

Corsham Eco Fair

Come and join us to discover the small changes we can all make that will make a big difference to the planet.

On Saturday 22 April - Earth Day - we're holding our second Corsham Eco Fair, in a joint event with Corsham Climate Action, and sponsored by Martingate. From 10am-2pm there will be stalls in the High Street (pedestrian area) and at Digital Mansion Corsham offering information, things to buy, vegetarian food, fun activities and more. All the stalls have been carefully selected for their great environmental credentials. Green Ginger and Spindles on the High Street will be joining in too, along with crafty activities at The Three Brewers on Priory Street and the new Tech Repair Hub and Community Garden at The

Pound. Visit them all as part of our special Recycling Quiz Trail where you can win a great prize. And Corsham Windband will be playing throughout the event.

The Fair will also see us launch Plastic Free Corsham, our initiative to remove avoidable, single-use plastics from life in Corsham. We already have a number of Business Champions and Community Allies signed up, so come and find out what you can do to help. (You can find out more about Plastic Free Corsham overleaf.)

To make sure there's something for even the youngest eco-warriors, in the run-up to the Eco Fair our **Easter Trail**, which runs until 26 April, is a Bug Hunt. Find the 10 little bugs hiding in town

centre windows and you'll earn a packet of sunflower seeds, plus you could win a special nature kit. Entry forms can be downloaded at corsham.gov.uk or you can pick up a copy from the Town Hall, the Tourist Information Centre, or Automattic Comics/The Corsham Toy Shop.



Fun and Festivals

The Eco Fair is just the start of a brilliantly busy time... For the latest on local events taking place to mark the **Coronation of King Charles III**, including a seniors tea party and live screening at The Pound, and volunteering opportunities for The Big Help Out on 8 May, get in touch with us at the Town Hall, or visit corsham.gov.uk.



Coming up, the team behind the **Corsham Walking Festival** (9-11 June) brings you Corsham and the surrounding countryside in all its glory with guided walks discovering everything from ancient parishes to wonderful wildlife. Booking's open now at corshamwalkingfestival.org.uk or via The Pound Box Office.



Then, from 12-17 June, The Pound gets busy with its own **Blue Sky Festival** (poundarts.org.uk), with the usual mix of family-friendly events, workshops, music, theatre and more. And as if that wasn't enough, on 17 June, from 10am-4pm, the Town Council's **Taste of Corsham** food festival is back!



Come and try, buy and enjoy the best local and regional food and drink in the town centre. There'll also be live music, crafts and lots, lots more.

Summer Busing
Saturdays return on 6 May, with live music every Saturday until the end of September, from 11.30am-1pm, in the town centre. And there's the great **Corsham Creative Market**, run by Nicola Davis, at Springfield Campus, from 11am-3pm, on the first Saturday of every month (corshamcreativemarket.co.uk) – including a Coronation Creative Market on 6 May.





From the Chairman

Here comes Spring!

By the time this gets to you, we will know whether we should be booking tickets to see Corsham Town Football Club at Wembley in the final of the FA Vase competition. If the answer is that the semi-final did not go Corsham's way, the players and coaches at the

Club should still be very proud of going so far – and I bet they and their supporters have had a great time along the way.

Thank goodness for sport and other leisure activities that bring people together – we really need them when times are tough, with the cost of living crisis, inflation, industrial action over wages, cutbacks and waiting lists in public services, and many businesses feeling the pinch.

We recently held our Sports Forum online meeting at which 10 of our many sports clubs shared updates about their activities. It's great that we have so many clubs locally, from Walking Netball to Corsham Gymnastics Academy, to the 36 youth football teams run by AFC Corsham, to name but a few. The Forum is an opportunity for the clubs' volunteers to talk to others and useful collaboration often comes out of the conversations.

Availability of sport and leisure activities, especially for young people, is an important part of our Strategic Plan work under the Community Wellbeing heading, and many of our clubs can offer support with membership costs and kit for those who need help, so there are opportunities for everyone to join in. If you need any help finding out about the leisure activities in Corsham, do get in touch with the team at the Town Hall.

Talking about young people, what do recent stark warnings in the news about climate change mean for their future? The Head of the United Nations recently said, "Our world needs climate action on all fronts: everything, everywhere, all at once." At the Town Council, we are pushing ahead with our work to make our activities net zero in terms of carbon emissions, concentrating on energy use in our buildings, and also working

to improve biodiversity in our area. But the "everything, everywhere, all at once" means people in our community and people everywhere, including world leaders, talking to each other and collaborating all the time. This is urgent work and there's no time to lose.

So, let's all of us keep talking and keep collaborating on all fronts to make Corsham (and the planet!) a better place.

