

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

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 update also 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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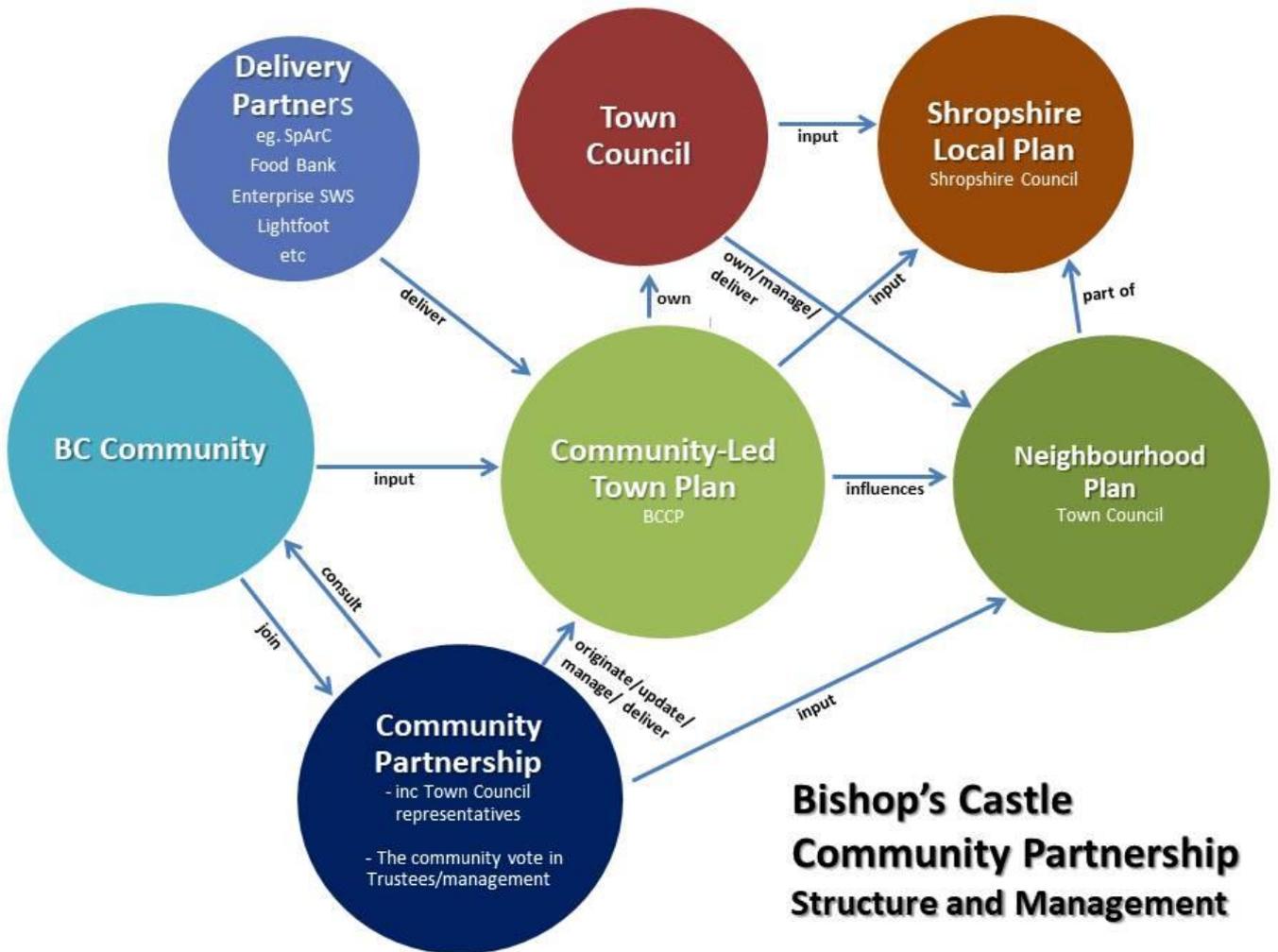


<https://www.facebook.com/communityplan/>



<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 & 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/UCi9yd2P2hIhCdStezZ1Cmlg?>

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.thescope.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

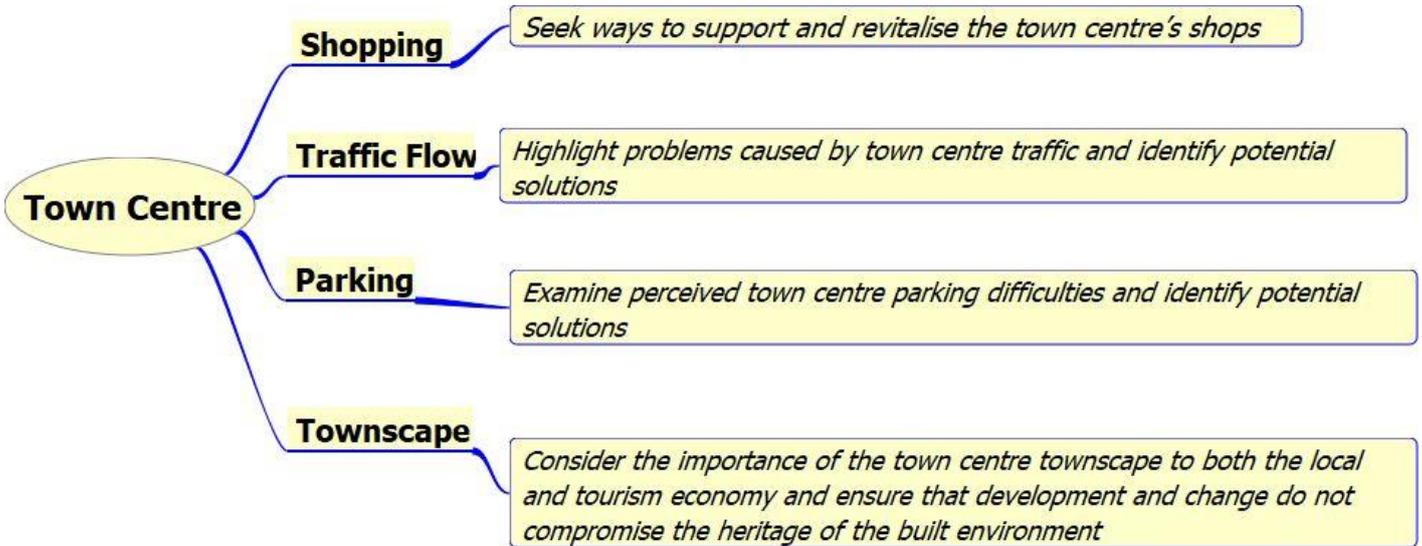
Please note that it is possible that we have missed other important achievements. If you know of anything that should be included then please contact us at townplan@bishopscastle.gov.uk

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022 Action Plans

The following Action Plans should be read in conjunction with the original Community-Led Town Plan published in 2016. These actions represent the current priorities for each theme for the period 2020 - 2022.



Town Centre



TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN 2020-22			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. SHOPPING</p> <p>Seek ways to support and revitalise the town centre's shops</p>	<p>Encourage people to shop locally by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. exploiting the “Bishop’s Castle - Open for Business” campaign and developing the “Shop local - Buy local” campaign; ii. exploring how to celebrate what makes Bishop’s Castle unique; iii. branding Bishop’s Castle as a destination; iv. developing selling platforms and ways to get products to a wider market; v. exploring the idea of a local currency, or ‘rewards’ or ‘loyalty credits’ for Bishop’s Castle; vi. researching what might be done to ensure retail trading in Bishop’s Castle is sustainable; vii. marketing what the Town has to offer (e.g. create map of shops and car parks, online directory, including opening times, etc.); viii. link to local produce and traders’ directory; ix. explore a joint delivery service for local goods; x. support on-line trading for local shops; xi. work with traders to re-establish a Traders’ Group; xii. create better opportunities for shopping linked to the Town’s festivals and tourism in general; xiii. deploy the Town Hall Stage (<i>cf Michaelmas Fair</i>) to support and encourage a wide range of cultural and trading opportunities throughout the year; xiv. explore ways to develop a wide variety of markets in the Town; xv. seek ways to increase parking spaces close to shops. <p><i>(cf Economy - 4 - Promote and Support Tourism and 5 - Economic recovery)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop Local Campaign • Local Food Resilience Group • Marches Community Land Trust • Tourism Group • Traders • Enterprise House, BC Business Support Unit • Michaelmas Fair 	<p>H</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN 2020-22			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>2. TRAFFIC FLOW</p> <p>Highlight problems caused by Town centre traffic and identify potential solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Town Council and Shropshire Council to continue pursuing options to minimise traffic impact with particular reference to the Neighbourhood Development Plan Figure 5: Traffic Management Areas in Bishop's Castle Conservation Area and paragraphs 81 and 87 to 100. Reference also Zones 1; 2; 3; 5; and 6 of the Character Assessment. • Work with Shropshire Council and the Town Council to evaluate any proposal for a one-way street scheme in the High Street by undertaking a community survey near the end of the proposed trial period. • Look into ways to discourage on-kerb parking in front of the Spar store. • Explore, test and implement other possible solutions resulting from the 2016 'Occupants Survey'; reference to the Character Assessment zone surveys 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, ; and public consultation, e.g. through improved signage, etc. • Explore potential sources of funding to address the issues identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council/Shropshire Council • Town Council • The March of the Elephants Artworks Trail 	<p>H</p> <p>M</p> <p>H/M</p> <p>H/M</p>
<p>3. PARKING</p> <p>Examine perceived Town centre parking difficulties and identify potential solutions</p>	<p>Explore, test and implement possible solutions resulting from 'Parking Survey' and public consultation, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> move and improve the current disabled parking bays - e.g. relocate the bay in front of the Town Hall to Market Square; seek to discourage the incorrect use of disabled parking (cf Community Health Project); provide better information on shopping and parking in Bishop's Castle for visitors (cf Economy - Tourism); improve signage to existing car parks (including signs in the car parks to where alternative parking maybe found if full); better use of existing parking capacity - e.g. marking out parking bays in Church Street car park; explore potential sources of funding to address the issues identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<p>M</p>

TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN 2020-22			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>4. TOWNSCAPE</p> <p>Consider the importance of the town centre townscape to both the local and tourism economy and ensure that development and change do not compromise the heritage of the built environment</p>	<p>Use the results of the Neighbourhood Plan Character Assessment to maximise the unique character of Bishop's Castle by preserving its heritage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Work with the Town Council and where relevant, Shropshire Council to explore the potential to develop an enhancement plan for the Square and the adjoining space at the confluence of Bull Street, Salop Street and Market Square. The objective: to link the spaces together, minimise the traffic impact and physically enhance the space as a whole. Ref. policy BC2: Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area and paragraphs 92 and 93 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Also Zone 2 of the Character Assessment. II. Scoping, consulting and developing a Heritage Lottery bid to preserve, interpret and enhance the historic value of the Old Square and to create an outdoor space for outdoor activities and as a place where people can sit and watch the world go by while enjoying food and drink; III. Work with the Town Council: to ensure that the Local List of heritage assets held by Shropshire Council is updated to correct inappropriate information and ensure that it is fit for purpose; and seek to identify which of those properties itemised in the NPD Appendix 3: Non-designated Heritage Assets, are eligible to be added to the current Local List. IV. Extend the 'March of the Elephants' artworks trail to become a major national tourist attraction for the region by exploiting artworks that contribute to the unique character of the townscape; V. Promote a refresh of the 'knit-bombing' and other unique displays around Town; VI. Scope opportunities to enhance the visually prominent areas described in paragraph 86 and identified as Sensitive Sites B; C; F; and G on Table 1 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Reference also Zones 1; 3; 4; 5; and 6 of the Character Assessment. <p>(cf Economy - 4 - Promote and Support Tourism and 5 - Economic recovery; and Development – 2 Managed Development)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Group • Town Trail • Civic Society • Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group • Old Square Heritage Enhancement Group • The March of the Elephants Artworks Trail • Community Land Trust • 'Save the Stars' Campaign 	<p>H</p>

TOWN CENTRE

The Context

The Town Centre Action Plan seeks to address specific issues raised by the Community Survey. 67% of respondents had something particular to say about the Town centre and over 10% of the comments identified the High Street as a problem in some way (see ANNEX G, Figure 1). The majority of comments related to traffic and parking problems, but there were also strong concerns about the sustainability of the retail and services outlets and the impact both on the local community and on the tourism economy of a 'tired' looking Town centre.

