

Alcester Town Council



newsletter Issue 14 Autumn 2008

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Flooding One Year On by Mike Gittus

So a year on and 'what have we accomplished?' The then Chief Executive of the Environment Agency (Baroness Young) described the flooding event of July 2007 as "unprecedented". The damage to property will exceed £3 billion and 55,000 homes and businesses were affected.

From the start Alcester Town Council appreciated that the way forward was to have a single unified approach, as different agencies have different responsibilities.

The Environment Agency carried out a post flood level survey of all the defences and this confirmed that all of the defences were at, or above, the required design level. A major hydrology survey has been commissioned for the whole of the River Arrow. This will highlight the river's efficiency as a flood carrier and will indicate whether any improvements can be engineered enabling long-term plans for the future.

A design and costing survey with the aim to construct three automatic surface water pump facilities within the defended areas of Alcester has been undertaken. Severn Trent Water and Stratford District Council have been "on board" from the outset. The pumps would evacuate water from behind the defences and discharge it into the river, reducing the likelihood of flooding to property. In the interim pumps will be available, on standby, if there was a need to evacuate water from behind the defences.

The Warwickshire County Council Archaeological Department have the responsibility of ensuring our precious heritage is protected for the future. This of course sometimes brings the department into conflict with the needs of the present and future. For example the sites required for the pumping stations are scheduled as Ancient Monuments and will require special designs and surveys. Stratford District Council has allocated money for this requirement.

Many householders have had concerns about their household insurance. All members of the Association of British Insurers have contracted to continue to insure flood risk properties as long as the Government continues to increase national funding to flood defences. Large increases in premiums and excesses are not in the spirit of the agreement and accordingly few people in Alcester have found they have had significant increases in their policy costs.

Sir Michael Pitt undertook an independent review of the flooding last year for the government. He made many recommendations; most of which have been covered previously.

One of the recommendations however has placed Alcester in a special category. Sir Michael said that a programme should be established to support and encourage individuals and communities to be better-prepared and more self-reliant during flooding emergencies. As a result of this statement The British Red Cross, having looked at a number of close-knit communities, has decided to choose Alcester as the first town in the United Kingdom to take part in a new initiative, which will eventually be available throughout the country. The scheme is a Personal Resilience Programme and will involve individuals singularly and collectively learning to be a good neighbour in the event of a disruptive challenge, such as the floods of last year. This is a wonderful opportunity for Alcester folks to learn and share skills that we hold collectively within our community.

We as a town should be proud that our togetherness and strong community spirit has been recognised in this way.



Alcester Town Under 8's in their new strip pictured with their Manager Peter Carr and the Mayor

Alcester Town Council is pleased to sponsor the Alcester Town Football Club Under 8 team who will be taking part in the Ambassador Evesham Football League in season 2008/09. The club has around 20 teams ranging from Under 6 to adult, including three girls' teams. The Council is a big supporter of youth activities within the town and is delighted to build on its association with our local football teams by becoming one of their sponsors.

Clerk's Corner

One year on from the floods, with the prospect of pumping stations to alleviate flooding, and decisions being made on the hospital with plans being formulated for improved doctors' surgeries and Care in the Home teams, all seem to be far enough advanced to turn our sights firmly on the future. The Vision for Alcester teams are now getting motivated to meet our 2020 Vision and the Town Council Committees are getting to grips with projects that meet the objectives of our Town Plan, which is a five-year plan to meet the needs identified by the Alcester community. The Town Council also has to embrace the latest of the Government white papers 'Communities in control: real people, real power' and during September we will be taking part in the first of the Local Community Forums that are being set up by the District and County Council partnerships to ensure that communities such as ours have a real say. We will be bringing our decision-making as close to the community as is practicable and invite local people to get to know their councillors and support events such as elections and open forums to enable stronger views to be put forward to higher authorities. The Town Council has a lot to get its teeth into and continues to work for a better and prosperous Alcester.

A Word from the Mayor

Once again our town is ablaze with colour thanks to the hard-working 'Alcester in Bloom' committee. Although a decision was made not to enter the regional competition the committee has not stunted in their enthusiasm and hard work to give the residents and visitors such a spectacular show. Until someone stops doing something you do not appreciate how much they have done in the past, and this goes for the In Bloom committee who for the last 20 years have weeded, swept and litter-picked our streets for the annual competition. It is very noticeable that these jobs have not been done to the standard of previous years; this is something the Council will have to look at next year. We have many volunteers who do jobs around the town without making a fuss; in particular we have two gentlemen who can be seen regularly litter-picking our roads and I would like to thank them for their efforts. Litter is a big problem and the Council spends a lot of money keeping the recreational areas of the town free from litter, and I feel we must start with the children and educate them to use litter bins or take their litter home.

During the last year the Council has been in talks with The British Red Cross regarding resilience training for its residents. I am pleased that Alcester has been chosen to carry out a national pilot scheme. This will involve the community coming and working together not only to be prepared for an emergency situation but to help with day-to-day living of our vulnerable residents.

