

Report of Community Activity in 2011

Below is a brief outline of many of the community based activities carried out during 2011. Most activities are led by the two part-time Community and Information Officers (Nicky Chruszcz (NC) and Sharon Thomas (ST)) although some are led by the Town Clerk or other staff.

In May 2011 Nicky's days worked were increased from two to two-and-a-half per week in order to take on more of the tourism and promotion of Corsham.

Corsham in Bloom (Lead: ST)



Corsham in Bloom was a great success this year with Corsham winning Gold in the South West in Bloom competition! The theme this year was the 90th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion. The colour scheme for the town's hanging baskets and planters was red, white and blue; a poppy flower-bed was created in the Garden of Remembrance, and local schools and community groups, with the guidance of Mazy Bartlett, Community and Outreach Artist, created banners and a poppy garland to be placed on the balcony on the Town Hall. Thirteen local groups, including many of Corsham's primary schools,

entered the South West in Bloom's 'It's Your Neighbourhood' awards, winning eight Level 4 and five Level 5 (the highest) awards between them. The awards were handed out, along with the trophies for the winners of the local Corsham in Bloom competitions, at a presentation evening at the Town Hall in October. Plans are already underway for 2012's 'In Bloom' activities.

Corsham Youth Council (CYC) (Lead: ST)

Over the past year, the Youth Council championed recycling in Corsham; helped select new play area equipment; came up with ideas for new graffiti artwork designs at the Skate Park; continued promoting and choosing films – in conjunction with The Pound – for Corsham Cinemania; suggested a number of routes for cycle paths (an issue that is very important to the Youth Councillors); planted vegetable tubs that were then raffled at Transcoco's Food Festival in June; were heavily involved in the Twinning visit to Jargeau (with six Youth Councillors travelling to France); made decorations to sell on their stall at the Christmas Lights Switch-On and helped decorate the Town Council's Christmas tree at St Bart's. The Youth Council also enjoyed a 'Parliament and Me' workshop run by Parliamentary Outreach, to which groups of local primary school pupils were also invited. Towards the end of the year, the Youth Councillors produced a survey, aimed at 10-18 year olds who live and/or attend school in Corsham, to find out what young people think of youth facilities – and the Campus – in Corsham. The results of the survey should be available in February 2012.



Sports Forum (Lead: NC)

Communication has been maintained between the Town Council and local sports clubs. This continues to be a useful resource for information and local opinions on sports related matters. No further meetings are planned but the dialogue will continue.

The Pound and Youth Cinema (Lead: ST)

A grant of £5,000 was made to The Pound Arts Trust, with certain conditions being made through a Service Level Agreement. The Youth Cinema – Corsham Cinemania - was launched, in conjunction with The Pound, in April 2010 on a trial basis. Viewing figures continue to be varied but CYC continues to be involved in the selection of the films shown and is also committed to promoting the project.

Tourism (Lead: NC)

The Tourism Working Group agreed to create a questionnaire to be distributed to local businesses, accommodation providers and tourism partners to help establish current trends in tourism in the Corsham area. This was distributed early July 2011 and responses were collected in at the beginning of October 2011. The results have given us some great insights into who is visiting Corsham, why they are coming and what they are doing while they are here. Some of the key points from the results are –

- Most popular reasons for coming to Corsham were shopping and visiting friends and family.
- 28% were first time visitors – all of which would recommend or highly recommend the Corsham area to others.
- Over half of the visitors were staying overnight in serviced accommodation
- Most people discovered Corsham through word of mouth, tourist leaflets or the internet.
- The most popular things to do in Corsham were shopping, eating out, visiting Corsham Court and walking.
- Bath and Bradford on Avon were mentioned as the most common places that visitors would go to during their stay.
- We asked visitors to state the main highlights of their visit. There was a very wide-ranging response to this, demonstrating the variety of things that Corsham has to offer. These highlights included The Almshouses; cricket club; High Street; Corsham Park; beautiful flowers; shopping/friendliness of shopkeepers, pub staff, restaurants etc; scenery; tidiness; lovely buildings and architecture.

These results will help us to target both marketing and our future tourism related activities.

The Council also agreed to support the Corsham Information and Heritage Centre following the Wiltshire Council cuts to TIC funding by offering rent free accommodation and a grant of £2,500 to help with running costs.

A new Tourism Plan is to be produced in 2012.

Skate Project and Youth Shelter (Lead: DM)

Following a successful grant application to the Area Board, and gaining planning permission, the skate park is now lit in the evenings. There has been very positive feedback from the skaters as a result.

The Emergency Services Show (Lead: ST)

Following on from the success of last year's show Corsham Town Council attended the Emergency Services Show at Hullavington again.

Katherine Park (Lead: NC)

Communication continues between the Town Council and Katherine Park Residents Association. A resolution regarding the Section 106 Agreement money is yet to be made, but a formal sports pitch has been opposed. The residents are being consulted as to what they would like to see in the area where the running track used to be. The Town Council will continue to be involved with negotiations.

Fetes (Lead: NC)

The Town Council, represented by Sharon and Nicky, with the support of local Town Councillors, attended Gastard Fete and Guide Dogs for the Blind Paw Trek with information, flyers and leaflets about the Council's services and facilities.

