

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

Annual Town Meeting Minutes (held 18 th March 2019)	Page 2
Mayor's Annual Report	Page 6
Annual Town Council Committee Reports:	
❖ Amenities Committee Report – Chair's Report	Page 8
❖ Burial Committee Report – Chair's Report	Page 10
❖ Finance and Scrutiny Committee – Chair's Report	Page 11
▪ Grants/Donations Awarded 2019/2020	Page 12
Head Groundsman's Report	Page 13
Custodial/Sole Trustee Reports:	
❖ Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust	Page 16
❖ Bathurst Park Pavilion - The Coffee House Report	Page 17
❖ Lydney Recreation Trust	Page 18
Gloucestershire County Council	Page 19
Community Reports:	
❖ Friends of Bathurst Pool	Page 21
❖ Forest Foodbank	Page 22
❖ Friends of Lydney Hospital	Page 24
❖ Lydney Coastal Community Team	Page 27
❖ Royal British Legion	Page 29
❖ Lydney War Memorial Trust	Page 30
❖ The Victoria Centre	Page 31
❖ Churches Together in Lydney	Page 32
❖ Lydney Twinning Association	Page 34
Community Sports Clubs:	
❖ Lydney Tennis Club	Page 35

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2019

Annual Town Meeting
Held at Lydney Town Hall, Lydney
Monday 18 March 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Lydney Town Council
B Berryman (Mayor), D Biddle, R Christodoulides, J Greenwood, C Harris, R Holmes, H Ives, W Leach, C Legg, B Pearman and A Preest

Mrs J Smailes - Chief Executive Officer
Miss C Wheeler - Executive Officer
Miss A Crawshaw – Grants and Events Administrator

Gloucestershire Police
PCSO T Oliver, Neighbourhood Policing Team

50 Members of the Public

Cllr 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.

Cllr Berryman requested that two minutes silence be observed to remember those who had lost their lives due to the recent atrocities carried out in New Zealand.

1. **APOLOGIES**
Apologies for absence were received and noted from Cllrs Tremlett and White.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting dated 23 April 2018 were confirmed and approved as a true record and duly signed. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Ives.** Unanimous.
3. **MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/19** – Cllr B Berryman
Cllr Berryman read out his report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Cllr Berryman highlighted the number of superb amenities which were provided in the Town; the fact that Bathurst Park and the Cemetery were maintained to a high standard; improvements which had been conducted to the drainage system on Lydney Recreation Ground to enable it to continue to be used for sports; the floral displays provided through Lydney in Bloom; the reduction in the risk of flooding to residential properties through partnership working. Cllr Berryman reminded all present that a number of years prior the Council had been subject to a Public Interest Report; since then the Council had attained

Quality Gold Status and conducted in-house financial audits. However, Cllr Berryman expressed his disappointment that the Council continued to receive criticism both from members of the public and Councillors and he stressed that the Council could not have achieved all that it had without its CEO and dedicated staff.

The Mayor then made the following presentations on behalf of the Council:

- Millie Howells – Mayor’s Civic Award Recipient 2018/2019
- Able Cadet Summer Elliott, Forest of Dean Sea Cadets – Mayor’s Cadet for 208/2019 – award at end of Term of Office
- Cllr Derek Biddle – Long service Award

4. **ANNUAL POLICE REPORT**

PCSO Tom Oliver read out the Police report, as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019.

5. **ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL REPORTS**

Planning & Highway Committee – Cllr Preest

Cllr Preest read out the Committee’s report, as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019

Amenities Committee – Cllr Harris

Cllr Harris read out the Committee’s report, as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Burial Committee – Cllr Ives

Cllr Ives read out the Committee’s report as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Finance and Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Pearman

Cllr Pearman reminded all present that Ordinary elections would shortly take place for the Town, which may result in the formation of the Council looking different after May.

Cllr Pearman then read out the Committee’s report as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019.

A presentation was then made on behalf of the Council by Cllr Pearman to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Bob Berryman, of a Past Mayor’s badge, together with a bouquet of flowers to the outgoing Mayoress, Mrs Sheila Berryman. Cllr Pearman gave a short speech on the work undertaken by Cllr Berryman during his time as Mayor.

6. **COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

County Cllr Preest stated that he felt privileged to have worked with Cllr Berryman and expressed regret that he had elected not to stand in the forthcoming elections.

County Cllr Preest then read out his report as contained in the Council’s Annual Report for 2018/2019.

7. **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 2018/2019.

Lydney Recreation Trust – Trustee Harris

Trustee Ives read out the Trust's report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

8. **COMMUNITY REPORTS**

Forest Foodbank – Mr R Simpson

Mr Berryman read out the report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Friends of Lydney Hospital – Mr A Midgeley

Mr Midgeley read out the report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Mr Midgeley expressed thanks to the Mayor and Mayoress, Cllr and Mrs Bob Berryman, for their support over the years.

Lydney War Memorial Trust – Mr S Moore

Mr Moore read out the report, as contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Lydney Coastal Communities Team – Mrs W Jackson, Regeneration Manager

Mrs Jackson précised the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

The Royal British Legion Lydney Branch – Mr M Rudge

Mr Rudge précised the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019. Mr Rudge also stressed the need for new members to join in order to keep the Branch going and that there was no requirement for members to be ex-members of the armed forces.

Lydney Town Hall Trust – Mr C Knight

Mr Knight read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Lydney Hub – Ms E Pettiford

Ms Pettiford read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Churches Together in Lydney – Mr W Leach

Mr Leach expressed thanks to Cllrs Berryman and Biddle for their community work and also expressed thanks to everyone else involved in community groups. Mr Leach then précised the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Lydney Tennis Club – Ms N Salter

Ms Salter read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Lydney Rugby Football Club – Mr R Beswick

Mr Beswick read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Lydney Football Club – Mr D Voss

Cllr Berryman advised that Mr Voss had been unable to attend the meeting and then proceeded to read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Dean Forest Railway – Mr J Shirley

Mr Shirley read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

Friends of Bathurst Pool – Mr B Berryman

Mr Berryman read out the report which was contained in the Council's Annual Report for 2018/2019.

9. **RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED**

No questions had been received prior to the deadline.

10. **CLOSE**

The meeting closed at 9.01 pm.

All attendees were provided with a copy of the Annual Town Meeting Report 2018/2019 (copy available to download from the Town Council's website after the meeting) as they left the Town Hall.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The 2019-2020 civic year will almost certainly go down in local terms as one of the most unusual and turbulent years for Lydney Town Council.

I was elected by the Council to the position of Mayor in August 2019 following the sudden and abrupt resignation of my predecessor, the Chair of Personnel and the CEO. Several new councillors were also elected to the Council early in the year thus bringing a whole new character to the council to that which had prevailed for the previous few years. Added to the time consuming and demanding internal issues we were then faced with flooding in February 2020 closely followed by the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020.

