



SHIPSTON ON STOUR TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019



Clr Ian Cooper
Town Mayor of Shipston on Stour
01March2019



The Town Council and how it operates

Introduction by Ian Cooper – Mayor of Shipston

In my first column in the Forum on becoming Mayor in May last year, I alluded to the fact that we had a strong and unified council, one that worked together for the common goal of the betterment of the town, but as individuals were open to express their opinions and challenge the decisions that the council was looking to make.

Supported by a strong and knowledgeable Clerk's team, this way of working has continued throughout this past year, providing the Town with the knowledge that decisions affecting its business are being correctly considered.

It is also a testament to the strength and unification of the council that we have not had any councillors leave during the year and have maintained a full and active council membership.

There are elections coming up this May, and a small number of our councillors have decided not to stand for re-election due to their own personal circumstances. On behalf of the council I'd like to thank them for their outstanding contribution and effort over a number of years.

The role of Town Councillor is not recompensed, and Town Councillors take no remuneration for their work. As Mayor, I receive an allowance to cover the additional expenses that I and the Mayoress incur, during our year in office representing the Town throughout Warwickshire and neighbouring counties. We should all, as a community, be grateful for the effort and commitment that individual councillors make towards this common objective of a better place for our residents.

I'd also like to thank the Mayoress for her contribution over this past year, it being quite a busy year personally, she has attended and hosted events and has been a real ambassador for the town – thank you Tina.

History

Since 1974, when Shipston Rural District Council was amalgamated with Stratford District Council, the previous Shipston Parish Council was elevated to Shipston Town Council, this meant that the Chair of the Council became the Town Mayor. Shipston has been fortunate to have been represented by many fine men and women of the town, in recognition of their extraordinary commitment we have introduced, like most of our neighboring towns, past Mayor Medals.

Members of the Town Council as follows, representing Shipston North and Shipston South Wards:



Ian C Cooper

(Mayor 2018 – 2019)

01608 663785

ian.cooper@shipstontowncouncil.org



Dan Scobie

(Deputy Mayor 2018 – 2019)

01608 666131 or 07771 772511

dan.scobie@shipstontowncouncil.org



Brian Cooper

01608 663237

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Martin Ferrier

07814 092134

martin.ferrier@shipstontowncouncil.org



Brian Healey

01608 663237

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Mrs Alison Henderson

01608 661911

ali.henderson@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mrs Fay Ivens

01608 662133

fay.iven@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mrs Veronica Murphy

01608 664518

c/o clerk@shipstononline.org



Paul Rathkey

01608 664141

paul.rathkey@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mrs Sheelagh Saunders

07800 889947

sheelagh.saunders@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mrs Jackie Warner

07717 391234

jackie.warner@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mrs Marianne Westwood

