

**BROCKWORTH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2014**

There were 14 people present.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2013 were received with no comments.

It was agreed that County Councillor Vines report be moved forward to allow him to attend another parish's meeting.

Report from Gloucestershire County Councillor – Robert Vines

A full copy of Cllr Vines report can be seen at Appendix 1.

Q. What is the policy on priority to filling pot holes?

A. The deeper the pothole the more immediate the response, the most essential done first.

Annual Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council – Cllr J Hunt

The Chairman outlined the main points of his report, which was circulated to all present and can be read at appendix 2.

Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014

The finance figures for 2013/14 were circulated to all present and can be read at appendix 3.

Q. Is the Brook money finished?

A. Mr Flounders explained some spending but unsure of rest.

Report from Schools

Headteacher of Millbrook Academy was unable to attend and sent a short update which was circulated to those present:

Many apologies for not being able to attend the meeting this evening. I hope that you find this report useful and informative.

Ofsted came in October 2013 and were very pleased with the progress the Academy is making. We were not quite judged as good across the board, partly due to some disappointing maths results, however, we anticipate an improvement this year. This will hopefully improve our judgement at the next Ofsted visit.

The number of students coming into Year 7 in September are way up on previous years which gives us a huge boost in knowing the progress the Academy is making is reaching the parents.

Those of you who managed to come to the Academy to see Les Miserable will have had a treat and rehearsals for next year's production are already underway. The students will be performing Sweeney Todd and we warmly welcome anyone from the community to The Mill in February 2015.

Other items of interest: All women are welcome to join our 'Race for Life' on the Academy field on 27 June to run alongside the girls and female staff to raise funds for cancer research. (Some of us will be walking rather than running!)

We are hosting the primary swimming gala in conjunction with our partner primary school, Brockworth Primary Academy and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their recent Ofsted results in which they were judged as good.

The Academy website is always populated with student and staff news and photographs can be found at www.millbrookacademy.org.

Report from the Police

The Police were unable to attend the meeting; a written report was circulated to those present, and can be seen in full at Appendix 4.

Q. Heard it all before – no police walking around Brockworth. If the new working model introduced, could it be monitored?

A. Cllr J Perez responded that the new community safety officer to attend the next council meeting to explain.

Q. Has Council had sight of the new working model yet?

A. Not yet. Chairman stated it would be an agenda item at the next Parish Council meeting.

Report from Brockworth Allotments and Garden Association

Cllr Neal read out the update from the Allotments Association. *We have had a large conifer tree removed from near the main gate as it was growing very rapidly and had become too tall for us to cut back. This was done very professionally by Greenfields Garden Services in just half an hour, at a cost of £120.*

All plots are taken with two people on the waiting list. 90% are being cultivated, the other 10% are held by people who are ill or seem to have lost the will to do them. We are now in the process of removing those that are suffering from inertia.

Report from the Tree Warden – Mr E Flounders

Mr Flounders' full report was circulated to those present and can be seen at Appendix 5. Mr Flounders introduced Mrs Pat Hutley who will be working together with him on tree matters this year.

Q. Invista work has started, are they are of TPOs?

A. Rob Williams of Invista has asked developer to keep Tewkesbury BC informed of progress.

A. Cllr J Perez said that everyone involved – locals, planning etc.

Q. Horsbere Brook Management, is it ongoing?

A. Brook Warden team probably needs to meet again.

Q. Land at the end of St Patrick's Church and corner of Abbotswood Road is very untidy after taking the trees down some time ago. Are they (Highways) coming back?

A. The land is back to where it was before tree work took place.

Report from Brockworth Community Project - Mrs Nina Walsh Vice-Chair of the Project

A very comprehensive report was given by Mrs Walsh, the new Vice-Chair. There has been positive growth in all areas – library, youth club, staffing, volunteers, activities, classes etc. Mrs Walsh thanked the Parish Council for its assistance. The Chairman thanked Mrs Walsh for presenting a very encouraging report.