My stated aim on taking the position was to rebuild the relationship of the Council with the public, the various bodies we interface with and provide a more open and inclusive environment. To this end the Council have engaged with local people and organisations to work on issues such as green spaces, the Christmas lights, youth forum and town regeneration to name a few projects. Requests and suggestions have also been made to Gloucestershire Highways to look at solutions to our traffic congestion and associated pollution issues.

A major project has been to transfer the internal finance procedures from an overly complex and inadequate system based on an excel spreadsheet that has been a cause of angst for councillors for many years. The Licence for a new system had been purchased by the Council some years previous but never used for a purpose designed product (Realtis) for managing Council budgets. The implementation of this system for 2020-21 will provide councillors, staff and the public much clearer access to how funds are being spent and managed. During the year we have also revised our Standing Orders and re-written our Scheme of Delegated Powers.

I have personally met with various members of the public who had specific grievances with the council and made progress in resolving some of the main concerns that I would hope to conclude shortly and the Council have, as a result, received much more favourable comments in the local press.

The Council now have regular briefings from our long serving and highly respected head Groundman James Young. James, with his team, has a wealth of knowledge on many environmental issues that the Council now benefit from as he presents his thoughts and plans directly to the Council.

The COVID pandemic led to the cancelling of the Annual Town Meeting where we had planned a very different event to include displays by organisations such as the harbour development, Highways, a regeneration team, planning as well as other community groups that provided an opportunity for input from our electorate but we hope that can be re-arranged at a suitable future date.

I am excited with the prospect that the appointment of our new permanent Town Clerk Stephen Holley, from the 1st of June 2020 will allow us to start further long-term planning with regard to our budget, review further our procedures and develop our currently out of date Neighbourhood Development Plan. Stephen joins us having

previously served in Tetbury and Shaftsbury Town Councils as well as Cotswold District Council and thus brings significant experience to our team.

One constant this year that has served us so well is our excellent staff who have shown incredible resilience through difficult times and I would like here to acknowledge and publicly thank every one of them for their patience and commitment. We have also been served very well by two separate locum appointments in Andrew Maliphant followed by Roy Balgobin (Clerk) with Irena Litton (RFO).

As I write we are just starting to see the lifting of the lockdown from COVID-19, so things are changing rapidly. During this time I believe the Town Council excelled in the face of this crisis. Within two days we had widely publicised through social media and the delivery of cards to virtually every household in Lydney the establishing of a Lydney Support Group. Comprising of over 200 volunteers this group led by the Deputy Mayor (Tess Tremlett) provided a level of expertise that became a benchmark for other councils. The work that this team has done has undoubtedly been a 'life-saver' for many providing essential support and advise as well as friendship and comfort through a testing time for many. I hope in due course we can hold a public event to thank our many volunteers and key workers for the excellent work they have done.

I cannot cover all issues of note here but the Chairs of each of our sub-committees and Trusts have provided their individual reports that will cover many more projects and provide further detail of the work that the council is undertaking for Lydney.

As a Council our priority is to look forward and not back. The Council is keen to move on from the trials of this past year and focus on bringing real benefit to Lydney. There is so much to be proud of in Lydney with our many resources including parks, lake, harbour, railways and pool etc. Lydney is a growing town and the harbour regeneration if it can be allied to further town centre regeneration, connection to the Forest Cycle Ways and other initiatives we can make Lydney a most desirable place to live - as if it isn't already!

What really makes a place a desirable home though goes beyond facilities and is found in friends, neighbours and genuine community spirit. I would call now on all our public to think in terms of what you can do to make Lydney better – how can we create a new community of togetherness – can this be a lasting 'good' from the terrible pandemic of COVID? Obviously, we can't please all the people all the time but I do hope that the vast majority will come on a journey with us that will outlast any individual personality.



Cllr. Walter Leach
Mayor

AMENITIES COMMITTEE REPORT 2019-2020

I was elected as Chair of the Amenities committee in September 2019 following the resignation of Cllr Carol Harris in August 2019. The Amenities committee has the largest budget of all the Council's committees with a total budget this year of £101,520.00 which is reducing to £100,385.00 for 2020/2021.

- Since coming into this role, we have reviewed some of our current Council contracts and ways- We are no longer hiring the railing baskets and the baskets which were installed on the street light columns; the Committee took the decision to instead purchase a quantity of railing baskets which will be planted up by our Ground-staff. Our Ground-staff already plant up the barrels around town and have done for many years and these have always been much admired in the past Ground-staff had requested that the Committee purchase a small number of planters in order to replace some which have worn out and the committee agreed to this. Our grounds-staff, as I am sure all would agree, do a wonderful job throughout our town, ensuring the floral displays are maintained throughout the season and kept looking good the whole year through. Thanks to the team for their continued sterling efforts.
- With regards to our tree maintenance program, we asked three local tree specialist companies to quote for works to be done and have now awarded that contract, achieving better value for money for Lydney.
- Due to my late arrival into this post, there was no time to alter the planned Lydney light switch on event, despite a call from many residents to do so. The event went well and although the date clashed with another popular children's event, many children and adults still attended the 'switch on' and despite the weather being wet and drizzly, it did not dampen the spirits of those who were there. I would especially like to thank all three of our emergency services who attended the event, Danters Fair, Lydney band, the schools choir, the car wash, the volunteers who helped out on the day, the star of the show Father Christmas, Lydney music and to Alex - the Mayor's Cadet who switched on the lights - Thank you all.
- In November, leading up to the 2019 Lydney light switch on event, I responded to numerous Facebook comments from residents expressing disappointment in the 2018 event and asking for change. I invited these residents to form a working party to look at putting on a community-led switch on event in 2020. Twenty plus residents agreed to be involved and have themselves set about with finding funds, bringing forward new ideas, making decisions and setting about organising the event that is all inclusive and enjoyable for all. It's been a pleasure to work with them and the committee would like to thank them all for their support to date. This years light switch on event will be on 5 December and we hope to see a huge attendance.
- Our annual play inspection report revealed that remedial works needed doing on some of our current play equipment - this was actioned. Sadly, due to mindless vandalism at the Leaze Court play area, equipment needed replacing costing the Council £339.10 plus VAT

- Dog poo bins are often being requested by members of the public - these are a direct expense to this Council not only for the bin but for emptying and disposing of the content. We currently have 15 dog bins that we are responsible for, costing an approximate annual emptying fee of £4,693.00 (NB: Each dog bin costs £565.10 to purchase and empty in the first year reducing to an annual emptying fee of £239.90 in subsequent years)

Whilst we do see a need for dog poo bins, I would like to urge our residents that bagged dog poo can go into your normal household refuse bins and be collected with your other waste by the District Council's contractors 'Biffa'. So, in the event of no dog bin being available, I do urge that dog owners pick up after their animal and take the waste home with them and use their household bins to dispose of it. Can I also remind the few who still insist on ignoring the law that it is an offence to allow your dog to foul and not pick up after it. Our District Council does enforce the law - failing to pick up could result in a hefty fine from the District Council's Street Warden team.

It's been an exceptionally busy year at Lydney Town Council and on behalf of the Amenities committee, we look forward to working with you, our residents, in the coming year.