Traffic and Parking Issues

Traffic and parking issues were major concerns in the Community Survey. This is an area that the Town Plan Steering Group believes this Action Plan can help to address as a priority. However, the medieval environment of the Town centre does not easily accommodate 21st century vehicular movement or patterns of behaviour. Consequently, not all problems can be resolved. In addition, implementing even the simplest of solutions has implications, particularly as community views on what should, or should not be done to address issues can vary considerably!

The Steering Group believes that the following must inform the development of any traffic or parking solutions:

- the need to take an holistic approach to traffic solutions so that there is one, joined-up strategy which can avoid piecemeal patch and mend measures and help ensure that a solution in one part of the Town centre doesn't impact unfavourably on another area;
- an understanding that solutions could inadvertently damage the visual and social characteristics that make Bishop's Castle unique - e.g. introduce excessive yellow lines or signage; counter existing patterns of considerate and patient behaviour by encouraging the ability to speed, etc;
- conflicting pressures on limited funding sources means that simple, low-cost solutions are a necessity and that the delivery of solutions may need to be prioritised;
- the need to be realistic about what can or cannot be done – for example there are limitations to the policing of parking – this is no longer a Police Force responsibility and there are no traffic wardens in Bishop's Castle.

The Parking Survey

The Parking Survey was undertaken on five days of the week (Sunday excluded) and on 17 visits at different times of the day, across the year. The number of parked cars was recorded on the Town centre streets listed above as well as on Station St., Union St., the southern end of Church St., Harley Jenkins St., and New St. Parked cars were also recorded on the Auction Yard, Harley Jenkins St. and Church St. car parks.

The Parking Survey showed that within the Town centre streets and car parks and the immediately adjacent Union and Station Streets, **there is sufficient parking space available** (see ANNEX G Table 1). Whilst the High St., Church St., Market Square and Salop St. all experience problems as regards parking, on all 17 occasions when the streets were surveyed there were **always some available parking spaces** somewhere within the streets and car parks adjacent to the main streets.

The Occupants' Survey

In spring 2016 a survey of 141 occupants of front street premises was undertaken to assess their needs regarding vehicular access to their premises and to on street parking in the Town centre. Their comments were also sought on actions that could potentially ease some of the traffic and parking problems that had been identified, in particular, the possible introduction of new signage, as well as a one way system and speed bumps on the High St/Church St. section, north of Harley Jenkins St. Residents, residents with a business and business only occupants were all surveyed. ANNEX G, Table 2 provides a breakdown of respondents from 3 distinct zones.

The results from both the Parking and Occupants' Surveys demonstrate that:

- There is always spare parking capacity somewhere in the Town but some key front streets experience problems that, if at all possible, need to be addressed;

- Parking on yellow lines is not enforceable by law and frequently they are being ignored (e.g. in Market Square) so, regardless of their visual impact on the historic environment, their efficacy is questionable;
- Parking on pavements is an increasing problem for pedestrians, prams and wheelchair users especially on streets that are important pedestrian routes to significant destinations (e.g. in Salop Street which is a key route to the doctors' surgery and the bus stop);
- There is an absence of parking for residents in certain areas (e.g. Welsh Street) which inevitably leads to parking on pavements;
Inconsiderate parking, including in passing places on the High St. and close to the junction of Market Square and Salop St. frequently causes traffic congestion and/or incidents;
- The desire to be able to park immediately adjacent to a chosen destination whether because of mobility issues or conditioning to the modern retail experience is unlikely to be assuaged;
- The demand for on street parking space by occupants of the front street's premises suggests that, at least in zones 1 and 2 there is minimal space available for use by shoppers and visitors;
- On the basis of the responses to the Occupants' Survey there is no overwhelming preference either for or against the possible signage, speed bumps or one way system 'solutions', even from the zone that would be most affected by them.

The Public Consultation

Various possible solutions to address traffic and parking issues were displayed at the Public Consultations held in June 2016 to gain the views of the community as to their priorities and responses. Details are provided in ANNEX G Figures 2, 3 and 4. The following solutions received the greatest positive response, in order of preference:-

- **Better signage** – on the entrances to Town to direct visitors to car parks and also in the Town centre itself;
- **Create a map of Bishop's Castle** - to show the location of car parks, etc;
- **The re-modelling of the Boar's Head crossroads** - this has long been a problematic junction with poor sightlines; no pavements on part of it but comprising a busy junction for both pedestrians and traffic. A trial realignment of the junction which involved confusing road markings was recently abandoned and the priority reverted to Church St. Another attempt is suggested to remodel the junction to encourage the use of Station St. by traffic not needing to go into the Town centre;
- **Erecting bollards in Salop Street** - to prevent the current on-kerb parking that currently makes pedestrian movement hazardous;
- **One-Way system in the High Street** – views at the Public Consultation session were polarised. More research and consultation is needed together with Shropshire Council.

The Way Forward

Shropshire Council has made a series of proposals under emergency Covid-19 legislation to make pedestrian flow safer and more socially-distanced. These proposals included relocating disabled parking bays, painting double yellow lines along much of the High Street and instigating a one-way system downhill in the High Street from Market Square to the Boar's Head junction. The proposal regarding yellow lines was rejected by the Town Council due to the strength of Community feeling against it. However, the proposals concerning reviewing and moving the disabled parking bays and a 1 year trial of a one-way system were approved.

The Community Partnership has agreed to evaluate the trial one-way system before the end of the trial by undertaking a community survey. However, to date these proposals have yet to be actioned by Shropshire Council and it is not certain they will now take place.

Shopping Priorities

Empty shops, a tired appearance and the loss of services and the Friday market were the key things mentioned in the Community Survey as contributing to a sense that the high street is struggling. The actions identified in this Action Plan to support and revitalise the Town centre's shops were displayed at the Public Consultation meetings for feedback.

The top 3 actions according to visitor comments were:

- Celebrate what makes Bishop's Castle unique;
- Create a local produce and traders' directory;
- Create a joint delivery service for local goods.

As part of the Covid Recovery Plan, a 'Buy Local - Shop Local' campaign is being launched along with an online trader's directory and map.

Townscape

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). Once ratified, the NDP which can cover planning issues related to housing, employment, design of developments, environment, heritage and transport, will have a statutory status as part of Shropshire Council's development plan for the county.

The Character Assessment is based on detailed surveys of the Conservation Area townscape and adds another layer of information to that collated in the original Community-Led Plan surveys of 2015/16, referred to above. It provides core data that informs and determines several NDP policies relating to planning issues and the impact of traffic on the Conservation Area. It also provides the basis of some of the Actions stated in the TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN above under both 2. Traffic Flow and 4. Townscape.

Further details on both the NDP and the Character Assessment are provided in the DEVELOPMENT section of this document.

Community and Services



COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>To examine opportunities to improve the provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people in terms of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational provision; • leisure pursuits; • employment support; • create new, wanted/needed jobs for younger generation; • how we help 18-26 year olds to help them stay in the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what services are available, what is missing and create an action plan to address the issues. • Create a survey for the younger generation that focuses on opportunity. • Work with partner organisations to explore opportunities to improve the provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people in the future. • Work with partnerships to create more jobs and evaluate how new jobs can be developed by looking at cycles of input/ output and need. • Look to create a 'Youth Booth' as a diverse outreach programme for 12-17 / 18-26 years of age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Shropshire Youth Forum • Enterprise SWS • SpArC • Community College • Primary School • Youth Groups (Scouts, AMP) • Town Council • Other Parish Councils • Shropshire Council • Bishop's Castle Thrive Community Hub 	<p>H</p>
<p>2. VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>To recognise the vital place of volunteers in the fabric of the Town and its activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a 'Volunteer Bureau - Exchange and Information Service' for such things as:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constitutions; • funding; • meeting places; • volunteer directory • Seek funding for a Volunteer Co-ordinator post with the purpose of recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers for community projects. • Create more volunteering opportunities where people can work as part of a team to foster a sense of purpose doing something good for their community and developing community spirit. • Enable opportunities for volunteers to work towards certificates and qualifications that will help towards their CVs and future employability. <p>(cf Sustainability project opportunities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Voluntary Groups • Age UK • Dial-a-Ride • Carers Group • Enterprise SWS • BC Community Connectors • Bishop's Castle Thrive Community Hub 	<p>M</p>

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>3. SERVICES</p> <p>To address the issue of continuing threats to the provision of statutory services, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ongoing management of SpArC; the need for better provision and co-ordination of local health facilities; the perceived need for more adult education and evening classes; rural poverty arising from increased costs of housing; transport and fuel whilst wages remain stagnant maintain and develop the Bishop's Castle Food Bank develop a Community Hub to support the needs of vulnerable and other groups in our area address the issues identified by the New Zealand Community Health study of Bishop's Castle 	<p>SpArC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage our income in the interests of our community support developments at SpArC during these uncertain times promote the Centre within our local communities work with Shropshire Council in developing an holistic approach to the management of leisure, arts, health and education at the Centre, including the future role of this charity. <p>Bishop's Castle Food Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Food Bank will continue to provide food and other supplies to those individuals and families that need assistance The Food Bank will participate fully in the newly established Bishop's Castle Local Food Resilience Strategy group It will continue its partnership with the Ludlow Bike Synergy Hub, thus enabling its customers to acquire refurbished bikes for free, giving them healthier and cleaner travel options. This will build on a new partnership with Shropshire Wildlife trust to encourage customers to make their gardens as bird and insect friendly as possible (<i>cf Stepping Stones Project</i>) It will work with members of the local community to examine the possibility of opening a clothes bank in early 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Coverage Care The Grange The Pines Stone House Patients Group SpArC BC library U3A Enterprise SWS BC Medical Practice Community College Primary School Save the Stars Campaign BC Community Connectors The BC Food Bank Bishop's Castle Thrive Community Hub 	<p>H</p>

