

Chair's Report 2024-2025

Introduction

The past year has seen the successful completion and letting of the commercial premises along with the residential flats (which were completed end of 2023). The Wild Fig Deli and Bar along with Mather and Murray Financial Advisors are now very well settled into the building and we should not underestimate the value this development has brought to the Town both encouraging more people onto the High Street, benefiting other traders, and creating jobs for over 35 people, as well as homes for 2 people - all with strong local Cricklade connections.

What a Year!

Walkway - New flooring laid with a Waylands Grant of £2,000 contributing towards the cost. New display boards celebrating both Queen Elizabeth II and Old Cricklade have made the area much more interesting to walk through.

Frontage - New paving has been completed greatly improving appearance and safety (thank you to Brenda Muir who raised this at the last meeting). A grant of £750 from the Wiltshire Council Area Board helped towards the cost of this.

The Garden@91 - We see the garden as a true community space and much effort this year has gone into finishing the work. All of this made possible because of grants which have contributed to the cost. Crapper and Sons (£25,000), Area Board (£5,000), Cricklade Town Council (£500), National Lottery (£5,500) plus contributions from Dobbies, Wickes and Chelworth nurseries.

There are not enough words to express our gratitude to our wonderful volunteers who have saved us having to spend many thousands of pounds with items like design, reinstatement of dry stone wall, electrics, fencing, moving and cleaning bricks and stones (so that we can recycle them and use them in the garden) and latterly mowing, digging, weeding and planting etc. etc. **THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!** This year I nominated our Volunteers for a Community First Award - they were chosen and in October received their award.

The basic planting was completed this Autumn and more will take place next Spring. We expect to see this beautiful garden space looking more complete next year, along with the utility space for garden use.

Looking forward to 2026, the garden will be available for use by community groups, for a range of activities, and will become a focal point on the High Street. More updates on this to come.

Membership

The Old Police Station redevelopment owes everything to the ongoing support of its Members, without you none of the above could have been achieved. We currently have 178 members and even though this project is nearing completion we really would like to encourage more membership - just think what else we could do to upgrade our High Street and keep important local services viable, and don't forget any shareholding over £2,500 will earn interest.

Operating Profit

You will see from the statement of accounts for the year ended 2025 our operating profit was £16,141 an increase of approximately £10,000 on last year. Good news and this will allow the Directors to make a higher interest payment of 3% on all eligible shareholdings of £2,500 and above from 1st October 2025.

Looking Ahead

As an organisation, CDF remains committed to strengthening Cricklade's High Street and supporting community-led improvements. Over the coming year, the focus will shift towards consolidating, maintaining our assets, and exploring possible other options to enhance our High Street.

On a personal note, I intend to stand down as Chairman of CDF at the end of this meeting. For health reasons I missed more than three months last year and must be realistic about my ongoing contribution as Chairman. From an idea seven years ago to what has been achieved, thanks to the other directors, you the members, our volunteers and tenants I am so exceptionally proud.

This project means a great deal to me, I believe we have made a big contribution to Cricklade and have enjoyed being involved with this excellent group of people but in the latter years my own role has reduced and one thing for sure I absolutely believe you will be left with a hardworking, professional and competent team of CDF Directors.

Now of course I won't leave them completely alone as I will become (a slightly useless) member of the new gardening group of volunteers 😊



Ruth Szybiak

Chair – Cricklade Development Foundation Limited

November 2025