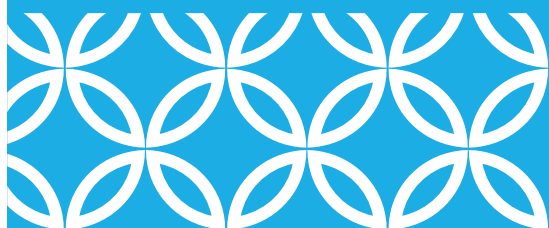


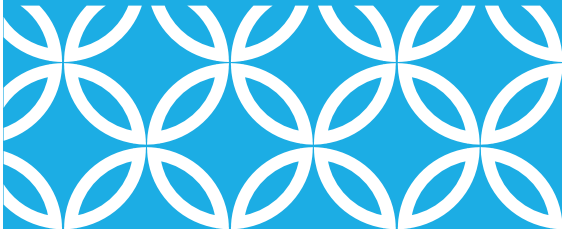
ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT
2023- 2024



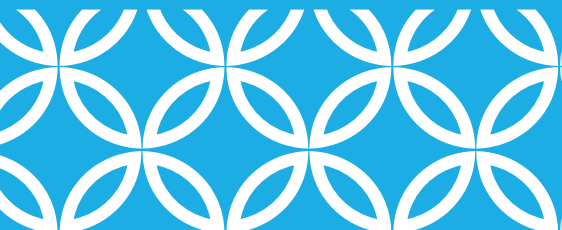
LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY



MAY



JUNE



Alcester CAFÉ

Climate Action For Everyone

Saturday 24 June

1.30pm to 5pm

Eric Payne
Community Centre,
off St Faiths Road,
Alcester, B49 6AG



MAY

Town Council Elections- These are held every 4 years and 2023 was the year! It transpired that there were 16 candidates for the 16 seats so the election was uncontested. Alcester Town Council (ATC) welcomed one new Councillor- Corin Elliot. Corin has taken on the role as Joint Lead Councillor for Business and Tourism and is very keen to promote business in Alcester.

May also saw the appointment of Councillor Vaughan Blake as Mayor of Alcester, and Councillor Mike Bowe as Deputy Mayor.

Coronation Street Party- Alcester celebrated the coronation of His Majesty, King Charles III and Her Majesty, Queen Camilla in its usual inimitable style! This included the Alcester Court Leet Street Party and the unveiling of two benches at Centenary Fields to commemorate the late Queen Elizabeth II and the coronation of King Charles III.

Strategic Planning - Having conducted a survey of residents' priorities in March 2023, the Town Council formed a Strategy Working party, chaired by Councillor Wendy Mills, to develop a Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 and an associated Action Plan for 2023-2024. Both are published on the Town Council website.

JUNE

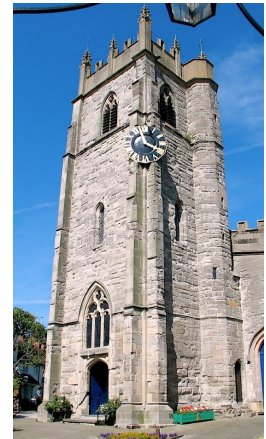
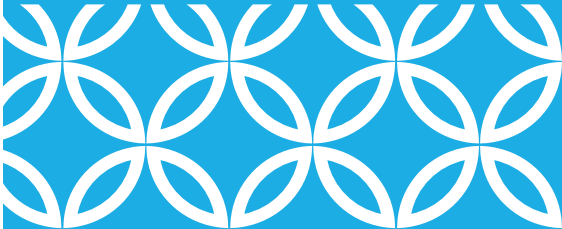
Climate Engagement Event- An interactive, brainstorming session was held at the Eric Payne Community Centre (EPCC) giving residents of Alcester an opportunity to have their say on climate change and think about actions they could take themselves to help reduce carbon emissions.

Health and Well Being Partnership- Replaces the Health and Well Being Board and is now chaired by Councillor Mark Cargill. The Partnership brings together all aspects of health and wellbeing provision for the town; doctors, schools, Dementia Café, Citizens Advice, CAVA, District and County Councils. Alcester is a 'Health and Well Being Town' and many of the projects that put Alcester at the forefront of community action start life with this group.

