

ANNUAL REPORT



2018/2019

Chard Town Council

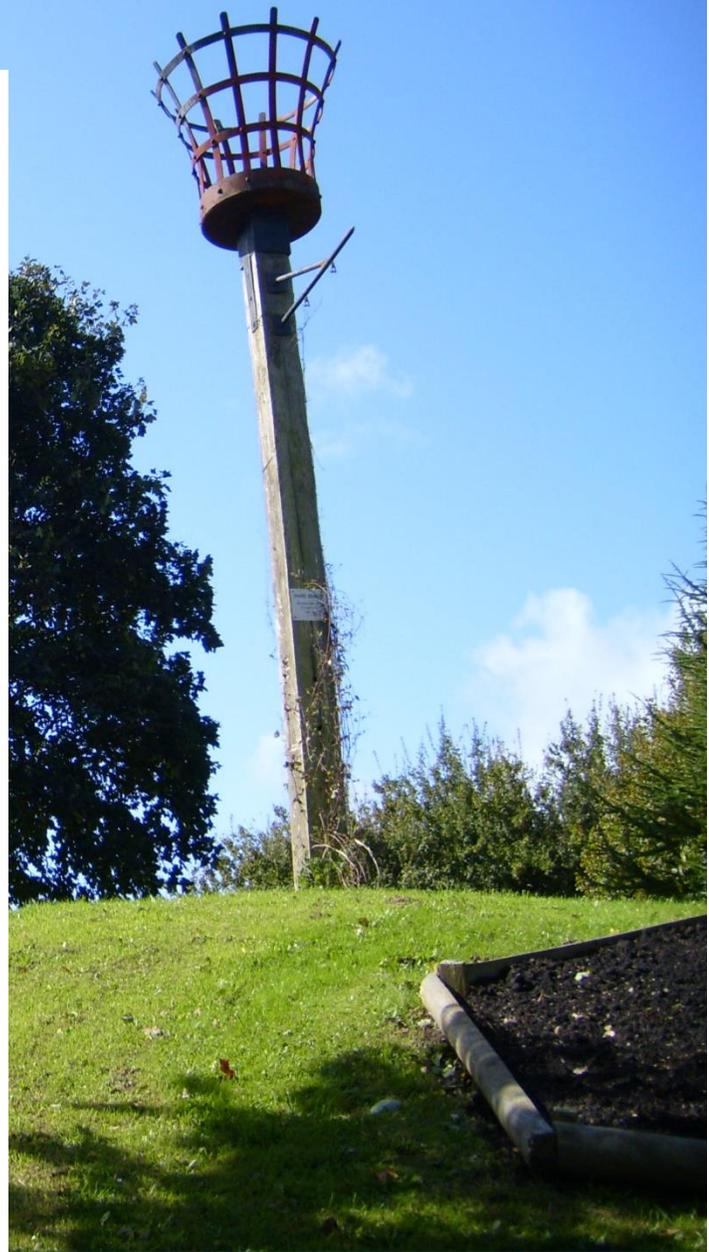
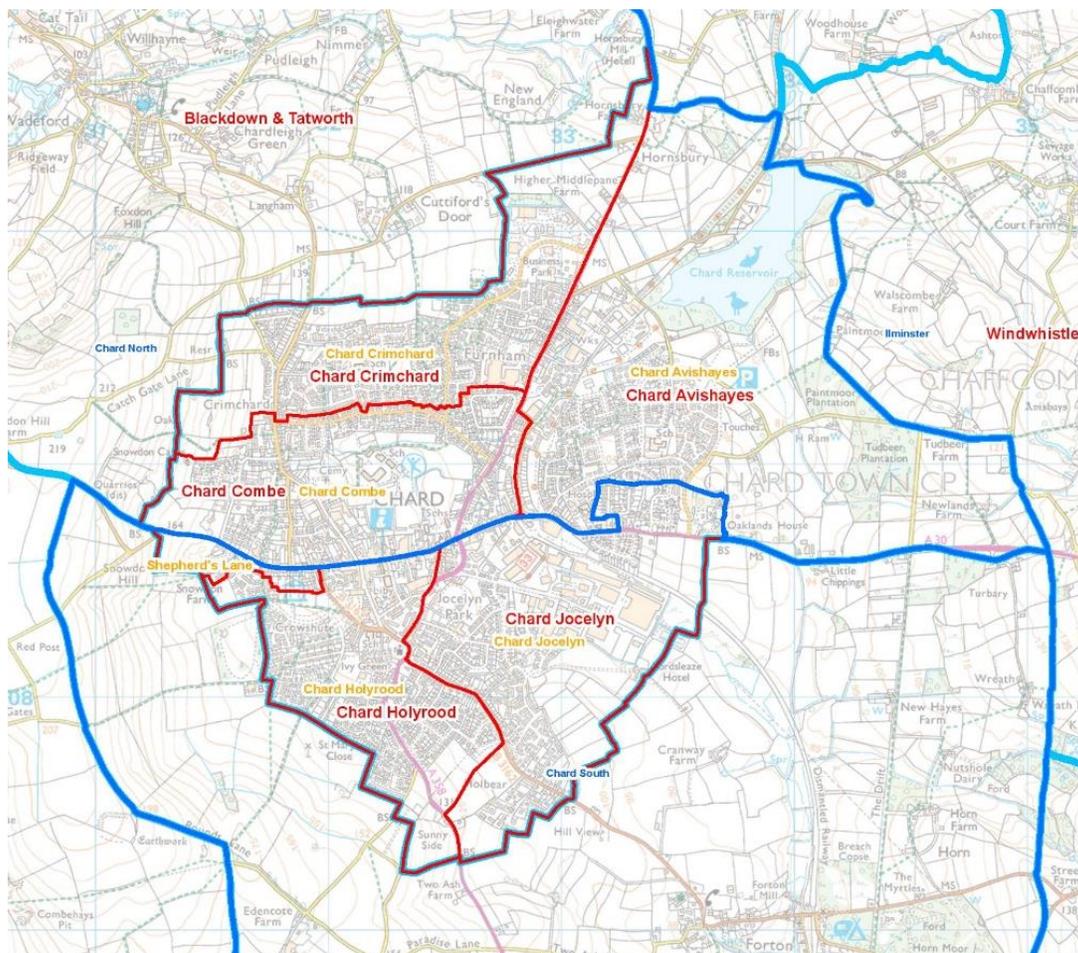