Report on Community Bus and Brockworth Elderly Groups

Cllr Neal read out the reports for the Welcome Club and Day Centre:

The Welcome Club is open to everyone aged over 50 years and meets weekly, on Wednesdays, from 1.00pm until 3.00pm at St Patrick's Church Centre. The Tesco minibus is used by the members for a door to door service, but the Club contributes towards the cost of this service. Without this transport many members would be unable to attend. There are 34 members, with an average of 20 at each weekly meeting. Only one new member was gained from the closure of the Golden Age Club. Sheila Hampson deals with finances and helps Patricia O'Connor deal with the meetings and bookings. Organising a weekly club entails much time and effort. They are to be congratulated on making the club so successful.

The year began with a spring outing by coach to the Belfrey Hotel, Littledean, where a 3 course lunch was enjoyed by all. In July there was a day trip to Weston, followed by a day trip to Stratford-on-Avon in the autumn. For the Christmas lunch it was back to the Belfrey Hotel because everyone enjoys the food and it is an interesting journey but not far to travel. There have been a variety of events at the weekly meetings, as well as the usual games and craft work. The Wye Valley Singers entertain at least once a year. Speakers have given talks, for example, on guide dogs for the deaf, and on the history of hats.

A regular advert is placed in the Brockworth Magazine in the hope of attracting new members. Sheila Hampson conveys her thanks to the Parish Council for the grant received in support of the Christmas outing, much enjoyed by all members.

The Brockworth Day Centre was set up nearly 40 years ago to provide a lunch club where lonely, elderly Brockworth residents could meet and enjoy a meal on Wednesdays. From a peak of 40 members over the years, we are now reduced to a small group of around 12 on a good day. The minibus delivers door to door to the Youth Club; the club pays rent and a bus contribution to the Parish Council.

With such a small number of members, the amount of money we have to raise dictates what we can do by the way of activities. The Welcome Club kindly invites us to join their trips and Christmas lunch outing. The Parish Council grant is greatly appreciated to help with the cost.

Our membership includes really elderly Brockworth residents – 3 are over 90, 3 are in their 80s and the rest are over 70. Any new members we attract are equally as elderly, so our numbers are always declining. It really is a case of do we run out of members first or money.

Report from the Tewkesbury Borough Council representatives – Cllr V Perez and Cllr J Perez

Cllrs Jude and Vince Perez read through the State of the Borough Report, which can be seen in full at Appendix 6.

Q. Any progress on the issue of dog fouling?

A. A new committee has been formed to tackle enviro-crimes.

There being no further reports or questions from members of the public, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Appendix 1 - Gloucestershire County Council Report – Cllr R. Vines

The County Council set its budget for the 2014/15 at £428m, a decrease in cash terms of £2.8m. Previously an ambitious 4 year savings plan had been introduced and by March this year £95m had been saved as part of the target of £114m needed by the end of 2014/15.

This was achieved whilst still managing to deliver the necessary services throughout the Gloucestershire. Adult Care will have £151m and Children and Families £95m. As part of this, Council Tax will be frozen, so no increase for this year with a Band D tax payer now paying £1090.50.

There is also an ambitious document that has been drawn-up by the Gloucestershire Local Economic Partnership – the LEP – outlining the future aspirations and needs for Economic Growth within the county in their submission to Government in the Strategic Economic Plan – SEP.

Hopefully businesses in the county have a potential for significant export growth. More young people will stay or move into Gloucestershire to start-up businesses or take up high skill jobs here. The medium high tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive area has potential for significant growth (including a cluster within the nuclear energy sector). Gloucestershire is a cross-roads of connectivity between Birmingham and the north; Bristol and the south-west and Wales; and London and the south-east.

Most of the employment and housing within the county is clustered around the M5 motorway, with 4 of the 6 motorway junctions being in Tewkesbury Borough. One major road concern is as Junction 10 – do you think it should be a 4-way junction? I would suggest it is almost unique nowadays for a motorway junction just to have a one direction access and egress, would a 4-way junction be more suitable?

