

Headlines 2022-23

- Created in May 2015
- 12 Councillors
- Precept: £578,883.83
- Stable Band D council tax with 0% year-on-year increase at £256.03
- Employed 5.14 FTE staff

Cranbrook Town Council



Annual Report

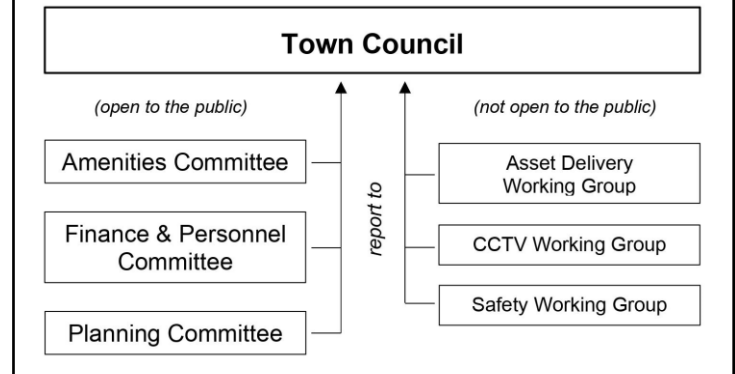
1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

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

Your councillors work continuously to resolve issues affecting the town, to progress improvements to existing and future infrastructure – or simply to deliver the latter, resulting in e.g.:

- Delivering and opening the Crannafoad play area in Rush Meadow Road
- Delivering and opening the Platinum play area in Badger Way/Chaffinch Rise
- Delivering an event space in the Long Meadow area of the Country Park
- Construction of the Ingrams Sports Pavilion commenced in September 2022
- Public open spaces transferring, e.g. Island Avenue and Platinum Park
- Treatment of weeds
- Tree planting
- First tranche of town centre construction commenced, including the town square
- Planning application for a wheeled sports facility (skatepark) in the town centre submitted in March 2023
- E.ON constructing a pipe bridge in the Great Meadow area of the Country Park to enable the extension of the district heating network
- Programme of path replacements where paths struggle to handle high rainfall
- Transfer of sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) basins 1a-c in the Country Park completed
- Community Garden in planning

Our **councillors** are **volunteers** who are not paid a salary or an allowance and who work hard to improve life and services in Cranbrook.

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 remaining a big problem throughout the town.

Do not park on verges which causes unsightly damage, or in front of gates and driveways.

Please respect the environment and other residents.

Memberships of Outside Bodies

As well as serving on the Council, its Committees and working groups, your councillors are also busy representing Cranbrook on external bodies, including Catchment-Sensitive Communities, the Cranbrook Strategic Delivery Board, Cranbrook Ottery St Mary Community Safety Group, East Devon Arts and Culture Forum, Exeter Airport Consultative Committee, Exeter University Geography Research Programme, Gypsy and Traveller Liaison, Larger Councils Forum, Move More Group, Police and Crime Commissioner Councillor Advocate, Sky Park / Hayes Farm Liaison Group, Sport England Local Delivery Pilot and the Tree Warden Forum. The Council is also a member of the National and Devon Associations of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Show me the money...

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

Summary financial statement

We received **£578,884** from council tax. Other income included rent from the Younghayes Centre, allotments and sports pitches. We also received funds which are ring fenced for delivering specific projects.

Our total expenditure was **£1,838,070** which included significant spending of Section 106 funds (developer contributions) for play areas and the construction of the Ingrams Sports Pavilion.

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 medium term future in our five-year business plan.

Our **grants scheme** benefitted four community organisations at a total value of **£3,792.80** in 2022-23.

We continue to be awarded substantial assurances by both our internal and external auditors, the highest within their assurance rating hierarchies, concluding that the Council maintains a very high standard of financial management, financial controls and risk management.

Detailed financial information, including our five-year business plan, is available on our website at

<https://www.cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk/finance/>.



Why oh why...

Some individuals continue to cause damage to our noticeboards, bins, trees, play equipment and to other infrastructure including Tillhouse Farm, bus shelters and Co-Bikes – the latter were withdrawn from Younghayes Road in March 2023 because of vandalism. We have a collective responsibility to conserve and protect assets of community value and we are committed to robustly respond to the few who seek to wreck these for others.

Ingrams Sports Pavilion

The construction of the Ingrams Sports Pavilion with its four changing rooms, a large social space and car park commenced in September 2022. The build is mainly funded by Section 106 (or developer) contributions, but Sport England contributed £125,000 too and so did the Town Council with £301,750 from its own general reserves. A multi-use games area (MUGA) and a play area is due to be delivered on the site too.

Spotlight on... Partnership Working

The Town Council hosts monthly meetings with representatives of the three tiers of local government (Cranbrook Town Council, East Devon District Council and Devon County Council), the local planning authority, the highway authority, all the developers, utility companies and any other bodies which are involved in the delivery of Cranbrook.

During 2022-23, we focussed on resolving snagging and remediation of roads in preparation for adoption.

We also specifically engaged with South West Water to address the lack of adoption and, as a direct result, ensured that in the future South West Water will routinely adopt drainage systems. This was not the case before the Town Council's intervention as the local planning authority, the lead local flood authority and South West Water had expected the Cranbrook taxpayer to pick up the tab.

We also respond to concerns raised by residents regarding street lighting and acknowledge that there are notable delays due to service delivery and supply issues. We have directly engaged with street lighting providers to tackle the provision of street lighting ahead of occupation which has not always been the case.

Finally, we have addressed problems which residents experience with mobility and disability issues by successfully pressing the planning authority to condition and, where necessary, enforce the provision of temporary disabled access arrangements until final surfaces are provided.

