

## **Report from the Town Mayor – Councillor Chris Parsons MBE**

As we come to the end of another Council year it's time to reflect on the past year.

Our town has changed considerably over the past years, the extra housing, primarily in the Station Road area, has brought with it significant additional traffic problems. The controversial traffic lights at Station Road/Wyre Road junction have caused three years of chaos in that area and are still not finished. The majority of members of the Town Council preferred a simple roundabout and actually produced a plan showing how this could be achieved; local residents also campaigned for such a roundabout, but unfortunately the County Council continued with the installation of traffic lights. We can only hope that when the work is finally completed the results will not be a continuation of the last three years problems.

The flood defences built in 2011 incorporated a bund through some areas of the allotments. The surface of part of this keeps breaking up and is the cause of consistent problems for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians. Whilst the Environment Agency, who are responsible for the bund, carry out regular repairs, a more permanent solution is yet to be provided by them despite the Town Council's regular requests. The Environment Agency plans to remodel the bund as soon as funds become available.

The town is fortunate to have around 250 allotments available to residents and it has been very disappointing to see a large number of these in such poor condition. Those tenants who fail to maintain a satisfactory standard have been contacted and it is hoped that better standards will be forthcoming.

The wetlands continues in both wildlife and popularity. This is due to the dedication and hard work of the many volunteers who give so freely of their time, often up to their knees in mud. Unfortunately a recent act of vandalism marred this site but this has not deterred the volunteers in returning it to its former glory.

The footpaths in St. Andrew Gardens became very muddy in wet weather and this year the Town Council resurfaced the paths. This has been carried out using material that is acceptable to pedestrians and wheelchair users whilst maintaining the soft landscaping of this area.

The Redrow development in Croome Road (Rebecca Road) was completed without the footpath connecting it the B4084. Following discussions with Worcestershire County Council this has now been completed. Discussions are ongoing regarding the dangerous footpath which exits the development directly onto the highway on Holloway.

The Town's twinning with Bad Neustadt and Plouay continues to flourish, and regular exchanges take place. This year sees the 40th anniversary of our twinning with Bad Neustadt, to celebrate this a party from Bad Neustadt will visit Pershore in August with our return visit planned for October. Anyone wishing to take part in these exchanges are always most welcome. This year we lost a long standing member of the twinning committee when Chris O'Loughlin sadly passed away, his input and company will be greatly missed.

The future of libraries in Worcestershire is under review by Worcestershire County Council. Pershore Town Council is aware that savings need to be made and have responded that the only acceptable change would be the slightly reduced opening hours of the library in Pershore. The option of Pershore becoming an open library was not supported.

With Pershore Town Council being the local burial authority the maintenance of our cemetery and the associated recording of burials takes a great deal of time. We continue with the task of digitalising both current and past records which will lead to a much more user friendly system both for our own staff and public alike. When completed members of the public will find it much easier to research family history with a complete digital map of the cemetery and detailing those who are buried there. The perimeter wall is being repaired at present. This work has to be carried out in accordance with the conservation officer's requirements and will be completed in stages over the next few years. A new toilet block is planned and tenders are currently being sought for this work.

There has been a great deal of debate regarding the possibility of providing Pershore with a brand new community hall which would include a family history centre. An exciting design and specification has been completed and further debate on this project will be held by the incoming council.

In November we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. A stained glass window was commissioned to the council's design and installed in our cemetery chapel. We have received nothing but praise from those who have seen the window. The council also staged a commemorative concert in Pershore Abbey where the story of a First World War soldier was relayed together with music provided by Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra. The Abbey was packed to capacity with a waiting list for any returned tickets. Both the stained glass window and the concert were very fitting tributes to those who gave so much in those dark days of war.

This Town Hall was developed from the old Post Office in 2002 and is now in need of refurbishment, and a little more than just a lick of paint. Plans have been drawn up to make this building more user friendly for the council and users alike.

The Town Council has moved a little closer towards the 21st century; we now have a Facebook site. This is not used as a means of a two way dialog but purely a notice board for publicising Council information.

I must pay tribute to our Council staff, they are the everyday face of the Council. From simply receiving someone's allotment rent to handling a complicated complaint from an irate resident, they deal with each matter in a most professional and friendly way. They are extremely knowledgeable of all aspects of council business and members of the public are grateful for the help given. Alison Barrett, a member of our staff for six years left our employment due to her relocation to Stoke-on-Trent. A new member, Lucy Gibson joined our team in April of this year and has already settled in to the variety of Council business. The role of the Town Clerk comprises of a great variety of tasks, too many to detail in this report and, once again, she has worked tirelessly throughout the year, often working long hours far beyond the normal working hours of the role.

