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INTRODUCTION FROM THE MAYOR



Good evening everyone and welcome to this year's Annual Town Meeting of New Romney Town Council. I am delighted to present the Town Councils Report for the 2014/15 financial year which has been generally a productive year.

The Council has again this last year been involved in formulating and making representation on behalf of the Towns residents to various bodies as well as having to adjust to changes through the enactment of Acts of Parliament, all of which has resulted in more work for the Council.

The Council has implemented its new web site to improve communicating with the public regarding Town Council business. It has also continued its support for local events such as the Country Fayre Day and has been able to provide free concerts for the residents as part of the Speakers Day and Commonwealth Day Flag Raising celebrations.

My designated charities for the year were: 1st New Romney Scout Group; The Old School Trust and the 1st & 2nd New Romney Brownies. My fund raising has also enabled me to support: St Nicholas church; The Confederation of The Cinque Ports and other individual requests for help.

I was pleased to continue hosting visits by members of the public, Civic Dignitaries, Schools and various groups to the Town Hall. The rich history of the Town Hall was something my recently departed Council Colleague, Dr Allen Snoad, used to enjoy explaining through his substantial knowledge and love of local history.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Hiscock, for her assistance and the Councillors, Town Clerk and Town Hall Staff for all their hard work and support throughout the year.

TOWN COUNCIL SUCCESS STORIES

Thanks to the continued and strenuous campaigning of the Town Council, there are often success stories – some big and some small – but many of which go unnoticed. However, during the past year there have been three particular successes that are worthy of highlighting:

- **New Romney Children's Centre**

Following news that the New Romney Children's Centre was under threat of closure, the Town Council fought hard to highlight the benefits of the Centre for local residents and the need for it to remain open. Kent County Council representatives were invited to attend a meeting of the Town Council in order that questions could be raised about the data upon which plans for closure were based and examples of need could be put to the County Council by Members of New Romney Town Council as well as Members of the Public who were in attendance. In addition to this, the Mayor and Chairman of the Council invited a wide range of interested parties to visit the Children's Centre to witness first-hand the good work that it was

doing for the residents of the Town. The Town Council was very pleased to receive the good news, following all of its efforts to overturn this decision, that the closure of the New Romney Children's Centre had been re-considered and that it would now remain open.

- **High Street Flooding**

For some considerable time, there has, during periods of wet weather, been severe flooding in the High Street in the vicinity of the petrol station, which has caused access problems for traffic and pedestrians. The Town Council, via its Planning and Environment Committee, put a great deal of time, this year, into liaising with Kent Highways Department as well as the relevant utility service providers to seek agreement that the cause of the flooding would be investigated and dealt with. Despite this being a lengthy process, the end result was that the relevant parties did carry out all investigations necessary to establish the cause of the problem, following which all necessary works were carried out in order to resolve this issue.

- **High Street Lighting**

This year, all of the Street Lighting Columns in New Romney High Street were replaced by Kent County Council due to the fact that the existing columns were no longer fit for purpose. However, following the installation of the new columns, it was noted by Members of the Town Council that the lighting spread in the High Street was exceedingly patchy and most definitely inferior to that provided by the original lighting columns. The Town Council, therefore, via its Planning and Environment Committee, took up this issue with Kent Highways. This resulted in a site visit being undertaken to assess the lighting provision, following which it was agreed by Kent Highways that the new LED units would be replaced and that the replacement units would be seated on a longer arm in order that a wider lighting spread could be achieved.

- **New Romney Festive Lighting**

Following the collapse of the New Romney Traders Association, the Town Council facilitated the installation of the Christmas Lights along New Romney High Street for the subsequent two years, with the assistance of an element of grant funding. However, the Town Council was then advised that the existing street lighting columns were no longer deemed safe enough to install the lights. Hence, there was no festive lighting in New Romney for the 2013 festive period. The Council was then further advised that the old lights would not be suitable for installation on the new street lighting columns due to there being a very strict loading limit on them. It was, therefore, decided by the Town Council that efforts should be made to purchase new festive lighting units to encourage increased footfall in the High Street and to bring back the festive cheer to the Town during the dark winter period and, with some careful calculation and re-allocation of funds, new festive lights were purchased without the need to impact on the precept at all and the Town Council was very pleased to be able to arrange for the installation of the new festive lighting units in time for the 2014 festive period.

