



Tetbury
Town Council



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Annual Newsletter from Tetbury Town Council 2015



It has been an exceedingly busy year with plenty of new and part-finished projects to get our teeth into.

Last year we commemorated all those who went from Tetbury to serve in the First World War; we also remembered all the very important work that was done by the Americans at The Malt House.

It is always a great pleasure to visit various organisations and groups and to meet both young and older residents of Tetbury and to hear their stories and we are very lucky to live in such a beautiful town. We all need to appreciate and take care of both the people and the iconic buildings which make up this wonderful place.

Tourism is always an issue of how we can generate more foot fall and place ourselves very firmly on the map. With this in mind, we are going to host a Town Crier Competition in the town on September 19th and we hope this will become a permanent fixture alongside other events like the Woolsack Day, Wacky Races, the Summer Show and the Heritage Weekend - to name but a few.

We have a lot of building work in progress and we need to make sure that the town's infrastructure can cope with what will be a lot more traffic. We already have issues with regard to parking - and we need to make sure that we are a "welcoming" town for all those who visit us.

Everyone in the town does a lot of fundraising, quietly and without recognition. I would like to thank all of them and their brilliant work to support people and projects in the town. It would be lovely to see the Goods Shed near completion this year and they are to be commended for the fund raising they have done to date. The Dolphins Hall has created more parking spaces, a much needed revenue for the Hall. Please support these exciting projects with all their forthcoming events.

Burial space is always an emotive subject and we are looking at what can be achieved and hope to come back with an answer in the near future.

Thank you for your support for my time in office.

Sandra Ball, Mayor of Tetbury

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING will be taking place on
Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 7pm in the Dolphins Hall
*Please come along and have your say***



FINANCE AND SCRUTINY REPORT 2014-15



Our Council Tax amount for this year was £248,611 and once again this allowed us to invest in Tetbury.

The objective behind our Budget is to provide support for our community, both in monetary support terms and by funding physical maintenance and improvement to those town assets for which we are responsible.

How successful were we in doing this?

We made grants totalling £18,000 to local organisations, so that they could continue their important community work. Organisations such as the Dolphins Hall Trust, the Youth Pod, St Mary's School, Tetbury Guides, The Monday Club and Tetbury Cricket Club all benefited from our funding, so that they in turn

could invest in their activities for the community. Tetbury in Bloom and Christmas in Tetbury also received grant funding from us.

We are responsible for a number of 'Green Spaces' around the town and we employed an additional gardener in the summer months to cope with the high level of work required. This allowed us to maintain these areas to a good standard. We also carried out a number of emergency tree works in various areas where trees had fallen, or were deemed to be dangerous.

In order to develop the Goods Shed into a worthwhile community asset, we obtained Planning Permission for its development and set aside £50,000 from our reserves to get things off the ground. We also have been successful in obtaining money from developers in and around the town to fund this work.

For the first time in many years we have set aside funds from reserves to maintain and improve our Council Offices and an ongoing programme of works has been put together to protect the building from undue wear and tear. All the urgent work has been completed, including an unplanned roof repair over the Council Chamber where a large hole had exposed the building to the elements.

The economy of the town centre is important to us and this year we provided £12,000 to both fund our Tourist Information Centre and promote the town as a tourist attraction, in order to maintain employment in the shops and hotels in and around the town.

Our reserve hold funds for the future provision of Burial Grounds and Allotments, but identification of suitable land where development is possible is proving difficult despite us having the funding to proceed.

Our reserves remain healthy and with prudent spending we can continue to invest in our town and its people.

Chair Cllr Stephen Hirst

HERITAGE AND REGENERATION

A committee is only as good as the people who work on it. That statement may seem simplistic, but there is a mountain of truth behind it! The success of this year's Heritage and Regeneration is down to the diversity of the committee members and first, I should like to thank my Vice Chair Councillor Tina Stevenson who I can always count on for support and common sense. It is Jenny Hunt the Deputy Clerk, however, who takes the minutes and collates the information and the figures, which really makes sense of our meetings and then who acts, turning our thoughts into reality. Thank you Jenny.

