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THE TOWN CLERK

Berkeley Town Council Annual Report May 2014 to April 2015

At the first meeting, of the newly elected Berkeley Town Council, on 2nd June 2014 members chose Councillor Keith Palmer to be Mayor of Berkeley. Councillor George Fryer was duly elected Deputy Mayor

In the first twelve months of its term the Council has focussed on these issues:

Civic Engagement

Berkeley Town Council joined the nation on the 4th August 2014 at 11 p.m. and placed a single light in the Town Hall to mark the centenary of the moment that the start of the First World War was declared.

Berkeley Town Council installed and then held an unveiling ceremony of a plaque that honours Victoria Cross winners during World War One. The commemorative stone is situated in the footpath in Market Place and is dedicated to our own local VC winner Captain John Fitzhardinge Paul Butler. Captain Butler won his VC on the 17th November 2014. The civic ceremony was held in conjunction with the annual Remembrance Day Service and was attended by a large number of local residents.

Community Services

The Town Council provides financial and in kind support to a number of vital voluntary local services. The services include Citizens Advice Bureau, Berkeley Community Bank, Berkeley Books Community Library, Berkeley Brownie Pack and Berkeley Community Trust. Most recently we have been pleased to assist the local Meningitis Trust Funday.

Community Infrastructure

Disabled Parking in Market Place - A request for revised disabled parking in Market Place was also supported by the Town Council and provided by Gloucestershire Highways

Station Road Bus Shelter – We had a visit from the Berkeley Youth Forum who asked the Council if it would be possible to install a bus shelter at Station Road for the school children to use on wet and windy school days. Berkeley Town Council felt that this would be a very good project to take on and the new bus shelter is now in place

New Cycle Stands – The Council carried out a survey of cyclists that regularly visit the Town asking them what they thought the Council could do to improve the visitor experience to Berkeley. The overwhelming outcome of the survey was that they really needed extra cycle stands at the end of High Street. Berkeley Town Council has had the new cycle stands installed in partnership with Gloucestershire Highways.

20 m.p.h. zone – The Council has listened to many complaints about excessive speed and near misses in the Town. The Town Council has asked if Gloucestershire Highways can provide a 20 mile an hour speed limit throughout the whole town. Discussions on the matter are continuing.

Town Centre CCTV – Despite the fact that Berkeley continues to have one of the lowest crime rates in Gloucestershire, there are still occasional late night incidents which flare up and cause distress to residents and damage to property. The Town Council has applied for a grant from the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner to upgrade and extend CCTV coverage in the town centre.

Community Facilities

Maintaining public facilities such as the Town Hall, Canon Park Recreation Facility, Oakhunger Lane Allotments and Park View Play Area consumes a large part of the annual budget but these are valued assets for the people of Berkeley and are well used.

We are currently negotiating a new 25 year lease for Park View Play Area in order to facilitate a major revamp of the play equipment.

Essential works to the roof of the Town Hall and internal decoration and improvements have also been completed as part of a rolling maintenance program.

The Council has recently been gifted a parcel of land at Lynch Road from Mrs Pamela Thorpe to be developed as a water meadow, wild life area and public open space. The space will be named Sarah's Field in memory of Mrs Thorpe's mother. Berkeley Town Council will be working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and the Severn Internal Drainage Board on the development and management of Sarah's Field.