maintain it's Home to School Contracts and deliver a high level of service to its Dial-A-Ride, Rural Bus Routes and Voluntary Car passengers.

Louise actively promotes the Charity, attending events throughout the district such as the Don't get Tricked campaign run by the local Police, highlighting our services at local lunch clubs and meeting with local councillors so they are aware of the services that we offer and can recommend us if their constituents have a transport need.

The Charity has benefitted greatly from its home of three years at Lydney Bus Station. We continue to receive feedback from the users of the public bus services as well as our own members that we are easier to access and we have improved the look of that area of town.

Louise also chairs Community Transport Gloucestershire. The group is open to all CT groups whether a small volunteer car scheme or the larger Dial A Ride groups such as Lydney Dial A Ride. It meets quarterly to share best practice, discuss the changes in legislation and helps us maintain contact with Gloucestershire County Council and understand what their vision for community transport will be both now and in the future.

The Forest Routes project has now entered its third year. A lottery funded five year project which has brought together the four main community transport groups within the Forest of Dean to look at ways we can become more sustainable, increase the awareness of the services and encourage more passengers to make use of us. The focus remains at this stage of the project to ensure people know the services that are available to them and how they can access them when they need them.

We have fostered relationships with other voluntary organisations for example Forest Voluntary Action Forum, Crossroad, Foxes Bridge and Gloucestershire Young Carers.

Lydney Dial A Ride has catered for 35,382 passenger journeys during 2015-2016, including Dial A Ride, Home to School and Voluntary Car trips.

The Charity employs 35 staff, mainly part-time, including five staff across our three Charity shops based in Lydney, Cinderford and online outlet.

Additionally we have some 25 volunteers covering duties in the Charity Shops, Volunteer Car and Trustees, without whom we could not carry out all of our different roles

We have a strong social media presence and you are able to keep up to date with all the news and events happening within the Charity by searching for us on Facebook and Twitter. We have had examples of family members requesting membership for their parents who live in the local area and they are calling from Australia!

Finally we would like to take this opportunity to thank Lydney Town Council for their ongoing support.

Louise Currie
Manager





Multi Flood Defence Stakeholder Group 2015 Report

The group is a multi agency flood discussion group, chaired by Lydney Town Council, meeting on an ad-hoc basis.

The discussion areas covered include aspects under the control of the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester Highways, Lydney Town Council and local Parish Councils in the area.

Discussions in 2015 included the following:

- Severn Trent Pumping Station capacity
- Clearance of River Lyd and watercourses
- Catchment improvements to south east Lydney
- Flood Risk and the Planning Process

Christopher Johns
Land and Property Manager
Forest of Dean District Council



Penstock Valve

WAR MEMORIAL OFFICER'S REPORT 2015/16

The aim of the Trust is to bring all the Nations War Memorials up to date before their centenary in 2018, and we are delighted to report that over the last twelve months we have successfully obtained a grant from The War Memorial Trust for the cleaning of the Memorial. This work was undertaken prior to Remembrance Sunday and I am sure that you will agree that the memorial is looking superb and is a source of pride for our Town.

Once again Lydney Town Council and Lydney Royal British Legion organised the Annual Town Remembrance Parade; a total of 45 poppy wreaths were laid. This year the Parade commenced from the Hams Road Car Park and it was wonderful to see so many people honouring those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month Mr Osborne once again organised/led the Citizen's Act of Remembrance; I am delighted to report that both events received the highest turnout to date.

'At the going down of the Sun and in the Morning We Will Remember'.

