

BELPER TOWN COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



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INTRODUCTION

By the Mayor, Councillor Emma Monkman

For many of us the past year has been extremely difficult and as Mayor of Belper I would like to offer my condolences to families who have lost loved ones, and not just those related to Covid-19.

I would also like to pay tribute to our wonderful NHS staff, support workers and the many volunteers who have been helping us all through this crisis and I am sure that is a sentiment echoed throughout Belper. I would also like to mention our Community Groups who still managed to run some of their activities during the year. Whether it was the virtual Belper Fringe Festival in May, Blooming Milford in the summer or the Lantern Trail at Christmas people pulled together to make the best of things which helped to raise spirits during difficult times.

The Council had to cancel a number of planned events during the year due to Covid, but I was pleased that we were still able to produce our floral displays which earned a Green Flag Award, reinstated the Geese sculpture lighting at the New Road roundabout and provide grants to Community groups and local projects.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public are welcome to attend Council meetings which are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month (apart from August) at 7pm when time is set aside for the public to raise any matters of concern or to make their views known on any items on the agenda.

In addition, there are the following Committees:

Finance, Governance & Staff Committee
Facilities, Environment and Local Economy Committee
Arts, Events and Heritage Committee
Youth Committee
Youth Council
Herbert Strutt Charity Committee
Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS:

St Johns Car Park opening

The car park situated at the side of St John's Chapel (Heritage Centre) was closed to members of the public to use unless they purchased a permit to park there, which was charged annually for the privilege. The car parking spaces that were available were limited to 10 spaces. The Council decided to open up the car park to all members of the public apart from 3 spaces which were set aside for staff parking. A height barrier has been installed and the car park access barrier has been removed from the site.

Accessibility Strategy

The Council developed an overarching strategy for the Town of Belper in partnership with Accessible Belper. The aim of the strategy is to create a culture of appreciation and understanding of people with disabling conditions and to work towards ensuring that they are fully included in the activities which take place in daily life.

Hanging Baskets and Christmas Tree Schemes

As a goodwill gesture to all businesses that purchased hanging baskets and Christmas trees last year. The Council agreed to provide free of charge hanging baskets and Christmas trees this year.

Flooding

Flooding is always an issue in areas of Belper and Milford and the Facilities, Environment and Local Economy Committee have tasked themselves with introducing a Flood Plan which will cover the areas mostly affected by flooding. Residents from all areas of Belper have come together with the Council to form a Flood Warden group who will develop and play an important role in the warning and prevention of flooding within the community, helping and preparing those in the local community that are at risk of flooding.

Flood Wardens will be a vital link between the local residents and those responsible for responding to an incident.

Belper in Bloom Competition Winners

Even though the East Midlands in Bloom competition was cancelled the Council still held the Belper in Bloom competition for local residents, organisations and businesses. Here is a list of the winning entries:

Best Public House – GOLD – The Holly Bush

Best Residential Garden – GOLD – 3 Quarry Cottages

Best Hanging Baskets – GOLD – Old Bike Shop

Green Flag Awards

The Council won a green flag for the Memorial Gardens.

Handrail repairs

After receiving numerous incident reports about the dangerous situation of various foot paths in Milford the Council set to action repairs of the handrails in the following areas:

Hopping Hill through to A6

Hopping Hill through to Shaw Lane

Bus Shelter

Members of the public raised concerns about use of this bus stop during winter months and Belper Town Council listened. As a Council committed to supporting the environment, we want to encourage use of public transport and believe this new facility will help to encourage use of the stop for travel up and down the A6 all year round.

Milford Strutt Arms bus shelter has now been installed in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council.

Lights at the Geese Sculpture Roundabout

The Council wanted to re-instate the lights on the Geese roundabout following a long period of time the lights have not been working and they have now been repaired by a local electrician.

Speedwatch

Councillors regularly conduct speedwatch sessions throughout the Parish using the speed camera the Council purchased last year.

