

## BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

### The Town Council

1. The Town Council year started on 18 May with the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, also known as Mayor-Making. At that meeting Town Councillors elected a Mayor, a Deputy, the Town Council's Committees and Advisory Groups, and representatives to outside bodies.
2. The Town Council comprises 13 Town Councillors, made up of 4 representatives from Bewdley West and Bewdley East respectively and 5 from Wribbenhall. (For a full list of councillors, go to the end of the Report).
3. Town Councillors are elected for a term of 4 years and the current term is from 2006 until 2010. This report covers the second year of this 4 year period following the election in May 2006.
4. The Town Council and Planning Committees meet once a month. The Town Councillors, together with attendance figures from 04/06/07 to 31/03/08 in which period there were 11 meetings are as follows:

	<u>Town Council Meetings</u>	<u>Planning Meetings</u>
Cllr. Mrs J. Adams	7 of 11	7 of 11
Cllr G Bulmer	9 of 11	9 of 11
Cllr. S.J.M. Clee	5 of 11	N/A
Cllr. Mrs. E.M. Davies	9 of 11	9 of 11
Cllr. Mrs. L. Edginton	11 of 11	11 of 11
Cllr. J. Foulkes	10 of 11	10 of 11
Cllr. P.D. Gittins	11 of 11	11 of 11
Cllr. Mrs. J Keen	9 of 11	9 of 11
Cllr. D Killingworth	9 of 11	8 of 11
Cllr. Miss A. Mace	10 of 11	10 of 11
Cllr Mrs B Stallwood	9 of 11	8 of 11
Cllr. A.D. Williams	9 of 11	9 of 11
Cllr. G Yarranton	11 of 11	N/A

5. The Town Council holds its formal meetings in the Guildhall.
6. The Town Council is actively involved in a number of organizations and has representatives on the following Bewdley Organisations:  
Chamber of Trade, Christmas Lights, Citizen's Advice Bureau, 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), WFDC Parish Forum, and the Worcestershire Assembly.

### Flooding in the Town

7. In June and July, Bewdley was badly hit by flash flooding affecting approximately 100 homes. The damage varied from a number of houses being severely flooded and contaminated with sewage necessitating evacuation, to flood water entering outhouses and conservatories.

8. It was obvious that immediate help was needed and after visiting and finding that a number of people were not insured, I launched a Flood Appeal.
9. The response to this was overwhelming and the total amount raised was £18,202, which included £10,440 from the British Red Cross National Floods Appeal. Money was also received from our Twin Towns of Clarkesville and Fort-Mahon-Plage. Sixty residents applied for money from the fund, which was divided equally with those in receipt of all payments receiving £330.00.
10. In addition, help and support was quickly available from the Bewdley Residents Flood Committee. Public meetings with responsible agencies were organised and very well attended. A scheme was set up with The Network (Worcestershire) who gave flood victims a 20% discount on all electrical goods.

#### **Civic Matters**

11. 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 Remembrance Services in November with a morning service at St. Anne's and an afternoon service at All Saints.
12. The Mayor undertook a full programme of engagements during the year.
13. In September the Mayor's Parlour and Guildhall were opened to the public for Heritage Open Day with several Town Councillors taking part.

#### **Civic Awards**

14. A very enjoyable Awards Evening was held on 30 January 2008 at which awards were presented to Pat Adams, Carol Gittins, Paul Gittins, Gill Holland and Hazel Rhoden

#### **The Town's Charters**

15. The Town Charters granted to the Town in 1472, 1606, and 1708, together with a Casket presented to Stanley Baldwin have been in the Town Clerk's Office for many years. Prior to the move of the Town Clerk's office to the Guildhall, these were all loaned to Bewdley Museum where it is hoped they will be on permanent display in the near future.

#### **Town Maintenance/Improvement**

16. The Town Council pays for the servicing of the Town Clock on St. Anne's Church Tower.
17. The Town Council owns 9 bus shelters, 7 of which have been replaced this year and 2 of which in Load Street are still waiting to be replaced. The 2 Load Street shelters are proving to be particularly difficult to replace due to cost and road planning issues. All these bus shelters have been provided from funds of Worcestershire County Council but are maintained by the Town Council and as such are cleaned on a 2 monthly basis at an annual cost of approximately £800.00.

18. The Town Council at present owns and maintains some 41 seats and benches situated in the town.
19. The Town Council owns and maintains 6 lifebelts on Severn Side North, Severn Side South and Wribbenhall. In the current year we have had far fewer problems with vandalism of these lifebelts than in the past year.
20. 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. During the year, after concerns that the poles may have been unsafe, these were all re-sleeved at a cost of £2,232 and at the time of writing, one pole needs replacing having been knocked down by a vehicle.
21. The Town Council manages the events notice board on Beale's Corner and all organisations in the town are able to advertise on this.
22. The Town Council pays the running costs of the Wyre Hill Play Area which costs about £5,000.00 per annum
23. The Town Council continues to keep a watchful eye on the town and throughout the year the Town Clerk takes up a wide range of matters with Wyre Forest District Council, Worcestershire County Council and other appropriate councils.
24. The condition of Bewdley's rural footpaths is monitored by the two Footpath Officers.
25. 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.
26. A new Self Employed Lengthsman was appointed in August who carries out minor highways work in the town.