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>SERVICES (continued)</p> <p>To address the issue of continuing threats to the provision of statutory services, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ongoing management of SpArC; the need for better provision and co-ordination of local health facilities; the perceived need for more adult education and evening classes; rural poverty arising from increased costs of housing; transport and fuel whilst wages remain stagnant maintain and develop the Bishop's Castle Food Bank develop a Community Hub to support the needs of vulnerable and other groups. A facility that promotes mental health and well-being, using creative team building and networking opportunities to develop community knowledge and skill-set, helping to form an optimistic thriving community, full of opportunity and prosperity. address the issues identified by the New Zealand Community Health study of Bishop's Castle 	<p>Bishop's Castle Community Hub - 'Bishop's Castle Thrive'</p> <p>Develop a Community Hub, acting as a central point, where people can drop in to find out about services either directly provided or virtually co-ordinated from multiple locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish a partnership and steering group to oversee the project develop aims, mission statement run a Community Engagement Strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inform - produce a definition and description of the sorts of services the Hub might provide and distribute to the community using paper-based and online media; Consult - Survey the wider community for their views on the above services and to suggest what is missing, etc.; Involve - Focus groups and visioning workshops to define the breadth of services required by community groups; Collaborate - working with community groups to design the running of services; Empower - establish steering groups to oversee the running and development of services. scope and cost the likely capital and revenue costs prepare initial bid submission for a National Lottery Partnerships grant seek other funders and service providers <p>Please note that this is a developing project in its early stages with no pre-conceived outcome. The aim is to listen to local people and design a service to help our community to thrive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Coverage Care The Grange The Pines Stone House Patients Group SpArC BC library U3A Enterprise SWS BC Medical Practice Community College Primary School Save the Stars Campaign BC Community Connectors The BC Food Bank Bishop's Castle Thrive Community Hub Community Land Trust (CLT) 	<p>H</p>

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>SERVICES (continued)</p> <p>To address the issue of continuing threats to the provision of statutory services, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ongoing management of SpArC; the need for better provision and co-ordination of local health facilities; the perceived need for more adult education and evening classes; rural poverty arising from increased costs of housing; transport and fuel whilst wages remain stagnant maintain and develop the Bishop's Castle Food Bank develop a Community Hub to support the needs of vulnerable and other groups in our area address the issues identified by the New Zealand Community Health study of Bishop's Castle 	<p>Community Health and Wellbeing Needs Take actions to address the community health and wellbeing issues identified through the New Zealand study, particularly with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "no health without mental health" campaign; campaign to employ of a mental health nurse in Bishop's Castle; seek to provide education for healthcare workers and community; develop sensory modulation techniques; study issues of mental health and dementia in greater depth during May 2021. Physical Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bringing people in the community together to enhance community well-being and share knowledge to develop health behaviours; development of good life skills and healthy choices for a sustainable future; encouraging different age groups to interact and share their knowledge promoting positive change within the community. <p>Befriending Service Establish a Befriending Service that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> companionship for isolated people; the chance to develop a new relationships; opportunities to participate in social activities; seek to affiliate the service to a local charity; develop a Street Champions project. <p>Services Under Threat Support and campaign to save local services which come under threat in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Coverage Care The Grange The Pines Stone House Patients Group SpArC BC library U3A Enterprise SWS BC Medical Practice Community College Primary School Save the Stars Campaign BC Community Connectors The BC Food Bank Community Hub 	<p>H</p>

COMMUNITY and SERVICES ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Issues)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>4. AN AGEING POPULATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop more volunteer activities to address the withdrawal of Council services, particularly for the elderly. The Dementia Friendly Town group has identified 'Health and Social Care' and 'Shops and Businesses' as priorities for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Bishop's Castle Medical Practice to evaluate their provision of care for those living with Dementia and their carers by improving signage and accessibility, and attending on-line Dementia awareness sessions. Visit shops and businesses in Bishop's Castle to raise awareness of the needs of people living with Dementia. 'Working towards Dementia Friendly' stickers in shop windows Promote awareness of dementia and sign up people to attend an awareness session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council Dementia Friendly Town Group Coverage Care The Grange The Pines Stone House Patients Group SpArC BC Library Enterprise SWS BC Medical Practice BC Food Bank BC Community Connectors Community Hub 	H

Community and Services - Context

This theme pulls together how our community interacts with the services that make this Town a great place to live in. It covers issues for young people and for an ageing population. It highlights how we are reliant on people volunteering to help. It shows what services are available locally both from the public and private sector. In the current period of austerity and the associated decline of public services, it is vital for Bishop's Castle to be proactive and to seek alternative strategies to maintain those services of value to the community.

SpArC ('Sport and Arts in the Community')

Key actions from April 1 2020 are to:

- consult with stakeholders, both existing and potential, to ensure that services offered are meeting the needs of all segments of the Community
- act as a channel to communicate these needs to Shropshire Council
- fund investment to support the renewal and improvement of equipment, facilities and services – for example to “match-fund” grants
- provide “seed funding” for new initiatives (e.g. additional opening times, services or activities)
- monitor the Service Provider to ensure that it is meeting its contractual obligations and achieving the agreed Key Performance Indicators
- report back regularly to the Town Council and Parish Councils on progress and issues to encourage them to continue their on-going financial support
- contribute to the improvement of local health and welfare
- report on progress with meeting important medical and social objectives
- increase community engagement and reduce social isolation
- raise the skill levels and employment prospects of the local workforce and volunteers

Volunteer Bureau

It is proposed to develop a volunteer bureau which would help established and potential new groups with the 'paper work' needed and provide a network of helpers. As services come under threat they are likely to depend upon the help of volunteers to continue. The proposed bureau will strengthen the recruitment and organisation of such volunteers enabling organisations to quickly respond to changing circumstances.

Enterprise South West Shropshire

Enterprise South West Shropshire providing services to Bishop's Castle and the wider community including:

- Business Workshop and Office units
- the Bishop's Castle Community library;
- a drop-in IT / Business Centre.
- Business Administration Services
- the Village Outreach equipment hire.
- the local SpArC Theatre Programme.
- Bishops Castle Business Network.
- the SpArc Artificial Sports Pitch.
- as well providing ongoing support to local community groups, Parish Councils and schools.
- The Enterprise House IT centre and Library continue to provide an essential hub for community services and support. Community relationships have been built up over many years with individuals and community groups depending on staff to help with sometime small but nevertheless critical technical fixes or printing and publishing solutions for example, alongside a catch-up and conversation with trusted friends and partners.
- We are currently participating in a Shropshire review of Library Services with feedback / new plans expected to be communicated in the early summer. We are also working closely with Shropshire Council to further improve the managements and scope of the highly successful SpArC Theatre Programme and to ensure that the use of the artificial sports pitch is maximised.

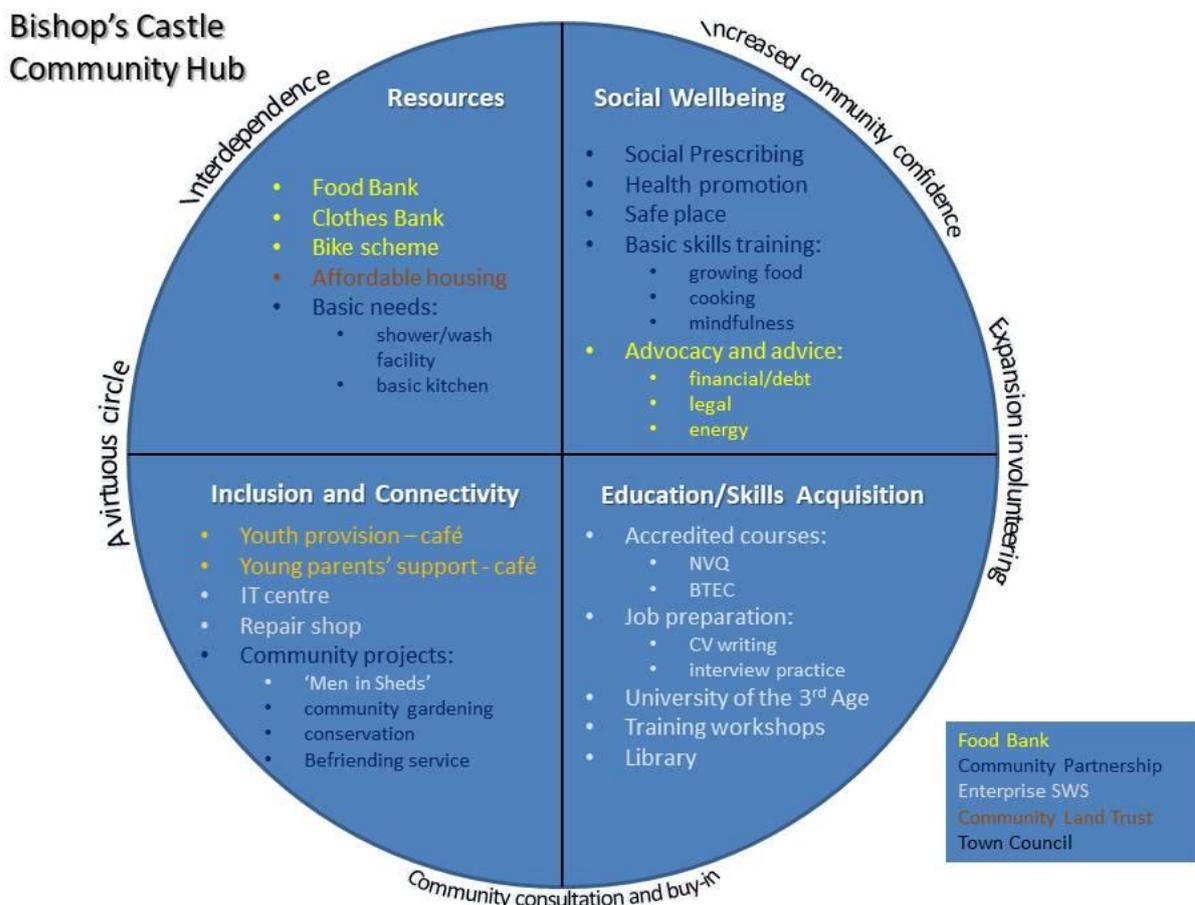
- Our Business Administration Services are increasingly being employed by local interest / volunteer led groups to take away some of the burden of the bureaucracy that can get in the way of the main ambitions of such organisations, and we hope to be able to do this for more groups during 2021. This function can also be utilised to help with the admin burden on our festival organisers knowing that ESWS is very well placed to get the background work done quickly and relatively easily, and to help ensure the ongoing survival of these community - critical and culturally important local events.
- The transfer of the day-to-day running of the library to Enterprise South West Shropshire in 2016 is a good example of how Bishop's Castle can respond to threats to public services by seeking alternative ways to maintain community services by bringing them into local control. The library has remained in its existing location and opening times have not been affected. Existing library staff have transferred to Enterprise South West Shropshire, who continue to provide the same range of services.