Many thanks for your support

Former Cllr. Tess Tremlett

Former Chair of Amenities committee/Deputy Mayor

BURIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The pursuit of additional land to increase the future capacity of the graveyard has been delayed due to the need for Dean Academy to obtain approval for the sale from the appropriate authorities, and due to the coronavirus crisis, everything has been put on hold. It is hoped that this will be taken forward in due course.

The committee were pleased to be able to keep the increase in charges commensurate with the rate of inflation, other than where specific costs had risen and those costs were passed on directly. We were also pleased to reduce the rate of increase to Alyburton Parish Council from 10% to the inflation rate for this year, and hopefully, for future years.

The Cemetery was closed for a short time when the Coronavirus Lockdown regulations were implemented, but was re-opened when government advice was revised. Many thanks to our ground staff for ensuring the safety of the public, and the enactment of government guidelines.

During the year, there were 36 interments, which included new graves, interment into existing graves, and the interment of cremated remains.

Cllr. Anne Harley

Burials Committee Chair

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Lydney Town Council has had a difficult time over the last few months but be assured that during that period the financial function has carried on as normal. This is due to the efforts of the staff and members.

We are in an excellent financial position with reserves both general and earmarked and a balanced budget. The precept for 2020/21 is almost the same as 2019/20 which is an indication of the council's strong financial control.

I have been chair of Finance and Scrutiny committee since August 2019 and I must pay tribute to my predecessor Brian Pearman for the way he carried out his duties up to then. I must also thank my fellow councillors especially the newly elected members who understood the finances in a short time.

I must emphasise that Lydney Town Council is a third tier council and has no direct financial relationship with central government and no access to windfalls such as new homes bonus which, even taking into account the number of new houses in the area, is not available to us.

The precept for 2020/21 is £579,249.00

Looking to the future:

- The pressure on Town and Parish Councils to take on non-statutory services has increased in recent years, and will likely increase further.
- The Town Council receives NO element of Business Rates, New Homes Bonus, Community Infrastructure Levy or Local Council Tax Support Grants Budgetary consideration relating to local projects.
- The Coastal Communities Team is likely to require financial support in relation to the Harbour project.
- Lydney Rail Station Car Park, currently under the control of GCC may be offered to the Council.
- Forest Youth Initiatives – A sum of £25k has been 'earmarked' for Youth Initiatives in Lydney – More may be required.
- Public Conveniences currently within the control of Forest of Dean District Council could be offered to the Town Council, with the risk of closure as an alternative.
- Burial Provision – the Council is rapidly running out of burial space, and more land will be required.

The above is not a comprehensive list of items considered during our financial/budgetary process, but it does demonstrate the Council's commitment to future service provision.

Cllr Roger Holmes

Finance & Scrutiny Committee Chair

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS/DONATIONS

GRANTS AWARDED IN FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/2020

General Grants:	
Town Hall Trust	£500.00
Victoria Centre	£300.00
Lydney Community Centre	£500.00
Forest Pulse	£500.00
Lydney Festival	£500.00
North & West Glos Citizens Advice Bureau	£500.00
Lydney Town AFC	£500.00
Age Concern	£606.00
Civic Awards:	
Lydney Tennis Club	£150.00
Lydney Cricket Club	£150.00
Lydney Royal British Legion	£600.00
Lydney Training Band	£350.00
Donations to Trusts:	
Bathurst Park & Recreation Ground	£53,700
Lydney Recreation Trust	£20,515



HEAD GROUNDSMAN'S REPORT

Lydney Town

Everyone at the Council's Ground staff team are friendly, happy, hardworking and extremely professional. We always work to the high standards I set for my team and myself.

My ethos is to keep Lydney clean, safe and beautiful for all residents and visitors. My aim this year was to start thinking about how we can be environmentally friendly to both people, wildlife, plants and habitats.

It is very important to reduce our carbon footprint and also be sustainable in every aspect of the grounds work we carry out. This is, and has to be, at the forefront of everything we do as a Grounds Team for the Council. I have put a new section addressing this subject in my report showing its importance and what we are doing.

Bathurst Park

The Park, as many residents and visitors have remarked over the years, is the jewel in the crown that Lydney offers in gardens and parks for the Town and local area. It is a place we, as Groundsmen, take pride keeping up the high standards we set every year, always striving to improve.

The flower displays I try to change each year to keep interest by adding new plants, shrubs and spring bulbs. New benches have been built and put in with improved disabled access. The fountain and the pond were cleaned out throughout the winter with new oxygenating plants planned to go in during the spring as the weather and temperatures warm up. A new fence was effected to enclose the Park gardens with dogs on leads only in this area. This has improved the tranquillity and peacefulness of the area and reduced the dog fouling over the grass and flower beds which, as you can imagine, has been greatly welcomed by the Grounds team and visitors.

The many events we have in the Park; Churches Together, Party in the Park, Easter Egg Hunt and fireworks display – all were run smoothly, successfully - but more importantly happily and enjoyed by everyone.

St Mary's Churchyard and Cemetery

The Grounds Team take care, pride and make sure we all are very respectful at all times when working in this important area. We cut the Cemetery every week during the growing season and make sure it is clean and tidy at all times.

We also have the Reflection Garden at the top end of the Cemetery which is kept to a high standard with shrubs, trees and roses adding to the calming place it can be.

Lydney Recreation Trust

The Grounds Team were busy this year keeping the area clean, safe and well maintained. We have cut back shrubs, trees, strimmed grass areas, weed killed and picked up litter.

We have also edged paths, filled potholes, cleaned the River Lyd again, as well as regularly walking round making sure everywhere is safe and tidy for everyone to enjoy.

Lydney In Bloom

This is one of the many areas the Grounds staff are happy and find the most rewarding. To be working with beautiful flowers and have kind, happy comments from the public about how they look is extremely nice to hear and makes all the hard work so rewarding.

Every year I try and change the displays with new and different plants which all helps in keeping the displays fresh and interest high.

Environment/Wildlife/Habitats

Since I took a course at Exeter University in this area a few years ago and, added to this the interest generally with people/news and my sense of personal responsibility, I have been trying to implement many things to improve the quality in many aspects to help the environment/wildlife habitats and eco systems.

We have put up many new bird boxes, bat boxes, owl boxes – all animals we have seen in the Park.

We have taken steps to leave areas of vegetation longer especially around boundary areas, all helping to encourage rabbits, hedgehogs, foxes, badgers, etc. When felling any branches or diseased trees we make sure we pile areas in managed heaps to encourage insects, moss and eco systems to grow. With the longer grass and vegetation we are seeing more bees, butterflies, ladybirds and dragonflies around the pond.

When cutting the grass we use mulching decks on our mowers which not only refeeds the grass, helps with re-seeding, eco systems and keeps time cutting grass down, better in fuel costs and pollution because we are not emptying boxes full of grass. However, where we have to box grass like the Bowling Green we make sure grass clippings are composted and used on flower beds.