#### **CCTV**

27. All the CCTV cameras, for which the Town Council contributed £5,000.00, are now operational in the town.

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

28. The Town Council owns 10 concrete flower tubs located outside the Guildhall and around the top of St. Anne's Church. They are planted up for the summer and winter seasons.
29. The Town Council provides and pays for the hanging baskets in Load Street.
30. Once again the Town Council organized a highly successful Christmas Lights Festival to coincide with the switching on of the Christmas lights. As residents will be aware, we have still not reached the situation where the lights are 100% reliable but with more replacement lights in 2008 I hope that the situation will be considerably improved. The Festival attracted many thousands of people to Bewdley town centre on 1 December 2008.

31. The Town Council arranges and pays for the fireworks display which forms part of the Carnival entertainment in June.

### **Planning**

32. Through its Planning Committee the Town Council maintains an active role in planning matters. All planning applications in Bewdley are referred to the Town Council Planning Committee for its views as statutory consultees and minutes of these meetings are published on the Town Council Web Site and are available at Bewdley Library.
33. All Committee Meetings of the Town Council are open to the public.

### **Communication with residents**

34. Full agenda and minutes of all Town Council Committees are available for viewing on the town's website ([www.bewdley.org.uk](http://www.bewdley.org.uk)) and "The Town Council News" is published every month in "The Bridge" magazine. This includes significant items from these meetings and additional information relevant to people in Bewdley. Copies of minutes of all our meetings are also available in the library and on the Town Council Web Site.

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

35. 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 comprising the medical centre, library, fire station and St George's Hall and it is hoped that the consultation exercise with the people of Bewdley will start in 2008.

### **Youth Facilities**

36. The Town Council has committed itself to allocate £1,000.00 towards the expenses of the café which, having received the necessary funds from the National Lottery, is to be opened in Load Street.

### **Quality Status**

37. Following the attainment of the Certificate in Local Town Council Administration by the Town Clerk, the Town Council applied for Quality Status. It was unsuccessful in its application in one main area and as result of this the monthly reports in The Bridge Magazine will be changed and hopefully improved. It is uncertain that this, together with a number of other minor changes, will be sufficient for any new application to be successful.

### **Town Clerk's new office**

38. After considerable discussions with Wyre Forest District Council, the Town clerk's office moved to the first floor in the Guildhall, vacating the old office for the installation of the Bewdley location for the Worcestershire Hub.

### **The future of the Guildhall**

39. Wyre Forest District Council who own the Guildhall, is anxious to ensure that it becomes a much wider used facility in the Town and discussions will be taking place between WFDC, The Town Council and Bewdley Development Trust to determine how this might best be achieved.

### **Footbridge over the River Severn**

40. The Town Council, having carried out extensive consultation with residents in the Town, voted to support the building of a footbridge because of safety concerns from residents crossing the river over the road bridge. Worcestershire County Council, the responsible authority, has given their support in principle to the idea and has stated that any future bridge would need to come from medium term funding in the period 2011-2016).

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

41. The Town Council continues to monitor anti-social behaviour in the town and is working with the Police and other relevant parties to try to eliminate such behaviour. Councillor representatives regularly attend local PACT meetings and meetings of the Wyre Forest Police Consultative Group.

### **Water mains replacement in Bewdley**

42. Councillors have been actively involved in working with the contractors Balfour Beatty to minimise disruption in the town and to ensure that large public events in the town during the road works are not disrupted. It is true to say that this consultation has not always proved to have been successful.

### **Finances**

43. The bulk of the Town Council's income comes from the Precept. This is the sum of money which the Town Council determines should be paid by the Council Tax payers of Bewdley, and is collected on its behalf by Wyre Forest District Council.
44. One of the dilemmas which the Town Council faces every year is a desire to provide more for the people of Bewdley against a need to keep Town Council Tax payments at a reasonable level. This year the Town Council accepted that an increase of 5.44% was required. It should be emphasised that the increase would only have been 3.41% if the Town Council did not have to pay a new service charge levied by Wyre Forest District Council for the new office in The Guildhall.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Precept</u>	<u>Cost for Band D Taxpayer</u>
	£	£
2003/4	50,280	13.90
2004/5	50,900	13.90
2005/6	53,200	14.44
2006/7	58,025	15.71
2007/8	73,760	19.91
2008/9	77,775	21.05

45. For the year 2008/09 the Town Council agreed £3,849.00 worth of grants to 19 organisations.

46. . Current Town Council Councillors

**EAST WARD**

Mrs Janette Adams (Conservative)  
21 Hernes Nest  
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Tel:401026  
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Mr Paul Gittins (Labour)  
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Mrs Julie Keen (Health Concern)  
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Mr Gordon Yarranton (Conservative)  
7 Telford Drive  
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Tel:403835  
gordon.yarranton@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

**WEST WARD**

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Hop Pole Lane  
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Mrs Louise Edginton (Independent)  
The Quay Cottage  
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Mr Derek Killingworth (Health Concern)  
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Mr Tony Williams (Health Concern)  
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**WRIBBENHALL WARD**

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Mr John Foulkes (Conservative)  
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Miss A. Mace (Health Concern)  
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## BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL

## INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE 2007/2008

<b>Income</b>	£
Precept	73,760
S 136 Grant from WFDC	11,064
Churchyards from WFDC	2,800
Sponsorship & Donations	244
Interest Received	2,088
Memorial Seats	1,247
Lengthsman Scheme	286
Miscellaneous Income	445
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>91,934</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries	28,847
Town Maintenance	18,914
Operating Costs	12,650
Miscellaneous	10,870
Grant Aid Donations	4,750
Mayoral Expenses	3,881
Election Cost Provision	1,000
Regalia	560
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>81,472</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>10,462</b>

This Mayor's Report has been published by Bewdley Town Council for the Annual Town Meeting on 21 April, 2008