



WEM TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report 2015/2016

2015-16

Mayor Cllr John Murray
Deputy Mayor Cllr Rosemary Dodd

2016-17

Mayor Cllr Rosemary Dodd
Deputy Mayor Cllr Edward Towers

Mayors Report

The Past Mayor of Wem, Cllr. John Murray gives an overview of the past year of his term of office.

What a brilliant year the Mayoress and I have had representing our wonderful town of Wem, it has been a huge privilege for us to promote Wem throughout the county and beyond in what has been a very busy year.

A fortnight after taking office I received a letter of resignation from our Town Clerk Jane of thirty five years which obviously threw me into a state of panic, however in true tradition of Wem Town Council we went forward and after due selection we appointed our new Town Clerk Penny O'Hagan, who I feel is a great asset, although she is dragging me into the 21st century.

After attending various events during the summer in the town such as the Sweet Pea Show, Vehicles of Interest, the ever wonderful Wem Carnival and a successful Civic Service in September, November saw us all dressed up for the Mayors Ball, supported by Mayors from around the county, raising £1500 towards the Mayors charity fund, destined for local organisations.

The Christmas Festival improves year on year and again the Honorary Townsman award which was celebrated in January was a success. The Spring and Autumn Markets were full of tempting goodies and it was also good to celebrate the completion of the restoration work of the tower and organ at our Parish Church. An enjoyable evening "Last Night at the Proms" Concert with Wem Jubilee Band plus Training Band ended our fundraising and local organisations will receive a share of £2506 raised this year.

As a forward looking council we have started street lighting upgrades, moving forward with the swimming pool with our partners Wem Swimming and Lifestyle Centre. This year we are increasing our floral displays, ensuring our recreation and play area facilities are up to date and well maintained, that the cemetery and allotments are well managed and that the council continues to fulfill its Health and Safety obligations to its staff and users of its facilities.

Cllr. John Murray.
Mayor of Wem (2015-16).

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

What do we actually do?

The Council comprises of 14 Councillors representing 2 Town Wards East and West. The Councillors are elected every 4 years with the last Election being held in May 2013. The next is scheduled for 2017.

The Town Council is served by a Town Clerk and 3 other full and part-time staff. The Council is chaired by the Town Mayor who, with the Deputy Mayor, is elected each year at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May.

Wem Town Council holds at least one full council meeting each month and has various committees which meet on a regular basis. Working groups meet as and when required.

Minutes and reports from committee meetings are noted at full Town Council meetings and their recommendations are considered. Councillors have a duty to attend all full council meetings because this is where decisions are made.

In addition to its decision making responsibilities the Council is responsible for many services and facilities in the town including the management of the recreation ground and play areas at various sites around the town, maintenance of over 200 streetlights spread across the town. Other facilities managed by the council include Love Lane Cemetery, Love Lane Allotments, various bus shelters and the public conveniences opposite the Town Square.

Planning

The Town Council also comments on all planning applications within the town area prior to their consideration by Shropshire Council who make the final decision on approval or otherwise. The past year has seen the submission of a number of contentious planning applications in and on the fringes of the town. The Town Council works hard to listen to the views of residents prior to submitting comments on any application.

Lighting

The Council is responsible for over 200 lights across the town. During 2015/16 a considerable amount of

expenditure was committed to upgrading some of the oldest lights in the Town. This programme of improvement work will continue during 2016/17.

Play Areas

Some of the older play equipment in the Town was painted during 2015/16 giving it a new lease of life. The Groundsman regularly cuts the play area and undertakes daily litter picks of the recreation ground to ensure that the Town's open spaces are always looking their best.

Floral Display

The fabulous autumn of 2015 meant that the floral displays in Leek Street and other areas of the town lasted much longer than usual. The Town Council is proud of the floral displays in the town which are developed with the help of volunteers and contractors over the summer months.

CCTV

During 2015 The Town Council was awarded a grant that has enabled the council to upgrade its CCTV system to a much clearer more reliable system. There are now a number of cameras around the town and the CCTV recording system is located in the police station. If you wish to enquire about any CCTV footage please contact the police direct.

Council Finances

Financially 2015-16 was a difficult year for the Town Council as the last minute refusal of Shropshire Council to pass on the council tax support grant to the Town Council (this is money given by the government to be passed onto Town and Parish Council's) meant a reduction in income of over £28000 before the year had even started! This unfortunately meant a rise in the precept to cover this significant unexpected shortfall. Unlike some of the larger Towns in Shropshire Wem Town Council has very little income other than the precept and this decision to remove the grant ultimately impacted on local residents who had an unforeseen increase in their council tax bills. In addition to this some urgent investment was needed to upgrade the fire prevention facilities at the Butler Sports Centre. Whilst this facility is managed by Wem Sports and Social Association the Town Council own the freehold of the building. In addition to this the Town Council also covered the cost of replacing the two main pumps at the swimming pool.

