

A Better Crewkerne and District (ABCD) Update

Members of the ABCD Executive Committee have met 4 times since the last AGM. The Trustees meet twice a year. Various working parties continue to meet regularly and report back to ABCD. Our support from SSDC continued with Alison Baker (SPARKS), but she is now no longer in post. We also attend meetings of the Market Towns Investment Group. (MTiG).

Following on from the Community Action Plan that was produced from the business survey, ABCD developed an Action Rail which is regularly updated. Unfortunately the demise of the Crewkerne Chamber means that ABCD has lost one of the possible active partners for projects.

ABCD with Alison Baker set up Business Breakfast Meetings with targeted businesses, supported by Anthony Bucke at Antiques Bazaar. The second meeting was so poorly attended – just one retailer - that the Trustees decided not to run a third.

More successful was the Network Event at the Henhayes Centre. Many local groups attended attracted by the information about opportunities for financial support. At least two groups gained funding following this event.

Digital Audit of South Somerset Towns.

MTiG set up a Grant Scheme for independent town centre businesses & not for profit organisations: A scheme for Capital Improvements and a series of training sessions. ABCD delivered information/application forms to the town centre retailers and the Lic promoted them out on social media. Digital Training Sessions were provided across the South Somerset Towns, including Crewkerne. 2 of our officers attended some, which proved extremely useful. However, they were not well attended by Crewkerne businesses.

A few grant applications had gone in from Crewkerne Businesses.

The Town Council made an application for a Capital Grant for Digital Display for the Town Hall. This is now in place, although there are some problems with glare/reflection on very sunny days.

ABCD do have a free website (not easily found on Google), facebook and twitter account. ABCD have no funds available to upgrade the website.

We have 3 very active working parties:

Friends of Crewkerne Station, who continue to improve the environment of the station itself; hold regular open days including the 70th anniversary of the naming of a steam engine -Crewkerne. They are pressing the rail company to name a current engine.

Creative Crewkerne:

- (a) The pom-poms were even better in 2008 and having applied for a grant the group ran a very successful Pom pom events day in Falkland Square.

They ran a poetry event in connection with National Poetry Day and Libraries week. Poems were displayed in shop windows and various venue throughout the town.

- (b) **Boundary stones** project - in planning stage. Costings being worked out in order to apply for funding. The group had a stand at Henhayes Fete. We are still looking for someone to lead this group.

(c) Theatre: This year's theatrical events included a Play, performances by Tangle which took place in Bowhayes & local pubs, and a comedy event.

Playground Working Party

The children's playground is now well used, so this group is looking again at the provision of an accessible pathway around Henhayes.

GDPR: ABCD is fully compliant with the GDPR requirements. It does make life difficult, as we cannot hold contact details, unless individuals have agreed, this may explain the lack of response to an email shot inviting local groups to our September meeting.

ABCD, actively helped promote the Library consultations and we are happy to state that our Library has been saved. We commend the Friends of Crewkerne Library for their campaign and the Library itself for the many activities provided for both adults and children throughout the year.

Cllr. Mike Best