When thinking and designing flower displays I am always looking at ways to use plants that are good pollinators for bees and liked by ladybirds, butterflies, etc. An example is the plants this year – lavender, dahlia, marigolds, roses, buddleia, hebe, foxgloves and to a lesser extent many summer bedding all help, especially the wildflower areas we plant on the entrances to the Town.

If we are building anything in the Park from benches, picnic tables, fences, play equipment, where possible we use local timber from Lydney Park Estate so sourcing from sustainable woodland. We then make it in-house in our workshop, all keeping the carbon footprint to a minimum. We are consistently looking at areas we can keep grass longer and introduce more wildlife areas helping not only insets but plant diversity. We keep watering to a minimum which helps reduce water consumption as well as water bills.

Another area the Council and myself are working towards is using less, and eventually eradicating, glyphosate weed killing when weed killing in the Town. This year we are hoping to reduce the chemical by 90% we use with the longer term ambition of going 100% free when technology allows. We are hoping to trial areas free of glyphosate this year and use different methods. Many chemicals Groundstaff use have already been reduced or stopped with only safer environmentally friendly chemicals being available.

I am also looking at ways our grounds machinery can move away from fuel to battery powered machines and be a lot greener.

Finally, we are looking at recycling in-house more as well as our open spaces rubbish collection. It is an exciting time to be involved with gardening and green areas; Lydney Groundstaff and I have been happy to embrace new ways of thinking and working to do our bit to help the environment, wildlife and habitats.

Overview

As you can see, both my team and I take a personal interest in every aspect of the job.

We take pride and want to make sure everywhere is beautiful, clean, safe and tidy but also reflects our passion for the environment, wildlife and all the eco habitats that are so important in a changing world.

We all enjoy our jobs and feel lucky to work outside in beautiful areas we look after, and also be flexible to help the Town whenever the need arises.

As Head Groundsman I welcome the new Council and the fresh new approach they have taken and thank them for including me in many new areas they are interested in changing.

I am happy and proud to work for Lydney Town Council and would like to thank my team of Peter, Tommy, Ryan and Ashley for all their hard work, skill and keeping positive throughout the year.

I would also like to thank Alison, Carol and Carolyn for all their help and support.

I look forward to an exciting, interesting and positive year ahead.

James Young

Head Groundsman

CUSTODIAL/SOLE TRUSTEE REPORTS

BATHURST PARK AND RECREATION TRUST REPORT

This is my first full year as Chairman of the Trust. We started with a very successful Party in the Park opened by John Challis (Boycie from Only Fools and Horses) in July. He seemed to have a very enjoyable day selling large numbers of his biography. The event was very well attended and again we were lucky with the weather. There was no trouble and the event felt like a real family day out. There was dancing, live music and even a 5 kilometre run. A big thank you to Harry Ives and Clare Vaughan who both worked tirelessly on the organisation and on the day. Also Trevor from the Lydney music school and Alison for all her work behind the scenes. Special thanks to Rose Christodoulides who secured sponsorship from Robert Hitchens Ltd.

Unfortunately we had to cancel this year's event due to the Covid 19 virus crisis. We also had to cancel the annual Easter Egg Hunt, but do not worry these two events will return next year even better.

On the more positive side we had a very successful Firework Display, very well attended and easily covering its costs. Once again a big thank you to Alison helping me organise the event.

It is a shame we had no cricket at the park this year hopefully it will return however we had plenty of rugby and football.

We received a wonderful poem from a member of the public about our beautiful park, which we mounted into a stone plaque by the pond. We also intend to replace some of the play equipment this year.

Finally a big thank you to James and his team of groundsmen who work so hard in making the park the wonderful and special place it is. You should all be very proud of yourselves.

Cllr. Richard Kemsley

Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust Chairman

THE COFFEE HOUSE REPORT, BATHURST PARK PAVILION



Well here we are 2020, and we've been busy at The Coffee House getting ready for our third season opening on Friday 20th March.

The 2019 season went in the blink of an eye, we had lots of events at The Coffee House, which all were well received, we started with the Easter competition, leading to the summer holiday events and then for Halloween which we had a week of various activities including biscuit decorating, puzzle days, and colouring competition all who took part was given a small

prize (even the adults).

The main event of the year was Party in the Park in July, and what a day it was, the sun shone and the park was full of people enjoying the atmosphere of the music, and the events taking place, it was truly amazing. John Challis (Boycie from Only Fools and Horses) came across to the coffee House and had photographs taken with the team, we are looking forward to this year's party in the park, well done to all who organized the event.

New for 2020 - The Coffee House, during the summer season will be offering lazy afternoon tea, a 24-hour pre-booking form will be available from the team.

Now its time to think about the new summer season, and we are already planning the Easter Egg competition Coffee House event, so children be ready to take part. We shall be having monthly events to keep the children occupied.

The team from The Coffee House, would like to say a big thanks, to all the Council team, including the park team who do an amazing job keeping the grounds in an amazing condition, plus all the lovely people that we have met over the season it was a great 2019.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL.

June Peates

The Coffee House Proprietor

LYDNEY RECREATION TRUST REPORT

This year has been a very difficult year for the trust due to the terrible flooding on the recreational trust fields in January. There was terrific damage to all the four sporting clubs. I would like to take the chance to say my deep admiration to all the sports clubs volunteers who worked tirelessly to get their clubs up and running. It says a lot about our community. I am pleased to say the tennis club has re-opened well done to you all. Also we have had very little sport due to Covid 19. It is very sad as no cricket on the rec, no junior rugby and the Lydney football club not able to complete their fixture list.

On the plus side South Wales Sports Grounds have completed the drainage works and there is no doubt this has made an enormous difference, even after the terrible flooding the water had all disappeared in days. We still have plans to improve the pump house.

We have also had two new dog foul bins on grounds. We have also put money aside to make vital improvement to the skateboard park. A new sign has gone up depicting the location of the sports facility on the trusts land. We still have park runs on the trust grounds and the fishing club are still going strong. The cycling network has now been completed. I am also pleased to report that the anti-social behaviour in the Hams Road car park has completely gone.

Finally I would like to thank all the sports clubs that use the recreational grounds and help Lydney becoming a stronger and healthy community.

Cllr. Richard Kemsley

Lydney Recreation Trust Deputy Chairman

GLoucestershire County Councillor's Report

Each month I provide a detailed County Councillors report for distribution and for this Annual report I will pick out some of highlights.

The new Civic year began on the 15th May 2019 with my appointment as Vice-Chairman of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) which is a great honour and privilege.

Cycle Path

The Gloucestershire First Local Enterprise Partnership funded Lydney Cycling Scheme and work on it commenced on 7th October 2019.

As the GCC Planning and Infrastructure Champion I brokered a meeting between interested parties and GCC regarding a Multi-use track to link Lydney to Parkend to discuss if an affordable, deliverable and importantly safe route plan can be arrived at. As approximately 95% of the route is predominantly within the West Dean Parish remit, I firmly believe that elected Cllrs/organisations within the West Dean area should be the ones predominantly to drive deliverance.