The other important roads is the A417 “missing link” identified in the SEP, most people think it is necessary to do something here. Not just because of the accident record on this stretch of road, but the economic potential of areas in the valley basin suffers very badly. If vehicles servicing these businesses are held up in the daily snarl-up of traffic from Crickley Hill to the Cowley roundabout, it must surely be to the detriment of our local economy.

Incinerator Appeal at Javelin Park: still waiting for the result!

Finally potholes on our roads. We all can see the problems with the road surfaces locally and wider afield – once again something must be done. The Cabinet member at Shire Hall with responsibilities for roads has come up with some interesting statistics. Gloucestershire has over 3,000 miles of road, the backlog of road repairs would cost £86m, even if two crews worked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week it would take over 8 years to complete the tasks. He went on to say that even if the roads resurfaced and in a pristine condition there would within a week be 10,000 potholes – according to industry predictions. I am not making excuses just trying to make sure you were aware of the reality. So we all need to be as patient as we can and hope some success can be achieved.

Appendix 2 - Chairman's Annual Report for the Year April 2013 to March 2014

Introduction

The annual report relates to the work of Brockworth Parish Council for the year 2013/2014 and describes the principal activities which it has undertaken over that period.

Planning

In 2013/2014 the Parish Council was asked to comment on 52 planning applications. There are always difficulties and differences of opinion when determining planning applications, particularly in areas covered by Green Belt and AONB. Brockworth Parish Council is always concerned about the future housing development on the consequential impact it has on its roads and other local services.

The housing development of 72 houses at Kennel Lane that I reported to you last year is now 50 percent occupied, however there are still complaints regarding traffic, mud and drainage problems which are reported to Gloucestershire Highways and the developer to resolve.

The 220 houses that Invista were granted planning permission for on planning appeal have now been reduced to 199 and work is due to start very shortly.

You will recall that there has been a lot of hard work put in trying to obtain refusal to the housing development application for 1500 houses alongside the A417. Unfortunately all the efforts of the Save Brockworth Green Belt group and the Parish Council may have been to no avail as Tewkesbury Borough Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council have all agreed for the site to be included in the Joint Core Strategy as a strategic site. However there is to be one more public consultation before it goes to the Secretary of State.

In addition to large developments, your Council comments on household developments and change of use applications and hope that you find it helpful when Councillors pay a visit to affected neighbouring properties in order that we can take their comments into consideration when dealing with these on your behalf.

Your Council also covers the following areas:-

Rights of Way

The Council is always looking to ensure Rights of Way are kept clear, notifying Highways of potholes in roads and pavements and ensuring that waste and dog bins are kept emptied and in good condition. Doggie bags are available from the Community Centre, at a cost of 50p per pack, which is restricted to two packs per visit.

The Parish Council is very fortunate in having an effective working relationship with the staff at County Highways. It is not possible, due to workload and financial constraints, to rectify every highway, flooding and environmental problem immediately but the Parish Council has been grateful for the prompt responses and action it has received from them. However some of the problems raised have been earmarked for action during 2014/2015.

Also hedges and trees along pavements and roads – at this point I would like to ask residents whose land boundary runs along Public footpaths if they would keep them cut on a regular basis in order to reduce time and cost to your Council dealing with complaints.

Parks and Open Spaces

This council has, and are always looking to improve and maintain play equipment on land owned by the Parish.

In my report last year i stated the Parish Council was successful in obtaining a grant from Tewkesbury Borough Council to renew play equipment in Mill Lane and Pound Farm playing fields which has now been installed to the delight of the youth of Brockworth. This year we have again been lucky in obtaining two more grants (£2,500 from The Summerfield Charitable Trust and £24,448 from SITA Trust) for outdoor gym equipment which has been installed at Pound Farm playing field. We also installed a new tarmac path leading across the playing field to improve accessibility to the new gym and play areas. The next major project will be a new multi-use games area at Pound Farm playing field – this will be done once we have received funding through the Invista housing development.

While we have maintenance costs for the equipment we are pleased to say that the vandalism has been considerably less.