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Ward Boundary Map

Chard Town Council has 15 Councillors representing six wards of Chard, see the map below for the boundaries of each ward:



A Vision for Chard

Chard will be a successful, vibrant, attractive town, where people want to live, work, study and visit.

The town will have real and accessible transport links, decent housing provision for all, excellent employment and business opportunities and a vibrant community life. It will be clean, green, safe, active and prosperous, and a place to be proud of.

The Mayor's Report

Cllr. Garry Shortland

As we approach the end of my second term as Mayor, it is always good to look back at the year's events.

It has been my honour to serve Chard over the last 12 months and to promote our town throughout Somerset.

Chard is an amazing Town and its people are some of the most community-minded in Somerset. One of our most loved community events is Chard Carnival, and this year was a great success and a triumph for the committee. Last year's Halloween event was in doubt but thanks to Kelly Leigh and a group she put together, the event was saved.

Chard's Christmas lights again were excellent, and thanks go to the Council's Outdoor Services team for their installation but none of these events would be possible without the help of the people who close the roads to keep us all safe during these events.

I also had the pleasure of welcoming a visit from the young people of Helmstedt, Chard's twinned town. Their visit coincided with the centenary of the end of the First World War and I was delighted to be joined by our visitors at the Remembrance service to jointly lay a wreath in reconciliation. Later that evening, we lit the Beacon along with the Town Crier and other Towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom.

It has been my privilege to be involved with the Britain's Disabled Strongman events held here in the Guildhall, which is a real testament to the athletes who take part in how they have overcome their disabilities to compete and I would urge you all to look at the event on social media.

For the last 2 years, I have raised money to support Hope For tomorrow who keep the Mobile Chemotherapy Unit running and on the road. The Unit comes to Tesco's carpark on a Tuesday, saving the stress of traveling to Musgrove Park Hospital for treatment. It has been an honour to work with the Ford family on this project and I am pleased to say that this year we have raised £4,137.40.

As with all these events they can only happen with the help of the community so if you feel you can volunteer for any of the groups here in Chard, they would be very grateful.

I believe the future for Chard is on the up, we were all devastated with the closure of the swimming pool and a lot of effort was put in to save it but to no avail. However, with the new regeneration of Chard coming with the leisure centre first and foremost this will make Chard a more vibrant town.



The Town Clerk's Report

Nick Randle OBE

Interim Town Clerk

As Chard's Interim Town Clerk, I have returned temporarily to the Council some 18 years after originally having been permanent Town Clerk here. While much has changed in the intervening years the core spirit of Chard is very much in evidence. Chard is a community that cares about its history and its future and in its status as an industrial town set within a rural landscape.

As I write the Chard Town Council has been through some years of upheaval and as the elections approach, we look forward to a period of renewal. Inevitably, following the council elections Chard Town Council will have a number of new Councillors although fortunately some experienced Councillors will remain. There has also recently been a significant turnover of staff which means that the excellent new team will be building their experience and developing their roles as the Council itself develops.

Both on its own initiative and in partnership with other Councils, Chard Town Council provides a range of services. These include: -

- Stewardship of Town Property and Finances
- Maintenance of the Town's Open Spaces and Playgrounds
- Provision of Allotments
- Operating Chard Cemetery
- Maintenance and Operation of Chard Guildhall as our main community venue
- Operating Chard Local Information Centre
- Working with and supporting community organisations
- Provision of Grants to Chard Organisations
- Operation of the Town Street Cleansing Contract
- Provision of street furniture and waste bins
- Acting as a statutory consultee on planning applications
- Lobbying public sector bodies on behalf of the Town
- Representing Chard with outside organisations
- Providing a Civic programme

In the first weeks of the New Council we will review our governance structures, undertake a joint training day and embark on a process to define the Council's strategy for the period ahead. We hope that these activities will allow the Council to define a detailed plan which will support the vision for the Town that the Council holds. While the new Council will decide the overall direction, it is already likely that there will be a strong emphasis on environmental programmes, improving the Council's engagement with the community and finding ways to support services provided by Principal councils where funding is being withdrawn.

In summary Chard Town Council looks forward to a period of renewal and to working in new ways on behalf of the community in the years ahead.

The Deputy Town Clerk & RFO's Report

Tracy Lamb CiLCA, PSLCC

Deputy Town Clerk & RFO

Mayor's Allowance

The Mayor's allowance exists to help defray the cost to the Mayor whilst undertaking his/her duties for the civic year. Chard Town Council is committed to accountability and transparency in respect of all expenditure, including the Mayor's allowance.

The term of office begins from the time of the election of the Mayor at the Annual Town Council meeting. The current annual budget is £4,500 with £437 unspent from the 2017-2018 financial year (the term of office running until May), of which £4,675.35 has been spent, however this is subject to change until the new Mayor is elected on 09th May 2019.

Council adopted a policy for permitted expenditure in March 2017 and details of expenditure are as follows:

Mayors Allowance	Amount
Mileage to and from events	£0
Tickets to events	£202
Raffle/draw tickets	£0
Donations to charity stalls, etc.	£0
Reasonable clothing allowance for civic events	£0
Telephone, stationery and printing	£0
Costs incurred e.g. hire of a venue, in relation to the Mayors fundraising events for the Mayor's named charity(s)	£4,473.35
Total	£4,675.35

Council Tax

Council Tax for the three Local Authorities responsible for Chard has been set for the year 2019-2020 at the following levels: -

Chard Town Council	£148.08	0% increase
South Somerset District Council	£167.11	2.85% increase
Somerset County Council & Somerset County Council Adult Social Care	£1,151.64 £88.09	3.99% increase
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	£217.81	12.38% increase
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	£86.52	2.99% increase
Total based on Band D Properties	£1,859.25	