Public Transport

I continue to be active on local Bus Service concerns and Stagecoach managers were present at a well-attended meeting that I arranged in Coleford.

The revised 15 December 2019 Transport for Wales timetable changes have delivered improvements on Sundays. Lydney is now served by a 09.23 train in the Gloucester direction and a 09.04 train in the Cardiff direction. These services open up far better connectivity to both the Midlands/North and the South West/London on Sundays.

Dialogue with the Railway industry and other interested parties concerning services from Lydney/Chepstow is constantly ongoing.

A £642,000 boost for bus services in the County was announced by the Secretary of State for Transport on 6 February 2020, which is good news. The funds will augment the £3m that the County Council already spends on bus services in the county and help to protect and expand existing bus services in Gloucestershire.

Separately GCC are working to enable two bespoke Rural Bus Schemes, one of which will be in the Forest. I will elaborate and brief interested parties when the finite detail is known. At that point I will also convene a Forest Bus users group meeting.

Highways

GCC Cabinet decided that delegated authority was to be given to the Lead Commissioner; Highway Authority to enter into a funding agreement with Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) under which GCC shall receive £1.5m by way of funding from FoDDC to pay for a contract for works for the Lydney Coastal Community Fund Highway Improvement Scheme.

Excellent work by Wendy Jackson and her Regeneration Team at FoDDC, who helped secure the funding and funding for other improvements in the Docks area.

Consultation for the GCC Revised Local Transport Plan (LTP) began on 16 Jan - and ran until 26 Mar 2020. I met with FoDDC Leader Cllr Tim Gwilliam and FoDDC Transport Champion Clive Elsmore to help formulate a realistic and feasible response from the Forest.

Entrepreneurs

It is good to see a lot of self-help entrepreneurial Regeneration taking place in Lydney. Kings Buildings, Regents Walk and the vacant William Hill premises in Newerne Street with suitable premise conversion for potential Small Business start up's. These initiatives must be welcomed and congratulated.

Flooding

Subsequently I arranged for Mark Harper MP to visit affected people and property predominantly in the Lakeside area. One lesson that was clearly learnt from the flood events is that both the Lydney Community Emergency Plan and Lydney Rapid Response Plan need urgent work and clarification to make them fit for purpose, particularly on specific responsibilities.

Coronavirus

A challenge we all now undoubtedly face, will concentrate minds and priorities. Community spirit, selflessness, importantly keeping an eye out for each other particularly the vulnerable is paramount and will go a long way to pulling us all through.

I wish you all well and will continue to serve the Lydney Division to the best of my ability.

Cllr Alan Preest.

Vice-Chairman Gloucestershire County Council

Planning and Infrastructure Champion Gloucestershire County Council
Lydney.

COMMUNITY REPORTS

FRIENDS OF BATHURST POOL ANNUAL REPORT

The summer of 2019 was another excellent season for The Friends of Bathurst Pool. We had 12,831 people through the gates during the public sessions and a very successful swim club with 197 members and 221 day rate entries.

The solar panels are now fully operational with electricity being generated into the national grid.

Improvements this season included purchase of more of the rainbow tables, additional artificial grass and a make-over of the top end changing cubicles so that they now resemble beach huts, all these being self-funded.

Bathurst Pool was donated to the residents of Lydney and Aylburton on 2nd October 1920 by Lord Bathurst on the occasion of the 21st birthday of his son Benjamin Ludlow Bathurst. We now look forward to celebrating the centenary with a function in Lydney Town Hall in October 2020 when everyone that has helped us over the last eighteen years will be invited.

Bathurst Pool continues to be a thriving charity with a very committed group of trustees, committee members and volunteers. We look forward enthusiastically to the 2020 season.

Sheila Berryman

Trustee/Treasurer

FOREST FOODBANK REPORT



The Forest Foodbank was founded in 2013; initially in Coleford and then within 6 months rolled out to Cinderford and then to Lydney. We have been under the governance of Coleford Baptist Church since the food bank's inception.

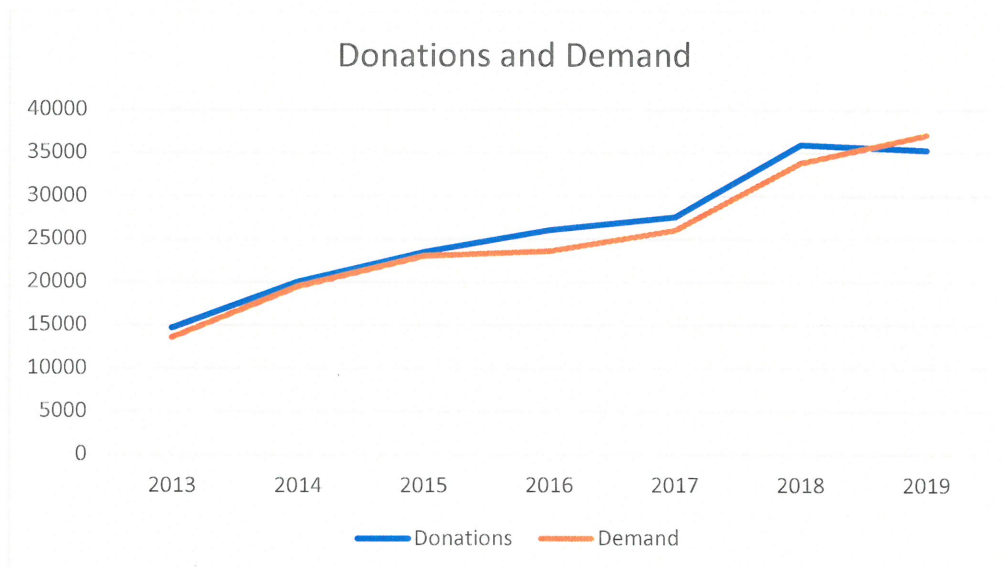
There is a session at one of the three Distribution Centres each day of the working week, in Lydney the session is on Wednesday and is held at the Fellowship Church.

Food parcels contents are predefined and based on the size of the family and are designed to provide 3 days food to get the individual out of immediate crisis. Individuals are referred to the foodbank by a voucher system which they exchange for a food parcel.

The food bank is run entirely by volunteers, the large majority of which are retirees. Much of the logistics work requires heavy lifting as food needs to be transported to each session from our Warehouse near Cinderford.