01608 662223

marianne.westwood@shipstontowncouncil.org



Mr Peter White

07792 507168

peter.white@shipstontowncouncil.org

Town Clerk



Georgina Beaumont

In post from May 2009
01608 662180
clerk@shipstononline.org

Deputy Town Clerk



Jayne Potter

In post from June 2014
01608 662180
assistant@shipstononline.org

Town Crier



Marion Lowe

In post from May 2009



Meeting dates – 2018 to 2019

Time: 7.00 to 9.00 pm at New Clark House

MONTH	Main Council Meeting	Additional Meeting if called	Working Group Meetings				
			Finance	Comms.	Monday	Planning	General Purposes
2018 May	14 th	-	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 21 st May	Tuesday – 7.00 pm 29 th May	TBC
June	11 th	25 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 18 th June	Monday – 7.00 pm 25 th June	TBC
July	9 th	23 rd	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 16 th July	Monday – 7.00 pm 23 rd July	TBC
August	13 th	-	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 20 th August	Tuesday – 7.00 pm 28 th August	TBC
September	10 th	24 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 17 th September	Monday – 7.00 pm 24 th September	TBC
October	8 th	22 nd	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 15 th October	Monday – 7.00 pm 22 nd October	TBC
November	12 th	26 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 19 th November	Monday – 7.00 pm 26 th November	TBC
December	Christmas toast 10 th	-	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 17 th December	Planning Sustainability General Purposes	To be confirmed
2019 January	14 th	28 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 21 st January	Monday – 7.00 pm 28 th January	TBC
February	11 th	25 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 18 th February	Monday – 7.00 pm 25 th February	TBC
March	11 th	25 th	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 18 th March	Monday – 7.00 pm 25 th March	TBC
April	8 th	ATM 9 th Townsend Hall	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 15 th April	Tuesday – 7.00 pm 23 rd April	TBC
May	Annual Meeting 13 th Mayor Making	-	6.30 pm	7.30 pm	Monday 20 th May	Tuesday – 7.00 pm 28 th May	TBC

Town Council Committee Structure

Members are summoned to full council meetings and are therefore legally obliged to attend.

Areas of responsibility are allocated to Working Groups, whose remit is to provide research and recommendations for full council to debate and make agreement on. Working Groups sanctioned by Town Council are:

- General Purposes Working Group
- Staffing Working Group
- Planning Working Group
- Finance Working Group
- Communications Working Group
- HALP – Heritage, Amenities and Leisure Projects Working Group

General Purposes Working Group

Members

Chairman: Councillor Fay Ivens

Councillors: M Westwood, V Murphy, S Saunders, B Healey

General purposes have the most extensive and wide-ranging remit of all the groups, it is responsible for: six play areas; street furniture (e.g. bins and seats); the cemetery and chapels, St Edmund's closed churchyard, the Centenary Garden (aka the gyratory garden), two allotments sites at New Street and Shoulderway Lane. It also has responsibility for the general upkeep of New Clark House and hire of the council chamber for community group meetings.

Over the past year, the General Purposes WG have instigated or been involved with issues such as:

- Monthly litter pick
- Review of the Cemetery tariffs
- Review of GP Terms of Reference
- Consideration of additional street furniture and amenities
- Working with the Town's contractors at times of Flood
- Holding the Annual Allotment Meeting and competition for the best plot