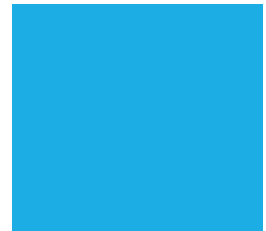
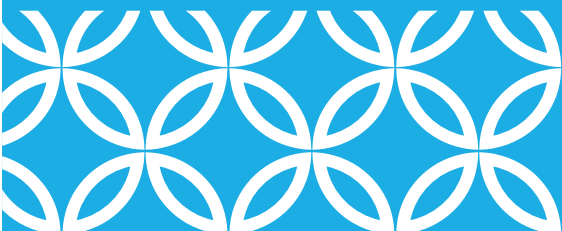
One notable event from 2023 was the summer trip to Weston Super Mare. This proved to be exceedingly popular giving residents a day trip to the sea that they would not otherwise have been able to afford. Particular thanks to Ali Buchanan for organising this trip.

Health and Wellbeing Working Group- Chaired by Councillor Kathryn Cargill, which continues the programme of developing and promoting projects and ideas to benefit the physical and mental health of our community.

JULY



AUGUST



JULY

High Street Events Forum- The Mayor, Councillor Vaughan Blake, has been involved in many of the town's organisations and events over the years and it occurred to him that they all share similar issues and challenges- brought to a head by the proposed 'Martyn's Law' stemming from the Manchester Arena terrorist attack.

The law seeks to make it safer to attend large events in these troubled times by setting out risk assessments and various protocols to safeguard events. It was reported in the press that this might prevent local events from taking place. As many of Alcester's town organisations potentially face this challenge it was felt that rather than each organisation re-inventing the wheel, they should have a common approach to Martyn's Law. It also seemed a good idea for organisations to share ideas and possibly costs and equipment needed to run events in the High Street. Thus, a forum was set up to include the Town Council, Alcester Royal British Legion, Alcester Court Leet, Alcester Food Festival, St Nicholas Night, Litter Free Alcester and Alcester Bunting and Lighting Executive. The forum is currently looking into acquiring new equipment to improve safety when the High Street is closed. The Town Council is co-ordinating training opportunities for members of the forum.

The Mayor's Civic Service- For Councillor Blake, a very moving service at St Nicholas Church conducted by Rev Katie Cross and supported by the Alcester Male Voice Choir. The service was well attended by both townsfolk and visiting dignitaries and it certainly showcased Alcester.

Bloor Homes Road Naming ceremony for Alcester Park North- A great opportunity to be able to commemorate past Mayors Cumberbatch, Cargill, Payne, Weatherhead, Madge and Malin with a road named after them. A fitting way to remember the contribution each made to the town. A further seven streets on the Southern phase will also commemorate members of the community who have been nominated by members of the public for making a positive impact on Alcester.

AUGUST

Meet the Mayor- An open opportunity for townsfolk to meet the Mayor and other members of the Town Council in the High Street and raise points of concern.

Slow Worms- The construction of the new Alcester Park meant the resident slow worm population had to be relocated to Abbey Fields. This seems to have been a great success with the colony now thriving in its new location.

Speed Awareness and Road Safety Working Group- The group, headed by Councillor Andrew Foster, meets regularly to look into ways to improve road safety in the town. The group runs regular speed checks (15 during 2023/24) at 4 sites and has recently conducted a survey into resident's concerns.

SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



SEPTEMBER

Community Fair- Volunteering was the theme of the month for September! A volunteering event was held at the EPCC attracting 30 volunteer groups looking to attract new members and also share ideas between themselves.

Working for Marcus- The Town Council was successful in receiving funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver some training in schools for pupils, teachers and parents/community leaders. Working in partnership with Alcester Youth Project and Loudmouth to offer the training, called 'Working for Marcus', drama and discussion workshops were used to help young people increase their knowledge and ability to safeguard themselves against child exploitation, grooming and exploitation into crime, eg. knife crime and county lines. The project also delivered a session to parents and local professionals/ community members so they can recognise and support any young person experiencing any of the above.

