



CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL Annual Report 2018



YOUR COUNCIL

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CONTENTS

	Page Number
Introduction from the Town Mayor	2-3
About Chepstow Town Council	3-6
Councillor Attendance	6
The Town Council's team	7
About Chepstow and the statistics	7
Financial matters and how we are funded	7
Where does the money go?	8
The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	9
A More Prosperous Chepstow	10
A Resilient Chepstow	11
A Healthier Chepstow	12
A More Equal Chepstow	13
A Chepstow of Cohesive Communities	14
A Chepstow of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	15
A Globally Responsible Chepstow	16

INTRODUCTION

FROM THE TOWN MAYOR, CLLR DALE ROOKE



Welcome to this Annual Report and Well-Being Statement. I hope that you will enjoy reading about the work of Chepstow Town Council, and the people we serve here in Chepstow. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Members, the many individuals and organisations who have worked with the Town Council to improve the Well-Being of the Communities of Chepstow.

It was with great pleasure that my fellow councillors elected myself as Mayor for 2017/2018 at its Annual Meeting in May 2017. This is my second term as Mayor as I had the honour of representing Chepstow in 2015/2016.

This year has been extremely busy and time has gone very quickly. I have fulfilled many engagements and supported as many local charities, voluntary organisations and Chepstow based groups as my schedule would allow. I hope that I have also played a part in promoting the town and its heritage at many events in Chepstow and the surrounding area.

I have had the privilege of meeting new friends and shared thoughts and ideas to improve and encourage local activities I have seen first hand the amazing work of charitable organisations in the town and I acknowledge the importance of people who do voluntary work in the community.

This year has seen me attend many varied events from the Walking Festival of the Communities of Bulwark and Thornwell, Chepstow Male Voice Choir's Annual Summer Concert, Civic Services of our neighbouring communities, The Big Lunch, a Nostalgia Day at Davis Court, Kre8tive Theatre Kids Christmas Production, Lions Club of Chepstow 46th Charter Anniversary Dinner, a piano concert at the Drill Hall, The Big Welsh Car Show, Bulwark Community Centre events "Swing into September" and their "Christmas Evening of Entertainment" and the licensing service for the new St Mary's vicar, Phillip Averay.



July 2017 saw the 950th anniversary of Chepstow Castle, Chepstow Priory (now St Mary's Priory Parish Church) and the town of Chepstow where a series of events were held in celebration. On the 7th July I was honoured to be invited, along with children from Chepstow primary schools, to celebrate the anniversary of the town at the Le Grand Pique Nique where, as well as falconry displays, there were also re-enactments from knights and old fashioned stocks.

Further celebrations were held on Saturday 15th July when “William FitzOsbern” led a procession of Norman re-enactors from the Norman marketplace (Chepstow High Street) to a fair in front of the castle. On the castle lawns there was music from The Singing Club, South Monmouthshire Celtic folk band, games and demonstrations.



battalion.

The 1st Battalion the Rifles exercised their Freedom of the Town on Friday 7th July by marching through Chepstow. HRH Prince Edward Duke of Kent took the salute and presented special awards to members of the



On Saturday 1st July a day of celebration was held to mark the 100th anniversary of the Garden City estate in Chepstow. As well as music performances, children’s activities and a visit by the fire and ambulance services, there was also a historical display of photos, documents and memories, and the opportunity to contribute to a community time capsule.

An important event in Chepstow is the Town’s Remembrance Day parade for which I had the pleasure of leading. The parade was extremely well attended by civic guests, organisations and veterans as well as the Brownies, Scouts, 1st Battalion the Rifles and a large number of the general public.

All in all another year of special events and community contribution and I thank all who help to make Chepstow continue to be a vibrant and diverse place to live.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to Karl Daymond who so tragically died last year. Karl was a huge character and his contribution to the ‘musical scene’ in Chepstow was truly unprecedented. His loss has been felt by many however his legacy continues.