"Heritage and Regeneration" almost seems a paradox. How can you have one without being at the expense of the other? Well this year it's been good to have some Councillors who have a lot of knowledge of the Heritage of our town, as well as some who have a new outlook on our wonderful town; truly, the best of both worlds. The good thing about our committee is the fact we have members of the public who come and sit with us (sometimes they even stay and come back!) - and who help us and give us direction from grass-roots level. One of the great successes recently has been working with the Rail Lands Trust, due to the hard work and enthusiasm of both the trust and the leadership of Will Cook. Having Will and his team come and sit and talk with us has been a joy and it certainly encapsulates what Heritage and Regeneration is all about. When it's finished I hope they all take centre stage and we as Councillors will surely sit in the audience and give them a standing ovation. This is one of the things we do best – we give both support and encouragement.

We also have the remit for smaller projects, whether it is supplying a wobble board for Webb Road, a waste bin for Northfield Road, or for the parade organised by Mayor Ball of the 29th squadron on the 27th June - and the subsequent medal presentation and Church service.



In addition, we entered the GRCC village of the year competition and in just seven days won a prize! We also look at and authorise tree work, one such major work was the copper beach tree at Cooks Pool.

Thanks to our work with the public, we are currently opening up informal discussions with concerned parties in regard to the Tetbury to Kemble footpath. This is thanks to Giles Preston, who has been sitting in on some of our meetings and since he knows some of the people concerned, has been able to assist. We are also looking at taking over the Ashes burial section of St Saviours. It was this committee

where I first submitted the burial ground report to discuss.

Finally I would like to thank all of the committee for doing such a good job. We might not always agree, but robust debate is the cornerstone of democracy and I have enjoyed being Chair of this committee. It is always an honour serving the people of Tetbury and I would like to thank the people of Tetbury for making this my home, your home, our home. A place we can say welcome to and in which we can be proud, safe and happy.

Chair Cllr Kevin Painter



PLANNING

In the last year Tetbury Town Council has received a general flow of planning applications, which have gone before the planning committee. These have ranged from small- to medium-sized domestic extensions, one-off houses and small developments. This Council year we have not received any applications for larger schemes, mainly since the number of allocated houses for Tetbury from 2011 to 2031 is 763 dwellings - and 739 of these have already been permitted, leaving only 27 new dwellings to be built over this plan period. The only application we've received of this type was from Redrow Homes, for 120 houses off Blind Lane (opposite SWRS), but this was subsequently withdrawn.

The scheme for 25 houses at The Dormers was finally granted permission on December the 10th last year. It's worth noting that this application and the permissions at Highfield Farm (250 houses) and Bath Road (39) were all outline applications, which merely grant permission for the principle of residential development on these sites. We as a planning committee are looking forward to receiving the detailed applications which will show us greater information about the actual house types, (floor plans and elevations), road layouts and open spaces - and this will give us the opportunity to discuss and review them. Please don't forget that members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings.

Some previously approved smaller schemes have been completed, such as the Pegler's Garage and Police Station sites, with 4 and 3 houses respectively - and the scheme for 3 apartments and 4 houses on the land at the rear of 19 Market Place, which will be completed by the early summer.

There has been a lot of debate in the media recently about the emerging Local Plan for Cotswold District, especially the proposed housing land allocations. The Local Plan is the key policy document, which will guide decisions on the use of land in our district up to 2031, and it must comply with the government's National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out guidelines on delivering sustainable development. In other words, we must meet the government's sustainability criteria while also taking account of the aspirations of local communities - twin aims that are very difficult to reconcile. This situation is not unique to the Cotswolds as many authorities across the country are facing the very same dilemma.

