

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan Progress and Achievements 2019-2020

Introduction

The Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan was launched in October 2016 with the intention that the Action Plan would be delivered during the period October 2017 to 2021 with an annual review, evaluation and refresh where necessary. The Covid-19 pandemic has curtailed a great many activities and events in 2020 and many of the actions identified in the Plan have been affected. It has therefore been agreed with the Town Council that the current Plan will be extended until 2022 as we plan how best to recover, to rebuild our local economy, services, facilities and social life.

This paper highlights some of the progress and achievements made over the last year to address the issues identified by the community in the Plan.

The Bishop's Castle Community Partnership

To ensure that it is community-driven, the **Bishop's Castle Community Partnership** was established as an independent charity with the aim to advance citizenship and community development by:

- providing a strategy for the development of the Town and key economic, social and environmental priorities;
- working closely with partners to translate the actions within the Community Town Plan into reality and practice;
- regularly consulting the community on its needs and prioritise the actions required;
- identifying and bidding for potential sources of funding (often unavailable to statutory bodies) to support local priorities;
- representing the interests of the local community at County and national level;
- supporting the community of Bishop's Castle and its environs to achieve a better quality of life for residents;
- undertaking actions directly where no other partners exist.

The Partnership has its own bank account and is therefore eligible to bid for funding to support community projects that contribute to the actions of the Plan should suitable grants become available.

People living in the Parish of Bishop's Castle aged 18 or over who support the work of the Community Partnership are encouraged to become members. Further details may be found at the end of this paper.

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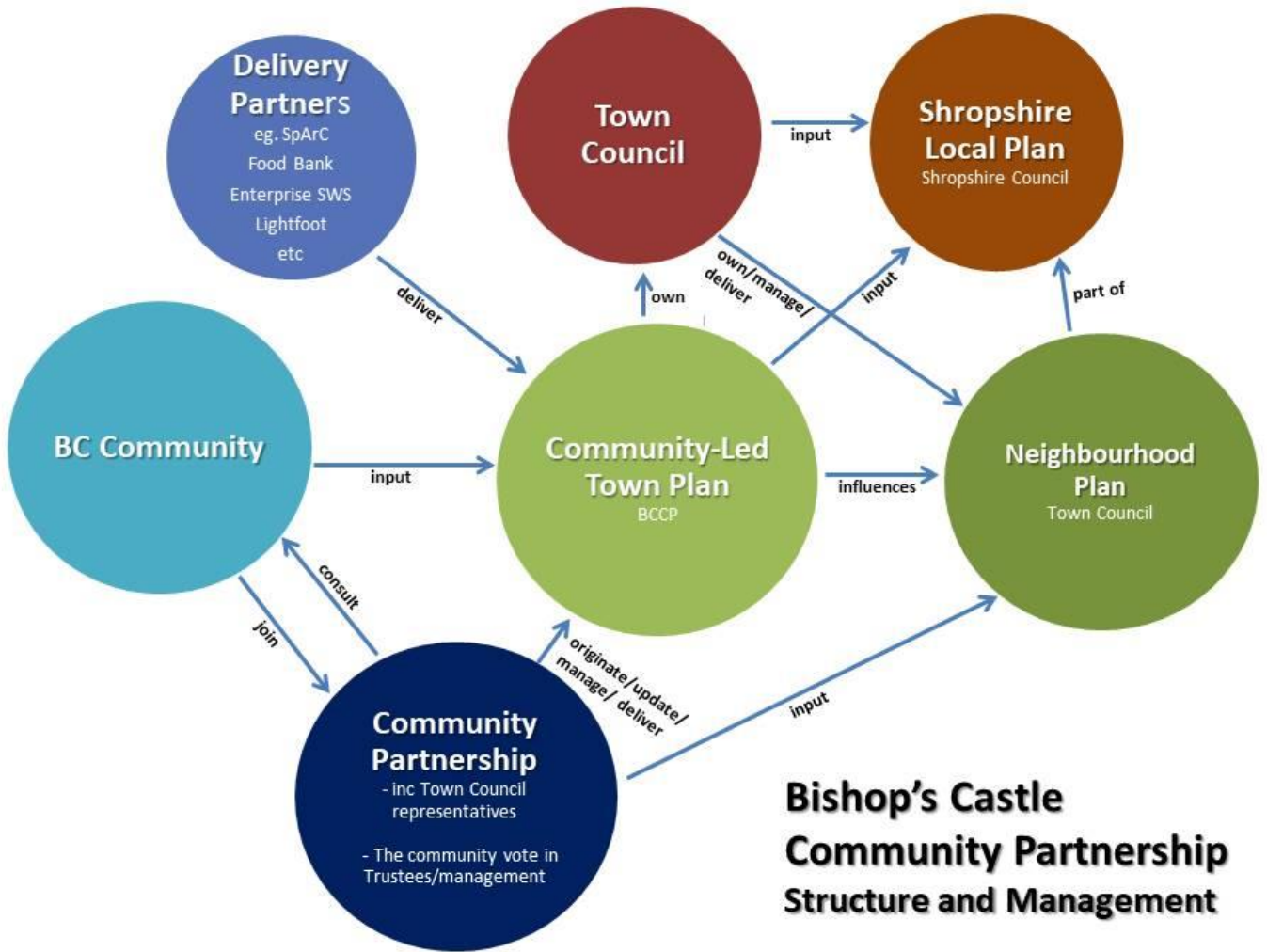