Many Thanks

Cllr Stan Rudge



THE VICTORIA CENTRE

VICTORIA ROAD, LYDNEY, GLOS, GL 15 5DG TEL: 01594 843418)

President Mrs M Goss Treasurer Mr John King Secretary Mrs P Biddle



Gloucestershire Freemasons Fund



A busy and exciting year for the Centre

- We celebrated our 40th anniversary in style, inviting all donors and volunteers, past and present. Tributes were extended to Mrs Goss, our President, who has been involved for many, many years.
- The Monday club has flourished offering Arts & Crafts and light lunches.
- The Gardening club has provided vegetables and flowers, thanks to the involvement of diners who have rediscovered the joy of fresh air and cultivation. The newly erected shed has proved most useful.
- The Exercise club is still proving very popular. Our oldest member recently celebrated her ninety seventh birthday!
- The exterior of the building has undergone more renovation and the interior has been repainted.
- Christmas Day opening was again very successful.
- The Centre is now fitted with a Hearing Loop to aid those with hearing difficulties.

For more details please contact Carol at the Centre on 843418



Photo of 40th Celebrations. Mrs Goss, - Guest of honour



Friends of Lydney & District Hospital

Registered Charity No: 277785

Annual Report 2015/16

The past year has once again been a busy period for the hospital with in-patient beds always much in demand, and the upward trend in numbers using the Minor Injuries and Illness Unit (MIIU) as reported last year has been sustained. Out Patient clinics supported by Gloucester Royal specialist staff have continued but the overall level of patient numbers being seen locally has again decreased. There are many reasons for this which cannot be adequately discussed in this report. It is disappointing that the Operating Theatre has not been used at all in the past year despite its availability, it now seems likely that this facility will be mothballed and the space used for other services. The Friends continue to regularly monitor hospital usage with both local staff and senior Health Trust officers. A Care Quality Commission inspection was carried out in June and overall the hospital and staff were given a good rating with patient care considered to be outstanding.

Hospital staffing levels have been increased in line with Government policy following the Francis Report into the problems identified at the Stafford Hospital. The Matron for the combined Forest Hospitals (Mandy Hampton) has moved to a new position in the Trust Headquarters after nearly ten years in charge; a new appointment has not yet been made and the Senior Nursing Sister (Karen Williams) is temporarily in charge at Lydney. Very positive reports from patients, visitors, and clinical specialists continue to be received for all members of staff at the hospital.



Fundraising has continued to be steady throughout the year with a very successful Annual Fete once again taking place in July, and the usual Spring Coffee Morning in May. Money raised has been spent on a number of useful items for the hospital which are detailed in the latest newsletter (Winter 2015/16) which continues to be published every six months and widely distributed in the local area.

The major project to modernise the In-Patient Ward control and reception area, reported to be in progress in the last report, has been completed and has been very positively commented upon by all parties. The changes have been significant, and the joint funding between the Friends and the Health Trust was an important factor in enabling such a forward thinking initiative to be undertaken. It is probable that any similar projects in the future will be funded in a similar manner.



The Friends are well represented on the review body (The Locality Reference Group) set up in September by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group to carry out a thorough survey into health and social provision in the Forest, and to make recommendations into how these services could be improved to ensure they meet local needs over the next ten years. An options paper for public scrutiny will be widely circulated in the summer (June is currently forecast), and a formal 12 week consultation exercise carried out before final recommendations are presented later in the year to the Health Trust responsible for the provision of these services throughout Gloucestershire. This exercise includes the provision of appropriate community hospital facilities.



Vintage Vehicles Society



Pillowell School



The Coventry Building Society

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION REPORT **2015 - 2016**

As the main custodians of Remembrance the Branch has been involved in various commemorative events during the year.

On Saturday 15th August 2015 a service of commemoration was held at the Branch to mark the 75th anniversary of the ending of the war with Japan. It was a matter of great pleasure that the Branch's two surviving Burma Star veterans were both able to attend the service as guests of honour.

On Sunday 8th November the Branch took part in the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service of Remembrance. This year, in a break with recent tradition, the Parade started from Hams Road rather than the Bream Road Car Park. Particular thanks this year must go to the ATC Corps of Drums and the Lydney Training Band for their much valued musical contributions but also to every one of those individuals and groups who took part and made this such a very special occasion.

