

# Who's who

## East Ward

- Phil Cutter**  
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- Ed O'Driscoll**  
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- Bev Pope**  
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- David Ravenscroft**  
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- Vacancy**  
This vacancy will be filled by an election in May 2021 unless the government allows it sooner.



The Corn Exchange is the home of

## Ross-on-Wye Town Council

The Office is normally open  
Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 1.00pm

Town Clerk, Sarah Robson FSLCC  
Social Media Marketing and Events  
Co-ordinator, Gayle Hockin  
Finance Assistant, Helen Holmes  
Administrative Assistant, Anna Jelali  
Project Officer, Rachel Lewis

The Corn Exchange, 7 High Street,  
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# Your Town Councillors

## North Ward

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- Daniel Lister**  
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- John Winder**  
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## This autumn we welcome our new Social Media Marketing and Events Co-ordinator, Gayle Hockin.

Gayle will be the point of call for any social media and event enquiries while she establishes some exciting new ideas and content for the Ross-on-Wye platforms. She will be introducing herself to local residents and businesses in the upcoming weeks, but please feel free to send her an email and introduce yourself at [tourism@rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk).

As a bit of background, Gayle has been within the tourism industry for over five years where she has worked across some of the world's largest tourist boards such as Visit California and Tourism Whistler. Having also implemented some of London's most successful free festivals and Christmas light switch ons, Gayle is looking forward to transferring her skills and knowledge across Ross-on-Wye to drive growth and tourism.'



## West Ward

- Simeon Cole**  
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- Rob Taylor**  
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- Julian Utting**  
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## A new Committee Structure for the Town Council

At a full council meeting in August, members agreed to a proposal to hold fewer full council meetings but to replace some of them with a Management Committee (consisting of all councillors). In addition to the Chairman of the Council (the Mayor), a chairman would be elected to chair this committee and Councillor Julian Utting was duly elected as chairman. Aspects of council work undertaken by the former committees would now be done by sub committees. This system removes much of the council meeting work from the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who were also ex-officio members of all committees, giving them more time for civic duties. Councillor Utting is now the only member to be ex-officio on all sub committees.

### Emergency Co-ordinator

The Council has appointed Cllr Daniel Lister as Parish Resilience Officer. He can be contacted in an emergency (e.g. flooding) on **07557 658442**.



## A year like no other for the town's Mayor

For the first time ever, Ross-on-Wye Town Council, like so many others, held its Annual Meeting via Zoom. As part of legislation to help with the Covid-19 pandemic, councils now are allowed to hold remote meetings. At the annual meeting Councillor Daniel Lister was elected Mayor having served as deputy for the previous 12 months. Danny tells us "I don't think words can describe how overwhelmed and pleased I was to have been elected as the Mayor for the coming year. It really is a great honour to be in this position". Danny thanked Councillors Jane Roberts and Chris Bartrum for their support during the past year and for passing on their knowledge and skills. He also thanked the staff for their help. He congratulated the councillors who had just completed their first year with a great job, working hard for a brighter future for our town. He looked forward to representing the town and continuing some of historic customs and traditions that have developed over the years. He went on to say that these are "very important, giving a sense of passion and heart to the town".

Sadly, much of the ceremonial has been impossible this year from the mayor making onwards. However, it was good to see the mayor at a flag raising ceremony in support of the NHS and care workers, key worker and the volunteer groups which have played a huge part in keeping the town safe and bringing the town together. Many plans have been put on hold or changed but Danny has continued to promote the town, support the council and residents throughout, and adapted as things have changed to move forward.

One planned ceremony which was not cancelled, though it did change considerably, was the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant which should have taken place at a special service to commemorate VE Day in St Mary's Church in May. Hosted remotely by Colonel Andy Taylor, County Colonel of the Rifles and watched (at a safe distance) by Councillor John Winder, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ian Gumm and the Revd Sean Semple, the Mayor and Graham Aplin, Chairman of the local branch of the Royal British Legion, signed the covenant while Air Vice-Marshal Michael Smart OBE DL signed it virtually. The ceremony began with a recorded cry from the Town Crier and finished with the National Anthem.



On the subject of his charity, Danny says, "It's customary for the Mayor to support a charity during his or her mayoral year through raising funds and awareness. My focus for the year is around young people and fundraising for various youth services. At the end of my term I will welcome groups of the town to come forward and pitch their ideas for an award of the money, whether that be a drama company, youth club or a games club - all will be welcome. Youth groups are of the utmost importance to the growth and development of young people today, who are our future. Without the interaction such groups and clubs provide, it can be very easy to get lost along the way. It was these very types of organisations that helped me and without them life would have been very different".



Signing the Armed Forces Covenant

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**Ross-on-Wye Town Council launches new website**

The Town Council had its first website in 2009 and this has served the council well for over 10 years. However, as technology changes, especially with the use of tablets and smart phones and in order to comply with accessibility rules, the council embarked on the design of a new website. We hope that residents and visitors will like it and find it easy to navigate.

[www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk)

**Community, Markets and Tourism**

**Community Grants**

Last year the Town Council gave over £9,000 to local groups to help them with projects and events which will benefit the people of Ross.

This year, as we go to print, there have been no applications for funds which have again been set aside to help with projects in the community. If you have a project which will benefit the community, please get in touch and apply for funds. A maximum of £750 can be granted. Full details and an application form are on our website.