Income and Expenditure 2015-2016

31.3.15	INCOME	31.3.16
238,662	Precept	263,493
839.72	Bank Interest	727
5,800	Cemetery Fees	9,300
967.76	Allotment Rents	1001
160.00	Story of Wem	0
28,996.2	Grants / Refunds	10539
2.56	Misc.	
275,428.06	TOTAL INCOME	285,059
	EXPENDITURE	
27,902.85	Street Lights	38,918
13,897.46	Allotments and Burial Grounds	3,958
18,150	Recreation Ground (WSSA)	18,150
25,576.32	Recreation Grounds other	4,374
78,815.43	Salaries and Wages	74,887
14,783.72	Administration	18,923
200.00	Election Expenses	0
407.63	Hospitality Allowance	441
1,500	Mayors allowance	1,500
7,262	Grants	9,530
2,475.00	Planters	1,970
15,94.69	Loan	739
20,000	Wem Town Hall	20,000
308.67	Petty Cash	0
73,689.94	Wem Swimming pool	73,999
120.00	Story of Wem	0
13,838.46	Public Toilets	11,517
3,275.00	CCTV	11,921
3,426.19	Miscellaneous	1,153
	Butler Sports centre	19,193
307,223.36	Total Expenditure	311,173
Balance 1.4.15	347,213.79	
Add income	285,059	
Less Expenditure	311,173	
Balance 31.3.16	321,099.79	

Grants Awarded during 2015-16

Organisation	Award Made
Wem Branch Shropshire Army Cadet Force League	£300
Wem Carnival Committee	£500
Eckford Sweet Pea Society	£900
Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery	£1500
Wem Scout and Guide HQ	£350
Wem Millennium Green	£1700
NS Wheelers (community transport group)	£100
Victoria County History Society	£500
Wem Christmas Lights Festival	£3000
Wem Baptist Holiday Bible Club	£180
Wem Youth Club	£2000

Councillor Contact Details

Wem Town Council meets on the last Thursday of every month – except in December – at Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem, at 7pm. The Council always welcomes electors’ comments and suggestions and allows time at the start of each monthly meeting for questions from residents of the town wishing to attend. A copy of the agenda for meetings is displayed on the Town Council’s official notice board at the front of the Town Hall, High Street, and on the Council’s official website: www.wem.gov.uk

Cllr David Boddy	The Rowans, Mill Street, Wem, SY4 5EX	01939 234708 boddychristine@hotmail.com
Cllr Mandy Meakin	5 Station Road, Wem, SY4 5BQ	01939 234834 mandymeakin@gmail.com
Cllr Pauline Dee	Benedict House, 17 Chapel Street, Wem, SY4 5ER	01939 233037 Pauline.dee@shropshire.gov.uk
Cllr Chris Mellings	37 Kynaston Drive, Wem, SY4 5DE	01743 252929 chris.mellings@shropshire.gov.uk
Cllr Clive Shingler	Lower Lacon Caravan Park, Soulton Road, Wem, SY4 5JD	01939 232376 clive@llcp.co.uk
Cllr Edward Towers	8 Fismes Way, Wem, SY4 5YD	01939 235283 edwardtowers@btinternet.com
Cllr Paul Johnson	The Thimbles, 55 Eckford Park, Wem, SY4 5HL	01939 232035 annpajess_johnson@yahoo.co.uk
Cllr Kathleen Bailey	46 Barnard Street, Wem, SY4 5EF	01939 234019
Cllr Philip Moyse MBE JP	7 Marlcroft, Wem, SY4 5AN	01939 233533 philipmoyse7@gmail.com
Cllr John Murray	6 Marlcroft, Wem, SY4 5AN	01939 232007 jhmurray@hotmail.co.uk
Cllr Rosemary Dodd	Craiglea, 18 Marlcroft, Wem, SY4 5AN	01939 233083 rosemary.dodd@mypostoffice.co.uk
Cllr Peter Broomhall	Sunnyside, 3 Swain Close, Wem SY4 5NZ	01939 232573 peterbroomhall@fsmail.net
Cllr Philip Glover	6 Trentham Close, Wem SY4 5AS	01939 809201 phil@glover1.fsnet.co.uk
Cllr Connie Granger	1 Barnfield Avenue, Wem, SY4 5HT	01939 236460 constancegranger123@btinternet.com

Town Council Staff

Town Clerk Penny O’Hagan	Town Council Office, Edinburgh House, New Street SY4 5DB	01939 232733 Email info@wem.gov.uk
Assistant Clerk Sue Thornhill	Town Council Office, Edinburgh House, New Street SY4 5DB	01939 232733 Email assistant.clerk@wem.gov.uk
Groundsman John Ralphs		Email groundskeeper@wem.gov.uk
Groundsman’s assistant Brian Humpreys		

Shropshire Councillors

The people of Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall elect two Councillors to represent them on Shropshire Council. Their contact details are as follows:

Cllr Chris Mellings	37 Kynaston Drive, Wem, SY4 5DE	01743 252929 chris.mellings@shropshire.gov.uk
Cllr Pauline Dee	Benedict House, 17 Chapel Street, Wem SY4 5ER	01939 233037 Pauline.Dee@shropshire.gov.uk