On 14th February we hosted another successful Poppy Concert in Lydney Town Hall. This was the 31st consecutive concert - a remarkable achievement. A delightful evening's entertainment resulted in profits of over £500 for the Poppy Collection.

So far this year the Poppy Collection Fund totals £16,932. The appeal year does not close till 30th September and we are hopeful that we will by then exceed last year's total of £18,374. Thanks as always must go to Stan Rudge, our Poppy Appeal Organiser; his Deputy, Carol Powell and their splendid team for the work that they do throughout the year.

Our 'Pop In' Welfare Support Centre upstairs at 3 Hill Street continues to flourish. It is open on Tuesday from 9 a.m. to Midday and offers support, advice and help to any serving or ex-serving personnel and their dependants. It is one of the busiest such drop-in centres in Gloucestershire.

Two forthcoming National Centenary Commemorations occur this year for the battles of Jutland and the Somme. Jutland was the only major sea battle of the First World War and ended with both sides claiming victory. The Somme was one of the costliest land battles to take place on the Western Front. Lasting from 1st July 1916 to 18th November 1916 it resulted in some 420,000 members of the British Empire armed forces being killed or wounded. It will not come as a surprise to know that there are at least twelve men named on the Lydney War Memorial who died on the Somme.

Locally we are due to host a formal commemorative event for the surviving members of the Dowdeswell family. The Dowdeswells were a Lydney family who lost two sons in the First World War. Francis Dowdeswell died in 1915 while serving with the 1st Glosters and his younger brother Reginald Dowdeswell died in 1918 while serving with the 7th Royal West Kents. Both were aged 24. Lydney Town Council subsequently minted a special commemorative medal and presented it to the mother, Mrs Emma Dowdeswell, after the war. In 1987 the Dowdeswell Medal was given to the Branch for safe keeping and display purposes. Now, in April and with the agreement of all the interested parties the Dowdeswell medal is being formally returned to the current members of the Dowdeswell family.

As a Branch we wish to place on record our gratitude to the trustees of 3 Hill Street (Watney Hall) for their continued support in allowing us to use the premises for our activities and for giving generous discounts to all Legion Members. Under the current management the establishment is going from strength to strength and there is now a real 'buzz' about the place.

We also would like to record our sincere appreciation of the support of the Town Council in our activities in the community and look forward to working with our liaison Councillors Bob Berryman and Brian Pearman during the coming year.

Ian Hendy
Lydney Branch Chairman
RBL



Lydney Area in Partnership

Lydney Docks <> Huge disappointment at the closure of the docks for the festival in the summer due to dock gates leaking faster than the fresh water can be replaced, mainly because the Harbour Masters has stated the EA priority is to keep a flow of water for the fish weir. The management of these levels appears critical to the water levels in the outer basin, but the management appears to be very unsophisticated. There is no news on possible sale of the docks and canal, the Pine End site will be extremely influential in any future development of the docks for any cafes or restaurants. The FODDC have been awarded £10k from Coastal Communities fund to attempt to bring all interested parties together to have one policy option for the future maintenance and management of the docks. Kathy Kilby & Roger Holmes volunteered to attend Lydney Docks Partnership meeting / workshop on future development of Lydney High Street .

Lydney Railway Station <> The news of the reversal on the Network Rail decision to allow extra car parking was welcomed, even though it is anticipated that car park charging similar to Severn Tunnel station at £3 per day will probably be introduced.

No news on the underpass development, though it was noted that Stonehouse has similar problems.

Lydney Walks Book <> Only three books sold at the Docks Festival event. Otherwise books are on sale at the Norchard Train Shop. LAiP still holds £1215 for Walkers are Welcome.

Forest Landscape project is appealing for historical or environmental schemes to adopt , but disappointingly Lydney is outside "Hundred of St. Briavels so does not qualify for these grants which could have assisted the repair of New Mills and Upper Forge which are both in need of attention from qualified stone masons.

