

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
2008/2009

Mayor's Report 2008/2009

The Council's committee structure is working very well and we have appointed five champions who concentrate on specific areas, health, youth, older people, flooding and business.

We have been working with the PCT to ensure that we get the best healthcare facility we can for the town. Members of the council are on the project team that is developing the £6.8m project.

Flood prevention is still high on the Council's agenda and we have committed £15,000 over the next two years towards the scheme that has been agreed with all agencies to install two pumps to get rid of surface water. We are lobbying Severn Trent to upgrade the drainage system in the Gas House Lane area and to install a new pump at the station in Stratford Road.

We have entered into a partnership with the British Red Cross to develop a pilot scheme for Community Resilience, public awareness meetings are to take place in May.

The Vision for Alcester Group has completed its first year and their projects are moving forward well. The youth of the town at present have no permanent facilities and we have been working with SDC and WCC to try and establish a youth club. Funding and plans are in place to provide a Multi Use Games Area along side the Pavilion at the Conway Fields.

A lot of work has been done on the Town's cemetery this year, removing undergrowth, pruning trees, installing a bank to aid flood prevention for Malin Court, planting bulbs and tidying up the old graves.

We have established regular town council surgeries that have been well supported by the residents since moving them to Church House.

We only had one small funding raising event this year and purchased a bicycle for one of our PCSOs to aid community safety.

Sue Adams

Community Committee Report 2009

Since the last Annual General Meeting the Community Committee has appointed several champions to concentrate on town issues and to support all sections of the community. These are in addition to the Flood Champion who was appointed in 2007.

Champions appointed in 2008 were Healthcare, Community Safety, Senior citizens and Young People, and after taking into account the current financial situation, and the effect it could have on local businesses a Business Champion was appointed early in 2009.

Throughout the year the Town Council has worked closely with the Environment Agency, Warwickshire County Council and Stratford District Council, and a number of improvements have been made to the flood protection and drainage of the town.

Following the severe flooding in 2007 the Environment Agency recommended that flood pumps should be installed in School Road and Bleachfield Street; this was agreed at a cost of £828,000 and was to be funded by the Environment Agency, Warwickshire County Council, Stratford District Council and Alcester Town Council, the project is due to be completed in 2010.

Although Severn Trent have carried out some minor work, more extensive work must be done to free the town of leaking sewage, to achieve this the pumping station in Stratford Road must be upgraded to cope, and pressure is being put on Severn Trent by all parties to carry out this work.

The Flood Watch Team carried out several town flood tours during periods of heavy rain.

Following the completion of the PCT consultation and three Public Meetings, it was decided to disband the Hospital Task Force and appoint a Healthcare Champion in its place.

The Task Force are to be thanked for the enormous amount of work they had done with the consultation and for keeping residents informed.

The Healthcare Champion has formed a Alcester Health and Wellbeing stakeholder group, made up with residents from the town both young and old. Their primary task is to co-ordinate a paper on the many activities which we feel can possibly impact on the health and wellbeing of residents of Alcester, and seek to influence local decision-makers to develop inclusive programmes for all.

The Hospital Task Force and latterly the Healthcare Champion have continued to work closely with NHS Warwickshire, and at a recent Board Meeting NHS Warwickshire agreed to invest £6.8 million in a major Health Centre in Alcester. This project is awaiting formal approval from the Strategic Health Authority, before work can begin in January 2010.

The Community Safety Champion, working closely with Warwickshire County Council has agreed measures to improve the safety of children outside the schools in St Faiths Road; also measures have been agreed in School Road to improve the safety of residents of Malin Court.

The British Red Cross in conjunction with the Town Council are launching a Community Resilience project, and Public Meetings are being held at the Greig Centre on May 8,9,15,16. This is a pilot scheme for the whole country.

Work is ongoing with the local Police in an effort to continue the reduction in anti social behaviour.

The Senior Citizens Champion is also the Chairman of the Alcester SCAN group and is a vital link, bringing forward to the council senior citizens' concerns and issues.

The Young Peoples Champion has a difficult task, as Alcester is very short of youth facilities, a situation that must be addressed; however work is in place to improve this situation.

