

The Role of Prescott Town Council

Local councils across the country work towards improving community well-being and providing better services at a local level. Their activities fall into three main categories:

- representing the local community;
- delivering services to meet local needs;
- striving to improve quality of life and community well-being.

Through an extensive range of discretionary powers local councils provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, bus shelters, car parks, commons and open spaces, community transport schemes, community safety and crime reduction measures, events and festivals, footpaths, leisure and sports facilities, litter bins, public toilets, planning, street cleaning and lighting, tourism activities, traffic calming measures, village greens and youth projects.

In order to provide these services the Town Council levy a Precept on each household within the Town. The Precept accounts for 81% of council expenditure the remaining 19% is made up of operating income from the Town Hall and a government grant in relation to council tax benefit, which is due to be removed by April 2018. To put this into perspective monies raised through Council Tax at Knowsley MBC for 2016/17 accounted for 18% of total expenditure.

The Town Council could exercise more of powers in the local area but are constrained by the nature of its funding. By April 2018 the Town Council will be solely funded through the Precept and the operating income generated through the Town Hall, therefore should the Town Council increase its activities these would need to be funded through an increase in the Precept or tax base.

Representing the local community

All Prescott Town Councillors are elected by the residents of the town in 'all out' elections every four years or through periodic by elections.

The Town Council advertise and hold publically accessible meetings on a monthly basis to discuss and agree its policy in relation issues affecting the Town and its inhabitants. There is a standard agenda item at the beginning of the meeting for questions from the public.

Prescot Town Hall offices are open 9-5 Monday to Friday to allow residents to engage with the council and contact details for staff and all councillors are available through the Town Councils website.

Town Councillors also play an advocate role in representing the issues local residents, if the Town Council are not responsible for the particular service in question the Town Councillor can escalate the matter to the borough council.

As primary consultee the Town Council represent the interests of residents with regard to planning issues affecting the Town.

The Town Council directly employ five members of staff on a full and part time basis, 80% of staff members reside in Prescott with the other 20% having local origins.

Wherever possible the Town Council will always seek to employ locally and contract local provision of service thus retaining the Prescott pound.

Delivering services to meet local needs

Prescot Town Hall

Following a referendum within the township Prescott Town Council was established in 1983 under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

Over that time the Town Council have operated from a number of various locations around Prescott including the old BICC canteen on Warrington Road (which later became Prescott Leisure Centre). The Leisure Centre was condemned as a building in 2011, as result of this a decision was taken to end the Town Council's somewhat nomadic existence by purchasing its own building from which it could operate independently.

The Fusilier Public House was identified as being available and appropriate to the needs of the council. The building was purchased and subsequently developed into a modern fit for purpose Town Hall, providing office accommodation and meeting rooms on the first floor whilst enabling a variety of publicly accessible activities to take place of the ground floor, the building also provides considerable parking for users.

The centrally located Town Hall provides residents with a range of accessible services and opportunities for social inclusion, there are currently 15 different publicly accessible activities taking place on a weekly basis at the Town Hall. For more information see the facilities page of our website.

In addition to public activities the Town Hall can also be used for private functions, this type of event often takes place at the weekends and has included Christenings, weddings, birthday parties of all ages and even religious festivals.

The Town Hall scores extremely high in relation to accessibility, meaning that anyone can attend and use the facility effectively.

As the building provider the Town Council are responsible for ensuring that the Town Hall meets all statutory and reasonable requirements with regard to basic duty of care.

Usage figures since opening

Year	Visits for Community Activities	Visits for Private Functions	Total Visits
10 months June to March 2015	5,992	6,796	12,788
April to March 2016	12,981	7,763	20,744
April to March 2017	21,056	7,521	28,577
Total			62,109

Since its opening the Town Hall has been visited over 62,000 times by people accessing the services provided within. Therefore it is fair to say that the building is a well-used community facility, perhaps even the most visited building in the Town Centre, and there is certainly a demand for the services offered at the Town Hall. All income generated through the operation of the Town Hall is used to fund the Town Council therefore helping to reduce the precept requirement.

Parks Maintenance and Development

Prescot Town Council hold leases on two of the town's three public open spaces King George V Playing Fields (known locally as Browns Field) and Eaton Street Park, the other being Prescot Churchyard and Cemetery. As lease holder the Town Council are responsible for the maintenance of each site. The Town Council therefore determine the quality and scope of maintenance to be provided at each site. As a local council with only two public open spaces the cost of equipment and storage would be prohibitive to the Town Council carrying out its own maintenance. Therefore the actual maintenance of the sites is contracted out to a local provider VIVARK. VIVARK are based in Kings Business Park 200 yards outside the town boundary and employ a vast number of Prescot residents. The Town Council are responsible for managing this contract effectively to ensure high quality of service and value for money.