Climate Plan

In February 2022, the Town Council adopted its comprehensive climate action plan which details the steps the Council is taking to reduce its carbon footprint.

We continue to only consume energy which is produced from 100% renewable sources; we plant trees and use public open space and verges to improve urban biodiversity and we are delivering a community garden.

For further information please visit our website at <https://www.cranbrooktowncouncil.gov.uk/climate-change/>.

What we spent your money on in 2022-23

Staffing costs: £212,271

Administration including audit, licenses and subscriptions, training, rent and utilities, legal costs, insurance, events etc: £60,834

Councillors' expenses: £60

Grounds maintenance: £229,756

Youth service: £11,294

Charity and Citizen of the Year

In January 2023, the Council decided not to appoint a charity of the year anymore and to replace the citizen of the year award with a recognition of achievements across the wider community as and when those arise.

Our **Planning Committee** commented on 36 significant applications of which 20 were major applications particularly in relation to the town centre and expansion areas, 8 householder applications seeking consent to extend their properties and two tree applications.

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

Cranbrook Development Plan Document

In August 2022, the Planning Inspector found the Cranbrook Plan sound. The Plan will guide the expansion of Cranbrook to approximately 8,000 homes and the Inspector's verdict triggered the eventual consent to two major planning applications relating to the Treasbeare and Cobden expansion areas.

Cranbrook Country Park

In December 2022, the Country Park in Cranbrook won the biggest landscaping award in Europe, the BALI Award, in the category "Grounds Maintenance – Free Public Access". The Country Park is also nominated for the Green Flag Award, an international accreditation given to publicly accessible parks and open spaces.



▲ The team at Tony Benger Landscaping Ltd, the Council's grounds maintenance contractor, with Cllr Kim Bloxham (third from left) and Cllr Barry Rogers (fourth from left) celebrating receiving the BALI Award.

Cranbrook Town Centre

Towards the end of 2022, the first tranche of the town centre in Cranbrook started to be constructed. This first phase includes a supermarket, town square, a number of retail units and a commercial nursery.

The Town Council will assume responsibility for the town square and a lift which connects the square with the level of the supermarket entrance and car park.

The Town Council will also deliver a multi-purpose town centre building to the north of Tillhouse Road opposite the town square but timescales for this will depend on the outcome of a town centre masterplanning exercise which the local planning authority East Devon District Council is planning on carrying out. Before that exercise is completed, the District Council is unlikely to transfer the land for The Tillhouse to the Town Council or consent to a planning application.

Watch your speed!

The Town Council coordinated the start of a **Community Speedwatch** scheme in Cranbrook in 2022 and hopes to grow the volunteer base so that this scheme will be sustained by the community without Council support in the future.

The Council also installed a **vehicle-activated speed sign** (VAS) in early 2023 with grant funding from Devon County Council which is an electric sign which displays a message and speed when triggered by vehicles travelling at excessive speeds.

Introduction of Parking Restrictions

In August 2021, the Town Council submitted a proposal to Devon County Council to introduce parking restrictions in four trial locations along Younghayes Road, at the Cranbrook Education Campus and at the junction of Yonder Acre Way with Crabtree Close. After the County Council simply ignored the proposal for many months, we finally anticipate installation in 2023.

Partner Consultations

During 2022-23, the Town Council contributed to East Devon District Council's Local Plan consultation, code of conduct consultation, council tax reduction scheme 2023-24 consultation, public space protection orders consultation, street trading policy consultation and the Broadclyst suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) consultation.

Celebrating the Development of Cranbrook



▲ Cllr Les Bayliss (left), the Town Council's Chairman, at the planting ceremony of the late Queen's Green Canopy in the Great Meadow area of the Country Park on 9 June 2022. The Town Council had hosted jubilee celebrations on 4 June 2022.

2022-23 has seen the delivery of many milestones in the history and development of Cranbrook, ranging from the turf cutting of the town centre on 29 September 2022 to the turf cutting marking the beginning of the construction of the Ingrams Sports Pavilion on 30 September 2022 and the delivery of two additional play areas.

Although progress may sometimes appear frustratingly slow, Cranbrook Town Council remains at the forefront of working with partners to deliver the remainder of the development at Cranbrook.

Cranbrook Youth Club

After our previous youth service provider since 2017, Youth Genesis, terminated our contract without notice in late August 2022, two resident volunteers established the Cranbrook Youth Club CIC which delivers a service for young people in the Younghayes Centre each Tuesday evening during term time. We are hoping to expand that service during 2023-24 so that even more young people can benefit from the inspirational team of youth workers. A huge thank you to everyone at the Cranbrook Youth Club CIC.



▲ Turf cutting marking the beginning of the construction of the town centre in Cranbrook on 29 September 2022 – a much anticipated milestone. *Photo credit: Acheson Construction Ltd (Whiteley)*



◀ Opening of the Crannaforde play area in Rush Meadow Road on 22 August 2022. In 2022-23, the Town Council opened two new play areas.



▲ More turf cutting in September 2022 – this time marking the beginning of the construction of the Ingrams Sports Pavilion on 30 September 2022. The Town Council is delivering the Pavilion from Section 106 funding, a contribution from Sport England and £301,750 from its own general reserves.

Our assets and services at a glance:

Younghayes Centre with its facilities to hire (multi-use sports hall, computer suite, small meeting room and conference room)
Country Park and Ranger
Ingrams Sports Pitches
Play areas at St Martin's, Hayes Square, Northwood Acres, Crannaforde and Platinum Park
Crannaforde Allotments
All other areas public open space across Cranbrook
Permanent barbeques in the Country Park
Table tennis table in the Country Park

Litter picking and bin emptying away from the adopted Main Local Route (MLR)
Youth service provided by the Cranbrook Youth Club CIC

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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