

Report from the Town Mayor – Cllr Tony Rowley

Introduction

My first annual report as Mayor coincides with the final year of this Council. It is a sad time in certain respects as we say goodbye to some of the members – who for various reasons decided not to stand for re-election. However, it is also an exciting time as we look forward to a new council term and some new members bringing their own various strengths and skills.

This year has been a busy year. Following 2 years of intensive work on major capital projects namely, the Library and Information Centre and the Cemetery Chapel, it was thought that a year of consolidation might be appropriate. No chance – it is a case of pressing on with the next project. This Council doesn't know how to ease off the accelerator.

Priorities

The Council has reviewed and progressed the priorities set by members during the term. I will highlight some of the work this year:

Promoting the Northern Link (also known as the Keytec Link) – working with Wychavon District Council, adjacent parish councils and Worcestershire County Council, the Town Council is pressing to get the scheme to a “shovel ready” status to take advantage of any funding opportunities that may arise. There seems a realistic prospect of the scheme starting in 2017.

Cemetery Chapel – following completion of the main refurbishment work last year additional works were necessary and carried forward to this year. The more urgent of these works have been completed including the major repair to the leaded window in the South Chapel Gathering Room. The completion of the window repairs has left a water tight building for the first time in many years.

Extension to the Cemetery – Planning permission was received to extend the cemetery including a much needed car park. Various reviews of the project have been undertaken by the Cemetery Committee in view of the substantial infrastructure costs of the development – namely archaeology and land drainage. Also, a change in legislation at national level concerning the re-use of graves has resulted in further re-programming of the project. The latter change in legislation is as a result of much pressure and persistence by our Town Clerk. Arrangements to implement the car park and access proposals are progressing.

Cemetery Lodge – much attention has been focused on the cemetery throughout the year. Following the Council's successful application for the HLF grant, arrangements continue to press ahead with the refurbishment works at the Cemetery Lodge to

convert the building into a Family History Centre. Credit here must go again to the Town Clerk for completing the HLF application and not taking 'no' for an answer.

Land off Holloway – a change of use planning application of the land from agriculture to amenity use was approved during the year and work has commenced to implement the agreed management plan. Hedgerow and tree planting and appropriate benches etc will be provided.

Avon Meadows – as a part owner of this land the Town Council is involved with the proposals to further enhance the wetlands and its development programme.

Public Transport – there has been a number of challenges facing the town over the year involving both rail and bus services. The Town Council, in response to various consultations, has worked hard to protect the services to Pershore. The never ending saga over car parking for Pershore Railway Station continues and with other agencies, including Wychavon DC and Worcestershire County Council, the Town Council continues to press claims for this much needed facility.

Work of the Committees

The Council conducts much of its business through a number of effective committees:

Amenities and Environment – chaired by Bob Gilmore

Cemetery – chaired by Chris Parsons

Finance and Property – chaired by Charles Tucker

Planning – chaired by Derrick Watt

Twinning and Tourism – chaired by Val Wood

Youth Council – chaired by Rebecca Wallbank

My thanks go to the hardworking chairmen and all my fellow councillors who take an effective role in all the committee work. I would also add that the Twinning and Tourism Committee also involves representatives of several other organisations in the town who play active roles in this important function of Pershore. A special thanks from me to the Youth Council who continue to add so much to the future of the Town. It has been a particularly active and enthusiastic Youth Council this year, under the leadership and determination of the Youth Mayor Rebecca Wallbank. It has been a privilege to work with Becky this year – she demonstrates such determination through a sea of calmness.

One new Councillor joined us during the year, David Annis – whom we welcomed on board as he brings his own individuality to the Council.

The Council Staff

Of course the work and success of this council would not be achieved without the staff based at the Town Hall and the Library and Information Centre and the “estates” team. The professional leadership of the staff comes from Ann Dobbins , our Town Clerk. Ann gives tremendous efforts in all she performs for the Town Council and I would like to offer my personal thanks for all her help and guidance. I would also like to thank the girls Amy and Alison for their specific assistance with my mayoral duties throughout the year. Ann has developed, over time, successful and distinctive team ethics with both the Town Hall staff including the Information Centre staff and the estates workforce.