<https://www.facebook.com/communityplan/>



<https://bishopscastletowncouncil.gov.uk/town-plan/>

The Bishop's Castle Community Partnership Structure



The Community-Led Town Plan

The Community-Led Town Plan was launched in October 2016 and the actions are updated annually. It has 6 themes designed to address the issues identified by the Bishop’s Castle community:

Town Centre; Community and Services; Economy; Sustainability; Infrastructure and Development



The Community Partnership is working in partnership with the Town Council in their development of a **Neighbourhood Plan** for Bishop’s Castle.

The Neighbourhood Plan is concerned with planning decisions, whereas the Community-Led Plan covers all things important to a community.

Both plans work together for the future benefit of the Town.

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan Progress and Achievements 2019-2020

Since the Plan was launched in 2016, the Bishop's Castle Community Partnership has helped to support, co-ordinate or lead a number of projects with the aim of addressing actions identified in the Community Plan. Listed below are some of the amazing things that have been achieved over the last year by dedicated volunteers.

SUSTAINABILITY

Climate & Ecological Emergency

- **Climate Action Plan:** Bishop's Castle Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in October 2019 and commissioned the Sustainability Working Group to draw-up a contingency plan. The BC Climate and Ecological Action Plan [CAP] was submitted to the Town Council in April 2020 and approved in June 2020. Various CAP initiatives are listed below. (Disappointingly, the call for volunteers to help deliver CAP initiatives has received no responses).

Bio-diversity

- **Restore Shropshire Verges Project [RSVP]** Around 400 wildflowers have been grown-on and will have been planted-by late 2020 on the verges of the A489 crossroad. The project has been successful in getting funding for a new grass-cutting machine that collects the cut grass, thus reducing the considerable effort raking and collecting requires, and plans are in hand for this grass to be used in bio-digesters.
- **Going Wild in BC** is an initiative to make Bishop's Castle visually greener and more attractive as well as increasing its bio-diversity. A funding bid for a part-time leader for this initiative is planned. This role is to help explore possible ways and means, perhaps, improved hedgerow management, large-scale tree-planting, and the delivery of a survey of the Town to identify areas where the planting of wildflowers, herbs, shrubs and trees, etc. can take place, and to organise the planting.

Waste and Recycling

- **Recycling** - Shropshire Council rejected the concerns submitted by the Crowgate volunteers and closed the Crowgate site. As the volunteers predicted, this has resulted in longer journeys (c.16-18 miles) for local people to the disposal site in Craven Arms, which is bad for the environment and road traffic, and has led to an increase in fly-tipping and, inevitably, less re-cycling. This closure is an outstanding example of the short-sighted application of a business case lacking any externality costs.