Summary of Accounts for 2017-2018

Item	Expenditure	Income
Amenities Including Capital	£180,100	£11,300
Street Cleaning	£79,850	£50,000
Cemetery	£27,850	£31,071
Allotments	£5,300	£4,600
Market	£3,248	£6,000
Guildhall Including Capital	£228,039	£35,550
Tourist Information Centre	£3,270	£1,130
Support & Other Services	£225,100	£4,620
Grants	£16,055	£0
Precept Support Grant	0	£15,800
Precept	0	£608,741
Contribution from reserves	0	£0
Total	£768,812	£768,812

Summary of Budget for 2018-2019

The Accounts for the year ending March 2018 have not been finalised and audited. The figures below are the budgeted accounts for 2018-2019.

Item	Expenditure	Income
Amenities Including Capital	£271,369	£8,600
Street Cleaning	£56,750	£56,750
Cemetery	£29,941	£35,011
Allotments	£4,386	£3,800
Market	£700	£5,000
Guildhall Including Capital	£328,728	£46,225
Local Information Centre	£650	£500
Support & Other Services	£197,559	£1,620
Grants	£16,355	0
Precept Support Grant	0	£5,420
Precept	0	£631,341
Contribution from reserves	0	£112,171
Total	£906,438	£906,438

Outdoor Services

Shirley Pitman

Outdoor Services Manager

We have been working with SSDC with regard to our Street Cleaning Program. Following this a new working structure has been implemented over the year. The cleanliness of the town centre and surrounding areas has improved as the team address the new structure. This has been commented on by the Environmental Services Manager from SSDC and the public.

The summer flowering season with our hanging baskets and beds, after improved care provided the town with a wonderful display this year. We experienced an incredibly hot summer, so the maintenance of the baskets and beds was an arduous job with consistent watering having to be undertaken to ensure the beautiful displays were kept alive. A number of comments came from the public congratulating the council on the standard of the baskets and beds.



New ashtray lids on a number of litter bins together with the installation of new and additional waste bins were made within the town centre. During the course of the ashtray lids installation we had comments from the public enquiring how they were used, once this had been explained it was commented that it was an excellent idea and would hopefully improve the town. We have found that the lids are frequently being successfully used. The Community Payback have continued to be a valuable asset. During the last year they have assisted us with greatly needed help. They have undertaken a multitude of tasks ranging from re-edging pathways, clearing the stream of litter and moss, removal of graffiti, hedge cutting and painting. Members of the public commented that they were doing a marvellous job. The effort and enthusiasm that the team provide to the council is invaluable and at a fraction of the actual cost.

During this year we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One. As one of the tributes to mark this event we purchased a Commemorative Memorial Bench to be placed in the Cemetery in readiness for Remembrance Day. This was a paying tribute to the local servicemen who lost their lives, as you can see it is a beautiful bench. As you sit and look up the cemetery and reflect, you have a wondrous view of the chapel and the well-kept graves and shrubs.



We also purchased 5 'Silent Soldiers' now referred to as Silhouettes these were placed at all the entrances to Chard and also alongside the Beacon. These were also a fitting tribute to those who made a huge sacrifice in the First World War. The Silhouettes are a mark to reflect and remember those who served, sacrificed and changed our world, we propose to erect these each November.

Our Allotments continue to be very popular with Chard residents. Many Allotments were flourishing with produce and flowers during the marvellous weather we experienced last summer. We do still have some remaining plots that are available to lease.

We are just in the process of carrying out a Play park equipment and facilities refurbishment in our parks around the town. The work is ongoing presently but we hope to have this completed within the next two months. We hope this will again encourage all children to engage in outdoor activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. Playing outside helps children to develop their learning abilities. There are numerous health benefits in playing outside, with more room to play in, children are often more active when outside, which helps them to build strong bones and good fitness levels, while also enabling them to burn off extra energy and calories. Outdoor spaces help children to naturally come out of their shells and be more social, making them more likely to talk to different children and make new friends. This all encourages children to learn social skills and how to interact with other children.

The Guildhall

Matt Hawker

Guildhall Manager

The Grade II listed building is continuing in serving many long-standing local groups and organisations in Chard and in addition, has hosted a wide range of other events and hires from visitors from further afield.