Events

I turn now to the various events organised within the town which have to a certain degree put Pershore on the map. I refer of course to the Pershore Carnival, the Jazz Festival, Midsummer Brass, Pershore Open Gardens, Heritage Open Days, the Plum Festival and the Christmas Lights Switch-on and Shopping Event. During the year we also saw the hugely successful Tour of Britain Cycle Event. The Town Council and Councillors are involved with all these events along with many other agencies and individuals. It is the hard work of the organising committees that make the events, so important to the town, possible. Events such as the Carnival and the Plum Festival attract massive crowds of between 10,000 and 25,000 people – the vast majority being from out of town and bringing trade to the High Street and many local businesses. I believe when it comes to organising events Pershore “fights above its weight”.

The Mayoral Year

Debby and I have enjoyed our first year as Mayor and Mayoress of Pershore. It has been an honour and privilege to serve the Town.

We have represented Pershore and the Town Council at some 116 events during the year. On the charity front we have raised some £6,700 for my two charities for the year, Guide Dogs UK and The Stroke Association. In addition Debby and I have hosted a number of Mayor’s coffee mornings to help raise money for local charities from Pershore and the surrounding districts and have raised £3,561.71 for these local causes.

The highlights of the Mayoral year for me have been the visits and involvement with activities at the local schools and also, at the other end of the scale, the visits to the local care homes. I have learnt during this year that you certainly get straight talking from both the very young and old!

I take this opportunity to thank Mark Jennings, my Chaplain for his wonderful help and guidance through the year, and above all, his humour and kindness.

And finally, I would like to thank Ann and all the staff for their help during the year and my fellow councillors for their dedication to Pershore and the Town Council.

Cllr Tony Rowley, Mayor of Pershore

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
Pershore Volunteer Centre
Pershore Town Football Club
Emergency Planning
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Public Transport Group
Pershore Market Town Partnership
Riverside Youth Centre
Transition Town Group

A report from each of the Council representatives on these groups was given at the Town Meeting on 7th May 2015 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
- Pershore Cemetery
- Town Hall and walkway
- Pershore Library and Visitor Information centre
- Land off Holloway – available to walkers for picnics and a rest area
- 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 including helping to fund Pershore Carnival, Pershore Plum Fayre, Pershore Jazz Festival and Midsummer Brass.
- Free accommodation 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 the Leisure Centre on a lease
- Some of land occupied by the Avon Meadows wetlands
- Free accommodation for the Heritage Centre

