

Mayor's Overview

It has been a privilege to serve Dursley as the Town Mayor for 2017/18 and I am pleased to have been re-elected to the role on 8th May 2018 for 2018/19.

The Council has achieved a great deal in the last year, as we continue to serve the community in changing and challenging times. This report will highlight many of these achievements which would not have been possible without the help and support of the local community and key partners.

During 2017/18 we have seen several changes within the Town Council.

Councillor Suzi Abraham was elected as Deputy Mayor for 2017/18 and made a significant contribution to the town in this role. Councillor Abraham decided not to stand for re-election in May 2018, due to other commitments, but continues as a Town Councillor. I am pleased to announce that Councillor Mandy Woodward was elected as Deputy Mayor for 2018/19. I very much look forward to working alongside her and my fellow Town Councillors over the coming year.

We welcomed Councillor Wayne Paice and Councillor Adrian Whitwell to the Council and both are already making an important contribution.

In November 2017, Councillor Fiona Firth decided to step down. Fiona had been a Town Councillor since 2009 and had made a significant contribution to the Council and the community, in particular on the Town Improvements Committee.

The past year has been a busy one and we have embarked on many improvement projects for the town including:

- Installing new goal posts, zip wire and signage at Highfields Play Area, as well as making improvements to the youth shelter and holding a community day.
- Employing an extra grounds person to help us manage and maintain our green spaces and town improvement commitments.
- Installing a new noticeboard at Kingshill Cemetery and continuing to review and make improvements to Cemetery practices.
- Refurbishing benches and noticeboards in the town centre.
- Supporting the new 'Welcome to Dursley' Information Brochure developed by Dursley Business Inclusive and working with them to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Carrying out the 'Regulation 14' consultation for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), alongside the NDP Steering Group, in readiness for its submission to Stroud District Council and future referendum.
- Supporting Dursley in Bloom and Dursley Welcomes Walkers with their activities.
- Awarding a substantial sum in grant money to a wide variety of groups and organisations offering support to Dursley residents, including the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Dursley & District Community Association.

Of course, our biggest project for the town in 2017 has been the successful purchase of the Reliance House site on Long Street to develop a public car park. This is a major project moving forward into 2018/19 and we hope to see the car park open to the public in October 2018.

To be able to continue improving the town and to plan for the future Council has to set a budget. Details relating to the 2017/18 budget are outlined in the Policy and Finance section of this report. At the beginning of 2018 Council agreed, after careful thought, to increase the 2018-2019 budget by an average of £47.58 per household per annum or 92p a week. Our share of the overall Council Tax bill is very small and this year's total budget is £602,107 of



Neil Grecian
Town Mayor 2017/18

which £435,616 will be met from Council tax (Council 2018/19 budget attached as Appendix 1).

The budget will enable the Council to continue with a range of important projects already in hand or planned. 2018/19 is going to be a busy and exciting year for the Town Council as we continue with the car park project, look at enhancements to improve the appearance of Castle Street and investigate and undertake projects that benefit the community. We will see the result of the Future Dursley project and the outcome of the Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum. We will also continue to support a number of local community groups and events through grants.

I have had many invitations to join in celebrations of different groups over the year and I have enjoyed them all greatly. The civic engagements I have attended are listed below.

Dursley has much to be proud of. The combined effort of local organisations, traders, dedicated volunteers and the Town Council, has led to many achievements over 2017/18.



The Dursley Walking Festival continues to go from strength to strength, drawing a greater number of walkers and visitors to the event year on year. The 2017 walking festival took place on Thursday 5TH October to Sunday 8TH October and was the most successful yet. There were 27 different walks to enjoy, including a Nordic taster walk.

2017 saw the annual Dursley in Bloom entry win a Gold award following the hard work and support of local volunteers and for this we are immensely proud. Our sincere thanks go to all the volunteers, their supporters and sponsors, for making our town more attractive throughout the year. The 'in Bloom' team is always looking for extra hands, so if you are interested in helping, please contact the Council office. The Council continues to support the group with grant funding and plants.

The War Memorial Recreation Ground continued to be well-used by Dursley football clubs throughout the year and the playground and outside gym equipment continues to be extremely popular. The ground was also used for other events including the annual fireworks, the Dursley Carnival, a funfair and a circus.

We attended the Dursley Carnival in the summer, which was a great success. Councillors and staff spoke with many people on the day gaining views on Future Dursley and the Council's work, in particular parking issues. This year the Dursley Carnival will take place on the War Memorial Recreation Ground over 3 days Friday 13th July to Sunday 15th July 2018 and the Council has supported the event with grant funding.

The Christmas Switch-on event continues to grow year on year. The 2017 event was no exception and drew more crowds than ever. The fireworks and snow for the event made it an even greater display! The 2018 event is being organised by the Festive Dursley Working Group with help from Dursley Business Inclusive, ourselves and local organisations and will take place on Friday 30th November 2018.

We continue to work closely with the community and dedicated volunteers on the 'Future Dursley' project to develop Dursley's Neighbourhood Development Plan. In 2017 the Steering Group continued to carry out consultation on the plan and worked with students from Rednock School and Dursley Primary Academy. In November 2017 the plan under went the first formal stage of the consultation process known as 'Regulation 14'.

These events and activities could not take place without the support of committed volunteers within our community. I would like to thank all those volunteers that help to make this town such a great place to live in. This includes: Dursley in Bloom, Walkers are Welcome, the Neighbourhood Plan group, Festive Dursley and the Carnival Committee.

Alongside our Annual Report, we have published a 'Community Report 2018' which outlines in more detail some of the work and activities taking place across the town.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that the Town Council office in Jacob's House holds a wide range of tourist and service information and residents can also view plans and report potholes, faulty street lights, etc. The office is open from 10.00am to 3:00pm Monday to Friday and regular updates are posted on the Council's Facebook page and website www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk.

Town Mayor's Civic Engagements 2017/18:

Town Annual Assembly	Greeting the Judges with Dursley in Bloom	Remembrance Sunday service & Parade
The Guides AGM	Opened the Tyndale Arts Trail	Judging the Festive Dursley Shop window Displays
Leslie Gale Award Presentations	GL11 AGM	Festive Dursley Christmas Lights Switch on Event
Judging the Speed posters at Dursley Academy	Opening the Walking Festival	Dursley Rugby Club/ Visit of the Weston Mayor
The Hollies Open Day	Judging the Pumpkin Competition	The launch of the Dursley Brochure
Dursley Carnival	Annual Door Celebration	Kingshill House Community Open day
Rotary Club Carol Service	Opening the Annual Fireworks	
ATC Annual Service	Launch of Gloucestershire 2050	
Unveiling of the Lister Plaque	Judging the Annual Pancake Race	
	Re-launch of the Farmers Market	
	Judge the fancy dress competition at the Hummingbird Café	