News that Bill Parker is taking the lead on the restoration of St. Mary's Bridge is very welcomed as his expertise and knowledge will ensure a first class job.

ANNUAL REPORT OF LYDNEY TOWN HALL 2015 - 2016

The Volunteer Management Committee which was formed in May 2012 set out eagerly once more to face the daunting and interesting challenge that lay ahead for the current trading year. Getting used to it now after four years.

We are now accustomed to the day to day running together with its needs of this iconic hall. We have reduced from two to just one resident caretaker in order to reduce overheads.

We are fortunate to be blessed with some excellent volunteers, who assist almost on a daily basis, with the small works and jobs that are found. I feel that they must be named, they are Geoffrey Hyde together with Mike, Tom and Maureen Channon. The hall would not function in its present form with the almost daily assistance and total commitment of Judith Cadogan.

It is acclaimed that the acoustics in the hall are first class and form part an excellent venue suitable for a variety of purposes from Dances, Theatre Productions, Public Meeting(s) and Parties to give just an example. To this end we have formed a relationship with a couple of professional promoters who have come up trumps with several first class sell out shows, namely Jethro, twice, together with a Guns and Roses Tribute. More class shows are in the pipeline including Show Wadywady, remember those chaps, and yes, we are having the actual group. A Beatles Tribute has also now been arranged. Hopefully many other varied shows and productions will follow.

Trustees, together with the committee, meet on a regular basis to debate and discuss the various topics that have to be addressed to ensure the smooth running of the hall.

Several Trustees have moved on during the year with additional Trustees taking office. As I write we are actively seeking to recruit additional Trustees with appropriate skills.

The number of private hires, for a wide variety of functions and events, has shown an increase as has the subsequent footfall though the door.

Over the year numerous items of decorations, maintenance and improvement have been achieved, almost all by volunteers.

The committee are researching funding streams to assist with much needed improvements to the hall. Eventually, fingers crossed, we will be successful with a substantial grant or two. In the meantime we have been fortunate in obtaining a few small amounts of funding together with help and assistance on a voluntary basis.

We have a professional presence on the World Wide Web. It is interesting to see the number of "Hits" gradually going up. Face book and Twitter interest is also increasing. In this electronic age we have to use every means at our disposal to advertise and promote our wares.

The hall is available for hire to anyone or any organisation subject to the normal Rules and Conditions for hire. Of interest, during the past year we have hosted a couple of wedding receptions, which have gone down well and has certainly encouraged interest. The Lydney and Severn Side Flower Club also the Regency Dance Club are regular users of

the hall as are U3A. Local walkers come in for light refreshments on a weekly basis. We are also assisting the local Alzheimers Society for a self-explanatory "Memory Café." Forest Musical Society usually put on two shows per year.

Our Wish List for the hall is long and varied. If and when we are able to secure any sizeable funding, we have a lot of ideas on how we can sustain and improve the viability of the building for the benefit of residents of the Forest of Dean in general.

The Trustees can assure the town residents of their continued determination to ensure the survival and success of the Town Hall, with a little luck and a fair wind, eventually to make itself financing and a credit to the community.

We are always open to suggestions, also we are always on the lookout for anyone who would like to join us or offer to lend a hand from time to time.

Colin Knight
Chairman



01594845704 / 07504565153

Loves Volunteers lydneycommunitycentre@outlook.com

www.lydneycommunitycentre.co.uk

 lydney community centre



The year has been dominated with the decoration of the hall, which included stripping the corridor panels of many years of paint, with the old glass being replaced with toughened glass which meets Health & Safety Standards.

A trial film show was held in the late autumn, which highlighted the need for a larger screen and a projector system which does not take half an hour to put in place. Fund raising is happening and to date approximately. 50% has been achieved. To meet 21st century room hire standards the committee would wish to see permanent screens and projectors in place in all the rooms for hirers to use at a push of a button.