Upgraded Council Website

The Town Council website has been upgraded to a new responsive website template which makes searching for, and finding information about Belper and its Town Council much easier to navigate. www.belpertowncouncil.gov.uk

Youth Booklet

Belper Town Council established a Youth Council through the Youth Committee in September 2019 with the aim of giving a voice to the Youth of Belper. The Youth Council in conjunction with the Town Council have produced a Youth Booklet. The booklet contains articles about the make-up and role of both the Town and Youth Council. It contains information on where the Youth Council emanates from, Youth Council terms of reference and how to become a Youth Councillor.

Award Scheme

Belper Town Council is pleased to announce the launch of its award scheme.

The Council are aware of the amazing work members of the public put into making our Town the great place it is.

Therefore, in recognition, we are happy to accept nominations from the public for individuals or groups who go the extra mile. The nominations can be submitted by email or by hand to the Clerk of Belper Town Council clerk@belpertowncouncil.gov.uk

Electric Vehicle Charge Points

The Council approved the purchase and installation of 4 electric vehicle charging points at the Coppice car park. This forms part of the Councils ongoing commitment to Climate Emergency.

Three cornered rec

Community Playspaces group applied to Amber Valley Borough Council and the Town Council to regenerate the three cornered rec area. The Town Council granted £20,000 towards the project. The project will be accessible to all ages, accessible equipment within the site and dementia friendly.

The Herbert Strutt Charity

The Council in April 2018 became the sole trustee of the Herbert Strutt Charity replacing Amber Valley Borough Council. The Council has invested the capital funds of the Charity in high interest yielding accounts in order to distribute the income in accordance with the Charity's aims. The Council administers the Charity through the Herbert Strutt Charity Committee and has made grants to the 4th Belper Brownies and one individual.

Providing Grant Aid to Community Groups:

By providing grant aid to many community groups, the Council is making an effective use of its resources. This support provides a lifeline for some groups enabling them to continue functioning, or it can provide "seed corn" money for new ventures and initiatives by existing organisations.

During the year, the following organisations have received up to £1,000 grant funding each:

Accessible Belper
Blooming Milford
Blue Box
Milford Primary School
Belper Walks
Derwent Valley Trust

During the year, the following organisations have received up to £5,000 grant funding each:

Belper Leisure Centre
Belper Meadows Community Sports Club
Belper Meadows Cricket Club

The Council has also provided ongoing annual grants to –

Belper North Mill Trust
Derbyshire and District CAB
Derbyshire Community Transport
Derbyshire Childrens' Seaside Holiday Home
Fleet Arts
Belper Early Years
Blend
Belper Street Angels
Accessible Belper
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre

During the year, the following organisation received a grant from the Belper Bounces Back Scheme:

Love Belper

HOW THE COUNCIL SERVES THE COMMUNITY

Looking after the Town:

The Town Council works in partnership with Amber Valley Borough Council undertaking many of the functions associated with much larger Town Councils. Belper and Milford areas are maintained to a very high standard as can be evidenced by the parks, gardens and floral displays. Every effort continues to be made to combat the problems of litter, fly-tipping and graffiti.

As well as contributing to the environment, the Council plays an important role in the monitoring and consideration of all planning applications.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has finalised the Plan which has passed the examination stage by an independent examiner and will now go to Referendum in May 2021. The Working Group is made up of 4 Councillors and 9 residents who have worked extremely hard to deliver the Plan. The Town Council believe that the Neighbourhood Development Plan will provide the driving force to give those who live and work in the Belper Civil Parish an enhanced quality of life and improved community infrastructure. The Plan has been prepared by a sub-committee of the Town Council, under the guidance of a Planning Consultant and following consultation with the local community. In accordance with legal requirements, the document is primarily concerned with land-use matters but the extent of consultation gives rise to a number of community projects. Account has been taken of the community's clear desire that was expressed consistently throughout – that building should be on brownfield sites before greenfield, and that the North & East Mills & Strutt House should be put into good order and full usage. It is understood that there is a need for housing and employment land, but that the situation is not straightforward given the number of heritage buildings and the multiplicity of protected areas (green belt, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and buffer zone, conservation area, flood risk, areas of special landscape interest). The Town Council recognises that a balance needs to be achieved between maintaining the Belper neighbourhood area as a sustainable community with sufficient employment and suitable housing availability, and protecting the area's heritage, ethos and landscape character. We believe that the Neighbourhood Plan for the Belper Civil Parish satisfies these criteria.