Staffing Working Group

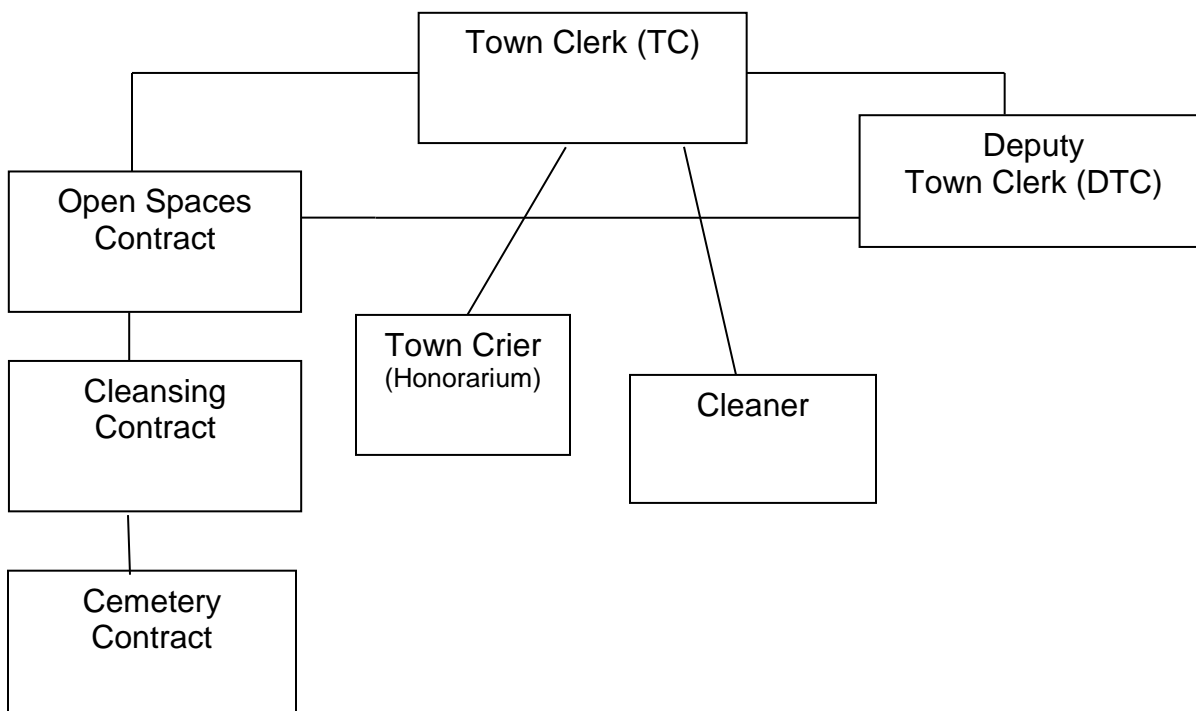
Members

Chairman: Councillor Veronica Murphy

Councillors: F Ivens, A Henderson, D Scobie

The Staffing Working Group takes responsibility for all aspects of employment. The Council thinks highly of its staff and associates, and works closely with the Town Clerk, to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of the team. The group oversees the remit and responsibilities of each employee, their training, remuneration and entitlements and advises the Town Council on the correct staffing levels and structure to enable the Council to work efficiently in the discharge of its duties.

Staffing Structure 2018/2019



Town Crier – Mrs Marion Lowe

I remain honoured to represent Shipston at competitions entered not only locally, but as far as Hertfordshire, which was organised by a lady town crier, and won by a lady town crier, unfortunately not me!

I have also attended Civic functions, such as this Annual Town Meeting, the Civic Service, Mayor Making and Songs of Praise, and most or all of our local events.

I announced the marriage of Prince Harry to Megan Markle. I look forward to announcing the forthcoming birth!

Finance Working Group

Members

Chairman: Councillor Ian Cooper

Councillors: A Henderson, F Ivens, V Murphy, D Scobie

The Finance Working Group (FWG) meets monthly, and more frequently for the review of annual financial statements and the Precept preparation. It is responsible for the efficient control and management of the Council's financial affairs and its financial standing. It reviews annual estimates of income and expenditure, including the provision for capital expenditure, and recommends to Council the community charge (precept) to be levied.

It also has the responsibility for scrutinising the financial implications of areas overseen by other committees and advises on the viability of such proposals before implementation.

The FWG does not have responsibility to make decisions directly but will provide any recommendations as to required actions or issues to the full council.

Rest assured, it is a statutory requirement of Town Councils to have our accounts and activities audited, and as well as our internal audit procedures, Grant Thornton provide an external audit in line with NALC guidelines – once again results for Shipston were extremely positive.

Planning Working Group

Members

Chairmen: Councillors Martin Ferrier and Brian Cooper

Councillors: Rathkey, Warner, Henderson, Saunders, Westwood

Co-opted members: P Sykes, P Tesh, P Wragg, R Taylor, E Jackson

The Council is increasingly aware of the workings of planning law and its importance to the development of the town, in future we will be benefitting from professional planning advice.

Although the Town Council is not the Planning Authority, which comes under the remit of the District Council, the Town Council is a statutory planning consultee and has the right to be notified of any planning applications affecting its area, and to make comments which the planning authority must take into account.

Communications Working Group

Members

Chairman: Councillor Peter White

Councillors: I Cooper, D Scobie

The communications working group meet monthly to review and update all of the Town Council's communication tools to ensure that we are communicating effectively to all Shipston residents. Councillors on the Communications Working Group are Peter White, Dan Scobie & Ian Cooper.

