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THE TOWN CLERK

Berkeley Town Council Annual Report May 2015 to April 2016

Town Council

At the Annual Town Council meeting in May, members elected Councillor Mike Studden to be Chairman of Berkeley Town Council. Councillor George Fryer was duly elected Deputy Chairman.

Chairman Studden chose to use the title of Mayor and Councillor Fryer chose to use the title of Deputy Mayor

Community Facilities

Town Hall, Salter Street

This year saw the final decorating contract completed of a five year refurbishment and maintenance programme in the Town Hall. The council now provides facilities for a wide range of hirers from toddler group to amateur dramatics as well as a designated meeting room for local community groups to use. There is also wi-fi access on request

The Town Hall now has a hearing loop in the meeting room which is used by the council for all of the committee and full council meetings. The council also has an office in the Town Hall where it is possible to speak to the Clerk during opening times.

Pavilion, Canon Park Recreational Facility

This year, following consultation with the regular users of the Pavilion, we employed an architect to draw up plans for much needed internal alterations to the building. The alterations will change the layout of the premises and provide much improved access, bar and kitchen facilities. The extractor fans will be upgraded, new secure storage cupboards will be built and the whole building will be decorated. Work is due to be completed at the end of the summer 2016

Canon Park Recreational Facility, Field

This year the council has embarked on a survey of the whole field to try and find a solution to the flooding problems we have encountered in the past. As a result work will start in the summer of 2016 to provide drainage to the area of field not covered by the football pitch (which already has drainage underneath it)

The council was successful with a grant application to Gloucestershire County Council Active Together Fund and have received £ 15,000.00 towards the cost of the drainage contract

Park View Play Area

The new 25 year lease for Park View Play Area is now in place. A revue will be undertaken of all play equipment facilities in the town and a concept plan will be put together for the improvement of play facilities on both of our play areas. This concept plan will be put out to the people of Berkeley for consultation before any work can begin.

Sarah's Field

Berkeley Town Council has commissioned a site survey and project design for Sarah's Field. The council has appointed Stroud Valleys Project (subject to funding) to project manage the contract which will make the field a wildlife water meadow accessible by all in the town. An application to the People's Postcode Lottery fund has been made and if it is successful work is expected to begin during the summer of 2016.

Oakhunger Lane Allotments

Berkeley Town Council continues to maintain an allotment site at Oakhunger Lane, near Berkeley for the residents of the town

Berkeley Town Council Maces

Following the closure of Nat West Bank in Berkeley, where the maces have been stored for approximately forty years, the council is exploring the option of putting them on display at Berkeley Castle as a possible solution for their long term storage

Communication

This year the council has agreed to pay £ 200 per annum to the Berkeley Flyer in order that we can provide a quarterly report for the people of Berkeley to read

We have also agreed to set up a facebook page for Berkeley Town Council. Our website is in need of an overhaul and upgrade therefore work on this and a social media page is ongoing

Community Services

The Town Council continues to provide financial and in kind support to a number of vital local services. The services include The Police, Stroud District Council Neighbourhood Warden Scheme, Citizens Advice Bureau, Berkeley Community Bank, Berkeley Books Community Library and the Berkeley Burial Committee.

We have also continued to support the Berkeley Brownie Pack with a further donation to assist with their moving costs and the Meningitis Fun Day with free access to the facilities at Canon Park Recreational Facility. The council has provided funds to the Berkeley Community Trust, to cover the cost of licences and insurance for the Summer Festival and the Christmas Fair. We have also provided the use of the town hall, free of charge, for a year to help the toddler group in Berkeley survive, following a drop in attendees. We are pleased to learn the toddler group is now in good shape again.

Berkeley Town Council has also pledged £1000 towards the project to provide a defibrillator for the Town

Berkeley Youth Club is going from strength to strength and continues to provide a stimulating, safe environment for our young people to meet

Community Infrastructure

20 m.p.h. zone - The Council is continuing to work with Gloucestershire Highways to provide a 20 mile an hour speed limit throughout the whole town.

Town Centre CCTV -The Town Council received a grant from the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner to upgrade and extend CCTV coverage in the town centre. As a result there are now five new camera positions covering the town.

Street Furniture - Berkeley Town Council has agreed that in the future all street furniture will have a similar design of black with gold trim. You will notice that as any new street furniture is added to the town and when old items are replaced they will all be decorated in the same way and will also have the Berkeley Town Council crest printed on them.

Town Centre Improvement Scheme - The council has made a start on a consultation with the traders and residents of the town on the concept first put forward several years ago. The original concept plans were put on hold when the financial crisis hit the country and sources of possible funding for the project dried up.