Bishop's Castle 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.
- The Foodbank became a registered charity recently. 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 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 have 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 we worked with our local butcher and Castle Hotel to provide meat for those foodbank customers who were cooking their own Christmas meals and pre-prepared meals for those who weren't.
- The Food Bank will continue to provide food and other supplies to those individuals and families that need assistance
- It will participate fully in the newly established Bishop's Castle Local Food Resilience strategy group
- It will continue its partnership with the Ludlow bike synergy hub, thus enabling its customers to acquire refurbished bikes for free, giving them healthier and cleaner travel options
- It will build on its new partnership with Shropshire Wildlife trust to encourage customers to make their gardens as bird and insect friendly as possible
- It will work with members of the local community to examine the possibility of opening a clothes bank in early 2021.

Bishop's Castle Community Hub - 'Bishop's' Castle Thrive'

- 'Bishop's Castle Thrive' is working on possible plans to develop a new Community Hub, acting as a central point, where people can drop in to find out about services either directly provided or virtually co-ordinated from multiple locations.
- It would be a Community Hub to support the needs of vulnerable and other groups. A facility that promotes mental health and well-being, using creative team building and networking opportunities to develop community knowledge and skill-set, helping to form an optimistic thriving community, full of opportunity and prosperity.
- 'Bishop's Castle Thrive' Community Hub could guide people to existing functions such as the food bank, IT Centre and library, and to a range of new services planned to answer community needs. These might include youth provision, social prescribing, debt and benefits advice, energy advice, health promotion, clothes bank, job preparation, safe space and access to advocacy services. The Hub could be situated in an accessible location, offering a joined-up service to all ages in our community.
- **'Bishop's Castle Thrive'** has a steering group that has representatives from the following organisations:
 - Bishop's Castle Food Community Bank
 - Bishop's Castle & District Community Land Trust
 - Enterprise South West Shropshire
 - Bishop's Castle Community Partnership
 - Bishop's Castle Town Council
- Please note that this is a developing project in its early stages with no pre-conceived outcome. Our aim is to listen to local people and design a service to help our community to thrive.



The following issues highlight the need to support our community by developing a Community Hub for Bishop's Castle:

- In the CLT survey of the community regarding the possible uses for Stars people mainly said:
 - use the former shop for the community;

- support the youth;
- to help people to get jobs;
- a community café
- 9 suicides among young people in the 5 years preceding 2020.
- There is little provision for regular and organised leisure activities for children or young people apart from Guides, Scouts and Army Cadets. Some school holiday provision related to Sports or drama subject to available grant opportunities.
- 37% increase in Free School Meals in Shropshire in the last year 2019/20.
- Increase from 52 to 85 clients using the Food Bank in 1 week over the past 3 months. The Food Bank was only established April 2020
- The Food Bank needs a permanent home with space for fridges, a freezer, bulk food storage and the development of other food resilience activities (e.g. cookery skills; preparing healthy meals etc.).
- Limited job opportunities in the Town. The social care sector on a low wage economy is a major employer. The need to attract more diverse job opportunities and therefore skill up school leavers for the world of work.
- Post-16 education travel costs are means-tested and can be prohibitive, potentially preventing young people accessing further education. There is no post-16 education provision (i.e. Sixth form) in Bishop's Castle. The nearest Sixth form colleges are Ludlow and Shrewsbury, each 20+ miles away.
- Limited public transport services makes access to advice and advocacy services such as Citizens Advice difficult.
- There were 12 incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the same period, the majority of this relates to nuisance. The highest number of incidents occurred within the same area experiencing the highest incidence of crime. Youth related ASB accounted for 41.7% of incidents and alcohol related for 58.3%. (Info from Shropshire Council ward data).
- Older people - Retirement age: 23.9% (891) of the population were aged 65 and over in March 2011. This compares with 20.7% at County level, 16.9% regionally and 16.3% nationally. (Data from 2011 Census).
- Over 85 year olds: 3.3% (124) of the population were aged 85 and over in March 2011. This compares with 2.7% at County level, 2.2% regionally and 2.2% nationally.
- Social isolation - Bishop's Castle scores 33 (compared with a national figure of 52) for "Relationships and Trust" on the Co-op Wellbeing Index. This is due to the significant number of people aged 50+ living alone and the proportion of the population with long-term illnesses.
- The hub would ideally support or host the following roles:
 - Manager
 - Youth and community
 - Connecting low risk people into community
 - Promoting rights in aid of health
 - Helping environment
 - Making events
 - Organising volunteers

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.

Community Wellbeing and Health Needs Study

The recent in-depth study by student nurses from New Zealand in partnership with Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin identified important mental and physical Community Health priorities for Bishop's Castle:

- **Mental Health**
 - Issues related to mental health and support are a significant challenge
 - Mental health and well-being is an integral part of health

- Rural communities like Bishop's Castle often struggle with barriers such as inaccessibility to services and lack of funding
- Bishop's Castle has had 9 suicides within the last 5 years which is significant for the population size
- Bishop's Castle has limited mental health resources. There is only 1 Cognitive behavioural Therapy Councillor funded for only 4 hours per week with a wait time of 4 months!
- There is no health without mental health

Health promotion messages:

- "No health without mental health"
- Submission to Shropshire Council for:
 - Employment of a mental health nurse in Bishop's Castle
 - Education for healthcare workers and community
 - Sensory modulation techniques (e.g. stress ball)

Resources produced

A flyer promoting mental health awareness to be put up in medical centre and schools
Stress balls to accompany the flyers

- **Physical Health**

- Having a well-balanced diet and getting regular exercise is important for good physical health
- Food poverty leads to numerous health complaints
- Maintaining good health is important to sustain well-being
- High number of those within Bishop's Castle community are considered overweight/obese
- Drug and alcohol misuse can have a great influence on physical health
- Smoking is an issue expressed to us by members of the community

Health promotion messages:

- Bringing people in the community together to enhance community well-being
- Sharing knowledge to develop health behaviours
- Development of good life skills and healthy choices for a sustainable future
- Encouraging different age groups to interact and share their knowledge
- Promoting positive change within the community.

Resources produced

Posters, beer mats and fridge magnets to explain and promote the benefits of gardening and providing households with tips to growing their own fresh produce.

- **Transport and impact on health**

- Strong reliance on public transport in Bishop's Castle
- Inadequate public transport system - transport poverty - especially for elderly and disabled
- Lack of disabled parking - poor marking, misuse, etc

Health promotion messages:

- Raise awareness of correct use of disabled parking
- Submission to Shropshire Council for:
 - Better signage and road marking for disabled park
 - Repercussions introduced for incorrect useIncreased education regarding why correct use is important

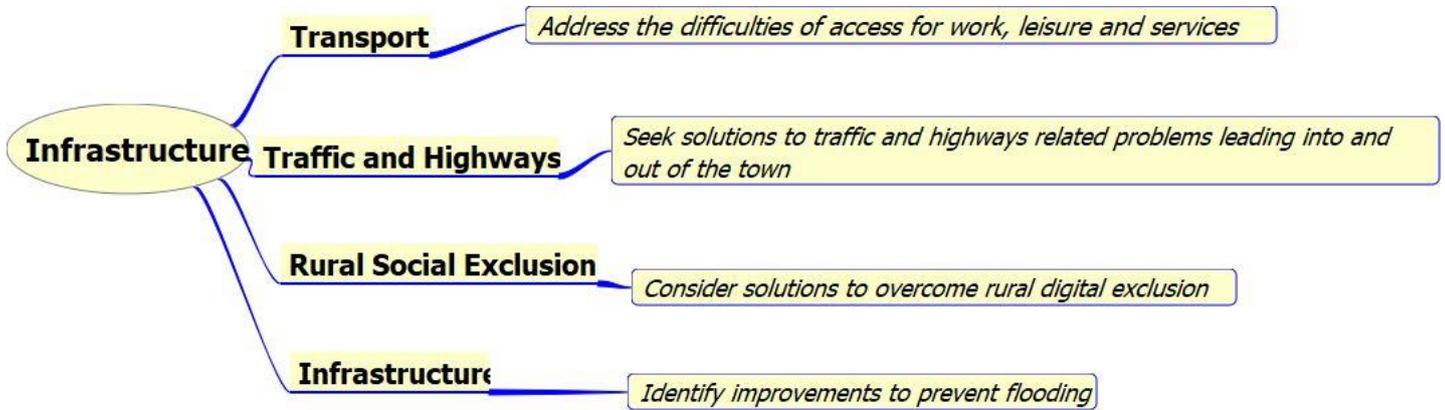
Resources produced

A flyer to be placed on cars misusing disabled parking bays to raise awareness

As a community, we need to use this data to help tackle these issues. This data will be invaluable in our Covid-recovery plan and any future bid for funding.

In May 2021 it is planned to continue working with New Zealand student nurses to study issues of mental health and dementia in greater depth.

Infrastructure

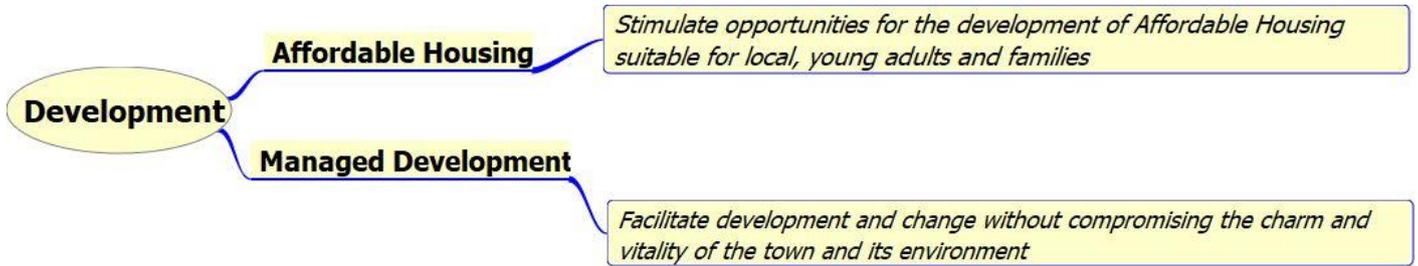


INFRASTRUCTURE ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. TRANSPORT</p> <p>Address the difficulties of access for work, leisure and services</p>	<p>I. Expand and co-ordinate volunteer drivers for Community transport (e.g. Dial-a-Ride) through the BC Business Support Unit [BSU] database</p> <p>II. Continue to publicise Dial-a-Ride service and the Wheels to Work scheme to the community</p> <p>III. Look into the feasibility of an on-line lift-sharing facility</p> <p>IV. Establish the collection of statistics regarding the number of people served by community transport as a KPI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group • Dial-a-Ride • Bus Users Group • Wheels to Work • Enterprise House BSU 	M
<p>2. TRAFFIC and HIGHWAYS</p> <p>Assess issues and seek solutions to traffic and highways related problems leading into and out of the Town</p>	<p>I. Continue to monitor issues and seek solutions for traffic/pedestrian conflicts</p> <p>II. Explore possibility of use of social media and other means to publicise and discuss issues e.g. road closures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group 	M
<p>3. RURAL SOCIAL EXCLUSION</p> <p>Monitor and consider solutions to overcome rural digital exclusion (e.g. improved broadband, mobile phones, etc.)</p>	<p>I. Monitor broadband and mobile phone quality for residents and businesses;</p> <p>II. Maintain the collection of statistics regarding local bandwidth as a KPI;</p> <p>III. Use social media to provide a mechanism for dissemination of information and feedback, especially Covid-19 Community Support via Facebook;</p> <p>IV. Promote the RCC Shropshire bulk purchase oil scheme (Keith Whiddon is BC Co-ordinator).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP Steering group • County Council • EE & other providers • RCC Shropshire 	M
<p>4. INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Identify improvements to prevent flooding, such as blocked drains, and review street lighting needs</p>	<p>I. Use social media to provide a mechanism for dissemination of information and feedback.</p> <p>II. Develop better systems to report issues, monitor progress and to inform the community.</p> <p><i>(cf Sustainability Action 2 iii regarding tree-planting to management catchment area run-off.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partnership • Town Council • Shropshire Council 	M

Infrastructure - Context

The Infrastructure theme seeks to address many of the underlying issues associated with being a small and isolated rural Town as raised by the Community Survey. In particular: the inadequacy of transport for access to work, leisure and services for those without a car; specific traffic and highways issues leading into and out of the Town; seeking ways to overcome rural social exclusion and identifying improvements to prevent flooding, and reviewing street lighting needs. Many of these issues are also to be found in the Shropshire Council Place Plan for Bishop's Castle.