Marketing of the hall has concentrated on trying to increase daytime use as all weekday evenings are fully booked. Regarding publicity the use of facebook has developed an enthusiastic following.

The social committee have been very busy this year and raised over £3k with the popular quiz events, Christmas Fayre, Chepstow Male Choir concert and a Fashion Show organised Judy Slee of the Dressing Room. Lydney.

The consultation undertaken by Rob Johnson of fdl architects produced many building options to improve the building for the

benefit of all users current and future. The committee and members favoured the design Option 5 which has three phases of build development, but the Quantity Surveyor estimate that the whole build could be £750k, the committee decided that such a bid was financially difficult to justify on the current usage. Phase one was selected which provides new entrance refurbishment of toilets and kitchen, with an estimated build cost of £400k. The committee are being assisted by Barbara Pond GRCC who is encouraging the bid to include finance for a youth development office to promote youth activities at the centre, this is felt to be a much needed facility for the town following the closure last year of the Vibes Youth Café.

LYDNEY WAR MEMORIAL (ALMSHOUSES) TRUST ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2016

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

The Trust continues to meet each month at the Naas Lane Community Centre. In the last year, we lost one Trustee – Mr Mel Rudge but are delighted to welcome Mr. Simon Moore who has agreed take up the role of Trustee. He will act alongside the other four Trustees; Mrs Ruth Richardson, Mrs Valerie Hobman, Mr Bill Osborne and Mrs Sue Osborne.

At the AGM Mrs Ruth Richardson agreed to continue to act as Chair, with Mrs Valerie Hobman also agreeing to continue as Vice Chair. Attendance at the meetings has been excellent, with all meetings in the year being quorate. Gill Moir remains as the clerk for the Trust.

The significant programme of building works, undertaken primarily to address the problem of water ingress at various points across the houses, is now complete, with the final element - the removal and rebuilding of the front gable – being finished towards the end of October 2015. The programme also included reducing the height of two chimneys, making repairs to the others, and replacing several of the flat roofs.

The Quinquennial Survey, which was delayed until after the building work had been completed, took place on 16th February and we are awaiting the report.

There have been no changes to tenants during the year. The Trust continues to maintain a good relationship with its residents, who can phone the clerk at any time should any problems arise.

Mrs Ruth Richardson (Chair)

Walking Matters 2016

Walking has important health benefits both in terms of the walker's personal health and by reducing traffic congestion & pollution. This is certainly an important factor within the Town where narrow roads & difficult junctions cause these problems. With the projected increase in the local population the problem of congestion is a major concern. With this in mind the Town are proposing a network of dual use pedestrian & cycle routes. These will eventually link residential areas with key destinations such as the Town Centre shops, schools, bus & railway stations & the Harbour area. The first key route is currently being surveyed by the Town Council in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council Highways to link the Swan Road area of the Town to the railway station. Future key links to this route will be planned into the future Oakdale & Highfield Hill developments.

The hoped for Parkend to Lydney route has not yet materialised but we will continue to press the Forestry Commission & Forest of Dean District Council to construct this important route. This is much needed on safety grounds and to promote Lydney as "The Gateway to the Forest". Recreational routes into the forest will not only benefit the local population but will bring positive economic benefits to the Town through tourism.

Funding obtained by LAiP will enable the printing of an improved **Lydney Walks booklet**. As well as being a benefit for the local population this is also a much needed item for the tourists. It has already been noted that the previous edition has encouraged the use of the footpaths. This has the benefit of keeping the paths opened thus reducing the need for maintenance. In the current economic climate this is a big issue when the Public Rights of Way Department has severely reduced budget & personnel.

Heritage Walk. Funding has been obtained & research is now underway to produce a heritage walk app. This will enable visitors to the Town to download local information to their mobile devices.