IMPROVING LOCAL PLAY FACILITIES



Following the installation of the new Children's Playground at The Greens, Littlestone and the Skate Park at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground, the Town Council has continued, throughout 2014-15, to work on improving play facilities for the children and young people of New Romney Town and Coast Wards. To this end, the Town Council has, this year, completed the installation of a range of amenity seating adjacent the Children's Playground at The Greens to allow children and their families to better enjoy these facilities and it has further secured the installation of six cycle racks in the vicinity, thanks to a grant funding programme via Kent County Council. The cycle racks are due to be

installed imminently and will provide greater access to the leisure facilities that The Greens provide. Furthermore, arrangements have been made for the re-siting of a toddlers' sheep rocker at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground - originally located at The Greens - to increase provision for toddlers in the Town Ward and the teenage multi-gym - currently located at The Greens - is also to be re-located to Fairfield Road Recreation Ground to increase

teenage provision in the Town Ward. In addition to this, a quotation has been recently accepted for the installation of a new piece of play equipment at Fairfield Road Recreation Ground to replace the old wooden climb and play structure that was removed for safety reasons. Again, this is due to be installed imminently.

HEALTH AND FITNESS FOR ALL

During 2014-15, the Town Council progressed its plans for the installation of an outdoor gym facility at The Greens, Littlestone – undertaking public consultation and seeking grant funding, having allocated £15,000.00 to this particular project via the Capital Spending Plan. The project, which is to be sited within the current fenced area adjacent the children's play area at The Greens and which will provide a range of health and exercise equipment for all adults from 14 years and over right through to senior citizens, is progressing well. The Town Council recently requested and considered formal quotations for supply and installation of the equipment. It is now hoped that the Outdoor Gym should come to fruition during the forthcoming summer months, subject to success in achieving the required grant funding.



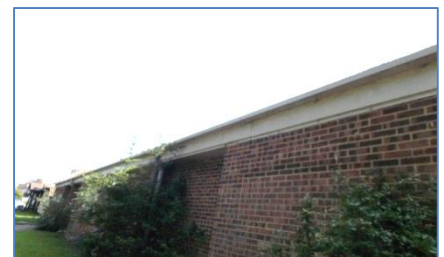
COMMUNITY HALL / SPORTS PAVILION UPDATE



During the past year, the Town Council has been working on the preliminary stages of an immense project to provide a new Community Hall and Sports Pavilion for which £630,000.00 was set aside within the Town Council's Capital Spending Plan, with the necessity to seek match-funding to achieve the build. Investigations were first undertaken, which included visits to several similar facilities and discussion about the pros and cons successes and pitfalls of the range of facilities viewed. These investigations provided a wide range of invaluable information and laid the foundations to move forward to the initial consultation stage, which involved a meeting of the Town Council's Community

Hall/Sports Pavilion Stakeholder Consultation Group. The Consultation Group, which included representatives from a range of stakeholders and advisory sources, discussed in detail what provision it was felt should be included in the building design. From this, a consultation questionnaire was drawn up in order to engage in the second stage of consultation, which included the wider public. Questionnaires and drop boxes were placed in locations around the Town and Coast Wards of the Parish and, following the recent conclusion of that consultation period, the data is now in the process of being collated and analysed. This information will be used to provide the Town Council with a well-informed perspective on the basic requirements that local residents would wish this build to incorporate.

As the Town Council moves towards the design stage of this project, it will be necessary to begin to incur professional costs and so the time-consuming and difficult task of large-scale fund-raising will need to be commenced in earnest. However, this will also result in the need to commence the process of developing a long-term business plan to support the major funding applications that will be necessary to achieve the substantial sum of money required for such a build. This will be a very busy period that will require a great deal of hard work. Hence, preliminary enquiries are already being made regarding prospective funding sources. Within the coming months, a meeting is to be arranged, via the Shepway District Council Sports Development Officer, with a Football Association representative to determine whether this would be a likely funding source. A positive response to a preliminary enquiry from the Town Council has already been received from the De Haan Charitable Trust, which has indicated that this project meets the



Trust's funding criteria and an application would, therefore, be welcomed. Other major funding sources will also be investigated, including such sources as Magnox and National Lottery.

Further consultation is likely to be necessary as this project progresses and it is hoped that our local residents will continue to take the opportunity to engage with the project and have a say in order that the resulting Community Hall and Sports Pavilion can truly reflect the needs of the local Community.

GRANT FUNDING SUPPORT

During 2014-15, New Romney Town Council has awarded grant funding as follows:

St. Martin's Field Charity - £2,150.00

NB: Grant Funding for the 2014 New Romney Country Fayre was actually awarded and paid from the 2013-14 budget.

THE GREENS, LITTLESTONE



The Greens, Littlestone, is an area of informal, open space which is owned and maintained by the Town Council and is regularly used for a range of community events and activities, including fun-fairs, boot fairs, fun runs and similar, as well as the very popular Emergency Services Day. Many of these events and activities benefit local organisations or charities by providing them with opportunities for fund-raising, whilst others provide entertainment for local residents.

During 2014-15, the following events took place at The Greens:

- 3x Boot Fairs
 - 1x Funfair
 - 1x 10K Run hosted by RNLI
 - 1x Emergency Services Day hosted by RNLI
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ASSEMBLY ROOMS, NEW ROMNEY

The Assembly Rooms in Church Approach, New Romney, are let on a regular basis to a range of local groups and organisations as well as for use by private persons.

For booking enquiries or further information, contact Ms Anne Williams (Amenities Clerk) at the Town Hall.

Email: amenitiesclerk@newromneytc.co.uk



CHURCH LANE ALLOTMENTS



New Romney Town Council currently provides 31 allotment garden plots in a range of sizes at its Church Lane Allotment Gardens. Plans are currently in hand to provide a further six plots within the very near future when the temporary access road - which runs adjacent the rear boundary of the site - is reinstated. The Council is pleased to have been able to negotiate the installation of security fencing along two of the site's boundaries in exchange for the temporary access to the adjacent development site, which is due imminently to be closed off and reinstated for use as the additional allotment

plots. In conjunction with the afore-mentioned installation of new security fencing, the Town Council, this year, also took steps to secure the Church Lane boundary with the installation of further new fencing and access gate.

On the advice of the Romney Marsh Internal Drainage Board and in consultation with the Romney Marsh Countryside Project, a Ditch Management Plan was put in place in respect of the ditch which lies just inside the Allotment Gardens boundary adjacent Church Lane. Initial clearance works were undertaken earlier in the year with annual maintenance works having been subsequently undertaken in accordance with the management plan.

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

New Romney Town Council appoints Members as representatives to other organisations. The Town Council would like to thank those Members who have, during 2014-15, served as Representatives on Outside Bodies, as follows:

| Organisation | Town Council Representative |
|---|--|
| Steward for Damian Collins MP | Cllr Mrs E Gould |
| Emergency Contacts for Shepway District Council | The Mayor – Cllr R A Joynes, Deputy Mayor – Cllr Miss J Hiscock |
| Floodline Contacts for Environment Agency | Cllr Dr A F Snoad, Cllr Miss J Hiscock |
| Kent Association of Local COuncils | The Mayor – Cllr R A Joynes |
| Lydd Airport Consultative Committee | Cllr Dr A F Snoad, Cllr D Lawton |
| Dungeness Site Stakeholder Group | Cllr Dr A F Snoad, Cllr D Lawton, Cllr P J Coe |
| New Romney Police Forum | Cllr Miss J Hiscock, Cllr P J Coe, Cllr Mrs V Loseby, Cllr Mrs E Gould, Cllr Mrs C M A Metcalfe |
| Shepway Citizens' Advice Bureau | Cllr W A Darling, Cllr M J O'Neill |
| Public Rights of Way (Footpaths Officer) | Cllr Mrs C M A Metcalfe |
| Romney Marsh Network | Cllr Mrs E Gould |
| Southlands Almshouse Trust | Cllr Dr A F Snoad, Cllr Mrs E Gould, Cllr Mrs V Loseby |
| Confederation of Cinque Ports | The Mayor – Cllr R A Joynes, Deputy Mayor – Cllr Miss J Hiscock, Town Clerk – Mrs C Newcombe |
| Amalgamated Internal Drainage Board | Cllr P J Coe |
| Environment Agency | Cllr P J Coe |
| New Romney Traders' Association | Cllr M J O'Neill, Cllr W A Darling |
| New Romney Allotment Association | Cllr Miss J Hiscock |
| Romney Marsh Forum | The Mayor – Cllr R A Joynes, Cllr Mrs V Loseby |
| KCC Library Services | Cllr Miss J Hiscock, Cllr Mrs C M A Metcalfe |
| Mayoral Representative | No permanent representative – appointed as and when required at the discretion of the Mayor |

COUNCILLOR SURGERIES:

Regular Monthly Surgeries are held in both the Town and Coast Wards of New Romney, at which residents can meet Members of the Town Council and the District Council and, by appointment, the MP for the Romney Marsh, to discuss any issues that they may wish to raise.