Introducing two more of our councillors



Bill Main

Bill was born in Alcester 77 years ago and has lived here all his life. He is a widower with two children: a son David and a daughter Debbie. He also has four grandsons, one granddaughter and two great-grandchildren, who all keep him very busy. Bill is retired, and enjoys doing word searches and work for the Town Council, British Legion and the Guild of Town Criers. He was High Bailiff in 1983 and 2001, Chairman of the Council in 1977 and 1986, Mayor of Alcester in 1992 and 1999, and has been a Town Councillor for the

past 35 years. He has also served as Chairman of the Royal British Legion and been a member for 20 years. Bill is also involved with the Greig Hall, Alcester Opportunities and two local charities. Bill says the thing he likes most about Alcester is the community spirit and support of the townspeople. He joined the Town Council to speak on behalf of the townspeople and bring their complaints and comments to the attention of the authorities on their behalf.



Ron Leek

Ron Leek was born in Olton, Solihull in October 1935 and has lived in Alcester for 47 years. He is married and has two sons and twin

grandchildren. Ron is a retired Quality Manager, and is involved with several organisations including Alcester Court Leet, Ordre des Chevaliers Bretvins, Alcester Town Hall Management Committee and a founder member of Alcester Civic Society and Alcester-Vallet Twinning Association. He was High Bailiff in 1969-70 and Mayor in 2002. Ron is also a Freeman of the City of London and Secretary of the Association of Freemen of England & Wales. Ron's hobbies include motor caravanning, model railways, reading, touring, local history and street organs. Ron says he likes Alcester because of the location, character, ambience and community spirit. He joined Alcester Town Council to serve the community.

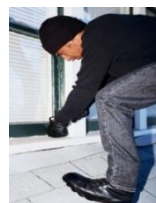
New Play Equipment

The Alcester Town Council Recreation Committee is responsible for all recreation areas and equipment. We have recently been given a grant to buy more equipment for the Conway Fields play area. Members are going to the Saltex exhibition, the major exhibition for all sports, play, amenities and landscaping held at Windsor every September, to look at the latest play equipment available. Robust and challenging equipment for teenagers will be selected to enhance our existing facilities and fit in with our plans to improve all our town facilities. The Council also installed a set of goalposts in time for the summer school holidays for the use of young people.

Alcester Healthcare Update

The Spring 2008 newsletter asked people to respond to the consultation document. Members of the Town Council's Task Force would like to thank the residents of the town who filled in their feedback forms. Meetings have taken place with both the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC) followed by a special PCT Board meeting which gave consideration to a report prepared by E C Harris, Health Care Consultants. The Board meeting resulted in a visit to the hospital site by members of the WCC Scrutiny Committee, discussions with staff at the hospital and a formal meeting at Globe House. Members of Stratford District Council (SDC), Alcester Town Council and other organisations were able to make representations to the Scrutiny Committee members. There was agreement in principle that every effort should be made to urgently proceed with the development of new healthcare facilities on the hospital site and that both GP practices should also move to the site. The issues surrounding beds were also debated at length and there was acknowledgement that more work needs to be done prior to the next PCT Board meeting in September 2008. A small group from the Task Force has subsequently visited facilities recently built in Upton on Severn and Malvern. Particular note was taken of how residents are treated in appropriate local surroundings by health and social care teams with access to specialist consultancy services when needed and of the system for commissioning beds locally when necessary. The Task Force plans to meet before the PCT Board meeting in September and will call a public meeting afterwards.

New Neighbourhood Watch Scheme



A new Neighbourhood Watch Scheme for Alcester has been launched. At a meeting on 5 August at the Greig a new Chairman, Mark Baker, was elected. The aim is to double the size of the scheme with co-ordinators in all areas of Alcester. PCSO David Martin is to give support and advice on relevant literature, contact schemes etc. The next meeting is on 30 September, 7.30pm at the Greig. All are welcome to attend.

Councillors Contact details

Alcester Ward

John Bunting	766753
Peter Crabtree	07808 368468
Mike Gittus	488027
Chris Gough	762307
David Hancox	763393
Mrs Yvonne Hine	07771 930002
Ron Leek	762574
Alan Morgan	762486
Eric Payne	762577

Oversley Ward

Mrs Susan Adams	400371
Peter Carr	766084
Nick Dearling	765070
Malcolm Graham	763925
Bill Malin	763113

Oversley Green Ward

Mrs Nina Knapman	764319
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Planning and Recreation Committees
7.00pm Monday 29 September
Amenities and Community Committees
8.00pm Monday 29 September

Full Council Monday 6 October at 7.00pm
at The Council Chamber, Globe House, Priory
Road, Alcester (Seggs Lane entrance).

***Launch of the Alcester Town
Council website***

Our website is now up and running – please
have a look at it and let us know what you think

www.alcester-tc.gov.uk

Clerk

Chris Wright 766084
Email: clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Assistant Clerk

Paula Haggerty 766084
Email: office@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Mayor

Councillor Susan Adams 400371
Email: mayor@alcester-tc.gov.uk

**Town Council Surgery Saturday 4 October
from 10.00am to 12 noon at Jubilee Court –
councillors will be in attendance to answer
your questions and concerns about the
town.**

PACT meeting

The next PACT (Partners and Communities
Together) meeting will be on Monday 22
September at 7.30pm at The Greig. Please
bring your concerns about the town to the
meeting.

Delivered by the Alcester Scouts & Guides to
households in Alcester and Oversley Green
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Please let us have your comments and views

Name

Address

Comments

Return to Clerk, Globe House, Priory Road, Alcester or email clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk