

Headlines 2020-21

- Created in May 2015
- 12 Councillors
- Budget (Precept): £ 469,559.02
- Stable Band D council tax with 0% year-on-year increase
- Employed 4.3 FTE staff

Cranbrook Town Council

Annual Report 2020-21

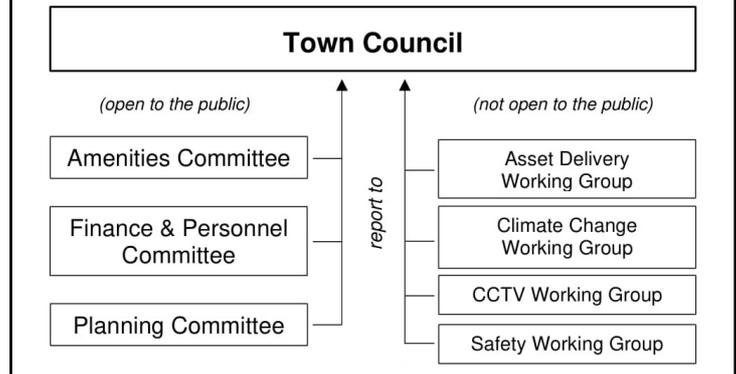


Our Vision

We want Cranbrook Town Council to be a modern organisation which strives to be open to all, transparent and responsive. We pride ourselves in working with and for people in order to help create a place where everyone feels part of a strong, prosperous and vibrant community.

We want Cranbrook to be a safe, clean and green environment where everyone is proud to live and bring up their families.

Our Governance Structure



AMENITIES AND ASSET DELIVERY

Our councillors leading on the Amenities Committee and asset delivery continue to work with partners to resolve issues affecting the town and to propose suggestions for improvements to its existing and future infrastructure, e.g. revisions to the built environment, street scene, landscaping, play areas, the Country Park and the train station. The Town Council facilitates regular meetings which bring together every organisation involved in the development of Cranbrook and these have led to, e.g.

- Ingrams pavilion; planning and delivery expected soon
- Expansion of the Cranbrook Medical Centre
- Electric vehicle charge points at the Younghayes Centre
- Country Park NEAP and trim trail and Phase 3 Northern LEAP in planning
- New Barbeques
- Table tennis tables
- Treatment of weeds
- Bat Boxes
- Public access to the nature reserve
- Geocaching
- Landscape photography kits
- Extension to path in phase 2 of the Country Park
- Willow shaded seating area in the Orchard
- Tree planting
- Country Park Management Plan review

Our councillors are volunteers who are not paid a salary or an allowance and who work hard to improve life and services in Cranbrook. Some of them have special responsibility for e.g. asset delivery, planning, health and safety etc...

Town Council Office

Our office on the ground floor in the Younghayes Centre is open to the public on

Monday to Friday from 10:00am until 2:00pm

or at any time by prior appointment.

Sadly... Parking and driving on grass verges is becoming a big issue throughout the town.

If you cannot find somewhere to park, do not park on verges which can cause damage to grass and wildflowers, or in front of gates and driveways.

Please respect the local environment and communities. It is not ok to park where it is not ok to park.

Memberships on Outside Bodies

As well as serving on the Council, its Committees and working groups, our councillors are also busy representing Cranbrook on external bodies, including Police Liaison, Catchment-Sensitive Communities, Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board, East Devon Arts and Culture Forum, East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership – Cranbrook Local Action Group (LAG), Exeter Airport Consultative Committee, Exeter University Geography Research Programme, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison, Larger Councils Forum, Move More Group, Parish and Town Councils Police Liaison Group, Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Advocate, Sky Park / Hayes Farm Liaison Group, Sport England Local Delivery Pilot, Tree Warden Forum.

Show me the money...

Our **Finance & Personnel Committee** develops and monitors the Council's budgets, administers the Council's community grants scheme and manages employees.

Summary financial statement

We received **£ 469,559.00** from Council Tax plus other income e.g. rents from Crannaford Allotments, Ingrams sports pitches and the Younghayes Centre. We also received funds which are ring fenced for delivering specific projects. Our total expenditure was **£ 437,662.00**. We will carry surplus funds forward to the following year and also build up reserves to meet operating costs and deliver future projects.