Local Food

- **Local Food production** Little Woodbatch Market Garden has expanded its vegetable box scheme, and is planning to extend its facilities and activities in other community projects and pilot an electric van delivery of veg boxes.
- **Seed Saving** The start of an initiative that is intended to lead to a Bishop's Castle Seed Bank. The first phase will be to encourage seeds to be saved for a seed swap to take place early in 2022. If enough interest is shown, the Town Hall has offered to host the collection of seeds for swapping or for a small donation.
- **Community College Kitchen Garden** Little Woodbatch Market Garden, in co-operation with members of the Sustainability Working Group, will manage the Community College's kitchen garden, supplying fresh herbs and vegetables for the students' meals.
- **Food Resilience Strategy:** A Community Food Strategy will be produced which allows us take stock of what's happening in our local food system - what resources we have, any issues or gaps, who needs support, and who can lend their skills. From this, we can take steps to making our community more resilient through targeted actions.

Renewable Energy

- **Electric Vehicle Charging point** in addition to attracting existing EV users to visit the Town, but also with the future government strategy of limiting the production of new vehicles to electric only, a survey was undertaken

to establish what the off-street charging situation in the Town is. The findings will be used by the Town Council to seek funding for the installation of charging points in the Town. Discussions on siting these are in hand with Shropshire Council.

The Middle Marches Community Land Trust

- The Trust was launched in April 2019 to provide a vehicle for the local ownership of land that can provide a haven for wildlife, better connectivity between habitats, promote regenerative agriculture and to stimulate local food production. Since then, our main achievements have been:
 - working with the Stretton Wetlands Interest group on an appeal to buy a three-acre field on the edge of Church Stretton. It hosts 141 plant species, and 45 different types of insects, and provides bio-diverse habitat, which is all the more precious when 90% of UK wetlands have been lost in the past 100 years. The appeal raised £25,000 in under four months and virtually all the donations were given by local people.
 - obtaining a 10 acre site just North of Bishops Castle, which has not been intensively managed for over 12 years. Part of the ground will be fenced off to allow for brief periods of mob-grazing to break up the turf and allow more plants to germinate. The rest will be re-wilded. The Trust has a five-year renewable agreement with the farmer, and the changes in biodiversity and soil fertility will be carefully monitored. The Trust hopes that this model of land management will prove to be of interest to other farmers.
 - bidding to buy 94 acres up on Norbury Hill. Half of the land will be owned by one of our shareholder members. Our offer has been accepted, but donations towards the costs are being welcomed until the end of December. Securing it means that Norbury Hill will become the largest 'Stepping Stone' for nature between the Long Mynd and Stiperstones. Plans for its conservation are being drawn up, and we expect to enable more Curlew to breed over the coming years.
- In 2021, an outline plan to work with a landowner on providing space for the growing of locally produced food will be progressed, and it's hoped that farm walks and other visits can be restarted. The Trust's first General Meeting was held in January 2020, when a full Board was formally elected. If you would like to join, get more information about any of our activities, please email us at info@middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk check out our website, or call Jonathan Brown on 07497 142 485.

ECONOMY

- The Covid-19 pandemic has made 2020 a very difficult year for the Town's economy, with some shops closing for long periods and those remaining open having to adapt to tricky social-distancing requirements. In the face of this unforeseen disaster, local businesses have shown remarkable flexibility in adapting to the restrictions imposed and finding new ways of continuing to trade.
- The people of Bishop's Castle appreciated the extra effort made by the shops in continuing to supply essential medicines, food and drink during the worst of the lockdown: in particular, the Pharmacy, Co-op, Spar and Andrew Pugh's butchers shop and, an important indicator of local food resilience, Little Woodbatch Market Garden, which quickly expanded its veg' box scheme. We hope the gratitude felt by the Town's residents to our local suppliers is reflected in their continued use of our local shops when better times arrive.