Shipston Forum

The contract for producing the Shipston Forum is with Catherine Martin Communications (CMC) until March 2020. Additional copies have recently been added to the print run for the new homes in Shipston. Copies of the Forum are available from New Clark House and the library. The group welcomes any feedback from readers regarding the Forum although please contact the office if you are not having a copy delivered. All copies of the Forum are available on the website.



www.Shipstontowncouncil.org

The website continues to be a useful tool for the TC and is hosted by Redwax until March 2020. All TC meeting agenda's and minutes are loaded onto the website for all residents to access. The Shipston Neighbourhood Plan website has recently been attached to the Town Council website so people can view the approved document online.

Facebook @shipston.council & Twitter @shipstononline

At the time of writing, the number of Facebook likes was at 1,091 and Twitter followers was 951. The social media pages are managed by Councillors White and Scobie so there are no costs associated with running both pages. The pages are extremely useful in providing followers with up-to-date information on local news and events.

HALP – Heritage, Amenities and Leisure Projects

Members

Chairman: Councillors Sheelagh Saunders and Marianne Westwood

Councillors: B Healey; V Murphy; A Henderson

Co-opted members: N Willis; Richard Henderson

The HALP group was established to take over from the previous Tourism Group, it was considered that it should cover a much wider remit to include the consequent projects given in the approved Neighbourhood Plan.

Projects the group are working on include: the establishment of a Joint Heritage and Tourist Information Centre; the Mill Street Riverside landscaping; a review of all current signage in the town, including Town signs on the 5 entrances to Shipston, fingerpost signs, car parking signs and finger post signs to town centre and attractions.

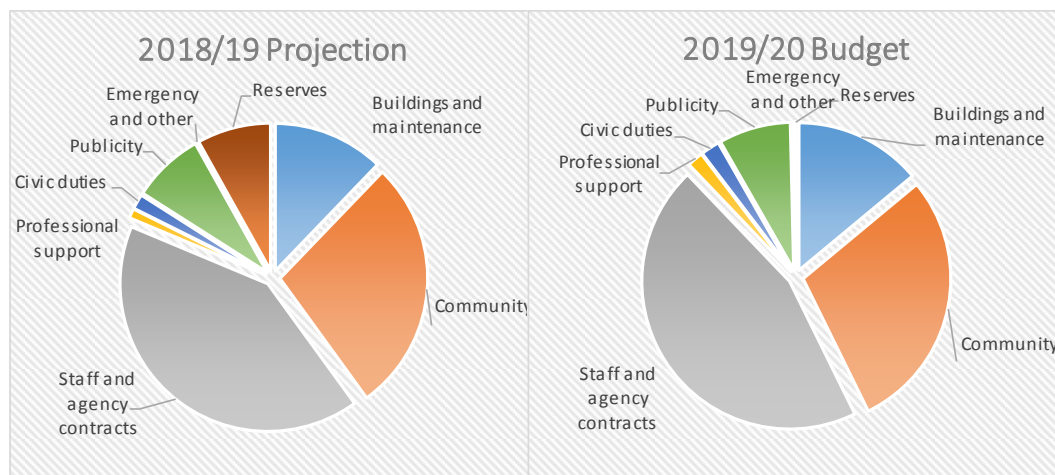


The Town Council's Financial Awareness

The Town Council takes seriously its responsibilities to contain its costs and adopts a rigid approach when compiling its budget to take account of new criteria to substantiate council spends. The budget (precept) for 2019/20 was prepared by careful review of expenditure to date and on continuing to limit any potential increases by comparison to current year's budget and previous years.

The Town Council unanimously approved the 2019/20 precept proposals put forward by the Finance Working Group in January 2019. These will enable your Town Council to continue with its work in ensuring that we offer the services to ensure your Town remains a pleasant and comfortable place to live.

Where does your town council spend its money



	2018/19 Projection	2019/20 Budget
Buildings and maintenance	£34,724	£39,759
Community	£79,381	£81,900
Staff and agency contracts	£117,734	£128,569
Professional support	£3,021	£5,045
Civic duties	£4,710	£5,950
Publicity	£22,483	£22,483
Emergency and other	£0	£1,000
Reserves	£23,081	£46

During 2018/19, the Town Council has undertaken re-surfacing works at New Street car park, as well as maintenance of play areas, and the cemetery. Cleaning, upkeep and maintenance services remain a priority for the Town Council, and again have proved effective.