The Town Council element of the council tax remained stable at **£ 256.03** per Band D household. We are forecasting that it will remain stable for the next five years in our Business Plan.

Our **grants scheme** benefitted six community organisations at a total value of **£ 3,520.00** in 2020-21.

We secured **Devon County Councillors' locality funding** of **£ 10,925.85** as follows Cranbrook Park run, Cranbrook Brownies to supplement CTC grant, table tennis tables, two new barbeques in the Country Park, Festive Folktales by Fairyflight performance at Christmas, additional pathing into orchard and a contribution to public open space planting., the Halloween event in the Country Park, TRIP to supplement CTC grant.

Detailed financial information, including our Five-Year Business Plan, is available on our website at <https://www.cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk/finance/>.

Our **Charity of the Year** 2020-21 was Devon Air Ambulance.

We raised **£ 1,200.00** for them and hope they continue providing their vital services for Devon.

Due to a lack of fundraising opportunities in 2020, we decided to keep the Devon Air Ambulance as Our Charity of the Year 2021-22.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

In October 2020 Cranbrook Town Council requested a community governance review be conducted to revise the parish boundary of Cranbrook to properly reflect the planned expansion of the town (ref. minute 20/162).

The parish of Cranbrook was created in May 2015 following an initial community governance review conducted by East Devon District Council (EDDC).

The reasons for support of a Community Governance Review:

- reflect the growth of the town both now and in the future;
- allow the electoral arrangements to reflect the growth of the town;
- reducing the need for estate rent charges;
- effective and efficient management of open space and SANGs;
- prevent expansion areas crossing local government boundaries;
- provide clearly defined boundaries which are tied to ground features;
- provide boundaries for future District and County Council elections;
- establish a sense of place, an inclusive community, a sense of pride, community cohesion and civic values;
- represent a distinctive and recognisable community;
- provide the best opportunity to influence future planning.

East Devon District Council full Council agreed to the Community Governance Review, 3 March 2021, minute ref. 141a. Following this decision East Devon District Council have 12 months to determine this review.

What a year 2020 was!!

In September 2020 we welcomed our new Property Administrator, Joanna Stephenson. She is a welcome asset to the team and looks forward to reopening the Younghayes Centre so she can finally meet the community face to face.

The year 2020 brought us many new challenges and the Covid-19 pandemic brought a whole host of new practices to the Council.

The staff continued to work from home throughout the pandemic, they had to learn new ways to communicate and work together as a team to ensure that the Council still served the community.

The Council started to have virtual meetings via Zoom, which the public were welcome to attend. As time progressed not only could public attend these meetings online, but we started to stream our meetings on YouTube so that people could watch these at their own convenience.

New policies had to be introduced to ensure the service to the community continued seamlessly such as Covid 19 Public Virtual Meetings Protocol and a mobile working policy was introduced, so that all staff were contactable during work hours.

What we spent your money on in 2020-21

Staffing costs: £137,648

Administration including audit, IT licenses and support, subscriptions, training, rent and utilities, legal costs, insurance, etc: £15,726.00

Councillors' expenses: £27.70

Grounds maintenance: £189,832.94

Youth service: £11,020.67

A note on reserves

We need to build reserves of something approaching 50% of our precept. We also need to build earmarked reserves for items which are initially funded by the Section 106 Agreement in order to avoid council tax increases when those funds run out.

Our **Planning Committee** commented on 26 planning applications during the year, including the delivery of a proposed total of 1,361 new residential dwellings and associated infrastructure (applications 19/1798/MOUT, 19/0620/MOUT, 20/1190/MRES) as well as multiple extensions and conversions, variations of conditions and tree works.

The Town Council does not determine planning applications but make comment to the local planning authorities as a statutory consultee.

Cranbrook Development Plan Document (DPD)

Towards the end of 2020-21, East Devon District Council had submitted the Cranbrook Development Plan Document – which will guide the expansion of the development to approximately 8,000 homes – to the Planning Inspector. At the time of writing the plan was still under review, following the inspectors report.