**Steve Abbott, Chairman,
Corsham Town Council**
clrsabbott@corsham.gov.uk

Town Council Surgery

If you have any issues, concerns or suggestions about where you live in Corsham, you can talk to a local Town Councillor at the Town Hall. Upcoming dates are 14 April, 12 May, 9 June and 7 July, from 1-1.30pm. No appointment necessary.

Environment and Climate Change

Tree Planting for The Queen

Corsham Town Council offered all schools and community groups in Corsham the opportunity to plant a tree in memory of Queen Elizabeth II. Corsham Regis Primary School, Corsham Climate Action and The Porch Surgery all planted trees which have been registered with the Queen's Green Canopy. A special memorial tree-planting ceremony, attended by the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire and other local dignitaries, took place at Neston Rec on 6 February, with an English oak planted in remembrance of Her Majesty.

Sarah Troughton, Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, and Cllr Steve Abbott, Chairman of the Town Council, plant a tree in memory of HM The Queen.



Plastic Free Corsham

Our work to achieve Plastic Free Community status for Corsham continues, with our aim to eliminate avoidable single-use plastic from the town. You may be wondering why we are supporting a campaign set up by Surfers Against Sewage when we live nowhere near the sea. It is because 80% of plastic in the ocean originates on land, with an estimated 12m tonnes of plastic

dumped into the ocean every single year. Countless fish, birds, turtles, whales and marine creatures are killed mistaking plastics for food. Also, plastics do not disappear over time, they break down into microplastics, entering the ocean food chain. As a result, they have been found inside humans, with as yet unknown effects on our health.



We are working with local businesses and community allies as part of the campaign. Green Ginger has already achieved its Plastic Free Champion award, with over 1,000kgs of refills, reducing the amount of single-use plastic in our town. Thank you to Gulliver, and to the other businesses who are working towards the award: Lower Rudloe Farm, No3 Deli, Clear Vision Accountancy, Strawberry Fields Hair Design and If The Shoe Fits.

A number of community allies have also joined us in our

campaign by signing the plastic free pledge. These include Corsham Climate Action, St John's Church in Gastard, 2nd Corsham Brownies and Corsham Scouts. We still need more of you to sign up so if you run, or are a part of, a community group, organisation or community space, please get in touch with Beth Searle, bsearle@corsham.gov.uk to sign up.



Beth, the Town Council's Environmental Project Officer, presents Gulliver at Green Ginger with the Plastic Free Champion award.

Council Tax 2023/24

For 2023/24, the overall increase in the Town Council's element of the Council Tax bill is 2.89%. The increase is from £220.30 to £226.66 for a Band D equivalent property for the year. This increase equates to just over 12p per week.

The Town Council's overall budget for 2023/24 will be £1,274,615 and the precept will be £1,126,728.

Notable projects and service developments the Town Council is planning to start or continue in the coming year include:

Parking Initiatives	£80,000
Public Realm Improvements	£58,000
Environmental Projects	£20,000
New Workshop	£20,000
Strategic Plan Delivery	£20,000
Service Delegation and Asset Transfer	£17,000
Youth Activities	£16,000
Cycle Network	£15,000
Health/Wellbeing Initiatives	£12,000
Fete/Events	£11,330
Destination Marketing	£10,300
Asset Management Plan	£10,000
Building Contingency	£10,000
Grants – General	£10,000
Play Area Improvements	£10,000
Public Art Strategy	£10,000
Corsham Youth Zone	£8,200

There are existing earmarked reserves for several projects. The most significant of these are: devolved services; Community Infrastructure Levy, some of which is allocated to public realm improvements in the town centre; Strategic Plan delivery; play area improvements, and Transport and Highway projects.

The Town Council always gives careful consideration to setting the budget and has to strike a balance between providing the services and facilities that local people want and the impact that increasing the budget can have on residents.

Corsham Town Council budget 2023/24

How we plan to spend the money

Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Finance and Administration	£436,683	£412,692
Property and Amenities	£626,874	£639,281
Community Services	£211,058	£176,803
Total gross expenditure	£1,274,615	£1,228,776
Less	2023/24	2022/23
Income	£147,887	£135,584
Use of reserves	£0	£0
Budget requirement (precept)	£1,126,728	£1,093,192

Transport and Highways



One of the four overall objectives of the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 is to improve transport and highways. Whilst Wiltshire Council is the highways authority, the Town Council is closely involved in numerous transport and highways matters including: the bid for a new railway station; funding bus stops and influencing bus service providers; improving cycling facilities; contributing to road and pavement improvements; planning future infrastructure through neighbourhood planning; operating speed indicator devices; reviewing waiting

restriction requests (yellow lines); helping implement 20mph schemes and, not least, funding free parking in the town to support local businesses and reduce on-street parking problems.

The Town Council has formed a working group of Councillors and officers to explore the issues and to produce an overall transport plan. This will be a complex piece of work and will start with a public survey later in the year.