Owing to the worsening financial situation of the country, and the effect it could have on local businesses, the Community Committee have appointed a Business Champion, who has been given the task of uplifting the businesses of the town, meetings have already taken place with Alcester Chamber of Trade and Business Link, also the Town Council had a stand at the Alcester Business Show.

A Business Seminar is in the process of being organized, to which all businesses of the town are to be invited.

Eric Payne
Chairman

Amenities Committee Report 2009

The Amenities Committee was formed during 2007 to review the situation of the Town's amenities with a view to managing them efficiently over the long term. The Committee is concerned with the following areas that are the responsibility of the Town Council. These are: The Allotments; The Cemetery; Footpaths; Trees & Hedgerows & Grass Cutting. The first year was used to assess the situation and develop plans. The position at completion of the second year is as follows.

Allotments

There is a continuing rise in the popularity of allotments. To help meet the requirements the Council has cleared overgrown allotments and installed fencing behind Bleachfield Street, and this has given another 12 plots. Not only do these extra plots help to meet the demand, they also help to defray the increased cost of leasing the land from Ragley Estates Ltd. The number of applicants on the waiting list continues to rise and currently stands at 26. To meet the demand the council is investigating the possibility of leasing more land; however this is not an easy task as there are many other demands on suitable spaces.

Two of the old pig sties/air raid shelters have been removed, as they were in poor condition and were a safety hazard. The remaining one will be preserved and restored with funding from the Local History Society, as a reminder of Alcester's more recent history.

The Council will continue to work, so that those residents that wish to grow their own produce on a Council Allotment have that opportunity.

Trees & Hedgerows

A survey of the major trees within the Councils responsibility was carried out in 2005. This showed that we were responsible for approx. 500 trees. The survey showed the type, age and state of preservation of the trees and also the work that needed to be done. We now have survey as a database and the Council is now able to search it and develop a maintenance programme. In previous years very little work had been carried out on the trees unless it was as a result of damage. This means that there is a considerable backlog of work, some of it very expensive. The Council is currently running a programme that will take a number of years, to remove the ivy choking many of the trees and to carry out safety checks and work that will improve the quality of the stock and replace those trees damaged by age, storm or vandalism.

Cemetery

The Council have done a lot of work on the cemetery during the past year. The improved tidiness and general appearance will be appreciated by all who visit it. The old cemetery, by School Road, has been landscaped and consecrated, so that it is now an integral part of the current graveyard. The Council is grateful for the community spirit of Greenmech Ltd who provided, free of charge, machinery and manpower to clear the site of overgrowth. This has

enabled the programme to progress at a faster rate than would otherwise have been possible. The whole cemetery has now been incorporated into the town's conservation area. There is further work planned to improve the paths and manage the trees, so that this very important area is a credit to our Town

Grass Cutting

The lease on the land at Hopkins Precinct expired at the end of 2008 and Alcester Council have chosen not to renew it. This means that it is now the responsibility of Stratford District Council – and that part of the financial burden for its maintenance has been removed from your Council. The Council has also taken back responsibility for cutting the grass at the old cemetery. These changes have enabled the Council to negotiate a 3 year contract at a reduced cost.

Summary

This has been a very busy year, but the work done so far will enable better management of the amenities that Alcester enjoys and better planning of their future maintenance. There is a much work to do and resources are limited, however the Council will continue to work to make Alcester a pleasant and picturesque town in which to live.

Nick Dearling

Planning Committee Report 2009

The Planning Committee for 2008/9 was formed of Cllrs Graham, Gough, Hancox, Mrs Hine, Mrs Knapman and Leek. Cllr Graham was elected as Chair. The Mayor and/or the Deputy Mayor attended a number of the meetings as ex-officio members.

The primary ongoing function of the Committee has been to consider all planning applications within the parish area forwarded for comment by the Stratford on Avon District Council.

During the period, the Committee have met on average twice per month, and a considerable number of applications have been considered. Of these, the great majority were returned with the comment 'No representations to make'. However, on some, representations to the District Council were made.

The second major function of the Committee has been to be responsible for considering and progressing any matters to do with the planning issues relating to proposals that the Town Council may have in respect of land in the Council's ownership, or on which the Council has a significant interest.