Development



DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING</p> <p>Stimulate opportunities for the development of Affordable Housing suitable for local, young adults and families.</p>	<p>I. Review the viability of current outstanding planned allocation of affordable units</p> <p>a) Up-to-date data currently being collated as part of the SC Local Plan Review, including long term viability of outstanding planning approvals.</p> <p>b) Consult with the CLT re their current affordable housing objectives and opportunities, including clarification of the situation re any potential opportunities in relation to the SAMDev site.</p> <p>c) Consult with Ron Davies re his views on the potential for the SAMDev site in relation to both affordable units and open market housing.</p> <p>d) Up-to-date data obtained on Homepoint figures of local housing need.</p> <p><i>Tasks a), b), c) and d) were specific, short term process tasks and all were actioned in 2018. They provided an up to date understanding as regards current demand for and likely provision of affordable housing units. These 4 tasks are therefore no longer relevant to the updated, ongoing Action Plan.</i></p> <p>II. Implement existing ideas for 'Live-Work' workshops that are being explored in the Business Park Business Plan</p> <p><i>'Live Work Workshops' were part of the original CLT led Business Park Business Plan. The Town Council is now leading on the process for future development of the Business Park. As 'Live Work Workshops' may still be considered in the future it should be flagged as a matter of joint interest with the Economy Group and, as an opportunity for Partnership contribution to the future management process of the Business Park development.</i></p> <p>III. Continue to provide information to the community on where to get support by directing those seeking housing to Shropshire Council's Right Home Right Place website and to register for housing on the HomePoint website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Land Trust • Housing Associations • Local land and property owners. • Shropshire Housing Group 	<p>H</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2020-2022			
What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who Could Help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>2. MANAGED DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Facilitate development and change without compromising the charm and vitality of the Town and its environment</p>	I. Publish the Bishop's Castle Character Assessment and establish a strategy for promotion to potential benefactors of heritage grants and those initiating projects or change within the Conservation Area.		H
	II. Once the Bishop's Castle Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is ratified, continue to work with the Town Council to ensure that actions stated in the NDP that pertain to development and the conservation of the Town's heritage continue to be progressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop's Castle Town Council 	H
	III. Continue to work with the Town Council through ongoing monitoring and periodic updating of the NDP as regards those matters that pertain to the Character Assessment and any other planning related issues being covered by the Community Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop's Castle Town Council 	H
	IV. Work with the Town Council to establish and agree a process that would enable the Town Council to provide structured, heritage and planning based comments on planning applications that relate to the area covered by the NDP. This would include all properties/premises within the Conservation Area, and those peripheral Sensitive Sites, identified in Table 1. Where relevant, comments would reference policy BC2: Development affecting the Bishop's Castle Conservation Area, parts A and C together with other planning related references, including paragraphs 69 to 72 and 84. The current process used with regard to tree felling applications could provide a basis for this process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop's Castle Town Council 	H
	V. Undertake a landscape evaluation of areas adjacent to but outside the development boundary which would be sensitive to development for environmental or other reasons, but which could be available for development under the exception sites policy. <i>The evaluation to include survey information provided by the AONB and held by SC on the visual impact of Bishop's Castle from the AONB.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footpath Group Shropshire Council 	M
	VI. Establish the collection of relevant Key Performance Indicators to facilitate future analysis of change e.g. the number of vacant properties/sites; environmentally sensitive sites etc.		M
	VII. Evaluate the implications of Shropshire Council's periodic Local Plan Reviews and as appropriate provide a written response to the consultation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shropshire Council 	H

Development - Context

3 Key Actions

- In 2019 three key and interrelated actions took place:
 - In accordance with government regulations, in January Shropshire Council began its public consultation on the 'Shropshire Local Plan Review'. The Review covers future development requirements for housing and industrial use up to 2038. The January consultation proposed a new site for development in Bishop's Castle, to take place towards the end of the Plan period. This is in addition to the as yet undeveloped BISH013 site on School House Lane. The proposed new site, BISO28 was to accommodate 70 dwellings and was located along the western edge of the development boundary, straddling both sides of Welsh Street. Access to the hinterland for both parts of the site was through the Conservation Area.
The southern part of the new site BISO28 lies south of Welsh Street and incorporates an area which in 2012, was proposed as site BISH021 in Shropshire Council's first public consultation on the Local Plan. This site was rejected by the community and by the Community-Led Plan (CLP), primarily for reasons relating to the impact of traffic that would be generated by the development. The site was later replaced in the Shropshire Local Plan by the BISH013 School House Lane site.
 - Following concerns about the new BISO28 site that Shropshire Council proposed in its Local Plan Review consultation, Bishop's Castle Town Council initiated a process in February 2019, to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). This involved setting up a Steering Group of volunteers to draw up the plan. The Community Partnership is represented on the Steering Group.
An NDP can cover issues relating to housing, employment, design of developments, environment, heritage and transport where these relate to planning criteria. It can contain planning policies and improvement proposals and allocate key sites for specific types of development, including housing. However, these must be sustainable (as defined by government and statutory bodies) and compatible with both national planning policy and adopted, strategic local planning policies, such as the Shropshire Local Plan. A NDP must also undergo a formal approval process which includes: a local consultation; an independent examination; and a public referendum. The latter two must be carried out by Shropshire Council.
If successful at the final public referendum, the NDP will become part of Shropshire Council's statutory development plan for the area, thus carrying more weight in the planning process than the Community-Led Plan. It could also impact decisions relating to planning applications and proposals for site allocations in future Shropshire Local Plan Reviews.
 - At the inception of the NDP Steering Group, the Community Partnership proposed that, as heritage is a recognised component of a NDP, a Character Assessment (CA) of the Conservation Area be undertaken. This would provide core data that could inform and determine policies in the NDP. It would also evidence that those NDP policies that related to the heritage data collected in the CA, would not only 'be compatible with' but would support a core, strategic, local planning policy of Shropshire Council – Development Management Policy DP23—*Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment*. In addition, it would provide data relevant to strategic site allocation assessments that are periodically undertaken in Shropshire Local Plan Reviews, including the current Review proposing site BISO28.
The planning consultant employed by the Town Council to assist in producing the NDP confirmed that this would be a useful contribution. The Community Partnership agreed to undertake the Character Assessment.

Bishop's Castle Character Assessment

- To ensure a thorough and objective approach, the Character Assessment was based on the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit which provides a comprehensive approach to surveying an historic area in order to: generate an evidence base to inform the design process; assist in the production of conservation management plans; and provide a basis for the management of change. Produced by Oxford City Council and supported by English Heritage and Oxford Preservation Trust, the Toolkit's objective is to gain greater understanding of the historic environment and the intricate layers that have helped form it. It would also enable us to deepen our understanding of both the positive and negative issues raised by the Community-Led Plan surveys that were undertaken in 2015/16.
- The survey constitutes a visual examination of the nature of and relationships between areas, spaces and buildings. It includes extensive details of physical features as well as sensory elements such as the ambience of the place. However, the survey remains factually based and evidenced rather than opinionated. Additional research using historical records is needed to understand how the character has evolved over time. Consequently, the physical, onsite survey has been overlaid with myriad information from historical records available from various sources including the Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre.
- The Conservation Area was divided into 9 separate zones. Volunteers were recruited to undertake the onsite surveys and write them up, including any supporting research they may have had. The surveys are illustrated with photographs. Given the complexity of the data being collected and the need for objectivity, 2 people were allocated to each zone. An initial survey was undertaken in May/June, the remainder in August. All were carried out on a weekday that reflects an average level of activity i.e. Tuesday, Thursday or Friday. All were completed by September 2019. Following completion, additional information from the historical and cultural research was added. Further details on the surveys can be found in Appendix 3 of the Bishop's Castle Character Assessment. The 9 individual surveys constitute Appendix 5.
- The Character Assessment identifies and evidences core issues that contribute to the Town's character today, including its historic heritage, its vibrancy and ability to adapt to change. As regards the former, the Shropshire Council Sites and Monument Record lists 267 separate heritage assets within the historic streets of the Conservation Area. These include 1 Scheduled Monument, 5 Grade II* Listed properties, 100 Grade II Listed premises and 161 non-designated assets (commonly referred to as a Local List). As the Local List was compiled in the 1970s by South Shropshire District Council, it is now out of date. Only 141 of the properties could be identified as remaining and several have addresses that are no longer correct. Whilst locally listed heritage assets are not subject to the same stringent protections and consent requirements as are listed buildings, their conservation as a heritage asset is a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application. National planning policy also states that Local Planning Authorities are obliged to consider the positive contribution that conserving non-designated heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality. The updating of the Local List of the 161 non-designated properties must therefore be a priority in the short term.
- A key outcome of the Character Assessment is the identification of: common architectural features within each of the zones surveyed; 9 sites that are sensitive to development if the character of the Conservation Area is to be maintained; 3 locations where an opportunity exists to enhance their appearance and minimise signs of neglect; the need for an holistic approach to the conservation of the Old Market Square and the streetscape between it and Market Square; and the impact of motorised traffic on the heritage assets and their setting.

Achievements to date

- The findings of the Character Assessment were invaluable to the development of three of the policies that are contained in the Town Council's NDP including policy *BC1 Housing Allocation and change to the development boundary*. This policy proposes an alternative site to BISO28 (the original site allocation suggested by Shropshire Council in the Shropshire Local Plan Review in January 2019). The justification for the new site centres on the impact of new development on the Conservation Area resulting from increased traffic.
- The inclusion of policy BC1 was enabled through consultations with Shropshire Council in 2020 when the conflict between the emerging NDP and the Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016 -2038, became apparent. Based on analysis of the Character Assessment, the NDP was evidencing that developments on the western edge of the development boundary would detract significantly from the character, aesthetics and important heritage

features in the Conservation Area. They would thus not only conflict with Shropshire Council's strategic, local planning policy 'Development Management Policy DP23' *'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment'* but also the national policy relating to non-designated heritage assets as development in the west would impact upon the shopping experience with a consequential effect on the economic viability of the Town.