Councillor Dale Rooke

Town Mayor 2017/18

ABOUT CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

Chepstow Town Council is the grass roots voice of Local Government for Chepstow and is therefore closest to the people. It comprises of 15 Councillors, elected in May 2017, who strive to improve the quality of life for the people of Chepstow and work to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

The services and facilities provided by the Town Council include:

- Providing major funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau
- Supporting Bulwark Community Centre and the Drill Hall
- Providing Summer floral displays and Christmas Lighting
- Providing funding for a summer playscheme for local children of primary school age
- Providing funding for the Chepstow Festival, Mari Llwyd and Wassail
- Monthly weekend markets
- Provision of Public Toilets
- Maintaining and undertakes improvement works to the historic Town Arch and Gatehouse
- Provision of litter and dog litter bins.
- Community Grant Funding
- Enhancing services provided by Monmouthshire County Council including the provision weekend street cleaning and extended opening hours at Chepstow Museum.
- Comments on all planning applications in the town - Monmouthshire County Council then makes the final decision, taking into account our views

HOW IT WORKS

Chepstow Town Council is a statutory body and has a powerful role to play in community governance as it has the power to precept and deliver some public services directly as well as having the ability to influence the decisions of other service providers.

An Annual meeting is held in May and this is where the election of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor takes place. These two roles are filled by Councillors who have been nominated and voted for by their fellow Councillors.

COUNCILLORS AS INDIVIDUALS

A Councillor has an active interest in their local community and plays a vital role in representing the interest of the community in which they serve by improving the quality of life and local environment. Councillors are summoned to attend meetings and they have a duty to do so.

Town councillors must act within the law and must sign a declaration to say they agree to work within the Code of Conduct. They are able to suggest ideas, engage in constructive debate, represent constituents and respond to the needs and views of the local community.

Councillors are the voice of their local community and can work to influence other tiers of Local Government and help make collective decisions which form the policy of the council.

THE ROLE OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor or Chairman is elected by members of the Council at the Annual meeting each year in May and serves for twelve months. The Chairman presides at meetings unless absent and is responsible for ensuring all meetings are conducted properly, with the aim of producing clear, lawful decisions. The Chairman must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office for the position of Chairman.

The Chairman is responsible for allowing all Councillors to partake in discussions and to ensure that opinions expressed are relevant to the matter being discussed. Is responsible for attending civic and ceremonial functions within the Town and wider community. The Chairman represents the Council and promotes the decisions and views of the Council and not himself. The Chairman cannot legally make a decision on behalf of the council.

MEETING STRUCTURE

As well as Full Council meetings, Members are appointed to four main committees:

Planning and Administration Committee
Finance, Policy and Audit Committee

Town Amenities Committee
Personnel Committee.

Full Council takes all policy and strategic decisions affecting the community of Chepstow; is responsible for the financial management of the Council; takes executive decisions regarding the main business of the Council; ratifies the recommendations from Council Committees where no specific delegation of powers has been agreed and receives routine items of business.

Meets monthly on the 4th Wednesday

Planning and Administration Committee is responsible for making recommendations to Monmouthshire County Council in respect of planning applications; to comment on planning policy matters; to decide matters of urgent business requiring action prior to the next Full Council meeting; planning matters of a strategic or substantial nature having a significant impact on the community to be referred to Full Council. Members considered recommendation on 65 planning applications last year.

Meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday

Town Amenities Committee is responsible for town amenities and has authority to authorise expenditure within the Council's approved budgets for Chepstow in Bloom, Christmas Lighting, and Town Publications.

Meet 3 times a year, May, September and November

Finance Policy and Audit Committee is responsible for finance including expenditure and investments; property, policy, assets, insurance, Annual Investment Strategy, Risk Assessment, Lettings Policy and Letting Income, Community Grant Funding other funding requests received up to a limit of £5,000 per application, reviews the standing orders and financial regulations.

Meets on a quarterly basis

Personnel Committee meets as an interview panel as required making recommendations to Council in respect of permanent Town Council positions; has delegated responsibility for staffing matters, staff welfare, training and development etc.

Meets on a quarterly basis

All meetings of the Town Council are open to the public unless excluded by a resolution of the meeting for a particular item which is of a confidential nature or prejudicial to public interest.