Play Area News

We have now taken over the management of the play areas at Katherine Park (both play areas), Bences Lane and Pockeridge (both areas) and, over time, hope to improve all five, starting with the Little Play Area, for 3-7-year-olds, at Katherine Park as this has been closed for a while. After public consultation, Kompan have been chosen to create a whole new play area, in time for the summer, which will include equipment that's also accessible for children with mobility issues.



Business and Economy



The Town Council's second Business Breakfast, with 40+ attendees, took place at Digital Mansion Corsham on 28 February. The event had a Sustainable/Plastic Free Corsham theme. The next meeting will be a lunch, to allow different businesses to attend, on Friday 9 June, again at the Digital Mansion. Details will be available soon.

In support of our Strategic Plan aim to 'prioritise the vitality of the town centre in decision-making'

we have created our first Town Centre Policy. This brings together the various elements of our work (transport, parking, public realm, business support, etc) to create a thriving and vibrant town centre. As part of this, our new Retail Map, designed by artist Susie Brooks, will be in the noticeboards this month.

Corsham Gastard Ward

Tina Ellis 07751 437825

Corsham Ladbroke Ward

Steve Abbott 07795 421933

Alan Brown 01249 715818

Tanvir Bush 07780 874594

Neville Farmer 07966 150444

Ruth Hopkinson* 01249 713216

Dave Jarman 07787 532650

Stephen Senior 07857 746503

Ruth Williams 01249 701586

Corsham Neston Ward

Nicholas Brakspear 07842 125835

Jeremy Brook 01225 810059

Anna Mackie 07877 817474

Corsham Pickwick Ward

Helen Belcher* 07967 466909

Alun Crockford 07939 014034

Mervyn Jackson 01249 716121

George McCaffery 07803 415655

Jane Robertson 07929 996729

Amanda Thomas 01249 323728

Gareth Ward 07740 348595

Anthea White 01249 713827

*Cllrs Helen Belcher and Ruth Hopkinson are also Wiltshire Councillors

Community Wellbeing

The Town Council is funding The RISE Trust's work with local families with preschool children, supporting parenting courses, including the recent First Aid for Parents, at Springfield Campus. The Trust's detached youth team are also in Corsham on Wednesday and Friday evenings meeting young people in the town centre. The youth workers offer the chance to chat and can share advice and guidance, as well as help to reduce anti-social behaviour. Through the colder months, we have funded the use of a room for an hour each week at St Aldhelm's Church, meaning the youth workers have been able to offer hot drinks and snacks, and a warm space where the young people can come to talk.



Much of our recent work for older/vulnerable people has seen us promoting Warm Spaces. We also continue to help fund the Corsham Community Club lunch group and Corsham Connections, as well as supporting Corsham Foodbank and Souper Friday.

In a new project, we are helping local residents to create a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) in the town, and Town Hall staff and Councillors have been learning some basic Makaton.

If you'd like to know more about our Community Wellbeing work, do get in touch.

PACT

The Potley and Portland Rise Art Community Project (PACT), commissioned by the Town Council, with support from Pound Arts, Corsham Print and Artway, sees local artists Caroline Rudge and Rachel Heard working with the residents in those areas to create a

public artwork. Free workshops, open to all members of this community, will help generate ideas, so if you live in the area and have difficulty, for any reason, in taking part then contact pactcorsham@gmail.com and they will be able to help. You can follow the project via PACT Corsham on Facebook or @pact_corsham on Instagram.



Artists Rachel (left) and Caroline with an invitation to get involved with PACT.

CWA On Tour

Corsham Windband Association headed for Strasbourg, in the Alsace region of France, in February, on their first tour since the pandemic. Past and family members also joined the trip, meaning the age of performers ranged from three to 75 (including two families represented by three generations of musicians), although the majority of players were eight to 16 years old. Hosted by Orchestre d'Harmonie de Schiltigheim, the Windband gave three acclaimed performances including a Valentine's Day concert and a performance at the Turkish/Syrian solidarity event, following the

devastating earthquakes, held in the centre of the Council of Europe, with an audience of over 350 that included the Turkish Ambassador Extraordinary.

The Town Council was delighted to support CWA's tour with a grant. To find out more about our grant scheme, visit our website or call the Town Hall for details.



Comments – have your say

Are there any other local concerns on which you would like to comment? Let us know your views in the space provided below and return to:

David Martin, Chief Executive, Corsham Town Hall, High Street, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0EZ, email: towncouncil@corsham.gov.uk or visit our website at: www.corsham.gov.uk, or you can call us on 01249 702130. You can also send us comments via our Facebook page. You can also contact your local Councillor (details above) or attend a Town Council Surgery (see page 2).

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Signed..... Print.....

Address.....

Telephone

Email