- As the emerging NDP was evidencing the potential impact on the heritage assets of development in the west and as there must be compatibility between the NDP and the Local Planning Authority's strategic planning policies, Shropshire Council agreed to remove site BIS028 from the Draft Shropshire Local Plan on the basis that the NDP would propose an alternative, sustainable site of a similar capacity.
- The process to adopt the NDP as part of the Shropshire Council development plan has three stages. In January 2021 the Draft NDP commenced the first stage of the formal Regulation 14 consultation process. This requires consultation with the local community, Shropshire Council and relevant statutory bodies. This stage of the process is estimated to last a minimum of 6 weeks and is carried out by the Town Council. Following completion of this stage, the Draft NDP is submitted to Shropshire Council who will undertake the Regulation 16 ratification process which involves an independent examination of the NDP to assess whether it meets the basic conditions and legal requirements. This also requires a minimum 6-week period. The third, Regulation 18 stage is a public referendum, undertaken by Shropshire Council. There is no specified time scale for this stage of the process. However, the promotion of the referendum is required to take place at least 28 days before the date of the poll. Timescales have been affected by the national health crisis that still exists in 2020.
- Sections of the Bishop's Castle Character Assessment are embedded within the NDP and Appendix 1 of the NDP constitutes the entire Character Assessment, modified to include copy relating to relevant planning regulations and processes as well as Shropshire Local Plan policies. It is the intention however to promote and make the Character Assessment available as a stand-alone document. It can then be used in a variety of ways to encourage sensitive change to premises and their setting, e.g. to support applications for heritage funding on properties and projects within the Conservation Area, either by groups or individuals; to encourage reference by property owners seeking to enhance or modify properties within the Conservation Area whether or not the proposals will require planning permission; and to facilitate amendments to the Local List of heritage assets. A limited number of hard copies should also be obtained for reference purposes, e.g. as part of the catalogue of documents contained in the BCHRC and for access by the public in the local library.
- Actions going forward in 2021/22 that stem from the results of the Community Partnership's Character Assessment are covered in both the DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN and the TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN.

Affordable housing progress

In 2019/20, South Shropshire Housing Association constructed 24 dwellings on land west of Oak Meadow in a corner of the area that was the proposed BIS028 site. As this land on which the affordable dwellings have been constructed lies outside the development boundary it is classified as an 'exception site' on which only 'affordable housing' is permitted.

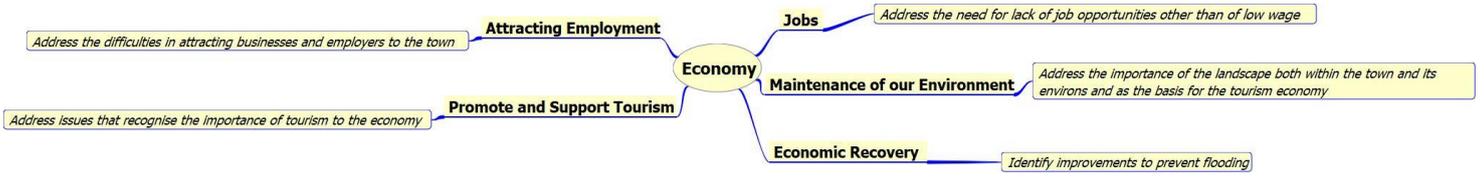
The plot comprises:

- 4 one-bedroom houses
- 10 two-bedroom houses
- 10 three-bedroom houses

In accordance with Shropshire Council's affordable housing strategy, a local connection takes priority. There is a mix of tenures including rental which appears to be the category with biggest demand locally. In spring 2021 some of the properties still remained empty.

Shropshire Council reported that the shortage of properties available for rent in Shropshire has been exacerbated in 2020 as a result of the Covid situation. There is evidence to suggest that private rental properties are being sold for home ownership as this market proves buoyant. The need for rental properties at affordable prices still remains an issue.

Economy



ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>1. JOBS</p> <p>To address the need for lack of job opportunities other than of low wage</p>	<p>1a. ESWS to increase rental unit space buy 25% and increase the number of businesses on the Enterprise House site by 25% to 15 and the numbers employed on the site from c25 to >35</p> <p>1b. ESWS to explore the potential of establishing a CIC at enterprise that provides an opportunity for developing key skills / business management skills, focusing on young people.</p> <p>1c. ESWS to support Shropshire Council with the development of the Business Park, acting as the local contact for interested parties and continuing to support business to start up and grow through small units at Enterprise House into business park premises.</p> <p>1d. Business Park Project: The Bishop's Castle Business Park is now going ahead, with an expected opening date of Spring (for details see 5. Economic Recovery below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS 	<p>H</p>
	<p>1b. Publicise existing business support activities carried out by Enterprise South West Shropshire and extends its remit as a Business Support Unit [BSU] to undertake additional activities. Strengthening and growing the Bishop's Castle Business Network and creating 2 new business forums one for Start-Ups and one for Business Growth that will:</p> <p>Acting as a focal point for local businesses to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. meet and discuss changes required to improve the local economy, II. draw-up a business strategy, III. assist in the promotion of these outputs and other retail activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS BSU • Tourism Group • BC Business Network • Marches Growth Hub • Volunteers 	<p>M</p>
	<p>1c. Recognise the importance of farming as a local employer by using the newly-formed BC BSU to explore establishing a 'Farmers' Forum' to assist with identifying farming issues and solutions, and acting as a link with the local community. This could be done by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. assessing the scale of interest in the farming community; II. if viable, setting-up and supporting the Farmers' Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS BSU • NFU • Young Farmers • Country Landowners Association [CLA] 	<p>M</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>2. MAINTENANCE of our ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>To address the importance of the landscape both within the Town and its environs and as the basis for the tourism economy</p>	<p>2a. Led by the Farmers' Forum (see Objective 1c), bring together local Farmers and civic groups to draw-up a working paper containing ideas on how to give priority to maintaining a high-quality landscape and environment as a primary resource for local people and for sustainable tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS (BC BSU) • Town Council • Shropshire Council • Shropshire AONB • BC Parish Paths Partnership [PPP] • Footpath Group • Sustainability WG • BC Walking Group • BC Cycling Group 	<p>L</p>
	<p>2b. Footpath maps. Update the local numbered Walk Sheets issued by the Town Hall with the numbers that have been put on the stiles (which also assist maintenance identification issues).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Parish Paths Partnership • Shropshire Council 	<p>M</p>
	<p>2c. Seek tourist feedback by including a pull-out sheet inside the Town Hall's Walk Sheets to find out where walkers shop, eat and stay in Bishop's Castle to help assess the benefits to the local economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Footpath Group 	<p>M</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>3. ATTRACTING EMPLOYMENT</p> <p>To address the difficulties in attracting businesses and employers to the Town</p>	<p>3a. 'Reaching Communities' project, which will enable the replacement of capital equipment (e.g. Enterprise House, Village Outreach, the Library and SpArC Theatre), plus some revenue funding for ESWS Business Services and future-proofing.</p> <p>To be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. pursuing grant funding; ii. procuring capital equipment iii. investing to meet ESWS's future needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS 	<p>H</p>
	<p>3b. Create and maintain an on-line directory giving details of following local facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills-sharing (free and charged) • volunteers (listing volunteering opportunities) • local traders • local produce and products • local services (e.g. plumbers, builders, etc.) <p>This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. advertising the on-line facility and mediating responses ii. creating and hosting the on-line engine iii. entering and maintaining data <p>(cf Town Centre Shopping and Economic Recovery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Town Hall • ESWS 	<p>M</p>
	<p>3c. Business Park Project (for more details see 5. Economic Recovery below)</p>		<p>H</p>

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>4. PROMOTE and SUPPORT TOURISM</p> <p>To address issues that recognise the importance of tourism to the economy of the Town and to consider drawing-up a business strategy including improved promotion of the Town.</p>	<p>4a. Actively pursue top priority actions laid down in the Bishop's Castle and Clun Tourism Plan (March 2014). These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. develop the unique identity of each Town in relation to the destination brand; ii. provide effective information material for each Town; iii. provide a high quality of visitor facilities, services and amenities; iv. deliver a creative experience of the Town's heritage, through sites, trails and interpretation; v. co-ordinate and promote a programme of events between the towns; vi. encourage and support and distinctive retail experience; vii. provide clear access links between the towns and the countryside. <p>(cf 5 Economic Recovery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall Trust • Bishop's Castle & Clun Tourism Group • ESWS (BC BSU) • BC Cycle Group 	<p>H</p>
	<p>4b. BC BSU to assist with business strategy and promotion of the Town, and co-ordination of the work of the Tourism and other groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS (BC BSU) 	<p>M</p>
	<p>4c. Explore the need for a BC Festival Co-ordinator to reduce duplication of effort in management, marketing, fund-raising, etc. by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. defining the role of an Events Co-ordinator; ii. establishing ways to fund an Events Co-ordinator; iii. establishing an Events Stewards group (cf. Newtown) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Festivals Group • ESWS (BC BSU) • Town Council 	<p>M</p>
	<p>4d. Establish an electric car charging point to encourage more electric-car-owners to visit the Town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Working Group 	<p>M</p>
	<p>4e. Actively pursue promotion of the Town to encourage visitors, in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. more promotion of the countryside; ii. more promotion of BC as the 'friendly Town'; iii. more information about facilities in the Town e.g. improved signpost for Library iv. improve availability of information on activities for children v. more off-season promotion work. <p>(cf 5 Economic Recovery)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC & Clun Tourism Group • ESWS (BC BSU) • Town Hall trust 	<p>H</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>PROMOTE and SUPPORT TOURISM</p>	<p>4f. Assist businesses with training courses, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. marketing/Internet Marketing II. web-site and social media development III. tailored advice to improve the market penetration of website IV. compliance with regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESWS BSU 	<p>M</p>
	<p>4g. Develop cycling off-and-on road routes leaflets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Cycling Group 	<p>M</p>
	<p>4h. Enhance the use of the Town centre for tourism by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scope, consult and develop a Heritage Lottery bid to enhance the Old Square to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. create an outdoor space for outdoor activities and as a place where people can sit and watch the world go by while enjoying food and drink; ii. preserve, interpret and enhance its historic value. ii. Deploying the Town Hall Stage (<i>cf Michaelmas Fair</i>) to support and encourage a wide range of cultural and trading opportunities throughout the year by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. establishing a Town Hall Stage crew of trained volunteers to erect and dismantle the Stage safely; b. seeking practical means of transporting the Stage between Enterprise House and the Town Hall; c. developing a programme of events for the year ahead. iii. Extend the 'March of the Elephants' artworks trail to become a major national tourist attraction for the region and provide a much needed boost to the local economy by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. seeking new sources of funding to add more artworks, etc; b. develop a national marketing strategy in liaison with the Shropshire Hills AONB, Shropshire Council, and other partners. iv. By spring 2021 'The Bishop's Castle Railway Weighbridge Project' plan to have a really useable heritage building for locals and tourists to enjoy the many events already being planned. v. 'The Faerie Trail' is planned to open by Easter 2021. It is the first trail aimed specifically at children. It is being developed to promote exercise, provide adventure and an appreciation of the natural environment through map interpretation, route finding, decision making and observation skills. The Trail is to be situated in a woodland area on the Wintles hillside using a public footpath and a permissive path courtesy of the Wintles residents. Two local artists, Sarah Gillard and Hereward Gabriel, will carry-out the work. Faerie Trail packs will be available for purchase from the Tourist Information desk at the Town Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Old Square Heritage Enhancement Group • ESWS • Town Hall Trust • Civic Society • Town Hall Stage Crew • Michaelmas Fair • Shropshire Hills AONB • Shropshire Council • The Bishop's Castle Railway Weighbridge Project • BC Tourism Company • Connexus 	<p>H</p>

ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2020-2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (Who could help?)	Priority H / M / L
<p>5. ECONOMIC RECOVERY</p> <p>Post-Covid 19 recovery plan Resetting the local economy and services.</p>	<p>Exploit the ‘Bishop’s Castle - Open for Business’ campaign and develop a ‘Shop local - Buy local’ campaign by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. creating a community survey to determine how and where people shop and obtain services, identify what is missing; and establish what would help people shop more locally, etc (<i>cf Marches Grow Local Survey</i>) b. branding BC as a destination, (e.g. for local food and drink - ‘farm to fork’) through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. promotion and marketing; ii. consider developing a local food trail; iii. increase the frequency of BC’s Farmers’ Market to make it a regular and reliable source for buying local produce c. developing selling platforms and ways to get products to a wider market, through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. branding, e.g. ‘Made in Bishop’s Castle’ or Shropshire; ii. the introduction of an on-line Food Hub delivering local produce. <p><i>(cf Local Food Production)</i> <i>(cf Town Centre - 1. Shopping)</i></p> <p>Explore the creation of a local currency, or ‘rewards’ or ‘loyalty credits’ for Bishop’s Castle.</p> <p>Develop a programme of community events to support and encourage trading opportunities throughout the year.</p> <p>Create better opportunities for shopping linked to the Town’s festivals and tourism in general.</p> <p>Work with the Business Park, SpArC, Community Hub, local employers, etc. to provide work experience, modern apprenticeships, volunteering opportunities (leading to qualifications), CV writing and interview skills, etc.</p> <p>Look into ways of create new and needed jobs specifically for the younger generation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Local Food Resilience Group • ESWS 	<p>H</p>

ECONOMY - Context

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

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.

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

Shropshire Council has supported Bishop's Castle with a grant of £5,000 from the 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 March of the Elephants' is a project to create a world-class elephant-inspired trail of varied artworks carefully placed around the Town.

We need to build on this by seeking further funding opportunities, develop a national marketing strategy by working with the Town Council, Shropshire Council, Shropshire AONB and other partners. We aim to become a major tourist attraction for the region and provide a much needed boost to our local economy.

The Bishop's Castle Railway Weighbridge Project

Despite all the challenges this year has brought, a tremendous amount of work has been achieved. With the shell of the building having been restored in 2019, 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. Firstly, 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.

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 Manager's 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.

As the levels of Shropshire Councils direct contact with the local populace diminishes, ESWS is well placed at the "coalface", with a unique and distinct understanding of the local area and its business and community dynamics and culture. The Company's relationships and reputation have developed over more than 25 years, supporting individuals, groups, and businesses with meeting their needs, whether solving IT problems or providing space for offices and warehouses or giving guidance and confidence. ESWS is the hub for effective public engagement in Bishop's Castle and the SWS area.

ESWS has long committed to supporting the economic development of Bishop's Castle, recognising a long lasting and intensifying need to support the inception and growth of emerging businesses and the sustainment and growth of existing firms.

The ESWS board, with a mix of senior leaders from the private sector and community representatives, has revisited the role of the company to deliver a broader mix of benefits, introducing more tools to support the growth of businesses in the area. Our provision of operational business support services, such as finance management and specialist skills training, allows emerging businesses to focus on core deliverables to achieve improved levels of productivity.

Whilst ESWS has an array of mature relationships with businesses and community groups in the region, our review last year recognised that our market penetration was neither wide enough, nor deep enough and that we needed to better demonstrate the value of these relationships in tangible terms.

We are taking several actions to address this including:

- Crystallising the nature of our offering. From a business perspective, we intend to be more ambitious, and we have created an enhanced approach and plan to help provide clarity for existing and prospective customers about what ESWS can offer them and how we will collaborate to continue to develop and improve our services going forward.
- As we recover from the pandemic hiatus, we also plan to use third party resources, potentially including additional PR planning and business development expertise to enable us to reach out more effectively across the business community. We intend to strengthen our Business Network by setting up new local start-up and business growth forums to develop a broader network in the region.
- Our new forums will include a series of semi-social networking events at Bishop's Castle and elsewhere that will enable businesses to meet and share challenges and opportunities, as well as being briefed on the implications of forthcoming legislation etc. through our links with Marches Growth Hub. Within these forums, there will be a series of special purpose activities that look at companies in specific sectors (such as Bed and Breakfast, or light engineering) and well as those at a defined phase in their growth cycle (start-ups, or new business concept development).
- Most importantly, it is key that we leverage our distinct and unique position in the region, our broader range of services and insight provided locally and nationally to maximise the benefit to Bishop's Castle.

- **Providing support services**

ESWS will add to its current portfolio to offer more business management services to our customer base and other third parties. We know from experience that this will be attractive to micro businesses that often see administration as something of a distraction. Additional services will include finance, purchasing, HR, marketing, and functional administration etc.

- **Delivering training**

Our Training offer will be developed in two forms:

Formal - we will be canvassing our growing customer base as to levels of interest in structured "official" training, such a food hygiene, first aid etc. These courses will typically be chargeable.

Informal – Across the region there is a wealth of knowledge and experience, often amongst the semi-retired community. We already have a list of potential courses that we can offer, these are likely to be free of charge.

- **Provision of office and workshop facilities**

We are currently working to optimise the benefits that Enterprise House can offer in terms of available office and workshop space and the number of local people employed on the site. This will also create additional revenue to help reduce reliance on SC funding.

- **SpArc Leisure Centre and Bishop's Castle Business Park**

We plan to continue to work in partnership with SC to support and improve the management of The SpArc Leisure Centre and to work with them to support the progress of the Business Park. We are committed to working with Shropshire Council to consolidate and further develop ESWS role as a small business incubator and development centre that helps businesses in Bishop's Castle and the region to develop and grow into business park premises.

Coordinating Bishop's Castle Festivals

- Bishop's Castle's festivals, such as the Michaelmas Fair, bring in significant revenue for the economy of the Town throughout the year, as well as being an important cultural focus for the community. We know that many event visitors later return to spend longer in the Town.
- However, these events take an incredible amount of time and effort to run and the cost and bureaucracy involved is growing year on year. For example, the current Michaelmas committee have run highly successful Fairs for the last 5 years and after next year (which is the 25th anniversary), we feel the need to stand down, partly because it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain our current level of involvement and also because we feel we need to make way for new ideas to help keep the Fair fresh going forward.
- At present there aren't obvious people willing to take over from us and the Christmas Grotto committee and the Carnival committee are in a similar position too.
- We believe that there is an opportunity to market Bishop's Castle Festivals as one co-ordinated package. The festivals working in partnership with the Town Council, Shropshire Tourism, Shropshire Council and local businesses to promote and market Bishop's Castle as a vibrant tourist destination throughout the year.
- By working together it may be possible to develop a Town-wide sponsorship scheme with local businesses so that they pay in just once per year into a central pot rather than continually being asked for support by individual festivals throughout the year.
- It may be possible to work with local hotels, B&Bs and holiday lets to develop a festivals information package to help them attract clients. Perhaps we might levy a fee from them which they in turn pass onto clients by charging extra to stay during festivals periods?
- **We therefore are seeking to work with the Town Council to collectively start thinking of strategies by which we might save and maintain these valuable events before it is too late.**

Festivals Coordinator

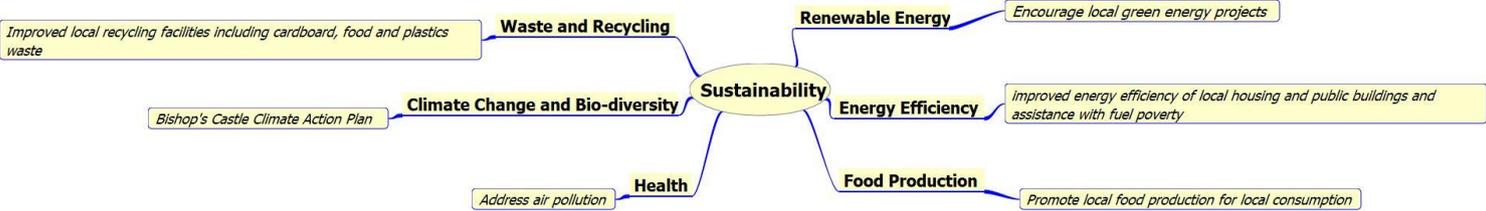
- While it is vital to preserve the unique character of each individual festival, there are many event organising tasks that could be done more efficiently across all festivals.

- It is proposed to employ a suitable Festival Coordinator, initially for Michaelmas, with BC Carnival and Xmas Lights/Grotto, to outsource many of the most time consuming tasks.
- Possibly this could extend to Clun Green Man and other local festival in future years.
- There is the potential for this role to be taken on through ESWS either by setting up / funding a distinct co-ordinator role (as above) or by utilising the business centres administration services to take the more onerous and time-consuming work off the hands of the organisers, freeing-up time, taking away some of the pressure and allowing them to focus more fully on the quality and delivery of the events themselves – potentially making it more attractive for volunteer organisers to stay / get involved.

Shop Local Campaign

- During the first pandemic lockdown, it became necessary to provide information to the community on which traders were able to supply and deliver goods and services and how to contact and pay them. At this time most physical shops were closed and most people were staying at home, so this was essential information. The information was collated manually by asking traders to send it in by Facebook messages to the administrators of the 'Bishop's Castle Events and Community Support' Facebook group run by Bishop's Castle Community Partnership. The list was published at the top of the group page, but had to be edited frequently as new or different information was received. This was a very labour-intensive task, but one that was felt only to be necessary during that lockdown.
- However, as subsequent lockdowns occurred, it proved necessary to seek a less labour-intensive method. This was achieved by creating a shared Google Spreadsheet. This was published at the top of the Facebook Group page and traders encouraged to enter their own information directly onto the spreadsheet as well as making any alterations themselves. The information is immediately publically available to the community. Additionally the list may be exported in PDF format so that it is accessible to those without access to social media. The current list at <https://bit.ly/2HUOfuE>
- Initially it took time to encourage traders to enter their information. The Facebook Group received many posted adverts from individual traders instead, despite this being against the Group rules. It took a good deal of communication and policing to encourage traders to make the move from one-off ads to using the spreadsheet, but today more than 40 businesses have self-added.
- The next stage was to create a Google My Map populated with the data extracted from the Google Spreadsheet. This has great potential to be further developed. The Google Map is at <https://bit.ly/34MLljo> and is also publically accessible from the Facebook Group.
- During the first lockdown, a simple list of community support was published, which highlighted the need for further business information to also be available. In order for essential community information to be available at such a significant time in winter, it was necessary to restrict content outside of community and events posts. In order to make sure the information available was correct and up to date, business owners, suppliers and traders were asked to populate the list with their details. Around forty contributions were made from a variety of sources, mostly businesses themselves. Some entries were supplied upon direct request by the Bishop's Castle's County Councillor, some directly entered and, as a test, a Christmas Shopping Special was published, online and in printed copy to provide a simple, date of services and goods available. The list on its own is printed and provided to residents without computer access, and the printed versions took into account the need for larger text. It was presented in list only, and magazine format, with the latter format being the published one.