In 2019/20, we plan to continue with our support of community organisations and community projects, while maintaining our focus on communication and publicity for the town and providing funding for some significant projects to enhance our growing Town.

The money for our expenditure does not just come from council tax charges, in addition to a diminishing Government reduction grant, we receive money in for some of the agency services we provide, including town-centre Street cleaning

and grass cutting. We receive income from rentals and lettings of some of our buildings and facilities, as well as charges that are made for allotment and burial services.

Our annual expenditure is increasing as our town grows and as we maintain our assets, however we are managing our costs and once again have managed our overall precept demand to ensure that the Town Council element of the cost to the “average Band D” household will not increase compared to 2018/19, a total of £107.91 per year, or just £2.07 per week. The contribution we receive from the Government has more than halved, but this has been offset to some extent by our increasing housing base.

Shipston on Stour Town Council
Precept base

Year	Precept	Council Tax Reduction Grant	Cost to Average Band 'D' household	inc / (dec) %	Council tax base	inc	inc / (dec) %
2009-2010	£225,000.00	no information given	£108.37				
2010-2011	£225,000.00	no information given	£107.85	-0.5%			
2011-2012	£206,000.00	no information given	£98.14	-9.0%			
2012-2013	£206,000.00	no information given	£95.78	-2.4%			
2013-2014	£206,000.00	£23,000.00	£95.78	0.0%	1,910.6		
2014-2015	£206,000.00	£20,480.00	£95.78	0.0%	1,936.9	26.3	1.4%
2015-2016	£216,000.00	£20,840.00	£100.96	5.4%	1,933.0	3.9	-0.2%
2016-2017	£232,000.00	£18,460.00	£108.51	7.5%	1,967.9	34.9	1.8%
2017-2018	£232,000.00	£13,710.00	£107.66	-0.8%	2,027.6	59.7	3.0%
2018-2019	£232,000.00	£10,980.00	£107.88	0.2%	2,048.8	21.2	1.0%
2019-2020	£243,000.00	£4,260.00	£107.91	0.0%	2,212.4	163.6	8.0%

We also compare well with the other market towns, and although we all face different challenges, we would like to think that we can be pleased with the results that we achieve.

Comparative Town and Parish Council precept information Source: Stratford District Council						
Town/ Parish	Year	Gross Expenditure	Contingency & Reserves	Income	Net Expenditure	Precept
		£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'s
Alcester	2018/19	302	0	51	251	250,746
	2019/20	312	0	52	260	259,832
Bidford-on-Avon	2018/19	230	50	27	253	253,345
	2019/20	245	50	23	272	272,165
Shipston-on-Stour	2018/19	272	3	54	221	221,020
	2019/20	285	0	46	239	238,740
Southam	2018/19	219	-5	12	202	201,685
	2019/20	234	-5	9	220	220,450
Stratford-upon-Avon	2018/19	828	-48	284	496	496,472
	2019/20	916	-140	271	505	505,452
Studley	2018/19	164	15	10	169	168,720
	2019/20	184	0	10	174	173,612
Wellsbourne	2018/19	230	0	5	225	225,000
	2019/20	235	0	5	230	230,000

The Town Council Working in Partnership

- **CCTV**

The CCTV network is a vital tool in combatting crime and disorder and is seen by some as an essential safeguard for the safety and wellbeing of those living, working or just visiting the town.

In partnership with the District Council the CCTV Forum has successfully been working to ensure improved CCTV coverage.

The Town Council continues to invest almost £6,000 each year to ensure full-time CCTV coverage for the town

- **Neighbourhood Plan**

This project started in 2013 and was undertaken by a small team of dedicated volunteers from the local community, with the full support of Shipston Town Council (STC).

