



## **Chair's Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2022**

After a year of very little activity due to the pandemic, the Town Team was reinvigorated in 2021/22 as the world started to open up again. We decided to focus our energy on our core activities, rather than start any new projects and had some significant successes.

However this year will be most remembered for the sudden and tragic death in August of our Chair Rod Brookes Hocking, which sadly overshadowed these achievements and dealt a severe blow to our team. We miss him hugely.

Amongst his many other achievements, Rod founded the Town Team in 2014 and we are determined to continue his work and find ways to mark his legacy

**Finance report – see Accounts**

### **Crediton Flag Project**

To mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of flag making in Crediton, as well as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we decided to expand the scope of this very popular project. Thanks to a larger than usual grant from the Town Council of £2,000 and a £5,000 Awards for All grant, we were able to make 10 new flags, repair 30 old flags and make 100m of bunting to decorate the town square. Charlotte worked with the residents of Kenwyn Care Home to produce celebratory designs which were then used to make smaller bunting flags for the square. The residents were able to enjoy the results when they came to the square for a cream tea during the Jubilee celebrations.

This year the flag workshops took place at the White Room Creative Space, a new venue on Lord's Meadow industrial estate, which offered us a favourable room hire fee. We also used Colebrooke Village Hall for the bunting workshops. As ever we are hugely grateful to artist Charlotte Turner for leading these workshops so expertly, to the team of volunteer sewers, to the Rotary Club members for putting up the flags (and taking them down) and finally to our own Jo Ward, for putting up the bunting.

### **Active Mums Cycling Group (Babes on Bikes)**

In March 2020, at the start of the pandemic, we had received a £2,795 grant from Sport England, but for obvious reasons had been unable to spend it. However, despite being granted an extension in Oct 2021 (until Aug 22), we struggled to get this project up and running again.

In September 2021 we advertised for paid ride leaders and had a fantastic response. After interviewing 5 candidates we appointed two leaders, Teresa Sullivan and Laura Vance, both very competent and enthusiastic.

Unfortunately they had to wait many months before starting the rides. Firstly there was a lack of training courses for the leaders, which didn't happen until March 2022, when both ladies completed a British Cycling ride leader course in Taunton.

An even greater problem arose when Create Storage withdrew their offer of free storage so we had to temporarily move the bikes and trailers to Kate's garage, where they were inaccessible. The Town Council kindly offered us free storage in the lean to at Old Landscore, which enabled Teresa and Laura to eventually relaunch the rides as 'Babes on Bikes' in July 2022.

Due to security concerns and a lack of parking at Old Landscore, we continued to seek an alternative storage solution. Thanks to some additional grants (from £1,000 from DCC and £500 from Magic Little Grants) we were able to hire a storage container to place on land next to the new Redlands surgery (with the consent of the GPs). The container was initially used by the Heart Project for their summer workshops in August and then in September 22, we finally moved the bikes in.

This is provided a much safer, more accessible base from which to develop the project.

### **Boniface Heritage Trail**

Although this ambitious project was completed in 2019, Covid had prevented us organizing an event to launch the Heritage Trail. To rectify this, Rod and Rachel organized a series of lively guided heritage walks (with actors) along the trail on four consecutive Saturdays in May, culminating in an event in the square on 5 June, Boniface Day, which conveniently coincided with the Platinum Jubilee Big Lunch. This included a performance of the Boniface story, making and hanging decorations on a 'Christmas' tree and distributing Boniface buns.

### **Jubilee Events**

The Town Team worked closely with the Town Council and Arts Centre to deliver a series of events over the Jubilee weekend, 3-5 June, including cream teas in the square, a family fun day and open air cinema in the park and the Big Sunday Lunch in the square. Rod was key to the success of these events, representing the Town Team on the steering group, writing funding bids and coordinating events on the day.

### **Share in Square**

This simple initiative started during the pandemic in July 2020 when we installed 12 picnic tables in the town square to enable people to meet safely outdoors. The Arts Centre provided live music on Fridays and Saturdays, and the square soon became a popular

meeting place for people starved of social contact during lockdowns. Working with the Town Council and Arts Centre, we repeated the project in summer 2021 and again in 2022, expanding the entertainment offer, to include several street theatre performances.

The picnic tables have proved hugely popular with residents, visitors and businesses. Ironically perhaps the simplest project we have under taken has had the greatest impact. It is also worth noting that it was Rod who led the campaign to save the town square in the 1990s and it was his idea to install the picnic tables, which has established the square as the focal point of the town.

### **Team members**

During the year we welcomed two new members. Cath Kelly joined us in December 2021 and then in February 2022 David Jaques took over from Martin as treasurer. We are very grateful to Martin for managing our finances since we started in 2014 and for agreeing to remain on the team. Sadly Sam Shaw had to step down due to ill health but we very much hope she will return in due course. At the end of the year we were very sorry to say goodbye to Paul Tucker. Luckily he has asked to keep in touch, so we can continue to seek his expert advice on funding.