Bishop's Castle Business Park

- After many years of campaigning by Bishop's Castle Councillors there is finally good news on the future of Bishop's Castle Business Park.
- Funding of £4.3 million has been secured to expand the Park by 50,000 square feet which is great news for local businesses wishing to expand and for new ones to secure modern purpose built business accommodation.
- Bishop's Castle Business Park is owned by Shropshire Council and has stood as an unused employment and industrial space for over 10 years. This is now about to change with this investment, £1.7 million of which is from the European Regional Development Fund, with a further £3.1million allocated by Shropshire Council.
- The investment in this site is long overdue. It was first identified over 10 years ago as an essential development needed in the area to enable existing businesses to expand and to support new businesses needing smaller start up units. Former Councillors for Bishop's Castle, Peter Phillip, Charlotte Barnes and Jonny Keeley all campaigned

hard to raise awareness of this site to secure inward investment and the development of this important economic resource for the local area.

- Planning permission has already been approved enabling work on to begin in spring 2021, with a planned opening date of spring 2022. Site clearance has already started. The development will consist of two 15,000 sq. ft. units and two 10,000 sq. ft. units, one of which will be split into five starter units, giving new businesses the chance to take up premises.

Recovery Fund - The March of the Elephants Artworks Trail

- In August Bishop's Castle successfully bid for a grant of £5,000 from the Shropshire Council Covid-19 Small Market Towns Marches Investment Fund. Working with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP), this funding has been made available for key Shropshire market towns to support initiatives aimed at enabling safe reopening, social distancing, driving footfall and reinvigorating the Town economy.
- The funding will help the Trail scale up to become a major tourist attraction for the region and provide a much needed boost to our local economy. We believe that this trail is unique in that it provides highly creative artworks of different shapes, sizes and media, for example:
 - Acclaimed national artist Chris Groombridge has made bas-relief elephant heads with entwined trunks cast in local Jesmonite and sited in the High Street;
 - Local artist Bamber Hawes, with support from Jamie Furber of VT Prints, has painted a huge mural of a standing elephant on the side of a building in the Town Centre;
 - A large interpretation sign has been produced for the Old Square to explain the history of the former Market Hall and the Clive Crest monument. It also details the March of the Elephant Trail.
- The Trail will be self-guided and as all sites are outdoors and spread out across the Town, social distancing will be maintained.
- Enterprise SWS has developed an excellent web-site for this initiative at <http://www.bishops-castle-march-of-the-elephants.org.uk/>

The Bishop's Castle Railway Weighbridge Project

- Despite all the challenges this year has brought, a tremendous amount of work has been achieved, none of which would have been possible without a dedicated group of volunteers and the support and generosity of the local community:
 - the goal for 2020 was to install replica windows and doors and have the building watertight by winter. By the middle of March it became clear that all fundraising events for the year would have to be cancelled and so we started thinking about alternative fund raising opportunities;
 - the 'Watertight by Winter' appeal was launched, followed by the first ever Bishop's Castle Railway Heritage Calendar;
 - during the year several grants and donations were received and in September, following the latest Government Guidelines, a National Heritage Open Day was very successful;
 - fundraising for the year exceeded our expectations and enabled not only the building to become watertight, but for the interior to be plastered and electricity to be installed. In addition a small kitchen area has been planned and ordered;
 - by spring 2021 there will be a really useable heritage building for locals and tourists to enjoy the many events already being planned.

Georgians in Stone Project

- The Parochial Church Council developed the project with the aim of conserving eleven Grade II listed Georgian tombs situated in the churchyard, including the well-researched African's Grave. The project also has a host of community activity to help people find out more about Georgian Bishop's Castle, which was a notable Rotten Borough. BCHRC has researched the lives of the people and families commemorated by the tombs, which is providing information for a special leaflet aimed at visitors, and development of the Town Tour. The project has a virtual celebration day in May. SpArC Theatre is collaborating with the group to produce activity bags for kids that will be available on May 15th to collect.