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE DETAILS 2017/2018

Councillor	Council 11	Planning 18	Finance Policy & Audit 3	Town Amenities 4	Personnel 7	Totals Actual / Possible
Cllr L Ayland	9	3	3	4		19 / 36
Cllr H Beach	9		3	2		14 / 18
Cllr J Becker	7			4		11 / 15
Cllr M Brady*	3					2 / 3
Cllr L Burrett	10	16	2	4	6	38 / 43
Cllr D Dovey	10					10 / 11
Cllr Y Havard	10	16	2	3	7	38 / 43
Cllr N Heywood MBE	11					11 / 11
Cllr P Hobson	3		2			5 / 14
Cllr T Kirton**	8	3	3	0	0	14 / 43
Cllr P Pavia	9					9 / 11
Cllr T Redhead	11	16	2		1	30 / 33
Cllr D Rooke***	11	18	3	4	7	43 / 43
Cllr J Rennie	11	17				28 / 29
Cllr A Watts	8		1		4	13 / 21

* Elected in January 2018

** Deputy Mayor Ex-Officio at all meetings

***Town Mayor Ex-Officio at all meetings

THE TOWN COUNCIL'S TEAM

Services are managed and delivered by the Town Council's team of seven part time staff, three in administration and four in mobile hygiene and asset maintenance. This small team, based at the Gatehouse, is led by a sector qualified Town Clerk who oversees the work of the Council, ensures the correct procedures and policies are in place across its work and the high quality delivery of services.

Chepstow Town Council aims to be a professional, competent and a listening Council. The staff aims to deal with enquiries from members of the public speedily and efficiently and, in addition, the Clerk ensures that councillors and staff attend relevant conferences.

ABOUT CHEPSTOW AND THE STATISTICS

Total Electorate	8,760
Total Population	12,350

The 2011 census highlighted a number of issues of significance to the town:

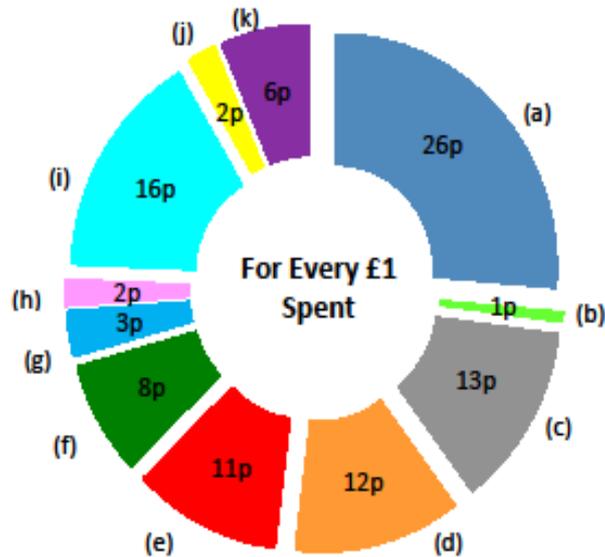
- The total population is now 12,350 up from 10,821 in 2011;
- The population growth in Chepstow grew at a rate of 14.1% between the census period – one of the fastest rates of growth in Monmouthshire
- Families wish to relocate to Chepstow as a place to live, shop, enjoy and also to commute to the urban centres nearby.

FINANCIAL MATTERS AND HOW WE ARE FUNDED

Each year the Town Council calculates the money it needs to raise in order to provide its services and fund any projects planned, it then deducts any income that it expects to receive leaving a net amount. This sum is called the precept which is an additional amount added to Council Tax bills based upon the Council's estimated expenditure.

For the 2018 – 2019 financial year the Town Council has estimated that it needs to spend £652,276 of which the amount of £633,066 will be levied on Monmouthshire County Council and collected as a proportion of the Council Tax paid by Chepstow households. This equates to £115.11 Per Band D property per year.

Chepstow Town Council's Net Budget for 2018/2019 of £633,066 will cost £115.11 per Band D property per year. So where does the money go?



