

CCTC Annual Report 24-25 for the Annual Town Forum

Good evening and welcome to our annual town forum.

Apologies

Minutes from last year -vote.

I'd like to invite Henry Hobhouse to report back on the past year first because he has to attend another meeting.

HH

Thank you Henry and thanks to Kevin for all your contributions and support this last year.

It's been my mission since I started as chair seven years ago to support what all our previous Councillors instigated and try to build on their success.

Whilst I have been chair we have:

Taken on the long lease of the MH and agreed an ambitious plan to enhance the facilities which Pek will talk about later.

We have policies and terms of ref coming out of our ears!...

We've had three Clerks- all very able but Lisa is the bees knees. Her knowledge and experience has been invaluable and still now I constantly refer to her for advice!

The Pavilion project has become a reality and now that we have full planning permission we are throwing ourselves into grant applications. I hope you have had the opportunity to view the model and plans. We are very grateful to the cricket and football clubs both of which have committed to raise significant funds towards the new building. The Pavilion will be a multi sport and multi generational facility fit for the 21st century.

Christmas High St decorations have evolved over the years from a lovely lit tree in the Horsepond and a Christmas tree in the Undercroft to lights on the Market House and the Horsepond along with lots of green decorations. We review them every year and would value your views on the Christmas trees particularly - please email the clerk to give your comments.

We have initiated and supported several projects for children & young people- the skate jam, the bouncy castle summer sessions and play fest.

A responsible Council ... listens to its parishioners and we do it through a variety of ways;

Newsletter

Community Conversations twice a year

This annual forum

Coffee morning chats

Accessible volunteers and staff available in the MH to feedback to Councillors

Our published strategic objectives, which were whizzing behind me, state what we intend to do until 2027 when we hope there will be an election. Our ideas are informed through chatting to residents and undertaking feedback through documents like the Neighbourhood Plan which is a legal document published in 2016. The Community Plan was a joint document created nearly 3 years ago and it included Ansford residents views. As you know I have always felt we are better working together.

The new houses have impacted on our community services and you will hear from the surgery about their capacity for the future. The balance of housing in our community is 1201 for Cary and 750 for Ansford. The school still has capacity as the birth rate is dropping fast and although there is space for a new school on the next new development in Station Road it is unlikely that there will be the demand in the near future. This situation is monitored regularly by Somerset Council which would be the initiator of any buildings. On the positive side Laura will tell you of the progress that the Toybox preschool is making. Another success story is our thriving High St. Our new Commerce group is enthusiastic and has produced a town map showing the enormous number of

businesses. This map is a temporary measure as there are many planned changes for 25/26 with the former Deli and The George renovations. We have had many visitors making us the destination town that we have aspired to and finally we have the Co-op!

We've had a great year making progress at the Market House despite the weather doing its best to sidestep us. The upstairs Assembly Room is being booked much more and we are keen to get started on the kitchen and the Billiard Room very soon.

Bookings are very healthy and I would like to thank Catrin for her hard work in promoting the MH and securing some incredible diverse bookings.

We have welcomed Terena as dep clerk formally from Somerset Council and many of our community know her from her previous job with Nat West in Cary. She felt part of the team as soon as she started and her experience has continued to be invaluable.

Mike trudges on picking up litter on a Monday, reporting on the safety checks for the play equipment and overseeing many various jobs on 10hrs per week. We are v grateful for his work and commitment.

We welcomed a new Councillor Gavin Crisp. Gavin has a financial background and I hope he will become vice chair of the Finance & Management committee

If you chop me in half like a stick of rock you will find the word 'community' right through me and our bookings and the many activities that individual Councillors are involved in, are testament to the vibrant community we belong to. This was celebrated in February by a visit from the Lord Lieutenant who recognised the amazing commitment from our volunteers facilitating over 30 community groups. More recently we welcomed the new High Sheriff for an informal visit to find out about the youth work we are facilitating. You will hear more about the innovative youth project in partnership with Bruton, Wincanton & Milborne Port through the Local Community Network, from Rob and we are delighted that the first year has been successful. Our coffee mornings continue to help fundraising in support of local groups. We don't charge for the use of the `undercroft but ask for a donation of 10% of the takings. Last year this amounted to £886.80 for the MH from 26 coffee mornings.

The bookings are organised by the team of information office volunteers and we indebted to them for providing a tourism service to 991 visitors and to 2324 locals. Also for collating and giving out the welcome packs to all our new residents in both Parishes.

Our market continues to thrive and we are very proud of Wendy, Paul and Ange's hard work come rain or shine. The variety of stalls seemingly increases weekly.

Looking forward we have Cary in Bloom started by our former apprentice Katie and now ably led by Penny Steiner with a large enthusiastic team - I'm delighted as I will have LOADS of time to help!!

Lastly I want to thank all my fellow Councillors for their support through some very difficult personal times for me and for us as a Council. It's not a job - in that it's paid - but as elected members we mostly give our all, passionately, to our community and I won't be stopping my involvement- it just means I can pick and choose what I want to do! I might even manage to see my large family more and return to Tai Chi! Thank you to everyone for attending and helping the Council to be the best it can be. Long may that continue

Now I'd like to welcome Trevor Oats, who on Monday was voted in as the new chair. Trevor has been a Councillor for a few years and took on chair on planning a couple of years ago. He's going to report on planning now and next year will be here doing this presentation.

Trevor Oats - Planning

Pek Peppin - Market House project

the following speakers

Rob Ruming-Pain - Youth Connect SW

Laura Tilling - Toybox
Helen Littell - Millbrook Surgery

Judi Morison
May 2025