Bowood Dog Show (Lead: NC)

To help promote Corsham to the outside community it was decided to attend Bowood Dog Show on 12 June 2011. Unfortunately due to extremely bad weather attendance was very low and the stand had to be packed up early.

Grants

Grants awarded from the 2011/12 budget include:

Wiltshire Citizens Advice	£1,000
Corsham Civic Society	£82
Wiltshire County Cricket Club	£350
Corsham Primary School	£204
Transition Community Corsham	£100
Corsham Churches Foodbank	£500
Corsham Gardeners Society	£250
Corsham Sixty Plus Club	£100
Mansion House Pre School	£500
Vitalise	£372
Corsham Country Markets	£400
Corsham Twinning Association	£300
Cancer Research UK	£56
Corsham Rugby Club	£450
Katherine Park Residents Association	£497
One Mile Club (Corsham Running Club)	£500
Relate	£500
Neston 60 Plus Club	£100
Corsham Community Association	£2,000
Tuesday Afternoon Club	£200
Charity Sci Fi	£500
Gastard Village Hall	£500
St Barts Church House	£500
Wiltshire Air Ambulance	£500

Christmas Lights and Wishing Tree (Lead: NC)



The new 'ceiling' of Christmas Lights in the town centre and the light 'curtains' at the Town Hall proved very successful, with a great deal of favourable feedback both at the Christmas Light Switch On and in the days following.

The Christmas Light Switch On itself was held outside the Town Hall on Friday 2 December. The market stalls in the High Street were a success and ran almost to the end of the non-pedestrianised area of the High Street. Other festivities included: Christmas tree at St Bart's Church decorated by the Youth Council; entertainment (dancing penguins, choirs, poet, fire juggler, music); fairground rides;

Father Christmas; reindeer; snow; Christmas window competition for local businesses; Christmas Card competition for local schools; and both reindeer and a Partridge in a Pear Tree created by local schools, art clubs and Mazy Bartlett. The lights were switched on by the winner of the card competition and two Bath Rugby players. This year the community involvement was even greater than previous years with traders in and around the Martingate Centre getting involved and almost every shop staying open late.

The Wishing Tree event was held on 26 November and, gave the children (and some adults) the opportunity to create glittery apples as well as wishes to be placed on the tree.

Operation Christmas Child

There were 17 shoe boxes collected in Corsham Town Hall for Operation Christmas Child. This has decreased substantially from 54 in 2010 and 120 in 2009. The number of boxes collected nationally has reduced, and some schools now deal directly with OCC rather than bring boxes to the Town Hall.

Easter Competition (Lead: ST)

The Easter Competition, run for two weeks either side of Easter, saw local traders displaying posters of Easter eggs in their windows which children then had to find. The event was very kindly sponsored by The Methuen Arms.

Annual Town Meeting (Lead: ST)

The Annual Town Meeting on 7 April was a success, with presentations about the Community Campus and 'Corsham: Back to the Future', as well as a report on local policing. Linking the event with the Community Awards Scheme (below) did increase attendance.

Community Awards Scheme (Lead: NC)

The Community Awards Scheme was launched in January 2011 and received 11 nominations in the categories of: Environment, Neighbourhood, Sports and The Arts. There were no nominations in the Youth (Under 19s) category. The award winners were Corsham Link – Neighbourhood, Corsham Amateur Swimming Club – Sports, Adam Walton - Environment and Mazy Bartlett – The Arts. The awards were presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 7 April 2011. In 2012 more promotion will be needed to encourage people to nominate, especially in the Youth category.

Newsletter (Lead: ST)

The newsletter continues to get very positive feedback and is a successful method of communication about the Town. In Spring 2011 distribution was increased to include delivery to local businesses as well as all households.

Town Guide (Lead: ST)

The new Town Guide for 2011 was completed and distributed, by the publishers, to all households in Corsham. Additional copies were also purchased by the Town Council for promotional use at events.

Website (Lead: ST)

The new Town Council website was launched in May 2011 and has received very positive feedback. It is far easier for Town Council staff to amend and maintain, which helps to keep the site as up-to-date as possible. The Town Council's Facebook page was used more regularly, particularly as a site to display photographs from events, and – alongside the website launch – Sharon and Nicky began using Twitter (@CorshamTC) to publicise information and events. The Town Council currently has 139 followers on the site.

Town Centre Promotion (Lead: ST)

Last year, the empty Perfect Rooms shop and one of the empty units in the Martingate Centre were used by the Town Council and community groups as display areas. These have not been available this year for the best of reasons as both units have since been let.

Markets (Lead: ST)

The Markets continue to do well in the Town Centre and help create a vibrant atmosphere on market days. Promotion continues. Wiltshire Council's French and Italian Markets, held in July and September respectively, also proved to be popular.



Footpath Walks (Lead: ST)

In 2011, the walks were held from April to September (with themed walks in July and August). Attendance was as variable as the weather so it has been proposed to revert back to Spring Walks in 2012. It has also been decided to combine the Footpath Walks leaflets with the Walking Map. This will be available from March 2012.

Community Campus Consultation (Lead: DM)

This has involved helping with the questionnaire, attending meetings and public events and generally supporting the consultation exercise. The Town Council has been updated regularly on progress and made several comments about what facilities it would like to see. This also includes freeing-up land and transferring the tennis courts to Wiltshire Council.

Nicky Chruszcz and Sharon Thomas
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