Primarily the plan investigated the use of land within the parish, and the extensive public consultations revealed a range of residents' expectations, concerns and suggestions. These were incorporated into the plan, as far as it was possible to do so. The final version of the Shipston Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) was approved at a local referendum in September 2018, followed by the adoption of the document by Stratford District Council (SDC) shortly thereafter.

The SNP now carries 'statutory weight'. In simple terms this means SDC must, by law, consider the policies and objectives of the plan when assessing any planning applications in Shipston. It now gives the local community some real influence and control over development in the parish. This can be best illustrated by reference to a recent planning application on the South Lynn House site on the London Road which went to Appeal in December 2018. The Planning Inspector declined the appeal and made it clear that the primary reason was because the application failed to meet the requirements of a specific policy within the SNP.

The adoption of the SNP has another longer- term benefit. SDC now levies a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on all approved planning applications of 11 or more units. As a result, for applications within Shipston, the community is entitled to receive 25% of the CIL monies for identified local projects-some of those being considered can be found in the Consequent Projects section of the SNP document. Potentially this provides the opportunity to deliver some much-needed improvements to the town.

The Town Council – Environment and the Community

- **Street Furniture and Amenities**

The Town Council try to ensure that our park benches, bins, dog bins and grit bins are in good condition and placed appropriate. We have a rolling programme of maintenance and replacement of street furniture, as well as fresh installations where and when required.

- **Extreme weather conditions**

Our snow wardens are at the ready each winter, but in recent years we have had little snow. During icy weather conditions, residents are reminded, that grit bins can only be placed on public highway sites, approved by the County Council, they also replenish as needed. They cannot be placed on private ground, however worthy the cause may appear i.e. schools, doctors or hospitals.

- **Monthly litter picks**

As a council, we are proud of our town and try to ensure that the town always looks its best, by using contractors to care for the town. We also have a group of volunteer litter pickers who meet once a month, we are proud to say that

- **Allotments**

The Council provides allotment at two sites, we have a total of 87 plots, 26 at Shoulderway Lane and 61 at New Street. Each year an annual meeting is held, allotment holders are encouraged to ask questions and suggest changes. The following year's fees are agreed at the meeting, the council's aim is to ensure that this provision is cost neutral.

Community Grants and Initiatives

Each year the Town Council provide funds for local groups and organisations that provide real benefits to our community. Applications must be received by the end of October in any given year. Bids are carefully considered against set down criteria. If successful, the awards are paid during the following financial year.

Chairs of working groups are also given the opportunity to put forward their wish-list for new or existing projects within the scope of their groups for the coming year. This forethought enables funds to be set aside within the precept.



Events & Festivals

The underlining theme from all the other towns and cities we have visited has been the heartfelt warmth that people feel towards Shipston. This is probably best encapsulated by a story I referred to in one of my forum columns, where the Lord Mayor elect of Coventry told me that she was so impressed with Shipston following her official visit as part of our Wool fair celebrations last May, that she and her husband had decided to take their summer vacations in Shipston to appreciate more of the town.

Shipston has an ever-growing calendar of events and festivals throughout the year. These include: The Woolly Weekend with Shipston Wool Fair; Totally Locally Markets; Annual Civic Service; Shipston Proms; the Fish and Frolics Festival; Remembrance Parade and the Victorian Christmas Evening and Lights Switch-on, along with a number of civic occasions.

- **Shipston Wool Fair**

A conversation between a Town Councillor and a member of Rotary in 2008 about the former Wool Fairs held in the town led to the birth of this fantastic event. Shipston Wool Fair held its 10th Wool Fair in 2018 and goes from strength to strength each year. There are pens full of sheep in the town centre, waiting to be displayed in the “sheep ring” or for the shearer to remove their winter coat. Each year has seen a new one-off project, in 2010 a sheep was sheared, the fleece was washed, combed and spun into wool, then hurried to the knitters who produced the “Shipston Hat” all in one day. There are also market stalls filled with carefully selected goods that are sheep related. This event has become a major visitor attraction for the town and the shops, hostelries and eateries alike enjoy a wealth of customers throughout the day.

