

Alcester Town Council

How Alcester Town Council provides leadership in planning for the future of the community.

Alcester's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was "made" by Stratford on Avon District Council in July 2021. The NDP was the outcome of almost 7 years' work by the NDP Steering Group led by the Town Council. All the required consultation took place and progress was regularly reported in the quarterly newsletter and on the website. The policies in the NDP are now taken into account by the District Council when making its planning decisions. Recognising that nothing stands still, the Town Council is currently recruiting members for a working group to start a review of the NDP.

Alcester Town Council has received national recognition for its work on health and wellbeing including being named Council of the Year in the NALC Star Council awards 2022. This work started in 2016 when ATC secured transformation funding from Warwickshire County Council to employ a Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator for a period of two years to undertake work to alleviate loneliness in older people. The project was so successful that when the grant funding ran out, ATC took the decision to continue to employ the Co-ordinator to work on health and wellbeing projects in the town.

This work has gone from strength to strength and has enabled ATC to support some of the most vulnerable members of the community. The "Crafty Lunch Club" provides a weekly hot lunch and craft activities for 40 adults with learning and physical difficulties who might otherwise have no safe space to attend and make friends. The "Cook and Eat Your Tea" project taught groups of residents to cook a basic meal and gave them the skills to provide budget friendly meals for their family. These projects arose out of ideas from the community but were led and funded by ATC. Over the past 3 years, ATC has secured over £100,000 in external grants to deliver similar projects.

Following the elections in May 2023 and a survey of residents, the Town Council produced a Strategic Plan which covers the period 2023-2027. An Action Plan has been developed from the agreed objectives and progress will be reviewed at six monthly intervals. It is hoped that this Plan and process will ensure sound leadership and provide clear direction for the Council.

ATC takes the lead on community emergency planning. It produces the Community Emergency Plan which is reviewed and updated annually. The town is liable to flooding and in the most recent flooding event in October 2023, ATC purchased 2 tonnes of sand and supplied this together with sandbags to residents to protect their homes. ATC liaised with the principal authorities to secure clearance of debris after the flood.

ATC also took a significant role during the Covid pandemic in March 2020. A Community Resilience WhatsApp group was set up by Councillors to arrange for volunteers to support those in need in the community. ATC raised significant funds from local charities to provide a hot meal service from a local delicatessen which delivered meals to vulnerable residents who were in isolation.

Alcester is fortunate to have many community groups who regularly close the High Street in the town to hold street markets and parades. ATC has set up an Events Group to support these groups in ensuring that such events pass off safely and will comply with the upcoming Martyn's Law. ATC has secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to fund new road closure barriers which will be available to all groups.