Such is the quality of Prescot's public open space that Eaton Street Park has held the prestigious Green Flag Award for the last 3 three years. Work to bring Brown's field up to this standard is on-going.

The Town Council continually seek to develop and enhance the Town's public open spaces, over the last four years they have invested over £103,000 in a new pavilion building and toddler playground at Eaton Street whilst carrying out development works to help realise a £1 million programme of works at Browns Field.

Striving to improve quality of life and community well being

Prescot Town Council places its' residents at the heart of its decisions and strives to provide the best quality service available from a Town Council.

In addition to the services offered above the Town Council strive to engender a strong community spirit within the Town this is evidenced through the Town Council's events programme, community grant scheme and community recognition awards. The Mayor of Prescot's Charity also provides cash contributions to local community groups operating within the Town.

The Town Councils events programme is second to none within the surrounding area and comprises of two large events and an Armistice Day Remembrance Service and the Mayors Parade.

The Prescot Carnival

The Prescot Carnival is the only event of its type to be provided by a Town Council within Knowsley and has grown to become the second largest event in Knowsley after the Knowsley Flower Show which is provided by the Borough Council. The Prescot Carnival provides a wide variety of attractions included a large fun fair, a wider range of stalls, for community groups, traders and service providers. Along with many Free activities such as live performances from local artists, a range of

inflatables, reptile workshop, birds of prey display and cage football. The Carnival is attended by around 5000 residents each year. The event is organised, funded and staffed by existing staff members, town councillors and local volunteers.

The Mayor's Parade

Processing through the Town Centre the Mayor's Parade and ultimately arrives at Brown Field just in time to officially open the Prescott Carnival. The Parade is made up of local dignitaries, community groups, representatives of various cadet squadrons, local brownies, guides, scouts all led by a marching band. The Parade is a great spectacle, and provides an opportunity for a bit of local pride to be displayed.

Armistice Day Remembrance Service

The Town Council recognise the importance of remembering the Towns fallen and make special provision to do so through the annual Armistice Day Remembrance Service held at the BICC memorial within Prescott Cemetery and Churchyard. Following the service existing staff members, town councillors and local volunteers provide attendees with refreshments either at the Town or Church Halls.

Town Centre Christmas Lights

Christmas simply isn't Christmas without lights, the Town Council fund and oversees the installation of Prescott's Christmas Light display and Christmas tree. In addition to the lights the Council also host a Christmas Light Switch on Event regularly attended by over 400 residents. The event comprises of various local acts including the winners of Prescott's Got Talent, donkey rides local theatrical group, visit from Father Christmas together with a selection box give away and free refreshments. Once again the event is organised, funded and staffed by existing staff members, town councillors and local volunteers.

Community Fund and other Financial Contributions

The Community Fund is administered under the Council's legal powers and invites applications from all active community organisations operating in the Township of Prescott for the benefit of Prescott residents. Applicants can request up to £500 every 12 months previous beneficiaries have included

- Prescott Historic Society
- E M H Residents Ass
- MALS Merseyside
- FOPCC
- Family Voices
- Prescott & Odyssey Cricket Club
- Westgarth JFC
- MATE Production
- St Pauls Lunch Club
- Vee's Place
- Prescott Air Cadets
- Prescott Town Team
- Molyneux Drive Allotment Association

- Prescott Army Cadets

The Town Council also make a number regular annual contributions including: a contribution to the massively successful Prescott Festival helping to support arts and culture within the town. The Church Clock at Prescott Parish Church and a contribution to Phoenix Night Community event at Bryer Road Community Centre.

Mayor of Prescott's Charity

In addition to the Community Fund the Mayor of Prescott raises money each year for a collection of local community groups and charities beneficiaries from the Mayor of Prescott's Charity include

- Willowbrook Hospice
- 1st Prescott Brownies
- Prescott Army Cadets
- Prescott Primary School Nursery Fund
- St Mary & Pauls Primary School PTFA
- St Pauls Social
- Playworld
- Prescott Cables Juniors

Prescot Community Recognition Awards

The Town Council have recently formulated the Prescott Community Recognition Awards. These awards are aimed at ensuring those within our community who take the time and effort to help others get the recognition they deserve, all too often local community champions can go largely unsung for their actions these awards offer those on the receiving end of the good deeds the opportunity to say thank you in a bigger way. The Town Council firmly believes this of behaviour will lead to stronger more cohesive communities.

Community Initiatives

The Town Council have worked in partnership with Merseyside Police to fund an anti-burglary campaign which saw the Prescott Neighbourhood Police Team distribute 300 DNA marking kits to properties identified as high risk targets.

General Advice, Guidance and Support

The Town Hall is often frequented by residents seeking support in relation to local issues including housing, planning and environmental health. The staff at the Town Hall will always seek to provide as much support as possible in dealing with the issues either by sign posting or direct action when possible.

Support to community groups the Town Clerk often provides local community groups with technical support to enable them to better meet their objectives and access funding.