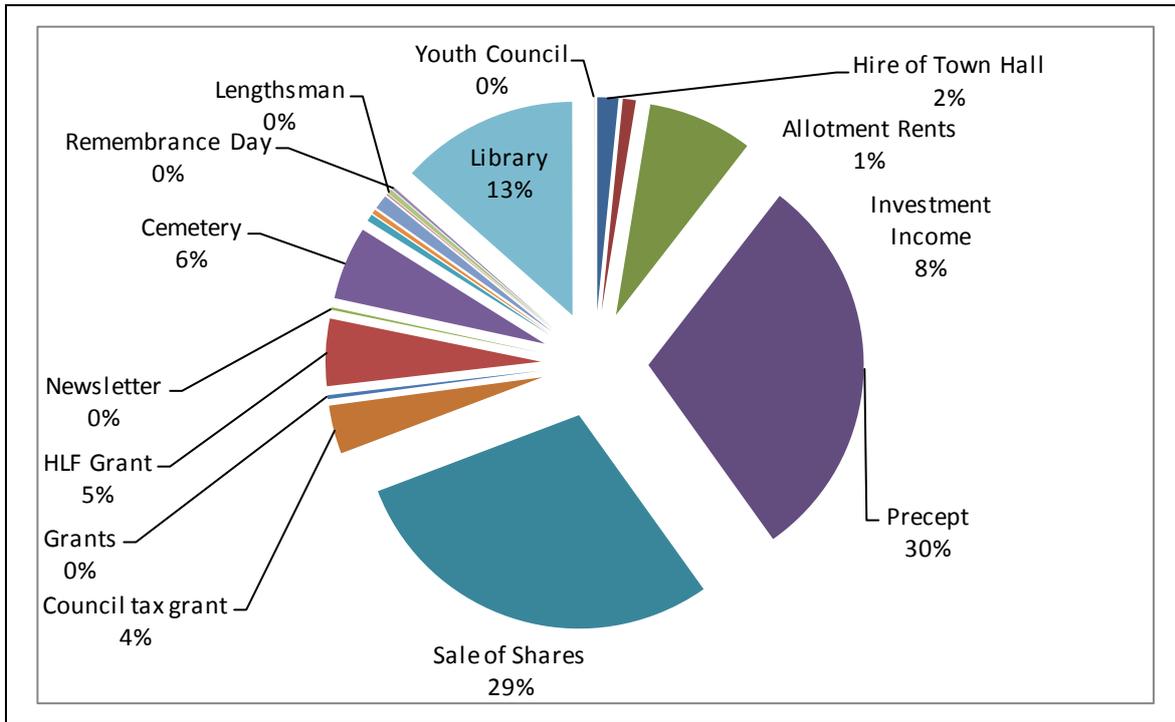
Town Council Finances

Please see below charts showing how the Council has spent your money during the year to 31st March 2015. If you would like more detailed information, or a set of the accounts, please contact the Town Clerk after the end of May.

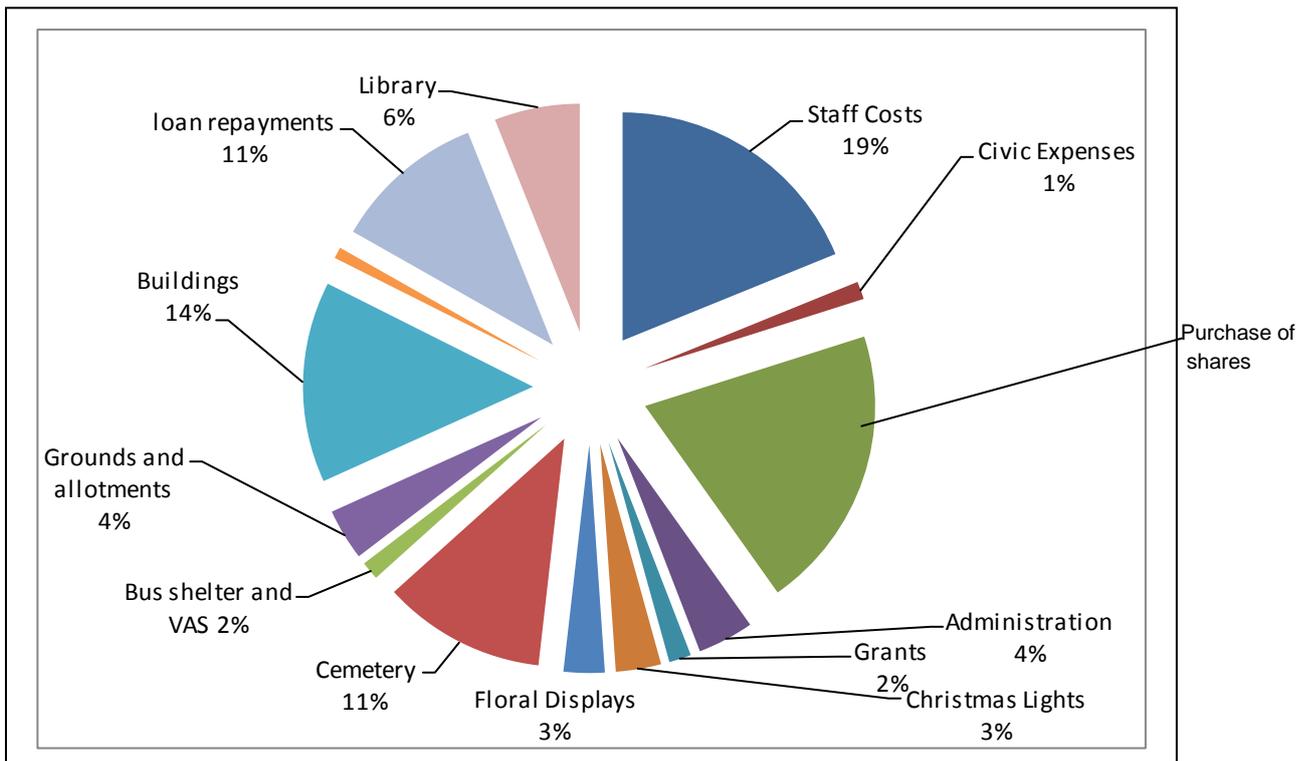
Some unusual items include the first payment of the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Cemetery Lodge conversion to a Family History centre, final capital payment for the Library and Chapel and purchase of an additional bus shelter in Station Road.