Finally a few words about the mayoral year. To say the least, it has been a busy one. Jan and I have attended 116 official engagements plus 38 various additional meetings for myself with other organisations, we have travelled some 1214 miles to fulfil those engagements. We have been both proud and honoured to have had the privilege to represent our town on so many different occasions. Wherever we go it is so gratifying to hear the positive comments about Pershore, we really are the envy of some other towns. There have been other occasions where we have been unable to satisfy an invitation and I thank Councillor Palfrey, my deputy, for standing in on these occasions. Angela Gerrard acted as my Chaplain for the past year and I cannot thank her enough for all the help and support throughout the year, also for her attendance at our Council meetings. My chosen charity for the year has been Prostate Cancer Support and I am most grateful to all those who have helped at the various events throughout the year, without your help the various events would not have been possible. The charity itself has also been extremely helpful and supported many of the events we have organised. We often hear the saying 'behind every man there's a better woman', this is so true, only with the help and support of my wife Jan has this year achieved so many successes.

Pershore Town Council has been a Quality Council since 2007, has held the standard of Quality Gold Council for the last four years and continues to lead the way. To many it is known as the jewel of Wychavon. With the commitment and dedication of future councillors this enviable status will, I am sure, continue.

Councillor Chris Parsons MBE  
Town Mayor

## **Councillor Activities:-**

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

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

A report from each of the Council representatives on these groups was given at the Town Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and these are available for residents on request at the Town Hall.

## **WHAT THE COUNCIL DOES**

### **The Town Council owns and manages:-**

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

## **The Town Council controls and manages:-**

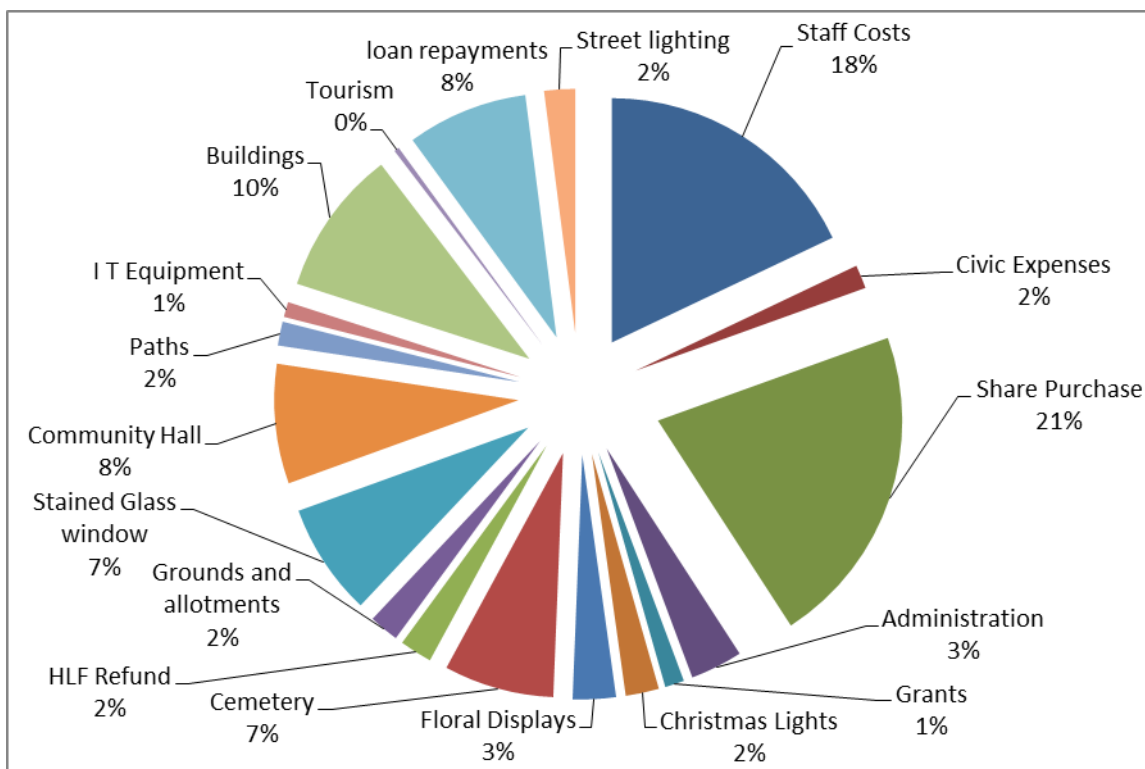
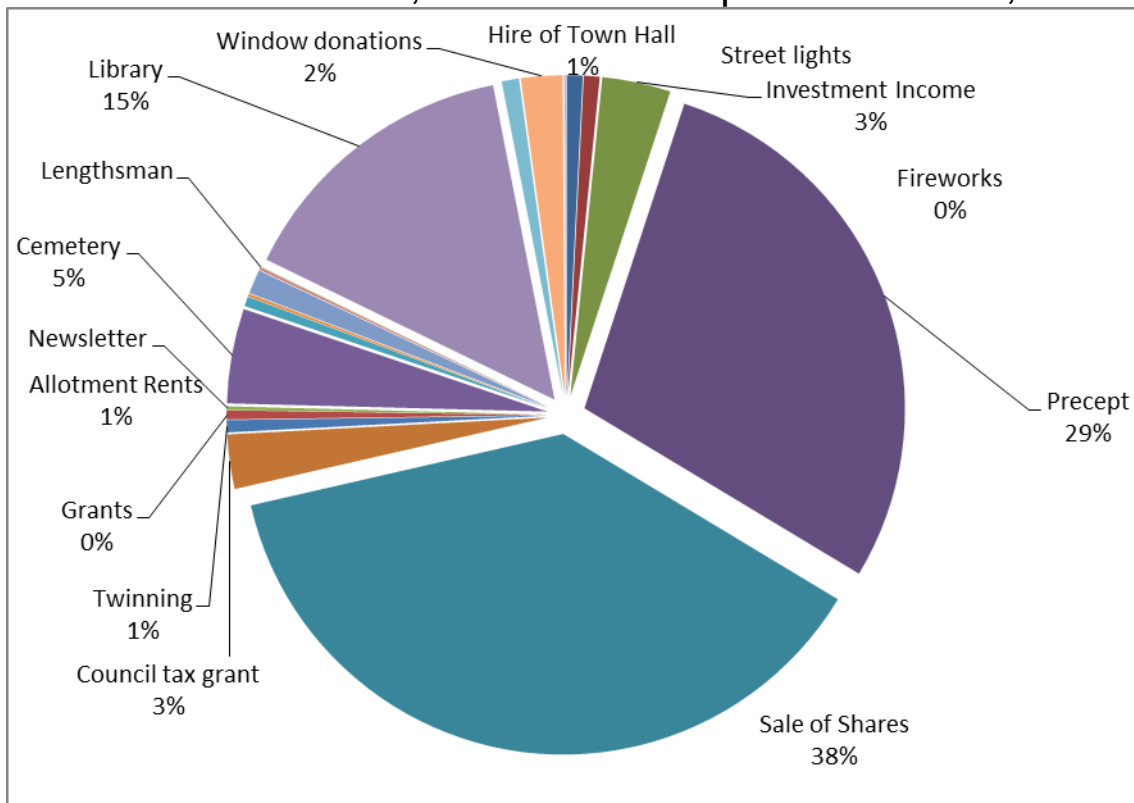
- St Andrews Gardens

