



# Bewdley Town Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

2010/11



## **BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

### **The Town Council**

- 1 Bewdley Town Council was created in 1974 following the reorganisation of local government in England & Wales before which it had been a Borough within Worcestershire. It now forms part of Wyre Forest District Council which is one of six District Councils within Worcestershire.
- 2 Bewdley Town Council has 13 Town Councillors all of whom are elected for a term of four years. The Town Council Elections took place on 27th May (delayed by three weeks because of the General Election) and hence this report covers the first year of that Council.
- 3 For voting purposes, Bewdley is divided into three Wards which are Bewdley West (four Councillors) and Bewdley East (4 Councillors) on the west side of the river and Wribbenhall (5 Councillors) on the east side.
4. As a result of the 2010 Elections, five new Councillors were elected to the Council. These were Cllr Mrs Carol Gittins who has previously served as a Town Councillor and been Mayor (2001/02) and Cllrs Mrs Linda Candlin, Mrs Anne Cox, Mrs Jenny Greener and Mr John Latham.
5. Officially the Town Council year began its work on 4th June with the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. This is also known as "Mayor-Making" when the Town Councillors elect a Mayor, a Deputy, the Town Council's Committees and Advisory Groups, and representatives to outside bodies. During this last year the Mayor has been Cllr Paul Gittins and the Deputy Mayor has been Cllr Mrs Liz Davies.
6. On 1st February, Cllr Stephen Clee resigned from the Town Council which necessitated a by-election which was held on 5th May being the same date as the District Council Elections.
7. The names and contact details of all the Town Councillors can be obtained from the Town Clerk's Office or from the website [www.bewdley.org.uk](http://www.bewdley.org.uk)
8. The Town Council and Planning Committees meet once a month. They generally do so on the first Monday of each month unless that happens to be a Bank Holiday in which case they take place a day later.
9. The attendance record for the 12 meetings of the Town Councillors is set out below



	Planning Committee	Council
CLr Dr Jan Adams	12/12	12/12
CLr Mrs Linda Candlin	12/12	12/12
CLr Stephen Clee	1/8	2/8
CLr Mrs Anne Cox	9/12	9/12
CLr Mrs Liz Davies	10/12	10/12
CLr Mrs Louise Edginton	11/12	11/12
CLr John Foulkes	11/12	11/12
CLr Mrs Carol Gittins	12/12	12/12
CLr Paul Gittins	12/12	12/12
CLr Mrs Jenny Greener	9/12	9/12
CLr Derek Killingworth	12/12	12/12
CLr John Latham	8/12	10/12
CLr Julian Phillips	6/12	11/12

10. The Town Council holds its formal meetings in the Guildhall which is owned by the District Council but made available as and when required for Town Council purposes.
11. The Town Council is actively involved with a number of organisations in Bewdley on which it has representatives namely: Bewdley Business Partnership, Christmas Lights, Civic Society, Community Health & Facilities Group, Community Transport Helpline, Bewdley Development Trust, Town Centre Forum & Environment Group, Bewdley Medical Practice Patients’ Advisory Group, Bewdley Museum Management Committee and Bewdley Old Grammar School Trust. In addition it has representatives on the following organisations: County Association of Local Councils Executive (CALC), Citizens Advice Bureau, Emergency Planning Group, Fair Trade Committee, Parish Games, Worcestershire Assembly, Wyre Forest Parish Forum and Wyre Forest Parish Games.

**Staffing Matters**

12. Mr Stephen Inman is Town Clerk and has now completed his second year in that role. The Mayor’s PA is Mrs Karen Raine and the Treasurer is Mr David Moore. All three are part time employees. The payroll function for the Council is carried out by the District Council. None of the positions are pensionable.

**Civic Matters**

13. Civic Ceremonies involving the Town Council comprise: St. George’s Day Parade in April, Annual Meeting of the Town Council (Mayor-Making) in May, Mayor’s Sunday in June, Bewdley Festival Service in October and two Remembrance Services in November with a morning service at St. Anne’s and an afternoon service at All Saints.
14. The Mayor undertook a full and extensive programme of engagements during the year.



15. Amongst its most treasured and valuable possessions are the Town Council's two maces. They are now 300 years old and are held on important civic occasions by two of the Council's Macebearers standing immediately next to the Mayor
16. In September the Mayor's Parlour and Guildhall were once again opened to the public for Heritage Open Day with several Town Councillors taking part.