Members of the planning committee met recently with a Planning Consultant to make comments on the Cotswold District local Plan and some of our concerns are outlined below:

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP



This group was set up in 2013 to prepare a town plan which would not only be the footprint for the next 20 years, but give a firm indication of what the town wants in the way of housing and facilities, with cast iron evidence to support that.

Completion and acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan would be a major factor in Cotswold District Council's decisions on planning applications, which emphasises the importance of us completing ours. Across the country, over 1200 communities are preparing plans, with 8 starting in the Cotswolds. Some 30 have been approved, including Malmesbury, who were one of the front runners.

Whilst it may seem that Tetbury has exceeded its district share of housing already approved, the town still needs to be aware that other developments may come forward and needs in place a robust plan which has assessed the suitability or otherwise of alternative sites.

With the sites already with planning permission, - Highfield Farm, SIAC/Matbro, Berrells Rd, Autonomis, the Dormers in Cirencester Rd and Quercus Park we need to ensure that infrastructure is in place as they become developed.



“The Town Council is concerned that the recent planning permissions for over 700 new dwellings have not been granted with sufficient supporting infrastructure to maintain a pleasant and prosperous community. In particular, there are concerns regarding the need for sufficient medical, youth and leisure facilities to meet the needs of the incoming population. The Town Council therefore questions how the allocation “supports and strengthens” Tetbury and asks the Planning Authority to provide evidence how this will be achieved through the local plan process. The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to achieve maximum benefit from the S106 contributions that have been secured.

Affordable housing needs to be carefully designed and marketed to meet the needs of the local population. Tetbury Council has prepared a Housing Needs Survey (2014) which it will share with the Planning Authority and which will underpin its Neighbourhood Plan. The survey identified that 57 households with a local connection have identified themselves as being in need of affordable housing in the parish.

The Town Council is concerned that there is insufficient housing for local young people who wish to remain in Tetbury and hope that the new housing will go some way to providing affordable and attractive accommodation. Some of the recent permissions sought to prioritise local people and this approach should be sustained into the future. Tetbury’s new housing should first meet the needs of the local population.

The Town Council supports the relatively small allocation of new housing in the proposals and would resist further housing proposals.”

Finally - and a concern for all of us in Tetbury - is the current discussions about 2,000 homes being proposed on the site of Cotswold Airport, which seems to be an alternative to building 2,350 homes in the Chesterton area of Cirencester. We are keeping a close eye on how this moves forward, as it will certainly make roads into and out of our town even more congested.

Chair Cllr Ian Maslin

The extra population they will generate means that we need to assess capacity in sports and leisure facilities, schools, surgeries, day centres and these are all being worked on. The constantly changing developments have inevitably meant a delay in producing a plan, but we know that Malmesbury took three years with theirs – we are in year two. Malmesbury have been very forthcoming in helping us formulate our plan.

In 2013, we canvassed public opinion and highlighted the areas of what residents liked about Tetbury, what they didn’t like and what they wanted changing – in graphic form, these can be highlighted as:

Some of these are outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan but many are part of what the NPG are working on – youth facilities, doctor’s surgery, and cycle routes, for instance.



What’s good about Tetbury?



What’s not so good?



What needs changing?

Larger versions of these graphics can be found on our website <http://www.tetburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/> as can records of our meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings and members of the public are encouraged to make a contribution. We are very grateful for those volunteers who have joined the group and are willing to put in the hours and intelligent contribution and to the Town Council staff for their enthusiastic input.

If you need any further information, please contact me, Barry Gibbs at 01666 504405 (e-mail barrygibbs@rfx.org.uk) or our Town Clerk, Natalie Haines at 01666 504670 (e-mail clerk@tetbury.gov.uk)

Chairman – Barry Gibbs



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NEW PICKET HARP ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION



At the AGM held recently, a new committee was formed, with Derek Bloxham as Chairman. Subscriptions of £40 per large allotment and £35 for smaller ones were paid for this year. All 28 allotments are currently being cultivated and there is a short waiting list of just seven people. Allotment holders at the meeting discussed various successes and failures and it was obvious that not only do they enjoy the growing but also the social chat... Allotment holders were reminded that The Priory Inn are happy to exchange meal vouchers for fresh locally grown vegetables and various holders have been glad to do that, when overwhelmed with produce from their allotment.