- **Totally Locally Markets**

A relatively new event to the town centre has been the introduction of the Totally Locally Markets, 2 or 3 markets are held each year on a Saturday in the lower part of Sheep Street, there is minimal disruption to traffic and the success of the stallholders proves that there is an appetite in the town for goods that are being sold.

- **Annual Civic Service**

At the annual Civic Service held at St Edmund’s Church, we give thanks for our town, for its strong sense of community and helping others, for its happy buzz of busy, happy people. To be a member of the Shipston Community is a very special feeling of its history and place.

- **Shipston Proms – Music Festival**

This two-week festival celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2018. There is a programme of musical events to suit every taste and genre. The last night, held in the town centre is the culmination of the festival when an audience of 1,000s is treated to a musical extravaganza by a much-anticipated headline band for the finale.

- **Fish and Frolics Festival**

The fishing festival is a relatively new event for the town, it is held at the London Road Sports Club. There is much, much more than angling to see and do, visitors can expect to be entertained by live music, wander around stalls and enjoy food and drink.



- **Remembrance Day Parade**

This annual opportunity to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers of World War I and II has been embraced by the whole community. Shipston Town Band lead the parade of soldiers, past and present, of members of the Scout movement, of civic leaders and of representatives from many other organisations, who all march from the Town Centre to St Edmund’s Church, wreaths are laid at the War Memorial outside the church. This is followed by a service of remembrance, in St Edmund’s, which is always full to capacity.



- **Victorian Evening and Christmas Lights Switch-on**

The Victorian Evening is not only a highlight of Shipston’s year, but also the start of Christmas for many residents. As soon as the Rotary Tree of Life goes up in the town centre, we know that Christmas is on its way. A very special guest every year is Father Christmas, who stays all evening to speak to the children of the town, asking them what’s on their Christmas list. The switching on of the Christmas Lights is delightful and always attracts a cheer. Once the formalities are over, visitors can indulge in all the Christmas goodies and gifts on the market stalls on High Street and Market Place. Our thanks go to Rotary for organizing this fabulous event for the town.

Deputy Mayor

Councillor Dan Scobie was appointed Deputy Mayor at the Town Council Meeting on 14th May 2018. All being well, Dan will become Mayor at the Annual Meeting on May 13th.

Dan and Cal, I wish you all the very best. I know you have recently experienced being Mayor and have no doubt that you will once again put Shipston in good custodianship.

Mayor's Report

The past year has been a bit of a celebration of milestones and anniversaries for Shipston. We have seen the 10th anniversary of the Wool fair, now under the custodianship of Ronnie Murphy, it marks the resurrection after 150 years of the Town's ancient wool fair and was the idea of past mayor and good friend of ours Angela Noyce

We also celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Proms, now a Shipstonian mainstay and summer entertainment for the Town and surrounding communities.

October saw the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 and a special Remembrance Day saw the largest parade and service at St. Edmunds. To finish off the year, in December we celebrated the 21st anniversary of the Victorian evening, again an event that has become institutional in getting us all into the Christmas spirit.

We have attended numerous Mayoral and special events outside of the town, from which we have gained ideas (good and bad) and have been able to hopefully enhance the reputation of Shipston and Shipston folk. The underlining theme from all the other towns and cities we have visited has been the heartfelt warmth that people feel towards Shipston. This is probably best encapsulated by a story I referred to in one my forum columns, where the Lord Mayor elect of Coventry told me that she was so impressed with Shipston following her official visit as part of our Wool fair celebrations last May, that her and her husband had decided to take their summer vacations in Shipston to appreciate more of what they had found in the town.



The Wool Fair was our first civic event, one of the first and a favorite amongst visiting civic dignitaries, including Mayors from Coventry, Solihull, Nuneaton, Leamington, Warwick, Stratford, Alcester and Southam and from further afield including Chipping Norton and civic representatives from Teignmouth in Devon and Wells in Somerset.