**Weekly Markets**

As with many shops, the market was forced to close during the initial lockdown which began in March. As things gradually began to open up again the market was reopened in July with just two of the food stalls on a Thursday. More stalls joined them - all were offered outside pitches and strict social distancing was observed. As we moved into August the Saturday market re-established with a variety of stalls including fresh cakes, hand-made fudge, fairtrade affordable and unusual gifts, hand-made toys and books. As we look to the winter, it is hoped to keep up the momentum. Food is on offer every Thursday and includes dairy, preserves, veg and fish. This outside shopping experience is very much suited to our present times, offering a safe environment for shoppers.

**Coffee with a friend?**

In August, the Town Council introduced a new arrangement whereby chairs and tables were provided under cover of the Market House for members of the public to enjoy takeaways from our many cafés and food outlets. It has been staffed to ensure tables and chairs are sanitised after every use and track and trace records kept. It has proved very popular, with requests from the public to provide this service again next year.



**This year's Act of Remembrance** at the Prospect will not take place in its usual format. Wreaths will be laid at the war memorial in St Mary's at a special service with limited numbers attending. Other much smaller commemorations will take place at the Market Place and in the Prospect.

**Tourism**

The Sub Committee continues to push ahead with its Tourism Strategy. It has appointed a new Social Media Marketing and Events Co-ordinator who will be working to fulfil some of the aims of the strategy. Initially for six months, it is hoped that if successful, the post will become permanent. You can read about our new member of staff on the back page.

**Bands in the Park**

It was with great sorrow that the council made the difficult decision to cancel the bands in the park series of concerts. We are currently looking for an organiser to co-ordinate the concerts for the next three years and by mid November someone will have been appointed. It is hoped that by next May we will be able to resume the concerts and that all musicians will be able to rehearse and perform again.



**Christmas is not cancelled!**



Christmas this year will seem very different for many with restrictions on gatherings likely to still be in force.

Sadly the Christmas Fayre and Christmas Carnival have been cancelled but the Town Council is doing what it can to ensure the town is looking festive for everyone to enjoy.

While we won't have a switch on event, you will find, during November, that the Christmas Tree will appear with all its coloured lights, a further tree will be put outside the Old Mill at the Brookend and the lights will be switched on in High Street, Broad Street and Gloucester Road.

Plans are in hand to have a series of Christmas mini markets on Saturdays up until 19th December so that you can buy your favourite gifts from our wonderful local

Christmas traders. Watch out for more details. You will also find some lovely stalls at our regular Saturday markets.

We are pleased to learn that St Mary's Church will be bringing Advent to the town centre with an Advent Calendar trail for you to follow. Look out for the numbered doors around the town and churchyard. Further information on this and other Christmas events will be found on St Mary's Church Notice Board and at [www.rossparishes.uk](http://www.rossparishes.uk).

The Mayor will be sending his Christmas cards this year from a design by the winner of his young person's Christmas card competition. Packs of five can be bought at £5 each or two packs for £9, with profits going to the Mayor's charity, by emailing [admin@rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admin@rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk) or telephoning the office on 01989 562373.

**Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan**

Covid-19 has had an impact on so much! In April we were supposed to have a referendum on the Neighbourhood Development Plan after a process which had been going on for over four years. In order for it to become part of the planning law, it must be approved by the local residents.

Currently, we are not going to be able to have the referendum until May 2021. This allows everyone plenty of time to look at the plan and ask questions if there is something you don't understand. It is hoped that in May you will all vote for it so that we can look forward to seeing our precious natural and built environment being protected; new housing to meet needs in a sensitive manner; our local economy (including the cultural facilities) enhanced and diversified; and getting about sustainably made easier. Most notably, new developments will be of modest size and situated to enhance the town rather than landowners and developers incomes.

**Amenities**

**Rope Walk enhancement**

Following the instalment of the new playground at the Rope Walk, we now have 60 new trees planted as a continuation of the linear arboretum begun in 2018 on Long Acre. Thanks go to Councillor Rob Taylor for his hard work in seeing this project through and to the many sponsors who made it possible. A map showing the varieties and location of the trees can be found on the website.

Another new feature along the edge of the Rope Walk meadow are the rocks which replace the rotting fence along the roadway. The rocks have come from a nearby quarry in the Forest of Dean and as well as being attractive, provide protection from vehicles on the grass and somewhere to sit on a hot day.

**Ross's own Town Crier**

In the spring, the Town Council appointed Ray Churchill as its own Town Crier. Unfortunately there have been few events for Ray to cry for, though he recorded cries for both VE and VJ days and for the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Ray is pictured in his new livery which is full of symbolism, fishing flies, quills, Regimental buttons, gold and black flora and riding breeches. We look forward to seeing and hearing him again in the near future.

If you would like to book Ray to promote your event or business, you can contact him, email: [raychurchill9@gmail.com](mailto:raychurchill9@gmail.com).



**Riverbank work**

Works continues along the river bank providing areas where the river can be viewed and allowing areas where wildlife can thrive. The Wye in Ross is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is home to kingfishers and egrets, otters and water voles. A variety of flora is being encouraged along Long Acre with the establishment of a flood plain meadow, a project being undertaken with Herefordshire Meadows and the Wye Valley AONB.

The Council is grateful to the Ross Angling Club who are funding work to help protect the riverbank from erosion. Last winter, the floods resulted in large chunks of the bank falling away. Work is being undertaken to provide more willow platforms, ideal for fishing from, but also protecting the bank. This work is being done in partnership with the Angling Club, The Wye Valley AONB and Natural England.