2015 once again saw the triennial 52 mile challenge walk from Lydney staged by the local branch of the **Long Distance Walkers Association**. Not only did the 200 participants do a fine job of beating the paths clear but also contributed to the local tourist trade. Participants came from places as far afield as Scotland, Yorkshire, Norfolk, Cornwall & some sneaking over the border from Wales. Many commented that they had not realised what a beautiful area this was and that they would return with their families. So another boost for the tourist industry. The LDWA caters for those interested in walks above 15 miles up to 100! If you are interested full details can be found on their web site www.ldwa-bristolandwest.org.uk/ or telephone 01594 844721.

Of course, 52 miles may not yet be in your leisure plans. For those looking for a more leisurely pace we have the local **Forest of Dean Ramblers**. This group has a good programme of walks of between 4 & 12 miles. Always led by knowledgeable local people, this is a good way to get to know the local area. Details of their walks can be found on the web site www.fodramblers.org.uk/programme/listing/ or telephone 01594 835371

Want to work your way to fitness? **The Forest of Dean Walking for Health** scheme offers people of all ages and fitness levels the chance to exercise, chat and meet new people. The Lydney group meet at Bathurst Park car park every Thursday at 10.30 a.m. and walk for up to an hour, usually around the lake, the Cut or down towards the Harbour. The walk ends with refreshments at the Town Hall and new walkers are always welcome. Phone 01594-841964 for further information on the Lydney walk or www.walkingforhealth.org.uk for other walks in the Forest or nation-wide.

For those interested in a little more speed over a shorter distance of 5km there is now the **Lydney Park Run** which takes place every Saturday at 09.00 starting at Lakeside Gardens near the lake in the Recreation Trust Ground. Full detail at www.parkrun.org.uk/lydney

Dave Street



Autumn in Millrough Woods



**Top of Watery Lane – view
towards St Mary's**



Bluebells in Norchard Wood

Twining Association 25 years of Friendship

This year the Lydney and District Twining Association will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of its formation in June 1991, and are expecting 37 adults and 10 children from our twin town, Bréhal, to come for their biennial weekend visit at the beginning of May.

This is a big increase in numbers and several extra hosts have had to be found which has led to new members having joined.

Twining gives exceptional opportunities to exchange cultures, make new friends and improve one's French and also, to be able to visit France and live briefly with a French family. This experience is a marvelous privilege and the weekends are usually great fun.

When the French are here this May we are planning to make a presentation of a commemorative plaque to the Mayor of Bréhal and also to present a similar one to the Lydney Council.

This year we very much appreciate the support of the Mayor of Lydney, Cllr Bob Berryman, who has generously made a donation towards the cost of entertaining our French visitors and the council staff have been exceedingly helpful with advertising and coordinating the event.

Lydney Golf Club has also been twinned with Bréhal Golf Club, which is literally on the sand dunes at St. Martin de Bréhal, since 1992. This year Bréhal Golf Club will be visiting Lydney Golf Club for a weekend of competition on September 16th.

The Association has recently set up a web site, "lydneytwining.org.uk", hoping to increase knowledge of the Twining's existence. Check out the web site or ring 01594 510391 for more information.

The Twining Association is always keen to welcome new members and it is open to all who would like to experience life in France, staying with a French family, and who are prepared to be hosts when the French come to visit us. Visits take place biennially, one year we visit them, and the next year they come to us.

Judy Capps
Chair



Lydney Festival 2015

The highlight of this festival year was the finals of the Totally Talented Competition, as all who attended witness the high standard of singers competing.

Last Night of the Proms was also a great success with Chepstow Male Choir tunefully supporting Bream Silver Band.

The lack of water in the outer basin at the docks resulted in cancellation of visiting boats, which reduced the numbers attending the Yacht Club Rally / Festival Music Weekend even though the musicians tried to lift the gloom of the empty docks apart from the grey mud..

Local talent was on display at the opening event at the Coop Store in June and also on bank holiday Sunday in the rain at Bathurst Park though the Friends Uknited had everyone singing and even dancing.