We had a great civic representation at our civic wedding blessing in January, which proved to be a lovely day for Tina and I and all those who attended. This was closely followed by the inaugural Mayors Charity Ball, which leads me on nicely to the charities which we have looked to support this year.



Supporting Youth in Shipston

As Mayor this year, I have stated that I am particularly concerned about our younger generations and believe we need greater facilities, activities and opportunities, and this has been a focus of my support and fund raising.

Shipston is going through a growth phase, it's something that we as a town council have very much on our minds and I'm pleased that Shipston's

Neighbourhood plan has now been formally adopted and gives us a plan to work towards.

From a town council point of view, we are very keen to ensure that the growth of the Town adequately supports our younger generation. We have some excellent sports facilities with strong youth development programs and many volunteers who help out with other organisations, but I have felt for some time now that we need to invest more in the future of our younger generation.

I'm was therefore delighted to have been able to announce the appointment last year of our youth ambassador and to get the endorsement from the Town Council for the formation of youth working group to represent all the aspects of youth in the town

This will ensure that our younger generation have a strong voice and a much better input to our decision making. I think this is a hugely positive step for the Town and the Town Council, and I'm very grateful to Abigale Slater who has agreed to take on the inaugural Youth Ambassador role and to help form and chair the Youth Working Group as well as to Gavin Saunders and Richard Harris, head and deputy head of the high school, who have helped put this in place.

We have a large number of organisations in the Town, all of whom recognise the importance of extending support towards the youth of our Town. This year we have worked with Rotary, the Lions, and the Joint Churches along with the Youth Club and our new Youth Working Group to engage with what they are doing to support our youth. As a Town Council we see it as our role to pull together these interests and co-ordinate a framework for the future of our youth.

We were delighted with the success of our inaugural Mayors Valentines Ball which raised over £1,900 in funds to support the Youth Club and increased the awareness of its activities. Our Youth Club not only provides a facility for the youth of the Town, but is the umbrella that youth support workers operate under to provide outreach and counselling services. I see this in being an essential spoke of youth strategy for Shipston, sitting alongside youth development sections at our excellent sports clubs and other youth organisations such as the scouts and brownies. The youth club will seek to address the issues for those who do not affiliate with these other organisations. It is encouraging that both the Youth Club and the Youth Working Group have now brought forward the results of surveys carried out to identify issues and concerns raised by our young people and prioritise their needs and wants. Our fundraising will support the Youth Club towards specific projects to meet some of these identified needs and issues.

The Mayoress's Charity

PAPYRUS is the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Suicide is the biggest killer of young people – male and female – under 35 in the UK. Every year many thousands more attempt or contemplate suicide, harm themselves or suffer alone, afraid to speak openly about how they are feeling.

Tina came across Papyrus through a work colleague whose own daughter committed suicide and has witnessed both the devastating impact this has had and the solace and support Papyrus has provided.

Papyrus has a vision for a society which speaks openly about suicide and has the resources to help young people who may have suicidal thoughts. The Mayoress will be hosting a “Ladies Lunch” on Saturday 11th May at Shipston Rugby Club to explore this theme and raise funds in support of the charity – For more information, or to help with the event or the charity, contact Tina via the Town Council office on 01608 662180.

Thanks, and support

I'd like to say a huge thank you to all those who have helped make this past year such a huge success, to the Clerk's team Georgina and Jayne for all their support, and past mayors especially to Ronnie and Fay whose experience and reputation has been commended wherever we have travelled. To all the volunteers and community organisations that help make this community so strong and to all my fellow councillors for their hard work and dedication towards Shipston. We will miss those councillors that are leaving us but welcome the new councillors that are joining us – to them I advocate three core principles: work hard; put the town first; and do not to be drawn by outside politics – they will keep you in good stead.

Finally, I'd like to say a huge thank you to Tina, who as well as marrying me, has been massively supportive over this past year and a true representative for Shipston.



J. L. Cooper