



BISHOP'S CASTLE NEWS

ISSUE 31 JANUARY 2012



Bishops Castle Business Park

On Wednesday 18th January 2012 it was announced that the £5 million biomass plant would not be going ahead on the Bishops Castle business park site. The deal came to a halt after Shropshire Council were unable to agree terms for the sale of the land with the developers. The news came as a great relief to the community and especially the Bishops Castle Group who have been campaigning against the proposed development for the past 4 years.

Keith Barrow of Shropshire Council attended the Town Council meeting on Tuesday 31st January and made a firm commitment to the Town Council and the community to establish a suitable use for the business park. Councillor Barrow promised nothing would be imposed upon the town.

Possible uses for the land have been suggested, all of which will need to be considered in some depth.

Ideas included; affordable work shop units or storage for local businessmen, especially those who currently work out of a back room, garage or garden shed: With the town lacking in soft play areas a Play Barn could also be a possible suggestion: Relocating the auction yard from Station St to the Business Park thus alleviating the congestion and parking issues in the town centre on market days. The demand for affordable housing in Bishops Castle is currently at a high level and needs addressing, the site could be developed with this in mind: Other suggestions include a community compost site, solar panels, care farm, relocation of the hospital, or relocation of the rugby and football pitches

The potential uses for this land are enormous, the above are merely suggestions. The project could provide great benefits to the town and local area. It is important that we move forward with the development quickly because of the amount of time the land has been unused.

We need your help!.....the work isn't over yet!

If anyone has any ideas or suggestions they wish to be considered or should you wish to help on the working party please contact the Town Hall on 01588 638141 or email

townclerk@bishopscastle.co.uk or alternatively contact our Unitary Councillor Charlotte Barnes on 01588 650561 or

email charlotte.barnes@shropshiregov.uk

Councillor Barnes will be holding a surgery shortly to discuss the matter further.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Dates for future Town Council Meetings are:

- 28th February 2012
- 27th March 2012
- 24th April 2012
- 22nd May 2012
- 19th June 2012

All meetings are on Tuesday evenings, starting at 8.00 pm and are held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. Any plans for discussion during the meeting are available for inspection from 7.40 pm.

Agendas and minutes of meetings are available on the website at www.bishopscastle.co.uk/council/

TOWN COUNCILLORS

Your Town Councillors are:

Keith Pinches - Mayor - 01588 638806
Jane Carroll - Deputy Mayor - 01588 638467
Karen Bavastock - 01588 638168
Steve Farr - 01588 638173
Malcolm Furber - 01588 638401
Neil Hird - 01588 638379
Mary Holton - 01588 638143
Julie Magill - 01588 638305
Paula Middleton - 01588 630234
John Morris - 01588 638523
Dr Penney - 01588 638128
Jock Wright - 01588 638318
Town Clerk - Diane Malley
Assistant Clerk - Nikki Rodick
Telephone: 01588 638141
Email: townclerk@bishopscastle.co.uk
Website: www.bishopscastle.co.uk

Bishop's Castle Town Hall **Renovation Project Update**



The Town Hall Project Team has been working hard in recent months and real progress is being made.

Following the public consultation in the autumn the plans for the building are now being submitted to Shropshire Council for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission. A copy of the proposals can be found on the Town Hall pages of the Bishop's Castle website: www.bishopscastle.co.uk

The application for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will be submitted in June. A very successful meeting with HLF took place just before Christmas and they are pleased with the progress being made.

Huge efforts continue with local fundraising through Target 250. Thanks to everyone for taking part and contributing. Latest figures show more than £20,000 has now been raised!

As part of the future planning it's vital that we identify a range of uses for the Town Hall, to ensure that sufficient income can be generated to maintain the building in the long term.

The latest Business Plan, that would be implemented post the renovations, proposes increasing the scale and frequency of the markets; using the Council Chamber as a venue for weddings and other ceremonies; space for meetings and community events; an Information Desk for visitors and locals on what to see and do in the area; sales of local products; an art gallery and of course the continuing headquarters of the Town Council and office for the Town Clerk. If you have any other ideas please let us know.

The partners leading the renovation project, the Town Council, the Tourism Company and BCHRC, are currently looking at the best options for the future management of the Town Hall. The Town Council recently approved a recommendation that a new Charity and not for profit company be formed. This would enable us to access new grants and secure a number of benefits, and mean any potential future financial burden on the local community would be minimised. The Town Council will continue to own the Town Hall whilst the new charity would take on the management of the building on a day to day basis.

The Town Hall is central to the life of Bishop's Castle. The fascinating history through the centuries is being researched and studied in detail and we are keen to involve as many people as possible in its heritage.

A group of youngsters from the Community College are taking part in a drama project with Appletree Theatre Company. They will be performing promenade drama during the Arts Festival at the Town Hall on Saturday 18th February. A recent visit to the primary school also engendered great enthusiasm from the children and a clear desire to know more about the stories of the town and the town hall through the centuries. The children are taking part in a poster competition and the entries will be on display at the Town Hall during Half Term.

Continued.....

At the other end of the generations we are really keen to hear from people who have memories of the Town Hall from their childhood, particularly how things have changed over the last hundred years. If you are able to help us in any way and willing to share your memories please get in touch.

Once again, following the success of the October pilot we will be opening the doors and encouraging people in to the Town Hall during Half Term Monday 13th – Thursday 16th February. The Town Hall will be open each day between 10am and 4pm and everyone is welcome to come in and have a chat, to explore the building and to learn a bit more about the project and what we are trying to achieve.