Communicating with the Public:

As well as the Council's notice boards situated around the Town, the Council publishes all news, events, agendas, reports and minutes on its website and news items are also published on twitter and Facebook. The Council also produces a Newsletter, which will now be in an electronic format. If you would like to be added to the distribution list please contact the Clerk.

Liaising with the Police:

The Police are invited to the Town Council meetings and are given the opportunity to report on crime figures and to raise any relevant matter.

Providing Community Facilities:

Due to the COVID pandemic all Council meetings which normally would be held at St John's Chapel which also serves as the Heritage Centre are being held virtually. The Heritage Centre in the Chapel is available for hire by the community for day time meetings and events.

Providing Allotments:

The Council provides a number of allotments sited at Hunter Road. They are managed by the Allotment Association in partnership with the Town Council. All the plots are in use and there is currently a waiting list. The Council are seeking further allotment sites if you know of any suitable land available please let the Clerk know.

Provision of Car Parking:

The Council provides valuable free parking facilities at the Coppice Car Park at the rear of the Market Place, Gibfield Lane and St John's at the side of the Chapel.

Monthly Market:

The Market is highly respected and is very well attended with visitors from all over the area enjoying the vibrant atmosphere and vast selection of quality produce which is always on offer.

Organising Events and Entertainment:

The Council has organised the following events this year:

- **Virtual Remembrance Service**

The service that was conducted by Reverend Anne Stratton at St Peters Church was recorded and uploaded to the Church and Council website on 11 November 2020 so everyone could join in safely from their homes.

- **The Christmas Light Switch On** – “Christmas light switch on” takes place both at Milford and Belper.

- **Virtual Christmas Eve Carol Service**

The Christmas Eve Carol Service is usually held on the Market place with over 1,000 people attending. The Council decided to hold a virtual Christmas Eve concert with the help from St Peters Church and local residents. A video was created from local artists and groups from Belper with a variety of songs and performances so residents could join in with the festivities if they wished to do so from their doorstep, armchair or in their garden.

STAFF

The Council employs five office-based staff: Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer, Assistant Town Clerk, Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism Co-ordinator and a Business Support Apprentice. The Council employs three outdoor staff members and one cleaner/caretaker.

FINANCE

The Council's precept for 2020-21 is £453,160.

Council's finances are regularly monitored by a Finance, Governance and Staff Committee.

Set out on the next page is a summary of the Council's income and expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2020.

INCOME

PRECEPT INCOME	284,271
ADMIN ST. JOHNS	2,539
MARKET PLACE	5,707
COPPICE	8,382
FLORAL	7,489
COMMUNITY SERVICES	600
CHRISTMAS	2,980
ALLOTMENTS	562
TOURISM	715

TOTAL 313,426**EXPENDITURE**

ADMIN ST. JOHNS	46,244
MAYOR	1,478
STAFF	169,683
MEMORIAL GARDENS	857
MARKET PLACE	4,292
COPPICE	1,966
FLORAL DISPLAYS	15,111
VEHICLES/ EQUIPMENT	2,576
GENERAL MAINTENANCE	4,138
RECREATION / ARTS	11,829
GRANTS	24,392
COMMUNITY SERVICES	20,028
TOURISM	10,327
CHRISTMAS	7,890
ALLOTMENTS	457
CONTINGENCIES	26,805
PROJECTS/CHANGES TO CODES	42

TOTAL 348,122