Tetbury Town Council, who set up the allotments, have been looking for land for more - and this may happen as part of the new development at Highfield Farm.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE



It's been another interesting, varied and busy year here at the TIC and you never know what you are going to be asked. From the never-ending directions for Highgrove to "Where can I get a Tetbury pork pie?" - it certainly keeps you on your toes!

In time for Christmas the Tetbury Tourism Group launched the Book of Treats with discounts and offers from many of the towns' businesses to encourage visitors and residents to "shop local". The book is available from the TIC or from participating traders.

We continue to sell Alexcars day trips, and can now book excursions and holidays with Marchants of Cheltenham.

Walking and cycling are both popular with both residents and tourists and we stock a good range of maps to satisfy all abilities. New this year is the Cotswold and Severn Vale cycle tour - £3.99, produced by Cotswolds Tourism.

This year we have encouraged local crafts people to rent our window space and have had displays from Hookhouse Pottery, quilts, bunting and accessories from Christine Higgs - and scarves, ties and rugs from Cotswold Woollen Weavers. Now, some of these items are stocked permanently in the shop.

Our Cards for Good Causes Christmas shop was well supported by both residents and tourists alike and this year we also had an exclusive Tetbury Christmas card by local artist Barry Barnes.

We are the only stockist of "The Americans in Tetbury" - a new book by historian Merlin Fraser about the 654th Engineer Topographic Battalion of the First American Army who, for a brief time during the late stages of WWII, touched the lives of the people of Tetbury.

Our latest campaign is to raise money to buy bunting, which usually goes up in time for the Woolsack races. The previous bunting had disintegrated and was thrown away, so shops and local business have been asked to contribute to a fund ensuring the bunting will go up and that Tetbury will look special throughout the summer.

Do please call in and see us at the TIC! You may be surprised at what we have to offer.

Jackie Williams

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY 2014 – 2015

Last year I likened the work of the Highways Working Party to painting the Forth Bridge, the job is never complete. This year has been a prime example.

This year has been a most difficult year to achieve satisfaction and it's mostly due to the fact that the County Council re-tendered the Highways Contract and the new Contractor has taken an inordinate time to work up to an acceptable level of performance.

We have not managed to achieve any new parking spaces this year although I can report that the Long Stay Car Park is now almost 80% full on a daily basis, during the week.

The Feoffees have reduced the first hour parking charge to 50p in the Chipping Car Park and Cotswold District Council have introduced a £2 all day charge for the West Street Car Park. As well as this reduction CDC have introduced a £50 per annum season ticket that allows parking in the West Street and Brewery Lane Car Parks from 8am to 10am and from 4pm to 6pm and Saturdays and Sundays. For weekend parking this means that this season ticket allows parking from 4pm on Friday afternoon right through until 10am on Monday morning.

Following these amendments there is a noticeable increase in parking in the West Street Car Park.

Pothole Repairs take a long time to carry out as do other minor pavement works. This would again appear to be as a result of the bedding-in of the new Contractor and it's hoped that improvements can be made in repair timeframes. Major resurfacing work has been carried out from the Market Place to the Hospital, as well as in Charlton Road.

The Traffic Order to re-organise parking in the Market Place has still not occurred and therefore we still await the new Traffic Orders, which will improve parking in the Market Place and Church Street. We have been advised that mid-year 2015 is now the target date for completion. This has taken too long to implement.

We have a number of streets in and around the Town where there are parking problems, new traffic orders are very expensive and therefore we cannot complete these in a speedy manner.

The volunteer Speedwatch team continue to operate in the speeding 'hotspots' of the town and they are to be thanked for their activity to regulate traffic speed as part of the town's efforts to eliminate road traffic accidents.