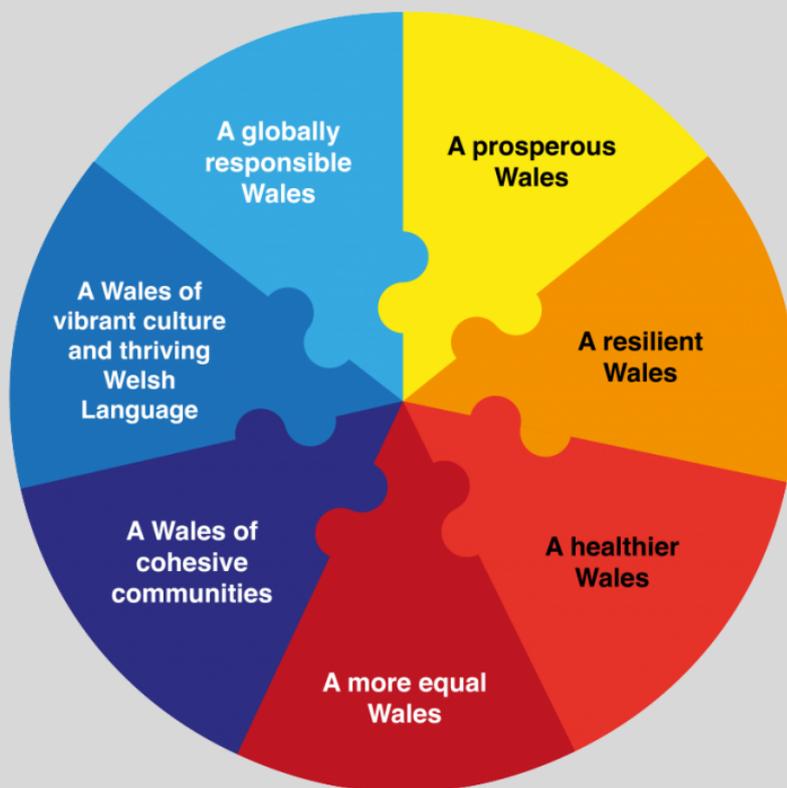
- (a) Will be spent answering public enquiries, managing and facilitating the Council projects and resources, responding to the consultation, servicing and administering of Council meetings
- (b) Will contribute to Civic Events and Mayoralty
- (c) Will meet net premise running and maintenance costs for the Gatehouse incl heating, water & business rates and will meet the loan repayments for the purchase and ongoing maintenance.
- (d) Will pay for Community Grants incl. Citizens Advice, Chepstow Tourist Information, lunchtime opening of Chepstow Museum, SARA, Chepstow Festival, Chepstow Town Band, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome, Chepstow Fairtrade
- (e) War Memorial Maintenance, litter picking, dog waste disposal, tidying problem areas, roadside benches, community notice boards, servicing and maintaining the Riverbank, Bank Street and Thomas Street toilets.
- (f) Will be spent on summer floral displays, Community Orchards, Apple day and Christmas Lighting
- (g) Will be spent on playschemes for local children
- (h) Will pay for community publications, Chepstow What's on Guide, website, promoting Chepstow, Chepstow Markets
- (i) Provision for future services
- (j) Will be spent on the Town's CCTV
- (k) Will be spent on Bulwark Community Centre and the Drill Hall

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and to help create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. Chepstow Town Council is subject to this duty as its gross income or expenditure was at least £200,000 for each of the three financial year's preceding the year in which the local well-being plan is published. Monmouthshire County Council's Well-Being plan is set to be published in May 2018 and the Town Council must publish a report annually detailing its progress in meeting the objectives contained in the local well-being plan.

To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals.



Chepstow Town Council has identified key policies based around the Act.

A MORE PROSPEROUS CHEPSTOW

To continue to support and develop the Well-being of Chepstow.

Promoting and marketing Chepstow

The Council continues to build links with the business community by having Council representation at the Chamber of Commerce. In addition to this, and for those businesses not members of the Chamber, regular Business Working Party meetings are held.

Farmers Market

The Town Council holds the Block Street Trading License within the town centre area, takes on responsibility for all street trading and strives to support local farmers and producers. Following a decline in market trading in 2017 the Town Council has been working with stakeholders to find an alternative way of delivering the markets. Following discussions with Cotyledon, a Community Interest Company, it has been agreed to trial run the farmers markets on the second Sunday of each month starting in April 2018.