Last year, I reported that Brockworth Albion Football Club had planning permission for the changing room building and had hoped to have had it completed for the football season in 2013/14 but due to unforeseen financial difficulties this was delayed. The good news is that they started building on 22nd April 2014 and hope to complete by the end of October in time for the football season 2014/15. The contractor has kindly agreed to put a temporary notice board close to the site giving information to local residents on the progress of the work during the build.

The Parish Council has also worked with the community in improving Horsbere Brook and helped to organise two community work days.

The Parish Council also took on the lease of the Nature Reserve on Green Street and organised several morning work parties to gradually clear the bramble and improve the Nature Reserve for the wildlife.

Brockworth News Letter

I hope you all enjoy reading the bi-monthly Parish Magazine, which the Scouts deliver to every Brockworth household on our behalf. Any local news or articles that you would like to be published should be sent to the Parish Office.

Community Building

The building has now been open for just over eight years and we are pleased to report that the bookings for the main hall and other rooms are increasing with all offices being rented for long-term periods.

As stated last year, if you have any comments to make regarding any functions etc. please do contact April, the Administrator of the Community Centre, or write to the Parish Council.

The Coffee Shop is now open Monday to Friday 10.30am to 3.00pm for light lunches, breakfasts and refreshments including take aways, all at very reasonable prices. We also hold a Senior Citizens Luncheon Club every Friday at 12 noon for Brockworth Residents at a cost of only £4.50 for a 2 course cooked lunch which includes a cup of tea or coffee. To ensure you get a seat, bookings should be made in advance as we are only able to seat 30 people.

Community Bus

The Council will continue the running of the community bus on Wednesdays for the next twelve months.

Library & Youth Centre

AS reported last year, the Youth Centre is now run by the Brockworth Community Project under the management of Matt Tope and had very good results. However, Matt has now left the Community Project and Monica now manages the Project office. The youth numbers continue to increase for the various age groups including an all-girls session which has been a great success. This is of course supported by the Parish Council with grants of £10,000 for youth provision and £3,445 for summer activities.

The library which was transferred to the Brockworth Community Project has now been open under this new management for over three years and is improving each year. However they still need more people to use it and of course still needs money in order to be able to continue to run it. The Parish Council has again supported them with a grant of £5,000 which we budget for through the Parish Council Precept, plus the Community Project also applies for various grants from other organisations.

Financial

At the end of this year (2013/2014) the accounts showed a healthy balance allowing the Council, to approve a budget for 2014/2015 which required a small increase in the Parish Precept (Council Tax). The annual accounts continue to identify specific items of possible expenditure held in the reserve account for such matters as the maintenance and improvements to our Community Building, Play Areas etc.

The Parish Clerk, Julie Shirley, will present the end of year accounts at the end of my report.

Appreciation

The Council would like to once again thank all the Councillors who give a lot of their time in helping to run the Community Building and also to all the staff especially the Clerk, Julie Shirley, who has carried out an excellent job in getting the Council through another busy year with her sound advice and support.

Jim Hunt

Chairman - Brockworth Parish Council

Appendix 3 – Statement of the Parish Council’s Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014.

The precept received by the Parish from Tewkesbury Borough Council for 2013/14 was set at £165,231 (made up of £145,155 council tax plus £20,076 Council Tax Support Grant) which was an increase of 4.55% on the previous year. We also received grants totalling £34,122, mainly towards the outdoor gym project.

Staff costs were £102,912 in the last year which is an increase of £7,112 over the previous year, this being due to the employer pension costs increasing slightly and staff receiving a 1% cost of living increase.

The Community Centre cost £109,930 to run in the past year which is an increase on the previous year, mainly due to items such as heating and electricity, business rates increasing. However, the Community Centre has again increased the amount of income it generates without increasing the room-hire rates:

£65,103 in 2011/12
£81,378 in 2012/13
£83,273 in 2013/14.

Grants and other services

During the past year, the parish council has given out grants to local groups totalling £15,795 (list below). We were able to continue the Community Bus for one day per week which cost £7,600 for the year. We have also continued to provide Citizen Advice Bureau services to Brockworth residents through the Community Centre which cost £1,728 for the year. Through the Brockworth Community Project we were able to provide four weeks of summer school holiday activities to young people, at a total cost of £3,544.