On the whole though, there has not been a satisfactory level of achievements during 2014-2015. We are planning on a much more successful 2015-2016.

CHRISTMAS IN TETBURY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15



Large crowds braved the cold on the evening of Thursday 4th December to enjoy the annual switch-on of the Tetbury Christmas lights. Having taken time out from his grotto in the Market Hall, Santa switched on the lights, assisted by two competition winning pupils - Charlie Sharpe from Saint Mary's Primary School and Rumi Rowe from Sir William Romney's School. This was preceded by a torchlight procession from St Mary's Church in which over 150 children took part followed by entertainment from St Mary's School choir, community carols accompanied by Avening Silver

Band, dancing from Arts Frenzy and music from the Big Brunch Band. Many stalls in and around the Market Hall offered a wide choice of Christmas fayre. It is a wonderful community event and a real team effort. For more information, together with photographs of the event, visit the website at: www.christmasintetbury.org.uk

Thank you to Tetbury Town Council for their donation towards the town centre lights and to the staff for all their support with the road closures.

Liz Farnham, Town Councillor and Christmas in Tetbury Press Officer

TETBURY POLICE

Tetbury Police have been working alongside a number of local groups and organisations, targeting different areas of concerns and criminal activity and also assisting in town events, including -

- Test Purchase Operations targeting sales of alcohol to underage age youths
- Licensing checks carried out in the Tetbury area in partnership with the licensing department from the Cotswold District Council
- Helping with the Remembrance Sunday Parade
- Tetbury Woolsack Race
- Tetbury 'Wacky Races'
- Tetbury Christmas lights
- Tetbury MOP Fair
- The execution of warrants in the area as a direct result of concerns and intelligence gained from local residents
- Speed Checks at various locations throughout Tetbury
- Help in the setting up of the Tetbury Community Speed watch
- Use of Mobile CCTV Cameras at various location across Tetbury
- Work carried out alongside Tetbury Town Council, Sir William Romney School and St Mary's School, Dolphins Hall Committee. Tetbury Neighbourhood Watch Schemes
- Neighbourhood priorities targeting issues including The Recreational Area, speeding and St Mary's Road
- Neighbourhood Consultation Group meetings, where members of the public are invited to come along and talk with the local Policing team, reference any concerns or issue's they may have
- Tetbury Police working in the Town Council offices
- Holding of surgeries for members of the public to attend and meet the local Police
- Work carried out alongside various Housing associations and Tenants groups.

We would like to thank all the support received from the Town Council, Cotswold District Council, local groups and businesses and, most importantly, the residents - in helping us Police Tetbury. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the future to make it a more peaceful and safe place to both live and work.

A date to put into your diary is Tuesday 2nd June (time to be confirmed) at The Market Place Tetbury, where the Neighbourhood Engagement Vehicle will be in situ with The Police and Crime Commissioner Mr Martin SURL and your local policing team. All members of public and local businesses are encouraged to attend, to ask questions and to give their views on local policing.

Tetbury Police can be contacted by telephoning the non-emergency number 101. We are also contactable on line either via the Constabulary website. www.gloucestershire.police.uk and follow the links from the Neighbourhood Policing section on the left of the page, or email to one of the officers below.

firstname.secondname@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk

Many Thanks



PC Leah Davis (Area Beat Manager)



PCSO's Sue Fellows & Paul Hancock

DOLPHINS RECREATION CENTRE

The trust is, as most people know, run by a management committee of trustees representing users of the hall, the sports clubs, Tetbury Town council and residents. That committee is split down to working groups who make their recommendations as to the main needs of the trust

- Hall Committee – responsible for the upkeep of the hall
- Grounds Committee – responsible for the upkeep of the recreation ground
- Bookings/Marketing Committee – responsible for the promotion of the hall for potential users and satisfying existing users
- New Build project committee - responsible for progressing the new Dolphins Centre project through planning, fund raising and community involvement.