Please note that 0% indicates income or expenditure of less than £3000.

Total Income £467,773.61



Total Expenditure £513,747



Council and Committee meetings for the year 2015
 Pershore Town Hall, 34 High Street, Pershore
 (Cemetery Committee will take place at the Cemetery Chapel in summer)

May	14th	Town Meeting
	14th	Annual Meeting
May	18th	Twining and Tourism Committee
May	21st	Planning Committee
	21st	Town Council
May	28th	Cemetery Committee
June	3rd	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
June	4th	Finance & Property Committee
June	18th	Planning Committee
	18th	Town Council
July	1st	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
July	9th	Amenities and Environment Committee
July	16th	Planning Committee
	16th	Town Council
July	23rd	Cemetery Committee
Aug	3rd	Twining and Tourism Committee
Aug	6th	Finance & Property Committee
Sept	3rd	Planning Committee
	3rd	Town Council
Sept	10th	Amenities & Environment Committee
Sept	24th	Cemetery Committee
Oct	1st	Finance and Property Committee
Oct	7th	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Oct	15th	Planning Committee
	15th	Town Council
Nov	2nd	Twining and Tourism Committee
Nov	4th	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Nov	12th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Nov	19th	Planning Committee
	19th	Town Council
Nov	26th	Cemetery Committee
Dec	2nd	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Dec	3rd	Finance & Property Committee
Dec	17th	Planning Committee
	17th	Town Council

2016

Jan	6th	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Jan	14th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Jan	21st	Planning Committee
		Town Council
Jan	28th	Cemetery Committee
Feb	1st	Twining and Tourism Committee
Feb	3rd	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Feb	4th	Finance and Property Committee
Feb	18th	Planning Committee
		Town Council
Mar	2nd	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Mar	10th	Amenities and Environment Committee
Mar	24th	Cemetery Committee
Apr	6th	Youth Council (Venue TBA)
Apr	7th	Finance and Property Committee
Apr	14th	Planning Committee
		Town Council

NB: Youth Council meetings commence at 2.00pm, Planning and Cemetery Committee 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 to the next election, planned for May 2019

Cllr David Annis,	7 Woodward Close, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Peter Brookbank,	86, Station Road, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr Robert Gillmor,	20, Loughmill Road, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr David Goodyear,	6, Leeds Avenue, Worcester	Holy Cross
Cllr Richard Grantham,	17 Acorn Grove, Pershore	Holy Cross
Cllr Julian Palfrey,	4, Mill Lane Close, Pershore,	Holy Cross
Cllr Chris Parsons MBE,	13 Allesborough Drive, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Tony Rowley,	Manor Farm House, Pensham,	Holy Cross
Cllr David Smith,	2, Conningsby Drive, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Robert Speight,	18, Birlingham Close, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr C G J Tucker,	10 Throckmorton, Pershore	St. Andrews
Cllr Derrick Watt,	48, Three Springs Road, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Matthew Winfield,	34, Hunter Rise, Pershore	St Andrews
Cllr Val Wood,	20 Bridge Street, Pershore	Holy Cross

All members may be contacted through the Town Hall on the numbers or email address listed below.

At the time of this report, following elections on 7th May there was one vacancy in St Andrews Ward. This vacancy will be filled by co-option, probably in June 2015.