Grants & Donations awarded to:

Roses Theatre
Library Provision
Jet Age Museum
Poppy Wreath 2013
Youth Provision
Day Centre
The Welcome Club
Brockworth Allotments Association
Colin Gommersal School Award
Brockworth Community Project (Youth & Library)

Public Open Spaces

In addition the council spent £9,120 on grass cutting, £5,840 on Parks & Open Spaces, and £2,385 on Rights of Way maintenance. A project to install an outdoor gym was carried out during the year which cost £32,800, and has been paid mostly through grant funding from The Summerfield Charitable Trust and SITA Trust.

Rights of Way

Gloucestershire Highways ceased its weed spraying of kerbs so the parish council continued this service which cost £1,520 in 2013/14.

The year end accounts are being audited soon and are available to view on request up until 6th June 2014.

Income & Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2014:

	2013/2014	2012/2013
Income	£	£
Precept	145,155.00	159,000.00
Council Tax Support Grant	20,076.00	
Investment Income	973.96	1,255.60
Burial Ground	4,130.00	6,275.00
Hall and Other Lettings	29,830.98	28,147.74
Office Hire	23,402.54	20,126.04
Parish fete	0.00	85.00
Catering Income	27,448.64	23,183.96
Sec 106 Grants	5,992.49	2,259.61
Youth Centre Lease	2,880.94	2,465.67
Other Grants	0.00	1,435.00
Miscellaneous Income (donations towards community bus & use of playing field, etc)	4,541.74	3,324.42
Playground Refurbishment / Outdoor Gym Project Grants	28,129.25	95,598.79
Total Income	292,561.54	343,156.83
Expenditure	£	£
Staff Costs	102,911.76	95,800.05
General administration	29,704.09	25,573.03
Sec.137 and Other Grants	5,795.00	13,505.18
Audit Fees	1,075.00	716.12
Members Allowance	2,119.90	2,101.90
Burial Ground General Maintenance	1,576.00	1,145.00
P & OS Various	10,382.47	9,668.63
RoW Various	2,625.60	1,795.00
Community Bus	7,600.00	7,500.00
Community Building	40,411.21	36,098.26
Catering Expenditure	8,105.06	6,474.89
Agency Costs	3,388.01	3,282.76
Grass Cutting	9,120.00	8,185.00
Parish Fete	0.00	1,411.11
Horsbere Brook Project	3,502.50	7,582.00
Insurance	1,825.42	2,985.88
Training (staff & councillors)	1,064.20	1,454.00
Advertising and Publicity	50.00	435.30
Youth Provision	12,000.00	20,000.00
Playground Refurbishment Project	49,761.24	108,938.73
Total Expenditure	293,017.46	354,652.84

Appendix 4 – Police Report – PC Robin Guest from Tewkesbury Safer Community Team

Over the last 12 months we have continued to see changes across the Constabulary and this has led to us having to manage our resources to meet an increasing demand. As an organisation we are committed to providing response cover 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To ensure this cover is maintained, occasionally community beat offices have had to be used to backfill response policing to cover training, annual leave and force wide operations such as the Royal International Air tattoo and the Cheltenham Gold Cup Festival. These abstractions inevitably have an effect on the amount of time that community beat officers are able to spend patrolling within their designated areas. In the short term this is unlikely to change significantly but there may be some light at the end of the tunnel.

There is major change in the air in the way the Constabulary operates. A huge amount of work is being undertaken at senior level to produce a new working model which, if successful, should free up a number of resources which will allow community beat officers to be ‘ring-fenced’ and hopefully when the new model goes ‘live’ we will have more time to be out and about in the community. That said, a return to the old model where a specific officer was dedicated exclusively to a particular area is unlikely. However, it is more likely that is an area is experiencing a particular problem, a large number of the community team will initially be involved in trying to resolve it in the short term.

Despite all the changes that have take place in the last 12 months, I am delighted to be able to report that recordable crime has fallen from 266 in 2012/13 to 238 in 2013/14. Burglaries remain low at 11 (down 2) and there was only one serious assaulted reported. Minor assaults were down from 21 to 13.