From all the available rooms, most prominently used is the ground floor main Auditorium, that features a stage with dedicated audio and lighting systems, and optional tiered seating and internal balcony, as well as Café area and fully functional Kitchen.

The Town Hall situated on the second-floor hosts, amongst other events, the Monthly Town Council meetings and has a Balcony, used for Civic events overlooking the high street.

The Guildhall has hosted a number of important community events in the last year, ranging from Wrestling shows to most recently, 2019 Britain's Disabled Strongman Event, some of whose competitors came to Chard to compete from a variety of countries including Europe as well as America.

A black-tie charity ball was held last year by the "Single Yellow Rose" Charity, who transformed the interior of the Hall with their distinctive yellow decorative colour scheme for the night and raised a significant amount of money for their cause. The Guildhall lends itself well to this type of event as well as birthday parties and private celebrations.

The Guildhall also hosts the Antiques Markets on Thursday mornings, a Saturday market once per month and recently hosted a Vegan Fair that also drew in a large amount of interest.

The building's décor, maintenance, cleaning and general upkeep are all undertaken by a team of dedicated Caretakers. These custodians of the building also undertake the arrangements for the configuration of any equipment to be made readily available for the use of the Public prior to and during their specific Hires. They are also on hand as a point of contact for many of the building's visitors and members of the public.

The Guildhall recently have had the new CCTV system installed and commissioned, this is an improvement from the previous system and it is now able to record digitally with 5-megapixel a range of 5-megapixel cameras. Covering a large area of Fore Street and Boden Street, the

new CCTV is an asset that can help the Police as they protect and serve the community of Chard.

The Heating system within the building has also benefitted from improvements through a modernisation of the electronic management system late last year. This will make more efficient the application of heat throughout all the relevant areas of the building and will cut running costs of the heating of the building while the system will continue to improve on itself.

We have a small number of significant maintenance improvements running over the course of the next year; one of which is the Café Area roof being due for its wood to be retreated with preservative and along with this some repairs are to take place on a few of the joints, a local business has been assigned this work.

The front of the building shall undergo a considerable and well needed clean, this will remove algae and vegetation that has accumulated over the years and help bring the stone work back to its former glory and assist in the resistance for deterioration for its upcoming years.

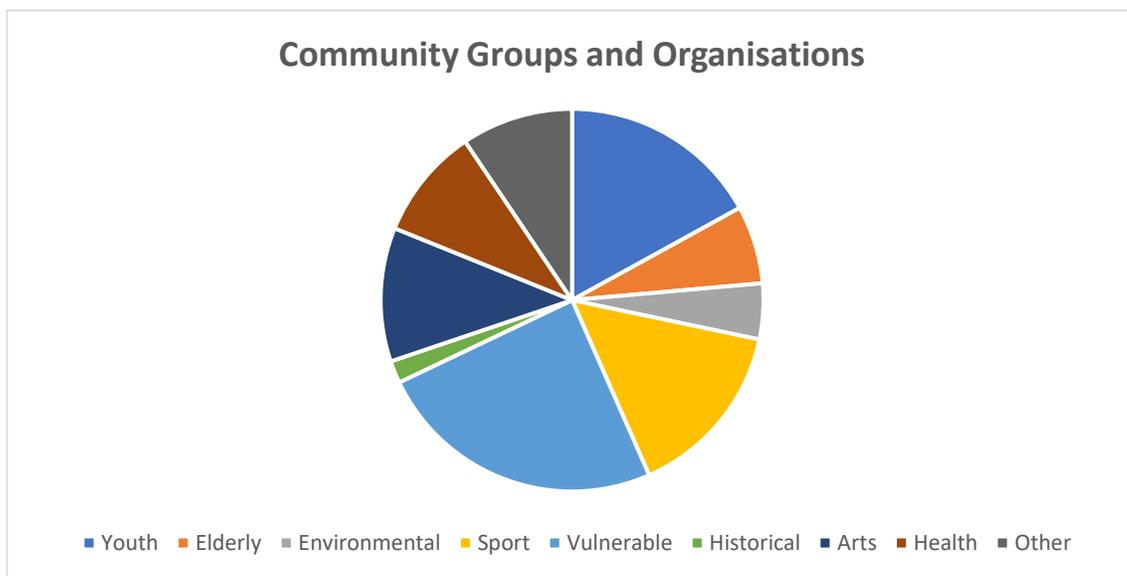
One of the other significant changes that the Guildhall will undertake is the improvement to the front doors of the building, again, initially facilitated by a local business, this will include the additional ease of accessibility for disabled patrons as well as visitors with young children, furthering its accessibility to all.