Much has happened on all fronts this last year.

Hall

We are continuing to improve the existing hall and in the last 12 months have re-surfaced the floor, improved the entrance foyer and updated the kitchen facilities by a new cooker and fridge. We have changed the licence arrangements for the bar, which means that we now have the licence ourselves. The Snooty Fox has agreed to run the bar on our behalf and is able to provide both bar and catering facilities for events.

Grounds

You will have seen the enlargement of the front parking area, which has provided a further seven much needed permit holders’ spaces. Permits may be obtained through the Town council offices. At the other end of the rec. we will shortly be re-surfacing the Hampton St. car park for the benefit of all users of the recreation ground.

Much of the perimeter hedge has been cut back to promote the growth of the trees along the hedge.

Bookings/marketing

The booking form has been simplified and can be found on our website www.dolphinshalltetbury.co.uk

New Build project

In June last year we invited residents to a public presentation of the plans for the new Dolphins Centre, and taking on board some of the comments made then the we have been working with our architects and are now ready to submit a planning application for the new design. Our initial discussions with the planners have been encouraging and we believe we are on the right track for planning approval.



Presentation day in June

Two questions are being asked:

When will it be completed? And: How does this project tie in with the goods shed project?

The answer to the first question is very much dependent on when the houses planned for around Tetbury are completed. Much of our funding is linked to money being released by developers as part of their community contribution and that will be released when a certain number of houses are built .The current projections are that it could be 2017/18 before all the funds are available to us, however, if we secure some other funding streams, we will look to perhaps obtain a loan to bridge the timing gap.

This is such a key project for the town, meeting the needs of so many groups both now and when the population increases, that a short delay would be worth enduring to give the town what it desperately needs - a modern community centre with good facilities which everyone will enjoy.

The answer to the other question is easier to answer.

This shows the separate activities specific to each venue, with little overlap between the two.

The next two years will be exciting times for the town – let’s look forward to them!

Chairman – Barry Gibbs





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2015/16 ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR TONY HICKS



Basic information – County population – circ 600k

The Democratic framework. Gloucestershire has 6 MPs, the County Council has 53 elected Division Members and there are 6 Districts with an average of 33 elected Ward Members. My County Division covers 16 Towns or Parishes, consisting of between 5 and 14 elected Councillors.

The Past – 2014/15. County Council spend – some £428 million non-school and £390million schools. This was the last year of the 4-year savings plan, which we achieved with very little reduction of services. We protected services for children, young people and adults, froze council tax, invested in public health activities, reduced our debt burden, increased apprenticeships across the County, supported libraries, improved Fire and Rescue services and planned substantial waste disposal developments. In spite of difficult weather conditions and the introduction of a new Highways contract, we managed road conditions reasonably well, too. Our local schools have fared well and support from our County education staff has been helpful in the current climate of ever more demanding OFSTED standards.

The New – 2015/16. County Council spend will be £420 million non-School, and some increase to £400 million funding for schools (including 204 Primary and 38 Secondary schools). This means we are still having to make more savings, but at a lower level than in the previous year. This still means some challenging re-shaping of services. For example in adult care, where people are living longer and have more complex needs, we are investing to enable people to stay in their own homes rather than having them take up beds in hospitals and residential homes. We are also working closely with our NHS colleagues to provide more efficient clinical and social care. We are also helping learning-disabled young people to lead more independent lives with better chances for employment, rather than getting stuck in residential homes.

Most of what will continue to be achieved will be looking after children and families with needs, continuing public health support, improving highways, trading standards, libraries, the Fire Service and waste disposal. We also look forward to further improvements in apprenticeships and in local schools.

TETBURY IN BLOOM

This year Tetbury in Bloom in its current incarnation celebrates its tenth anniversary.

We have come a long way since being given permission in 2005 by Tetbury Town Council and the Feoffees to take over the planning and maintenance of the flowerbed on the Knapp.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the year (except when there is snow on the ground or a really hard frost) between five and nine regular volunteers garden the town in the name of Tetbury in Bloom, increasing to eleven on evenings in June and early July when we plant the summer bedding.