## **The Town Council provides:-**

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

**Town Council Finances** - Please see below charts showing how the Council has spent your money during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. If you would like more detailed information, or a set of the accounts, please contact the Town Clerk after the end of May. Please note that 0% indicates income or expenditure of less than £3500.

Total Income £687,273      Total Expenditure £690,269



## **Council and Committee meetings for the year 2019**

Pershore Town Hall, 34 High Street, Pershore

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

|                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| May 14 <sup>th</sup>  | Town and Annual Meetings            |
| May 16 <sup>th</sup>  | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| May 20 <sup>th</sup>  | Twinning and Tourism Committee      |
| May 23 <sup>rd</sup>  | Cemetery Committee                  |
| June 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Youth Council (Town Hall)           |
| June 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Finance and Property Committee      |
| June 20 <sup>th</sup> | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| July 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Youth Council (High School)         |
| July 11 <sup>th</sup> | Amenities and Environment Committee |
| July 18 <sup>th</sup> | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| July 25 <sup>th</sup> | Cemetery Committee                  |
| Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>   | Finance and Property Committee      |
| Aug 12 <sup>th</sup>  | Twinning and Tourism Committee      |
| Sept 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| Sept 12 <sup>th</sup> | Amenities and Environment Committee |
| Sept 18 <sup>th</sup> | Youth Council (High School – TBC)   |
| Sept 26 <sup>th</sup> | Cemetery Committee                  |
| Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>   | Youth Council (Town Hall)           |
| Oct 3 <sup>rd</sup>   | Finance and Property Committee      |
| Oct 17 <sup>th</sup>  | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>   | Youth Council (High School)         |
| Nov 14 <sup>th</sup>  | Amenities and Environment Committee |
| Nov 21 <sup>st</sup>  | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |
| Nov 28 <sup>th</sup>  | Cemetery Committee                  |
| Dec 4 <sup>th</sup>   | Youth Council (Town Hall)           |
| Dec 5 <sup>th</sup>   | Finance and Property Committee      |
| Dec 19 <sup>th</sup>  | Planning Committee<br>Town Council  |

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

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

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

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

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

All members may be contacted through the Town Hall on the numbers or email address listed below. Members also have their details on the Town Council web site:-

[www.pershoretowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.pershoretowncouncil.gov.uk). The Town Council also has a Facebook page called Pershore Town Council.