The future of the Council's land on the Stratford Road falls into this category. Following lengthy negotiations, and after waiting for approval of the Council's loan application to the Public Works Loans Board, the adjacent site of the old Warwickshire Fire Station will shortly be owned by the Town Council. The Committee are at present formulating policies for the short- and long-term proposals for treatment of the whole of this area of land. During the year, the Town Plan and Action Plan were completed, and later approved by the Stratford on Avon District Council. This document has led to benefits to the town when dealing with the District Council and other authorities on various matters. It has also enabled other Town Council Committees to progress many of the issues identified as important to the town. The Committee is also responsible for monitoring the Action Plan and ensuring that the Council, through the various committees, reviews the plan at the required intervals. Other pressures have delayed this work, which will be progressed as soon as possible. My thanks to the members of the Committee for their assistance over the year, and to Paula Haggerty for her work as Clerk to the Committee; also to the Mayor Susan Adams, Deputy Mayor Mike Gittus and Town Clerk Chris Wright for their support.

Malcolm Graham

Recreation Committee Report 2009

Progress has been made on many projects listed in last year's report. The following list is a summary of progress and projects considered in the last year.

Play ground equipment improvement. A.T.C. has placed in the 2009 budget a sum for equipment. A group has been formed of Ladies to look at and suggest the improvements to our play areas from a user's angle.

Conway Fields are subject to plans submitted to S.D.C. for a MUGA (multi use games area) on the car park at the pavilion. Phase 2, to include a youth building will be submitted soon. This is in conjunction with Vision and other parties and follows a deputation by a number of youths to the area Forum meeting held at the Greig Hall who

pointed out the lack of facilities for their age group in Alcester. This is a priority for this committee as we have poor or no facilities for the youth age group.

Youth Hut. Plans are included in Conway Fields development. Stratford D.C. and W.C.C. youth service are requesting a joint meeting to look into future prospects.

Alcester Opportunities have agreed to change the lease on the Pavilion.

The Pavilion changing area has been painted and remedial work done on the toilets and showers.

The Town Council has agreed to take back the changing rooms area in the new lease. Work has been done to the interior of Pavilion by Alcester Opportunities, with T.C. help, making it much better.

This includes

- Electricity meter changed to separate the changing rooms from Alcester Opportunities.
- New door so one room can be now used by Alcester Opportunities and football for changing. A.T.C. contributed to provide a suitable dual use floor covering.
- Additional security is in hand to improve interior cover, agreed at April Alcester Town Council meeting.

All pods are to be moved away from the pavilion building. The one used for changing to become a store.

Before next season we intend to negotiate new terms with the football teams. This is to include the tidiness and hygiene of the showers and changing rooms and the cost of electricity for showers which has up to now been paid by Alcester Opportunities who no longer can afford the burden.

Discussions are to take place as to the use of the pitches. Moveable posts and nets are suggested to preserve the goal mouths.

With the help of a local charity the T.C was able to buy the Football Club a new mower.

Hopkins Precinct play area has been returned to the land owners, Stratford District Council now own the equipment and maintain the area, and talk of some regeneration.

TC has asked to be kept informed as we might be able to improve some of our play areas under the same contract.

Greig Hall has requested a meeting.

Recreation Ground on Stratford Road. The Council is about to acquire the site of the old Fire Station which was always part of this area. This is in the process of being tidied up and the fence removed.

Notice boards. Some have been replaced and others adapted.

Rural Cinema has been abandoned by Greig, it is possible that the Town Hall will take it over.

The Council work force has been assessed with regards maintenance of our play areas, more changes will have to take place due to new legislation and flexible working where needed.

Collins Way is being checked by Councillor Graham, the Police and others following complaints from local residents. This is mainly due to ball games and noise. A meeting to revamp the area is proposed with a restriction on ball games. It is suggested ball games should be encouraged on the piece of land we own at the end of Fairwater Crescent

Biodiversity Action Plan. We have been approached by this group which includes Warwickshire Wild Life who run the Nature Reserve, to use part of Conway Fields. This could involve nature clubs, courses and even a Town orchard. Early days yet but this would involve Alcester Opportunities pavilion building.

Better Welcome has joined Vision to provide a riverside path, to make changes to some rights of way and provide picnic areas, along the River Arrow, south of the Town.