Town Council website

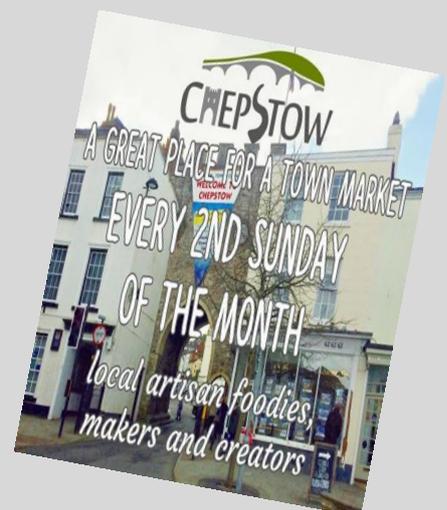
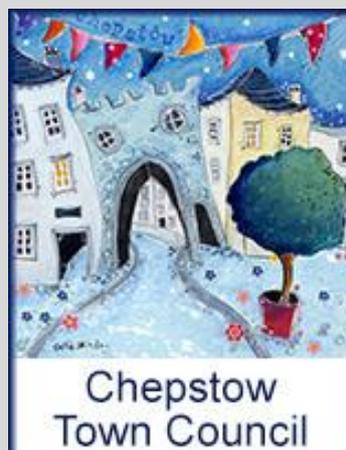
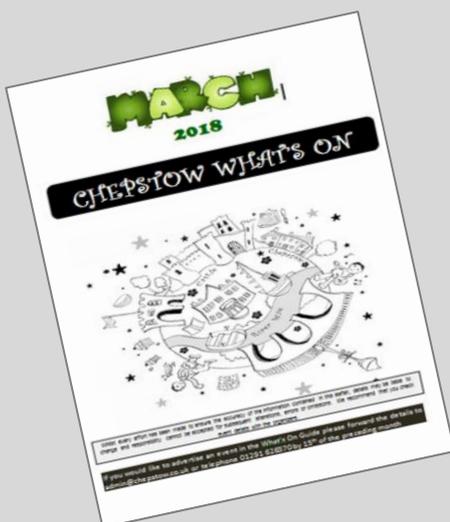
The Town Council has its own website which holds information for residents, visitors, businesses and shoppers as well as key Town Council information, including agendas and minutes, and other documents in an easily accessible format. The web site design seeks to reinforce the town's identity by using the work of local artist, Susie Grindley.

Planning

When responding to planning applications the Town Council continues to give consideration to business requirements and the distinctive and historic character of the town. When Town Planning and Development meetings are held recommendations are made that are robust and clear as to the reasons for that recommendation and are in line with the sustainable economic objectives of the Town

Publishing the monthly What's On Guide

The Town Council edits and produces and distributes the monthly "What's On Guide" and this has been very well received by residents and community groups.



A RESILIENT CHEPSTOW

To build and develop the Well-being of Chepstow with sustainable development demonstrated by sustainable behaviours.

Supporting sustainable projects

The Town Council continues to look to support sustainable projects in and around Chepstow with the Town Council having recently resolved to support Chepstow becoming a Plastic Free Town. The Council has committed to removing or replacing single-use plastics in all council premises and at all council supported activities, the Council will lead by example removing single-use plastic items from our premises and designating Council run community spaces as Plastic Free. Chepstow Town Council will encourage plastic free initiatives, promoting the campaign and supporting events.

Permanent sustainable planting

Permanent planting is more sustainable and provides for cleaner air and reduces carbon footprint. Following discussions and advice from the Town Councils floral contractor the Town Council have purchased six self watering barrels which will be planted with herbs in order to trial a more sustainable planting theme that could be rolled out more broadly to Chepstow planters at a future date.

Provision of services

Street cleaning, litter collection, refuse and recycling are the responsibility of Monmouthshire County Council. In October 2016 Monmouthshire County Council advised of their intent to withdraw the manual weekend street sweeping service from the Town Centre which the Town Council took over and have been successfully providing this service since April 2017.

The Town Council has supported and facilitated the provision of dog waste bins in and around the town and pays for these bins to be emptied on a regular basis.

The Town Council is not directly responsible for the delivery of highways, transport and parking in the town, but strives to ensure that the relevant delivery bodies provide a good quality affordable service which takes into account the needs and expectations of its residents and its businesses.



A HEALTHIER CHEPSTOW

To build a participative, vibrant Community that demonstrates participative capable and motivated leadership.

Summer Playscheme

Play is important to the physical, mental, emotional and social health of our children and through play children learn life skills and develop Well-being. The Town Council provides major funding for the operation of a summer play scheme for the children of Chepstow and works in partnership with Monmouthshire County Council to encourage opportunities to enhance the cultural educational, sporting and social life for local children.