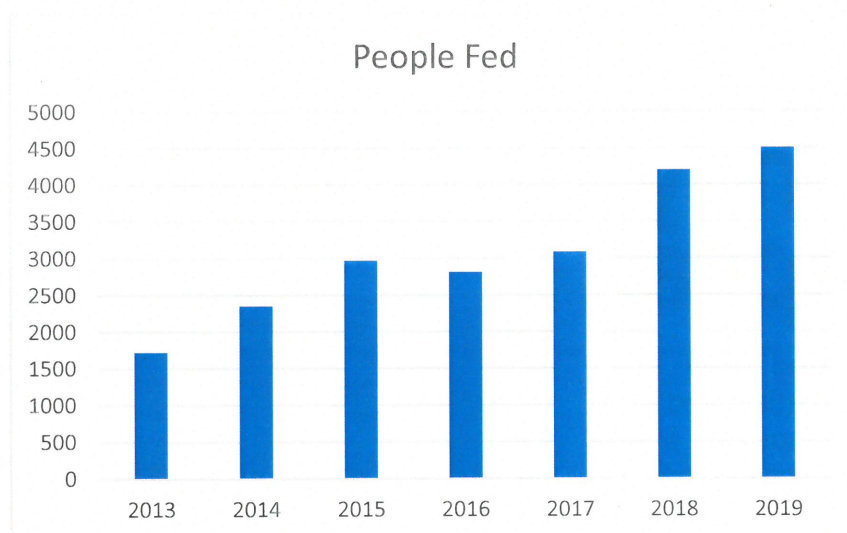
The Forest Foodbank is a franchise of the Trussell Trust who provide significant support in many ways but crucially by enabling us to collect food from Tesco stores in Lydney and Gloucester. Without this support we could not function.

Since inception in 2013, there has been a huge increase in demand which is measured kilos donated and distributed:



During 2019 demand was starting to outstrip supply, which will require us to increase our efforts to raise donations to meet this rise.

In 2013 we fed 1724 people rising to 4500 in 2019 an increase of 161%



The future for the Foodbank

It is expected that the demands on the foodbank will continue to grow. This puts a strain on some of the facilities and also the small number of people who manage the operation. In Lydney, we are very grateful for the support of the Fellowship Church, however, storage space is limited which means that sometimes we are unable to supply the amount of food necessary to meet the demand.

Our main issues are:

- Inadequate storage at our Lydney venue. We would consider moving to a more suitable premises.
- Lack of volunteers in key roles; we are looking for Fundraiser and Public Relations skills and people to move food into and out of our warehouse.
- Food donations in peak periods, i.e. school summer holidays.

In order to deliver these objectives, the foodbank requires support/sponsorship/partnerships from the wider community within the Forest of Dean, this is not limited to individuals, but includes business and other charitable organisations.

Tina Gray

Foodbank Manager 2/3/2020

FRIENDS OF LYDNEY HOSPITAL REPORT



Annual Report 2019/20

Registered Charity No. 277785

We have attended many meetings and participated in Locality Workshops with a view to retaining services in the South of the Forest.



We have presented our ideas to a panel of Clinicians and other Health Professionals at an Engagement hearing in Gloucester.

We are also continuing discussions with local doctors and other interested parties.

Whilst we accept that when the new hospital opens in 2022, we will lose our 'Inpatient beds', we feel that by then, the population of the South of the Forest will fully justify the retention of the remaining services. These could be provided in the existing building whilst new models of care are planned and built.



WILL THERE BE A NEW HOSPITAL IN THE FOREST OF DEAN?

Yes. Following a consultation, the Boards of Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning and Care Services (GCC and GCS) decided to replace the existing Lydney and Dilke units with a single modern facility and satellite Health Hubs.

WHERE WILL IT BE?

The Boards accepted the verdict of the Citizens' Jury that the new hospital should be north Cinderford.

WHEN WILL IT OPEN?

There are a lot of things to do - decide what will be in the hospital - design the unit - obtain planning permission - build it and fit it out. The Trust is aiming to open it in 2022.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO LYDNEY AND DILKE?

We have obtained assurances that they will remain open until the new hospital is operational - we assume they then will be sold.

Under the Localism Act both hospitals have been listed by their Town Councils as Assets of Community Value.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FUNDS HELD BY THE FRIENDS OF LYDNEY HOSPITAL?

We believe that monies collected over the years from local people for supporting Lydney Hospital should be used to benefit Health Care services in Lydney and the South of the Forest.

WHAT NEW HEALTH PROVISIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE SOUTH OF THE FOREST?

A good question and one of our major concerns. We are campaigning to ensure that there is a comprehensive Health Hub in Lydney to cover the South of the Forest. It should include an urgent care centre, diagnostics, outpatient's appointment, X Ray facilities, the services from local GPs and other related bodies, together with social care and mental health facilities – in other words a complete **Health and Wellbeing centre**.

HOW ARE THE FRIENDS INFLUENCING THESE DECISIONS?

We are having ongoing discussions with the various health authorities including local doctors. The town council are very supportive, but we have not yet obtained the positive engagement of our MP for replacement 'Urgent Care' facilities in the South of the Forest.

We are adamant that no services should be withdrawn from Lydney Hospital until new local services are put in place.

ARE THE FRIENDS STILL SUPPORTING LYDNEY HOSPITAL?

Yes, we continue to support patients and staff with some extras and also items of equipment.

HOW THE FRIENDS ARE SUPPORTING THE HOSPITAL WITH EQUIPMENT?

Minor Illness and Injury Department requested a new 'Slit Lamp Imaging equipment'. This cost over £20,000 and is used to improve the treatment of the ever-increasing number of eye injuries. It will photograph the eye and save patients having to go to Gloucester Hospital for follow up appointments. Lydney will have the best in Gloucestershire. Also, on going equipment for the inpatient ward and physio department.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THIS EQUIPMENT IF THE HOSPITAL CLOSES?

We have now come to an Agreement with the Health Authorities that any large piece of equipment requested by the Hospital will remain the property of the 'Friends' and be loaned to Lydney Hospital but can be transferred to any new local facilities when the hospital closes.

WHAT ABOUT CAR PARKING?

This is a problem and GCS have agreed it needs to be improved for both patients and staff and we are working with them to provide an extension.

ARE YOU STILL FUNDRAISING?

Future fundraising is likely to be for health facilities in the Community. We are still grateful for any donations.

Recent equipment purchased by the Friends:

New Eye Slit Lamp for MIIU - £22,674.74



The Friends retain ownership of this machine and loan it to the Hospital



Adrian Bevan
with new
equipment for
the Physio
Department

Recumbent Cycle
and Upright Cycle

Total - £3,190.00



Mary Thurston
Friends of Lydney Hospital

Lydney Coastal Community Team 2019/2020

Team Governance

The Lydney Coastal Community Team (LCCT) comprises an Executive Group and a wider Stakeholder Group. LCCT meetings are chaired by the Environment Agency with Forest of Dean District Council providing the accountable body and administration roles. The LCCT Economic Plan is updated annually:

<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/7246/lcct-economic-plan-update-2020-final.pdf>

Team Activity

The focus for the team during 2019/20 has been the preparation and submission of successful funding bids and subsequent detailed project planning.

The team prepared a successful £2.1M bid submission to the Coastal Community Fund (round 5) for the Destination Lydney Harbour (DLH) project, consisting of a number of elements which cover the area from the A48 roundabout on Harbour Road to the docks and harbour and serve to improve connections between these areas and the town centre. They can be broadly categorised as Improvements to Access Routes and Wayfinding, Enhancements to the Landscape, Enabling Increased Use of the Canal, Docks and Harbour.