Community

Liz Johnson-Idan

Community Liaison Officer

Since joining Chard Town Council as Community Development Officer in August 2018 I have had the pleasure of working with both staff and Council on a range of issues and events which have proven to be rewarding, stressful, exhilarating and heartbreaking by turn and often all at once.



An initial scoping exercise found information on over 100 groups and community organisations active in Chard. Updating contact details and identifying where and when they meet took some time but I am confident that the list is as accurate as possible. Since the initial search several new groups have formed so it continues to be a 'work in progress' and that reflects the interests and needs of people in the area.

I continue to monitor the range of community-based organisations and where appropriate signpost to initiatives active in other areas. Funding is always an issue and is becoming more difficult but wherever possible I direct groups to funding streams that are available for their needs.

Environmental sustainability has become a priority during this period and I am working with campaigners to increase awareness in the levels of single use plastics, recycling and afforestation to address the issues and reduce the impact of the Town Council on the environment. This will also play a significant role in forward planning.

Additional funding from SSDC enabled the purchase of two electronic noticeboards for use in the Guildhall. One of these is in the foyer where it can be read from outside which is particularly useful during the evening. They are movable and easy to update with a scrolling display of news and events and have capability for video and audio display.

Mayor's events have included a Concert, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lights, Pantomime, Bumble Bee Ball and St George's Day. While all have received praise from those who came. The Mayor has been invited to and attended nearly 40 events over the last year covering a diverse range of activities in support of the local community of Chard and the wider area. While these last months have been a learning curve in many ways and new challenges evolve as the role develops the fact that the Community Liaison Officer acts as the buffer and link between the community and the Council means there is never a dull day and the ability to foresee what the future will bring other than the regular events calendar will remain an act of faith as it will always reflect the wishes of the Mayor and change as the person in the role does.

The coming year will no doubt bring new challenges, and one hopes, some triumphs, as the work continues to liaise with the community and elected members and I am particularly looking forward to working with the new Mayor whoever that may be.

Organisation and Accountability

There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities. Chard Town Council is the first and most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the town, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. South Somerset District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including car parking, housing and street cleaning. Finally, Somerset County Council's responsibilities include highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

Chard Town Council has fifteen elected Councillors who are elected every four years and represent one of six areas in the town, known as wards. The wards are Avishayes, Combe, Crimchard, Holyrood, Jocelyn and Shepherd's Lane.

The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected annually at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Chard and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and to do business. Elections were last held in May 2019 and are scheduled to be held next in May 2023.

The full Council meets bi-monthly in the Town Hall at The Guildhall. All meetings are open to the public, with a period of time set aside for members of the public to address Council. There are some occasions when for reasons of confidentiality members of the public and press are excluded. This is by means of a resolution in accordance with the requirements of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

In addition to the full Council meetings there are three standing committees; Finance and Personnel (F&P), Guildhall and Amenities (G&A) and Planning and Highways (P&H). P&H meet every month to act as consultees on planning applications and highways issues. F&P and G&A meet in rotation on the months between Full Council meetings. Again, all meetings are open to the public. Council also have a Personnel Sub Committee (PSC) to support the Town Clerk in the appointment and management of staff and to manage the Town Clerk. The PSC meet every month but these are business meetings and are therefore not open for members of the public to attend.