2023 CAVA volunteer awards- Featured the Repair Café Alcester which was a very worthy winner. The Café repairs items which would otherwise go to landfill and also provides much needed companionship and support.

OCTOBER

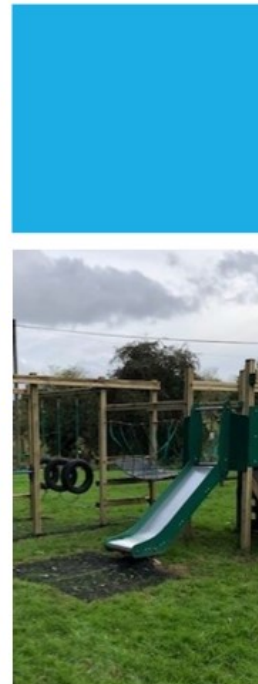
The Crafty Lunch Club- Handed over by Alcester Town Council to a newly formed Community Interest Company. This also coincided with its second birthday. It is a group for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities which meets weekly to take part in crafts, form friendships, share a hot meal and have a lot of fun! A very worthwhile facility for the town.

Community Shed Project- Designed to repurpose the old squash courts at the back of the Greig Hall into a community space to provide a home for a Community Shed and the Repair Café and create a facility for a group to meet and potter or just have a coffee and 'chew the fat'. The Repair Café has outgrown the space at the EPCC now repairing over 50 items a month. A Squash Courts Working Group was established chaired by Cllr Wendy Mills. Updates on exciting progress and design ideas were discussed at public meetings in both November 2023 and February 2024.

Flood Working Group- Re-established after flooding from Storm Babet with the aim of providing residents with more advice and some practical assistance in terms of sandbags and sand. In November 2023 it was agreed to produce a leaflet for residents and develop a Community Flood Plan.

New Town Council website- Check it out as there is so much information available about Alcester and the Town Council which is now much easier to find www.alcester-gov.uk

NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



Will you be alone this Christmas Day?
New to the area and want to meet new friends?
If so, join us for the

Alcester Community Christmas Day Dinner

Eric Payne Community Centre
off St Faith's Road
Alcester
B49 6AG
Monday 25th December 2023

CALL US OR EMAIL FOR YOUR INVITATION:
07414 881644 alcester-cod@hotmail.com

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!
Can you spare an hour or two on Christmas Day, or a few hours prior to the big day? Call or email: 07414 881644 alcester-cod@hotmail.com

NOVEMBER

Bleachfield Street Play Equipment- Worn out play equipment was finally replaced in Bleachfield Street with new state of the art items thanks to donations from Church Street Property Trust and Alcester Food Festival. This has been well received and will hopefully provide a fun space for youngsters for years to come.

Remembrance Sunday- A big feature of November is the Remembrance weekend which provides a moving reminder of the sacrifices made by so many people over so many years. The Town Council organises the parade element, enhanced by the Alcester Victoria Silver Band. As always, this was very well attended and provided quite a spectacle.

Winter Warmth- An event held at the EPCC hosted by ATC in partnership with Act on Energy to help households manage in the light of the ongoing fuel crisis. Assistance was available from several agencies with much practical advice on offer.

NALC Smaller Councils Committee- The Town Council is delighted that Vanessa Lowe, Town Clerk, has been elected as a member and Vice Chair of the NALC Smaller Councils Committee. This is a national committee of NALC representing the interests of smaller councils (those with an electorate of less than 6000) which is most of them! The committee includes representatives elected by the National Assembly and clerks and councillors directly elected by the sector. The Committee seeks to share good practice, identifies issues pertinent to smaller councils and prepares advice notes and guidance.

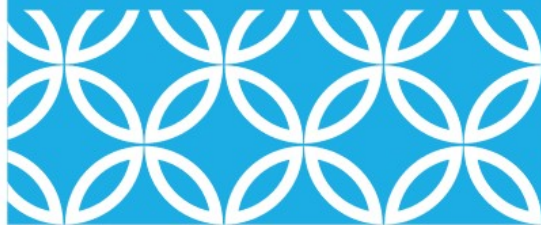
DECEMBER

Flooding- This winter has seen a record number of flood alerts and warnings for areas at risk in Alcester and Oversley. Heavy rain and saturated fields have led to water levels in both the Alne and Arrow rising quickly. Alcester Flood Wardens, co-ordinated by Alcester Town Councillors, have been regularly monitoring the situation and ensuring that both sandbags and sand are available for residents that need them.