Sustainability



SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2022

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (could help?)	Priority & Notes
<p>1. RENEWABLE ENERGY Encourage local green energy projects</p>	<p>i) Continue to explore local wind and solar project opportunities in the hope that improved technology (e.g. storage), or strategic scale projects such as the Business Park project, can enable a community approach to renewable energy supply. ii) Installation of Electric Vehicle charging points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marches Community Benefit Society • SUS WG 	<p>HIGH - ON HOLD i) Not viable under present Govt policies HIGH - UNDERWAY ii) See Economy</p>
<p>2. ENERGY EFFICIENCY E.g. improved energy efficiency of local housing and public buildings and assistance with fuel poverty</p>	<p>i) Green Homes Grant for upgrading heating and insulation of some social housing properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUS WG • MEA • Connexus 	<p>HIGH - UNDERWAY Awaiting confirmation of funding from MEA</p>
	<p>ii. Energy Diary produced and distributed to schools in the Marches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightfoot 	<p>HIGH - UNDERWAY</p>
	<p>iii. Explore potential of a Community Forest for wood-heat supply (and also to assist bio-diversity and flood control), planting local provenance hardwood trees for eventual coppicing. Alternatively, consider a Forest Garden.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUS WG 	<p>LOW - ON HOLD Awaits benefactor for the land</p>
<p>3. FOOD PRODUCTION Promote local food production for local consumption</p>	<p>i) Little Woodbatch Farm: development of vegetables and fruit for local sale and veg boxes. Future plans include organic certification, running learning sessions with local schools, training kitchen and more. Piloting an electric van delivery for veg boxes. ii) Food Resilience: Draft Local Food Resilience strategy paper produced looking at how to improve local food production and supply. To be forwarded to the Town Council for their approval. iii) Community Gardening: Encourage local food growing and planting (e.g. 'Incredible Edible' and other community gardening approaches. iii) Create an on-line shopping tool for local food producers and retailers iv) In 2021, the Mid-Marches MCLT will produce an outline plan to work with a landowner on providing space for the <u>growing of locally produced food</u> will be progressed, and it's hoped that farm walks and other visits can be restarted. <info@middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk> v) Community College Vegetable Garden: Little Woodbatch will supply the plants and SUS WG members will plant and maintain the vegetable garden, the produce from which will be used to prepare meals for the College and other local schools.</p>	<p>i) Little Woodbatch i) SUS WG (CAP) Food Bank Little Woodbatch iii) Marches Grow Local MMCLT Little W'batch iv) MMCLT v) Little W'batch SUS WG</p>	<p>HIGH - UNDERWAY</p>

Bishop's Castle Community-Led Town Plan 2020 - 2022

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2021

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (could help?)	Priority & Notes
<p>4. WASTE and RECYCLING Improved local recycling facilities including cardboard, food and plastics waste</p>	<p>i) Continue encouraging re-use of items via Bishop's Castle Freegle site; ii) Establish a Repair Café (being explored by Enterprise House); iii) Continue to encourage local shops and shoppers to find alternatives to plastics; iv) Seek SCC improvements to <u>re-cycling</u> after loss of the Crowgate facility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUS WG 	<p>High – on hold</p>
<p>5. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN</p>	<p>The Bishop's Castle 'Climate & Bio-diversity Action Plan' [CAP] has some initiatives underway alongside other similar activities in and around the Town:-</p> <p>i) The Greening of Bishop's Castle ('Going Wild in BC') - A CAP initiative to create an urban 'stepping stone' or wildlife corridor to increase bio-diversity by planting trees, flowers and herbs, reduce hedge cutting, etc., has been allocated some start-up funding by the Town Council. A Steering Committee has been formed and a community questionnaire will be circulated. - Tree Planting: Despite all the talk and targets, there has been a disappointing lack of momentum on this important matter locally. One good exception has been in Churchtown (Mainstone), where over 9,000 trees, including oak saplings rescued by Extinction rebellion, have been planted by contractors and local volunteers. This work has been led by Luke Neal of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, which provided 8,000 native broadleaf trees, and Rob Rowe of the MMCLT. On a smaller scale, an area of the Wintles' Hillside has been allocated for the planting of 100 oak trees (rescued from destruction by Extinction Rebellion) this year. The plan is to make this a Bishop's Castle community event and families will be invited to come along and plant one or more oak trees (provided for free) as a positive statement for the future for themselves and future generations in the fight against climate breakdown. - The Middle Marches Community Land 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. - Restore Shropshire Verges [RSVP]: roadside verge management for wildflowers. The grass has been cut and removed and 400 wildflower plants have been raised and planted by Rob Rowe and volunteers on the verges of the A488 crossroads.</p> <p>ii) Electric Vehicle Charging points (see Economy Action Plan) iii) Community Seed Bank: encouraging vegetable growing. It has proved too difficult to start this in 2021, but will be pursued once lockdown allows.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUS WG • MMCLT • Wintles • Little Woodbatch • BC Food Bank 	<p>High - Underway</p>

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2021

What? (Objectives)	How? (Actions)	Who? (could help?)	Priority & Notes
<p>6. HEALTH Air Pollution</p>	<p>Air Pollution i) encourage drivers to switch-off engines when parked in the Town. ii) circulate information about how to reduce pollution from wood-burners iii) circulate guidance on the efficient management of wood-burning stoves and logs, and make access to cheap wood moisture meters available iv) increase cycle and footpaths to reduce car use and encourage exercise. Ruth Houghton is seeking the opening of cycle paths to Lydham and Brockton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council • Lightfoot • SCC 	<p>Medium – on hold</p>

SUSTAINABILITY – Context

Climate Emergency

Among the many reports on this existential crisis that could be quoted, a recent review into the economics of biodiversity by the Cambridge University academic Prof. Sir Partha Dasgupta says humanity – all 7.8 billion of us – is on a collision course with the planet. Our current economic system is unsustainable and endangers the prosperity of current and future generations.

The review is full of alarming statistics, of which perhaps the scariest is that in little more than two decades, between 1992 and 2014, there was a 40% fall in the stock of natural capital per person. That is the water we drink, the air we breathe, the soil we grow food in, and all living things shared among the global population.

Measured by gross domestic product (GDP), the global economy is 14 times bigger than it was in 1950. There has been a massive increase in prosperity but it has come at a “devastating” cost to nature: the extinction of species; the depletion of fish stocks; the destruction of coral reefs; the shrinking of the rain forests. At current levels of consumption, we require an Earth 1.6 times larger than its actual size.

Bio-diversity

In the first global study since 2005, 150 experts from 50 countries released [a major report](#) demonstrating that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented, [with up to 1 million species threatened with extinction](#), more than at any other time in human history. Our actions over the past 50 years have been the cause of record losses in species – tens to hundreds of times faster than the natural rate of extinction over the past 10 million years.

Since 1970 alone, vertebrate populations have fallen by 40 per cent for land-based species, 84 per cent for freshwater species and 35 per cent for marine species. [Chatham House ‘IPBES Global Assessment 2019’]

Food production

The global food system is on course to drive rapid and widespread ecological damage with almost 90% of land animals likely to lose some of their habitat by 2050, research has found. A study [published in the journal Nature Sustainability](#) shows that unless the food industry is rapidly transformed, changing what people eat and how it is produced, the world faces widespread biodiversity loss in the coming decades. [The Guardian]

Responses

Shropshire County Council

“Securing our future, whilst meeting our present needs – working together to balance social, environmental and economic needs”.

Shropshire Council’s Sustainability strategy states that: *“Our vision for Shropshire is to stabilise and progressively reduce our environmental footprint”*, and adds: *“. . . the council recognises the impact that its day-to-day activities have on the environment, as well as the importance of managing the resources used. Through our Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change Policy, we aim to reduce our resource consumption as an Authority, and to promote sustainable practices throughout our organisation, with Partners and the County as a whole.*

The Localism Agenda will be used to empower communities to become more sustainable and climate resilient”.

SCC’s ‘Climate Change Strategy Framework’ focuses mainly on the impact of SCC’s services, but it also contains the following statement:-

“We want the Shropshire economy to shift to one which is zero carbon and abides by circular economy principles, whilst enabling our communities to build and enjoy their prosperity. The choices we make now will determine whether we can deliver on our obligations. . . “

Bishop’s Castle Town Council

September 2019 the Town Council declared a Climate Emergency and commissioned a ‘Climate and Bio-diversity Action Plan’ to be drawn-up.

June 2020 the Town Council approved and adopted the *Climate and Bio-diversity Action Plan* [CAP] drawn-up by the BC Community Partnership’s Sustainability Working Group.

December 2020 the Town Council gave a £600 grant towards the CAP’s ‘Going Wild’ initiative.

Bishop's Castle Community Partnership's Sustainability Working Group [SUS WG]

October 2016 a *Sustainability Action Plan* was included in the initial Community-Led Plan. Since then the SUS WG has delivered various initiatives, such as the 'Fight the Plastic' and 'Food Waste'

March 2019. The SUS WG delivered the draft Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan' to the Town Council.

The Bishop's Castle Sustainability Working Group consists of a small group of local people and would welcome new volunteers.

June 2020: on adoption of the Climate Plan and declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Bishop's Castle Town Council, BC Sustainability have started working on some of the initiatives contained in the CAP.

Other local environmental groups delivering on bio-diversity and climate change matters:

Middle Marches Community Land Trust <<https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/>>

National Trust <<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd>>

Little Woodbatch Market Garden <<https://www.littlewoodbatch.co.uk/>>

Lightfoot Enterprises <https://lightfootenterprises.org/>

Shropshire Hills AONB <<https://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/>>

South Shropshire Climate Action <<https://southshropshireclimateaction.org/>>

Zero Carbon Shropshire <<https://zerocarbonshropshire.org/>>

Trees for Shropshire <https://treesforshropshire.org.uk/>

Marches Grow Local <<https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/the-hub/marches-grow-local/>>

Green Shropshire Exchange <<https://tinyurl.com/yxjq7he>>

Marches Energy Agency <<https://mea.org.uk/>>

If you know of any other local group working on environmental issues, please let us know via e-mail to townplan@bishopscastle.co.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



townplan@bishopscastle.gov.uk



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



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