Enterprise South West Shropshire

- Mike Ashwell retired from the company Managers role at the end of 2020. Mike had managed and developed Enterprise House over the last quarter-century creating a hub for many of the Town's activities: the library and the SpArc theatre, the Village Outreach facility, and the myriad business and IT support functions carried-out by him and his colleagues.
- With Rob McKay now settling into the Managers role the ESWS team have been working in collaboration with Shropshire Council and other local partners to develop its plan and to build on the legacy left by Mike by expanding its current offering and introducing new services to meet the needs of local community groups and businesses.
- During the periods of lockdown ESWS has continued to provide essential business and community services remotely and via click and collect. The Library has enjoyed considerable support and has also continued its popular ready read remote services. The theatre has been providing events in-between periods of lockdown, reducing its capacity to ensure safety for its ever-enthusiastic audiences. Significantly for the Bishop's Castle economy ESWS has provided additional support to some of the business tenants at Enterprise House to help them through this challenging period. 11 of the 12 Workshop and Office units have remained occupied for the whole of 2020 with the Enterprise House site supporting the employment of >25 local people overall over the last 12 months.
- In 2021 ESWS has opened up more unit space at Enterprise House to support additional local businesses and to increase the numbers employed on the site as restrictions ease. These new units include 3 new offices of various sizes and workshop / storage units. We are also working closely with Shropshire council to deliver a shared work hub / co-working space in the building so that we can offer a local alternative to home working in the area.
- ESWS business services have been added to, including additional administration and bookkeeping services for local business and community interest groups, these services will be further enhanced as the year progresses.
- Further new services are also currently being progressed for 2021, including the potential for a Community Repair shop, additional IT services, new training programs, opportunities to volunteer, and a strengthened and revitalised business network that includes new forums for business start-ups and business planning to grow during the year.

Bishop's Castle Festivals Joint Group

- Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, all of our festivals had to be cancelled this year. The organisers have come together to create an online presence with activities and events to show that the Festivals are still here and will return once the pandemic is over. For example:
 - The Carnival organised a 'Virtual Treasure Hunt' on Facebook; a 'Decorate Your House' competition and posted Videos/pictures from previous Carnivals via YouTube
 - The Michaelmas Fair organised a 'Children's Steam Engine Colouring Competition'; a 'Vehicle Photographic Competition' and posted a montage of stills and video clips of past Fairs was posted on Facebook and YouTube.
 - Christmas Lights organised the Town Centre tree with a video of the lights being turned on; 'Bishop's Castle Advent Calendar'; a 'Nativity Sheep Trail Competition' and Bishop's Castle Christmas Grotto took over a vacant shop to make a magical grotto for children to observe safely.
- The Group has created Facebook and YouTube channels:
 - Facebook Channel - <https://www.facebook.com/Bishops-Castle-Festivals-100617371680464/>
 - YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi9yd2P2hCdStezZ1Cmlg?>

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport

- The '**Dial-a-Ride**' service and '**Wheels to Work**' scheme have been publicised via the Town Newsletter and the Community Partnership Facebook page.

Rural Social Exclusion

- **Fast Broadband** is now available across the Town. Take-up is at **60% of households** in the SY9 post code area at the latest count.
- **4G connectivity** is now available across much of Town and becoming more reliable
- The Community Partnership collects **connectivity information** and disseminates that via the Facebook page
- **Advice and support** re connectivity has been provided by Enterprise House
- The '**Shropshire RCC Community Fuel Buying Scheme**' has been publicised via the Town Newsletter and the Community Partnership Facebook page. The number of local people has increased to the point where Keith Whiddon (07971 661615) has been asked to become the Bishop's Castle Co-ordinator for the scheme.

Covid-19 Pandemic Community Support

- The Community Partnership has supported the community during the pandemic through our online social media presence. The well subscribed Facebook 'BC Events' group has been renamed 'BC Events and Community Support'. The group currently has 2,087 members. The group has proved a valuable way of disseminating information to the community as well as providing a forum for the community to exchange ideas and thoughts.
- We have maintained lists of local traders during the lockdowns. The current list is in the form of an online Google spreadsheet <https://bit.ly/2HUOfuE> and Google map <https://bit.ly/34MLljO> accessed via the Facebook group. Traders are able to enter and maintain their own information that is immediately publically available to the community. Additionally the list is exported in PDF format so that it may be accessed by those without access to social media.