Thanks again to everyone for their support for the Town Hall Renovation Project. For more information please contact Sam Hine, Project Manager on 07974 772840, or email townhall@bishopscastle.co.uk or pop in to the Town Hall and talk to the Town Clerk. You can also keep up to date through the Bishop's Castle website or find us on Facebook at Bishop's Castle Town Hall.

Town Council Budget for 2012/2013

The Town Council recently agreed the budget for 2012/13 after freezing the precept (the amount the Town Council takes in Council Tax) at the same level as the current year at £45,650.

This proved to be quite a challenge when taking into account the rising rate of inflation having a knock on effect on the cost of contractors, fuel and energy supply.

This is compounded by losing small business rate relief on the Town Hall due to the Town Council taking over ownership of the Auction Yard Public Toilets as well as the actual cost of taking over the running of the public toilets. The business rates payable by the Town Council has in effect increased by over 200%.

Savings have been made by swapping the street lighting energy contract to the Shropshire Council's bulk energy purchase scheme. The installation of PV solar panels has counteracted the rise in electricity costs for the Town Hall in addition the Town Council receive a modest income from the Feed in Tariff generated from the PV solar panels.

An Awards For All grant has been obtained to purchase a PV solar panel system for the Auction Yard Public Conveniences roof which should help reduce the overall running costs for the toilets.

Maintenance schedules for the playing fields and other grounds maintenance areas have been reviewed to make the contracts more streamlined and therefore more cost effective.

Hire charges of the Town Hall have been reorganised to allow a lower rate for non profit organisations or private hirers compared with business hirers. Please contact the clerk if you would like to hire the Town Hall.

SPRING TRIP TO TWIN TOWN IN FRANCE

Bishops Castle Town Twinning Association invites you to enjoy a Spring Weekend in France. Stay for four nights in our twin town of Saint Marcel in Normandy, from Thursday 12 to Monday 16 April. Travel by coach from Bishop's Castle direct to St Marcel and stay with a French family, or at a hotel in the town. St Marcel is on the banks of the River Seine, between Rouen & Paris and near the town of Vernon. You don't need to be a French speaker and a warm welcome from our French hosts is assured. The cost will be £120 for the coach and ferry crossing, with the chance to take optional trips to Monet's Garden in nearby Giverny and the Palace of Versailles. Or you could catch a train to Paris or Rouen for the day.

Call 01588 620557 or 01588 680445 as soon as possible to find out more and book your seat.

What's on Your Mind?

Did you know the Town Council has its own blog where you are invited to make comment or let your thoughts be known?

Current topics on the blog include ideas for the Business Park, Post 16 education transport costs, footpath lighting on the path leading from Oak Meadow to Corporation Street and ideas for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. So get blogging and let us know what's on your mind!

Dog Fouling

Please help us combat this serious problem by ensuring you clean up after your dog. The Town Council have had a number of complaints about the dog fouling around the town, especially in the area of the Fire Station in Church Lane, the pathway between Church Lane and Grange Road and the footpath leading from Oak Meadow to Corporation Street. Whoever is responsible for letting their dog foul and not clearing up after them please remember that it is an offence. Failure to do so can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued or possible prosecution. A street cleansing warden visits the area weekly and can issue on the spot penalties for dog fouling and littering. **Please can we encourage people to report incidents of fouling to Shropshire Council on 0345 678 9006 or visiting their website at www.shropshiregov.co.uk under the environmental maintenance section where you can complete an online report form.**



Allotments

New Allotment Plots Available!

We are pleased to announce that the work to extend the existing allotments at the business park site has now been completed. We currently have a number of half plots available. The cost of a half plot is presently £20 for a year with the tenancy running from April to March.

Should you be interested in an allotment please contact the Town Hall on 01588 638141 or email town-clerk@bishopscastle.co.uk as soon as possible before you miss out.

Awards For all Grant

The Town Council has been fortunate enough to receive an Awards For All Grant from the Big Lottery Fund to install a 2.88kWp solar panel system on the roof of the Auction Yard Public Conveniences. Annually the system will generate an estimated 2,477 kWh in energy, saving 1,180 kg in Carbon Dioxide. The estimated savings on electricity and income from the feed in tariff will be around £630 a year.

Bishop's Castle Markets

Come and support your local markets....

Friday Market - held on every Friday morning from 6am to mid afternoon in the Town Hall selling vegetables, bread and bakery, bric-a-brac, textiles, jewellery, ethnic clothing, incense and hand made cards.

Farmers Market - held on the third Saturday of the month from 8.30am-1.30pm in the Town Hall and on Market Square. There is a wide selection of stalls selling fresh vegetables, cakes, pies, bread, rolls, jams, preserves, eggs, meat, ham, bacon from organic bred pigs, home made chocolates and much more. Please support your local farmers and producers, enjoy the taste of Shropshire and purchase a quality natural fibre B.C. Farmers' Market shopping bag!

Flea Market - held on the first Saturday of the month in the Town Hall.

Markets have been a major part of the trading and historical importance of Bishops Castle for centuries and we want it to continue.

Town Council Grants

At the Town Council Meeting in November grants were awarded to:

The House on Crutches Museum (£100), The Old Castle Land Trust (£100), Bishops Castle Skateboarders Association (£500), Dial a Ride (£60), BCTCIC (£100), West Shropshire Talking Newspaper (£50), Citizens Advise Shropshire (£100), Grange Road Lunch Club (£140).

From 1st February the Town Clerk's Office is open in the Town Hall, Monday - Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm where plans can be viewed. Pop in if you have any queries connected with the Town.



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