We care for the iconic roundabout at the Cirencester entrance to the town, all the beautiful flowerbeds on London Road and in Saint Marys' churchyard, The Diana Memorial bed, Anniversary Gardens, the roadside bed at the hospital, the bed on the Knapp, the public toilets in Old Brewery Lane, the fire station, the library, the Twizzle, the delightful garden at the front of Old Coombe House, the side garden and frontage of The Dolphins Hall, the troughs at each entrance to the town - and the floral displays in the many planters around the centre of town and on the lampposts.

Well done and thank you to Sue Hirst and the team for all their hard work. Thank you also to the Town Council for its on-going financial support and to the grounds staff for their assistance and for maintaining the grassed areas.

For up-to-date information on how the various flowerbeds and planting initiatives have matured in recent years, for a full list of sponsors and a programme of events, visit our website at: www.tetburyinbloom.org.uk

Cllr Liz Farnham, Tetbury in Bloom Representative on Tetbury Town Council

TETBURY RAIL LANDS REGENERATION TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1092160 PATRON: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES



Here is a roundup of the progress we have made towards converting Tetbury's redundant Goods Shed into an Arts Centre in the last year:

First and foremost the original drawings have been formalised by an architect, enabling us to submit them for a variation on the planning consent and planning approval has been given.

Following a visit to the Corinium Museum we are considering the refinement of retractable, staged, comfortable seating. This would optimize everyone's experience for film shows, concerts and presentations. The chairs would be housed in a compact storage unit which would keep them in mint condition throughout many years of use. The freestanding chairs and collapsible tables that we would also need for interactive and social events would be stored under the stage. Our target budget to include this marvelous improvement stands at £589,000.

In funding this we have had both successes and disappointments. It was a blow to have our Entrust bid deferred. There is a sense that Tetbury is affluent and well catered for already - and this is why it has been difficult to attract grant aid, but the reality is that we have every demographic group within our community and although we may have smart shops in the town that reflect our royal connection to Highgrove, the infrastructure that Tetbury enjoys badly needs updating and we have fewer facilities than most of our neighboring towns. Thanks to Mr. Beeching we already have an amazing building complete with plenty of parking. Our funding group has re-applied to Entrust, in line with their suggestions, and has also presented new bids to three other large funding bodies. We are approximately £170,000 short but if our bids are successful full-scale work should begin this autumn.

Meanwhile our local small fund-raising efforts have surpassed our expectations and we have doubled the amount we pledged to raise a year ago in the Goods Shed bank account.

Money has come in from the rolling events calendar, individuals who have run events and gifted the profits to the Goods Shed and from donations from individuals and small trust funds. I am sure you will agree the events which have been put on by our helpers have been amazing. To name some; the sculpture show, dog show, cream teas, open garden, concerts, the WW II commemorations, the carol service, community walk, art exhibition and so on.

In addition to this there have also been many positive improvements to the Goods Shed, thanks to the efforts of our ever-expanding army of volunteers. The old platform has been dismantled, leaving a small stage to which temporary steps have been fitted. This gives us a big useful hall and we are already making full use of it! We have been provided with a free versatile lighting system and are about to get more power points and emergency exit signs. The floor has been levelled and covered with a cheap second-hand carpet. The stubborn old ironwork has been removed from the outside cattle loading bay by contractors, so it can now be restored to its former glory, complete with its original timber posts. The repair of the brickwork will be done by volunteers in the spring, so we will soon have our outside performance area ready for use. Finally, fire escape doors are about to be fitted within the original main doors.

Plans for the coming year include a dazzling art show, an ambitious weekend music festival and many other events so please keep an eye on our website: tetburyraillands.co.uk Culture lovers will have plenty to look forward to!

Thank you for your support in the last year.

Will Cook (chairman of the Rail Lands Trust)

