



Our community post office has bright future

A threatened community post office saved by Stroud Town Council has won its final reprieve.

The council has been providing financial support to Uplands Post Office by paying for its technical services from Post Office Counters Ltd.

Now, following discussions with the town council, Post Office Counters has waived the annual charges.

For Postmaster Robin Craig it marks the end of a long battle. He said: *"This decision has taken a lot of pressure off me. The town council has been fantastic. It is only because they were resolute that this has happened."*

Post Office saved: Deputy Mayor John Marjoram (left) , John Luff, Barry Harrison, Post master Robin Craig, Julie Jones and Sue Harrison

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Council campaigns to protect successful farmers' market

Stroud Town Council is campaigning to protect the future of the town's successful farmers' market.

In December, there was a public outcry as Stroud District Council revealed plans to invite new bidders to run the Saturday market in the Cornhill. It has repeatedly been named as the best farmers' market in the country.

The town council wrote to the district, calling for an extension of the current contract to allow time to explore options other than a competitive tender process.

Councillors are conscious of the market's importance, not just for

the stallholders, but for shopkeepers and the town centre itself with the proposed threat of two more supermarkets on the edge of town.

There was an increase in public pressure, petitions and campaigns in the local press to protect the market. Several national chefs joined the campaign, extolling the importance of this successful enterprise.

The breakthrough came when Geoff Wheeler, leader of the district council, the Chief Executive and a few district councillors met stallholders, to discuss their concerns.

At a meeting in February, the district

council announced it would launch a consultation with the public, Chamber of Trade, stallholders and other interested parties offering a number of options besides going out to tender.

The questionnaire for the consultation is currently being worked on and due to be circulated in the near future.

Town mayor Amanda Moriarty said: *"We feel that our position on this issue, as town councillors, has helped this transparent decision making process to come into being.*

"Hopefully now no one can say that the decision is going to be made behind closed doors."



Stroud Town Council offices are at Thanet House in London Road

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Threatened post office is saved by town council

From page 1

In 2008 Stroud became the first town or parish council in Britain to step in and save a Post Office axed under the Government's controversial Network Change programme.

There was a 10-month battle to save Uplands. Grandmother Mary Davies, from Stroud, challenged the closure

in the High Court on the grounds that the Post Office had not considered the impact of closure on disabled access.

It was Mrs Davies' claim which helped the town council negotiate the ground-breaking funding deal with post office managers which saved the branch.

The town council has provided grant funding for Uplands Post Office since then.

Deputy Mayor John Marjoram, who with former town councillor, Andy Read, led the town council fight to save Uplands, says that investment has saved the post office which now can stand on its own without financial support.

In brief

20mph plan on the cards

Stroud Town Council is supporting a proposal to introduce 20mph restrictions on some streets in the town.

Gloucestershire County Council is carrying out a consultation about the plans to introduce the new limit.

Almost 80 streets would be made safer by the scheme including Folly Lane, Spider Lane, Merrywalks and Bisley Road.

The proposal follows a campaign by county councillor Sarah Lunnon who has worked with Gloucestershire Police, the town council and the county council's Highways team.

Garden for peace

With the centenary of the First World War the town council is considering dedicating Trinity Pocket Park as a Peace Garden.

It wants to hear what residents think about the plan and any ideas they might have.

Trinity Pocket Park is at the top of Field Road, near the Peace Memorial Wing of Stroud Hospital. One possibility is to look at this as a four-year project to improve the park while integrating the peace theme.

If you might be interested or have any ideas, please contact the town council.

Tell us about Stroud's unsung champions

Stroud's environmental and community heroes will have a chance to shine in the town's annual awards.

The Awards, organised by Stroud Town Council, are an opportunity to praise those people who go the extra mile and make the town unique.

Anyone can nominate an individual or group for an award. There are four categories: community, environment, trader and young person of the year.

The Environmental award is for action to enhance the environment or improve awareness of sustainability issues.

The Trader award is open to people who work in or run any shop, café or restaurant in the town, not just the town centre.

The Community award is for a group or

individual who have gone that extra mile to improve community life.

Young people under the age of 25 can be nominated for the Young Person of the Year award. It can be for contribution to sports, culture, community life or the environment.

"Stroud is full of amazing unsung heroes who go out of their way to make our town such a strong and vibrant community," said town mayor Amanda Moriarty.

The winners will be announced at a special town meeting on Thursday May 8 at 7.30pm, Old Town Hall, Shambles.

To make a nomination simply fill in the form on this page and return it to the Town Council office in London Road. The deadline for nominations is Tuesday April 22.

Nomination Form

Name of nominee

.....

Phone Number

.....

Tick which category you would like to nominate them for (you can tick more than one)

Community

Environment

Trader

Young Person of the Year

Why do you think they deserve to be nominated?

.....

.....

.....

Your name and contact phone number

.....

.....

.....

.....

Grants improve life for our residents



Stroud Town Council has supported the youth drama group Flies on the Wall

A charity supporting families who have children with disabilities plans to raise its profile, thanks to a Stroud Town Council grant.

The Stroud charity, Allsorts, will use the £3,000 grant to raise its public profile and launch a fundraising campaign.

Launched just four years ago by parents with children with disabilities, Allsorts now has more than 160 families as members.

Last year the town council awarded £31,300 in grants from the Community Support Fund and Small Grant Funds, £19,900 was paid in regular community grants and £20,600 in grants for arts, culture and town centre regeneration events.