Tewkesbury division has a very pro-active crime team which is responsible for developing intelligence in order to target suspected criminal activity across the area. In the last 12 months they have obtained a number of warrants following initial intelligence supplied by the local community, which has led to 4 successful outcomes. Three of these have led to class B drugs being found in residential dwellings and 1 warrant resulted in the record of class A dugs worth £18,000, which led to the offender being jailed for 4 years. This clearly shows the importance of the community in combating criminality.

Although there have been a small number of staff changes over the year, they have had little impact in the way Glevum West is policed. The faces may change but the intention remains the same – to inspire trust, confidence and to serve the public and place them at the heart of everything we do.

Appendix 5 – Tree Warden Report – Mr E. Flounders

Introduction

The past year has seen little activity compared with the previous years. There are two main reasons for that, my own circumstances have changed dramatically, I now have little time to do voluntary work, and secondly, we have just about done the things that we can do around the parish without some big investment and land requirement.

That said, we still do have much to do in being alert and managing the tree work that we have done to date, and looking after the ancient trees and protecting our trees from destruction through development and vandalism.

I am delighted at this point to introduce Pat Hutley who has volunteered to become a Brockworth tree warden. We will spend time this year checking the existing tree sites and monitoring progress of the major developments expected to take place in the Brockworth area.

The worst bit of news was the destruction of the three Perry Pear trees at Kennel Lane. We are assured that replacement Perry Pear trees will be planted at the Kennel lane site, but this can not replace the 100 or so years of growth lost through the original trees.

Shell Meadow

We continue to monitor the trees that we have planted on the Shell Meadow. We have added a few trees but the weaker trees are dying off as the stronger trees mature and through the natural development of the copse, just as nature does.

Abbotswood Road

We have lost two beautiful Golden Willow tree on Abbotswood road over the past couple of years due to disease. Tewkesbury Borough Council has now replaced these with three Silver Birch standards (larger rooted trees) which are spaced to fill the site as they mature. I have arranged for volunteers to water these for this year, at least three times per week if we have a drought.

We also lost a mature Hornbeam over at Abbotswood which was believed to be the cause of damage to adjacent wall and may have lead to an Insurance claim against TBC.

Horsbere Brook

Very little has been done on Horsbere Brook since we completed the project there two years ago. We have planted a few willow shrubs on the island nearest to the Scout hut to replace those lost to vandalism and the floods. We have also lost a mature tree and some heavy ash branches through disease and storm damage.

The National Grid wanted to remove some small trees along the brook behind Cedar road that were affecting the power lines. Utilities do have a right under legislation to access and remove trees, but normally they will ask permission from the land owner which was Brockworth Parish Council who agreed to the clearance.

As a form of compensation the National Grid have given four replacement trees of our choice, we have asked for four Rowan, which will be planted along the pathway to the new play area at Pound Farm, so we will be doing this in the late Autumn.

We will be planting some willow shrubs along the brook near to the area from where the trees were removed.

Royal Trees

We were given three young Oak trees in 2012/13 that were grown from acorns on one of the Royal Estates. These were to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and other Royal events (Prince William Playing fields). These are currently being grown on in private gardens and will be planted out once they have reached a suitable size. It has not yet been finalized where these trees will go.

Developments at Invista & Perry Brook

The development areas known as Invista and Perry Brook both have Tree Preservation Orders. We will continue to keep watch on these developments. There are heavy fines for breaching TPO's.

Working with Schools

Our work with schools has dropped considerably compared with previous years. It would be helpful if we could have a Councillor who is willing to act as a co-ordinator for work with schools.

Brockworth Nature Reserve

After quite a long period of doing no work at the Nature Reserve waiting for the leasing the agreements, we have managed to do two work parties this year. The work done was mostly coppicing and tidying up the ground cleared in earlier periods. Work on the reserve has now stopped until the late Autumn.