### **Civic Awards**

17. It has become a tradition in Bewdley for the Town Council to organise the "civic awards" and they have now done so since 2000. Nominations for awards are invited during the autumn from which the winners are selected by the Civic Awards Panel. This year there were four successful nominations who accepted their silver engraved medals and certificates at a ceremony on 4th March. They were husband and wife team Robert and Alison Williams who were recognised for their work with the Scouts & Guides, John Genner for his work with the Red Cross and Stella Baldwin also for her work with the Red Cross and also with NHS patients groups.

### **Town Maintenance**

18. The Town Council pays for the servicing of the Town Clock on St. Anne's Church Tower.
19. The Town Council owns nine bus shelters. All these bus shelters have been provided from funds of Worcestershire County Council but are maintained and kept in repair by the Town Council.
20. The Town Council at present owns and maintains some 41 seats and benches situated in the town, a significant number of which have been donated in memory of people for whom Bewdley was a special place.
21. The Town Council owns and maintains 7 lifebelts on Severnside North, Severnside South and in Wribbenhall which are checked on a regular basis. Last summer regrettably there was evidence of wanton misuse of three of the lifebelts by throwing them into the river. Two were not recovered so had to be replaced at a cost to the taxpayer.
22. The Town Council owns and maintains 10 street poles in Load Street which are used for Christmas Lights, bunting for the Carnival and Festival and for hanging baskets. It is unfortunate that from time to time these are damaged by vehicles which then necessitates repair.
23. The Town Council manages the events notice board on Beale's Corner and all organisations in the town are able to advertise on this, subject to liaising with the Town Clerk as to a suitable slot in the diary being available. Due to high demand, it is necessary to limit advertising to a period of one week per event. to run from Sunday to Saturday. Any adverts must also comply with the requirement that they are not too wordy as to cause a distraction for motorists
24. The Town Council has continued to pay the running costs and maintenance of the Wyre Hill Play Area which costs in excess of £4,000 per annum.



25. The condition of Bewdley's rural footpaths is monitored by the two Footpath Wardens.
26. The condition of Bewdley's trees is monitored by the two Tree Wardens appointed by the Town Council who regularly comment on planning applications for work to be done on trees in the Town.
27. The Town Council continues to engage Mr Bob Carlyle to act as its Lengthsman. The role of the Lengthsman is to carry out a wide range of minor works mainly in the town centre but also outside. He will for example deal with the removal of overhanging vegetation where it obstructs the pavement or footway or the removal of weeds from the "splitter" islands along the by-pass or the unblocking of grids and gullies from mud and debris. His work has had a beneficial effect on areas of the town that were previously not maintained. The Council had agreed in principle to having the Lengthsman extend his duties so as to provide gritting for the main town centre pavements but this proved not to be necessary when the County Council reviewed its gritting procedures to cover that responsibility.

### **Other Activities - Flowers, Fireworks, Christmas Lights**

28. The Town Council owns 10 concrete flower tubs located outside the Guildhall/HSBC and around the top of St. Anne's Church. They are planted up for the summer and winter seasons. Though repainted in black and gold by the Lengthsman during the year to enhance their appearance, a number of the tubs have become chipped and damaged.
29. The Council made a decision last year that they wished to give greater priority to flower displays and an order for what should be attractive flower planters has been made which should be in place outside the Guildhall and elsewhere for the Discover Bewdley weekend at the end of May. The Town Council provides and pays for the 12 hanging baskets in Load Street and parts of Severnside South. They have been in use for many years and are in need of renewal. The Council therefore has also just placed an order for new baskets which should be in place for the Discover Bewdley weekend.
30. The Town Council currently provides the Christmas Lights which are switched on for a period of about six weeks from late November into the New Year. It pays the cost of installation, maintenance and dismantling at a cost of £3,900 together with the cost of the electricity. The Council invested in 15 new "feature" lights to replace those which are fastened vertically to various lampposts which were beginning to fail and cause electrical problems. Part of the cost was met by a grant from the County Council Economy Group of £1250.
31. The Town Council arranges and pays for the fireworks display which is centred on the Rowing Club and forms part of the Carnival entertainment in June.

### **Town Planning**

32. Through its Planning Committee which meets each month, the Town Council maintains an active role in planning matters. All planning applications in Bewdley





are referred by the District Council to the Town Council Planning Committee for its views as statutory consultees. During the calendar year 2010 some 120 applications were considered and recommendations made for either approval or refusal.

33. Many of these applications related to the felling, pruning or crowning of trees within the town centre conservation area which the Committee is always anxious to enhance and protect as a means of maintaining Bewdley as an attractive riverside town.
34. All Planning Committee meetings of the Town Council are open to the public and generally take place (subject to occasional changes) at 6.15pm prior to each Council meeting.