The DLH project includes the refurbishment and conversion of the Harbour Store and Mortuary buildings to provide a heritage information point and toilet facilities respectively plus the installation of a modular café unit. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) will project manage the Highways element of the works. The bid was submitted at the end of January 2019 and was awarded funding in September 2019. Detailed project planning is underway.

DLH will complement the major private sector investment proposals being planned for the redevelopment of the Pine End Works site which is aiming to transform the former employment site into a major visitor attraction which will encourage people to visit the area for 3-4 hours. Agents for Richard Cook (Severn and Wye Smokery) have submitted this planning application which, at the time of writing, was yet to be determined.



Pic: Destination Lydney Harbour Project Leaders Richard Morgan and Rose Farrington at Lydney Harbour

Additionally the project complements the GFirst LEP-funded Links Lydney Cycle Improvement Scheme, completed in early 2020. The scheme improves access and increases connectivity by creating a pleasant, safe and accessible network of pathways around Lydney linking together Aylburton, Lydney Town Centre, Railway Station and Harbour approach, and residential developments. The scheme was developed with the aim of promoting cycle usage and reducing car journeys within Lydney whilst a non-vehicular route to the Harbour fits with the LCCT's aspiration to attract more people to the site.

The LCCT also team submitted a bid to the Coastal Revival Fund for the repair of the harbour's outer sea gates. This project was successful in obtaining £50K funding for detailed design work – work is now underway to secure the remaining funding needed.

The Environment Agency has submitted an internal bid for further de-silting of the harbour in addition to the repair of the outer sea gates.

In September 2019 a number of LCCT members came together for their annual clean-up of the Lydney docks area as part of the Severn Estuary Partnership's 'Beach Clean' event. 25 volunteers showed up in total, with Publica staff making great use of one of their volunteering days. 8 full bags were collected. The most commonly collected items were cans, plastic drink bottles and crisp packets. Overall, the amount of rubbish was way less than the 17 bags collected last year - so hopefully this downward trend will continue!

The Environment Agency continued their efforts to transfer land ownership at Lydney harbour to Mr Richard Cook. A process of legal and due diligence work is underway to conclude this important transfer.



Pic: 'Beach Clean' Team Members with their 2019 litter haul



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION REPORT

LYDNEY BRANCH REPORT, 2019- 2020

As custodians of Remembrance the Branch is heavily involved in the organisation of the Annual Remembrance Parade and Service on Remembrance Sunday in conjunction with Lydney Town Council. The event seems to be more supported with every passing year with both the Parade and Service getting bigger. It is very encouraging to see more and more young people & organisation getting involved. The wreath laying service is also getting bigger with over 40 wreaths being laid.

To recognise the numerous volunteers and organisations who give up their time to ensure the Parade runs smoothly each year, the Branch held a presentation evening in February to present them with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Our Welfare Support Team continues to be involved in Welfare cases all over the Forest of Dean Area and in the last year have supported some 50 cases involving ex and current service personnel and their dependants. It is also involved in issuing Food Vouchers this is done at 3 Hill Street , Lydney every Wednesday from 12.30pm. to 3.00pm. they also offer support, advice and help to all.

The membership of the Branch continues to diminish each year and one of our priorities is to increase membership especially younger members to ensure the values of the British Legion continues for the Future

As a Branch we wish to place on record our thanks to the trustees of 3 Hill Street who allow us use of the building on generous terms. We also would like to express our thanks to the Town Council for their continuing support for our work in the community.

Lydney RBL Branch Committee

LIVE ON
Legion Contact Centre 0808 802 8080
Registered Charity Number 219279

LYDNEY WAR MEMORIAL (ALMSHOUSES) TRUST REPORT

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 meets every other month at the Naas Lane Community Centre. During the year, Mrs Sue Osborne sadly resigned from the board. Mr Bill Hobman agreed to be become a Trustee and joined the existing board comprising Mr Simon Moore, Mrs Ruth Richardson, Mr Bill Osborne, Mrs Valerie Hobman, Mr Walter Leach and Mrs Lynn Daszko.

At the AGM Mr Simon Moore agreed continue to act as Chair and Mr Walter Leach agreed to act as Vice Chair. Attendance at the meetings has been excellent, with all meetings in the year being quorate. Gill Moir continues to act as the clerk and administrative officer for the Trust.

There have been no changes to the residents this year and the Trust continues to maintain a good relationship with them. They understand that they can contact the clerk at any time should any problems arise.

The Trust has continued to manage its finances effectively, carefully planning projects and maintenance work within ongoing income levels, with the aim of keeping a constant and modest level of reserves. During the year, one of the bathrooms was upgraded in accordance with the needs of the resident. In addition, there have been a number of minor maintenance issues during the year, which have been addressed.

As part of their succession planning, the current board of Trustees are keen to encourage anyone who would be interested in becoming a Trustee to contact the Trust.

Simon Moore

Chair

THE VICTORIA CENTRE REPORT

The Victoria Centre has had another very successful year.

The highlight of our year was gaining the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the only charity in the Forest of Dean to achieve it this year, and one of only three in the County of Gloucestershire. The Centre is very proud of all our volunteers who won this award and of the high standards they maintain. The Award is recognised as the equivalent of an OBE for volunteers. Two of them attended the Royal Garden Party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace in May. The Award was presented at the Centre in October by Mr Edward Gillespie, the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, who represents the Queen in the County, accompanied by 4 Deputy Lieutenants. The event was celebrated by our volunteers, diners, trustees and local benefactors.

We have maintained our diner numbers and continue to be the premier lunch and activity club in the area, providing freshly prepared and cooked meals in our 5 star kitchens. We have managed to maintain our low prices despite continuing pressure on food and salary costs.

Our activities continue to expand, offering more choice for those who wish to participate.

Yet again, we have opened on Christmas Day with a free lunch for those who otherwise would be alone. This was again a very popular, much appreciated, festive occasion, and yet again, the centre was full. We wish to thank all those organisers and volunteers who so unselfishly give their help to make this a special day for others.

Sadly, our Chair, Mavis (Sally) James passed away at the end of the year. Sally was an amazing character whose presence will be greatly missed by all at the centre, and around the area.

All that we have achieved has been made possible by our team of dedicated staff and volunteers and by the support that the local community and organisations have given us in donations and grants. We would like to thank all those who have helped in any way and we look forward to making even more progress in 2020.

John King
Trustee

vcllydney@gmail.com
www.lydneyvictoriacentre.co.uk
01594 843418

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN LYDNEY REPORT



The Churches in Lydney provide a significant input to the life of the town through their Christian worship and community engagement, both of which are summarised below.

Churches Together In Lydney (CTiL) is a working group that comprises membership of all the Churches in Lydney sharing the common goal of promoting the Gospel. There are nine congregations in total that represent the breadth of Christian expression from Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed and Free Evangelical worship. Across the churches on any given typical weekend there are between 200 and 250 regular worshippers. Members of the churches represent people from all walks of life; all age groups, all incomes, families and singles – there is no ‘typical’ member as such.