Vision for Alcester

- As most of the schemes proposed by Vision involve the Town Council who own land or could be involved in future projects or maintenance, members of our committee are closely involved and try to keep the Council informed on projects and future proposals.
- Nick Dearling is Chairman of Vision. John Bunting acts as Vice Chairman if the Chairman is unable to attend.

- Vision is active in finding a permanent, large site for Alcester Town Football Club. It is hoped that the site will be big enough for all their teams to play together, with changing, parking and room for expansion.
 - Less organised football on the Conway fields opens up the prospect of different activities and uses for this area.
 - Vision in conjunction with Alcester Chamber of Trade are seeking an away from centre all day parking facility. This is Town Council Policy and needs all our support as the Town gets congested now and should get worse with the taking over of Somerfield by Waitrose.
 - A set of junior goal posts have been put on Conway Fields.
 - Help has been given to Alcester and Ragley Cricket Club to expand their pitch.
 - A survey is being done to see the extent of Roman activity in the area between the Stratford road and Bleachfield Street. From this it will be possible to judge what can be done on these fields and whether they could or should become an additional recreation area for the Town.
 - A joint plan has been prepared and a planning application submitted to S.D.C. for the Conway Fields area... Other plans are to be submitted to S.D.C. soon but need to be presented to the Town Council for approval.
 - Riverside walk. See above number19.
2. New litter bin and dog litter bin have been put on Conway Fields and Moorfield play areas.
 3. All Play areas and equipment have been inspected and a schedule of repair implemented.
 4. The damaged barrier at the Pavilion car park has been replaced at the request of the Police.
 5. Disabled parking notices for an area on the car park at the pavilion have been discussed.
 6. Following letters and visits from A.T.C. and the History Society, the Victorian letter box in the Priory has been repaired and returned.

John Bunting

Communication Sub Committee 2009

In 2008 it was decided that the Communication Committee should become a Sub Committee of the Community Committee. The reason for this decision was that the council felt that there should be a closer working relationship between the two committees.

The Sub Committee under the chairmanship of Councillor Bill Malin is a small group of dedicated councillors who have made tremendous progress during the past year.

The Quarterly Newsletter which is still hand delivered by Alcester Scouts and Guides to homes around the town has increased in size to eight pages and contains both council and community news, and has become very popular with residents, many comments have been received confirming this.

Progress has also been made with the website which now also contains council agenda's and minutes, work on the website is on-going and a work programme is planned for the near future.

Another huge step forward is the recent appointment of Anne Tugwell as the council Press Officer whose remit is to forward council news to all media outlets on a regular basis, a number of reports have already appeared in the local press which have received very positive comments from residents.

Eric Payne

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

**MR C WRIGHT
TOWN CLERK
ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

BALANCE SHEET

AT 31 MARCH 2009

	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
Investments		5,550		854
Current Assets				
VAT recoverable	1,271		1,507	
Payments in advance	1,906		1,855	
Bank and cash balances	<u>111,828</u>		<u>91,774</u>	
		115,004		95,136
Total Assets		120,554		95,990
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and accruals	2,112		13,770	
Loan	<u>5,702</u>		<u>5,457</u>	
		7,814		19,227
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u>112,741</u>		<u>76,763</u>
Liabilities > 1 year				
Loan		123,841		129,543
Net Assets		<u>(11,100)</u>		<u>(52,780)</u>
 Represented by:				
General fund		11,751		(45,132)
Burial fund		(14,905)		(9,375)
Allotment fund		(7,947)		1,727
		<u>(11,100)</u>		<u>(52,780)</u>

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

	2009		2008		
	£	£	£	£	
INCOME					
Precept		209,000		167,000	
Income and interest on investments		2,795		3,899	
Rental income		3,340		2,171	
Burial fees		5,134		3,506	
Sundry income		100		150	
Total income		<u>220,369</u>		<u>176,726</u>	
EXPENDITURE					
General administration		87,776		87,075	
S.137 payments		9,775		9,370	
Running costs:					
Allotments	13,014		7,492		
Burial Grounds	10,664		7,745		
Parks and Open spaces	54,072		45,122		
Mayor's expenses	<u>3,388</u>		<u>4,280</u>		
		81,138		64,638	
Total expenditure		178,689		161,083	
Surplus/(Deficit)		<u>41,680</u>		<u>15,643</u>	
Movement of funds					
		Total	General Fund	Burial fund	Allotment fund
Balance 1 April 2008		(52,780)	(45,132)	(9,375)	1,727
Re-allocation between funds					
Income		<u>220,369</u>	211,895	5,134	3,340
Expenditure		<u>167,589</u>	166,763	(4,241)	5,067
		<u>(178,689)</u>	<u>(155,011)</u>	<u>(10,664)</u>	<u>(13,014)</u>
		<u>(11,100)</u>	11,751	(14,905)	(7,947)

**ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009**

NOTE 1 - FIXED ASSETS

For the purpose of this note assets are defined as land and buildings, vehicles and plant and equipment with a significant value in relation to the Council's financial activity.

At 31st March 2009 the following assets were held:	Basis of valuation	Value
1. Land at Westbury Park title WK335337	Nominal	£1
2. Cemetary Birmingham Road title WK407773	Historic cost	£400
3. Old burial ground title WK335374	Historic cost	£1
4. Disused railway land Birmingham Road title WK382315	Historic cost	£5
5. Collins Way Play Area title WK209562	Historic cost	£1
6. Alcocks Road land title WK246376	Nominal	£1
7. Recreation Ground Gashouse Lane WK40774/410505	Historic cost	£240
8. Comway Playing Fields title WK363232	Historic cost	£10,000
9. Sports pavilion on 8	Replacement	£160,000
10. Concrete stores at Cemetary and allotments	Replacement	£11,000
11. Play equipment and safety surfaces	Historic cost	£27,000
12. Land Conway Fields title WK386388	Historic cost	£6,000
13. Former railway land title WK409908	Historic cost	£5,000
14. Toilet facilities at Oversley Green	Nominal	£475
15. Lawn tractor	Nominal	£1,552
16. Computer equipment	Nominal	£2,474
17. Carpet at the Pavillion	Nominal	£670
18. Mulch tractor	Replacement	£1,787

NOTE 2 - BORROWINGS

Loan from Public Works Loan Board 27th July 2005 in sum of £150,000 (£149,947.50 net) term 20 years.
Repayments during year £11,404.06. Balance at year end £129,543.26
Purpose of loan - grant to Greig Centre Multifunctional Hall, Alcester.

NOTE 3 - LEASES

Lessor	Purpose	Annual rent payable	Year of expiry
GE Commercial Finance Limited	Photocopier	£1,398	2012

NOTE 4 - DEBTS OUTSTANDING

VAT repayment of £1,270.75 due within 3 months of the year end.

**ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009**

NOTE 5 - TENANCIES

During the year the following tenancies were held:

Tennants	Property	Rent	Repairing/non repairing
Council as landlord:			
Various	Allotments	Various	N/A
Ian Whitehead	Alcocks Road	£10 p.a	5 years from 21.01.2008
Alcester Opportunities	Pavillion Conway Fields	£1 p.a	30 years from 21.11.2002
Lessor	Land		Rent
Council as tenants:			
Stratford D.C	Bleachfield Street play area		£3 p.a
Stratford D.C	Bleachfield Street allotments		£5 p.a
Ragley Estate	Bleachfield Street allotments		£225 p.a
Moorfields Charity	Moorfields play area		£200 p.a
Ragley Estate	Canada Road allotments		£80 p.a
Stratford D.C	Seggs Lane Office		£2,097 p.a
Stratford D.C	Crooks Lane play area and Hopkins		

**ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009**

NOTE 6 - SECTION 137 PAYMENTS

The following payments were made in the year under Section 137:

Royal British Legion	£100
Alcester Volunteer Centre	£700
Alcester Town Crier	£500
Arrow Action Group	£200
Alcester Woen Football Club	£175
Darby & Joan	£200
Alcester Horticultural Society	£100
Alcester in Bloom	£2,800
ABLE	£500
Alcester Young Firefighters	£200
Alcester Folk Festival	£300
CAB	£700
Alcester Club for the Blind	£300
Alcester Male Voice Choir	£500
ACT.com	£250
Alcester Junior Operatic	£250
WRVS	£200
Warwickshire Reminiscence	£300
Greig Centre	£1,500
	<hr/> <u>£9,775</u>

NOTE 7 - AGENCY WORK

During the year the Council undertook no agency work on behalf of other authorities.