Walking and cycling routes

Chepstow was awarded Walkers are Welcome status in 2012, coinciding with the launch of the Wales Coast Path which has its southern terminus in the town. Close co-operation with local authorities is a key dependency to achieve Walkers are Welcome status, the Town Council directly supports Chepstow Walkers are Welcome with grant funding and helps promote Chepstow as an ideal base for walking activities.

The Town Council recently awarded A-B Connecting Communities a grant to assist with the planning application submission that will see a Shared Use Route linking the Severn Bridge via the Wales Coastal Path. This will link a new footbridge across the River Wye where at Sedbury it connects with the proposed railway path to the Old Station Tintern and onward up the Wye Valley to Monmouth.

Grant funding

The Town Council has financially supported many community groups to provide services that support the community and encourage community involvement including:-

Chepstow Town Band

Chepstow / Cormeilles Twinning

Chepstow Fair-Trade Forum

Bulwark Community Centre Management Committee

Chepstow Street Pastors

Bands on the Bandstand

Severn Area Rescue Association

Garden City Community Group

Drill Hall Management Committee

Chepstow Arts and Community Festival

Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice

Chepstow Apple Day

One of the more important roles of the Council is financial support for many of the voluntary groups in and around the Town. The work of these groups is highly valued and an effective grant application scheme ensures the careful use of monies allocated for grants.

The Town Council also received Community Grant applications from a diverse range of local community groups seeking funding for "one off" projects and was able to contribute grant funding towards the following: Davis Court Community Room, Friends of the Dell, Foxtrot Friday, Severn Bridge Park Run, Chepstow RFC and A-B Connecting Communities.

A MORE EQUAL CHEPSTOW

To deliver locally relevant, efficient and effective public services which include enhancing our Twinning links, developing links outside of Chepstow along with partnerships including deploying appropriate resources.

Town's Floral Displays and Chepstow in Bloom

Transition Chepstow once again tendered the 8 herb and vegetable planters throughout the town and, with funding from the Town Council, undertook the pruning and maintenance of the community orchards. The Town Council provide a number of floral hanging baskets and barrels around the town and traders were invited to purchase baskets from the Council to hang outside their premises.

Practical support

The Town Council continues to make their gazebos and tables available to community groups and schools for community events. The Town Council are happy to advertise these events both on the notice boards and in the monthly publication of "What's On". Meeting rooms are available for hire both at the Gatehouse and Thomas Street and can be booked via the Town Council offices.

Young People

At the meeting of Full Council in July 2017, Members agreed to support the set up of a Youth Council in Chepstow with the nomination of three Councillors to support and provide an ongoing link between the Town Council and Youth Council.

Local Services and Facilities

The Town Council is responsible for the delivery of a number of non statutory services and facilities including:

Public toilets – responsible for the opening, closing and cleaning of the public toilets in Chepstow located at Thomas Street, Welsh Street car park, Tourist Information Centre and at the Riverbank.

Chepstow Riverbank – this site is adjacent to the riverbank and hosts the bandstand with the grass cutting being undertaken by Monmouthshire County Council under contract to the Town Council.

Roadside seats – all roadside seats are the responsibility of the Town Council and a comprehensive refurbishment programme is underway with a burgundy colour scheme for the seats in the High St.

Chepstow Tourist Information Service – to ensure that a face to face tourism information service was maintained within the town, funding was provided by the Town Council.

Chepstow Museum – the Town Council continued its support of the museum providing funding to allow the museum to open over the lunchtime period.

Twinning

The Town Council maintained its long standing cultural links with our twin in Cormeilles. Chepstow's link with Cormeilles dates right back to the Norman Conquest, when Chepstow Castle was established in 1067 by William Fitz-Osbern, Knight of Cormeilles. The present twinning arrangement began in 1972 when Abbé Meron from Cormeilles visited Chepstow and met Canon Barrie Evans. As a result, Canon Evans took a coach party to Cormeilles and in 1975 Chepstow Town Council invited Cormeilles to become officially twinned with Chepstow. Every 'even' year it is Chepstow's turn to welcome the French guests for 5 nights.

A CHEPSTOW OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

To provide attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

Cohesive Community Venues

The Town Council continued to provide essential funding for Bulwark Community Centre and the Drill Hall with Town Councillors working on the management committees of these organisations to provide leadership and direction and to help ensure that their facilities are made widely available for all to enjoy.