Community Christmas Lunch- Another fixture in the Alcester calendar is the Community Christmas lunch held at the EPCC on Christmas Day. Well done to Joyce Emerson for organising another great event.

Old Library- After much negotiation, facilitated by Alcester Town Council, Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has agreed to the disposal of the old library to Faces For All CIC. This is to repurpose the building as a day care centre enabling some of our disabled residents to engage with new activities, to socialise and for carers to take a much needed break. This project is in its infancy and will require a large amount of work and funding to get the centre up and running. Having seen the determination of the organisers so far, there is no doubt that this project will be a massive success.

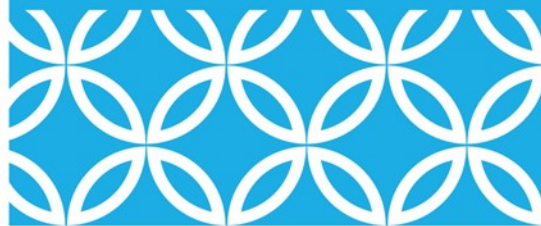
JANUARY



Mayor's Civic Awards 2023



FEBRUARY



SPEND

Support for Parents of children with additional needs, Neurodiversity and Difficulties

monthly parent/carer support group is bringing for children with additional needs who are isolated or overwhelmed in Alcester, Studley and surrounding villages.

spend time with people who understand

JANUARY

Window Wanderland- Alcester's streets were once again transformed into a magical window walk-about for the fifth year running. Twenty two window makers registered and who brightened up their windows for our enjoyment. The windows were judged by the Mayor, Councillor Blake, and his Consort, Mrs Kay Blake. This was no mean feat due to the high quality of the entrants!

Mayor's Annual Civic Awards- Outstanding contributions from members of the Alcester community were recognised at the Mayor's Civic Awards evening held at The Greig Hall in January. This was a very celebratory yet humbling occasion providing an excellent opportunity to showcase the brightest and the best of Alcester in terms of volunteering, community spirit and commitment to the town.

The Mayor of Alcester, Cllr Vaughan Blake, made the following awards for 2023 (see January photos left) from an extremely strong group of nominations:

Young Person of the Year- Oscar Goodhand-Wyatt (bottom middle)

Community Organisation of the Year- Repair Café Alcester (bottom left)

Business of the Year (new category)- Simply Fresh (middle left)

Citizen of the Year- Marcus Bennett (top left).

In addition, Cllr Blake decided to recognise the significant contributions to the town of Alcester, and in particular 60 years with Alcester Musical Theatre Company, by Cynthia Hill with a special **Lifetime Achievement** award (top right).

Prizes were also awarded to the winners of the 2023 allotment competition. Mr Harrington was the overall winner across all 4 sites and awarded the Reg Grummett trophy for the fourth year running! (bottom right).

FEBRUARY

SPEND- A new, popular and much needed initiative offering support for parents and carers of children with educational needs, neurodiversity and other difficulties. The monthly parent/carer support group is for people caring for children with additional needs who feel isolated or overwhelmed in the Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Studley and surrounding village areas. The group meets at the Depot, Eric Payne Community Centre B49 6AG.

Grand Days Out- Eight trips organised for elderly residents with over 50 different attendees. Venues included Jephson Gardens, Touchwood, Stratford Garden Centre, Evesham Country Park, Batsford Arboretum, Moreton in Marsh, Webbs Garden Centre and the British Motor Museum, Gaydon. Visiting new places is a great way to see new things, improve mental and physical health, meet new people, explore a different environment or engage in activity that is different from the normal routine. All trips were subsidised and cost just £5 (plus any entrance fee) and the buses, which are wheelchair and disabled friendly, collected people from four different locations in the town.

Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Review- A Steering Group has been formed from residents and representatives from the Town Council to assess the impact of the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan and potential upcoming planning reform on the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Current policies are also to be reviewed.

