

Crewkerne Town Council

NEWSLETTER

Winter – Issue 65



Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7LN
Tel: 01460 74001 Email: towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk Website: www.crewkerne-tc.gov.uk



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



As this newsletter reaches you, we should hopefully be nearing the end of this second period of national lockdown. These have been and are very difficult times, but I would like to thank the people of Crewkerne for supporting the various restrictions that we have lived through and are still enduring. Collectively, you have managed to keep the number of covid-19 cases very low in our area.

The Town Council and the Christmas Committee have had to make some difficult decisions about our annual Christmas events. In view of the importance of doing everything we can to stop the spread of the virus, we have, unfortunately, had to cancel the Lighting Up night and the Christmas Market.

But on a brighter note, the Christmas lights and Christmas trees are going up around the town to spread some festive cheer and the Christmas Committee will also continue to run the Annual Christmas Window Display competition.

The Town Council is looking at ways to help the town's businesses promote the services they offer and has discussed expanding the section in the Town Council newsletter.

The Council is also about to kick off the development of a new website for the town, which will have a dedicated business links section. Any local business that is interested in finding out more about this new development, please email Cllr. Rob Cottle: rob.cottle@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk, Crewkerne Town Council's representative and liaison officer on the Crewkerne Business Group. Please continue to support the local businesses that are open, either in person safely or online.

Stay safe everyone and look after yourselves, family, friends and neighbours.

COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

With the resignation of Ben Hartshorn and the fact that Alan Smith is no longer a Councillor, there are now two vacancies on the Council. A bi-election will be held in May 2021 to fill these vacancies.

If you are interested in becoming a Councillor and would like to understand more about what it means to be a Councillor, please contact the Clerk's office.



Crewkerne Town Council

THE CREWKERNE BUSINESS GROUP



goes from strength to strength

The newly created Crewkerne Business Group has been proving popular in the town, with a wide variety of people from the business community coming together to pool their knowledge and experience in many different trades and professions.

With regular online meetings, guest speakers and networking connections being made, the local business community is seeing a positive boost in these trying times. Councillor Rob Cottle has been working as liaison with the group to ensure a strong working relationship is maintained with the Town Council and any concerns or suggestions are heard.

If you are interested in joining the Business Group, then please contact either:

Leighton Ballantine: Leighton.Ballantine@sjpp.co.uk

Cllr. Rob Cottle: rob.cottle@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

FREE MEALS & FOOD BANK

Be A Good Neighbour



Is offering free meals for individuals and families. They also have a small foodbank which can be used to top up any items you might need.

To register, please contact:
Crewkerne Community Church
Barn Street, Crewkerne TA18 8BP
01460 77489 CHURCH@CREWKERNE.ORG

FIVER FEST in Crewkerne

The recent Fiver Fest event in Crewkerne was a great example of how local businesses can find innovative ways of attracting customers into their shops. Well done to Anna Grand of Grand Interiors for organising the event.



Support Services

For those struggling with mental health, winter can be a difficult time. As we move into the second lockdown, it is more important than ever to check in on friends, family and neighbours. Be kind to yourself and each other and reach out if you are struggling.

Listed below are a number of services that can provide much-needed support during this time.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

• **Samaritans** - <https://www.samaritans.org>

Call free on 116 123, open 24/7

Provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress, despair, including those that could lead to suicide.

• **Shout Crisis Text Line** - Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Open 24/7

Offers confidential, free crisis text support for times when you are struggling with your mental health and need immediate support.

• **Mind Infoline** - <https://www.mind.org.uk>

Call free on 0300 123 3393

9am - 6pm Monday to Friday

Provides confidential information on local mental health services.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

• **Active Learning & Skills** - <https://www.alsyouth.org.uk>

Call 07711244357

Email: pete.may@alsyouth.org.uk

Delivers services for teenagers and children in South Somerset, helping them enjoy, learn and grow.

• **The Mix** - <https://themix.org.uk>

Call free on 0808 808 4994, 4pm - 11pm

Offers support for under 25s through a phone helpline and an online chat service, providing confidential support on any issue.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT

• **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Call free on 0808 2000 247

3pm - 10pm Monday to Friday

Helpline open 24/7 and online chat service

• **Citizens Advice South Somerset**

<https://www.citizensadvice-southsomerset.org.uk>

Call 03444 889623, 10am - 4pm Monday to Friday

Independent advice charity providing free, confidential and impartial information, support and advice for anyone who needs it.

Kithill Planning Application

The outline planning application for up to 150 residential dwellings at Kithill was recommended for refusal by the Town Council and the application was indeed refused by SSDC, who are the Planning Authority. Unfortunately, the developer submitted an appeal which the planning inspector subsequently upheld.

The Town Council sought the advice of a specialist barrister, who confirmed that the appeal was correct in law and there would not have been a case for a judicial review. There was, however, a point that the inspector had included in his report that specified that certain works were required to be completed on the site, before development could begin. This was the stopping up of the pedestrian crossing and diversion of the footpath away from the railway line. The barrister pointed out that, if residents and community groups raised a sufficient number of objections to the diversion of the footpath with Network Rail and with the County Council Rights of Way Officer, then there would need to be an enquiry which would almost certainly delay the commencement of the development. If you wish to object to the stopping up of the pedestrian crossing and want assistance in how best to do this, please contact the Deputy Clerk.