Meeting accommodation at the Town Council's offices, in the Gatehouse and the Community room at Thomas Street continued to be made available for local community groups.

Collaborative working

The Town Council continued to have representation on various working groups to promote sustainable behaviours, healthier lifestyles and well-being issues. These groups include:

Air Quality Steering Group

Senior Citizens Welfare Trust

Chepstow Fair Trade Forum

Chepstow Twinning Association

Monmouthshire Citizens Advice (observer)

CCTV user group

One Voice Wales

Chepstow Chamber of Commerce

County Council Cluster Group

Gwent Police

Chepstow based officers from Gwent Police work very closely with the elected members of the Town Council and with the community by having regular ward meetings and attending council meetings.

CCTV

The Town Council continues its funding of the CCTV in Chepstow, an initiative dating back to 2002. Chepstow Town Council, together with the other towns in Monmouthshire, entered into a partnership with Monmouthshire County Council for the provision of CCTV.

Notice Boards

In pursuance of Council's agreed objective to provide for a community notice board for each ward the Town Council is currently seeking authority to install a notice board in Thornwell and St Mary's. This adds to the notice boards at:

Town Arch, High Street, Chepstow

Bulwark Road, Shopping Area, Bulwark

Garden City Way, Garden City

Barnetts Wood, Bayfield.

The notice board under the Town Arch is used primarily for "statutory notices" whilst the remaining three notice boards are used for the display of community information, events posters etc. This also includes Councillor Contact Details, a Schedule of Town Council Meetings and the Current Year's Budget Summary.

A CHEPSTOW OF VIBRANT CULTURE AND THRIVING WELSH LANGUAGE

To provide a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh Language.

Upkeep and maintenance of the War Memorial and the Memorial Gun

The Town Council has responsibility for the maintenance and care of the War Memorial located on High street. The Memorial gun, known locally as the “the gun”, is a well-known landmark for people visiting the town. It stands proudly adjacent to the War Memorial. The Town Council is currently exploring grant funding to undertake condition surveys on both with a view to full refurbishment of both the War Memorial and Gun.

Cultural Town Events

The majority of the events and festivals held in Chepstow are organised by other organisations. The Town Council retains a small budget to fund celebrations or festivals with some amounts being made available under the grants budget especially for events of which are felt of particularly benefit to Chepstow residents.

Chepstow 950

This year saw the 950th anniversary of the founding of Chepstow Castle, Chepstow Priory (now St Mary's Priory Parish Church) and the town of Chepstow. The Town Council funding assisted with the delivery of a “Chepstow 950” programme to every household in the area, the Great Tower Party in the Castle as well as the re-enactors for the parade.

Historical Plaque Unveiling

The Town Council is hosting an event to unveil a historical plaque to mark the 100th Anniversary of the foundation of the Royal Air Force and the 75th Anniversary of the Dambusters raid. The plaque will be unveiled on the house where Flight Sergeant Bill Townsend, pilot of Avro Lancaster bomber “O for Orange” in the WWII Dambusters raid, lived as a young boy. A Flypast of the last flying Lancaster Bomber is expected to add to this significant occasion.



A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE CHEPSTOW

To seek to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

Fairtrade

Chepstow has been a Fairtrade Town for 12 years and the Town Council continues to support this by only serving Fairtrade refreshments at its meetings. The Town Council also grant fund Chepstow Fairtrade to assist with their promotional material, talks, newsletters, visits to schools and other events which are held as wells as flying the Fairtrade flag to advertise Fairtrade Fortnight.

Transition Chepstow

Transition Chepstow is very active with projects on energy, transport, food and more and have teamed up with the Council to plant over 150 fruit trees for the local community. Each year they help to maintain the trees, including pruning and checking stakes and ties. This year the Town Council have funded the purchase of labels to be attached to all trees detailing their variety. This signage also has QR codes on which visitors to the orchard can scan, directing the viewer to more orchard information.

Christmas lighting

Christmas lighting is one of the largest expenses for the Council and in this year we replaced the centre of town with LED warm white bulbs for which very positive feedback was received.

The Christmas Switch on event proved successful with performances from St Mary's RC Primary School, Wydean Gospel Choir, CHAOS, CMYT, Chepstow Rock Choir and Chepstow Town Band. The weather stayed dry and the event was well supported.