DEVELOPMENT

Character Assessment

- In 2019/20 the Community Partnership produced a Character Assessment of the town's Conservation Area as part of its involvement in the Steering Group of Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The Character Assessment contains: 9 on-site surveys of the townscape within the Conservation Area; a review of its historical assets; and research on the social and historical nature of the town and its community. It provides core data that adds another layer of information to that collated in the original Community-Led Plan surveys of 2015/16, referred to below in the Town Centre section of this document. Including the nine surveys, the document extends to some 250 pages.
- The Character Assessment was instrumental in defining several policies in the NDP as well as the site selection for the additional houses required up to 2038 by Shropshire Council's Shropshire Local Plan. It highlights further the impact of traffic on the Conservation Area. It also provides the basis of some of the 2020-2022 Actions listed in both the Town Centre Action Plan under 2. Traffic Flow and 4. Townscape, and the Development Action Plan.
- The Character Assessment also provides the data and the platform to enable the Town Council to press for action in conjunction with Shropshire Council on 3 fronts:
 - Update the Local List of non-designated heritage assets which is no longer fit for purpose but which is now recognised by the National Planning Policy Framework as being a significant element in the planning process. This update should include consideration of the additional premises identified in the NDP as worthy of recognition as non-designated heritage assets.
 - Address the traffic related issues identified in both the Character Assessment surveys and in the NDP. As traffic issues are not in themselves a planning matter, they cannot be directly addressed by the NDP. It requires direct engagement with the Highway Authority and a fresh look at options available, taking account of the up-to-date information contained in the Character Assessment surveys and the NDP.
 - The generation of an action plan for the Market Place/Old Market Square and its surroundings.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

- The NDP covers planning issues related to housing, employment, design of developments, environment, heritage and transport. It must be led by a 'qualifying body'. Hence, the Town Council initiated the NDP and is responsible for monitoring its progress through the formal ratification process.

- Work on the NDP was undertaken during 2019/20. The Plan includes: a new residential site allocation; policies relating to the protection of the historic environment in the Conservation Area; the Character assessment, including the 9 zone surveys and the review of the Local List of heritage assets; housing mix and design criteria; and defined green spaces and footpaths.
- There are 6 key features of the NDP which result from the work undertaken on the Character Assessment:
 - The inclusion of the residential site allocation ensures that there is sufficient land to meet the projected housing need up to 2038. This would satisfy the requirement of Shropshire Council's Local Plan.
 - The NDP reinforces two of Shropshire Council's Core Strategies – DP23 and MD13(2), both of which require a Heritage Assessment to be made for proposals that might affect the significance of a designated or non-designated (Local List) heritage asset or its setting. These two policies are further enhanced by the NDP Policy B2 which also requires that all applications for development within the Conservation Area must reflect the relevant characteristic features of the Conservation Area in general and those of the zone in which the site is located. The policy goes on to specify 5 distinct features that must be reflected.
 - The NDP defines locations that are/have been highly sensitive to change, including the Market Place/Old Market Square and its surroundings. It highlights the need for action and/or attention as regards future change in these sensitive sites.
 - NDPs that incorporate an historic environment provide one of the criteria for eligibility for historic grants funding. The NDP can therefore be used to support funding applications for both projects and improvements to individual premises.
 - When commenting on planning applications for properties/sites within the Conservation Area, the Town Council now has additional planning criteria against which to assess an application, and which can be directly referenced in its response.
- In January 2021, the Draft NDP entered the first of three stages to formal ratification, the Regulation 14 stage. This stage gathers the evidence to support the proposed site for future housing. It will be followed by an independent examination (Regulation 16) and a public referendum (Regulation 18). Both must be undertaken by Shropshire Council. If, following the referendum, the NDP is approved, it will be incorporated into Shropshire Council's Shropshire Local Plan (2016-2038), alongside three other NDPs. Whilst the approved NDP will then have a statutory status as part of Shropshire Council's development plan, it will still require the Town Council to be pro-active and vigilant in ensuring that the NDP policies and objectives are continuously realised.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Dementia-Friendly Community