REORGANISATION Crewkerne and Ilminster Schools

Proposals drawn up by Somerset County Council to change from the current 3-tier system school system to a 2-tier system, would have a dramatic effect on the schools in the Crewkerne and Ilminster area. These proposals, which are now in a period of consultation, have been considered by Crewkerne Town Council.

Councillors were agreed that the current proposals would not be in the best long-term interests of Crewkerne and the surrounding villages. They were concerned that the proposals focussed on short term issues of pupil numbers and did not take into account the major housing developments in the pipeline for Crewkerne, which would see a large increase in the number of families living in the Crewkerne area. Councillors were also concerned that the proposals would result in the senior schools being saved at the expense of the junior schools and that the timing of this proposal was not appropriate, as it had come at a time when the whole future of local government in Somerset was under review.

The Town Council agreed to write to the County Council, expressing their severe concerns over the current proposals.

The Future of Local Government in Somerset

Somerset currently has a traditional 3-tier system of local government, with Somerset County Council, four district councils and of course the town and parish councils like Crewkerne Town Council, as the lowest tier of local government. But this system of local government is proving increasingly unsustainable as budgets come under increasing pressure and the cost of delivering services mounts. Reform is urgently needed and there are two different proposals on the table for a restructured local government framework in Somerset. The first is from Somerset County Council and is known as **One Somerset**. The other is from the four district councils and is known as **Stronger Somerset**.

- **One Somerset** would see the county council and four district councils replaced with a single new council.
- **Stronger Somerset** would see the county council and four district councils replaced with two new councils, dividing the county into East and West regions.

Full details of the **One Somerset** proposal can be found on the Somerset County Council website, and similarly the details of the **Stronger Somerset** proposal can be found on the SSDC website. Both Somerset County Council and SSDC are inviting feedback from residents.

The members of Crewkerne Town Council debated the two proposals at a recent Council meeting. The Town Council agreed that the **Stronger Somerset** proposal offered the best opportunity to ensure that local government in Somerset was sustainable into the future and offered the best opportunities for those growing up, living, working and being cared for in the communities of Somerset. On that basis, the Town Council agreed to put its full support behind the **Stronger Somerset** proposal.

Sadness at death of a former Councillor

The Mayor and fellow Councillors offer their condolences to Teresa Bond on the sad death of former Councillor Ron Bond who died recently.

Ron was elected as a Town Councillor in 2008 and served for over 4 years. In addition to this Ron worked tirelessly within the town, mainly as the chairman of Crewkerne Hospital League of Friends, during his time on the committee he oversaw the refurbishment of the physio department and Penny's Garden.

George Reynolds Centre: AN UPDATE

As reported in the previous edition of this newsletter, the charity responsible for managing the GRC community centre regrettably ceased operations earlier this year, with responsibility for the building reverting back to the Town Council.



Since then, the Council has been working hard to address a number of significant maintenance issues identified with the building to ensure that, when the doors do re-open, the building will be fully fit for purpose. Good progress has been made, which has at least allowed the Jigsaw pre-school group to continue to operate at the centre. In addition, repair works are planned imminently, which will allow the Active Learning & Skills youth group to re-establish operations in the building. Both of these childcare groups have put in place the necessary covid secure procedures to ensure safe operation.

Looking forward to a time when the GRC can be fully re-opened as a centre supporting local community groups, sports clubs and social and business events, it is clear that this will depend on when coronavirus restrictions are lifted to allow this. Realistically, this is very unlikely to happen before the spring of next year. But the Council plans to make good use of this time, to put in place further improvements to the building to enhance its appearance both externally and internally, and to plan how best to manage and promote the centre, to ensure that it is an asset to the community going forwards.



QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOUR for a former Town Councillor

Former Town and District Councillor Angie Singleton has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to Community Health and Wellbeing.

Angie served as a Town Council for over 20 years and as a District Councillor for 11 years. During her time as a Town Councillor, Angie played a leading role in many activities and projects, but most notably she was a leading light in bringing to fruition two major town centre community building projects, namely the George Reynolds Centre and the Crewkerne Aqua Centre. Angie has been and remains a very active member of the local community, with her involvement in the management of the GRC, the Aqua Centre and her membership of various community groups such as ABCD and the Christmas Committee, to name just two.

Angie's drive, commitment, and good old common sense, made her an outstanding Councillor, liked and respected by her fellow Councillors and the Council staff. Angie's award of the MBE is richly deserved.

Well done from your colleagues at the Town Council!

Michael Williamson

The Mayor and fellow Councillors offer their condolences to Donna Williamson and family on the sad and premature death of Michael Williamson. Mike was a local solicitor who supported and sponsored various projects and sports clubs within the town. He was a respected local businessman who will be missed by friends and clients alike.

If you have any comments or concerns about issues which affect Crewkerne, please contact:
Crewkerne Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7LN
Tel: 01460 74001 Email: towncouncil@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk

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Mike Best (Vice Chair – Amenities)	01460 74245	mike.best@southsomerset.gov.uk
Rob Cottle	01460 74001	rob.cottle@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk
Kathy Head (Mayor)	07704 197469	kathy.head@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk
Ben Hodgson (Chair – Policy & Resources)	01460 76623	ben.hodgson@southsomerset.gov.uk
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TWO VACANCIES		