Cranbrook Local Action Group (LAG)

The Cranbrook LAG forms part of the East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership and is chaired by one of our town councillors. Despite the lockdown, the Group managed to achieve.

- A Safer Towns designation with a series of workshops planned, at the Education Campus led by Youth Genesis.
- Five sessions to be run at the Education Campus - County Lines, Gang Culture, Online Safety, Community Safety & Positive Active Citizenship.
- East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership via LAG supporting the mental health provision at the Education Campus.

The Chair of the LAG attended regular liaison meetings with the Police, OPCC and Community Safety Partnership along with representatives of the other Parishes in the County Electoral Division. As part of a wider review by the Community Safety Partnership, there are proposals under consideration to amalgamate the liaison meetings and the LAG to form a new Community Safety Group (CSG).

Cranbrook Town Centre

The Town Council forms the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board together with East Devon District Council and Devon County Council. Both officers and members have been working tirelessly with partner organisations to deliver the town centre Cranbrook deserves. After monthly meetings, numerous site visits and considerable undertaking the town centre will at last start to see development.

The town centre will be delivered in phases and the Town Council continues to work with Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board on the details. The first phase will be a supermarket, town square and around nine or ten retail units. The Town Council expects the first planning application over the next month or two with more to follow with an aim to have the supermarket open ahead of Christmas 2022.

Partners are also working on proposals for a temporary commercial centre similar to the Box Park locations in London which will house small retail and social elements which could function as a unique attraction for the town bearing in mind it will have to exist within the shadow of nearby Exeter.

Local Plan Consultation

East Devon District Council consulted on the new East Devon Local Plan (2021-2040). We responded following the 15 February 2021 Council meeting, minute Ref. 21/32.

The main consideration raised was for the Town Council to assume responsibility for public open space delivered in the future, rather than creating estate rent charges. We also submitted comments on beauty in design, neighbourhood plans and sustainably led development.

FOOD BANK

Cranbrook Town Council has operated a food bank as a branch of the Exeter food bank Trussell Trust since April 2020. This provision is based at the Younghayes Centre. All clients are referred for the service and the foodbank operates Monday to Friday from 10am – 2pm.

In the last year we have assisted 87 households with emergency food provisions. We partnered with a local community group called “Grow, Eat, Do” which has supplied over 1,500 free home cooked, healthy, frozen meals to the community.

Celebrating the Community



▲ Apple pressing in the orchard was a sensational success with many squeezing their own apple juice.

We are always looking for ways to provide or support events which celebrate our fantastic community. Events we organised or supported during 2020-21 included the Cranbrook fun fair in July 2020, the Spring Nature Trail, apple pressing, Halloween in the Country Park, a Christmas sing along on your doorstep, Festive Folktales by Fairylight, Twit-Twoo where are you as well as tree and bulb planting.

▼ Citizen Award

Town Council presented the Citizen of the Year award to Claire Cross. Claire supported the Cranbrook community by coordinating a local group dedicated to making personal protective equipment (PPE) for local healthcare professionals. Claire has also sewn many lip-reading facemasks so the deaf or hard of hearing could "...see to hear..." (quote from D Hartford 1/11/2020 on the Cranbrook Scrubbers Facebook page) as well as making masks for the homeless.

The Town Council celebrates the Citizen Award in recognition of outstanding local achievements every year. Congratulations to the well-deserving winner!



▲ The Halloween Trail and Treat on the 31 October 2020 was a delightful encounter in the Country Park.

▶ Twit-Twoo had you all looking for Owls through the Country Park.



Our existing assets and services at a glance:

Younghayes Centre
Country Park and the Country Park Ranger
Ingrams Sports Pitches
Play areas at St Martin's, Hayes Square and Northwood Acres
Crannaford Allotments
All other areas public open space across Cranbrook
Four barbeques across two sites in the Country Park

Litter picking and bin emptying away from the adopted Main Local Route (MLR)
Youth service provided by our service provider Youth Genesis
Community development work



◀ Our virtual Christmas tree light switch on was on the 27 November 2020.

We hope you all enjoyed your message from Santa on Facebook. ▼



For further information please contact Janine Gardner, Town Clerk, on tel. 01404 514552, mob. 07746 909933 or email clerk@cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk

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