Councillor Surgeries were held during 2014-15, as follows:

Town Ward:

The Assembly Rooms, Church Approach, New Romney

MP, Town Councillor and District Councillor Surgery – First Friday in every Calendar Month (except August)

Coast Ward:

Varne Boat Club, Littlestone

Town Councillor and District Councillor Surgery – First Tuesday in every Calendar Month (except August)

COUNCILLOR DETAILS

New Romney Town Council consists of a full membership of sixteen Councillors, with eight Members representing each of its two Wards.

Currently, there are fourteen Town Councillors, as follows:

Town Ward:

Councillor Mrs P S Rolfe

Councillor Mrs E Gould

Councillor Mrs V Loseby

Councillor Mrs C M A Metcalfe

Councillor M J O'Neill

Councillor P P Tanner

Councillor A Rodriguez

Coast Ward:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor – Councillor R A Joynes

Deputy Mayor – Councillor Miss J Hiscock

Councillor D Lawton

Councillor P J Coe

Councillor D L Evans

Councillor W A Darling

Councillor Mrs B J Gregory

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2014/15 Budget Analysis

The Town Council's revenue budget for the year 2014/15 is on target to balance, with an anticipated expenditure and income, each comprising £149,673. The cost of New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the financial year was £57.12 equating to £1.10 per week, which was a decrease against the previous year in the amount of £1.33.

The Town Council's Precept for the year 2015/16 of £139,765 represents a cost of £56.51 for New Romney Town Council's services for a Band D property for the year, equating to £1.09 per week, which is a decrease for the year in the amount of 61p.

Analysis of Proposed Income and Expenditure for 2015/16

| <u>Income</u> | £ |
|--|-----------------------|
| New Romney Town and Coast Tax Payers | 139,765 |
| Local Council Tax Support Grant Allocation | 6,000 |
| Hire of Land and Properties | 17,950 |
| Allotment Rents | 700 |
| Hut & Winch Site Rents | 3,200 |
| Other Income | 560 |
| Total Income | <u>168,175</u> |

Expenditure

| | |
|--|--------|
| Amenities Committee | |
| Sports Field and Maude Pavilion | 3,100 |
| Fairfield Road Recreation Ground | 4,100 |
| The Greens | 2,880 |
| Flagstaff Land | 1,350 |
| Allotment Gardens | 6,300 |
| Land at Coney Banks | 100 |
| Town Square | 200 |
| Assembly Rooms | 6,450 |
| Community Hall | 820 |
| Other | 750 |
| Reserve Fund Contributions | 6,500 |
| Personnel Panel | 73,150 |
| Finance & General Purposes Committee | |
| Town Hall | 11,875 |
| Town Hall House | 1,200 |
| Insurances | 10,500 |
| Legal & Professional Fees | 3,500 |
| Donations | 3,500 |
| Subscriptions | 2,200 |
| Office Equipment | 3,200 |
| Computer Maintenance | 750 |
| Phone/Internet | 1,200 |
| Printing & Stationery | 1,500 |
| Public Clock | 500 |
| Postage and Petty Cash | 2,500 |
| Admin & Miscellaneous (inc. Mayor's/Civic Allowance) | 6,700 |
| Bank Charges | 500 |
| Reserve Fund Contributions | 12,350 |
| Contingency | 250 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Planning Committee | <u>250</u> |
| Total Expenditure | <u>168,175</u> |

The Town Council is fully accountable to residents each year at the Annual Town Meeting at which time any questions may be raised.

The fully audited accounts for 2013/14 are available at the Town Hall for perusal by prior arrangement.

The Town Council has an approved Capital spending Plan which is reviewed annually, details of which are available from the Town Hall by prior request.