- In June last year, Bishop's Castle was recognised by the Alzheimer's Society as a Community working towards being Dementia Friendly. Since then, the steering group has identified 'Health and Social Care' and 'Shops and Businesses' as priorities for action.
- We have had conversations with Bishop's Castle Medical Practice, who were keen to evaluate their provision of care for those living with Dementia and their carers. They have taken steps to improve signage and accessibility, and the staff have attended on-line Dementia awareness sessions.
- We had a tour of the new Dementia Unit at Coverage Care, and have attended the Forget-me-Not café at Keegan's Court. Valerie Woodmansey, who runs the local Dementia awareness sessions, has been the guest speaker at the Friends of Stonehouse AGM, and has run awareness sessions with members of the WI and Mothers' Union and individuals – over 100 people in total.
- Members of the steering group started to visit shops and businesses in Bishop's Castle to raise awareness of the needs of people living with Dementia. Look out for "Working towards Dementia Friendly" stickers in shop windows. To receive one, staff need to attend a Dementia awareness session and made improvements to assist their customers.
- Thanks to sponsorship we purchased a floor banner with the idea of taking it around the festivals with Alzheimer Society leaflets in order to promote awareness and sign up people to attend an awareness session.
- Unfortunately, COVID-19 has curtailed both the conversations in the shops and businesses, and the festivals. However, conversations are ongoing with the Medical Practice and we are exploring how we can support people "virtually" whilst the pandemic rages on.

SpArC

- **Centre re-opening** - The SpArC Centre was taken over by Shropshire Council from Teme Leisure in April 2020. Covid 19 inevitably stopped the opening which eventually took place on 24 August, including the pool. The theatre's first opening was in mid-October. Despite reduced capacity, early indications are that the planned programme of events is being well supported by a loyal customer base. The theatre continues to be operated by the theatre manager and a committed group of volunteers.
- **Income** - We were successful with our grant applications, gaining this year £29,500 from Calor, Pocket Parks, and the BA Carbon Reduction fund as well as £4,200 in crowd funding. This contributed to a total of £66,600 for the first 8 months of 2020. We continue to be grateful for the substantial support of town and parish councils within this total.
- **Spin bikes** - 18 new, top of the range, bikes were delivered to SpArC in July, funded by the SpArC CIO
- **The MUGA** - The CIO offered to match-fund with ESWS £5,000 annually in order to build up funds for resurfacing the MUGA
- **The Theatre** - The CIO has increased the contribution of theatre friends substantially and worked closely with the theatre to gain £5,000 grant funding from Shropshire Council. We are collaborating on securing other grants to support the theatre.
- **SpArC has been chosen by the Co-op** as one of their 3 local causes for the year from October 25 2020 to October 23 2021. Our aim is to buy water play equipment to boost children's water confidence and increase parents' social confidence; both of which have been dented by Covid restrictions.

Bishop's Castle Community Food Bank

- The Foodbank opened on 9th April 2020, temporarily based on the ground floor of the Methodist Hall. The original opening times were: Mondays 2-4pm, and Thursdays 2-4pm. We secured a more permanent arrangement with the Methodist church and, since 2nd September 2020, we have been based on the first floor of the hall. Our opening hours changed to accommodate potential returns by groups already using the hall. Our new opening hours are: Wednesdays 5-6.30pm; and Fridays 1.30-3.30pm. The trustees will review these new arrangements after three months.
- Since opening we have provided food and other supplies to an average of 45 individuals at each session. We have a group of about 23 active volunteers who undertake a variety of tasks, including home deliveries. We are extremely well supported locally in terms of both food and financial donations. In addition, we have applied for and received approximately £3000 of grants from a variety of sources within and outside Shropshire. We have received a great deal of helpful advice and ongoing support from the Shropshire Poverty Food Alliance as well.
- We became a registered charity about five weeks ago. A group of 7 trustees have governance responsibilities for the charity. The trustee group comprises 2 customers; 2 volunteers; a chair, vice chair and treasurer. One of the customers acts as secretary.
- We have certain core principles. We:
 - do not ask for proof of need;
 - do not require users to be referred by third party agencies or organisations;
 - treat our customers as exactly that – as customers. In other words, we do not give them pre-packed bags or boxes of supplies. They choose what they want;
 - offer a home delivery service for customers who cannot get to the food bank for whatever reason. About 40% of our “business” is home delivery.
- We want to link in with as many other local resources as possible. For that reason, we have an arrangement with the Little Woodbatch market garden, who provide us with free organic vegetables every week. We have also made a recent link with the Ludlow based synergy bike hub. They have provided 4 of our customers with refurbished and fully roadworthy bikes for free, a development we are really pleased about. We now participate (by Zoom) in a food bank consortium led by the Herefordshire diocese and comprising food banks in south Shropshire, Herefordshire and some parts of Worcestershire, and we are also part of the BC social prescribers group.
- We worked with some local residents and three food outlets to underwrite the cost of free school meals to eligible children and young people over half term and intend to repeat this, with the collaboration of local schools, for the Christmas holidays. We also got a UNICEF grant for providing fresh meat, eggs, cheese and fresh