### **Communication with residents**

35. The full agenda and minutes of the Town Council and its Committees are available to view on the town's website at [www.bewdley.org.uk](http://www.bewdley.org.uk). Copies of minutes of all Council and Committee meetings are also available on the three town notice boards situated in the Load Street Car Park, on Load Street outside the Mayor's Parlour and inside the covered entrance to The Guildhall. They can also be viewed at the Library.
36. The Bridge magazine devotes one page each month to "Town Council News" which includes significant items from these meetings and additional information relevant to people in Bewdley.

### **Quality Status**

37. The Town Council retains its Quality Status that was granted for a four-year period from 2008 and which will expire (subject to renewal) in June 2012.

### **Bewdley Community Health & Facilities Group Project**

38. The Town Council continues to be actively involved as a member of the Community Health & Facilities Group Project. This involves the redevelopment of the site off Load Street comprising the medical centre, library and St George's Hall. Planning permission has now been obtained by the Bewdley Development Trust acting in conjunction with the Trustees of St George's Hall for complete refurbishment the Hall and the replacement of the 1970s extension which would be demolished.

### **Youth Facilities**

39. The Town Council continues to support the Youth Café through contributions and activities of individual councillors. It has now been open for two years and is regarded as one of the most successful in the local area with its design, management and workings being used as a basis for similar ventures in other towns.

### **Policing in the Town Centre and Anti-Social behaviour**

40. The Town Council continues to be concerned about anti-social behaviour in the



town and is working with the Police and other relevant parties to try to reduce such behaviour. There is also unfortunately evidence of a drug supply in the community and the Town Council urges all authorities to clamp down and eliminate such activity. Councillor representatives regularly attend local PACT meetings and meetings of the Wyre Forest Police Consultative Group.

**Water & Gas Mains Replacement in Bewdley**

41. The difficult task of replacing and renewing gas and water mains along the High Street and Load Street was finished la year ago. Hopefully any similar large scale disruption can be avoided for many years to come.

**Finances**

42. The bulk of the Town Council’s income continues to come from the Precept. This is the sum of money which the Town Council raises from householders in Bewdley. It forms part of the overall Council Tax levied by the County Council, West Mercia Police Authority and the Fire & Rescue Service which is collected on their behalf by Wyre Forest District Council.

43. The Budget Working Group of the Council met on several occasions during the autumn and New Year to discuss what could be afforded and at what cost and made some savings where it could to certain items of expenditure and increased some where it was prudent to do so. Once again when it came to setting the budget there was a view amongst the Working Group and Town Councillors that the amount levied on householders for the Bewdley part of the total Council Tax bill should not be increased. It therefore remains at £21.52 for what will be the third year running as shown in the table below:

Year	Precept £	Band D Charge £	Increase %
2005/6	53,200	14.44	3.88
2006/7	58,025	15.71	8.80
2007/8	73,760	19.91	26.73
2008/9	77,775	21.05	5.73
2009/10	80,048	21.52	2.23
2010/11	80,399	21.52	0.00
2011/12	80,184	21.52	0.00

44. The Council has continued its policy of building up a reasonable level of reserves given the overall uncertainty about public expenditure and what may be required to be funded form the Town Council in the future which is funded elsewhere at present.

45. For the year 2011/12 the Town Council has agreed to make £6,000.00 worth of grants to local organisations which is a similar figure to the current year. Voluntary and community organisations who would be interested in applying for a grant should make contact with the Town Clerk.



BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE SUMMARY**

	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Income</b>	£	£
Precept	80,048	80,399
S 136 Grant from WFDC	8,041	11,436
Churchyards from WFDC	2,800	2,800
Lengthsman Scheme	901	719
County Economy Group (Christmas Lights)	1,250	0
Community Emergency Plan	0	600
Interest Received	2	10
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>93,042</b>	<b>95,964</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries	25,647	24,080
Town Maintenance	11,495	12,218
Operating Costs	11,555	11,321
Council Costs	6,452	7,204
Grant Aid Donations	7,560	7,379
Town Events	5,965	7,918
Election Cost & Provision	1,837	1,000
Riddings Brook Pledge to EA	0	1,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>70,511</b>	<b>72,120</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>22,531</b>	<b>23,844</b>

This Mayor's Report has been published by Bewdley Town Council for the Annual Town Meeting on 26th April, 2010. It will also appear (with minor changes) as an insert to the June edition of The Bridge magazine which is circulated to all households in Bewdley and Wribbenhall.

Further copies of this Annual Report are available at:

The Town Clerk's Office at The Guildhall, Load Street

The Town Council's section of Bewdley Town's web site [www.bewdley.org.uk](http://www.bewdley.org.uk)

Bewdley Library



**Bewdley Town Council**

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