The Future of Our Trees

Thanks must go to the members of the public who keep us informed about issues affecting our trees and plant life. Having a Tree Preservation Order put on trees is not a simple process. It is a legal process that has to be drawn up by TBC Solicitors, and takes time. It is essential that we can prove that a tree is under threat and has aesthetic value, as well as other things like community access and a healthy state. It is very important that the general public keep us aware of any circumstances that are putting trees under threat.

And Finally Our thanks to the parish office for the care they take in keeping on top of the day to day problems with litter, and vandalism of trees and open spaces.

Appendix 6 – Tewkesbury Borough Council report – Cllr J Perez and Cllr V Perez.

The Council is undergoing significant change and alongside other councils in the country the Borough have had to make huge savings whilst working out how to deliver services in more cost effective ways for our communities.

Since 2008, Tewkesbury Borough Council has saved £3million. There remains another £3million to save over the next five years. The new emerging Business Transformation Strategy intends to achieve one third of those savings with the balance from an already established savings programme.

The Council Plan 2012-16: the Council Plan which is the strategic focus for Tewkesbury Borough is now entering its third year and is undergoing its annual refresh. The Plan vision and values, priority themes and key objectives remain unchanged. Key actions from the previous

year under each priority are updated and this keeps a fresh and vibrant approach for the ensuing year.

Here are some of the achievements over the last 12 months under each of the five Council Plan priority themes:

Priority: Use resources effectively and efficiently

Tewkesbury Borough organisational review was completed and with a new management team structure effective from August 2013 generated an overall savings figure of £954,000.

Despite financial pressures the Council Tax has been frozen for the fourth year running.

The £1million office refurbishment is well underway and due for completion in September 2014. 1065 square metres of office space has been freed up allowing for new tenants to move in and thus creating an income stream of £160,000. Job Centre Plus are the most recent new tenant and Tewkesbury Borough Council will continue to seek further partners to create further income.

Complaints are low as at 31 December 2013 with only 4 complaints from the Local Government Ombudsman with all 4 decided in the council's favour. With 41 complaints dealt through the council's complaint framework. To keep this in context, the waste service alone there are over 3million successful bin and caddy collections a year.

A new communications strategy has been developed to drive forward the council's future aims which include digital communications technologies whilst recognising the need to continue with traditional methods.

Staff sickness levels have improved significantly. Last year it was an average of 9 days. Now it's down to 5.77 days.

Priority: Promote Economic Growth

Tewkesbury Business Support Grant Scheme continues to be a great success with this year a further 37 grants awarded.

Works continues with GFirst LEP in developing a Gloucestershire Strategic Economic Plan.

Priority: Improve recycling and care for the environment

Recycling rate remains healthy at an estimated 52%.

A new committee has been formed to tackle enviro-crimes particularly the problem of dog fouling.

All medium and high priority flood projects in the Flood Response Action Plan are now complete with the exception of the Tirley Scheme.

Priority: Customer focussed community support

The Families First programme has a target to engage with 90 'troubled families' over a 3 year period. As at March 2013 which is year 2, work is being carried out with 97 families and which has successfully turned around 24 families.

Approval of a new leisure centre in Tewkesbury is a major step forward in helping to deliver health and wellbeing initiatives.

Funds of £50,000 have been agreed to support the Citizens Advice Bureau who have provided excellent service over the past 12 months assisting 1420 residents.

Priority: Develop housing relevant to local needs

The Joint Core Strategy has now been approved by all three councils (Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester) and should be heading towards submission to the Secretary of State this winter.

79 cases of potential homelessness were prevented during the year. Tewkesbury Borough Council awarded 118 disabled facilities grants totalling over £675,000.

155 affordable homes have been built, an 11% increase on the previous year and the most affordable homes built in one year for over five years.

Moving forward 2014-15

Tewkesbury Borough assets will be carefully looked at to see if they can be better used in the further development of the Public Service Centre having more like-minded tenants under one roof.

The Joint Core Strategy will continue to be worked on with a significant amount of time devoted to this.

To successfully transform there will need to be a programme of organisational and cultural development. This will include programmes for staff and member development, plan for different ways of working such as more flexibly and maximising the use of technology to work more efficiently.

Overall last year a period of great change.