1. **Finance & Personnel Committee** is authorised by Full Council to take responsibility for the preparation of the Council's annual precept, review of the longer-term strategy of the Council, monitoring and scrutinising of the budget. In addition, the Committee takes responsibility for the regular review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Insurance, Risk Management, Policies and Terms of Reference. It has delegated responsibility to make expenditure against the Council's Administration Budget. The Committee monitors the Council's Monthly Accounts Reports and takes appropriate action to ensure compliance with budget.
2. **Guildhall and Amenities Committee** oversees the management, maintenance and enhancement of the Guildhall building, including maximising the continued use of the building by external groups. The committee works to ensure that the Town Council plays its full role in promoting the cleanliness, safety and development of the town

and its open spaces. It has responsibility for setting Guildhall hire charges, allotment rents, market rents and cemetery fees subject to approval of Full Council.

3. **Planning and Highways Committee** make observations on all planning applications and planning issues, including Development Briefs, Local Plans, Structure Plans and Development Control and to make site visits where necessary. The committee works to ensure that planning matters are exercised in accordance with the legislative and policy requirements of the Council with due regard for the individuals and communities affected, the economic effects, sustainable and environmental impacts

In accordance with statute, at the end of each financial year the accounts of the Council are available for public inspection for a period of 30 working days. This period is advertised and facilities are made available for members of the public to come and examine the Council's accounts. As the Council is committed to a policy of openness and transparency any reasonable request to view the accounts, or any other aspect of Town Council work, will try and be accommodated at any time of the year. The External Audit last year was completed by PKF Littlejohn LLP and there were no matters of concern identified or reported.

The Council's website contains a lot of information about services and functions of the Council and there are many downloadable forms available relating to allotments and the cemetery. All of the minutes of the Council's meetings and also its policies are available and can be downloaded in a PDF Format. If you do not have access to a computer and wish to see copies or extracts of minutes these can be made available for you to view at the Guildhall upon request in advance. Recent news events are also uploaded and details of any vacancies that occur within the Council. There is also a comprehensive list of groups and organisations on the website – if you know of a group that isn't included please let us know as we would like to ensure information is easily accessible for the many organisations based in Chard.

The Town has an electorate of 10,214 as of 1st May 2019.

Town Council Staff and Management

The Council currently has posts for a total of nine full-time staff and eight part-time staff, (three posts are currently vacant).

The administration of the Town Council is currently led by the Interim Town Clerk (Nick Randle) who is appointed by the Council. The Interim Town Clerk must carry out all the functions required by law as the Town Council's Proper Officer and issue all statutory notifications.

They are supported by the Deputy Town Clerk (Tracy Lamb), who is also the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council, with specific duties relating to the budget, annual accounts and audit to ensure proper financial management and transparency.

Your New Council

How to get in touch

Your Town Councillors are elected democratically by the people of Chard. They are not paid and do not receive any allowances. It is the Councillors that make the decisions and steer the direction in which the Council goes.

Avishayes Ward

Mrs. Cath Morrison	01460 239120
Garry Shortland	01460 61592
Dave O' Brien	01460 66104

Combe Ward

Andy Kenton	07921 574019
Mrs. Amanda Broom	01460 62102
Steve Warwick	01460 61977

Crimchard Ward

Mrs. Jenny Kenton	07921 574019
Martin Carnell	07411 696725
Mrs. Jenny Orchard	01460 67760

Holyrood Ward

Mrs. Sue Wyatt	01460 61370
Jason Baker	07736 310805
Dave Orchard	01460 67760

Jocelyn Ward

Dave Bulmer	01460 67917
Mrs. Sara Dowell	01460 261898
Mrs. Irene Glynn	01460 238417

Details of Councillors' addresses, and email contact may be obtained on request from the Town Clerk and are also available on the Chard Town Council website under the page 'Council'.

Contacting Officers

Visit us at:
Chard Town Council
The Guildhall
Fore Street
Chard
TA20 1PP

email: townclerk@chard.gov.uk
email: financeofficer@chard.gov.uk
Tel: 01460 239567

Other Council officers may be contacted through chardtouncouncil@chard.gov.uk or by phoning the Reception Desk on 01460 239567.

Other Legal Requirements

Chard Town Council is registered with the Information Commissioners Office to enable it to hold information under the Data Protection Act 1998, The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and has adopted the Model Code of Conduct for the conduct of its Councillors.