The **Midcounties Co-operative**

FRIENDS OF BATHURST POOL

ANNUAL REPORT

18th APRIL 2016

The summer of 2015, although the weather was not as good as the previous year, was still a success for The Friends of Bathurst Pool.

The Income and Expenditure account showed a net loss of £6143.00 but we had actually spent £11,290.00 on major improvements to the site. This included a large area of artificial grass, more non-slip surface, and some maintenance-free picnic tables. We also had the murals renovated and brought back to their original state and we purchased a digital swimming pool clock which was much appreciated by our serious swimmers. No external funding was received in this financial year and all expenditure was met by our own funds. Because of the disappointing weather during August the number through the gate was four thousand down on the previous year but we still ended the season with a healthy £48k in the bank.

We were devastated on 7th February this year when one of our volunteers, when walking past the pool, discovered that it had been vandalised. Several picnic tables had been completely destroyed, changing cubicles had been broken into, guttering destroyed, but worst of all everything and anything within sight had been thrown into the pool. Our worst fear was that the liner may be damaged. A short message was posted on Facebook the next evening with one photograph of the damage and the response was overwhelming. Phone calls, texts, messages and offers of practical and financial help poured in. One of the most important of these was the diver who phoned and offered to come to the pool with a colleague to retrieve all the debris and examine the liner. This they did on what must have been one of the coldest mornings when the temperature of the water was 4 degrees and we had to boil kettles to de-ice their breathing apparatus. They did a wonderful job getting out all the rubbish but best of all to tell us that there appeared to be no damage to the liner. We could not thank these two enough for their invaluable help on this bitter cold morning.

There have been several collections in the town and many individual donations which have enabled us to repair and replace items and to increase security of the site.

We have now held our Annual General Meeting when commitment and enthusiasm of trustees and committee was as positive as ever. The pool is up and running, the site is looking better than ever and we are all looking forward to another great season at Bathurst Pool.

Sheila Berryman

Trustee/Treasurer

BIOGRAPHY PUBLISHED OF LYDNEY WARTIME JEWISH REFUGEE

In the freezing January of 1940, a fourteen-year-old Jewish German refugee, *Kindertransport* boy Günter Stern, arrived in Lydney from Birmingham to join the evacuated Yardley Grammar School. Lodging for three years in Springmeadow with Eddie and Doris Allsopp and their children Alan and Hazel, the boy thrived in their care. He became Deputy Head Boy, passing up a University place to volunteer for the British Army. Over seventy years later, in January 2016, Pen and Sword Books has published *Escaping Hitler: A Jewish Boy's Quest for Freedom and His Future*, the biography of Günter's remarkable ninety-year life.

Norwich writer Phyllida Scrivens spent four years researching the many aspects of 91-year-old Joe Stirling; Günter's adult name as changed by the British Army; including his time in the Forest of Dean. She says, 'A letter to The Forester newspaper in 2013 led to Joe being reunited with Hazel Allsopp after many years. In 2014 I visited Lydney, taking tea with resident Barbara Vedmore (née Hyde) who as a girl, was a close neighbour and friend of young Günter. Barbara generously shared fond memories of the young refugee, stories now captured in my book.'

In 1946 Joe married a Norfolk girl and moved to Norwich, his home for nearly seventy years. His destiny was to become a Labour Party Agent, leading member of Lions International, pioneering travel agent and ultimately Sheriff of Norwich in 1975. He would be in his seventies before he learnt of the fate of his parents in the Holocaust.

Joe says, 'I have never forgotten the kindness of the Allsopp family, the teachers at the school and the people of Lydney. They showed compassion, friendship and tolerance to a German boy in a time of war.'

Learn more at www.escapinghitler.com. The book is available on Amazon.co.uk and Kindle, or for a copy signed by both author and Joe Stirling, contact Phyllida.scrivens@icloud.com. Books cost £19.50 plus £4 postage.