Each of the churches have their main congregation meeting on the weekend and encompass a range of styles for their service from formal liturgical services through to contemporary styles of music and presentation in a relaxed Café style environment. As well as the Saturday/Sunday services there are regular meetings through the week including house-groups, bible studies and prayer meetings. Churches run courses for enquiring and understanding the Christian faith and the complete work of Jesus, such as Alpha, Freedom In Christ the Grace course and the locally written Weigh-Up.

Each church operates its own curriculum of activities and also works together through the CTiL forum to put on regular events such as Praise In The Park, Songs of Praise, Easter Witness and a joint Christmas celebration. This year we held our joint Carol Service in St Mary’s Church, it was great to see all churches represented and to share in Christmas worship together.

At the Party in the Park, CtiL hosted a stall; cakes were a great draw and conversation flowed. The puppets from the Kings Arms Church also took part entertaining the crowd, young and old with a fun, and inspiring Christian message.

The churches undertake a significant amount of social engagement. Below is a selection, but not exhaustive, list of work done by volunteers from within the church for the benefit of the Lydney and district community.

- Befrienders-Debt Help, Life Skills and Job Club courses supported by Christians Against Poverty to assist those in Debt, struggling to run a home and the long term unemployed.
- Food Bank operated from LCF and supported by donations from across the churches. Many of the volunteers come from the local churches.
- Open The Book: Presentation and explanation of the main bible stories in school assemblies
- Services at Rodley House Home visits to the elderly, vulnerable, lonely.
- Various Mothers & Toddlers / Pebbles groups Messy Church Arts and Craft groups
- Fetes & Fayres Christmas Tree Festival

- Summer/School Holiday clubs
- Harvest Festivals & Lydney Harbour Open Air Service

A warm welcome is offered to any that would like to join any of the congregations below. For further information on this report CTiL can be contacted through the secretary aileenandjapp@googlemail.com

More information regarding each church, their location and contact details can be found on their website below.

Anglican St Marys' & Holy Trinity	lydneyparish.org.uk/
Kings Arms Community Church	kingsarmschurch.org/
Lydney Baptist	lydneybaptists.org/
Lydney Christian Fellowship	lydneychristianfellowship.org/
Lydney Methodist	gloucestershiremethodist.org.uk/churches/circuit-churches/lydney.html
Lydney URC	urcdirectory.org.uk/church-detail?listingid=572
Roman Catholic	forestrc.co.uk/
Stroat Church	stroatchurch.org.uk/

Rev Michelle Ireland

**Methodist Minister
CTiL Chairperson (2019-2020)**

LYDNEY & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION REPORT

2019 was another active year for Lydney and District Twinning Association during which a number of local families made their way across to Brehal in France prior to the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May. The Mayor of Brehal welcomed the Lydney families at a reception at the Town Hall before they settled down for a weekend of sight-seeing and activities throughout the weekend. This included visits to some of the numerous D-Day historical sites and to the fortified coastal town of Granville. One group were even taken on a boat trip across to the Isle of Chausey. The visit culminated in a party at a local hall where both Twinning Associations enjoyed an evening of singing and folk dancing.



The alternating annual visit continues to provide a marvelous opportunity to secure strong cultural links between the two communities. For the Lydney visitors, there is no requirement to be able to speak French, although many of them 'have a go', and this provides a great opportunity to learn some of the language.

The membership of the Association is continuing at around 40, with the core committee of 11 taking on the organisation of the events. In September, the Chairman and Treasurer attended a meeting with representatives of other Twinning Associations in the area, including Monmouth, Coleford, Ross-On-Wye, Chepstow and Raglan. This confirmed many similarities of approaches to twinning visits, fund raising and membership, with the attraction of new members continuing to be the biggest challenge. It was agreed that further area meetings would take place in 2020.

Fund raising events for this Year will include a Quiz and Meal at Woolaston Village Hall on 25th April, a BBQ on 12th July and a French Speaking evening hosted by the Chair at the end of November.

Families from Brehal will be travelling to Lydney on 21st May and will be hosted by families in the local area. The main event will be a celebration dinner at Forest Hills Golf Club on 22nd May followed by a weekend of visits and activities being organized by the host families.

Andrew Dean

Chairman

COMMUNITY SPORTS CLUBS

LYDNEY TENNIS CLUB REPORT

2019 was another successful year in the life of Lydney Tennis Club with membership growing again from last year's high to a total of 230 members, 103 of whom are under 18; a strong junior membership is so important for the future of any club.

The courts have been well used again in the past 12 months for social play, coaching (both for juniors and adults), Live Ball, Cardio tennis and league matches, both junior and senior.

In the 2019 Gloucestershire Summer League we entered 5 Ladies' teams and 3 Men's teams – with 4 of these 8 teams gaining promotion. For the 2020 season there will be an additional Ladies' team – evidence of the healthy state of ladies' tennis at the club.

In addition, we entered 8 junior teams in the Gloucestershire Aegon league over the summer from Under 8 to Under 16 and four of these teams gained promotion. Parents of the youngsters get involved by captaining a team, providing transport to away matches and generally supporting all those taking part. Learning to win and lose with good grace is an important part of any sport and our junior players have shown that they play the game with the right attitude.

This winter we entered 4 teams in the Gloucestershire Mixed Floodlit Winter League – one more than last year and evidence of our players' willingness to play on cold and windy winter evenings! Three of those teams have also been promoted.

All in all, a very successful year on court.

Our toilets and changing areas were refurbished last year with the help of a grant from the District Council. New flooring was laid in the toilets.

A defibrillator was installed at the club and several club members undertook training on how to use it. We are very pleased to have it at the club but we all hope that it is something we never have cause to use!

Our major project for this year is to have 2 of our courts re-surfaced and this is still our aim and we are in the process of accessing funding/loans to enable us to do this.

However, the events of 16th February have turned all our plans around and the damage done to the court surface by the flooding now means that we are looking to get all 4 courts re-surfaced by the end of the year – so we are looking at a cost of approx. £50,000, hence our need to find funding as a top priority.

If this were not enough, our clubhouse also flooded. I don't think anyone ever imagined that it was possible for it to flood as it is 5 steps above the level of the

courts. Getting this back to a usable condition is also going to take considerable time and expense.

Last year was mainly about the success we had on court; since 16th February we have shown what an amazing club we are at doing everything from shifting huge amounts of silt from our courts, organising funding and fundraising, sweeping, cleaning, clearing our clubhouse – in short, pulling together to do everything which needs to be done to get our club back on its feet again.

As a club, we are hugely grateful to all those who have donated to our Just Giving page – at the time of writing we have raised over £5000. We are also so touched by all the offers of help from local businesses and Lydney residents and offers to run fundraising events on our behalf. The support has been unbelievable.

I am confident that by the time this goes to print, we will be back up and running as a club – back to more success on court but, as importantly, with an even stronger club spirit. The old saying of what doesn't kill you makes you stronger certainly applies to Lydney Tennis Club.





LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

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