fruit and vegetables, and are working with our local butcher and hotel to provide meat for those foodbank customers who were cooking their own Christmas meals and pre-prepared meals for those who weren't.

Bishop's Castle Community Land Trust - 'Save the Stars Campaign'

- Over the past few months, the main objective of BCCLT is to secure a future for the former Stars Newsagent at 68-70 Church Street. The Trust tried to get Shropshire Council to take out a compulsory order on the building without success. However an online petition <http://savethestars.org.uk/> attracted over 300 responses and many supportive comments.
- The Trust is delighted to announce it has bought the former Stars Newsagent! After more than five years of lying empty and neglected, with your help we can start the exciting work on bringing this important and valued building back to life, to play its part once again in the life of our Town.
- The aim is to provide two flats for local people in housing need.
- We need to raise around £75,000 towards the building work and hope that many residents of Bishop's Castle and further afield will want to help us to reach that target. Please give whatever you can.
- <https://bcclt.co.uk/donate/>

Linking Student Nurses in New Zealand with the Community of Bishop's Castle

- As part of their nursing degree, 12 student nurses in New Zealand studied Bishop's Castle remotely using video-conferencing and email. The project was in partnership with Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. A core team was established representing a wide cross-section of our community to provide the students with local context and data. They studied us in depth for 6 weeks and their main findings were both incisive and detailed. In particular, they identified important mental and physical health priorities for us:
- Transport and impact on health - e.g. Bishop's Castle has a strong reliance on public transport; transport poverty - especially for elderly and disabled; Lack of disabled parking
- Mental Health - e.g. Bishop's Castle has had 9 suicides within the last 5 years which is significant for the population size; mental health and well-being is an integral part of health; Bishop's Castle has limited mental health resources, inaccessibility to services and lack of funding; 'There is no health without mental health'
- Physical Health - e.g. High number of those within Bishop's Castle community are considered overweight/obese; food poverty leads to numerous health complaints; high drug and alcohol misuse; the need to bring people in the community together to enhance community well-being
- Covid has prevented us from working to tackle these issues in the short-term, but we do now have academic data that would be invaluable in a Covid-recovery plan or any future bid for funding.

Academic Research Papers about Bishop's Castle

- Daphne DuCros, Hope Robson and Keith Whiddon have had work concerning the Bishop's Castle community published in the 'Scope Journal' of Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand <https://www.thesopes.org/health-and-wellbeing-4/>.
- Additionally a paper concerning the Bishop's Castle case study with New Zealand nurses has recently been submitted by Kansas University to 'The International Association Community Development Handbook' - <https://www.iacdglobal.org/new-iacd-global-handbook/>.

Information correct as of March 2021

Please note that it is possible that we have missed other important achievements. If you know of anything that should be included then please contact us at townplan@bishopscastle.gov.uk

Bishop's Castle Community Partnership

How do you get involved?

If you would like to become involved in any of the projects, or have any ideas on how to help make Bishop's Castle an even better Town, then please do consider joining the **Bishop's Castle Community Partnership**.

Membership is free and open to anyone living in the Parish of Bishop's Castle aged 18 or over.

Contact:



07971 661615



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