MARCH



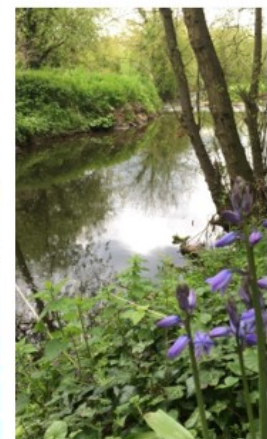
MEET THE MAYOR
Cllr Vaughan Blake



SATURDAY
23 MARCH
2024
10am-12pm
Alcester High
Street
by the
church gates



APRIL



MARCH

Holiday Lunch Club- The club started during Covid and now attracts over 50 attendees every Wednesday during school holidays. The Town Council therefore runs about 12 lunch clubs over the year offering approximately 600 meals. 2023-24 saw a few 'special' lunches with cost of living hubs during summer 2023 and during the Christmas break and February half term. Activities have been expanded to include crafts, Lego, learning opportunities and cooking. Free bags of food were also provided to families consisting of fruit and vegetable bags, picnic bags and recipe bags. There are always two hot food options and treats, plus home made cakes. Other stakeholders are often present and there is an opportunity for signposting. Particular thanks to Anita Hellyer for her efforts in continuing to run the Holiday Lunch Club with Wendy Sherwood, Health & Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

Kevin the Kiosk- Most of you will know Kevin the telephone kiosk who has stood quietly and unobtrusively in Church Street outside the original Post Office for nearly ninety years. I am sure Alcester folk could tell a tale or two about Kevin. He, however, has kept a resolute silence about the goings on he has witnessed. As a youngster Kevin witnessed the 1937 Coronation of King George VI, then the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953 and eighty six years later the Coronation of King Charles III. As a now rare Georgian type K6b kiosk, Alcester Town Council has purchased Kevin from BT for the princely sum of £1. Unfortunately, Kevin is a bit poorly, and will require a restoration to make him look more youthful, this will cost rather more than £1! The hope is to restore Kevin to his youth, and to convert him to be used as a home for a defibrillator.

Meet the Mayor- Another open opportunity for townsfolk to meet the Mayor and other members of the Town Council in the High Street and raise points of concern.

APRIL

Annual Parish Meeting- This is not a Council meeting and anyone may attend. Registered electors of the Parish may speak and vote during the meeting. It is also an opportunity for the town's groups and societies to provide a review of their year and give an insight to their successes, challenges and aspirations.

Town Council services- The Town Council sets the precept each year in January. The precept is the primary source of income for the Town Council and is a small part of the Council Tax which residents pay to Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The Town Council uses the precept to run council business and to provide a wide range of services to residents. These include four allotment sites, four playgrounds, the cemetery on Birmingham Road, civic and community events such as Remembrance Sunday, grants to voluntary organisations, the Health and Wellbeing projects, maintenance and upkeep of the Eric Payne Community Centre, maintenance of Priory Meadow, Centenary Field and other open spaces and miscellaneous street furniture such as signs, benches and bins.