So far this year the council has awarded £24,289 in grants.

For many, such as Allsorts, the council provides vital funds to ensure the organisations can support and enhance community life in Stroud.

Allsorts supports families who have children aged up to 24 with any disability or additional need (with or without a diagnosis).

It organises events and activities for the entire family, from inclusive sports

sessions, family days out, youth clubs for disabled children, and a group for siblings.

"Our members say that Allsorts makes normal possible," said Rachel Levay, manager of Allsorts, who has a daughter with a disability.

"We are led by families for families. Allsorts aims to make their lives easier. We do that with a positive approach and by supporting each other."

"This grant from the town council has enabled us to bring in some help to move Allsorts to the next level, to get known better locally for the great work we do, and to give us a more secure future in the local community."

The town council also awarded a £1,593 grant to Gloucestershire Deaf Association to promote lip-reading classes for Stroud residents.

"The town council believes it has an obligation to support projects which enhance and enrich the life of the community," said town mayor Amanda Moriarty. *"We would encourage more organisations to apply for grants if they have a need."*

The next deadline for grant applications is May 12.

The groups who have received grants from the town council in 2013/2014 so far:

Small grants:

Ignition Gloucestershire (Family Fun Day) £500
Spaniel in the Works Theatre Company £500
Spider Lane Allotments Association £420
Summer Street Allotment Association £500
Stroud Festivals (Laurie Lee anniversary) £500
Top of Town Community Association £350
Transition Stroud £500
Uplands Allotments Association £150

Community grants:

Allsorts £3,000
Citizens Advice Bureau £826
Flies on the Wall Youth Theatre £1,800
Gloucestershire Deaf Association £1,593
Stroud Valleys Project £3,000
The Door £3,000

Other:

Gardening Assistance Scheme (Care and Repair) £3,000
Play Gloucestershire Play Rangers £3,150
Youths Exploring Sustainability (YES!) £1,500

In brief

Committed to the community

Stroud Town Council has increased its share of the council tax by less than 3%.

In 2014-2015, an average Band D council tax payer will pay £109.76 or just £3.18 more per year.

This is despite the town council seeing its government grant cut by over £7,500 – the second cut in two years.

The town council looks after more than 20 green spaces and contributes funding to organisations such as the CAB and HomeStart and many more.

Play scheme rescued

Town councillors have come to the rescue of a threatened outdoor play scheme.

Play Gloucestershire Play Rangers run weekly sessions year round at Mason Road playing fields and Archway Gardens play area during term times. More than 80 children take part in the free activities.

Due to funding cuts the sessions were due to end in December until town councillors stepped in.

The Play Gloucestershire Play Rangers are at Mason Road on Tuesdays and at Archway Gardens on Thursday. Both sessions run from 4pm-6pm

Arts market

Find something original at the Lansdown Hall Arts Market on May 17 from 11am-5pm.

Organised by Stroud Town Council the market will feature locally-made, Fairtrade and vintage items. They will make perfect presents or you could find something you cannot resist for yourself.

Spring colour

The Green Spaces team have planted more than 5,000 bulbs in the parks and town centre planters.

Tackling the debt crisis

Councillor Paul Shevlin writes about how Stroud Citizens Advice Bureau is supporting the community

Many Stroud people are having increasingly serious financial problems.

Stroud Town Council, through its community grants, has increased its support to Stroud Citizens Advice Bureau to help to expand its advice services to local people.

While the CAB provides a comprehensive service covering issues as diverse as employment problems and relationship breakdown, it is debt and benefit advice that most people need.

For example, Andy was made redundant so couldn't afford the repayments on his car, which was worth less than the amount still owing on it. He got into debt. The CAB helped Andy draw up a budget and make an arrangement for reduced payments

with his creditors.

He was also helped to make sure he and his family got the benefits they were entitled to. Although still a struggle, Andy managed to avoid the severe debt problems that many people find themselves facing.

Many people struggling to make ends meet are in work. The town council thinks employers should move towards paying the Living Wage (£7.65 an hour) rather than the Minimum Wage (£6.31 an hour for over 21s), and has agreed to do this itself by this April. Although only a small employer, we believe it is right to pay enough for people to live on.

Stroud CAB is located in Brunel Mall, London Road, Stroud. Telephone: 01453 759954. www.stroudcab.org.uk

Fighting to protect our town

Stroud Town Council is protesting to the Government over the changes to planning guidelines.

The National Planning Policy Framework came into effect last year.

The new policy guide has reduced thousands of pages of planning guidance to around 50 and has been branded a "developers' charter" by critics.

Now the town council is writing to Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, to express its concerns over the new guidelines.

It follows a letter to all parish councils from Stroud District Council leader Geoffrey Wheeler. The district council is backing a petition against the NPPF, calling it "unjustly prejudiced in the interest of the construction industry and developers to the detriment of the...local community".

Meet your town councillors

Central Ward



Kevin Cranston
01453 755483



Rachel Lyons
01453 750268



Ben Spencer
01453 753355

Trinity Ward



Steve Hurrell
01453 767127



John Marjoram
01453 750962



Amanda Moriarty
01453 759102

Uplands Ward



Julian Carlyon
01453 767120



Simon Arundel
01453 766825



Lucas Schoemaker
01453 840039

Valley Ward



Steve Naumann
01453 767977



Paul Shevlin
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Haydn Sutton
01453 763255



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