The Town Council year in numbers



**SPEEDWATCH
15 CHECKS
OVER 4 SITES**



**OVER 600 FREE MEALS SERVED AT KIDS
HOLIDAY LUNCH CLUB**



**REPAIR CAFE ALCESTER
OVER 50 REPAIRS PER MONTH**



**RESPONDED TO OVER 95 PLANNING
APPLICATIONS**



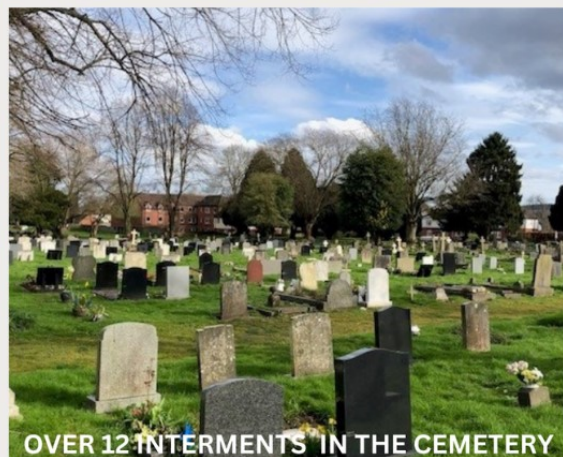
**GRAND DAYS OUT
8 TRIPS
50 HAPPY CUSTOMERS!**



134 ALLOTMENTS MANAGED



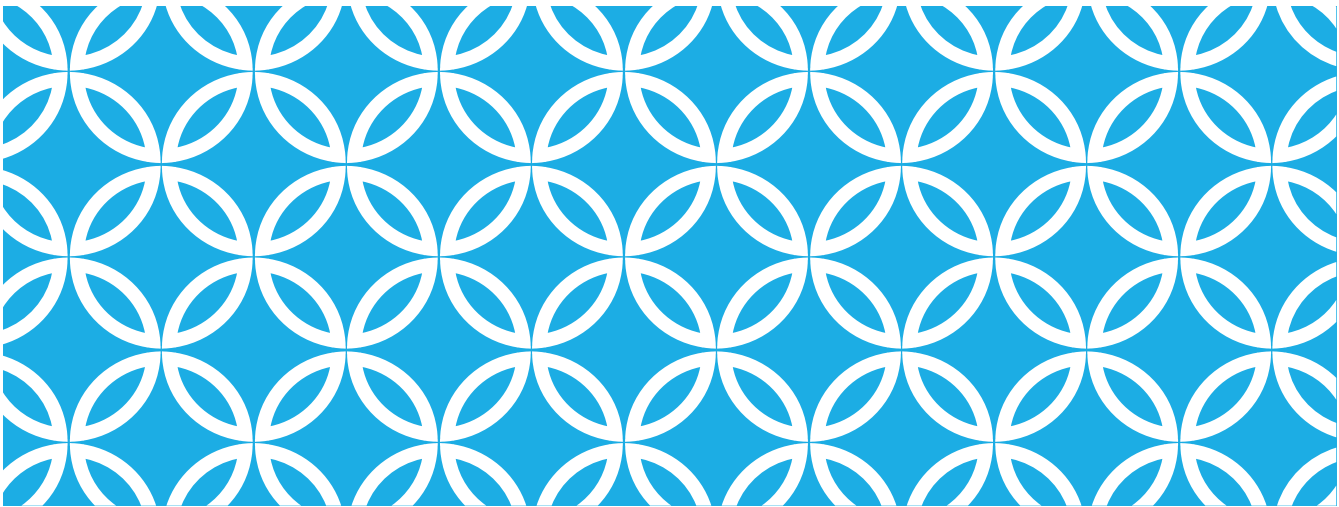
**OVER 425 BOOKINGS AT THE ERIC PAYNE
COMMUNITY CENTRE**



OVER 12 INTERMENTS IN THE CEMETERY

Alcester Town Councillors

Alcester East Ward	Alcester West Ward
 <p>Mark Cargill Lead Councillor: Eric Payne Community Centre</p>	 <p>Vaughan Blake (Mayor) Joint Lead Councillor: Business & Tourism</p>
 <p>Gill Forman Lead Councillor: Cemetery</p>	 <p>Mike Bowe (Deputy Mayor) Lead Councillor: Planning</p>
 <p>Kathrin Foster</p>	 <p>Kathryn Cargill Lead Councillor: Health and Wellbeing</p>
 <p>Dougie Gordon</p>	 <p>Corin Elliott Joint Lead Councillor: Business & Tourism</p>
 <p>Keith Greenaway Lead Councillor: Allotments</p>	 <p>Andrew Foster Lead Councillor: Road Safety and Speedwatch</p>
 <p>Alison Leask Lead Councillor: Youth Engagement</p>	 <p>David Henderson Lead Councillor: Public Footpaths</p>
 <p>Erick Wilson Lead Councillor: Open Spaces</p>	 <p>Wendy Mills Lead Councillor: Communication</p>
	 <p>Clive Neal-Sturgess Lead Councillor: Community Resilience</p>
	 <p>Gavin Smithers Lead Councillor: Play Areas</p>



Contact details for Alcester Town Council
Globe House Tel: 01789 766084
Priory Road Email: clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk
Alcester
B49 5DZ
The office is open between 9am-1pm Monday-Friday

